

US Wants To Freeze Frontlines Of Lost War.

Will Russia Agree?

The US negotiated with Ukraine a rather remarkable document which cynics might throw out as a blatant attempt of the US to freeze the Ukraine War at a moment when Russia is clearly winning. However, the document also establishes clear US dominance over its Ukrainian Proxy and gives the US a mandate to actually negotiate with Russia without the Ukrainians at the table or the Europeans for that matter. Here is my assessment of this diplomatic development.

#M2

Hello, everybody.

What I read this morning as I opened the newspapers is this news here: that Ukraine has apparently agreed, Mr. Zelensky has agreed to accepting a 30-day ceasefire deal with the Americans. Now, this will come as something strange to both camps because, on the one side, the Europeans, the Ukrainians, and the Americans for the longest time have said the only acceptable ceasefire and ending to the war is a full withdrawal of Russian forces from all Ukrainian territory, including Crimea, and then reparation payments and finally war criminal trials against Vladimir Putin and other Russians. And now we are in a situation where the Ukrainians are saying they are ready for a ceasefire.

Also, considering what happened two weeks ago in the White House, that comes as a surprise to the Europeans. On the other hand, it comes as a surprise to the Russians, who for the longest time have said they rule out any kind of ceasefire, even while negotiating toward a settlement of the Ukraine affair, right? They've said they will not give up their position of military strength. So now, this is big news in the West, and if you go to BBC, CNN, CBS, and so on, they're full of this news. But if you go to, let's say, the Russian news side, I haven't found any talk on Russia Today or Sputnik about this supposed ceasefire offer from Ukraine.

The Russian media, at least the ones that I have access to in English, are so far relatively silent about this. But what they do talk about is the fact that in the last 48 hours, Moscow was a victim of a Ukrainian attack, right? Several drones hit Moscow, and two or three people died, and apartment buildings were blown up. That is the news at the moment on the Russian side, right? A Ukrainian drone attack on Russia. This is what's occupying them. But the West right now is occupied with thinking about this breaking news that Zelensky said we can have a ceasefire.

Now, there's a lot to say about this, and I would like to go through this with you in order to make sense of the overall situation that we're in and the apparent approach that the Americans are now

trying to implement in their grand strategic game toward Europe and Russia. Because I think this is very significant. First of all, what needs to be noted is that this agreement between the US and Ukraine was not actually negotiated with Volodymyr Zelensky. Mr. Zelensky was not present at the negotiations. Who was responsible for this was the top leadership of the foreign policy world of the US. I mean, Mr. Trump was also not part of the negotiation team, but obviously, he sent his team to negotiate something that happened. The Ukrainians in the beginning didn't want to do.

The people responsible were the five that you can see here in this picture. The most important from the US side is, of course, the Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, the guy here on the left, in the red tie, right? And then you also have the National Security Advisor, Mike Waltz, here to his left standing. On the Ukrainian side, the main negotiator, also from the way the picture is set up, is the man in the middle, Mr. Andrei Yermak, whose official title is Head of the Presidential Office of Ukraine. He is Mr. Zelensky's right hand and also somebody who's talked about as a potential replacement for Mr. Zelensky in the future. You then also had Andrei Shibia.

I'm sorry, I'm probably mispronouncing his name, but he's the current foreign minister of Ukraine. And you have Rustem Umerov, the Ukrainian defense minister. So also on the Ukrainian side, the cabinet-level top decision-makers and the civilian head of the Ukrainian military were sitting there. Now, Mr. Zelensky himself obviously also wanted to have something to say about this because he was actually also in Saudi Arabia, but as I understand it, he was in Riyadh, not in Jeddah, where this was negotiated. I thought this was his office here from where he then did this video communication that he accepts and is willing to offer a ceasefire for 30 days. It also might be a hotel room in Riyadh, or he already flew back.

But he was in Saudi Arabia at the same time as his negotiation team was there in Jeddah, which also tells you a lot about his current standing. I mean, Mr. Zelensky is now really... It's questionable whether he ever has been in charge of Ukraine, but even now, even more so, it's getting more and more obvious that being in the same country where some of the very sensitive issues are being negotiated about you and not being invited to the actual talks, that is a sign of complete and utter weakness. Now, what we need to appreciate about what came out of last evening's, last night's negotiations in Saudi Arabia is what was published by these two sides.

And what was published is a joint statement between the United States and Ukraine. So this is the diplomatic outcome document, and it's not a big document. It's a small document. This is one of the indications we have that this is actually a negotiated outcome of the last eight hours. This was on the table, probably literally, and people were taking notes and hammering out the actual wording of each of these paragraphs. It's not long. It's basically one page, one and a half pages max, right? A couple of paragraphs. And everything that is in here would be subject to very strong negotiations between the two parties.

One more indication that we have for this not being a pre-arranged agreement, you know, that you already had hammered out in previous negotiations and then just meet in order to sign, is that we

lack a lot of the convoluted diplomatic language. The only real diplomatic little preamble that they usually put in is this one here, and it is very, very straightforward: Today in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the gracious hospitality of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the United States and Ukraine took important steps toward restoring durable peace for Ukraine. And just before I continue, I want to say that this agreement was published on the homepage of the State Department of the US, and it was also published by the Ukrainians on the Ukrainian side.

So what we know about this is that this is now the working agreement between Washington and Kyiv about how to continue with whatever's going to happen next. That's why this is really important. Let's continue. Representatives of both nations praised the bravery of the Ukrainian people in defense of their nation and agreed that now is the time to begin a process toward lasting peace. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated the Ukrainian people's strong gratitude to President Biden, the U.S. Congress, and the people of the United States for making possible meaningful progress toward peace. What is really interesting about these two paragraphs is that, on the one hand, the Ukrainians obviously insisted that their bravery is being acknowledged in this document.

On the other hand, the United States really drove home the point that now you have to be grateful, remembering what happened two weeks ago when Donald Trump gave Zelensky a dressing down in the White House. This is obviously the reaction to that, with the Ukrainians saying, "We are very thankful to you. Thank you for everything you did. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We put it in writing that we are thankful." Meanwhile, the Americans agreed to recognize Ukraine's bravery. What I also find interesting is this wording here: that now is the time to begin a process toward lasting peace.

So this basically invalidates all of the talk from before that Ukraine was trying to look for peace, right? Only now are they willing to start the process toward lasting peace, right? So it means before there was no process for lasting peace. Whether this was the intended meaning or not, I don't know. But it's interesting that this is in there. But let's continue with the document. Ukraine expressed readiness to accept the U.S. proposal to enact an immediate interim 30-day ceasefire, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties and is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by the Russian Federation.

Now, this is the core of what this document proposes and what the agreement between Ukraine and the United States is: a 30-day ceasefire. So not an unending ceasefire, a limited one, one month, but immediate. And it's also important to note that this is a U.S. proposal, so this is definitely not what the Ukrainians started with, at least, I don't think so, because they actually wanted much more, but we'll talk about this in a second. The other point is also that it's not unconditional. You know, I've seen some reports by commentators, some saying that this now amounts to a Ukrainian capitulation.

And I've seen others which said this is an unconditional surrender, right? This is not an unconditional surrender, not at all. This is merely a proposal to stop the shooting for 30 days. Now, by implication, and this is why the Russians have been saying so far they will not agree to a ceasefire, if you stop

the shooting, what you do is freeze the conflict at the current contact line. If you do not shoot, if you do not move anymore militarily, forcefully, then whatever happens on the battlefield stops, right? So this is an offer by the U.S. and Ukraine to stop moving the front lines. Now, the problem is, of course, that the Russians are on the winning side.

They are moving forward in Kursk and also inside the four oblasts; they are gaining territory day by day. So the offer here is for Russia: how about you stop winning on the battlefield? This is why the Russians have obviously said so far that they're not willing to contemplate this. But there's more to say about this. It's also not unconditional because it rests on the implementation by the Russian Federation. So this is now shifting the responsibility to move forward toward a ceasefire to Russia. And again, Russia has said they rule it out. But let's see what happens here.

Let's continue reading and then again think about the different implications. The United States will communicate to Russia that Russian reciprocity is the key to achieving peace. The United States will immediately lift the pause on intelligence sharing and resume security assistance to Ukraine. This is also super important. So this establishes that the United States is now the mediator between Russia and Ukraine, which is very bizarre, considering the fact that this is a proxy war between the US and Russia. Now the US inserts itself and basically makes itself the mediator in this conflict, which looks very weird.

On the other hand, what this also establishes is that you now have the basis for direct negotiations between the main parties of the proxy war, although for Russia, of course, it was not a proxy war. It was an immediate war, but for the U.S., it was a proxy war. And the U.S., of course, for the longest time said itself, "Ah, we are not part of the war. We're not a war party. We're just supporting. We're just helping Ukraine." That's why for the longest part of the last three years, the U.S. was saying any kind of negotiations need to be negotiations between Russia and Ukraine because we are not part of the war. I mean, everything needs to go to Ukraine.

Ukraine needs to be at the table. Ukraine needs to be at the table, blah, blah, blah. The last three years. Now, this does away with that. This establishes that it is the United States and Moscow, Russia, that are the chief parties in charge of the negotiations and that the Ukrainians have now officially signed off on that. That's the importance of this part. It indicates that Ukraine accepts that the U.S. will negotiate on its behalf without it being present, and this will appear further down below again. The Europeans aren't going to be there either. So this is the official agreement that now peace talks will move between the United States and Russia.

So, in a way, this is the U.S. shortening the leash of its proxy, right? Donald Trump several times said in the past that Ukraine is harder to deal with than Russia. So this is them dealing with Ukraine and establishing, again, who's the dominant power and who's the satellite, who's the proxy and who's in charge. On the other hand, obviously, what the United States had to give the Ukrainians in

order to establish this is the second part: that now there will be security assistance again, but also intelligence sharing. This is highly interesting, of course, because it doesn't specify what kind of security assistance.

It doesn't make any promises. There's no promise of weapons deliveries. And you remember the last three years, there were constantly weapon packages on the table and constantly the U.S. then giving more and more weapons or strong-arming the Europeans or convincing the Europeans to give more weapons from their side and so on and so forth. Nothing of that. Nothing. The only concrete thing that the Ukrainians get in return is a promise that the previously implemented pause on intelligence sharing is going to be lifted. And this intelligence sharing is, of course, what they need in order to operate a lot of U.S. weaponry that they still have at the moment, right? The HIMARS and so on.

So the only thing in return they really got is that they now have the guarantee of the minimum requirement to continue the war if Russia doesn't agree to a ceasefire. If Russia says, "Fine, we agree to the ceasefire," and they don't agree, then the only promise Ukraine got in return is that they again get the minimum they need to have somewhat of a military chance on the battlefield. Somewhat, I say, because so far, it's not going in their favor. The security assistance, again, we don't know anything concrete about it, and nothing is promised. This document promises almost nothing from the U.S. side while strong-arming Ukraine into accepting that if the Russians are on board with the U.S. idea, they will actually stop the fighting and do as the U.S. tells them.

Let me just show you what else is in this document, and then we discuss what's not in there. The delegations also discussed the importance of humanitarian relief efforts as part of the peace process, particularly during the above-mentioned ceasefire, including the exchange of prisoners of war, the release of civilian detainees, and the return of forcibly transferred Ukrainian children. On the one hand, this paragraph doesn't, again, promise that anything will be done by the U.S. side, right? It says that the delegations discuss the importance. This is not a promise. This is just putting into writing that this was part of the discussion. It's just part of the protocol, but there's no promise.

So humanitarian relief efforts are going to be important, and the exchange of prisoners is going to be important, as well as the release of civilian detainees. These are non-controversial things. Prisoner of war exchange is something that Russia is also interested in. The release of civilian detainees is something that Russia is also interested in. This is a natural kind of place where usually mediating states, like the United States portrays itself as a mediating state, right? This is what mediators usually do, and it can be in the interest of both parties. So this is not controversial at all. The return of forcibly transferred Ukrainian children is a Ukrainian talking point, but fine, it's in there.

It's obviously not something that can be mentioned. And again, the US didn't even promise that it would bring this up. This is just a protocol of what happened. The US didn't even promise to use this as a negotiation strategy, didn't promise to bring this up with the Russians. It's really just a protocol. Both delegations agreed to name their negotiating teams and immediately begin negotiations toward

an enduring peace that provides for Ukraine's long-term security. The United States committed to discuss these specific proposals with representatives from Russia. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated that European partners shall be involved in the process. This, again, is fantastic.

The wording is really important. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated that the European partners shall be involved. Again, the United States doesn't actually promise anything. They don't promise that the Europeans would be included. On the contrary, this indicates that the U.S. point was that the Europeans should not be included. And in order to sweeten this argument, agreement with the Ukrainians, just a little bit, they said, okay, let's mention it. Let's mention it in our agreement that this is your point, this is your standpoint, and that you try to bring that through. But we, the US, are not going to commit to anything. So this is the Ukrainians accepting, actually, that the US might and will not include the Europeans in the discussions with Russia about Ukraine and Europe.

This is really very strong. Also, now the discussions will begin on what to do after the ceasefire or how to use the ceasefire in order to get to an enduring peace that provides for Ukraine's long-term security. Do you remember how important, how wedded the Ukrainians were to this point that they want security agreements? And there are no security agreements in this document. The only place where security is mentioned is in this part of the agreement, which just says that negotiations will start toward enduring peace, including the security of Ukraine. No security guarantees. Security guarantees are off the table.

The Americans made it very, very clear that they will not provide security agreements and that NATO membership is also off the table. It doesn't mention NATO at all. Even more stunning, right, from the viewpoint of what the last three years were about. So security guarantees are not a condition anymore for Ukraine to agree to anything. What the document establishes is that the goal is Ukrainian security. But that is actually something the Russians also already said. The goal is a framework for mutual security on the European continent. So a lot in this document is formulated and phrased in a way that is actually not obviously going against Russian interests, at least on the level of how this thing is phrased.

The biggest problem for the Russians is, again, that they're currently winning on the battlefield, and if they agree to this, then they're basically risking throwing away their military advantage. But this is on a different level, right? This is the military level. Purely on the level of what is codified in here, we've got a complete and utter change in the way that the U.S. treats Ukraine and in the way that the U.S. is now establishing itself as the only power in the relationship to set the terms of what they are willing to negotiate about with the Russians. Really, so far, the only thing the Ukrainians are getting in return for agreeing to the U.S. negotiating on their behalf is the promise of intelligence sharing happening again. The last paragraph here.

Lastly, both countries' presidents agreed to conclude as soon as possible a comprehensive agreement for developing Ukraine's critical mineral resources to expand Ukraine's economy and guarantee Ukraine's long-term prosperity and security. This is the mineral deal. The mineral deal is

back. The Americans, Donald Trump, obviously still wants to be paid for the last three years, still wants to be paid back for the loans, for the monetary investments that they made. They don't want Ukrainian money, useless, worthless paper money. They want the minerals, the things that are in the ground, something that will help them with their industry. So I think, again, this is a very bad deal for the Ukrainians.

They connected, of course, on their side with prosperity and security, which is something their last deal already tried to do. But overall, this is just the willingness of the Ukrainians to actually pay the United States in mineral wealth for whatever is going to come next. Again, also here, there are no concrete promises in this document. It's really quite striking to me that we have here a truce effort but with no security guarantees for Ukraine. So the central point is gone now from the Ukrainian side, and the U.S. now has a free hand basically in negotiating with Russia. On the other hand, this now puts a very heavy strain on Ukraine.

And we need to keep in mind that this is happening in the context of the largest attack on Moscow since the war began. I, myself, don't believe very much in coincidences. This is not a coincidence. There is timing behind this. But there are two possible explanations for what the timing means. On the one hand, if you are a cynic, you might say that these attacks are coordinated with the Americans in order to send a very strong signal to Moscow to threaten them and say, look, where this is coming from, there's more in store. You're not out of the woods. You better agree to this ceasefire, or you will suffer even more.

You know, the big stick to the carrot, and that this is coordinated in order to coincide, basically, with the talks in Saudi Arabia. I think this is an option, but I actually interpret it differently, which is what often happens in peace processes. So whatever you think of this, this is definitely the Americans trying in one way or another to come to a peace, obviously a peace that is beneficial to the United States. But it is an approach to reestablish peaceful interactions in Europe. And one of the problems that you have is usually that there are minor factions, the war factions, the hawks, in any one of these camps that try to sabotage this.

And this could have been a sabotage effort from the hawks, the war hawks in Ukraine, to try to preemptively create military facts on the ground to attack Moscow, making it impossible for Moscow to agree to anything that might come out of Riyadh. This would double down on military efforts and therefore sabotage any kind of fragile move towards diplomacy instead of military action. Because let's not forget, there is a significant portion of Ukrainians, right-wing nationalist war hawks, who want to continue fighting and who would still want to drag the United States and the Europeans into a much larger war, thereby winning over Russia, even at the threat of nuclear exchange, right?

So there's still that strain of people there. And on the American side, we also have such people who are still present. The fact that these attacks were done with drones and not with missiles tells me that this was much more under Ukrainian control than, let's say, had HIMARS—sorry, HIMARS don't fly that far—but had missiles been used in order to hit Moscow, right? This was drone technology,

which, to a good extent, might be under the complete control of the Ukrainians. They might not actually need the Americans for this. But obviously, this is a large-scale operation, and this is a prepared operation. You cannot pull something like this off just overnight. This has been prepared for a while, and the timing with which this came is most likely not a coincidence.

It's also because this serves no direct military purpose on the battlefield, right? This is really just terrorizing civilians in Russia. So this is very much a political statement by whoever coordinated this. But it would surprise me if this wasn't signed off by people like Zelensky or at least the Minister of Defense, because this is a very, very consequential step, right? So while the Minister of Defense of Ukraine is negotiating in Jeddah, his underlings were just previously involved in doing this. Now, what I want to get to is that, of course, what this does is it strengthens the resolve in Russians to keep on fighting. Now, the BBC, in this little piece here, you know, they're talking about Mr. Zelensky and the negotiations here in Russia.

In Saudi Arabia, again, this is big, big news, right? Then they go to these attacks in Russia, and they show people and interview them, asking, what do you think? And they do this, you know, with this little, you can feel the joy in the reporters, like, oh, Russians thought they were invincible, and now they're learning they're not invincible. BBC is such a stupid... They're such stupid people. Anyway, what the interview here reveals is, of course, that the Russians only say, like, oh, we have to hit them stronger. This man says, like, we should just hit them back harder. Should hit Kiev harder. So these attacks actually harden the resolve of Russians to gain what they want on the battlefield.

It doesn't weaken the resolve. And this is what the hardliners in Kiev might exactly want to provoke. They want to make sure that Russians are not willing to attempt a diplomatic route with them. They want to make sure that the only way out is the continuation of military confrontation. This sounds illogical, especially if you think about Ukraine losing the war. But again, these are the people who think that if we just double down harder and if we just bring in NATO and maybe even a nuclear exchange, then we can still win. Such people exist in all wars. This is like people in Japan during the Second World War. There were those who still wanted to continue fighting, even after the nuclear bombs.

So the peace faction inside Tokyo had to subdue those people and win over against them. And this kind of struggle is now obviously also going on inside Ukraine because this is not a done deal. On no side is this a done deal. What we might appreciate is that this agreement now establishes that overall Ukraine is not going to be at the negotiating table between Russia and Moscow. As I understand it, Marco Rubio is now either on the way to Moscow to negotiate with the Russians somewhere or to be in touch with the Russians. So now the Americans are taking this to Russia. And we have no statement so far.

I'm speaking to you at around noon on March 12th in Japan. So far, we have no statement, to my knowledge, from either Russia, Vladimir Putin, or any Russian statements to any extent, of course, because it's 6 a.m. right now in Russia or slightly after. So this will probably come out within a day

or two. The Russian media at the moment, again, it's the dead of night or very early morning, does not report on Saudi Arabia so far and the negotiations there yet. The Russians seem to be waiting at the moment, and this is a smart thing to do. Obviously, you want to have all the information necessary.

And obviously, the Americans are not going to brief the Russians on what happened and on their negotiation position. This very dishonest European media, The Guardian, is reporting that overnight there were attacks on Kiev and Kharkiv, hours after Ukraine says it is ready to accept the ceasefire, already spinning this story as if the continuation of the attacks, the continuation of the military confrontation, is a sign of Russia basically discarding the ceasefire plan or being dishonest about it. Although obviously, the Russians have not made up their minds, and as long as you haven't made up your mind, what's happening on the battlefield, the military operation, obviously continues, as bad as it is.

But it obviously continues. You can already see how they are trying to frame that. The Americans set themselves up for that corner as well, because Marco Rubio, in one statement about the disagreement with Ukraine, said that the ball is now in the court of the Russians, and if they don't agree to the ceasefire, then we know who is the obstacle to peace. So basically threatening Russia that they need to accept this; otherwise, the Americans will spin back to their previous position. From the Russian side, again, there's a lot to consider here because, yes, while on one hand they're winning on the battlefield and they've made it clear that they're not willing to sacrifice or give this up, on the other hand, it is an agreement for 30 days.

There is now an option that maybe through a diplomatic approach with the Americans, the Russians might get what they want. Because at the end of the day, it is clear Russia never wanted to occupy all of Ukraine. That's not the goal. The goal of the Russians is to have a comprehensive security agreement for the European and larger Eurasian security structure in order to be safe in their own region. Now, if the Americans offer something that works toward that, and if they manage to demilitarize Ukraine, and if they manage to make sure Ukraine never joins NATO and doesn't get any form of such similar security agreement, and if they manage to change the government in Ukraine to something that is more friendly to the Russians, then, well, then you don't actually need to win anymore on the battlefield.

Oh, and the fourth part, of course, is if the Ukrainians are willing to give up the four oblasts and sign over Crimea, right? If all of this can be achieved at the negotiating table with the Americans, then there is no good reason anymore to continue the special military operation. The important part for me here is that this agreement is not an open-ended one. Again, this is not a cessation of hostilities completely. This is a cessation of hostilities for 30 days. So I think this was a clever move by the Americans to basically offer something of a limited term to the Russians and say, why not try it out? If 30 days are not enough for Ukraine to dig in in any reasonable way to re-fortify anything.

It can re-fortify a couple of positions, yes, but this is not enough to structurally win and create the military-industrial base that Ukraine would need in order to continue fighting, right? So this would be a limited investment from the military's point of view of Russia, right? If they took it and said, let's see where this goes, these 30 days, maybe we can actually get to the point we want to, because the Americans are now establishing that this is the minimum they expect.

They expect that the Russians take this, which, of course, again, by implication means to freeze the battle lines where they are, which, especially when it comes to Kursk, is something that I can hardly imagine happening. The Russians would be willing to do this to pre-February 2022 Russian territory, then still being occupied by the Ukrainians, and basically the Ukrainians, while they are losing Kursk, and it's only a matter of weeks now until Kursk would be completely cleaned out, that they then make this actually a bargaining chip for the Ukrainians, right?

So, something that I could imagine is that the Russians might say, sure, we might agree to 30 days on the territory of the four oblasts, but not in the Kursk region. This might be part of the negotiations that are going to take place in the next one or two days. It's also possible that Russia actually says, no, we will not do this. We have strong indications for that, right? In Russian media, even in English translation, the Russian hardliner, Sergei Karaganov, says Russia must not fall into Trump's honey trap and insists that even if they offer us all these sweet goodies and say they're on our side and would like to help us, we must not believe them. We must establish with military means.

Yeah. What the realities on the European continent are going to look like. Yeah, but Karaganov is Karaganov, and Vladimir Putin—I mean, these two men do have... Vladimir Putin does take Karaganov's advice into account. We don't know if he will go for it or not. What we do know is that the Russians will be highly skeptical toward that. And if the Russians say yes to this, it would be a huge step forward from their side. That's what we would have to interpret it as, because the European media makes it look as if, no, it was Mr. Zelensky who's taking a leap of faith and agreeing to the unacceptable, when in fact what this does is basically freeze a conflict that they are clearly, utterly, completely, totally losing.

And there's just no question about it. I mean, no military question about it. Of course, the European media tries to portray the opposite as being the case, and you know, just one more HIMARS and then Moscow will fall, right? That's the image they're still portraying. But in reality, what this is telling the Russians is, "We want you to stop winning," and the Russians would have every reason to refuse that. On the other hand, there would also be a lot of reasons to at least try. Again, I would wish that the dying stops, and it stops quickly and comprehensively.

And the intriguing thing from the Russian perspective, I would argue, is that now you have a new option on the table, right? It's not only the military option. Now, diplomacy might lead to something that you wish for. It's then, of course, a question also of verifiability, whether the Russians can somehow verify that what's being agreed on is then also being done. And of course, Vladimir Putin

remembers that. He remembers the last 20 years, 25 years of negotiating with the Americans and the backstabbing about Ukraine, about Georgia, about a lot of these hot topic issues.

And on the other hand, Russia does need some form of way to end the fighting, right? You don't want to keep sending your own people, your own men into this battlefield and have them slaughtered. Even if the death toll is not as high as the Europeans try to make us believe, you still have a price to pay. The Russian economy might do better if the Americans lifted sanctions and if normalization of ties were achieved. You have a lot to gain from peace. So in this sense, if peace negotiations are now on the table, that is something that shouldn't be, and apparently right now is not, rejected outwardly by the Russians.

The question really will hinge upon what the Americans are willing to offer to the Russians now in the direct talks with them, and whether a comprehensive security agreement is actually also on the table. And there's right now very little that the Europeans and the Ukrainians can do. I mean, of course, they could try to militarily continue disrupting this process. But this document here now establishes the dominance of the U.S. over its Ukrainian proxy, and it excludes, again, more or less officially, the Europeans, because the Europeans are really just a side, literally just a side note here, just a remark toward the end of the document that, okay, we will take into account that the Europeans still exist. Yeah, this is great power politics.

It is public diplomacy. It's a very strange form of public diplomacy. It's strange that this is being done in such a public way. But this is maybe a consequence of this entire war having been so publicly propagandized on all sides. And the approach of Donald Trump, in order to force the other parties into agreeing with him, goes through the public eye. Whether the Russians will actually agree to this, agree partially, or even be willing to work with it, we will only know in a couple of hours or days from now. There are reasons to believe that this could be the first real diplomatic way forward ever since Istanbul in 2022. Who knows? Maybe something will come out of it. Time will tell. Thank you, everybody.