
What a Ukraine Peace Treaty Brokered by Trump Might Look Like

Description

by Gilbert Doctorow

For those among you who still believe that my high expectations of a Donald Trump 2.0 administration in the domain of foreign relations are misplaced, I offer some considerations based on the 'warts and all' presentation of Trump's thinking and belly-led inclinations coming from his former ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell. See

Sadly this two day old English language video has received only 22,000 views [the German language version has received 10 times that number]. It merits vastly more attention from an American audience. What you get here is the underlying logic of what the mainstream media falsely denounce as the 'isolationism' of MAGA. In fact the isolationism is nothing more than drawing back from the overextended position as global policeman that the country cannot afford financially.

This video provides a wealth of clues as to how Trump's promise to snuff out the wars that Biden lit can be achieved quickly. Most importantly it allows us to see beyond the bravado of transactional foreign policy based on overwhelming U.S. strength and bullying. What we see instead is the fundamental weakness of the U.S. position that necessitates the turn away from military solutions in favor of diplomacy and, second, the realization that the United States has no fundamental interests at stake in how the diplomatic solution is structured other than to see that both sides make compromises that ensure the deal will stick and be properly enforced by global powers in a way that Minsk-2 was not.

Throughout the interview, Grenell takes as his point of reference the unsupportable 37 trillion dollar national debt, which must be cut back, not added to in the years of a future Trump administration. This can only be realized by ending the wars that Washington is fueling NOW.

I put this explanation of why the United States under Trump will cut all further assistance to Ukraine together with the explanation we heard from Senator J.D. Vance, now Trump's running mate, in his speech on the Senate floor just before the fateful vote on an additional 60 billion dollars appropriation to Kiev: that in the ongoing war of attrition the United States simply does not have the manufacturing capacity to send to Ukraine the 155 mm artillery shells and other munitions and weapons systems that it needs to defend itself against the greatly superior Russian armed forces, which are backed up by the world's biggest production of these necessities of war.

Given the realism underlying these guiding principles of the future Trump foreign policy which will operate on the old truth that politics is the art of the possible, given the longstanding foundation of Russian foreign policy in the very same tradition of the Realist school that puts national interest foremost, what may we expect to find in the peace settlement that Trump may broker as from the days

immediately following his election on 5 November?

I hazard the guess that notwithstanding the claims that Trump may make that he has forced concessions on both sides to reach a peace, that peace will be largely based on the latest proposal by Vladimir Putin on the day before the phony Summit on Peace held in Switzerland in June.

To be sure, the Russians will give up their territorial claims to the entirety of the 4 provinces they have already incorporated into the Russian Federation but never fully conquered. It may even be that they will keep only two of these, Donetsk and Lugansk, while Kherson and Zaporozhie are returned to Ukraine under conditions that guaranty substantial autonomy to them, in the sense of the Minsk-2 accords that were never implemented for lack of active intervention by the West European guarantors of the accords. After all, Russia's national interest was never territorial aggrandizement but its security from NATO encroachment.

Why the distinction between the 4 provinces? Firstly, because Lugansk and Donetsk constitute the most heavily Russophone part of Ukraine and suffered the greatest losses of people killed and property destroyed from the 8 years of shelling and 'anti-terror' marauding by Ukrainian military units as from 2014 to the start of the Special Military Operation in 2022. They are also the most valuable territory for their metallurgical and general manufacturing traditions. And they are essential to ensure the viability of Russia's hold on Crimea. Letting go Kherson and Zaporozhie would return to Ukraine valuable Black Earth land which is essential to ensure the economic viability of the rump state.

At the same time, surely the Russians will set as a non-negotiable demand the formal refusal of Ukraine to ever seek NATO membership, a prohibition on the placement of foreign military infrastructure or personnel on Ukrainian territory and limits on the size and capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces.

It is virtually certain that Russia will raise no objections to Ukraine joining the European Union. And it is conceivable that Russia will contribute to the rebuilding of Ukraine by ceding part or all of the 350 billion dollars in frozen Russian state assets now in the West as an act of good will, not as war reparations. Russia can well afford to do this because it recouped a large part of this amount in the first year of the war from the vastly inflated prices of the hydrocarbons it sold on world markets as a result of global disruptions in energy supplies. In return, Russia will surely demand, and likely the West will agree to rescind all economic sanctions that have been imposed on the country.

I believe that a package closely resembling what I have outlined above can be sold to the American public, especially if there is provision of massive funding for the reconstruction of Ukraine using the frozen funds with Russian consent and thereby avoiding the risks of overturning the global financial system inherent in the presently discussed outright confiscation of Russian state assets. Moreover, the exchange of land for money is a widely accepted solution that even the much abused Ukrainian citizenry might well accept, were they to be asked in a plebiscite.