

Putin's Peace Proposal for Ukraine

It's Time for a New Economic and Security Architecture

Russian President Vladimir Putin, on June 14, 2024, [addressed](#) a meeting in the Kremlin of the senior staff of the Russian Foreign Ministry. We provide, here, excerpts from the translation of the full speech, as provided by the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Subheadings are added by EIR.

We last met in this extended format in November 2021, and since then, there have been many pivotal and even fateful events, without exaggeration, both in Russia and around the world. Therefore, I think it is important to assess the current situation in global and regional affairs, as well as set the appropriate tasks for the Foreign Ministry. All of these tasks are aimed at achieving our main goal: creating conditions for Russia's sustainable development, ensuring its security, and improving the well-being of Russian families....

Let me repeat: the world is changing rapidly. Global politics, the economy, and technological competition will never be the same as before. More countries are striving to strengthen their sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and national and cultural identity. The countries of the Global South and East are gaining prominence, and the role of Africa and Latin America is growing. Since the Soviet times, we have always acknowledged the importance of these regions, but today the dynamics have completely shifted, and this is becoming increasingly evident. The pace of transformation in Eurasia, where many significant integration projects are underway, has also accelerated significantly.

This new political and economic reality now serves as the foundation for the emerging multipolar and multilateral world order, and this is an inevitable process. It reflects the cultural and civilisational diversity that is inherently part of humanity, despite all attempts at artificial unification.

These profound, system-wide changes certainly inspire optimism and hope because the establishment of multipolarity and multilateralism in international af-

airs, including respect for international law and broad representation, make it possible to resolve the most complex problems together for the common benefit, and to build mutually beneficial relations and cooperation between sovereign states for the sake of well-being and security of peoples.

Such a vision for the future aligns with the aspirations of the vast majority of countries. This is evident, among other things, in the growing interest in the work of a universal association such as BRICS, which is based on a culture of trust-based dialogue, sovereign equality of its members and respect for each other. Under the Russian chairmanship this year, we will facilitate the smooth inclusion of new BRICS members in the association's working bodies....

In general, I believe that the potential of BRICS will allow it to become one of the core regulatory institutions of the multipolar world order.

I should note in this connection that international discussions are already underway regarding the parameters of interaction between states in a multipolar world and the democratisation of the entire system of international relations. In this regard, we have agreed on and adopted, together with our colleagues in the Commonwealth of Independent States, a joint document on international relations in a multipolar world. We have also invited our partners to discuss this subject at other international platforms, primarily in the SCO and BRICS.

We are interested in fostering this dialogue within the UN, including on such a vital topic for all as the creation of an indivisible security system. In other words, global affairs must be based on the principle that the security of some cannot be ensured at the expense of the security of others.

A Unique Opportunity Lost

Let me remind you that at the end of the 20th century, after the end of the intense military and ideological confrontation, the international community had a



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

President Vladimir Putin (L.) presenting his strategic proposal to senior staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 14. At right, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

unique opportunity to build a reliable and just security order. This did not require much—simply the ability to listen to the opinions of all interested parties and a mutual willingness to take those opinions into account. Our country was determined to engage in constructive work of this nature.

However, a different approach prevailed. The Western powers, led by the United States, believed that they had won the Cold War and had the right to determine how the world should be organised. The practical manifestation of this outlook was the project of unlimited expansion of the North Atlantic bloc in space and time, despite the existence of alternative ideas for ensuring security in Europe.

They responded to our justified questions with excuses, claiming that there were no plans to attack Russia, and that the expansion of NATO was not directed against Russia. They effectively forgot about the promises made to the Soviet Union and later Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the bloc would not accept new members. Even if they acknowledged those promises, they would grin and dismiss them as mere verbal assurances that were not legally binding.

In the 1990s and later, we consistently pointed out the flawed approach taken by Western elites. Instead of simply criticising and warning them, we suggested options and constructive solutions, emphasising the need

to develop a mechanism of European and global security that would be acceptable to all parties involved (I want to underscore this point). It would take too long to list all the initiatives advanced by Russia over the years.

Let us recall the idea of a European security treaty, which we proposed in 2008. In December 2021, a memorandum from the Russian Foreign Ministry was submitted to the United States and NATO, addressing the same issues.

However, all our repeated attempts (it is impossible to list them all) to convince our partners, as well as our explanations, appeals, warnings and

requests, met with no response....

Lastly, the self-centeredness and arrogance of Western countries have led us to a highly perilous situation today. We are inching dangerously close to a point of no return. Calls for a strategic defeat of Russia, which possesses the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons, demonstrate the extreme recklessness of Western politicians. They either fail to comprehend the magnitude of the threat they are creating or are simply consumed by their notion of invincibility and exceptionalism. Both scenarios can result in tragedy.

It is evident that the entire system of Euro-Atlantic security is crumbling before our eyes. At present, it is practically non-existent and must be rebuilt. To achieve this, we must collaborate with interested countries, of which there are many, to develop our own strategies for ensuring security in Eurasia and then present them for broader international deliberation.

A Vision for Equal and Indivisible Security

This is the task set in the Address to the Federal Assembly: to outline a vision for equal and indivisible security, mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation, and development on the Eurasian continent in the foreseeable future.

What needs to be done to achieve this and on what principles?

First, it is important to establish dialogue with all

potential participants in this future security system. I would like to ask you to address the necessary issues with countries that are open to constructive interaction with Russia.

During my recent visit to China, President Xi Jinping and I discussed this issue. It was noted that the Russian proposal is not contradictory, but rather complements and aligns with the basic principles of the Chinese global security initiative.

Second, it is crucial to recognise that the future security architecture should be open to all Eurasian countries that wish to participate in its creation. “For all” includes European and NATO countries as well. We share the same continent, and we must live and work together regardless of the circumstances. Geography cannot be changed.

Yes, Russia’s relations with the EU and many European countries have deteriorated, and it is important to emphasise that we are not to blame for that. The anti-Russia propaganda campaign, involving senior European politicians, is accompanied by speculation that Russia intends to attack Europe. I have addressed this issue before, and there is no need to repeat it again here. We all understand that these claims are baseless and serve only to justify an arms race....

If Europe wants to continue being an independent centre of global development and a cultural and civilisational pole on our planet, it should definitely maintain good and friendly relations with Russia. Most importantly, we are ready for this....

Speaking of the United States, the never-ending attempts by the current globalist liberal elites to spread their ideology worldwide, to maintain their imperial status and dominance in one way or another, are only further exhausting the country, leading to its degradation, and clearly contrary to the genuine interests of the American people. If it were not for this dead-end policy, driven by aggressive messianism based on the belief in their own superiority and exceptionalism, international relations would have long been stabilised....

A Charter of Multipolarity and Diversity in the 21st Century

Fourth, we believe that the time has come to start a broad discussion of a new system of bilateral and multilateral guarantees of collective security in Eurasia. At the same time, it is necessary, in the long term, to gradually phase out the military presence of external powers in the Eurasian region.

Of course, we are aware that in the current situation this point may seem unrealistic, but that will change. However, if we build a reliable security system in the future, there will simply be no need for such a presence of out-of-region military contingents. To be honest, there [is] no need today either—just occupation and that’s all....

In this sense, we support our Belarusian friends’ initiative to develop a programme document—a charter of multipolarity and diversity in the 21st century. It can formulate not only the framework principles of Eurasian architecture based on the essential norms of international law, but also, a strategic vision of the nature of multipolarity in a broader sense and multilateralism as a new system of international relations which would replace the Western-centric world....

Fifth, a crucial part of the Eurasian security and development system should definitely be the issues of the economy, social well-being, integration, and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as addressing such common problems as overcoming poverty, inequality, the climate, the environment, and developing mechanisms to respond to the threats of pandemics and crises in the global economy. All that is important.

The West not only undermined the world’s military-political stability by its actions. It has compromised and weakened the key market institutions by its sanctions and trade wars. Using the IMF and the World Bank and twisting the climate agenda, it has been restraining the development of the Global South. Yielding in competition, even by the rules that the West has written for itself, it applies prohibitive barriers and all kinds of protectionism. Thus the United States has abandoned the World Trade Organisation as an international trade regulator....

There is [also] a growing distrust of the financial system based on Western reserve currencies....

I believe that we need to seriously intensify the formation of effective and safe bilateral and multilateral foreign economic mechanisms as alternatives to those controlled by the West. This includes the expansion of settlements in national currencies, the creation of independent payment systems and the building of value chains that bypass the channels blocked or compromised by the West.

Naturally, it is necessary to continue efforts to develop international transport corridors in Eurasia, the continent with Russia as its natural geographical core....

The Policy of Containment Directed Against Our Country

Our proposals aim to establish a system where all nations can feel secure. With such a framework, we could approach today's numerous conflicts in a different way, and more constructively. The issues of insecurity and mutual distrust are not limited to the Eurasian continent; rising tensions are evident worldwide. The interconnection and interdependence of our world are constantly apparent, with the Ukrainian crisis serving as a tragic example with its repercussions spreading across the globe.

I want to clarify right away: the crisis involving Ukraine is not a conflict between two states or peoples stemming from issues between them. If that were the case, there is no doubt that Russians and Ukrainians, united by a shared history and culture, spiritual values, and millions of familial and human connections, would have found a fair resolution to any disputes and disagreements.

Meanwhile, the situation is different as the roots of the conflict are not in bilateral relations. The events in Ukraine are a direct result of global and European developments from the late 20th and early 21st centuries. They stem from the aggressive, unrestrained, and utterly reckless policy that the West has been pursuing for many years, long before the special military operation began...

This explains the policy of containment directed against our country. Some figures in the United States and Europe openly declare the goals of this policy, speaking today about the so-called decolonisation of Russia. Essentially, this is an attempt to ideologically justify the division of our Fatherland along ethnic lines. The dismemberment of the Soviet Union and Russia has been a discussion topic for a long time, as everyone in this room is well aware.

In pursuing this strategy, Western countries aimed to absorb and militarily and politically develop territories near us. There have been five, now six, waves of NATO expansion. They sought to transform Ukraine into their stronghold, an "anti-Russia." To achieve these objectives, they invested money and resources, bought politicians and entire parties, rewrote history and educational programmes, and nurtured groups of neo-Nazis and radicals. They did everything possible to undermine our inter-state ties, divide us, and turn our peoples against each other...

The peaceful protests against the coup in Kharkov,

Kherson, Odessa, Zaporozhye, Donetsk, Lugansk and Mariupol were suppressed, with the Kiev regime and nationalist groups unleashing the reign of terror. There is no need to recall all this, for everyone is well aware of what was happening in those regions.

In May 2014, referendums were held on the status of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, at which the overwhelming majority of local people voted for independence and sovereignty. This bids the following question: could people generally express their will in this way and declare their independence? People present in this room know that they certainly could and had the full right and reason to do that under international law, including the right of people to self-determination. There is no need to remind this to you, of course, but since the media are at work, I will say that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the UN Charter extends this right...

But what did the Kiev regime do in this situation? It fully disregarded people's choice and unleashed a full-scale war against the new independent states, the people's republics of Donbass, with the use of aircraft, artillery and tanks. They launched bombing and artillery attacks on peaceful cities and resorted to intimidation. So, what happened next? The people of Donbass took up arms to protect their lives, their homes, their rights and legitimate interests.

In the West, the prevailing narrative is that Russia initiated the war with its special military operation and is therefore the aggressor, so it is allowed to attack the Russian territory using Western weaponry. It is argued that Ukraine is merely defending itself, and is justified in doing so.

I want to reiterate: Russia did not start the war. It was the Kiev regime that initiated hostilities, following the declaration of independence by residents of certain parts of Ukraine in accordance with international law, and continues to do so. If we do not recognise the right of these peoples to declare their independence, then this is indeed aggression. Those who have supported the Kiev regime's war machine over the years are, therefore, accomplices to this aggression.

Back in 2014, the residents of Donbass refused to surrender. Militia units stood their ground, repelled the punitive forces, and eventually pushed them back from Donetsk and Lugansk. We hoped this would bring those who initiated the violence to their senses. To halt the bloodshed, Russia made its customary appeals for negotiations. Talks began, involving Kiev and repre-

sentatives of the Donbass republics, with the support of Russia, Germany, and France.

The talks were not easy, but ultimately led to the conclusion of the Minsk Agreements in 2015. We took their implementation very seriously, hoping to resolve the situation within the framework of the peace process and international law. There was hope that this would lead to the recognition of the legitimate interests and demands of Donbass, including enshrining the special status of these regions and ensuring the fundamental rights of the people living there, all while maintaining Ukraine's territorial integrity. We were prepared for this and sought to persuade the residents of these territories to resolve issues through such means. We proposed various compromises and solutions multiple times.

However, Kiev ultimately rejected everything and simply discarded the Minsk Agreements. As representatives of the Ukrainian elite later confessed, none of the articles in these documents satisfied them; they simply lied and evaded as much as possible....

In late 2021 and early 2022, the Minsk process was finally buried by Kiev and its Western handlers. Another large-scale attack was planned on Donbass. A large group of the Ukrainian armed forces was preparing to start a new offensive against Lugansk and Donetsk, which obviously entailed ethnic cleansing campaigns, numerous casualties and hundreds of thousands of refugees. We were obliged to prevent that catastrophe and to protect the people. We saw no other solution....

At the same time, we called on the Kiev authorities to withdraw their troops from Donbass. I can tell you that we contacted them and told them that they should pull their troops out, and that would be the end of it. They rejected our proposal almost immediately; they simply ignored it, even though it was an opportunity to settle the problem peacefully.

On February 24, 2022, Russia had to announce the start of the special military operation. I addressed the citizens of Russia, the people of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics and Ukrainian society, outlining the goals of that operation – the protection of people in Donbass, the restoration of peace, and the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine. We did that to avert the threat to our state and to restore balance in the sphere of security in Europe.

At the same time, we continued to believe that our priority was to attain the above goals by political and

diplomatic means. I would like to remind you that at the first stage of the special military operation we agreed to hold negotiations with representatives of the Kiev regime. They were first held in Belarus and then moved to Türkiye. The message we tried to get across was that they should respect the choice made by Donbass, withdraw their troops and stop shelling peaceful cities and towns. This was all we asked for, saying that everything else could be decided later. But their reply was, “No, we will fight.” It was clearly the order that came from their Western masters. I will speak about this now.

As you know, in February and March 2022 our troops approached Kiev. There are many speculations both in Ukraine and in the West about this.

What do I want to say about this? Our units were indeed deployed near Kiev, and the military departments and the security bloc had different proposals on our possible further actions, but there was no political decision to storm the city with three million people, no matter what anyone said or speculated.

In fact, it was nothing else but an operation to coerce the Ukrainian regime into peace. The troops were there in order to push the Ukrainian side to negotiations, try to find acceptable solutions and thereby end the war Kiev had started against Donbass back in 2014, and resolve issues that pose a threat to the security of Russia.

Surprisingly, as a result, agreements that satisfied both Moscow and Kiev were indeed reached. These agreements were put on paper and initialled in Istanbul by the head of the Ukrainian negotiating delegation. This means that this solution was suitable for the Kiev authorities.

The document was titled “Agreement on Permanent Neutrality and Security Guarantees for Ukraine.” It was a compromise, but its key points were in line with our fundamental demands and resolved the problems that were stated as major ones even at the start of the special military operation. Let me also note that this included demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine. And we also managed to find challenging outcomes. They were complicated but they had been found. It was meant that a law would be adopted in Ukraine banning Nazi ideology and any of its manifestations. All of that was written there....

On March 29, 2022, we withdrew our troops from Kiev because we were assured that conditions must be created to complete the political negotiation process,

and that one of the parties cannot sign such agreements, as our Western colleagues said, with a gun to their head. Okay, we agreed to that, too.

However, the very next day after the Russian troops were withdrawn from Kiev, the Ukrainian leadership suspended its participation in the negotiations staging the infamous provocation in Bucha, and rejected the prepared version of the agreements. I think today it is clear why that ugly provocation was necessary: to explain why the results that had been achieved during the negotiations were rejected. The path to peace was rejected again.

As we know now, it was done on orders from Western curators, including the former UK Prime Minister who said directly during his visit to Kiev—no agreements; Russia must be defeated on the battlefield to achieve its strategic defeat. Thus they began to intensively pump Ukraine up with weapons and started talking about the need to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia, as I have just mentioned. Some time later, as everyone knows, the President of Ukraine issued an executive order banning his representatives and himself from conducting any negotiations with Moscow. This episode with our attempt to solve the problem through peaceful means came to nothing again....

Let me also remind you that following the commencement of the special military operation, the West initiated a vigorous and quite undiplomatic campaign aimed at isolating Russia on the global stage. It is now evident to everyone that this attempt has failed. However, the West has not abandoned its goal of forming an international coalition of sorts against Russia and maintaining a facade of pressure on our country. We are fully aware of this strategy as well.

As you may be aware, there has been active promotion of the initiative to convene the so-called high-level international conference in Switzerland on peace in Ukraine. Moreover, they intend to hold it shortly after the G7 summit, that is those who essentially fueled the conflict in Ukraine through their policies....

In this regard, I would like to stress that it is impossible to reach a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis and to overall European security without Russia's participation, without an honest and responsible dialogue with us.

Right now, the West ignores our interests, while prohibiting Kiev from negotiating, and keeps hypocritically calling on us to negotiate. It looks simply idiotic: on the one hand, they are forbidden to negotiate with

us, but we are called on to negotiate implying that we refuse to do so. It is nonsense. It looks like we are living in some kind of a fantasy world.

Meanwhile, they should first command Kiev to lift the ban on negotiating with Russia, and second, we are ready to get down to negotiations as soon as tomorrow. We understand the peculiarity of the legal situation but there are legitimate authorities there, even in accord with the Constitution, as I have said. There is someone to negotiate with. Here you are, we are ready. Our conditions for starting such talks are simple, and come down to the following....

The Ukrainian troops must be completely withdrawn from the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. Let me note that they must be withdrawn from the entire territory of these regions within their administrative borders at the time of their being part of Ukraine.

As soon as Kiev declares that it is ready to make this decision and begin a real withdrawal of troops from these regions, and also officially notifies that it abandons its plans to join NATO, our side will follow, and an order to cease fire and start negotiations will be issued by us that very moment. I repeat—we will do this expeditiously. Of course, we also guarantee an unhindered and safe withdrawal of Ukrainian units and formations....

A Conversation with My American Counterpart

Today, I will tell you another important fact that has not been publicly disclosed before: at the very same hours on February 21, [2014], I had a conversation with my American counterpart at the initiative of the American side. Essentially, the American leader offered unequivocal support for the Kiev agreement between the authorities and the opposition. Furthermore, he described it as a genuine breakthrough and an opportunity for the Ukrainian people to prevent the escalating violence from crossing all imaginable boundaries.

Furthermore, during our discussions, we collaboratively formulated the following approach: Russia committed to persuading the then-President of Ukraine [Yanukovich] to exercise maximum restraint, refraining from deploying the army and law enforcement against protesters. Conversely, the United States pledged to urge the opposition to peacefully vacate administrative buildings and work towards calming the streets.

All of these efforts were intended to restore normal-

cy in the country, ensuring adherence to constitutional and legal principles. Overall, we agreed to collaborate towards fostering a stable, peaceful, and well developing Ukraine. We fulfilled our commitments in full. At that time, President Yanukovich, who had no intention to deploy the army, refrained from doing so and even withdrew additional police units from Kiev.

What about our Western colleagues? During the night of February 22 and throughout the following day, despite agreements and guarantees from the West (both Europe and the United States, as I just mentioned), radicals forcibly seized control of the Rada building, the Presidential Administration, and took over the government while President Yanukovich left for Kharkov, where the congress of deputies of the southeastern regions of Ukraine and Crimea was supposed to take place. And none of the guarantors of these political settlement agreements—neither the United States nor the Europeans—did a thing to fulfill their obligations by urging the opposition to release the seized administrative buildings and renounce violence. It is evident that this sequence of events not only suited them but also suggests they may have orchestrated the unfolding events.

On February 22, 2014, the Verkhovna Rada, in contravention of Ukraine's Constitution, passed a resolution declaring the self-removal of President Yanukovich from office and scheduled early elections for May 25. This marked an armed coup instigated by external influences. Ukrainian radicals, with implicit consent and direct backing from the West, obstructed all efforts for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Then we urged Kiev and the Western capitals to initiate dialogue with the people in southeastern Ukraine, respect their interests, rights, and freedoms. However, the regime that seized power through the coup d'état opted for war and began punitive actions against Donbass in the spring and summer of 2014.... Therefore, in 2022, Russia was forced to begin the special military operation to cease the war in Donbass and safeguard civilians from genocide.

From the outset, we consistently proposed diplomatic solutions to the crisis, as I mentioned earlier today. These included negotiations in Belarus and Türkiye, as well as the withdrawal of troops from Kiev to facilitate the signing of the Istanbul Agreements, which had been broadly accepted. However, these efforts were also rebuffed. The West and Kiev persisted

in their aim to defeat us. Yet, as you know, these efforts ultimately faltered.

A Definitive Resolution to the Conflict

Today, we are presenting another concrete and genuine peace proposal. If Kiev and Western capitals reject it again, as they have done before, then ultimately, it becomes their responsibility, both political and moral, for the ongoing bloodshed. Clearly, the situation on the front lines will continue to evolve unfavourably for the Kiev regime, altering the conditions necessary for initiating negotiations.

Let me underscore the key point: the essence of our proposal is not a temporary truce or ceasefire, as the West might prefer, to allow the Kiev regime to recover, rearm, and prepare for a new offensive. I repeat: we are not discussing freezing the conflict, but its definitive resolution.

And I will reiterate: once Kiev agrees to the course of action proposed today, including the full withdrawal of its troops from the DPR, LPR, the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, and begins this process earnestly, we are prepared to commence negotiations promptly without delay.

I repeat our firm stance: Ukraine should adopt a neutral, non-aligned status, be nuclear-free, and undergo demilitarisation and denazification. These parameters were broadly agreed upon during the Istanbul negotiations in 2022, including specific details on demilitarisation such as the agreed numbers of tanks and other military equipment. We reached consensus on all points.

Certainly, the rights, freedoms, and interests of Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine must be fully protected. The new territorial realities, including the status of Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, Kherson, and Zaporozhye regions as parts of the Russian Federation, should be acknowledged. These foundational principles need to be formalised through fundamental international agreements in the future. Naturally, this entails the removal of all Western sanctions against Russia as well.

I believe that Russia is proposing an option that will make it possible to bring the war in Ukraine to a real end, that is, we call for turning the tragic page of history and, although with difficulty, gradually, step by step, restoring relations of trust and neighborliness between Russia and Ukraine and in Europe as a whole....