



RESEARCH STUDIES 27

NEGOTIATING
PEACE TREATY BETWEEN
UKRAINE AND RUSSIA? LET'S
BE FAIR ABOUT IT

Plamen Pantev

Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS)

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I Introduction

The topic of negotiations accompanies the war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine from the first invasion (2014) and with actual interest after the second, full-fledged one (24 February 2022). The practical results of negotiations after 2014 – the so called ‘Minsk Agreements’, were with no effect for the invaded country – Ukraine. However, they led to the inception of the term “*soft Munich 1938 policy by the West*”, reflecting the modern appeasement attitudes of democratic states towards an aggressive regime.

The talk about negotiations after 2022 displayed: first, a failed Western deterrence effect of preventing a full-scaled war of Russia against Ukraine and, second, a more sophisticated combination of appeasement policy and “escalation avoidance” mentality by the Biden Administration in Washington. While the first is steadily repeated by Trump, the second remains as an irreparable historical attitude that led to a worsened for the victim of the aggression situation.

The new US Administration re-launched the negotiation topic by stating the two warring parties have acknowledged the stalemate in which the war has entered and the presence of desire to end it. Despite statements of the Trump Administration officials that they will negotiate the “peaceful ending of the war”, the reality of the “negotiation situation” is simply their self-selection as the *third party* in these eventual negotiations with yet to be clarified plan and role of the mediator. The grand plan of Trump, however, is to reshape the world and make it manageable enough to deal effectively with the Chinese geopolitical, military and economic rise and aspirations to global domination. And Ukraine is wrongly listed by Washington somewhere down in its agenda.

Trump and his team have proclaimed themselves to be the appropriate ‘go-between’ the warring states. The argument is the powerful US position, capable of encouraging the two sides to reach agreement. This position is backed up by the possibility to use the US resources for the aims of extending threats and promises to both Russia and Ukraine thus

manipulating their interests and stimulating them to reach agreement. The arsenal of rewards and punishments, according to Trump, is big enough to reach the promised peaceful end of the war. In this role, there is a risk that the mediator may influence negotiations to favor U.S. interests or of one of the conflicting parties. And we already saw how the US gave up free-of-charge bargaining chips in relation to Russia: “no NATO membership for Ukraine” and “no chance of getting back the territories already occupied by Moscow”. This programmed deterioration of the result of the Ukraine-Russia negotiations for the Ukrainian side.

Furthermore, trying to improve its mediating role, the USA adopted the strategy of malign neglect towards Ukraine, tried to downgrade the moral stance of Kyiv in the negotiation process, of course, from Trump’s code of behavior perspective. This is how he considers pushing Ukraine to accept the US definitions of resolution of the war. The purposeful ambush, organized against President Zelenskyy in the Oval Office of the White House on 28 February 2025 was another element in this “mediating” attitude, shaping favorable negotiation conditions for Russia and just the opposite for Ukraine.

In practice the Trump Administration augments the appeasement of the aggressor’s policy. By flattering the Russian dictator and ignoring the consequences of the violation of international law by Moscow, by uniting with the invader in the UN General Assembly and in the UN Security Council Trump and his cabinet demoralize the victim of the aggression. And this has nothing to do with the boasting to carry out an effective mediating process for ending the war.

Trump intensified the pressure on the Ukrainian side by putting at pause vital deliveries of essential weapons for air defense and for attacking Russian assets – a solemn engagement of these same United States that he is now in charge of. The qualification that the previous president has been stupid have no reference to the obligations, undertaken by the USA towards Ukraine. The inclusion of the topic of the “rare earth elements” in the intimidation of Ukraine added another moral feature to the personality of the mediator of the bilateral Ukraine-Russia negotiations.

Expecting wonders after such a beginning of the eventual future negotiation process between Ukraine and Russia would be naïve. Relying only on the various rewards and punishments the USA may exert on the two sides, wrongly calculating the geostrategic consequences of such behavior and discarding the moral and international legal aspects of the war is no guarantee for “ending” it but rather preparing the ground for its further intensification.

A major purpose of this study is to examine the validity and effectiveness of the negotiation approaches, strategies, tactics and other crucial instruments of a working negotiation process used by the present US Administration. A significant orientation in the study is the promised product of the negotiation process – the peace agreement, its contents and how its implementation can be guaranteed.

II The World Geopolitical Stage of Eventual Ukraine – Russia Negotiations

It is a fact the US-Russia relations are in disarray – bad news for the two nuclear superpowers and the world in general. In addition, the military nuclear relations are becoming more and more complex with China, getting closer to the club of the two other powers. There are nuclear illegals like North Korea, insisting to display its devastating military capabilities. Iran is closing the gap to acquiring nuclear bomb. The group of the P5 “official” nuclear states is not delivering effective governance of these most dangerous arms.

The drive to multipolarity, launched by Russia, China, India and others has not produced structural outcomes that would make possible the shaping of a new world order. The international system gets even more complicated with the unpredictable neglect and ignoring by the USA of the existing international institutional setting, serving for decades also the American interests. China and Russia, at the same time, satisfied by the present American administration’s chaotic steps, persist in creating their own version of the “new world institutional order”. The suspicious wooing by Trump of the Russian dictator Putin, probably expecting the wonder of neutralizing or channeling Moscow’s geopolitical and strategic might against China, clearly diminishes the power of Ukraine’s bargaining chips in the eventual negotiation process with the aggressor and discredits the mediating role of the USA. No wonder Russian leaders speak of largely aligning foreign-political visions of the world with this US Administration¹.

The shaken globally regional order adds to the difficult international environment of the eventual peace talks between Ukraine and Russia. The US of Trump as well as China are perceiving the aggressive war of Russia against Ukraine through the lens of their multiple regional strategic interests and intentions worldwide. Ukraine is obviously not a priority issue for either of them.

¹ The Moscow Times, Kremlin Says U. S. Foreign Policy Shift Aligns With Its Own Vision, March 2, 2025, at: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com> .

The slow making of the EU as the “effective global actor” further complicates the general strategic atmosphere of eventual negotiations between an aggressor and the victim of the aggression. The waking-up has started in the beginning of the 1950s and unfortunately has not been completed till nowadays. It would be equally wrong to ignore the possibility of a fast mobilization of the EU and taking its destiny in its own hands, not relying on America any longer². Any such mobilization would be in harmony with the accelerated EU integration of the most capable military force in Europe – the Ukrainian armed forces, and the clear political and military position of both France and the UK against Russia’s aggression. Germany is soon to take to the stage in a similar decisive way too³.

Ukraine is demonstrating its commitment to EU and NATO values and interests by resisting the aggression of a major military power with determination, courage and resilience. And another reality, ignored by Trump and his loyal lieutenants is Russia – in diplomatic disgrace, collapsing domestically, compromised at the battleground despite the slow creeping of its troops to the west with thousands of victims every day. Russia is on the brink of an emerging crises. A next step of broader mobilization of forces in Russia would inevitably shake the regime of Putin and his personal destiny. And at this point Trump began his rescue operation of Putin.

A reminder – President G. Bush (senior) told Chancellor H. Koll what should be done about the future of NATO when the German leader disputed the issue with the Soviet leaders: “To hell with that! We prevailed, they didn’t! We can’t let the Soviets clutch victory from the jaws of defeat.”

Today the US President is giving presents to the compromised diplomatically, militarily, economically, financially, legally, morally Russia of Putin, allowing him to clutch victory from the jaws of

² Lorne Cook and Raf Casert, AP News, Takeaways from the EU’s landmark security summit after Trump said Europe must fend for itself, 7 March, 2025, at: <https://apnews.com> .

³ Katya Adler, New German leader signals seismic shift in transatlantic relations, BBC, 24 February 2025, at: www.bbc.com .

Ukrainian heroism. And as part of this negotiation analysis – all these considerations are not alien to the US society, whose democratic instincts and fair judgement must not be neglected or doubted. The thinking and insistence in the societies of the EU and the UK is the American public will not stay silent to the unfolding geopolitical suicide by the present US Administration. This has a meaning for the developing US mediating role and position that should be considered by the EU, UK and Ukraine.

For three years of war, if the collective West would have been consistent in its promised support for Ukraine, the victim of the aggression could have been already the victorious party that would have thrown away the invader. What we see for now, however, is a US President ignoring the role of Putin in starting the aggressive war and guaranteeing the latter the label of “peacemaker”. By now the present US Administration has not displayed any signs of active attitude and assessment of the effects of Russia’s aggression on international law, including international humanitarian law.

All that said draws a bleak background of the eventual Ukraine – Russia peace negotiations for Kyiv. The initial steps, undertaken by Washington and Moscow for preparing the ground for high-level talks, in which the Ukraine-Russia peace negotiations would be a topic, are in no way “the negotiations” from which will follow the big promise of Trump to end the war. The chaos, the lack of morality in the US political overtures towards the aggressive war of Russia against Ukraine are not a promise for effective negotiations despite all the arguments of trying to involve the Russian side in the game. This is another US Administration’s recognition of the success of Russia’s nuclear blackmailing – after the one of President Biden.

What should these negotiations for peace look like to have a guaranteed success of the US Administration’s promises and the expectations of the victim of the aggression?

III The Negotiations – Ending the War or Pausing Before Its Intensification

A chaotic situation exists as to who negotiates with whom and what should be the configuration of the negotiation *actors*.

A US-Russia negotiation process cannot lead to a lasting and just peace in Ukraine. It may only provide the US mediator with information where Russia stands in its claims against Ukraine. In a similar way eventual multilateral negotiations among US, Russia, EU and Ukraine are not the ones to produce a result in the form of a peace treaty that would reflect the interests of each of these actors. The geopolitical realities with the diverging interests of the big players US, EU and Russia do not promise a treaty that would be implemented.

Both the US and EU may have a role in the process of brokering a peace treaty between Ukraine and Russia, including in the formula definition phase and the application of the “rewards” and “punishments” tactic. However, the negotiations should be between the two warring states. Ukraine has a lot of political arguments as a country in the process of integration in the Union to insist the EU sits together with Kyiv in the negotiations with Russia. Moscow could not swallow the geopolitical consequences of its former satellites trying to integrate in the EU. In a similar way it could not realize the essence of the voluntary political and economic integration of like-minded societies and states in the EU, one of which is Ukraine.

The *talk* on negotiating before Trump’s presidency had two meanings:

- a. When coming from Moscow, it was an effort to portrait Russia and Putin in a positive way as peace-lovers, and the Ukrainian side – negatively, with the subtle effect to induce diminishing the Western support for Kyiv.
- b. When coming from the West – first, it displayed a combination of fatigue in helping the victim of the aggression and, second, a complete

misunderstanding of the consequences of negotiations used by Russia as a smokescreen before intensifying the aggression further west.

The forceful involvement of the Trump Administration in an eventual ending of the war by negotiating for peace between Russia – the aggressor, and Ukraine – the victim of the invasion and occupation, requires a closer analysis of the means of utilizing the negotiation tools for reaching certain constructive and practical results.

International negotiations are neither a propaganda issue, nor a smokescreen for aggressors. The proven knowledge of the theory of international negotiations⁴ provides practical opportunities: 1) to reach an agreement by balancing conflict interests through exchange or by realizing common interests; 2) to take a decision together with an opponent or partner and, 3) to contribute to an ongoing relationship that precedes the negotiations and will continue well after them.

The theoretic instruments of utilizing these opportunities are various:

First, starting with the formal equality of the negotiating parties, meaning they will have an equal ‘say’ in formulating the result of negotiations. Factual inequality between the two parties has nothing to do with the equality of the satisfaction from the joint decision.

Second, each of the two negotiating parties should consider the opponent as the legitimate representative of the state, exponent of legitimate interests. The give-and-take, the process of trade-offs requires acceptance and respect of both sides. The maneuvers by both Putin and Trump do delegitimize President Zelenskyy as a negotiation partner of the Russian dictator go against the constitutional arrangements of sovereign Ukraine and aim to guarantee victory for the Russian side. Setting a blind eye on Putin’s own undemocratic rule for more than 25 years after fake elections, neglecting the regular democratic cycle in Ukraine Trump fights to report at any cost to the world and his electorate he has ended the war and implemented his promise.

⁴ See for example: I. William Zartman, The Effect of Ukraine and Entropy on Negotiation, in: PINpoints 52/2023, p. 7-10. Also, at: www.pin-negotiation.org .

Third, the theory of international negotiations employs the concepts of the “bargaining space” or “zone of possible agreement”, defined by the “bottom lines” of the negotiating parties – the absolute maximum each party can propose and the absolute minimum the other party can accept.

Fourth, to make the orientation about the “bottom lines” each of the negotiating parties is self-navigated by the standard called BATNA – “Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement”⁵. Depending on the developing situation the BATNA of each side may change.

How do these theoretic requirements fit to the eventual Ukraine-Russia negotiations?

The assessment of *a stalemate* and claims the situation is *ripe* for solutions has led many political leaders and observers, especially in the USA⁶ to suggest the *formula: Russia ends its violence and gets what it has conquered; Ukraine, on its side, stops resisting, gets “peace” and focuses on reconstructing what the Russian war of attrition has caused.* Is this the equality of satisfaction of the result of negotiations – the aggressor is rewarded and the victim – punished?

This is the formula that the US as a mediator for *the start* of the eventual negotiation process insists on *one* of the sides, Ukraine to accept. While this is aired as a kind of a ‘bait for Russia’ to get on board of the negotiations, it bears practical consequences for diminishing the value of the Ukrainian claim to preserve its sovereign rights on internationally recognized territories. In fact, Moscow receives all it has strived for many years without a single shot, just as a present by a “common sense” US President. If this is a genuine US understanding how the interests of the two countries should fit to serve the Trump Administration’s wishes for a quick end of the war – then it is still far from guaranteed Ukraine would adhere to such conditions.

⁵ Roger Fisher and William Ury, With Bruce Patton, Editor, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*, New York, Penguin Books, 2011, 204 pp.

⁶ Trump’s insistence ‘Ukraine does not have cards to play’ expose his and his advisers’ incompetence about the value of moral superiority in waging a defensive and just war.

And here comes the issue of *ceasefire*. The focus of President Trump on ceasefire may be considered as his final political engagement with this devastating war, probably thinking of ceasefire as “bringing peace to both Ukraine and Russia”. Leaving aside without consideration the issues of territorial grab by the aggressor and not providing key effective security guarantees by the USA confirm this assessment.

Ceasefires do not necessarily lead to peace. In the Russian case it will be used to reorganize the armed forces for more battles. Later, eventually, new ceasefires will be claimed. And this is in no way an incentive to engage in meaningful negotiations for ending the war. And much more than ceasefires will be needed for dealing with the core issues of the war and of the eventual peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine. The treaty should guarantee no repetition of the aggression and fair solution of all financial and legal issues, caused by the invader in this war.

Prescriptive application of the outlined negotiation instruments *is not able* to deal with the extraordinary situation in Ukraine:

First, there is an aggression against Ukraine by the autocratic regime of an imperial nuclear superpower, which is prone to territorial expansion. It has been supported since the beginning of the aggression by China and since January 2025 – by the USA.

Second, there is genocide of the Ukrainian people by Russia.

Third, Russia is ruining the existing international legal order and practically acts to turn impunity into 21st century regulative norm.

Fourth, Russia has a completely compromised negotiation reputation – a partner that does not honor agreements it has concluded, including on ceasefire and war prisoners’ exchange.

The US mediation induce for now very low probable effective negotiation process between Ukraine and Russia. An effective negotiation must lead to an *encompassing peace treaty*. Such a treaty should solve four major issues:

1 – *Full return of Ukrainian territory to the sovereign state of Ukraine as provided in the bilateral treaties with Russia and the agreement for the dissolution of the Soviet federation.* That was the essential meaning of the December 1994 Budapest Memorandum among Ukraine, Russia, the UK and the USA – the preservation of the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine while Kyiv gives up its status of third biggest nuclear power⁷. Western allies of Ukraine should not press Kyiv to conclude unfavorable agreements by trading territory for uncertain peace. Such a formula is unacceptable by Ukrainian society, despite all the sufferings from the brutal aggressive war of Russia and the betrayal by the US ally.

2 – Providing *security guarantees* to the invaded country – Ukraine, that would prevent a new aggression. Effective deterrence capabilities will be needed, and the most effective one would have been NATO membership for Ukraine. This was a missed opportunity in 2008 and later, including after the beginning of the first aggressive war of Russia against Ukraine in 2014 and after the second one in 2022. Appeasement of the aggressor by the United States in combination with the forgotten know-how of managing nuclear deterrence for the purposes of peace and security in the world led to missing the opportunity for membership of Ukraine in the Alliance.

Though a just peace agreement is hard to imagine, the security guarantees are in the process of their gradual engineering by the European members of NATO and the EU. A betrayed several times Ukraine since 1994 is not alien to the nuclear rearmament of the country option – a development induced by the imperial aims of the Russian federation to put an end to Ukrainian statehood and identity, a development disregarded irresponsibly by the appeasing the Russian aggressor USA. Washington is not delivering on its solemn promises of 1994 to protect Ukraine, its territory and independence.

⁷ Budapest Memorandum of Ukraine, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Budapest, 5 December 1994, at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%203007/Part/volume-3007-I-52241.pdf>

3 – Russia must pay *reparations*, and the international community should be engaged in the reconstruction and post-conflict rehabilitation of Ukraine. The sanctions against the Russian aggressor must be preserved as long as it takes to motivate the political leaders in Moscow to deliver the needed funds to Ukraine.

4 – Ending the war *by bringing to justice those who decided to begin the aggression, all Russian war criminals and all who have committed crimes against peace and humanity*. This devastating war in Europe is the largest on the planet after the Second World War. It has caused human suffering and violation of all norms of international humanitarian law. If the perpetrators and war criminals do not receive justice by legal courts and tribunals, the military conflict will be programmed forever.

IV What Is Wrong with the US Charting of the Negotiation Setting

First, as already mentioned, Trump's Administration did not place itself in the very beginning of the mediation efforts as an honest broker, but rather as a bully against one of the warring parties – Ukraine, and as an appeasement servant for the other – Russia. In the hurry to demonstrate fast results Trump needed one of the parties to the eventual negotiations to be overpowered and subordinated. The claim “I am in the middle” by the US President sounds good to his public, but no expert on negotiations would take it seriously.

Second, looking for a fast track to fulfilling Putin's expectations on the territorial conquest, in the very beginning of the would-be later negotiation process, Trump pushed Ukraine to make a present to Putin with the partly occupied territories. All this was masked under the arguments of the “realities on the ground”. And the realities are rather bleak for Russia and the mediator needed to take advantage of that for the peace mission and for the security of the European continent.

Third, the US President gave up voluntarily one of the most powerful tools in international diplomacy – basing your arguments on the functioning international law. Assuming by default international law was meaningless, Trump deprived his mediation role from a strategic instrument of manipulation and influence – of the future negotiating parties, the broadest international environment and the domestic public opinion. The faith in the superiority of the autocratic and dictatorial personalities, ready to enlarge the territories of their states by any means, blinded Trump and the USA for the higher efficiency of international legal order and negotiations, based on the rule of law.

Fourth, a fundamental deficiency of the negotiation setting, linked very much to the personality, professional background and a close circle of “yes-men” around Trump is the lack of understanding how to apply negotiating skills on business/real estate issues to the negotiations on security and values issues. The myth of “Trump – the great negotiator”

was not defended with a capacity to negotiate, but by autocratic bullying and twisting of hands of the victim of the Russian aggression. The negotiation experts' calculation is easy – you cannot bargain human lives, devastated infrastructure, polluted environment in Ukraine for rare earth minerals without guaranteeing that Russia's violation of agreements will be prevented by something more than the presence of American business. Great powers, including Russia and the USA already lied Ukraine in 1994 and the same happened with the Minsk agreements in 2014-2015.

Fifth, and most importantly, Trump and his lieutenants are not competent to draft a strategic vision of how to deal with the complexities of the world today and tomorrow. The imagination stops at brutally simplistic *transactionalism*. Highly doubtful is his negation of multilateralism, over-focusing on short-term won battles. This motivates him and his loyal inferiors to view the world from a zero-sum perspective. Values do not matter in relations with other states. The concept of “grand plan” do not exceed intellectually rewarding a dictatorial and totalitarian regime with the territories the latter has occupied illegally. This is just for the sake of boasting to the world ‘peace has been achieved as promised’, despite this was achieved at the expense of the invaded country.

It is unfortunate the present US Administration has not included in the core of its security grand strategy the key role of the European allies – a proven guarantor of America's global successes. All this is reflected in the negotiation approach and activity of Trump and his team to the war of Russia against Ukraine and portends no good to America's other global interests.

V Conclusions

We heard “America is back” and there is “a new sheriff in town”. And this was a clear indicator the US domination in the world is over. The US economy is comparable to the economies of the PR China and EU, no matter what advantages in certain spheres are preserved for each of these three economic power centers. The military capacity of these centers is also huge. While the US keeps a leading position, the Chinese military machine is growing fast as well as the defense capabilities of the EU.

Russia’s military status remains strong but highly shaken by its strategic defeat in Ukraine. In addition, the economy of the Russian federation is in a shambles and unreliable for sustaining a long-term armaments competition. There is a growing fear in Moscow the EU has started rearmament as a long-term engagement. Putin’s regime dived with the war against Ukraine in deep waters and has not figured out how to swim back to fresh air. The strategic partnership for ever with China guarantees communicating vessels of sucking Russia’s resources, demographic weakness and in the end – its great power statehood by Beijing. The Russian dream of occupying ‘the Ukrainian brothers’ or ‘Nazis’ or whatever has been of adding the territory, resources and demographic power of the neighboring state to the mammoth sized federation. Usually, such dreams or plans do not come true, as Hitler’s experience proved 80 years ago.

The rich European economies have embarked on the road of developing a balance to Russia’s military might. The historic frustration of Moscow that Ukraine has become a genuine European state, initially perceived as a dangerous aberration in 2014, has turned into a depressing reality for Putin. The promise for the future is “*smut*” in Russian society, additionally “poisoned” by the Europeanness of the neighbors to the West.

The suicidal strategic attitude of the Trump Administration to undo the country’s long-built alliances was displayed in the chaotic structuring of the negotiation process to stop the war of Russia against Ukraine.

Washington gave up coordination with its NATO allies and partners of the EU in the negotiation process, missing the opportunity to push the developments in the direction of reviving the international legal order. It should not be doubted in Moscow that the EU will be part in one way or another of an eventual negotiation process together with the Ukrainians – far from the dream of Putin sitting together with President Trump and dividing the world in spheres of influence. Ukraine is negotiating its integration in the EU and the destiny of this country has become also the destiny of the Union. Nuclear blackmail may have worked for the Biden and probably for the Trump Administrations, but not for the Europeans. This game is over.

Showing features of imperial inclinations Trump's USA aligned with Putin's Russia in the preparation and launch of the peace negotiations between Ukraine and the aggressor to the East. What is underestimated, however, is the precedent the change of borders by aggression in Europe would bring to a continent, in which the last two thousand years are a period of devastating conflicts, including two world wars.

Agreeing on Putin's terms for Ukraine is unacceptable for the European countries. If the territorial issue is not solved according to the international legal treaties and principles, it is hard to expect the Ukrainians, and their European allies will not continue their struggle for a just and durable peace. There are still historical memories of the consequences for the world and for the USA when unjust peace has been enshrined into treaty texts by using violent means and diplomacy.

As shown in the analysis of this study negotiations that do not lead to a durable, guaranteed and just peace agreement cannot fulfil their regulative aims: solving the issue at stake, balancing cooperative and conflicting interests and providing a continuation of a constructive relationship. Unless Russia is pulled back to its internationally recognized territories before 2014, pays the reparations for recuperating Ukraine's economy, infrastructure and traumatized environment the peace agreement is not achievable. There cannot be a peace agreement until the war criminals, the officials in Moscow who launched the aggression are

not brought to justice. As history shows without these ingredients of the agreement peace will remain a chimera and war will be perpetuated.

Even if we presume that Trump's tactics for peace in Ukraine, though creating some doubts and obstacles in the beginning, brings to the negotiating table Russia, that will not mean a process that would lead to just and durable peace. Russia is still negotiating its peace agreement with Japan after the end of the Second World War. Moscow's diplomatic skills of transforming the negotiation process into smokescreen for its aggressive imperial policy is known for ages. Russia will try to translate its friendly policy to Trump into some benefit but never give up voluntarily the occupied territories. For the two imperial-minded and autocratic presidents – of Russia and the United States, would be easier to join forces to press Ukraine into capitulation. Then they will interpret this result as a successful negotiation outcome.

The option of 'regime change' in Russia after the devastation Putin and his cronies caused to their people and the world remains quite probable. Though society, economy and policy are militarized and used as guarantors for the prolongation of the regime of Putin, this country is in civilizational decline. A consequence of a regime change would be a future successful and effective peace agreement.

Neither Moscow, nor Washington should miss in their analysis that Ukraine is in the process of joining the EU – a powerful contribution to the might and talent of the whole European continent. And unlike the autocratic leaders in Moscow, Washington (and Beijing, Tehran, New Delhi, Pyongyang and elsewhere), the Europeans have an unmatched motivation – to preserve the power of international law and prevent the law of the jungle take the upper hand. And no false talk of "negotiations for peace" can mislead Europe – the cradle of democracy and freedom.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Plamena Pantev is graduate of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Law School. Ph. D. and Professor in International Relations and International Law. Founder and Director of the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia, 1994, www.isis-bg.org . Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky" (ret.), lecturing Political Science students.

Founder and Head of the International Security M. A. Program, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridsky" (2005-2021), Law School. Lecturer in International Relations to Law students (1996-2020), lecturer in Theory of International Relations and Theory of International Negotiations to International Relations students (1996-2020), Doctoral Mentor in International Relations and Security Studies.

Graduate of the SEC of G. C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen (September 2001). Co-founder in 1999 in Sofia of the Study Group on Regional Stability in Southeast Europe of the NATO/PfP Consortium of the Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes and Co-Chairman of this Group (2002-2010). Co-founder and Co-Chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Security Study Group of the PfP Consortium (1999-2003). Author of 40 books and more than 160 academic publications – in Bulgarian, English, German, Italian, French, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and Bahasa (the official Indonesian language). Member of the International Advisory Boards of the *'Journal of International Negotiation'* (1996-2011) and *'Europe's World'*. Vice Dean of the Law School of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky" (2006-2011). Member of the International Studies Association (ISA), 1997-, the Academy of Political Science, New York, 2013-. Member of the IISS, London, 2015 -. Member of Vanga Foundation. Married, one daughter, one granddaughter.

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ISIS Post-Address: 1618 Sofia, P. O. Box 231, Bulgaria

Phone: ++359888289605

E-Mail Address: isis.pantev@gmail.com **Website:** <http://www.isis-bg.org>
