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No Fear of Peace Negotiations

"The drumbeats of war must give way to words of peace"

By Jeffrey Sachs, Romano Prodi et al 20 Juni 2022

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War in Ukraine

Jeffrey Sachs, Romano Prodi et al: "The drumbeats of war must give way to words of peace"

By Jeffrey Sachs et al.

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Peace is possible, isn't it?

An international working group led by U.S. economist and director of the UN Sustainable Development Solution Network Jeffrey Sachs met June 6-7 at Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, to develop solutions for a "just and lasting peace in Ukraine."

KARENINA documents in German translation the "Declaration of the Participants of the Study Group on Science and Ethics of Happiness" that emerged there, signed, among others, by Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and former Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos.

Achieving a Just and Lasting Peace in Ukraine

Statement of the participants of the Study Group on Science and Ethics of Happiness; meeting at Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, June 6-7, 2022.

Jesus taught the world that peacemakers are blessed because they are children of God. As war rages in Ukraine, the world needs peacemakers to help the warring parties choose peace instead of continued conflict. The U.S., the European Union, Turkey, China and other countries should help the two sides feel secure with a negotiated peace agreement.

For Ukraine, security means that a peace agreement will not be followed by renewed Russian threats or incursions. For Russia, security means that their withdrawal from Ukraine will not be followed by NATO's eastward expansion and heavy arming of Ukraine. In short, peace means a neutral Ukraine whose sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are assured.

Pope Francis has made his plea for peace clear and powerful: "I renew my appeal to the rulers of nations: Do not lead humanity to ruin. Please. Do not lead humanity to ruin!"

His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has stated, "We call on all parties

involved to continue on this path of dialogue and respect for international law in order to end the conflict and allow all Ukrainians to live in harmony. Weapons are not the solution."

The goal of peacemaking in Ukraine is not just a negative peace - a peace without justice - but a positive peace resolutely based on the four pillars of moral relations between states recognized by St. John XXIII in his authoritative *Pacem in Terris*: Truth, Justice, Willing Cooperation, and Liberty (paragraph 80). Such moral relations are necessary not only between Russia and Ukraine, but also between Russia, the United States, and the European Union.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is undoubtedly a heinous violation of the UN Charter and international law. Russia's differences with Ukraine should certainly have been resolved through UN Security Council-sponsored negotiations, taking into account the security interests of all countries.

Now, the grim realities of the ongoing battle, in which neither side is likely to win a decisive military victory, should bring both sides to the negotiating table as soon as possible to prevent the prolongation of the war and achieve peace with justice.

The war in Ukraine is likely to turn into a war of attrition and end up as a frozen conflict or a negotiated peace instead of an open victory of one side over the other. A negotiated peace would be a better outcome than the casualties of a war of attrition and a frozen conflict for both the peoples and the governments of Ukraine, Russia, the U.S. and the EU, and the rest of the world.

If the war ends as a frozen conflict, Russia would continue to occupy a significant portion of eastern and southern Ukraine while Western sanctions against Russia remained in effect. Trade and investment between Russia and the West remained blocked, resulting in an overall decline in world trade and development. Weapons and military personnel would continue to flow into Ukraine from external sources.

If the war instead ended in a negotiated peace, further heavy casualties among Ukraine's civilian population and the militaries of both sides would be avoided, and the existence and independence of the Ukrainian state could be safeguarded against external attempts to overthrow it. Most of the Russian-occupied regions would return to Ukrainian state sovereignty, certain regions could be subject to special regulations, the Russian military would be withdrawn, and Western sanctions would be lifted, allowing for reconstruction and a higher level of security for all actors in Ukrainian society and neighboring countries.

The basis for a possible peace agreement was outlined in the second half of March, when both sides reported good progress in negotiations, and more recently in Italy's proposal of a four-part peace plan in late May. In the negotiations in the second half of March, Ukraine proposed four points for a peace settlement: Neutrality; international security guarantees for Ukraine; an extended timeframe to finalize the status of Crimea; and negotiations on "the complex issues of the Donbass."

Italy's peace plan also has four points: Ceasefire; Ukraine's neutrality; ongoing negotiations on Crimea and the Donbass; and multilateral negotiations within the OSCE and between Russia and NATO on regional security arrangements.

While drawing on the practical wisdom (phronesis) of the blessed peacemakers, based on the

ascertainable roots of the conflict, the March negotiations, and the peace initiatives to date, we propose the following guiding principles for a ceasefire and a positive peace agreement:

Ukraine's neutrality, that is, renunciation of the state's ambition to join NATO, while recognizing Ukraine's freedom to conclude agreements with the European Union and others;
Security guarantees for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity by the five permanent members of the United Nations (P-5: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), as well as the European Union and Turkey, which could include military transparency and restrictions on military deployments and large-scale exercises in border areas under international scrutiny in the context of lifting economic sanctions;

Russian de facto control of Crimea for a period of years, after which the parties would seek a permanent de jure solution through diplomatic channels, which could include facilitated access for local communities to both Ukraine and Russia, liberal border crossing policies for people and trade, deployment of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, and financial compensation;
Autonomy of the Lugansk and Donetsk regions within Ukraine, which could include economic, political, and cultural aspects that will be further defined in the near term;
Guaranteed economic access for both Ukraine and Russia to the Black Sea ports of both countries;

The gradual lifting of Western sanctions against Russia linked to the withdrawal of the Russian military in accordance with the agreement;

A multilateral fund for reconstruction and development of Ukraine's war-torn regions - which includes Russia - and immediate access for humanitarian aid;

A UN Security Council resolution to provide international monitoring mechanisms to support the peace agreement.

Toward a positive peace

President John F. Kennedy wisely observed, "Real peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many deeds. It must be dynamic, not static, changing with the challenges to meet each new generation. Because peace is a process - a way to solve problems." To solve problems, we need cooperation, and to cooperate, we need trust. Lasting peace therefore depends not only on formal treaties, but also on cooperation in communities, across ethnicities, religions and nation-states. The media also have a responsibility to ensure that the drumbeats of war give way to words of peace.

Religious communities are at the forefront of positive peace. Religious communities bring people together in the spirit of human dignity and justice under God, and have the capacity and mission to bring people together even across faiths and ethnicities. The Catholic Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine are the pillars of positive peace both between Russia and Ukraine and within the different communities in Ukraine and can play a crucial role in the necessary reconciliation process as a path to positive peace.

We recommend that religious leaders of all faiths support Russia and Ukraine in pursuing a positive peace, keeping in mind the words of Isaiah: "They will turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. For no nation shall lift up a sword against another, and they shall learn war no more." Isaiah 2:3-4

Addendum: Further Reflections

Even if the fighting continues, neither Russia nor Ukraine is likely to achieve an outcome better than a negotiated peace. Nonetheless, the above conditions will certainly raise the following four objections, to which we offer our response.

Objection 1: Ukraine has the right to choose to join NATO.

While the OSCE Charter (paragraph 8) recognizes the right of OSCE member states to choose their security arrangements, including treaties of alliance, states are also obliged "not to strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other states." Instead, they pledged to create a common OSCE security space "without dividing lines and zones of different levels of security" (para. 1), and "no State, group of States or organizations shall have more responsibility than others for the maintenance of peace and stability in the OSCE area, nor may any of them regard any part of the OSCE area as its sphere of influence." (para. 8)

To this end, Nato member states and the Russian Federation committed themselves in the Nato-Russia Founding Act (1997) to maintain strategic restraint and stability - through arms control commitments and by improving mutual security cooperation and strengthening the OSCE as a joint security organization. Moreover, NATO is not obliged to accept applications from other states to join the alliance; rather, it must weigh the implications for regional and strategic stability and mutual security.

In Russia's view, NATO enlargement to include Ukraine and Georgia would come at the expense of Russia's security. With the proposed NATO expansion, the United States and its allies would have been able to take possession of the strategic base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, create new potential deployment areas for troops and missiles near Russia's core countries, and thus undermine the strategic balance; NATO forces would be able to restrict Russia's access to the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean for its economic and military purposes. These are age-old considerations that played a role in the Crimean War (1853 to 1856) and are playing out again today.

Moreover, while NATO describes itself as a purely defensive alliance, Russia sees it differently. Russian leaders and diplomats have repeatedly expressed grave concern about NATO's bombing of Russia's partner Serbia in 1999; the U.S.-led "coalition of the willing" in the 2003 war against Iraq over the objections of the U.N. Security Council; and the violation of U.N. Security Council mandates in the 2011 bombing of Russia's partner Libya by NATO allies, which led to regime change and continued chaos.

In Russia's view, NATO serves the geopolitical interests of the United States and its allies far beyond its stated rationale of collective defense of Western Europe in the context of the long-running Cold War. Be that as it may, while they take such Russian concerns seriously, they in no way justify military aggression against a sovereign neighboring state.

Objection 2: Ukraine will soon retake territory Russia has seized since the February invasion

Ukraine and its supporters claim that Ukraine will win a war of attrition, pointing to the damage to the Russian economy from Western sanctions and the poor performance of the Russian military. Nevertheless, Russia occupies a significant amount of land and continues to expand occupied territories in the Donbass. According to the IMF, Russia's GDP of \$1.8 trillion in 2021 was about 9 times larger than Ukraine's GDP at \$200 billion. Since the invasion, the Ukrainian economy has been in a desperate state, threatening complete collapse

with a decline of perhaps 50 percent of GDP, while Russia's economic decline is expected to be about 10 percent. According to some reports, Russia's dollar export earnings have actually risen, not fallen, because sanctions have increased the world price of Russian export goods, while Ukraine's export earnings have plummeted.

Ukraine's prospects in a war of attrition therefore depend entirely on continued substantial financial and military support from the West. However, public support in the U.S. and EU for further large-scale allocations is already waning, especially under the heavy burden of declining living standards resulting from the economic dislocations caused by war and sanctions.

Objection 3: Russia should be punished, not rewarded, for the invasion.

Russia's differences with Ukraine and with NATO certainly should have been resolved through peaceful negotiations. But when Russia tried to negotiate with the Biden administration and NATO on the issue of NATO expansion in 2021, the U.S. and NATO responded that Ukraine's prerogative to join NATO was not negotiable. When Russia raised the issue of Ukraine's failure to implement the Minsk agreements, the European guarantor countries did not provide support.

These facts in no way justify Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but they help explain it, and more importantly, they help point to landmarks that will help end the war.

Russia must also refrain from creating narratives that deny Ukraine's national identity and deliberately reclaim territories it claims are historically Russian, as this would lead to a prolonged war and destroy all chances for reconciliation and peace.

Objection 4: Russia and Ukraine are far from a negotiated settlement, so fighting will continue.

The following reasons support the reliance on negotiations: On the military front, the war has become an intense conflict in a limited region of Ukraine (Donbass and southern coastline, 20 percent of Ukraine's territory). Gaining ground for both sides is very costly. The West's fears that Russia will overrun Ukraine and then attack other countries are long forgotten.

On the other hand, the belief that NATO weapons will quickly push Russia off the battlefield has also been disproved. Moreover, the West's sanctions, once seen as a means of crushing Russia's economy, have proven to have limited effectiveness and a high cost to the rest of the world.

Both sides have reached a state of "painful stalemate," long considered a fundamental indicator that conflicts are ripe for resolution. Negotiation would also dramatically reduce the risk of destabilization in societies of non-neighboring countries, Europe, and other continents for the social and economic consequences of continued conflict.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine will improve this baseline by continuing to fight. Russia may be able to seize more Ukrainian territory at great cost to its military and the Russian economy, but it would likely not be able to convert the occupation of that additional territory into a more beneficial peace agreement. Rather, occupying even more territory or unilaterally annexing the Donbass to Russia would almost certainly result in a frozen conflict in which the

West's sanctions regime would remain in place, hundreds of billions of dollars of Russia's foreign exchange reserves would remain blocked, trade and investment between Russia and the West would be suspended indefinitely, and the financial burden of reconstruction in the occupied territories would fall entirely on Russia.

It is unlikely that Ukraine will also improve this starting position by continuing to fight. The United States and other NATO countries have made clear the limits of the kind of military and financial support they will offer. The Ukrainian economy is already devastated, and more serious losses would follow if fighting continues.

Ukraine has already conceded the reality of NATO's non-expansion, but reaching an agreement with Russia on this point could secure Ukraine significant advantages in the countermeasures Russia has agreed to.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to a negotiated outcome is the fear of negotiations themselves. Politicians fear that they will be attacked as appeasers and even defeatists if they call for compromise rather than military victory at the negotiating table.

That is why peacemakers are so important at this stage. The role of His Holiness Pope Francis and the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and other esteemed peacemakers could be crucial to this end.

Advocates of peace must empower politicians who take the risk of seeking negotiations. Those like Prime Minister Mario Draghi, who recently put forward Italy's proposals for peace, deserve our deepest commendation. We must mobilize civil society organizations and world public opinion for peace and call for an alliance for peace.

Initial signatories

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