

Putin's Retaliation SHOCKS Trump, US-EU Peace Scam DONE

Donald Trump is to blame for the humiliating defeat of his own peace plan says geopolitical analyst Alexander Mercouris, who blows the lid off the so-called "negotiations" that has done nothing but leave Putin no choice but to do the unthinkable. Watch until the end to understand how it all happened. SUPPORT THE SHOW: PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> #Russia #Trump #Putin #Ukraine #Europe

#Danny

Donald Trump was kind of begging for a ceasefire, like, "This needs to stop now. The bleeding has to stop," because they don't want to be part of whatever the end game is going to be. But then you have remarks like this—here's what Donald Trump said to the media right after all these talks that have been happening with Europe as well as Ukraine.

#Trump

But we're getting closer. We're having tremendous support from European leaders. They want to get it ended soon. And at this moment, Russia wants to end it. The problem is, they'll want to end it—and then all of a sudden they won't. And Ukraine will want to end it—and then all of a sudden they won't. So we have to get them on the same page. But I think that's moving along. Very good talk.

#Danny

So that's Donald Trump's interpretation of the situation. But what is the reality here, and what exactly is being proposed? Because there's been a lot of talk about what kind of ultimatums the U.S. is issuing to Ukraine, and a lot of this is happening without any real contact with Russia.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think the first point to make is the one you made at the very start, which is that the Trump administration came in, and I think they understood at some level that the war was indeed going badly. They wanted it to stop, and they wanted it to end now. Back in January, when Trump was inaugurated, it looked as if there was still a fair amount of time to do that. The Russians hadn't made the big advances they've made in the last few months. It didn't yet look as if Donbass was about to crumble. The Ukrainians were still in the Kursk region, which is actually inside pre-2014

Russia, and there hadn't been these big Russian breakthroughs in Zaporozhye. And there wasn't this aerial campaign.

So they took their time. They talked about a ceasefire on the existing conflict lines. They looked for a freeze of the conflict, a bit like the freeze in Korea. They told themselves it was still basically a stalemate, that there was time to play and time to maneuver. But I think what's happened since the summer is that they've finally understood that really isn't the case at all. In fact, they don't have much time—the Russians are advancing more quickly than they expected, and the Ukrainians are in worse shape, much worse shape, than they expected. So now they're pressing to end the war much more quickly, and they're becoming more desperate about it.

So you have Donald Trump, and what he's doing—and what his two very inexperienced negotiators, Witkoff and Kushner, are doing, who are not seasoned diplomats—is trying to move forward with some kind of process to stop the war by agreeing, when they meet one side or the other, with what the side they're talking to wants. So the Russians say, "We want the five regions. We want Ukrainian neutrality. We want Ukraine out of NATO. We want restrictions on the size of the Ukrainian army. And we want rights for Russian speakers." That's what the Russians want. The Americans, apparently, in the recent meeting that took place in Moscow—when Kushner and Witkoff went there—said, "This is fine. This is good. We can work with all of this."

Let's move forward with that. Then they had another meeting in Berlin, and they came up against the Ukrainians and the Russians. The Ukrainians said, "We're not prepared to withdraw from any territory. We want a ceasefire on the existing lines. We accept that we perhaps can't join NATO now, but we still want security guarantees from the United States, and we want to have an army of 800,000 men." And Witkoff and Kushner said, "Yes, that's fine." The fact is, these are two completely incompatible positions—that's where, unfortunately, we are. So Trump says that the two sides are changing their positions all the time, but the reality is that the Americans are agreeing with both at once about incompatible things.

#Danny

You have the Trump administration. They've spoken to Russia, they've visited. Then the Trump administration comes out and talks about security guarantees for Ukraine as if they didn't hear anything—as if that's not going to cause a major, what the media is calling, an impasse, which I think is a false use of the word. But nonetheless, that's what they're using. So what explains this antagonism with these so-called negotiations?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think the Americans have never developed a proper negotiating strategy. They've never really asked themselves, "Who is it that we should be negotiating with?" What they're trying to do is present themselves as some kind of outside party, which is coming to this conflict and, out of some

extraordinary act of benevolence, is trying to find an acceptable compromise that will satisfy everybody. Which, of course, is nonsense, because the United States is not an outside party. It is a direct participant. It's been arming Ukraine, helping Ukraine with intelligence, imposing sanctions on Russia, and, according to Trump himself, playing a major role in provoking the war.

So the Americans are trying to persuade the Ukrainians and the Europeans, treating them as partners they should be negotiating with, which is very strange when you take a step back and see that these people, as the U.S. itself has admitted, are proxies. So it spends most of its time negotiating with its own proxies rather than doing what it needs to do, which is negotiate with the other side—the Russians. They have much more contact with the Europeans and the Ukrainians than they do with the Russians. And there's never been a proper, sit-down, organized negotiation with the Russians, with properly formed negotiating teams—sending Wyckoff to Moscow, getting him to go there every couple of weeks, having meetings with Putin, having the odd phone call with Putin—that is not a negotiation, not a proper negotiation of the sort that's needed to end this war.

#Danny

Right. And even the Alaska summit—it felt more about just making contact than about actually coming to some kind of settlement on this, as the two major players in it are the U.S., being the root cause of the Ukraine conflict, and, of course, Russia, being the one fighting it. But Russia has made its side pretty clear, Alexander. And I want to show you the much-vaunted—I'm sure you're very familiar with it—the Independent. They actually reported on Russia's so-called refusal to give up land after Trump claimed the peace deal is closer than ever. So, Sergei Ryabkov, the deputy foreign minister, said that he is not aware—he has not been updated—about the progress of recent talks with the proxies, and that he is shooting down the idea of a NATO peacekeeping force in post-war Ukraine, after the U.S. finally said it is open to offering Article 5-style guarantees. That is shocking. That was shocking to me to hear that again, Alexander. Talk about why the United States is even talking about Article 5-like guarantees.

#Alexander Mercouris

The reason the Americans are talking about Article 5 guarantees—and this is my own take—is that some people have a very sinister interpretation. They say the U.S. is trying to fool the Russians, to tell them, "Well, we're not actually going to bring Ukraine into NATO, but we're going to set up an arrangement that's identical in all respects to Ukraine entering NATO." And I mean, that is ultimately what will happen. But I think the purpose of this is to get the Ukrainians to agree to give up territory in Donbass to the Russians. So what the Americans are doing, instead of telling the Ukrainians, "Look, we're very sorry, we've come to the conclusion that this war is lost, and it's in our national interest to stabilize relations with the Russians," they're trying to dress it up as something else.

Ultimately, you are our proxy, so we will do what we choose. This is our policy, and we're going to move forward. If you don't like it, well, you're on your own. Instead of doing that, what the United

States is trying to do is bribe the Ukrainians to agree to withdraw from Donbass by offering them security guarantees—which, of course, the Russians are going to reject. And the reason the Americans, the U.S., are doing that is again because of the point you made earlier: they’re desperate to end the war as quickly as possible before the collapse comes. So they have to come back to the Russians with something. They could say, “Well, look, we’re making progress. We’ve got the Ukrainians to agree that they are withdrawing from Donbass.”

So why can’t we get a ceasefire now? Why can’t we get a freeze? We can sort out all these other things. And don’t worry about this business of the security guarantees—Article 5-type security guarantees—that we’re giving to Ukraine. This is only going to be for a short time, a temporary period. That’s, by the way, the messaging that’s coming out at the moment: it’s only for a short time, because eventually we’ll be able to iron this all out in the future. So they’re bribing the Ukrainians with the security guarantees in order to persuade the Russians to stop. And to get the Russians to stop, they think they can throw them a bone, which is the rest of Donbass. It is, again, not a negotiating strategy.

It’s not the way this sort of thing is done. And the Russians, by the way, have made it absolutely clear that they want—yes, of course they want Donbass—but they also want the rest of the five regions. They want Zaporozhye and the Kherson region. We went through the whole summer and autumn with various claims in the media that the Russians had agreed to give up their claims to the totality of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions—what, two of the four regions. Turns out that was never true. The Russians never agreed to any such thing. But there we go. It is absolutely incompetent negotiation—trying to agree with everyone at once and thinking that if you can agree with somebody on one thing, you can get the other side to agree on something else.

#Danny

Alexander, how much does—the Trump administration, Donald Trump himself, or maybe someone around him at the beginning of this process—say it’s a good idea to frame yourself as the mediator? But now it seems like that’s bearing a lot of spoiled fruit, in the sense that, yeah, the Trump administration is acting like a mediator. But unlike the strong language you see, let’s say, on Latin America—the Monroe Doctrine, “we are going to dominate, dominate, dominate”—you don’t have that energy when it comes to Ukraine, even with Europe, despite all the national security strategy bluster. There’s still a lot of cordiality and attempts to come to a compromise, despite the fact that most of us have been saying it’s kind of ridiculous for the U.S. to be acting as the mediator in a conflict of its own making.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, can I just say something? I’ve actually worked as a mediator in disputes—it’s something I used to do in my previous career. And nothing that’s happening remotely resembles mediation as it should be conducted. Firstly, you’re absolutely right. The United States is in no position to act as a mediator

because it is a party to the conflict and always has been. By definition, you cannot mediate a conflict to which you are a party. That's one. But mediators are not there to offer proposals or, in effect, negotiate with two sides at once. What mediators do is talk to each side and ask, "What are your ideas? This is what the other side is concerned about—what are you going to do about that?"

Have you any thoughts? Gradually, you get to a point where you start to find common ground, and you bring the two sides together in a proper negotiation process—into the same room. You narrow the points of dispute and get them to start coming up with ideas together to work out a way forward. That's not what we see here at all. What we're seeing is the United States conducting, in effect, bad-faith negotiations with the Ukrainians and the Europeans at the same time as it's conducting bad-faith negotiations with the Russians. Now, how did this happen? There's a very simple explanation: it's because Trump doesn't want it to seem that this is, in any way, his war.

He wants to distance himself from it. So he says, "I'm not really involved, because I'm not involved. The United States isn't really involved. I'm this benevolent person. I'm not trying to end the war because I can see that America is going to lose—lose this proxy war. I'm doing this from a position of strength, as the impartial, objective mediator who's coming in, purely out of benevolence, to try to find a mutually satisfactory conclusion." Now, as I said, this is always a false premise. And here I would say that one can criticize the Russians, because they perhaps ought to have said to Trump right from the outset, "What you are proposing to do simply cannot work. You cannot be a mediator and a participant in the conflict at one and the same time."

#Danny

Russia's definitely been playing the "we want the United States to be open to something" card, especially around normalization. It seems like that's been more of an interest for Russia, given the state of the Ukraine conflict. But, you know, the U.S.—the Donald Trump administration—has issued a kind of ultimatum to Ukraine about these security guarantees. What do you make of that? According to **The Telegraph**, Washington has reportedly warned Kyiv that its offer of NATO-style security guarantees could expire if it doesn't accept peace terms soon. But nothing's been agreed upon. So, agreeing to terms in order to get the security guarantees—what does that really accomplish? Why go through all of this? Does it serve any purpose at all? I would think the Trump administration would do very well to look powerful—not so much a mediator, but more like an arbiter—if it were to pull things along. What are your thoughts on that?

#Alexander Mercouris

It means absolutely nothing. The first thing to say is that the Ukrainians are not going to believe this. They've been on the receiving end—as, by the way, have the Russians—of any number of Trump ultimatums. I mean, do you remember back in August, Trump said that unless Russia agreed within 100 days to stop the war, he was going to impose 100% tariffs on Russia and 100% tariffs on any country that bought Russian oil? What happened to that? Then, just a short time ago, we were

getting reports that when there were the original 28 points, he wanted the Ukrainians to agree to those 28 points by Thanksgiving.

#Danny

Two weeks.

#Alexander Mercouris

Two weeks. So all that's come and gone, and it was still up. I said, I don't think the Ukrainians are going to take this ultimatum seriously. They're going to say, "Well, this man has offered us—the United States has offered us—security guarantees, so that's now in our pocket. We can move on, and we're going to continue to dig in our heels." Because realistically, especially given that we have the backing of the Europeans—and, by the way, many people in Washington—now that the U.S. has offered us these security guarantees, told us it's going to give us the security guarantees, it's not going to walk back on them. It's a commitment it cannot walk back from.

I mean, they may be wrong about that, but I'm sure that's what the Ukrainians are thinking. And, well, let's assume it happened—let's assume this ultimatum was for real—and one of two things happened. The Ukrainians agreed to pull back from Donbass, which is almost inconceivable, by the way, but let's assume they do. Then the Americans come and say, "The Ukrainians have agreed to withdraw from Donbass, but they're going to get, in return, Article 5-level NATO-equivalent security guarantees." The Russians are going to say, "You must be kidding." And so it already makes the whole thing, if you think about it, ridiculous, because it doesn't ultimately address the core issues—what the Russians refer to as the root causes: the origins of the war, NATO expansion, Ukraine's tilt toward the West, the Maidan events of 2014, and all of that.

#Danny

Before we move to Europe, I wanted to ask you about the Ukrainian side. Is this, for them, a kind of strategy—almost like suicide—to get what they want? You know, the Trump administration will wag its finger at its own proxy, and then Ukraine can say, "OK, you're wagging your finger, but we're the ones doing the dying. We're the ones digging in our heels," as you said. And if they keep doing that, what other option do you have but to try to save them, even if you say you don't want to? So, do you think that might be part of the thinking among those pulling some of the strings inside the Ukrainian regime?

#Alexander Mercouris

You're absolutely right about this. I think this is the illusion—the dangerous illusion—that exists in Kiev. They're saying to themselves, at the end of the day, we can stand firm, we can refuse all concessions, because the Americans have invested so much in us that, in the end, if it really comes

to that point, they're going to step in and prevent us from going down. The humiliation for the United States would be too great for any other outcome. So the Ukrainians are saying, well, we can lose Donbass, we can lose Zaporozhye, we can let the Russians come all the way up to the river. But if we concede what the Russians demand, then it's going to be a completely different Ukraine—not the Ukraine we're fighting for.

We'll slip back under Moscow's shadow, and we don't want that under any circumstances. We don't, in the end, have to agree to it, because if we stand firm—if we reject these demands—and it really does look as if we're going down, then the Americans and the Europeans will step in to save us. And not just save us, but enable us to win. Now, lots of countries have made that mistake. President Thieu of South Vietnam made that mistake, which I'm sure you're familiar with. President Ghani of Afghanistan made that mistake. I don't believe that if Ukraine starts to go down, the United States is going to rush in to save it. But I think that in Kiev, many people—Zelensky himself—absolutely do.

#Danny

I mean, isn't that part of the problem too? What will the United States do? It seems like the United States has done everything it can to push this conflict as far as it can go. And we are where we are right now. What else could the United States do, Alexander?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, that's actually an excellent point, because practically there isn't anything more the United States can do. But when the United States comes and tells people in Kiev, "We are the mighty, all-powerful United States. You're up against a country that has only a fraction of our power—Russia, you know, a gas station masquerading as a country," and all of that—if you're Ukrainian and you really want to escape Moscow's shadow, and you believe that, it's very difficult to stop believing it. So the Ukrainians will probably say to themselves, "Well, there are lots of things the Americans can do."

They can give us more weapons. They can't imagine there's a real situation where Russia could actually outproduce the mighty United States in terms of weapons. They can choke off Russia's oil exports again. It's difficult, perhaps, if you're in Kiev, to believe that the United States actually can't do that—that choking off Russia's oil exports entirely would create economic problems in the United States itself, and wouldn't be accepted by China, which is Russia's biggest customer for oil. And the Chinese, if they're threatened economically by the United States, have repeatedly shown they're prepared to take counteraction.

And of course, there's always, perhaps at the back of everybody's mind in Kiev, the belief that the United States could step into the war directly—that it could establish a no-fly zone. The Ukrainians were demanding a no-fly zone early on in the war. There's a reluctance to believe that the United States cannot and will not do that, that it really would run out of air-to-air missiles if it started

shooting down Russian ones. Because for the Ukrainians to admit to themselves that the United States does indeed have those limits is to admit that they gambled everything on American assurances that America cannot fulfill. And that is something, psychologically and politically, which I suspect is impossible for the leaders in Kiev to do.