

# Glenn Diesen: NATO's War of Choice - The Sabotage of the Istanbul Negotiations

Professor Glenn Diesen outlines the evidence for how the US and UK sabotaged the peace negotiations in Istanbul to use Ukraine as a proxy to weaken Russia. After NATO built a large Ukrainian proxy army to weaken a strategic rival, it was absurd to assume that Ukraine would be allowed to restore its neutrality and make peace with Russia. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen) Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdiesen](http://buymeacoffee.com/gdiesen) Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

## #Glenn

On February 24th, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine.

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That is after the Minsk Agreement had been sabotaged for seven years. Russia decided to invade and impose neutrality by force. In this video, though, I will put forward evidence for how, primarily, the United States and the United Kingdom sabotaged the following negotiations in Istanbul in April 2022, in order to create a long war where they could use Ukrainians to fight and weaken Russia as a strategic rival. I'm well aware that this is considered a controversial argument, but we should also ask why it's considered controversial. That is, the United States has a hegemonic strategy in which its security is based on the idea of the perpetual dominance of the United States.

NATO expansion is, to a large extent, an instrument toward this end. To maintain hegemony, the U. S. seeks to weaken rival centers of power, Russia being one of them. So why, then, is it difficult—or even controversial—to argue that U.S. strategy is about preserving global primacy, as opposed to being an Amnesty International with nuclear weapons that merely seeks to defend democracy and the freedom of other peoples? Now, I could be wrong about NATO seeking to fight to the last Ukrainian, but let's at least address the evidence of the sabotage of the Istanbul agreement, which isn't permitted in the media, as it tends to disrupt the war narrative.

But again, this evidence can't be refuted, yet it's not really part of the discourse. So, just to be very clear about the purpose of this video: it's not a statement of support for the invasion, nor an attempt to legitimize it, or to suggest that Ukraine doesn't have the right to defend itself. The purpose of this video is simply to support the argument that there's overwhelming evidence that the United States

and the UK sabotaged the negotiations in Istanbul in order to use Ukrainians as a proxy to fight Russia. Now, this is important for understanding why we have a war, why it hasn't ended for four years, and what's required to actually put an end to it.

So what happened before the Istanbul talks? Let's begin at the beginning. On the day after the Russians invaded Ukraine—on February 25th, 2022—President Zelensky had already confirmed, and I quote: "Today we heard from Moscow that they still want to talk. They want to talk about Ukraine's neutral status. We are not afraid to talk about neutral status." The next day, the second day after the invasion, on February 26th, 2022, Zelensky again reaffirmed his willingness to negotiate Ukraine's neutrality. He said, "If talks are possible, they should be held."

If in Moscow they say they want to hold talks, including on neutral status, we're not afraid of that. We can talk about it as well. The day after, on the 27th of February—the third day after the invasion—Moscow and Kyiv announced that they would hold peace talks, without preconditions. So it looked like this could be an extremely short war. And here's my point: if my thesis is correct, that the objective is to use Ukraine as a proxy, then you don't want to end the war and restore Ukraine's neutrality after spending years building a large proxy army to weaken a strategic rival. So let's see what happened during those same days on the NATO side.

Well, on February 25th, 2022, the first day after the Russian invasion—after Zelensky had agreed to discuss neutrality—the U.S. spokesperson Ned Price announced that Washington rejected peace talks without preconditions, insisting that the U.S. could only accept diplomacy after Russia had withdrawn from Ukraine. In the words of Ned Price, quote: "Now we see Moscow suggesting that diplomacy take place at the barrel of a gun." And he went on: "If President Putin is serious about diplomacy, he knows what he can do. He should immediately stop the bombing campaign against civilians, order the withdrawal of his forces from Ukraine, and indicate very clearly and unambiguously to the world that Moscow is prepared to de-escalate."

We heard on the 26th of February—the second day after the invasion—from the UK Minister of the Armed Forces, James Heapy, who wrote in the Daily Telegraph, again on the second day, about Putin: "His failure must be complete. Ukrainian sovereignty must be restored, and the Russian people empowered to see how little he cares for them. In showing them that, Putin's days as president will surely be numbered. And so too will those of the kleptocratic elite that surround him. He'll lose power, and he won't get to choose his successor." So we already saw, from the second day, that the objective of the war had become regime change. Then, on the 27th of February—the third day of the invasion, the same day that Russia and Ukraine announced they would hold peace talks—the EU approved 450 million euros in military aid, which would also reduce the incentives to negotiate with Moscow.

On the day after, on the 28th of February, the spokesperson for Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the UK stated, and I quote, "The measures we're introducing, that large parts of the world are introducing, are to bring down the Putin regime." Just to drive home the point that this was about

regime change. Then, in March 2022, as talks were about to start between the Ukrainians and the Russians, the U.S. spokesperson Ned Price was asked if the U.S. would support the negotiated settlement that Zelensky was proposing. Price answered, quote, "This is a war that is in many ways bigger than Russia. It's bigger than Ukraine. Principles are at stake that must be maintained."

And he went on to suggest that this was more about world order and the rules that America had to uphold. So again, the main objective was not to end the Ukraine war at the negotiation table. The U.S. Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, also outlined the U.S. objective in the Ukraine war as weakening a strategic rival, saying, quote, "We want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things it's done in invading Ukraine." So it—meaning Russia—has already lost a lot of military capabilities and a lot of its troops, quite frankly, and we want to see them not have the capability to very quickly reproduce that strength.

We had even more direct language from Leon Panetta, a former CIA director, who argued in March 2022, quote, "We are engaged in a conflict here. It's a proxy war with Russia, whether we say it or not. The way you get leverage is by, frankly, going in and killing Russians." Yet in the media, the narrative was still that this was all about Ukrainian democracy and sovereignty. More evidence came on March 22, 2022, when Niall Ferguson reported in Bloomberg. He cited sources from the U.S. and U.K. governments and concluded that the preference now was for, quote, "the conflict to be extended and thereby bleed Putin, as the only endgame now is the end of the Putin regime."

We see, time and time again, statements from several Western countries—especially the U.S. and the U.K.—that this is an opportunity to pursue regime change in Moscow. So why hurry to end the war? To really drive the point home, we have none other than President Zelensky, on March 27, 2022, giving an interview with *The Economist*. In that interview, he said, and this is a direct quote: everyone has varied interests. There are those in the West who don't mind a long war because it would mean exhausting Russia, even if that means the demise of Ukraine and comes at the cost of Ukrainian lives.

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I think everyone has different interests. And in the West, there are those who want this war to drag on, because it would mean the ruin of Russia—but at the cost of Ukraine. Still, the Russians and Ukrainians met in Istanbul to negotiate an end to the war.

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Great progress was made, and they were even close to a deal. It was then sabotaged by the U.S. and U.K., to a large extent executed by Boris Johnson, who came to Kyiv and told the Ukrainians exactly what the U.S. and U.K. would not do—and that was support any early peace agreements. According to Ukrainian media, Boris Johnson went to Kyiv and delivered the following message, as reported by *Ukrainska Pravda*: the first point was that Putin is a war criminal and should be

pressured, not negotiated with. The second was that even if Ukraine was ready to sign some agreement on guarantees with Putin, the U.K. and U.S. were not. Some have questioned whether this really happened, and to what extent Boris Johnson actually wanted to keep the war going.

Well, we could look at Boris Johnson's own comments. For example, later in June 2022, he made a statement in a speech. He said, quote, "Now is not the time to settle and encourage the Ukrainians to settle for a bad peace." Instead, Boris Johnson argued for what he called "strategic endurance," which is a nice way of saying a long war. Similarly, in December 2022, Boris Johnson published an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* arguing against any negotiations. He said, quote, "The war in Ukraine can end only with Vladimir Putin's defeat." Later, the head of Zelensky's political party and head of the Ukrainian delegation in Istanbul, David Arakhamia, said in an interview that the negotiations were primarily about restoring Ukraine's neutrality.

And then he said—and this is a direct quote—Boris Johnson came to Kyiv and said that they would not sign anything with them at all, and to just go to war. So that was Boris Johnson's contribution. The talks took place in 2022. Turkey acted as the mediator in Istanbul, and the former Israeli prime minister, Naftali Bennett, also played a supportive role. So let's look at how they assessed the negotiations. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett of Israel argued that Russia wanted to end NATO expansion and was willing to make, quote, huge concessions to achieve it.

He also argued that Zelensky had accepted the terms of neutrality. In the words of Bennett, quote, both sides very much wanted a ceasefire. However, he goes on to explain that the West blocked the peace agreement because there was, quote, a decision by the West to keep striking Putin. So that was the general idea: they trained hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, they armed them, and now it was an opportunity to use these Ukrainians to bleed Russia, a strategic rival. Why would the US and UK agree to any peace agreement in which Ukraine becomes neutral? Again, it's hardly a conspiracy—it just doesn't make sense.

But we can also look at the Turkish side. What did the Turkish negotiators say about what happened in Istanbul? The Turkish foreign minister said, quote, "After the talks in Istanbul, we did not think the war would last this long. But following the NATO foreign ministers' meeting, I had the impression that there were those within the NATO member states who wanted the war to continue—let the war continue and Russia get weaker. They don't care much about the situation in Ukraine." Those were the words of the Turkish foreign minister. We can also listen to the deputy chairman of Erdoğan's political party, who confirmed that Zelensky was ready to sign the peace agreement before the US and UK intervened.

In his words, quote, "This war is not between Russia and Ukraine; it is a war between Russia and the West. By supporting Ukraine, the United States and some countries in Europe are beginning a process of prolonging this war. What we want is to end this war. Someone is trying not to end the

war. The U.S. sees the prolongation of the war as being in its interests.” We can also look at the Ukrainian side, where the Ukrainian ambassador, Chaly, who participated in the negotiations, said later on, quote, “We were very close to finalizing our war with a peaceful settlement.”

He goes on to say that Putin tried to do everything possible to reach an agreement with Ukraine. He adds that they came to what he called “a very real compromise.” We also heard similar comments from others, such as retired General Harald Kujat. He is the former head of the German Armed Forces and was also the former chairman of NATO’s Military Committee, which is the highest military position in NATO. He confirmed not only that NATO had helped provoke this war, but also that Boris Johnson had sabotaged the peace negotiations to fight a proxy war with Russia—that is, to weaken Russia by using Ukrainians.

Now, one after another, American leaders also came out praising the “brilliant statecraft” of using Ukrainians to weaken Russia, which would then allow the United States to refocus on confronting China instead. We saw U.S. General Keith Kellogg arguing in March 2023 that, quote, “If you can defeat a strategic adversary without using any U.S. troops, you are at the acme of professionalism.” Then we had Mitt Romney, who argued that sending weapons to Ukraine was, quote, “the best national defense spending I think we’ve ever done.” And why did he say this? Well, because they spent a relatively small amount of money and were losing no American lives in Ukraine.

We heard similar comments from Mitch McConnell. However, he argued that the U.S. should not be swept away by idealism, saying that, quote, the most basic reasons for continuing to help Ukraine degrade and defeat the Russian invaders are cold, hard, practical American interests. We all know that Ukraine’s fight to retake its territory is neither the beginning nor the end of the West’s broader strategic competition with Putin’s Russia. We also heard Senator Richard Blumenthal argue that we’re getting our money’s worth on our Ukraine investment because, for less than 3% of our nation’s military budget, we’ve enabled Ukraine to degrade Russia’s military strength by half.

Lastly, we also have Lindsey Graham, who came in arguing, “I like the strategic path we’re on here. As long as we help Ukraine with the weapons they need and economic support, they will fight to the last person.” Now, in 2024, it became evident that NATO could not use Ukrainians to exhaust Russia, and indeed, that Russia was winning. At this point, Boris Johnson stated the following: “If Ukraine falls, it will be a catastrophe for the West. It will be the end of Western hegemony.” However, we’ve also seen that in every war, Europeans have argued that diplomacy is the most important tool to end a conflict—or, correction, in every conflict not fought by the Europeans.

However, this time the Europeans boycotted diplomacy for four years, and instead the NATO Secretary General proclaimed that weapons are the path to peace. So how can we explain this shift when it was evident that the Russians wanted a deal? What do you expect to happen if you trigger a war that the opponent—Russia, in this case—considers an existential threat? That means the

Russians will not, and cannot, back down. Then you suspend all diplomacy to find a peaceful end, and you claim that the only way to end the war is to send weapons and more Ukrainians to the front line. This is not a recipe for peace.

This is a recipe for a proxy war where we fight through Ukrainians. So, recognizing the sabotage of the Istanbul negotiations, it's important to find peace. Our governments and their mouthpieces in the media always start from the same premise: we must stand with Ukraine, we must support Ukraine. And with this, I fully agree—we should support Ukraine. But how you support Ukraine means how you get the best possible deal for Ukraine. Four years ago, that would have been in Istanbul. And, of course, seven years before that, we could have actually implemented the Minsk Agreement instead of sabotaging it.

But what do we do today? Four years into this invasion, it's now about getting the best possible deal. Standing with Ukraine should not mean hunting for Ukrainians, pulling them out of their homes, and sending them to the front line to fight to the last man in the hope of weakening Russia as a strategic rival to NATO. Every day this war goes on, Ukrainians lose more men, more infrastructure, and more territory. So are we still going to pretend that the objective of this war has been to help Ukraine, when the evidence overwhelmingly shows that the real goal is to use Ukrainians to weaken Russia?