

## MEMO ON UKRAINE DIPLOMACY John Gittings

1. The Ukraine war will have to end through diplomacy and negotiations. This has been reaffirmed recently by Ukraine's chief negotiator, David Arakhamia, by NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, and others including President Macron and Chancellor Scholz. *[see below for references]*
2. Although the conditions to restart negotiations do not seem favourable right now, preparatory ground work is already under way, with little publicity, between Ukraine and its allies to produce a potential framework for a ceasefire.
3. The call for an "immediate ceasefire" has already been voiced by world politicians including the US Defence Secretary and the Chinese and Indian foreign ministers.
4. The UN Secretary-General has received a peace plan from Italy that has been part of current discussions. This looks at critical issues including Ukraine's neutrality, security guarantees, and the future status of Crimea and the Donbass areas.
5. In terms of timing, David Arakhamia has suggested serious negotiations could resume in August. Other forecasts point to the autumn. It should be remembered that there were intensive negotiations in the first weeks of the war, before these stalled.
6. However the general public narrative – particularly in the UK – suggests that the war must and will proceed for a long time until it results in Russia's withdrawal and defeat.
7. This narrative is inspired partly by the Ukrainian desire to maintain morale, and also by questionable optimism that Russia can be defeated. Outside Ukraine it also serves wider geopolitical and (again particularly in the UK) domestic political aims.
8. There is a danger that unless this unrealistic narrative – with its inherent dangers of escalation – is engaged and contested, it will entrench hard-line positions and make it harder to negotiate a ceasefire and peace settlement when this should be possible.
9. It is vital therefore that there should be as much public discussion as possible on how to achieve peace through negotiation, and that those in positions of influence in the media, in government or opposition, in the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies, in foreign affairs think tanks and disarmament NGOs, should take this up.
10. Britain as a permanent member of the Security Council has a particular responsibility under Article 24(1) of the Charter to work for the maintenance of world peace. So does China, and in spite of UK-China differences, an attempt should be made to engage Beijing in a joint initiative.
11. The UK House of Commons should hold a Westminster Hall Debate as soon as possible to raise parliamentary and public awareness. Britain should seek to mobilise UN support for a new General Assembly Special Session.
12. Issues to be debated and explored include:
  - a) The modalities of a cease-fire and the demilitarization of front lines – the use of UN peace-keepers should be discussed.
  - b) The nature and scope of security guarantees for Ukraine's neutrality, and the identity of those offering guarantees (preferably underwritten at the UN).

- c) How to clarify the future status of Crimea and separately of Donbas in terms of territorial integrity and freedoms including language rights. The evident difficulties here only underline the need for early discussion and research.
- d) How to establish a new EU-Russia relationship that would lead to a withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine and the winding down of sanctions.

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*References:*

*David Arakhamia, Ukrainian chief negotiator*

(1) [“Ukraine plans to resume peace talks with Russia by August, officials say”](#) 19 June

(2) [Ukraine suffering up to 1,000 casualties per day in Donbas](#) “He said there was domestic backlash to the idea of negotiating with Russia at all after the alleged war crimes in cities like Bucha and Mariupol, but also noted the war would have to end through ‘compromise’” 15 June

*NATO Sec Gen Jens Stoltenberg*: “So our military support to them is a way to strengthen their hand at the negotiating table when they, hopefully soon, will sit there and negotiate the peace agreement.” 13 June

[“Macron and Germany’s Scholz urge Putin to hold ‘direct negotiations’ with Zelensky”](#), 28 May

[Western allies meeting regularly to game out potential framework for Ukraine ceasefire as war hits 100th day](#) 3 June

[Pentagon chief urges 'immediate' Ukraine ceasefire in call with Russian counterpart](#), 13 May

[India and China for immediate ceasefire in Ukraine - Indian foreign minister](#) 25 March

<https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-05-20/card/italy-circulates-4-point-peace-plan-h2o9EfwULf6P1mwDbjdn> 20 May

