

A 24-Step Plan to Resolve the Ukraine Crisis

By Uri Friedman

Vladimir Putin may be meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko for [peace talks in Belarus](#) on Tuesday, but the conflict between the two countries, and more broadly between Russia and the West, is in fact escalating, with Russia most recently sending [aid convoys](#) and apparent [military equipment and armored vehicles](#) into Ukrainian territory. Since April, fighting between the Ukrainian military and pro-Russian rebels has killed more than 2,000 people and displaced around 360,000 more. Kiev accuses Moscow of directly and indirectly violating its sovereignty and waging war against it; Moscow accuses Kiev of violently repressing Russian-speakers and creating a humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine.

In an effort to break the impasse, a group of American and Russian experts and former officials—including an ex-director of Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service and a top Russia advisor to George W. Bush—recently [met on an island in Finland](#). Working privately, in an approach known as “[Track II diplomacy](#),” they developed a plan for a possible high-level diplomatic discussion on resolving the crisis in Ukraine. In a climate of intensifying hostilities, their ideas—among others, establishing a UN-authorized peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine, granting amnesty to combatants who have not committed war crimes, and respecting Ukrainian legislation on the country’s “non-aligned” status—chart a path to peace.

The Ukraine crisis remains in a highly dangerous phase. Escalating violence on the ground in Ukraine and fears of a descent into a more intense confrontation between Ukraine and Russia have focused the world’s attention.

Despite these tensions, there is reason to believe that all the major parties to the dispute are open to a non-military solution if satisfactory terms can be devised. However, finding those terms has not been easy. A bitter information war obscures ground truth, deepening the gulf between Russia on the one hand and the United States and Europe on the other. Voices on each side exaggerate the objectives of the other. Meanwhile, the challenges of reconciliation and building a stable, prosperous Ukraine mount the longer the violence continues. People in eastern Ukraine, whatever their political allegiances, suffer, most the innocent victims of disputes and policies in which they have little voice.

The Ukraine crisis will ultimately end with a diplomatic solution. The only question is how much devastation will occur, and how many future grievances will be born and nurtured, before diplomacy will be able to resolve the crisis. As always, a diplomatic solution will require all sides to make concessions and to focus on their essential needs, not on ideal outcomes or unconditional victory.

We are not privy to the confidential discussions between our governments. It would help whatever diplomacy may be underway if the public debate in both Russia and the West were focused not so much on fixing blame and stoking passions as finding ways to reduce the risk of further escalation and end the crisis. In that spirit, a group of high-ranking Russian and American

experts with strong experience in executive and legislative branches of power and analysis of international relations—with the generous support of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)—recently met outside Helsinki on an island retreat called Boisto to consider the Ukraine crisis and a way forward. What follows is the fruit of that session: a set of issues for a high-level U.S.-Russian dialogue, which should be part of a larger discussion that must include Ukrainian as well as European representatives. The issues could become a framework for resolving the crisis. We think it especially notable that the group focused part of its efforts on the terms for an enduring and verifiable ceasefire with significant international participation. Obviously, much tough diplomacy would be required to reach agreement on all the issues. But it is time to reinforce the diplomatic effort, starting with a ceasefire, as outlined here.

* * *

BOISTO AGENDA

Elements of an Enduring, Verifiable Ceasefire

1. Ceasefire and ceasefire-monitoring by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
2. Formation and deployment of a UN-authorized peacekeeping mission under Chapter 7 of the UN charter
3. Withdrawal of regular Russian and Ukrainian army units to an agreed distance from conflict zones
4. Removal of Ukrainian National Guard units from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions
5. Establishment of effective border control and halt of illegal trans-border transit of military equipment and personnel
6. Agreed limits on significant armed-forces concentration in the vicinity of the Russian-Ukrainian border
7. Confidence-building measures under OSCE auspices
8. Verified demilitarization of illegal armed groups on both sides under OSCE auspices
9. Formation of new Ukrainian law-enforcement forces in the conflict zone

Humanitarian and Legal Issues

10. Return of and humanitarian assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)
11. Compensation for property losses and reconstruction of housing and commercial property
12. Credible investigation of crimes committed during the crisis
13. Amnesty for combatants not involved in war crimes during the hostilities

Economic Relations

14. Preservation of Russian-Ukrainian economic relations, including defense-industry cooperation in view of the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and other arrangements

15. Enhancement of energy-related infrastructure and transportation networks
16. International measures against illegal siphoning of gas transit
17. Mutual guarantees for current status of labor migrants

Social and Cultural Issues

18. Protection of the status of the Russian language and of traditional cultural ties between Russia and Ukraine
19. Free access to mass media and television, including Russian mass media and television

Crimea

20. Discussion of the settlement of legal issues pertaining to the status of Crimea
21. Guarantee of uninterrupted water and energy supplies
22. Protection of the rights of ethnic minorities
23. Discussion of access by Ukrainian companies to development of offshore oil and gas reserves

International Status of Ukraine

24. Mutual respect for the non-bloc status of Ukraine as stipulated by Ukrainian legislation

* * *

BOISTO WORKING GROUP

American Participants

1. *Thomas Graham*—Co-chair of the Boisto Group; managing director of Kissinger Associates; former special assistant to the president and senior director for Russia on the National Security Council staff (2004–2007)
2. *Andrew Weiss*— Co-chair of the Boisto Group; vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; former director for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian affairs on the National Security Council staff (1998–2001)
3. *Deana Arsenian*—Vice president of the International Program and director of the Russia Program at the Carnegie Corporation of New York
4. *Rajan Menon*—Anne and Bernard Spitzer professor of political science in the Colin Powell School at the City College of New York/City University of New York

5. *Robert Nurick*—Senior fellow at the Atlantic Council
6. *Jack Snyder*—Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations in the Political Science Department at Columbia University

Russian Participants

1. *Alexander Dynkin*—Co-chair of the Boisto Group; director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO); advisor to the prime minister of Russia (1998–1999)
2. *Aleksey Arbatov*—Head of the Center for International Security at IMEMO; deputy chairman of the Defense Committee of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (1995–2003)
3. *Vyacheslav Trubnikov*—Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary; member of the IMEMO board of directors; director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (1996 – 2000); first deputy minister of foreign affairs of Russia (2000–2004); four-star general, awarded with Hero of the Russian Federation medal
4. *Victor Kremenyuk*—Deputy director of the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies
5. *Artem Malgin*—Vice rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University)
6. *Feodor Voitlovsky*—Deputy director of IMEMO
7. *Andrey Ryabov*—Editor in chief of the *World Economy and International Relations* monthly journal

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- [eugah](#) • [6 days ago](#)

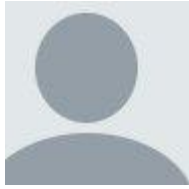
Someone should ask the Ukrainians if this is acceptable...

My guess is that it will seem to them like the MolotovRibbentrop pact



- [wjca eugah](#) • [6 days ago](#)

More likely, they will see a parallel between East Ukraine and the Sudetenland. So this would be Munich....



[Cossack26 eugah](#) • [4 days ago](#)

Better ask Nuclear Armed nations what they think of Budapest Memorandum



[eugah Cossack26](#) • [4 days ago](#)

When Russia had leaders who were not KGB kleptocrats, this agreement worked well. The west trusted Russia because we thought, after the collapse of communism, they shared our values.

They did for a while. But faced with a stagnating economy based on rent-seeking, the kleptocratic leadership decided they could restore it's authority by prosecuting a neo-colonial war of aggression against a sovereign neighbor. The fact that Putin et al. Are constantly dissembling means that no agreements are possible with them. The West needs to frighten them into compliance by introducing weapons



[Edwin Pace](#) • [6 days ago](#)

The plan doesn't seem to address the main issues. What will be the disposition of the rebels? Do they lay down arms, stay in position, or what? Also, nothing on the political status of Donbass. After losing Ukraine, Putin wants at least that to portray himself as a winner. But I very much doubt that Kyiv will agree. It seems to solve everything but the problem.



[bagart Edwin Pace](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Ukrainian government can't agree for this nonsense "plan" as this will result in burning Ukraine. " Strilciv " will be active in every village, and members of parliament hanged on lamp posts...



[Mat Edwin Pace](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Stop trying to appease and aggressor, it legitimizes war crimes here. Come on.



[mikosloper Mat](#) • [17 hours ago](#)

indeed. NATO has been expanding for long enough. after installing their puppet yatsenyuk after the putsch, the pro-NATO ukrainian army immediately started attacking the provinces which don't want to appease the NATO aggression... these war crimes (ukrainian against ukrainian) have got to stop and perhaps a war crime tribunal invoked.



[Mat mikosloper](#) • [17 hours ago](#)

are you high? literally everything you said was total fabricated nonsense



[mikosloper Mat](#) • [16 hours ago](#)

oh?

look at a historical map of NATO: it has grown and grown, even after promising gorbachev that NATO would not expand... haven't you seen the reports of the ukrainian army killing people in donetsk & luhansk?

where is the "fabricated nonsense"? these are simply true observations.

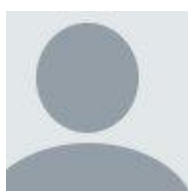


[Mat mikosloper](#) • [16 hours ago](#)

so what if NATO grew?? it's there to protect countries from Russia, naturally countries are going to want to opt in. They are sovereign states that can set their own defensive and foreign policy, why should they worry about what Russia thinks? It certainly had no problem setting up the CSTO in response.

And no, the Ukrainian army is not killing people, not intentionally like the Russians are. What reports do you read, from RT? Crazy people on twitter?

Of course, everyone knows how the Russian insurgents go around throwing grenades at houses and fire at residential areas. <http://pressimus.com/Interpret...>



[eugah Edwin Pace](#) • [4 days ago](#)

They can go back to Russia, where they came from.



[Mainz05](#) • [6 days ago](#)

Yes, I'm sure this is what Putin had in mind when he invaded the country. Good grief.



[Liam Chambers](#) • [6 days ago](#)

I'm amazed that this 24-step proposal is portrayed as a neutral position when it clearly is pro-Russian. It is probably the most naive proposal I have ever seen. Putin could have written it himself! It bears strong resemblance with Chamberlain's "Peace in Our Time" document he

cosigned with Hitler in 1938, a document Hitler reneged on within months. What idiots these non -Russian members of BOISTO are! Hopefully this is a send-up!?



[IanVL](#) [Liam Chambers](#) • [6 days ago](#)

First clue this is total BS: the group includes only Americans and Russians, but no Ukrainians.



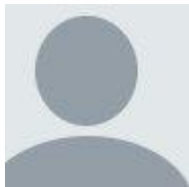
[vkg123](#) [IanVL](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Ya I thought that was funny as well.



[bagart](#) [Liam Chambers](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Of course this is fake.



[eugah](#) [Liam Chambers](#) • [4 days ago](#)

Thomas Graham takes money from the Kremliin as a partner at Kissinger Associates, which has been lobbying its interests in DC for years.



[Steve](#) • [6 days ago](#)

I am saddened by this naïve attempt of 24 points. It ASSUMES Russia which violated the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 will actually honor, obey, comply with the first 9? Please !!!!

And to think there needs to be a U.N. Peacekeeping force (which Russia WILL DEMAND to be part of) is nothing but giving Putin exactly what he wants...a Frozen conflict and direct influence in Ukraine.

This report while written with good intentions is a classic example of educated fools. Remember the road to H*ll is paved with good intentions.



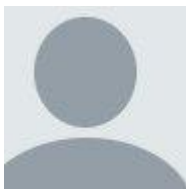
[Svarun Steve](#) • [5 days ago](#)

I agree with what you wrote except that this proposal was "...written with good intentions" and is ".. a classic example of educated fools...". An ex-KGB/FSB director and an ex-Bush adviser = "educated fools"? Nope, these are hyper-partisan spinsters. Demanding from Ukrainians to withdraw their units from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions which they largely control - on account of heavy losses - is literally insulting. It would be suicidal for Poroshenko to sign such a document. No way in hell.



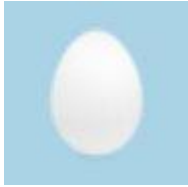
[bagart Steve](#) • [5 days ago](#)

There are not good intentions here. This is shameful surrender in order to get unhindered supply of petroleum product and to have gate fully open to sell Mercedeses, Audis, Porshes for oligarchs and their immediate families. Such a moves will be prized as "pragmatic approach of the western politic in resolving human tragedy". Mercedeses and Russian meddling will not be mentioned.



[Padraig o Cearbaill](#) • [6 days ago](#)

This is a purely Russian narrative. Is the west only interested, at this stage in railroading Ukraine back into the Russian sphere of influence in order to appease Putin and safe guard the west's ecominic interests in Russia. Unbelievable!



[danram](#) • [6 days ago](#)

I have a better way to "break the impasse", and that's for the US and the EU to ...

- 1) Immediately begin providing massive lethal military assistance to the Ukrainian army and air force along with advisors on the ground.
- 2) Provide close air support to Ukrainian ground operations using NATO ground attack fighter planes and attack helicopters. We can simply deny that our forces are involved just like Putin is steadfastly denying that Russia's armed forces are involved.
- 3) Provide the funding needed to that Ukraine can close and permanently secure it's border with Russia against any further aggression. This includes an electrified fence topped by barbed wire and flanked by anti-tank ditches along the entire length of the Russia/Ukraine border.
- 4) Slap every remaining economic sanction in the book on Russia, including freezing Putin's personal assets.

If Putin wants a fight, fine. Let's give him one. If we wimp out now, we'll only have to fight him later on. Better we use NATO's overwhelming military superiority to send a message now that aggression of this type will not be tolerated.

I just returned from 10 days in Ukraine. I saw a brave people there who are united as never before and who are determined to resist Russian imperialism. Unfortunately, we need real leaders here in the west with the backbone to confront Putin, and sadly, we don't have them.

John Kennedy went to Berlin and let West Berliners know that if Russia attacked them it would mean war with the US. Russia never attacked.

Ronald Reagan aggressively confronted the Soviet Union at every turn and won the Cold War for the west.

Barack Obama wishes the whole thing would just go away so that he can get back to doing what he does best, which is playing golf and attending fund-raising events.



[Sergey Tokarev danram](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Hi chickenhawk! I didn't see you for a long time. Nice long, disingenuous comment. Commendable.



[Stanislav Ulinivovsky danram](#) • [4 days ago](#)

At the risk of seeming to resort to Ad Hominem debate tactics, this is possibly the most stupendously moronic post I've seen in years.
Feel free to fly yourself and your family back to the Ukraine to enlist and trade AK rounds on the front line, but can you not drag the rest of us into it? World War, or Nuclear War are likely next steps - and worldwide economic ruin a certainty.
This nuke'em all stance smacks of brash and callous imperialism and wrongly assumes a position of unquestioned strength.



[mikosloper danram](#) • [17 hours ago](#)

uh-huh. more war. more violence. that will sure solve things...
you are inviting a disastrous confrontation based on national borders.... lines on maps.
this is absurd and obscene that people are STILL willing to kill each other based on nationalism.



[Godfree Roberts](#) • [6 days ago](#)

"the conflict between the two countries, and more broadly between Russia and the West, is in fact escalating, with Russia most recently sending aid convoys and apparent military equipment and armored vehicles into Ukrainian territory"
So...all that talk about Ukraine using bombs, missiles, artillery and tanks against its own people doesn't count as 'escalation', but sending medical aid does?



[Scud Bee Godfree Roberts](#) • [6 days ago](#)

You really need to ease off on watching RT.



[Mykola Potytorsky Scud Bee](#) • [6 days ago](#)

I would rather go for a bowel movement than watch rt tv, the kings of bullshit mountain



[Sergey Tokarev Mykola Potytorsky](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Good for you. The most important thing: focus on distracting attention from the gist. You can sell more corpses and fool more people this way.



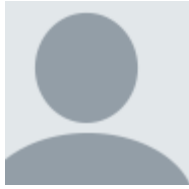
[tga999 Scud Bee](#) • [6 days ago](#)

It takes a lot of chutzpah for the Russians to criticise Ukraine's fairly restrained conduct of the war, given a) they were the ones who have instigated and fueled the conflict and b) these are the same people who were responsible for the second war in Chechnya, which did involve systematic and deliberate abuses on a massive scale that is not even comparable to anything that has happened in Ukraine.



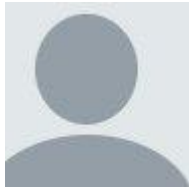
[mikosloper tga999](#) • [17 hours ago](#)

NATO instigated the putsch which toppled yanukovich.
it is absurd to blame this crisis on russia.
NATO has expanded and is still expanding... and somehow russia is to blame...



[tga999](#) [Godfree Roberts](#) • [6 days ago](#)

They're perfectly within their rights to combat an armed insurgency.



[PoeTentiate](#) [Godfree Roberts](#) • [6 days ago](#)

Paid commentator



[Mainz05](#) [PoeTentiate](#) • [5 days ago](#)

One...



[Sergey Tokarev](#) [PoeTentiate](#) • [5 days ago](#)

You don't need to introduce yourself. It is obvious.



[Scud Bee](#) [PoeTentiate](#) • [5 days ago](#)

There is a "troll farm" in Olgino near Saint Petersburg in Russia. Dozens (likely hundreds) employees are paid on per message basis to drown any sensible discussion in pro-putin shit. They are called "Olgino Trolls" in Russia. They are also called "Shit of Motherland" ("shit" sounds like Russian word for "shield").



[Mainz05](#) • [6 days ago](#)

Once this comments thread fills out, it's going to be fun to count all the Russian-sounding posts made under English-sounding names.



[PoeTentiate](#) [Mainz05](#) • [6 days ago](#)

It's very hard for volunteers to keep up with big budget strategic internet manipulation.



[Sergey Tokarev](#) [PoeTentiate](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Yes, it is hard, but nevertheless truth trickles through moderation and whining of MiniTruth trolls, so MiniTruth has closed comments on almost all sites.



[Scud Bee](#) [Mainz05](#) • [5 days ago](#)

No Kremlin trolls so far... Interesting... Effective moderation by The Atlantic?



[Sergey Tokarev](#) [Scud Bee](#) • [5 days ago](#)

It is the only big site in US where people can still say truth on this issue. Apparently you wish for closing comments here too? You are right, Americans and N. Koreans are sensitive and should be protected from info.



[Scud Bee](#) [Sergey Tokarev](#) • 5 days ago

11 roubles per message, right? Or is it 18 roubles now?



[Sergey Tokarev](#) [Scud Bee](#) • 5 days ago

You have forgot your tariff? Ask your MiniTruth supervisor.
Regards.



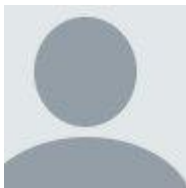
[Scud Bee](#) [Scud Bee](#) • 5 days ago

Nope, they just missed it... *sigh*



[Sergey Tokarev](#) [Mainz05](#) • 5 days ago

There are lots of intelligent people in the West too. There are some honest and decent people. You flatter Russians too much, singling us out.



[Trueteller](#) • 6 days ago

Budapest Memorandum guaranteed that Russia,USA and UK will protect Ukrainian territorial integrity in case if anybody attacks Ukraine foe nuclear arsenal which Ukraine voluntarily gave to Russia.Exactly Russia attacked Ukraine and annexed territory and we saw guarantee! Please!

This plan is written in Putin's office and we know about Russian integrity in negotiations or public statements. It's just words in the sand... Ukraine needs NATO base and it's ONLY guarantee for Ukraine. P.S. Or Ukraine needs start with nuclear weapons program again. They have capabilities, material, equipment and scientists?

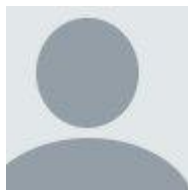


[Randy Irelund](#) • [6 days ago](#)

Because the US has failed to honor the Budapest Memorandum, that they should return Ukraine's 1800 nuclear weapons. Then the Ukraine can sell them for cash to support their war with Russia.

Ukraine made the world a much safer place by signing the Budapest agreement. But why would other nuclear powers want to sign agreements with the US when we fail to honor our pledges. Our failure to comply with our treaty with Ukraine will make the world a much more dangerous place, as no state that we want to sign a nuclear treaty in the future will trust us. The United States failure in Ukraine appears to be cowardice.

The Boisto Agenda appears to have been written in the Kremlin.



[Ashok Randy Irelund](#) • [5 days ago](#)

The US did not fail to honor the Budapest agreement. That agreement says that if Ukraine is attacked by nuclear weapons, then the signatories will raise the issue in the UN security council. The US has no obligation to protect Ukraine. I think if we (the US) wish to use our armed forces, it will be more fruitful to take over an oil-rich country, such as Qatar or Saudi Arabia, rather than a financial black-hole like Ukraine. That will help reduce Islamic terrorism too.

I don't think any other country is, in any case, going to eliminate its existing nuclear weapons. So, that does not set any bad example. Leaving Ukraine to solve its own problem will just show that the world does not care about corrupt and uncompetitive countries. That would be a good lesson for all countries to learn.



[Александр Ashok](#) • [5 days ago](#)

Ukraine gave up world 3rd nukes arsenal in exchange of guarantee of it's territorial integrity, - this includes Crimea.