

U.S Secretary of State Blinken Concedes War Is Lost?

Offers Kremlin Ukrainian Demilitarization; Crimea, Donbass, Zaporozhye

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The author makes certain statements which are not explicitly corroborated by David Ignatius. (see article below). Ignatius acknowledges that Blinken "has begun planning for an eventual postwar military balance".

He also refers to "A demilitarized status".

The article also mentions a News Interview at the State Department.

The statements attributed by the author to Blinken remain to be confirmed.

(M.Ch, GR)

David Ignatius (lead image, left) has been a career-long mouthpiece for the US State Department. He has just been called in by the current Secretary of State Antony Blinken (right) to convey an urgent new message to President Vladimir Putin, the Security Council, and the General Staff in Moscow.

For the first time since the special military operation began last year, the war party in Washington is offering terms of concession to Russia's security objectives explicitly and directly, without the Ukrainians in the way.

The terms Blinken has told Ignatius to print appeared in the January 25 edition of the [Washington Post](#).

The territorial concessions Blinken is tabling include Crimea, the Donbass, and the Zaporozhye, Kherson "land bridge that connects Crimea and Russia". West of the Dnieper

River, north around Kharkov, and south around Odessa and Nikolaev, Blinken has tabled for the first time US acceptance of “a demilitarized status” for the Ukraine. [This is not explicitly addressed in the Ignatius’ article]

Also, US agreement to restrict the deployment of HIMARS, US and NATO infantry fighting vehicles, and the Abrams and Leopard tanks to a point in western Ukraine from which they can “manoeuvre...as a deterrent against future Russian attacks.”

This is an offer for a tradeoff – partition through a demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the east of the Ukraine in exchange for a halt to the planned Russian offensive destroying the fortifications, rail hubs, troop cantonments, and airfields in the west, between the Polish and Romanian borders, Kiev and Lvov, and an outcome Blinken proposes for both sides to call “a just and durable peace that upholds Ukraine’s territorial integrity”.

Also in the proposed Blinken deal there is the offer of a direct US-Russian agreement on “an eventual postwar military balance”; “no World War III”; and no Ukrainian membership of NATO with “security guarantees similar to NATO’s Article 5.”

Blinken has also told the *Washington Post* to announce the US will respect “Putin’s tripwire for nuclear escalation”, and accept the Russian “reserve force includ[ing] strategic bombers, certain precision-guided weapons and, of course, tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.”

President Putin has offered a hint of the Russian reply he discussed with the [Stavka](#) and the [Security Council](#) last week.

Putin told a meeting with university students on Wednesday, hours after Blinken’s publication.

“I think that people like you,” the president [said](#), “most clearly and most accurately understand the need for what Russia is now doing to support our citizens in these territories, including Lugansk, Donetsk, the Donbass area as a whole, and Kherson and Zaporozhye. The goal, as I have explained many times, is primarily to protect the people and Russia from the threats that they are trying to create for us in our own historical territories that are adjacent to us. We cannot allow this. So, it is extremely important when young people like you defend the interests of their small and large Motherland with arms in their hands and do so consciously.”

Read on, very carefully, understanding that nothing a US official says, least of all through the mouths of Blinken, Ignatius, and the *Washington Post* is trusted by the Russians; and understanding that what Putin and the Stavka say they mean by Russia’s “adjacent historical territories” and the “small and large Motherland” has been quite clear.

Follow what Blinken told Ignatius to print, before Putin issued his reply. The propaganda terms have been highlighted in bold to mean the opposite — the public positions from which Blinken is trying to retreat and keep face.

Blinken ponders the post-Ukraine-war order

By David Ignatius, January 25, 2023

The Biden administration, convinced that Vladimir Putin has failed in his attempt to

erase Ukraine, has begun planning for an eventual postwar military balance that will help Kyiv deter any repetition of Russia's brutal invasion.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken outlined his strategy for the Ukrainian endgame and postwar deterrence during an interview on Monday at the State Department. The conversation offered an unusual exploration of some of the trickiest issues surrounding resolution of a Ukraine conflict that has threatened the global order.

Blinken explicitly commended Germany's military backing for Ukraine at a time when Berlin is getting hammered by some other NATO allies for not providing Leopard tanks quickly to Kyiv. "Nobody would have predicted the extent of Germany's military support" when the war began, Blinken said. "This is a sea change we should recognize."

He also underlined President Biden's determination to avoid direct military conflict with Russia, even as U.S. weapons help pulverize Putin's invasion force. "Biden has always been emphatic that one of his requirements in Ukraine is that there be no World War III," Blinken said.

Russia's colossal failure to achieve its military goals, Blinken believes, should now spur the United States and its allies to begin thinking about the shape of postwar Ukraine — and how to create a just and durable peace that upholds Ukraine's territorial integrity and allows it to deter and, if necessary, defend against any future aggression. In other words, Russia should not be able to rest, regroup and reattack.

Blinken's deterrence framework is somewhat different from last year's discussions with Kyiv about security guarantees similar to NATO's Article 5. Rather than such a formal treaty pledge, some U.S. officials increasingly believe the key is to give Ukraine the tools it needs to defend itself. Security will be ensured by potent weapons systems — especially armor and air defense — along with a strong, noncorrupt economy and membership in the European Union.

The Pentagon's current stress on providing Kyiv with weapons and training for maneuver warfare reflects this long-term goal of deterrence. "The importance of maneuver weapons isn't just to give Ukraine strength now to regain territory but as a deterrent against future Russian attacks," explained a State Department official familiar with Blinken's thinking. "Maneuver is the future."

The conversation with Blinken offered some hints about the intense discussions that have gone on for months within the administration about how the war in Ukraine can be ended and future peace maintained. The administration's standard formula is that all decisions must ultimately be made by Ukraine, and Blinken reiterated that line. He also backs Ukraine's desire for significant battlefield gains this year. But the State Department, Pentagon and National Security Council are also thinking ahead.

Crimea is a particular point of discussion. There is a widespread view in Washington and Kyiv that regaining Crimea by military force may be impossible. Any Ukrainian military advances this year in Zaporizhzhia oblast, the land bridge that connects Crimea and Russia, could threaten Russian control. But an all-out Ukrainian campaign to seize the Crimean Peninsula is unrealistic, many U.S. and Ukrainian officials believe. That's partly because Putin has indicated that an assault on Crimea would be a tripwire for nuclear escalation.

The administration shares Ukraine's insistence that Crimea, which was seized by Russia in 2014, must eventually be returned. But in the short run, what's crucial for Kyiv is that Crimea no longer serve as a base for attacks against Ukraine. One formula that interests me would be a demilitarized status, with questions of final political control deferred. Ukrainian officials told me last year that they had discussed such possibilities with the administration.

As Blinken weighs options in Ukraine, he has been less worried about escalation risks than some observers. That's partly because he believes Russia is checked by NATO's overwhelming power. "Putin continues to hold some things in reserve because of his misplaced fear that NATO might attack Russia," explained the official familiar with Blinken's thinking. This Russian reserve force includes strategic bombers, certain precision-guided weapons and, of course, tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.

Blinken's refusal to criticize Germany on the issue of releasing Leopard tanks illustrates what has been more than a year of alliance management to keep the pro-Ukraine coalition from fracturing. Blinken has logged hundreds of hours — on the phone, in video meetings and in trips abroad — to keep this coalition intact.

This cohesiveness will become even more important as the Ukraine war moves toward an endgame. This year, Ukraine and its allies will keep fighting to expel Russian invaders. But as in the final years of World War II, planning has already begun for the postwar order — and construction of a system of military and political alliances that can restore and maintain the peace that Russia shattered.

Click to follow Putin's remarks in the official Kremlin [translation](#).

Highlighted in bold type in Blinken's text is the phrase, "a strong, noncorrupt economy and membership in the European Union". This is Blinken's message to the Kremlin that the US wants to preserve Ukraine's agricultural economy, its grain export ports, and the trade terms agreed with the European Union before the war. It is also Blinken's [acknowledgement](#) that Vladimir Zelensky's move early this week to force the resignations and dismissals of senior officials means the US is calling the shots in Kiev and Lvov.

Nothing is revealed in Blinken's offer "for the Ukrainian endgame and postwar deterrence" of how, and who on the US and Russian sides, to negotiate directly on the particulars. Instead, there is the hint that if the Russians agree to trust the Americans and delay the planned offensive, and if they allow the rail lines to remain open between Poland and Lvov, the Americans will reciprocate by keeping the Abrams and Leopard tank deliveries in verifiable laagers west of Kiev.

As Russian officials have been making clear for months, no US terms of agreement can be trusted on paper, and nothing at all which Blinken says. A well-informed independent military analyst comments on the Russian options:

"The best response is continue the special military operation, destroy the Ukrainian military in their present pockets, complete de-electrification and destruction of the logistics, then either take everything east of the Dnieper or establish a *de facto* DMZ, including Kharkov. Blinken and the others cannot be trusted to follow through if they think they have a chance to stall for time. The Ukrainian Nazis are conspicuously absent

from this proposal – and they remain to be dealt with. We know there will be no end to trouble if the Russian de-nazification objective against them stops now.”

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