

Europe Betrayed. Minsk Peace Negotiations “Did Not Fail”? They Prepared Ukraine for War With Russia? Angela Merkel

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The current conflict in Ukraine is a direct result of the failure of the Minsk Agreements. Between 2014 and 2015, Russia and the European Union mediated negotiations between the breakaway republics of Donbass and the Kiev government, reaching a mutually beneficial protocol that was expected to guarantee regional peace. However, the terms of the pact were never respected by the Ukrainian regime, which continued to constantly attack the republics and advance its project of “de-Russification” and ethnic cleansing.

According to former German prime minister, [Angela Merkel](#), the Agreements did not fail, but fulfilled their real objective: to prepare Ukraine for a war against Russia in the near future. Commenting on the beginning of Moscow's special military operation and the escalation of the conflict in Donbass, the German former official stated that this confrontation was expected from the very beginning, with the ceasefire established in Minsk only working as a way to temporarily alleviate tensions, enabling Kiev to gain time.

However, this does not appear to be the opinion of some other insiders who were also deeply involved in negotiations in the Belarusian capital. I recently had the opportunity to visit the [Donbass region](#) as a war correspondent. There I interviewed several local leaders, politicians and state officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Lugansk, Vladislav Deinego, who was one of the negotiators in the Minsk process.

In our conversation, I asked the Minister his opinion on the failure of the Minsk Agreements and heard from him a long explanation about how the situation got out of control and escalated to the current status of war. According to Deinego, Merkel is lying when she claims that the plan has always been to simply prepare Ukraine. For him, Europe had a genuine interest in achieving regional peace and stabilizing its relations with Russia,

avoiding a military escalation that would put the entire continental security architecture at risk.

Deinego claims that Kiev wanted total war from the beginning. The Minister explains that, before the Minsk Accords were established, the separatists tried to resolve the situation diplomatically in several ways. After non-military means failed, the republics proposed to Kiev that the fighting be somewhat limited to avoid civilian casualties.

First, a ban on the use of artillery and aviation was proposed, which Kiev quickly denied. Next, Donbass' leaders attempted to establish security zones, limiting the use of heavy weapons according to their distance to civilian areas. In this model, artillery would be allowed only in regions far from inhabited cities, while in the "zero line" combat would be limited to the regular use of infantry, preventing civilians from being hit by heavy weapons. Even so, Ukraine denied signing such a deal.

This insistence by the neo-Nazi regime on waging all-out war against the separatists, according to the minister, generated real concerns among Europeans. The deeper the Ukrainian incursions were, the closer the attacks would come to Russian borders, worsening the security crisis. In practice, the situation could at any time escalate into a situation of absolute violence in which Moscow would be forced to intervene, generating a major conflict in Europe. This worried EU members, especially Germany, which was very dependent on the partnership with Russia.

Being a major importer of Russian gas and depending on friendship with Moscow to guarantee its economic and social stability, Berlin engaged deeply in the diplomatic process to try to end, or at least freeze, the conflict. For this reason, Germany was the main negotiator on Kiev's side in Minsk, while Russia negotiated in support for the Donbass' republics. In this sense, after many negotiations, the pact was finally signed, establishing measures such as ceasefire, release of prisoners and respect for the political autonomy of Russian-speaking regions.

Deinego believes that actual compliance with the Agreements would be the best scenario for Europeans as it would guarantee stability in Russia-EU relations, despite Ukrainian hostility towards Moscow. However, as well known, Kiev never obeyed the Minsk's terms and continued violence in the region – even though the intensity of the fighting obviously decreased. Deinego thinks that this was never in the European interest and that, in fact, the direction taken by the conflict showed the failure of European diplomacy.

Indeed, at the time Russia-EU relations were prosperous, despite ideological and geopolitical rivalry. There was no reason for Europeans to agree to participate in a war plan in which they would be severely harmed. This leads us to believe that other actors worked to escalate the crisis, without considering European interests. Certainly, the US, which always wanted war with Russia, was responsible for this.

The circumstances show that Washington probably took advantage of the "stability" generated by the Minsk Agreements to prepare Kiev to act as a proxy against Russia. The Europeans never participated in this plan and were betrayed by NATO just like the Russians. Currently, Europe continues to be a victim of NATO's war plans, being forced by the US to impose suicidal sanctions against Russia, affecting its own economy.

The opinion of an insider of the Minsk process is vital to show the real reasons for the

conflict. In practice, Deinego presents proof of how relations between the US and EU are semi-colonial, with Europeans being used by Washington in war plans, without having their interests respected.

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