

Boris Johnson Talks to Zelensky: U.K. Seeks to Sabotage Ukraine-Russia Peace Negotiations?

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The West continues to work against peace in Ukraine. According to recent reports, the British government is “concerned” about the progress of the peace talks, mainly due to Kiev’s alleged initiative to propose significant concessions. The news was published by The Times website, which mentions anonymous British government sources in its text. If the veracity of the information contained in the article is confirmed, this will be further evidence of the destabilizing role played by the UK in the conflict.

According to The Times, Britain is “concerned” that the US, France, and Germany will pressure Ukraine to “settle” quickly and make significant concessions during the recent peace talks with Russia. An anonymous senior British government source reportedly said there were concerns that other Western countries were “eager” to secure a peace deal as soon as possible, encouraging Kiev to accept all Russian-imposed conditions.

This “fear” was allegedly the reason British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky the last weekend. During the conversation, Johnson described Vladimir Putin as a “liar and a bully” and “alerted” that the Russian leader would try to wear down the Ukrainian government and force it to make concessions during the Ankara peace talks, which ended without any relevant results.

The source also stated that the hegemonic thought among British government officials is that Ukraine should reinforce its military measures before seeking a diplomatic solution, using full power against Russian troops. For London, what seems to be the worst-case scenario for Western interests is a retreat by Kiev on territorial issues. In this sense, there should be a maximum effort to bring the military resistance to the last consequences, so that, in addition to international sanctions (which he said that must be increased further), Russia will then be forced to leave Ukraine including from Donbass and Crimea, which Kiev continues to claim.

An interesting point to mention is that Liz Truss, the UK Foreign Minister, said in an interview on Sunday 27 March that Western sanctions on Moscow should only be lifted in the event of a complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the Ukrainian territory. In other words, Truss believes it is necessary to maintain a policy of absolute coercion throughout the entire Russian Special Operation, not admitting the possibility of easing sanctions in advance to initiate a diplomatic dialogue. In fact, it is a position somewhat similar to that pointed out by the anonymous interviewee of The Times, which makes the situation really worrying.

Considering that goodwill and mutual trust are elementary diplomatic principles, it is difficult for any peace talks to be fruitful if one of the parties starts the debate by ruling out withdrawing its troops. Russia has so far reduced the intensity of operations during talks on all occasions that there has been a diplomatic meeting between Russian and Ukrainian relations. So, it would also be diplomatic kindness for the West to at least ease some sanctions during the negotiations, showing willingness to really reach a peaceful end.

However, returning to the topic reported by The Times, it is curious to note the destabilizing role that London is adopting. It is known by any experts that the Ukrainian armed forces do not have the material conditions necessary to carry out the resistance for a long time, which is one of the main reasons why a peaceful diplomatic agreement is considered a good option. The Russian military superiority is absolute and, in other words, there is simply no possibility for the Ukrainians to effectively counter Russian troops.

Of course, this fact is well known to British government officials, who apparently still insist on advocating that military resistance be promoted. In practice, what London simply wants is for the West to increase its participation, sending more money, weapons and fighters. Some recent UK actions corroborate this narrative. It is necessary to remember, for example, that many western mercenaries who are fighting on the side of Kiev are actually British veterans and even members of elite divisions. Indeed, for the UK, peace seems to be the least important thing.

It seems wrong, however, to believe that other countries really have any interest in making Ukraine consider concessions. On the contrary, so far Kiev has shown no interest in surrendering on practically any relevant point, making bilateral dialogue virtually impossible. It simply appears that London is adopting such a radical stance that even some more realistic positions on the part of its allies sound like “eager” to achieve peace.

The UK is interested in projecting itself internationally with the ongoing conflict, leading a global pro-sanctions and pro-military aid campaign to Kiev. The US historically occupies this type of position, but there is strong popular pressure on Biden to avoid a new war, which leads Washington to take a more realistic stance. Only in the EU there is a more genuine interest in peace, as the conflict directly affects the European continent and impacts trade and energy supply, leading Europeans to also act realistically when advising Zelensky. The UK, on the other hand, as not a member of the EU and being free from US social pressures, remains able to occupy this position of “global anti-Russian leader”, which is why it has acted in such a destabilizing way.

It is questionable, however, how much force the UK will have to actually encourage Kiev to carry out military resistance. With the undeniable Russian victory and global demand for peace, the most likely scenario for the short-medium future is that Boris Johnson himself will soon be increasingly questioned by the British public opinion, losing legitimacy due to his pro-war positions.

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