

Ukraine Ceasefire Agreement? Donbass “Conflict Resolution” in Minsk?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

Around midday Minsk time Thursday, Putin announced a ceasefire agreement was reached. More on this below.

Previous efforts failed. Agreements last April in Geneva and Minsk in September were followed by continued conflict.

Washington and Kiev stooges it controls bear full responsibility. It's hard imagining something different this time.

Whatever is agreed on in principle or announced documents is meaningless without Obama calling off his dogs.

Ending the war he began. Including cutting off all military aid to Ukraine. Withdrawing US-led NATO forces close to Russia's borders.

Removing all US forces currently training Kiev's military. Halting an announced new 600-strength 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team deployment to Lviv to train neo-Nazi National Guard thugs.

So-called volunteer battalions guilty of horrendous atrocities and other war crimes.

As this is written, marathon Minsk peace talks ended after about 17 hours of negotiations.

The Wall Street Journal earlier cited unnamed diplomats close to talks saying European leaders were “expected to sign a document Thursday after all-night talks...”

No indication of contents was given or whether “broad ceasefire agreement” would be reached. A follow-up Journal report said a “truce deal” was reached.

Germany's Foreign Minister Frank Walter-Steinmeier was quoted earlier saying “talks in Minsk are not easy and continuing.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called them “super, better than super” when asked how things were going.

Ukraine's deputy presidential administration head Valeriy Chaly said “(w)e can't leave here without an agreement on an unconditional ceasefire.”

Key disagreements included deciding what constitutes the demarcation line between both sides. Kiev wants it based on September's Minsk protocol and follow-up memorandum.

Rebels insisted it reflects current battlefield conditions. In other words, including all territory they control.

Russia called it impossible to secure its border with Ukraine unless and until Kiev halts its economic blockade.

Reuters cited one unnamed source saying hopefully an agreement would be reached – another saying a document would be signed.

It may be more “a joint declaration rather than a full agreement,” said Reuters – “signed by lower level envoys rather than by the leaders themselves,” according to sources.

A two-paragraph follow-up Reuters report said quoted Putin saying “(w)e have managed to agree on the main issues.”

AP reported talks continuing overnight more than 14 hours. Now ended after over 17 hours according to RT International as of around midday Minsk time Thursday.

Officials remain largely “tight-lipped, praising progress but refusing to divulge details.”

A follow-up AP report indicated Putin saying ceasefire agreement was reached. Key sticking points included:

- withdrawing (nonexistent) Russian troops and military equipment from Ukrainian territory;
- Ukraine securing control of its border with Russia “to stem the (nonexistent) flow of Russian fighters and weapons, while Russia says that’s up to the rebels who have captured some key border posts;” and
- granting rebels more autonomy.

Kiev expressed willingness to grant them more rights under Ukrainian law – not the full autonomy they demand and deserve. Without it they’ll have virtually none at all.

Russia wants more than Kiev promises. It wants “guarantees.” In what form isn’t clear or how they’d be enforced.

Lavrov expressed concern over border control that could leave Donbass residents surrounded and cut off from humanitarian aid.

On the one hand, Poroshenko earlier downplayed progress made. “Unfortunately, there’s no good news yet,” he said.

He accused Russia of proposing “unacceptable” conditions. In other words, fundamental ones Kiev won’t observe whatever it agrees on.

On the other, [Ukraine’s Urian news service](#) reports a document being prepared titled “Minutes of the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group with the representatives of individual regions of Donetsk and Luhansk regions regarding a set of measures for political settlement of the conflict.”

Urian says 15 points are included. Main ones so far not verified stipulate:

- a comprehensive ceasefire beginning on Thursday, February 12, at 10:00AM local time – it's already past that now;
- withdrawal of heavy weapons and troops from the current contact line;
- Donbas forces to withdraw behind the September 19 Minsk memorandum stipulated contact line;
- withdrawal to begin no later than the second day after ceasefire agreed on;
- OSCE monitors to observe the process on the ground;
- Ukraine's parliament to pass legislation by February 20 listing Donbas areas subject to "special status in accordance with the Law of Ukraine 'On a temporary order of local government in some regions of Donetsk and Luhansk regions' (within the contact line defined by the Annex to Minsk memorandum dated September 19, 2014);"
- agreement by March 20 on "municipal elections in some areas, and to initiate a dialogue on granting these areas the status of autonomies;"
- "cancel(ing) all...political and military...decisions" related to "conducting...'anti-terrorist' operation(s) in the Donbas" by February 23.
- enacting Kiev legislation prohibiting "the prosecution and punishment of persons" involved in Donbas conflict by February 25;
- providing pardons, amnesty and release of "all persons held in the territory of Ukraine (an all-for-all exchange of prisoners)" to be completed "no later than the fifth day after the withdrawal;"
- restoring Donbas' "social sphere (payment of pensions and benefits) and the securing of safe access to, and the supply, storage and distribution of, humanitarian aid..."
- restoring "full economic and social cooperation between" both sides, "including in the banking sector;"
- withdrawing "foreign military forces" and armaments, including "mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, under" OSCE monitoring;
- the "disarming of all *(undefined) illegal groups;"
- Ukrainian constitutional reform, "including deep decentralization by granting the status of autonomy to individual areas of the Donbass;" and

- organizing Donbass elections under international monitoring based on Ukrainian law.

Fighting rages as talks continue. All Ukrainians, including Donbass residents and freedom fighters, want peace.

They never wanted conflict in the first place. Washington planned, implemented and directs Kiev's naked aggression on its own citizens.

Whatever is agreed on in Minsk, expect no end of conflict. Washington rejects peace. It wants total control of its newest colony.

It wants hardline rule instituted nationwide. It wants Donbas freedom fighters crushed.

It wants Ukraine as a platform targeting Russia's heartland with the ultimate objective of regime change - ousting Putin. Replacing him with pro-Western stooge governance.

Washington appears willing to risk WW III to achieve its objectives. Bipartisan lunatics control things. US governance is gangsterism by any standard.

Poroshenko threatened martial law nationwide if fighting escalates.

"I can say that I, the government and the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine are ready to take a decision on the introduction of martial law throughout the country," he said.

"In any case, I will not be late with this decision, if the irresponsible actions of the aggressor lead to a further escalation of the conflict."

Human rights activist Galina Zaporozhtseva heads Mothers of Ukraine. She justifiably believes Kiev will straightaway violate whatever it agrees to like every time before.

Neo-Nazis in charge want war, not peace. Washington won't let Poroshenko end conflict whatever is agreed on in Minsk, she said.

If he withdraws Kiev forces from frontline positions, "he should not return to Kiev," she believes.

"He will be immediately destroyed, and replaced with (illegitimate prime minister Arseniy) Yatsenyuk, who will begin a new, more bloody stage of the war," she said.

With full US support and encouragement. Real, sustainable peace in Donbas with residents granted rights they deserve is pure fantasy.

The entire conflict is based on Big Lies. Lunatics running things in Washington want it escalated, not ended.

Obama says one thing and does another. He gives serial lying new meaning. He's waged perpetual war throughout his tenure.

He wants congressional authorization for unconstrained war with US boots on the ground against any adversary he designates.

In other words, officially declared total war on humanity. Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, and other theaters perhaps are warmups for greater planned conflict to come.

It can't be stressed too strongly that neocon lunatics controlling US policy may end up destroying humanity altogether.

Key isn't what happens in Minsk. It's stopping these monsters once and for all.

Otherwise, world peace is impossible. Humanity is more threatened than any other time in world history.

A Final Comment

Near midday Thursday Minsk time, Tass reports Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic leaders Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky "refus(ing) to sign...the so-called "Normandy Four" " document.

An unnamed source was cited. No further details were given. Later reports indicated rebel leaders agreed to ceasefire terms "due to guarantees from the president of Russia, chancellor of Germany and president of France."

Zakharchenko warned if agreed on "terms are broken, there will be no new meetings or memoranda."

RT International, Sputnik News and Tass reported Putin saying ceasefire terms were agreed on starting Sunday, February 15.

"I believe we agreed on a big deal," said Putin. "We agreed to a ceasefire starting at 00:00 on February 15." A disengagement line compromise was reached.

A security zone separating both sides will be at least 50km wide for artillery over 100mm, 70km for multiple rocket launchers, and 100 km for longer-range heavier weapons.

Kiev will withdraw heavy weapons from the current front line. Rebels will pull back to what existed in September.

Withdrawal to be completed within 14 days. OSCE observers will monitor both sides.

One document reportedly was signed called "The package of measures aimed at implementing the Minsk agreements."

Putin said a second document "is not for signatures. (It's) a statement of French, Ukrainian presidents, your faithful servant, and German chancellor saying we support this process."

"Despite all difficulties in the negotiating process, we managed to agree on the main issue," Putin said.

"I want to urge both conflicting sides to end bloodshed as soon as possible and switch to a real political process of a longterm settlement," he added.

It remains to be seen what follows. If past is prologue, hold the cheers.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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