

Western Military Strategy for Ukraine: Towards A “Conciliatory Tone”. Cease Fire Narrative?

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According to Western authorities and media reports Ukraine has been winning the war, but, notwithstanding all the weapon’s shipments from the West, this narrative can only be described as propaganda, [for a number of reasons](#). Amid this triumphalist rhetoric, the US-led West seems to have chosen the path of full-spectrum conflict with Moscow, as one can see in the recent [G7 joint statement](#).

And yet, strangely, French President Emmanuel Macron’s own remarks during Europe Day contained a conciliatory tone about not “humiliating” Moscow should Kiev win.

The US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, in turn has asked May 13 for a conversation with his counterpart, Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, to talk about “an immediate ceasefire”. This was the very first talk the two officials had since the beginning of the Russian military operations in February. Thus, we are seeing contradictory signs.

Moreover, Austin also showed he is interested in keeping lines of communication open with the Kremlin. The one-hour long phone call was requested by Washington. This is the same Lloyd Austin who, in April 26, stated he believed Kiev would win the war, with American help.

Echoing Austin’s change of tone, Macron reportedly has asked Ukraine to make some “concessions”, to which President Volodymyr Zelensky replied in a May 13 interview with Italian TV channel RAI that “we won’t help Putin save face by paying with our territory”. This has generated some embarrassment and has prompted a reply from the French presidency, stating that Macron in fact has never “asked President Zelenskyy for any concession.” The same day the G7 announced its intentions to further contain and isolate Moscow, Macron stated, during his [address](#) to the European Parliament, on May 9, that “we are not at war with Russia”, adding that Europe’s duty is to “stand with Ukraine to achieve a ceasefire, then build peace.”

Macron and Austin are not alone. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz during a long talk with Russian President Vladimir Putin on May 13 over the telephone, according to a recent [Twitter publication](#) of his, stated that there must be a “ceasefire” in Ukraine “as quickly as possible”. Interestingly there was no talk of Russia immediately retreating, which would be a strange thing if it were true that Kiev is “winning” the war.

Three points from my long phone call with [#Putin](#) today:
There must be a ceasefire in [#Ukraine](#) as quickly as possible.
The claim that Nazis are in power there is false.
And I also reminded him about Russia’s responsibility for the global food situation.

— Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz (@Bundeskanzler) [May 13, 2022](#)

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi in turn has also echoed the same theme about a ceasefire.

The fact that the speeches of leaders from the three EU largest countries are thus aligned is a clear sign that something is changing. This reflects popular opinion also: according to a recent [survey](#) across 27 Western countries (conducted by polling company [Ipsos](#)), support for diplomatic talks with Russia has increased precisely in France, Germany and Italy.

These are certainly not the only problems that should worry the US. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for example, has [threatened to block Sweden and Finland NATO bids](#). With Turkey being such a relevant NATO member, this is yet another sign of the contradictions within the alliance.

In spite of the aforementioned Austin statements, the American take on this is still somewhat more complicated, though. According to the Politico website, a high-ranking Washington official has admitted the US worries about a “fracture”, considering these recent European developments. Within American society itself, however, concerned voices, even in the conservative camp, are increasingly more skeptical about the current US policy regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war. As inflation rises, the 40 billion-dollar package to help Kiev, which is being discussed in Congress, is [under a lot of criticism](#).

While Western officials are starting to change their tone and are apparently willing to start some dialogue with Moscow, the Ukrainian President in turn is maintaining his triumphalist uncompromising tone. Kiev, however, is largely dependent on the West, and in the long run would have no choice, but to play along.

The problem is that any “appeasement” endeavors will face a harsh internal reaction from the very [extremist forces](#) the West has been supporting.

One should recall Dmytro Yarosh’s 2019 threatening [remarks](#) about Zelensky “losing his life” and ending up “hanging on a tree on Khreshchatyk (in the Kiev’s center)” if he “betrayed” Ukrainian nationalists. [Yarosh](#), a far-right activist, is nowadays an adviser to Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

This also explains why countries such as [Germany](#) are increasingly reluctant to further arm Kiev – the risk of weapons ending up in the hands of unpredictable extremist groups is too

high.

By now, it has become abundantly clear that today's conflict in Ukraine is a [proxy Western war against Russia](#).

The attitude of the United States and EU leaders regarding the crisis has been one of open confrontation without compromise – and of fueling tensions. However, as we can see, there are signs that this approach could be starting to decline.

In early May, referring to the former US President, American intellectual Noam Chomsky, stated, in an [interview](#), that only one “Western statesman” is advocating “a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine, instead of looking for ways to encourage and prolong it”, namely “Donald Trump”. Chomsky’s remark seemed accurate back then, but this might be changing now.

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