

Letter

Letter: Seize peace in Ukraine before it's too late

From Lord Skidelsky and others



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YESTERDAY

Russia's latest military gains in the Donetsk region ([Report](#), July 5) reinforce the case for a negotiated settlement of the war in Ukraine. The US and its allies support Ukraine's key war aim, which is a return to the 2014 frontiers, ie, Russia's expulsion from Crimea and Donbas. But all informed analysts agree that short of a serious escalation of war, the likeliest outcome will be continued stalemate on the ground, with a not insignificant chance of a Russian victory.

This conclusion points to the desirability, even urgency, of a negotiated peace, not least for the sake of Ukraine itself. Reluctance by the official west to accept a negotiated peace rests on the belief that anything short of a complete Ukrainian victory would allow Putin to "get away with it".

But this ignores by far the most important outcome of the war so far: that Ukraine has fought for its independence, and won it — as Finland did in 1939-40. Some territorial concessions would seem a small price to pay for the reality, rather than semblance, of independence.

If a peace based on roughly the present division of forces in Ukraine is inevitable, it is immoral not to try for it now.

Washington should start talks with Moscow on a new security pact which would

safeguard the legitimate security interests of both Ukraine and Russia. The announcement of these talks should be immediately followed by a time-limited ceasefire in Ukraine. The ceasefire would enable Russian and Ukrainian leaders to negotiate in a realistic, constructive manner.

We urge the world's leaders to initiate or support such an initiative. The longer the war continues the more territory Ukraine is likely to lose, and the more the pressure for escalation up to a nuclear level is likely to grow. The sooner peace is negotiated the more lives will be saved, the sooner the reconstruction of Ukraine will start and the more quickly the world can be pulled back from the very dangerous brink at which it currently stands.

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