



## US media finally covers sabotaged Russian-Ukraine 2022 negotiations

*This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.*

**Max Blumenthal (MB):** I wanted to lead today with something that I think – I don't want to say confirmed because it came from the New York Times, and it contained a lot of omissions, key omissions, omissions as a form of propaganda, but it corroborated what you've been saying over and over and over again since April 2022. Which is that there was a peace deal on the table, and this really colours our whole understanding of the Russian invasion or special military operation in Ukraine. There was a peace deal on the table between Ukraine and Russia and the West came in and sabotaged it. And the New York Times has finally acknowledged the existence of this. I remember for a long time after Ukraine's Pravda paper revealed the details of this deal and Boris Johnson's sabotage of it, that the Western media played the role of denying its existence and undercutting that report. And now it's finally been revealed at a, I think, momentous time. So maybe you can take us through this and what the New York Times has left out, Aaron?

**Aaron Maté (AM):** Yeah, very important to stress what you did, which is that the existence of these talks in Istanbul has been completely ignored for more than two years. The Times has barely acknowledged that Ukraine and Russia sat down immediately after Russia's invasion began, and they almost reached a deal in Istanbul. And if you were to read the Times of the last two years, you wouldn't know that that happened. Sometimes they mentioned it in passing. But finally, the Times for the first time acknowledges there were these talks in Istanbul, they came very close to a deal, and the Times has been the first outlet to actually publish the draft treaties in full. There are three documents that the Times published, and this is the first time that they've been revealed in full, publicly. Putin has waved up a copy before, and actually, sceptics of the Russian claim that there was almost a deal have said that, you know, if Putin says there was a deal reached, how come he hasn't released the actual agreements? Well, the New York Times just did, and they're there in full. And they show that the premise was that Russia got Ukraine to accept permanent neutrality. So not joining NATO or any other military bloc, which, by the way, is not a radical concession on Ukraine's part, that was in Ukraine's founding constitution. It was previously enshrined, as a goal of Ukraine

to be permanently neutral until the Maiden coup, which reversed all of that, backed by the US. And basically, in exchange for committing to permanent neutrality, Russia would withdraw to the pre-invasion lines. The status of Crimea was basically left to be determined in future talks. And Ukraine would receive guarantees that it wouldn't be attacked again. And, we know what happened next. Boris Johnson came over to Kiev, told Zelensky that we're not going to give you security guarantees, which Ukraine would need to reach this deal because Ukraine wanted from, as a concession for declaring neutrality, that it would get the guarantee from states, including Russia and the US to come to its defence in case it was attacked again. But Boris Johnson told Zelensky, we're not going to give you that and you should keep fighting instead. And that's exactly what Ukraine did. And Ukraine got rewarded with tens of billions of dollars and additional NATO weaponry and funding, which also came at the cost of how many untold lives have died since. And so the Times for the first time acknowledges that there was almost this deal.

Now interestingly, they don't acknowledge that Boris Johnson came to Kiev and told Zelensky that the West wouldn't back them up, which is a really huge omission because Ukrainian sources have now confirmed this. So that's the Times still spinning for the Biden administration. But they do confirm that US officials opposed these deals. There's a line in there, in the Times, that American officials were alarmed at the terms of this deal, and they told the Ukrainians that this would basically amount to a surrender. Like the term used in the article is that this would be a unilateral disarmament by Ukraine. So basically, that's the Biden administration telling Zelensky again that they were opposed to it. But what's interesting, I think most interesting about this, on top of confirming that the Biden administration opposed peace, is that now we get a brand new excuse from Ukraine as to why they walked away. Because this article is obviously sourced to Ukrainian officials. And now for the first time, they're introducing a brand new excuse, and they're claiming that basically Russia at the last minute tried to throw in a clause that would have given Russia a veto over any future response to a potential Russian invasion again. So basically, under the deal, Russia is agreeing that there's going to be guarantor states for Ukraine, like Russia is going to guarantee Ukraine security, and so will the US. And what Ukraine is saying at the last minute, Russia tried to throw in this clause that basically says that if there's any future attack on Ukraine, then all the guarantor states, including Russia and the US, if they're going to respond to help Ukraine, it has to be mutually agreed on. So there's a language there on the basis of the decision agreed to by all guarantor states. So basically, if Ukraine is attacked again and if Ukraine asks for help from the guarantors, all of them have to agree. And so Ukrainian officials are now saying, and a lot of people have unfortunately bought into their excuse, that basically this could have given Russia a veto over any future response to future Russian aggression. So basically, Russia could invade Ukraine again and then if Ukraine said, okay, we need help from our guarantor states, Russia could say, no, we don't agree to this, and it has to be mutual. So therefore nobody could come to Ukraine's help. The problem with that argument, though, is that this is article five, right? Where this clause is mentioned. But article two clearly says that, any state that's a party to this treaty, including the guarantors and any other state that's a party to it can't attack Ukraine. So basically, if Russia were to invade Ukraine, it would already be violating the deal that it signed. So there's no way that Russia

could then invade Ukraine again, thereby breaking article two, which says you can't invade Ukraine again, but then say, no one can come help Ukraine because that's barred under article five, like you can't violate a treaty and then try to cite another provision of it to sustain your violation. It wouldn't make any sense. Nobody would take that seriously. It's not as if Russia invaded Ukraine again and then tried to point to article five, the US would say, okay, fine, you're right, sorry, we're not going to come help Ukraine because article five says we can't unless you agree, even though Russia's already violated the part that says we can't invade again. So it's a completely phoney excuse. And then there's the fact that this is a brand new excuse. The first time we're hearing this. We previously gotten other excuses. The first time we got an excuse from Ukraine, they said it was because of Bucha, the alleged Russian atrocities in Bucha. But the problem with that excuse, even if you agree that Russia is guilty of everything it was accused of in Bucha, which I think is far from settled, there's plenty of countervailing evidence, but putting that aside, even if Russia was guilty of everything in Bucha, there's no way that could have been a reason for Ukraine to not take the deal because they kept negotiating after the Bucha allegations surfaced. And Zelensky said, accurately, that the way to prevent more atrocities like we saw in Bucha is to make peace and that's why we have to keep talking. So that excuse doesn't fly. And then we got a new excuse later on from the top Ukrainian negotiator where he said that the reason why we couldn't do this is because we'd have to change our constitution. Because at that point, Ukraine's constitution said that they wanted to join NATO. But just as Ukraine previously changed its constitution, they said they wanted to join NATO, they could just as easily change the constitution again, to say we don't want to join NATO. Because that was actually enshrined in Ukraine's founding constitution, that the goal is permanent neutrality. And then, he also said that we couldn't just trust Russia. Okay, so that's the other excuse, but this brand new excuse, the rush to try to throw in a last minute clause that would have vetoed a future response to Russian aggression against Ukraine, it just doesn't make any sense. But Russia, I think, was talking about that, let's say Ukraine gets into a fight with somebody else like Belarus, which is not a party to the treaty, then at that point there should be a mutually agreed upon response, which is similar to the UN security Council. If somebody vetoes it, you don't respond. So I don't think it's not that radical of a demand. And regardless, it has nothing to do, I think, with Russia trying to protect its own future aggression against Ukraine. It just doesn't make any sense. The real explanation is what has already been in the public record. Ukrainian officials say they were told by the West that we're not going to give you security guarantees if you make a deal with Russia. And Boris Johnson told Ukraine to keep on fighting. That's what happened and that's where the Times is continuing to cover up. But in the process, at least, they're giving us some important new detail.

**MB:** Yeah. They at least acknowledge the existence of these talks. And, you know, there's some hint, of course, the framing is propagandistic and entirely influenced by the thinking of these Western officials, but they give us a hint at how alarmed the US and the Biden administration was with the prospect of peace. You highlighted this, Aaron. This is from the New York Times article. "American officials were alarmed at the terms. In meetings with their Ukrainian counterparts, a senior Biden administration official recalled: We quietly said, "You understand this is unilateral disarmament, right?" So there they are actually warning the

Zelensky administration against engaging in these negotiations and taking up the deal with a false framing. This isn't unilateral disarmament.

**AM:** What they mean by that is this would roll back the NATO armaments in Ukraine that they've been undertaking for the last eight plus years, using the prospect of Ukraine's future NATO bid to militarise Ukraine, turning into a NATO proxy. And that's what they were alarmed by. And that's what they thought.

**MB:** Exactly. I mean, this deal would have essentially ended the Western Front of the new Cold War. I mean, Ukraine was the key front of that war. Ukraine, who had converted the 2014 Maidan coup into an anti-Russian enclave. That was the whole point. A neutral Ukraine? Yes, it would mean peace for Ukraine. It would mean an eventual end to the Ukrainian civil war that has seen parts of the country secede after thousands and thousands of death and so much misery, especially for the Russian speaking, ethnically Russian population of the Donbass. It would mean severe reduction of, I think, the greatest civilizational threat today, the nuclear threat. But it would also hit Lockheed Martin executives and Raytheon executives and Victoria Nuland paymasters in the pocketbook. So it couldn't happen. They were alarmed and it had to be sabotaged. And so here we are tens and tens of thousands of deaths later, and Ukrainian men are afraid to go out in the streets of Kiev for fear that they will be captured, kidnapped by military police, hauled in a van and sent to what they call the meat grinder in a failing war with no clear purpose. Which is expanding into a global conflict as well. Discuss.

**AM:** And just to confirm that there was a lot of progress made in this idea that, like, Russia tried to sabotage the talks with this last minute clause that would have given them a veto over any response to their future aggression. A Ukrainian negotiator admitted that they made huge progress and he said Putin did everything possible to make peace. And the Times actually quoted. He said this back in December. The Times actually acknowledged some of his remarks. Not his full comments, so let's listen to what he said. This is Oleksandr Chalyi, who is a veteran Ukrainian diplomat. He was a part of the delegation that negotiated in Istanbul. Listen to what he says.

**Oleksandr Chalyi:** I was in that moment in the group of Ukrainian negotiators. We negotiated with the Russian delegation for practically two months in March and April the possible peaceful settlement agreement between Ukraine and Russia. And we, as you remember, concluded the so-called Istanbul communique. And we were very close in the middle of April, at the end of April to finalise the war with some peaceful settlement. For some reason it was postponed. But to my mind, this is my personal view, Putin in one week after he started his aggression on the 24th February last year, he very quickly understood he made mistakes and tried to do everything possible to conclude the agreement with Ukraine. And the Istanbul communique was his personal decision to accept the text of this communique, which is totally far away from the initial proposal of Russia, the ultimatum proposal of Russia, which they put before the Ukrainian delegation in Minsk. So we managed to find a very real compromise. So Putin really wanted to reach some peaceful settlement with Ukraine. It's very important to remember this.

**AM:** I mean, it couldn't be more clear. He says Putin did everything possible to make peace, we found a real compromise, basically everything was resolved. And then he says for some reason, it got postponed. So he doesn't tell us why the talks broke down. But it's obvious now. And other Ukrainian officials have filled in the details. And the Times, for the first time acknowledged some of his remarks, but not all of them. But imagine if that clip had been played to Western audiences back when it came out, which was last December, on CNN and, you know, every other show. I mean, we played it, but it's been kept from the public, but it couldn't be more clear than that. That's Ukrainian saying that Putin did everything possible to make peace, and it's obvious why it didn't happen. The West stopped it.

**END**

**Thank you for reading this transcript. Please don't forget to donate to support our independent and non-profit journalism:**

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>BANKKONTO:</b><br>Kontoinhaber: acTVism München e.V.<br>Bank: GLS Bank<br>IBAN: DE89430609678224073600<br>BIC: GENODEM1GLS | <b>PAYPAL:</b><br>E-Mail: <a href="mailto:PayPal@acTVism.org">PayPal@acTVism.org</a> | <b>PATREON:</b><br><a href="https://www.patreon.com/acTVism">https://www.patreon.com/acTVism</a> | <b>BETTERPLACE:</b><br>Link: <a href="#">Click here</a> |
|---|--|--|---|

The acTVism Munich e.V. association is a non-profit organization with legal capacity. The association pursues exclusively and directly non-profit and charitable purposes. Donations from Germany are tax-deductible. If you require a donation receipt, please send us an e-mail to: [info@acTVism.org](mailto:info@acTVism.org)