

To: President Biden, Prime Minister Starmer, President Macron

Date: July 5, 2024

“Win the Peace”

In the 29 months since Russia’s wider invasion of Ukraine, in spite of the tragedy for Ukraine, there are a number of triumphs the West can recognize – [best captured](#) by Professor Graham Allison:

- Finland and Sweden, two of the most militarily capable European nations, have joined NATO;
- Germany has greatly reduced its dependence on Russia for cheap energy, and begun building up its own military forces;
- European NATO partners have been awakened to the reality of 21st century combat – motivating them to invest hundreds of billions in their own defense capabilities;
- China’s Xi Jinping has warned Putin, both privately and publicly, against any threat or use of nuclear weapons – thus reinforcing the “nuclear taboo” that has emerged over the past 78 years;
- The adversary whom the US threat matrix had ranked as the second most capable military power in the world has been fought to a draw;
- [Public sentiment](#) today in Ukraine is more Western than ever.

All this without the loss of a single American soldier.

In asking what to do next in Ukraine, [we have studied](#) all manner of advice and counsel. The wisest words of all [come from](#) Professor Stephen Kotkin of Stanford. They are sufficiently wise, we will quote them without further comment:

“All wars are about winning the peace. Wars are generally a miscalculation. They generally don’t turn out the way people hope or expect. They rarely deliver the advantages that the people who start them think. But it’s not the war, per se; it’s *the peace* you should focus on.

The US in Afghanistan won the war. But then we lost the peace. In Vietnam, the US lost the war and it won the peace. Vietnam is a remarkably pro-American country, despite the atrocities the Americans committed there. The people there today are incredibly warm to Americans.

This is really interesting. You can not only win a war and lose the peace; you can lose a war and win the peace.

How do you win the peace in Ukraine?

What about after the war? What should it look like? And how should we define victory in the war if our goal is to **win the peace**?

This is a criminal aggression under international law – what Russia has done.

But we can talk about victory as: Ukraine getting into the European Union, and Ukraine getting some sort of security guarantee.

Ukraine needs the mechanism of European Union accession to transform its domestic institutions. To go from a weakly institutionalized, corrupt state, to more like a European state – with rule of law, an open society, free and open media, and prosperity. And security guarantees so that a rebuilt Ukraine isn't destroyed again.

What might that EU accession process and security guarantees look like? Those are worthy of debate, and are being debated – and that's very positive. But to get to that road, you need an armistice.

You don't need to get all of your territory back in order to start the process of European Union accession, transformation of institutions, and rebuilding the country in a new economy with some security arrangements.

It would, of course, be better if you got your territory. But it would be much better if you started the process with an armistice of gaining a Ukraine that the Ukrainians need. Getting however much of Ukraine you can control, and transforming it into a European country. "Joining the West" is how we would put it.

How do you get an armistice? How do you get to the point where you can start that process? That's a better definition of victory, and that's how you win the peace.

If you look at the Korean peninsula, of course it's a very unsatisfactory outcome. It's only an armistice. It's not a peace treaty. They're technically still at war. But there's not large-scale fighting. On the other side of that demilitarized zone, with the American security umbrella, in the absence of a peace treaty, they've rebuilt one of the most successful societies on the planet. It's unbelievably impressive what they did.

Again: it's not perfect. It would have been much better to get a peace treaty. But hey, look what they've achieved. An outcome like that for Ukraine would be a miracle. It would be a gift. And it would not necessarily involve Ukraine acknowledging loss of territory. South Korea doesn't acknowledge that the Korean peninsula is divided forever. Quite the contrary. But in the meantime, they've rebuilt.

Some type of security guarantee with the United States would have to be sold to the American people. The same way as the one with South Korea. That hasn't happened yet. And this could be joined by other countries.

We would have to prepare the US public, the US Congress, and Senate especially, to ratify a treaty like that. We're far away from that now. But at least let's discuss these terms publicly, so people understand how Ukraine could **win the peace**.

How do we win the peace, so we don't get an endless war, or a renewal of the war, and instead we get a stable Ukraine that can aspire to become something like South Korea's success?"

Listening to the Other Side

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