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WAR IN EUROPE

All the pitfalls of Putin's proposed peace plan

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.On 14 June, Vladimir Putin gave a **long speech** at the meeting of the highest officials of the Russian republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A very long and complex speech which the Western press summarised as follows: 'Putin proposed definitive peace in Ukraine. He poses as preconditions the immediate withdrawal from the provinces annexed by Russia. Planned neutrality of Ukraine, along with denuclearisation, demilitarisation and denazification. Western leaders and Zelensky consider the proposals inadmissible'.

This sketchy reconstruction is actually partial and misleading, and legitimises the Kremlin's reading of the West's willingness to continue the war, forcing delegitimised Ukrainian leaders to go on because their mandate would have expired. Forgetting, by the way, that in other western countries, the Constitution provides that the government cannot be dissolved in the event of war.

Since it is to be expected (and is already happening) that analysts and pundits will report such a summary lacking in many essential elements, as has been done over the past ten years, we submit to the reader the authentic source (which, as a rule, analysts and pundits never do) together with a summary of Putin's speech.

Putin's long harangue mostly re-proposes the usual old narratives on the history of Russia and Ukraine, already examined by the *Daily Compass*. The novelty lies in the more accentuated and assertive re-proposal of a Eurasian New World Order that is completely alternative to the Western one. The declared aim is to crumble alliances - NATO for example - which, according to him, are already collapsing.

The preconditions for peace are as follows:

- 1) Kiev's withdrawal from the provinces of Zaporizha and Kerson as well as the states of Donetsk and Lugansk
- 2) Ukraine's declaration that it does not want to join NATO.

At this point, the Russians would immediately cease fire and ensure the safe withdrawal of Ukrainian troops. This would be followed by denuclearisation, demilitarisation and denazification as well as the lifting of all Western sanctions against Russia.

It should be noted that, compared to the Istanbul communiqué (March 2022), there is no longer even any mention of Ukraine's entry into the European Union and it is Putin himself who says that 'Of course, a literal return to the security proposals we made 25, 15 or even two years ago (read: Istanbul) is impossible: too many things have happened, circumstances have changed'.

Put in this way, things already sound decidedly different from the simplifications published by the media in recent days. Moreover, each point deserves a closer look to better understand its full implications.

First of all, the withdrawal of Ukrainian troops: bear in mind that only Lugansk is almost entirely occupied. Donetsk is 75 per cent occupied by the Russians and the other two provinces mentioned by Putin 50 per cent. Basically, the Ukrainians would have to surrender everything the Russians failed to conquer in two years of war.

As for guaranteeing the ceasefire and the safe withdrawal of Ukrainian troops, it is hard to believe that Russia can be trusted given the precedents: since the Minsk agreements (2014) there have been countless violations of the ceasefire agreements by

the Russians with the treacherous killings of hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers, as in [Debaltseve in 2015](#).

On denuclearisation, there had already been the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which was violated by the Russians without the required Western guarantees ever being activated. Moreover, given the situation, demilitarisation would place Ukraine at Moscow's mercy. Finally, denazification can only mean the ousting of Zelensky in favour of, say, a questionable character like Yanukovich, in any case a government pleasing to Moscow.

Totally up for discussion would be, in any case, the guarantees that Ukraine had asked the West for and their mechanism, which Lavrov's men had already questioned during the [Istanbul talks](#).

So this is the peace proposed by Putin. A pact with no guarantees for Ukraine and the West, i.e. unconditional surrender. As if that were not enough, on the same day, 14 June, Dmitry Medvedev - deputy secretary of the Russian Security Council - published an article in Rossiyskaya gazeta entitled '[The Humanity should get rid of the colonial system heritage. Colonial powers time is up](#)', which states that 'The so-called Mattei Plan', presented after the Italy Africa summit earlier this year, pursues the same goal. Ironically, the project to exchange African natural resources for Italian loans with a total investment of €5.5 billion, which seems so ambitious (at least on paper), is a typical example of 'friendly neo-colonialism', when pumping cheap resources for European industrial production is embellished with various PR campaigns. As the EU's national economies continue to sink, there will be more such shameless attempts at 'a blinged colonialism'.

So even the Italian government, while espousing a more moderate line than Macron and Scholz, is accused of neo-colonialism.

Whatever solution is to be found to put an end to the conflict it cannot, therefore, disregard an objective analysis of the interlocutor, without censure without pretence, on pain of failure of the negotiations or, even worse, complete surrender.