

## Negotiation Now: We Must Ramp Up Diplomacy to End the War in Ukraine

Over [12,600 Ukrainian civilians have lost their lives](#)<sup>1</sup> since Russia's full-scale invasion began three years ago, with the total casualty count surpassing 41,000. Ongoing and intensive negotiations are desperately needed to end the bloodshed and prevent further destruction.

### High-Level Diplomacy Can Help De-Escalate and End the War

A just peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine will be complex, likely covering issues of displaced persons, security guarantees, Ukraine's status vis-à-vis NATO, and territorial borders. [Preparation and pre-negotiation are needed](#)<sup>2</sup> to lay the groundwork for a ceasefire and a settlement that addresses these areas. This is best achieved with assistance from collective bodies with mediation expertise, such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), or other ad hoc groups of negotiators. Smart and thorough diplomacy is necessary, not the haphazard and reckless approach currently being employed by the Trump administration.

- **Publicly demand that Ukraine and its European allies be involved in diplomatic talks and agreements**, particularly when it entails regional security guarantees. Ukrainians must be the deciders on compromises they accept in any peace process, and their sovereignty and self-determination recognized.
- **Publicly support Russian activists opposing the war** and highlight the work of the [pro-peace organizations](#)<sup>3</sup> that have been reprimanded, silenced, and worse.

### The U.S. Can Support Progressive, Nonviolent Ways for Ukraine to Heal from War

The U.S. is positioned well to support concrete programs that can help heal the suffering and create peace, given its relative wealth and major role in the conflict. It should also admit and support the resettlement of its share of Ukrainian refugees.

- **Support U.S. contribution to international funds to rebuild Ukraine**, which can help millions of displaced people return to their homes, support farmers to produce food to address global hunger, aid in demining the towns and countryside, and rebuild cities destroyed by this war.
- **Support the [cancellation of all of Ukraine's debts](#)**<sup>4</sup> to international financial institutions, which will free up billions to fuel grassroots rebuilding by the Ukrainian people.

### The U.S. Should Engage Russia in Broad Nuclear and Security Dialogue

A second separate diplomatic track focused on diplomacy between the U.S./NATO and Russia, to restore arms control measures and focus on wider European security issues, could support peace talks between Ukraine and Russia by addressing some of Russia's purported security rationales for the invasion.

[Nuclear arms control has been in decline](#)<sup>5</sup> — from George W. Bush's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 to Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 and the Open Skies Treaty in 2020. New START is the last remaining arms control treaty between the world's two greatest nuclear powers. It is set to expire next year, which could nearly double U.S. and Russian arsenals.

- **Cosponsor [S.Res.61](#), by Senator Ed Markey, and [H.R.100](#), by Rep. Bill Foster**, expressing support for continued arms control agreements with Russia and China.
- **In the House, cosponsor [H.Res.317](#), by Rep. Jim McGovern**, to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race by engaging in global diplomacy. **In the Senate, introduce and support** a similar effort.

<sup>1</sup> *Ukraine three years on: Pain, loss, solidarity and hope for a better future*, United Nations, February 23, 2025

<sup>2</sup> Pickering, Thomas R., *How to Prepare for Peace Talks in Ukraine*, Foreign Affairs, March 14, 2023

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Ashley, *Inside the Russian Resistance Against Putin's War*, Spectre Journal, June 23, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Yurchenko, Yuliya, *Credit won't work: Why Ukraine's state debt must be cancelled*, Commons, April 28, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Dempsey, Judy, *The West Cannot Rescue Arms Control Alone*, Carnegie Commentary, November 2, 2021