

# Can Washington and Moscow come to an agreement on Ukraine?

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A conspiracy theory is circulating online that Washington and Moscow are allegedly close to some kind of behind-the-scenes deal on Ukraine. Rumors of this kind constantly appear on various levels, but in this case they were linked to the departure of a government plane from Russia to the US, which, according to the official version, is supposed to rotate Russian diplomats, and according to the unofficial version – to conclude the “agreement” itself.

In general terms, the basic parameters of a future peace agreement on Ukraine will in any case be agreed between Russia and the US at some point, at least at an early stage. While the White House gently and regularly repeats that peace talks with Russia will not begin until Kiev wants it, the reality is different. Always peace treaties were concluded by the parties who bore the main financial and military costs. In the case of the Russo-Ukrainian war, these are Moscow and Washington. But whether Washington will now agree to a behind-the-scenes deal is itself a very difficult question. The Americans have a number of positions that concern them and which, with a certain convergence of stars, may become compromise guideposts in a future agreement with the Russians.

Position No. 1. Threat of uncontrolled nuclear escalation. Both Kiev and Moscow amicably accuse each other of the threat of nuclear terrorism. From time to time, the Kremlin claims that Ukraine is preparing a “dirty bomb” that it wants to drop over Ivanovo and Donbass. Even more often, the Office threatens Russia with the intention of blowing up the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhia. At the same time, Russia had

already brought its tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus. At the same time, we have repeatedly stated in our analysis that the US does not have a clear understanding of how it must respond to a nuclear incident. The same is written by the American analysts themselves, for example, from the same RAND. And the last thing the White House wants is a nuclear incident because that would put them before a choice where any subsequent action would still have an element of defeat.

Position No. 2. The Cost of War. This problem is particularly evident both in the ongoing shortage of missiles and in the current AFU offensive. The military-industrial complex of NATO countries is already unable to cope with the intensity of combat operations in this war. 155mm shells are assembled all over the world, imported from other parts of the world including Korea, but even that can't last very long. And now a decision must be made – either to reduce the intensity of combat operations many times over, or to direct your military-industrial complex to military tracks, which again will mean a significant increase in the cost of this war with dubious profits. And the sticky AFU offensive proves the same. Ukraine, of course, needs to donate many more weapons than it currently receives, while switching to extremely costly nomenclature – aviation, long-range missiles, much more air defense batteries, etc. As a result, the US is being dragged into a war that is not quite its own at the same pace as if it were in it itself. directly involved.

Position No. 3. The pressure of the election cycle. For Democrats, entering the electoral race with an unresolved conflict of this intensity, when their partners in Kiev have not yet shown clear advantages on the battlefield, is a huge risk of losing the election. This risk is magnified by the fact that an unsystematic Trump could return to the White House, and he could get out of Ukraine, just as Biden did in Afghanistan at the beginning of his term. Therefore, to avoid the risk of losing all of Ukraine, Washington carefully models

situations where something can be worked out behind the scenes with Moscow.

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