

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE US 28-POINTS PEACE PLAN ON UKRAINE

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the implications of the United States proposed 28-point peace plan for Ukraine in the context of the current great power dynamics arising from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. To evaluate the plan, a qualitative document-based approach was used to evaluate how the plan addresses territorial integrity, security guarantees, reconstruction and international enforcement of the plan. It also highlights the rift between the strategic calculations derived from the actions of external actors and the reality on the ground for Ukraine, as well as the importance of these differing perceptions. The theoretical framework utilised was neoclassical realism, as it considered the implications of the domestic limitations, lack of legitimacy and limited enforcement mechanisms on the overall effectiveness of the peace plan as well as how these complexities are exacerbated by the pressures to act in response to systemic power dynamics and risk management considerations in the international system. The conclusion of the paper asserts that any peace framework that prioritises short-term geopolitical stability over the presence of reliable local agency and assurances of peace is unlikely to create a long-term resolution of the underlying causes of the conflict and may ultimately consolidate further instability in the Eurasian and European security order.

Keywords: Ukraine conflict; Special Military Operation; Peace plan; Peace efforts; War

Introduction

Ukraine has undergone dramatic changes since the country's 2013-2014 Revolution of Dignity (also known as the Euromaidan Revolution). Forced to confront a Russian invasion and occupation of Ukraine's Crimea region, a Russian-led separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine, and a tightening of Russian control in the nearby Sea of Azov and Black Sea, Ukraine has developed a military capable of territorial defense, reversed a decline in economic growth, implemented reforms, and maintained a democratic path (Ryan, 2018). Since 2019, Ukraine has been governed by President Volodymyr Zelensky. During Zelensky's presidency, Ukraine has enacted difficult economic and governance reforms, albeit with some resistance and delays, and grappled with the social and economic consequences of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. President Zelensky also has attempted to reinvigorate the conflict resolution process with regard to Russia-occupied eastern Ukraine and has drawn greater international attention to the situation in Ukraine's occupied Crimea region. Russia, however, appears no closer to implementing a permanent ceasefire or to withdrawing its military forces from Ukraine (Welt, 2021).

The open declaration of Ukraine's desire to join the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in order to ward off Russia's dictatorship over it meant the implantation of nuclear weapons in Ukraine by the West, which will become a snare to Russia seeing as it is Ukraine's neighbour. This was seen as a threat to Russia's security and to prevent such, Russia invaded Ukraine on the 24th of February, 2022. The Russia-Ukraine crisis is a continuation of the one that began in 2014. However, it was spurred by the recent political developments between Ukraine, the US, Europe and Russia (Grajewski, 2022).

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has shaken the security of Europe, upset global geopolitics, and brought back memories of Cold War tensions. After over three years of the conflict in Ukraine, peace still seems far off. The global community began looking for a diplomatic solution when Russian troops established themselves in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. Concerns regarding the dominance of great powers, coercion and sovereignty were revisited, as a result of the announcement of a 28-point peace plan that is currently being meditated between the US and Russia (Bukhari, 2025). Many have speculated on the motives behind this peace deal, which promises to bring a legal path for Ukraine, along with its future stability and the effects it has on Sovereignty. Another point is that the 28-point peace plan acts as a roadmap to end the ongoing war and contains many highly controversial sections that are cause for concern, there are certain provisions regarding constitutional changes preventing Ukraine from joining NATO. The other major controversial provisions include the recognition of Russian territorial control of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions or territories that were once Ukrainian land. The plan furthermore outlines proposed changes in the political structure of Ukraine that could enact a potential change in power in Kyiv. All these concerns raise questions regarding whether or not this peace deal will be an actual genuine restorative process, or just another means of the major powers articulating their future control over Ukraine (Kragh, 2025).

As a result of the political and territorial interests of larger powers being reflected in these agreements, they tend to diminish the sovereignty of smaller states over their own territorial and political destinies. These negotiations, which have negatively affected the long-term security and sovereignty of Ukraine, will dictate the future of the country as a major power (Smith, 2024). The outlined peace proposal, which creates a situation whereby Ukraine is put into a situation of economic and political dependency upon Russia through territorial acquisitions, creates a power imbalance between the two nations. If the peace proposal results in a short-lived state of peace, it is likely that it will solidify the existing geopolitical status quo as it pertains to Moscow's long-range strategy, thereby limiting Ukraine's ability to make future decisions relating to foreign policy, economic security, or military security (Bukhari & Ullah, 2025). However, it seems that the proposed peace plan framework between the United States and Russia is more focused on restructuring international security than it is on putting an end to the conflict in Ukraine. That project might take years, if not decades, and would necessitate concessions from NATO members as well as Ukraine's other allies in addition to Russia. Its ambiguous, open-ended, and complex language leaves gaps that allow for a wide range of interpretations and possible manipulation (Bukhari, 2025).

Thus, this paper examines the possible geopolitical, legal, and domestic implications of the peace plan on Ukraine. It also places the plan within the context of current diplomacy related to the war, examines the growing body of academic and policy studies on externally proposed

settlement agreements, provides an analytical strategy for critical discourse analysis, and grounds the investigation in a theoretical framework.

Literature Review

Russia – Ukraine Conflict Since 2022

Grajewski (2022) opined that the immediate cause of the Russia–Ukraine war started in February of 2022, with the Russian Federation launching a large invasion of Ukraine on February 24th. This invasion would prove to be a turning point for European security since the Cold War. Although tensions had existed between these two states prior to this date, an invasion marked an escalation of relations that had existed between both nations which were primarily defined as hybrid and limited conflicts since 2014, into an overt international war setting. Russia launched its military assault on multiple fronts, including advances towards Kyiv, Kharkiv and the southern corridor from Crimea. These initial actions showed a strategy intended to rapidly change the Ukrainian government and, as a sovereign entity, eliminate Ukraine’s independence. However, Ukraine’s unexpected resilience and ability to mobilize within itself quickly as a nation and the early assistance from the West of military equipment disrupted Russia’s operational plans and forced a recalibration of Russia’s goals (Brands, 2023)

By the month of April 2022, due to logistical difficulties and Russia suffering heavy losses, Russia retreated from northern Ukraine and restructured its military strategy to focus on eastern and southern Ukraine. Additionally, this beginning of the war for Russia was characterized by the widespread suffering of civilians due to the impact of military actions against them; the mass flight of civilians from the battle zones into other countries; and allegations and documentation of Russian forces committing war crimes against civilians (Ahmad & Shafqat, 2023).

The war entered into a protracted and attrition-based phase from mid-2022 to 2023 characterised by fluctuating control of territory, increased military assistance to Ukraine, and an institutionalisation of the Western sanction’s effort against Russia. The counteroffensives of Ukraine in Kharkiv and Kherson in late 2022 showed the growing operational capacity of Ukraine to conduct operations and the effectiveness of the Western military systems supplied to it, leading Russia to make further territorial retreats. This led Russia to announce a partial mobilisation in September 2022 (Badawi, 2023). Russia’s formal annexation claims of four (4) Ukrainian regions occurred during the same timeframe, which were rejected by the international community and illustrated Russia’s intent to politically entrench its territorial advances in addition to the militarily accomplished territorial gains. Throughout 2023, the war increasingly began to resemble a war of attrition, as trench warfare, artillery duels, and drone warfare predominated. Ukraine’s long-awaited 2023 counteroffensive resulted in a very limited territory advance with high cost, illustrating the significant structural challenges inherent in breaking through heavily fortified Russian positions. As the war dragged on through 2023, the cohesion of Western support for Ukraine began to deteriorate due to economic pressures, war fatigue, and increasing internal political divisions in the war’s primary supporting states, thus curtailing their sustainability of long-term military and financial support for Ukraine (Jentleson, 2023).

Beginning in 2024 and continuing into 2025, the conflict developed into a strategic stalemate with serious geopolitical consequences globally. As Moscow organised its defensive positions across

the theatre of war, it has stepped up its use of long-range missiles, bombs, and drones against Ukraine's civil and industrial infrastructure for the purpose of undermining Ukrainian societal support and bargaining position within the overall negotiation process. However, due to Ukraine's continuing manpower shortages as well as a delay with allied support arriving to help defend its borders, Ukraine has increasingly viewed the War as an existential fight for both its territorial rights and survival as an independent and democratic state (Smith, 2024).

On the diplomatic front, there has been a proliferation of different attempts to create a peace framework via summits and peace initiatives from not just the United States and China but also many European nations. Many of these peace proposals are now compromised due to irreconcilable differences between Ukraine and Russia: Ukraine demanding the full restoration of its territory and receiving credible security guarantees; Russia demanding all territory that it now occupies be recognised by Ukraine and Ukraine agreeing to limit its strategic alignment with the West and NATO (Hynek & Senk, 2025). Over the last few years, the War has changed from a high-speed invasion into a lengthy confrontation that has altered the security architecture of Europe, demonstrated the limits of the effectiveness of the current international deterrent mechanisms and emphasised the continuing importance of power, sovereignty, and domestic political stability in the conduct of modern interstate warfare (Shamim, 2025).

Empirical Review on Russia – Ukraine Conflict

Al-Hasnawi (2022) considered the war between Russia and Ukraine in the context of international security and the geopolitical vision of Russia. The paper aimed to provide an understanding of the geopolitical dimension of the Russian-Ukrainian War, its implications on international security, and what possible scenarios may happen in the future if this war continues for a long time through a geopolitical analytical vision. It stated that, following the new situation in Ukraine, Russia will be likely to develop its plans for a future Russian military incursion into the Baltic States but of a very difficult nature since the Baltic states are less susceptible to the kind of hybrid strategies that Russia has used so effectively in Crimea. A more likely outcome for the future, the study concluded, was that the United States and its European allies would have nothing to offer Ukraine other than the traditional soft power approaches: ineffective diplomatic support, partnership agreement, possibility of economic aid, and useless sanctions against Russia. The irony where the strength of soft power in many instances requires hard power policies to become effective-was not lost. Therefore, all analysts and political and military experts agree that the war will be prolonged, heading towards a non-stop freeze, and Ukraine will likely disintegrate in the future and create a new state with a smaller area and less population in a new international reality.

The changing character of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its potential to alter international security arrangements are examined by Charap and Shapiro (2022). Concerns about the war's unpredictable course and its effects on NATO, American foreign policy, and European security gave rise to the study. The researchers created simulations examining possible outcomes ranging from a frozen conflict to full-scale regional warfare through scenario planning and expert interviews. According to their findings, a protracted conflict raises the risk of ongoing hostility between NATO and Russia, a military buildup in Europe, and polarization of power on a worldwide scale. The authors note that as a result of the war, NATO and its allies have become more united as a result of increased conflict with Russia; however, the war has also decreased the support and validity of principles of territorial integrity and sovereign rights. In order to help avoid

creating an international community divided by separate spheres of influence, the authors suggest that improved strategic diplomacy to reduce risk, improved NATO capabilities, and continued diplomatic engagement with the Global South are necessary elements of a successful response to the crisis.

Kortunov (2022) analyzed the global political implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its implications on the liberal international order. This study began because there was little empirical documentation to support the claim many state actors would shift their state alignment due to the conflict, as the data were anecdotal rather than quantitative. The aim of the study was to assess quantitatively if indeed states were changing their alignment due to the conflict. A thorough review of numerous types of primary source materials aided in evaluating the extent to which the West-Rest dichotomy has developed as a result of this conflict. In addition, many countries that comprise the Global South are viewing the conflict as a post-colonial scenario and are resisting the pressures to choose sides. Ultimately, these findings show that, while Western states have united behind this issue, many other states have chosen either neutrality or a hedged stance, which undermines the universality of principles established by the West. Therefore, the author recommends that the West avoid framing the conflict in strict ideological dichotomies and that international organizations adjust their consideration of the current multipolar world.

Brzezinski and Volker (2022) analyze NATO's response to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as its impact on how NATO perceives collective defense in the new era after the Cold War. As new emphasis is placed on NATO in response to Russia's aggression, their finding is that their operational and strategic posture has been revitalized as a direct result. The authors present information supporting this conclusion from defense budgets throughout NATO member-states, the flow of military aid, and interviews with top defense officials from each member-states. Some examples include increasing joint military exercises in Eastern Europe, many nations have significantly increased their defense budgets, etc. Although they caution not to overdo it, the authors believe that NATO's image as a credible deterrent has been re-established and recommend investing more in cyber-defense; developing more rapid deployment capabilities; and working strategically with non-NATO and EU members.

Zhukov (2022) analysed both the civilian casualty statistics and the spatial aspects of the battlefield dynamics for Russia's conflict with Ukraine. The data for this study is based on civilian casualty records and geo-coded conflict events that have been analysed by the scholar as a way of identifying the trends associated with violence; and the results of this analysis indicate that it was the urban centres of Mariupol, Kharkiv, which were subject to the strongest Russian military attacks, due to their combined ability to pressure the Ukrainian resistance, as well as their direct targeting of civilian infrastructure. The study also finds a link between internally displaced people and high-intensity conflict areas. To reduce civilian casualties in upcoming conflicts, Zhukov suggests strengthened humanitarian corridors, more stringent international legal enforcement of war crimes, and better early warning systems.

Okoro, Ndubuisi, and Ogwu (2022) explored the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its effect on contemporary global security. The study employed the qualitative descriptive historical technique anchored on the theory of Offensive Realism in explaining the phenomenon under study. It also relied on secondary sources for data collection and content analysis for data analysis. The findings from this study showed that the history of the Russia-Ukraine conflict started with the Kievan Rus

from which the two nations emerged, conquest, and domination by Russia, as well as Ukrainian independence, pre- and post-soviet Ukraine. Most of the foreign powers and international bodies like the United Nations, European Union condemned the invasion of Ukraine by Russia through the imposition of economic sanctions besides providing overt and covert military as well as humanitarian aid to Ukraine. It was further revealed that besides increased refugees' epidemic and internally displaced people, (IDPs), in view of the importance of Russia and Ukraine in gas, steel, and grains supply in the world economy, the war has created a shortage of these important goods, thereby heightening global inflation, economic recessing, protests, and social upheavals, arms proliferation capable of raising insurrection and further insecurity across countries. The study recommended that parties to the conflict should seek political rather than military solutions to end the war quickly so that the sanctions which have been detrimental to the global economy and security would be eased.

Ochim and Ibrahim (2023) researched on the implications of the Russia-Ukraine War on world peace and security. The nature of the war in question, what caused it, and the effects of the war were examined to achieve the set objectives. Accordingly, the data analysis was made through the qualitative method by utilizing secondary sources. It used the power theory as a theoretical framework in investigation of the war, remote and immediate causes of the war. This paper unraveled that the war is hybrid in nature and that there are remote causes such as Ukraine's sense of national identity, idiosyncrasy of the leaders involved, and immediate causes such as Ukraine's sovereignty and status of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk, international alliances that triggered the occupation of Ukraine by Russia in February of 2022. It is recommended that respect for a state's sovereignty as enshrined in international law and the United Nation's charter should be a thing of national concern for both countries, that referendum should be considered especially with issues surrounding the status of Crimea. It also recommended mutual tolerance and respect for international law to avoid plunging the world into crises of unimaginable proportion.

Theoretical Framework

This research uses neoclassical realism, which was developed during the 1990s and considers the original formulation of structural realism as its starting point. The primary basis for neoclassical realism is the belief that while the distribution of power in the international system will create limitations on state behaviour and interactions, the eventual effect of these systemic limitations will ultimately depend upon the nature of internal Domestic-Level Variables (internal domestic variables), such as the perceptions of elites/decision makers in the state, the capacity of the state, the constraints imposed on the state by its institutions, and the forces from the societal level on the state (Rose, 1998). Therefore, states desire security and survival in an anarchic international system and all state behaviour is brought about through the political processes of the state and filtered through the state's internal political processes in response to systemic forces. Thus, the mechanism of power and its influence on state-level decisions cannot be viewed as strictly mechanistic or objective; rather power is interpreted by political leaders through their respective constructed lenses and through their experiences with institutions and their internal political processes (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016).

The framework of neoclassical realism offers insight into the origin and contested reception of the 28-point US peace plan by placing it within a systemic environment. At the systemic level, the launch of the peace plan is connected to US global power dynamics which are changing due to

concerns about overstretching American resources (military and otherwise) in light of escalation risks with Russia and the reallocation of US resources to other theatres of conflict. Pertinent to the 28-point US peace plan is that these types of structural elements provide incentives for the United States to pursue efforts to de-escalate conflict, even if it means sacrificing its normative values. While US-based neo-classical realism has provided insight into the challenges of the 28-point US peace plan's existences in order to reduce ongoing conflict, it has also directed analytical focus on the fact that these system-level factors will be refracted through domestic political structures that shape the political and military commitment levels of the United States regarding the Ukraine conflict.

At the domestic level, the political and military commitment of the United States to Ukraine is shaped by electoral dynamics, partisan divisions and how the elite perceive threats to their respective domestic political environments. In Ukraine, the systemic factors impacting US domestic electoral dynamics are filtered through different lenses. Thus, the Ukrainian elite view of how to translate systemic insecurity into security guarantee for the country, based on historical betrayal, current human suffering and social empathy, leads them to reject any possibility of trading away territory in return for a promise of security by the US.

Methodology

The paper adopts a qualitative method of collecting and analysing data. Peer-reviewed articles from databases such as SCOPUS, Web of Science etc., government reports from Chatham House, European Parliamentary Research Service etc., media reports from Aljazeera, the Guardian, etc., and books were consulted for this research. In order to determine which sources would be used in this research, relevance and authority were the primary criteria. The coded documents were analysed qualitatively through content analysis, focusing on recurring themes.

Geopolitical Significance of Ukraine

Ukraine has great geopolitical significance in Eurasia. Control of Ukraine is critically important for establishing Russian dominance over the Eurasian region. The geographic location of Ukraine along with its close geographic proximity to member states of NATO, and the historically established ties between Ukraine and Russia makes Ukraine one of the key arenas for establishing dominance between the Russian and western bloc. Ukraine's alignment with the West or with Russia will significantly alter the balance of power in the region, and is the reason why the Russians are so determined to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO.

Demertzis and Sapir (2023) noted the strategic significance of Ukraine and Russia's historical perspective that Ukraine has always been part of Russia's sphere of Influence. This perspective drives Russia's continued military actions and insists upon Ukraine's Neutrality in order to maintain a position of power and control over the area. The continuing conflict over control of the borders of Ukraine, and the connection of Ukraine to the Russian political system is indicative of the strategic role Ukraine plays in maintaining control of Russian influence within the region. In 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, showing how much Russia values having a strong influence in this area.

Historically, the intended purpose of Ukraine has been as a bridge between Europe and Russia; they were both historically dependent on each other technologically for energy transportation; they also used each other's land or access routes between Europe and the Caspian Sea or Central Asia for trade. As a result, they both relied on each other for economic stability and insurance against foreign invasions of their territories. Ukraine has always been a major source of critical infrastructure, human capital, manufacturing capacity and cultural identity for Russia, therefore making it an essential component of Russia's strategic depth, industrial base and the basis for Russian culture (Charap & Colton 2023). Ukraine's political alignment has been considered by Russia to be one of its greatest security threats, not merely as a threat to Russia's territorial integrity but as an extension of Russian dominance in the region. For Europe, Ukraine represents one of the leading edges of Europe's security framework and therefore serves as a leading indicator of the key principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and border integrity that underpin the post-Cold War order. Ukraine's possession of critical Black Sea ports and significant levels of agricultural production and energy transit capacity for Europe add to the significance of Ukraine for Europe; any interference with Ukraine creates several negative consequences for European food security, energy price volatility and maritime threats to Europe (Frank & Lewis 2023).

In addition to being located in a highly strategic location, Ukraine has become a symbol or representation of two different political philosophies since 2014, particularly after 2022. It is no longer just about economics; the importance of Ukraine is that it has become a dividing line between the two philosophies. The first is Euro-Atlantic, based on democratic governance and a cooperative rules-based system, and the second is an alternative Eurasian system based on spheres of influence and hierarchical relations of power. Ukraine's ability to resist foreign domination has assumed importance not only within Ukraine, but throughout Eastern Europe, the Baltic region, and Central Asia, where nations are closely monitoring the price associated with resisting or accommodating great power pressures (Kortunov, 2022). For NATO and the EU, Ukraine has been central to ongoing discussions about enlargement, deterrence and strategic autonomy, challenging Europe to consider its ability and willingness to uphold its stated security order. Generally, throughout Eurasia, the contest over Ukraine is indicative of whether post-Soviet states will have an authentic exercise of strategic choice or remain mired in patterns related to imperial legacy (Demedziuk, 2022).

The United States 28-Point Peace Plan

Trump's plan called for alterations to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Legally, Crimea would join Russia. However, only in areas held by Russian forces, nearly all of Luhansk and occupied areas of Kherson, Donetsk, and Zaporizhzhia, would the disputed eastern regions come under "de facto" Russian control, meaning Ukraine would not need to officially cede them. In exchange, Ukraine would receive unrestricted passage of the Dnieper River, regain complete control over Russian-occupied areas of Kharkiv, and have the nuclear plant at Zaporizhzhia recognised as part of its territory, even though it is run by US personnel and provides energy to both Russia and Ukraine. The public would still find the move to be extremely contentious; only 9% and 7%, respectively, can envision giving up Crimea and the four eastern oblasts (Kragh, 2025). However, because the proposal does not require formal changes to sovereignty and leaves open the possibility of recovering temporarily lost areas in the future, Ukraine's leadership may be more open to accepting it. In fact, Trump's plan did not call for Ukraine to become neutral, even though it excluded NATO membership. Furthermore, Ukraine might be split into three zones, each under

the control of Russian, British, French, Ukrainian forces, as proposed by US Special Envoy to Ukraine Kellog. This would follow Germany's post-World War II model. Trump's strategy for ending the conflict quickly has been interpreted as beneficial mostly to Russia (Hynek & Senk, 2025).

Nevertheless, the administration started to change its stance after several false starts and a growing perception that Russia was not genuinely trying to bring about peace in Ukraine. In August 2025, Trump stated that Russia ought to return some of Ukraine's very prime territory. Furthermore, the US stance has become even more rigid in the wake of the inconclusive Anchorage meeting, which legitimized Russia but produced no concrete outcomes. The president even suggested that Ukraine, with the backing of the European Union, is in a position to take on and win all of Ukraine back in its initial form (Alcaro, 2025).

In the initial Trump plan, a number of European and like-minded non-European countries but not the United States of America were supposed to provide Ukraine with robust security guarantees and potentially serve as a peacekeeping force. Trump reiterated this stance in August 2025 and pledged to back a European reassurance force (Kozyreva, 2025). Additionally, it has been suggested that the United States may participate more covertly, such as by deploying troops to protect the Zaporizhzhia power plant or to safeguard its economic interests guaranteed by the 2025 minerals agreement between the United States and Ukraine. However, some analysts doubt the idea's viability. Also, although it may be a long way off, the plan does not prohibit Ukraine from joining the EU, which would have a mutual assistance clause akin to NATO's Article 5 (Bukhari, 2025).

The administration has repeatedly threatened to abandon its mediation absent a quick breakthrough, indicating limited interest in achieving a difficult but sustainable solution. This seems plausible in light of the USA backtracking on its initial negotiating position (e.g. ceasefire) or the paucity of details regarding the implementation of the proposal. An exception is the construction of a demilitarised zone (DMZ), similar to Korea, separating the would-be Ukrainian and Russian zones envisaged by Kellog. However, the technical feasibility is in doubt, it would need to span approximately 30 kilometres in width and at least 1000 kilometres in length, compared to just 4 and 250, respectively, in Korea as in Kellog's position in the negotiations (Chatham House, 2025). Thus, a direct regional implication of the Trump plan might be the USA's further disengagement from European security. However, globally, the message could be of strengthened US commitment to other regions, notably East Asia, as was the case in the wake of the country's departure from Afghanistan in 2021. The plan would indeed destabilise the international order, in respect to territorial integrity and human rights, but might not automatically encourage Chinese invasion of Taiwan (Shamim, 2025).

In terms of economic provisions, Trump first suggested boosting bilateral economic cooperation and removing sanctions against Russia. The plan avoided discussing funding, possibly suggesting that it would fall to Europe, but it did mention compensation and aid for rebuilding Ukraine. Since then, in an effort to pressure Moscow into accepting an immediate ceasefire, the United States government has hardened its stance toward Russia by placing sanctions on Russia's two biggest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, as well as several of their subsidiaries. Nonetheless, the US has maintained silence on justice, with the administration actions, ending efforts and programmes geared to monitoring and reporting on the war crimes of Russia, indicating that

it has no plan to hold Russia accountable (Hynek & Senk, 2025). Concerns about the long-term durability of the peace plan are significant. The 28-point peace plan appears to be primarily influenced by the larger strategic goals of the US and Russia than by Ukraine's interests. The provisions for the creation of Ukrainian neutrality and the recognition of Ukrainian territory are also consistent with Russian objectives for the war. Consequently, the manner in which the peace framework has been created is indicative of a disparity in power between the two negotiating sides, with geopolitical considerations likely taking precedence over the autonomy and interests of Ukraine (Bukhari & Ullah, 2025).

Implications of the 28-Point Peace Plan on Ukraine

Political Risks

The Ukrainian and Russian governments have agreed to a comprehensive 28-Point Peace agreement which establishes rules and regulations for the cessation of hostilities between the two nations. The agreement will also provide the basis for Belarus to become involved in negotiations regarding a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine-Russia conflict (Slattery & Banco, 2025). The plan includes a number of provisions that are contrary to basic principles of international law, including those established by the United Nations and the OSCE since their inception. The plan's key provision (Point 5) states that the Ukrainian government will receive reliable Security Assurances, while simultaneously Point 8 prohibits the deployment of Allied forces within Ukraine's borders and territory (Slattery & Banco, 2025). This effectively makes any security guarantees subject to a Russian veto. When a solution to a territorial dispute involves making territorial concessions there is an immediate normative implication. Such a settlement creates a potential precedent in which states can acquire additional territory through the use of force and subsequently gain those territories through negotiations with diplomatic means (Melville, 2025).

Moreover, a resolution arrived at through this manner could set a negative precedent for the state system as a whole and a regional example with the potential to have global ramifications. The objections of the Ukrainian people regarding the legality and rationale for their resistance to territorial acquisition and the requirement of concession are not simply rhetorical, they reflect a clear principled boundary condition for what is acceptable within the framework of Kyiv's domestic politics and identity. In other words, should Kyiv agree to territorial losses as part of a negotiated agreement, it will create a protracted crisis of legitimacy within the Ukrainian state; such concessions would likely be interpreted as betrayal and diminish the legitimacy of the current regime to the point that it may lead to the political polarisation of Kyiv's government and possibly even to an insurgent resistance to the terms of the accepted agreement (Ravid & Lawler, 2025).

Limited Sovereignty

Although it does little to ensure it, the plan officially reaffirms Ukraine's sovereignty. According to the plan, Kyiv would have to give up both the Russian-occupied territory and the part of Donetsk that is still under Ukrainian control. Donetsk is home to about 200,000 people and is strategically important for the defense of the rest of the country. In addition to sacrificing territory and lives, this would mean losing lines of defense that would compromise Ukraine's ability to defend itself in the meantime (Alcaro, 2025). Elections in Ukraine would have to be held within a hundred days. This issue is not particularly contentious in and of itself, but the Russians' desire to include it on the agenda is an apparent attempt to weaken Volodymyr Zelensky, who has continued to serve as

president past his natural term due to the martial law that has been in place since the Russian invasion in 2022. Moscow's propaganda has long sought to undermine the legitimacy of the Ukrainian president, and with the fallout from the allegations of corruption involving two ministers potentially leading to Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak's resignation, the timing is now more favorable. Also, holding elections on short notice could cause instability and give Moscow room to launch a disinformation campaign in a nation that has been ravaged by nearly four years of incessant bombing (Kozyreva, 2025).

In terms of the crucial military aspect, Kyiv would need to include a pledge in its Constitution to stay out of NATO (as it had done prior to Russia's initial invasion in 2014). Despite the serious, if temporally ambiguous, promises made as recently as the 2024 summit, the Alliance's leadership would remove the membership of Ukraine from its agenda. Additionally, NATO troops would not be allowed to enter Ukrainian territory. Since the European reassurance force would be operating as a coalition of the willing as opposed to under NATO auspices, it is unclear if the ban would be applicable to it (Tsivkach & Bandura, 2025).

However, it is certain that Russia will maintain that NATO troops and military from member states of NATO are the same. Ukraine would have to agree to a cap of 600,000 soldiers, which is more than one-third less than the current total but an improvement over the 80,000 that Russia had demanded during the Istanbul negotiations in 2022 (Diehl & Balas, 2023). Ukraine's armed forces, which have increased in size, experience, and capability, are backed by a thriving defense sector, and serve as the primary deterrent against future aggressions, cannot afford to be forcibly reduced. The most uncertain part of the plan is still US security guarantees, which were envisioned in a different version as somewhat similar to NATO's Article 5 but only valid for ten years (Melville, 2025).

Reintegrating Russia and Rebuilding Ukraine

The plan's ambiguities, combined with the increasing unreliability of the US, which has increasingly adopted a nationalist and unilateral foreign policy, along with no real legal basis for the plan and Trump's lack of engagement, create a situation in which the non-aggression pledges are not credible without stronger assurances (Kozyreva, 2025). In addition, the colonial characteristics of the plan are particularly evident in the chapter dealing with reconstruction. The plan includes a proposal to use 100 billion dollars in frozen Russian assets to create reconstruction and development efforts led by the United States, with 50 percent of the profits going to the US. The remainder of the frozen Russian assets (approximately 200 billion dollars) will be placed into a US-Russian joint fund for common projects (Tsivkach & Bandura, 2025). Most of the over 200 billion dollars in frozen Russian assets are based in Europe (primarily Belgium), meaning that the US will benefit from the reconstruction of Ukraine while utilizing economic resources in which it does not have a legal stake. Lastly, a further insult added to this injury is the editorial call for the EU to contribute an additional 100 billion dollars from their resources to bridge the gap between decision makers and those financially supporting the reconstruction of Ukraine (Chatham House, 2025).

If the United States were able to restore Russia's access to their previously frozen assets, this would undoubtedly lead to the establishment of a new economic relationship between the two nations. In addition, any gradual lifting of sanctions would also lead to the eventual reintegration of Russia

into the Global Economy, allowing Russia to resume trade with all countries around the world (Ravid & Lawler, 2025). In addition, returning Russia to the Group of Eight will provide formal recognition of the fact that relations between Russia and the U.S. have been resumed, and could potentially entice Russia away from China. Also, an overall amnesty would protect Putin and his associates from prosecution for any war crimes committed as they carry out this strategy of increasing their influence in the Middle East (Kragh, 2025).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper noted the following as the implications of the US 28-point peace plan on Ukraine as: loss of Ukrainian sovereignty; loss of control over foreign policy with respect to NATO and the European Union as a result of U.S. compliance with Russian demands through the implementation of the 28-point peace plan; potential for leadership change as a means of diminishing Ukraine's ability to develop its political identity; and a weak defense posture, which limits Ukraine's ability to independently defend its own interests. A peace settlement which is contrary to international legal standards and established norms will negatively impact European security and increase the likelihood that Russia will continue to use military force against Ukraine in the future. Thus, security guarantees for Ukraine must include provisions for the presence of allied forces on Ukrainian soil in order to be respected.

As a result, the following recommendations are made: first, peace agreements in Ukraine must be backed by clear, legally binding, multilateral security guarantees, instead of just being promised by governments politically. In addition, for security guarantees to become a reality, they must include procedures for enforcement of those security guarantees as well as predetermined measures for punishment for violations, adding to the credibility of the guarantees while lowering the risk for future aggression. Without security guarantees, peace proposals will not deter threats of future war.

Secondly, the sustainability of any solution to the conflict in Ukraine depends on the extent to which Ukrainians have ownership, as well as the degree to which it is perceived as domestic and legitimate. Therefore, the negotiation of any peace terms must take place openly and transparently with full participation of the government of Ukraine, and must receive internal constitutional or parliamentary ratification. Any agreement that is perceived to have been imposed from without or which does not take into account the social norms and practices of society will not last.

Lastly, all of the post-war reconstruction needs to be treated separately from coercive political negotiations and focused on increasing the future resilience of Ukraine. Finance of post-war reconstruction should be directed at both government capacity, security of infrastructure and economic diversification according to a clearly defined set of legal definitions, creating a recovery that strengthens sovereignty rather than creating new dependence.

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