



Some Reflections on Resolving the Ukrainian Crisis, Europe and Global Security

Sergey Lavrov has condemned the 'ultimatum' issued on 7 June by London, Paris, Berlin and Kyiv, which he believes is intended to freeze the conflict without addressing its root causes. He has called for a new Eurasian security architecture.

The Editors

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Editor's note: This article by the Russian Foreign Minister was originally due to appear in the Brussels-based newspaper « Politico-Europe », but the newspaper's editorial team decided at the last minute to cancel its publication. Source: mid.ru, June 19, 2026

At a meeting in London on 7 June 2026, the leaders of Britain, France, and Germany, as well as Vladimir Zelensky, laid out five preconditions for Russia to secure a "just and lasting peace" in Ukraine. The united Europe now presents this list of demands as the basis for dialogue with Moscow.

Background

More than two decades of negotiation with Europe, as part of the collective West, leads to only one conclusion: engaging Russia in dialogue has served as a diplomatic smokescreen for the geopolitical expansion of Western institutions, above all NATO and the European Union, eastwards, right up to Russia's borders.

Europe's complicity in fuelling the Ukrainian crisis is undeniable. Together with the United States, European countries orchestrated the Orange Revolution in Kiev in 2004. To create an anti-Russian bridgehead in Ukraine, they spent years buying off politicians and entire parties, rewriting history and educational curricula, cultivating and nurturing Ukrainian nationalism, and went to great lengths to pull away Ukraine away from Russia.

In 2013, the European Union rejected outright our proposal for a compromise on the association agreement – a deal Brussels had long been pressing Viktor Yanukovich to sign. It is worth recalling: Ukraine was offered unilateral market opening, without reciprocal commitments – terms that would have proved incompatible with Kiev's continued membership in the CIS free-trade zone. When Viktor Yanukovich requested a deferral, the Europeans incited street riots which swiftly escalated into a coup d'état in Kiev in February 2014.

Germany, France and Poland then proved themselves to be equally treacherous. Having guaranteed that the agreement struck between the opposition and Viktor Yanukovich would be honoured, they washed their hands of it the instant that same opposition, their own handiwork, took power. "Democracy," they shrugged, "takes unexpected turns."

Europe thereafter lent its backing to the new authorities. In Odessa on 2 May 2014, the burning alive of dozens of innocent supporters of closer ties with Russia did not draw a single word of condemnation from European capitals.

As co-guarantors of the 2015 Minsk Agreements, France and Germany effectively encouraged the Ukrainian regime to sabotage its own commitments. As Angela Merkel and François Hollande later conceded – after the special military operation had already begun – the implementation by Kiev of the Minsk Agreements,

unanimously approved by the UN Security Council, was never genuinely intended. The objective, they admitted, was merely to buy time: to shore up the Armed Forces of Ukraine and flood them with Western weaponry.

Russia, for its part, explored every diplomatic avenue to defuse Europe's security crisis. However, in January 2022, the United States and NATO rejected Russia's proposal for legally binding mutual security guarantees. European NATO members actively endorsed that rebuff.

Following the launch of the special military operation, the united Europe threw its support behind the British Prime Minister's efforts to sabotage the Istanbul negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. Boris Johnson's appeal to Kiev – "don't sign anything, just fight" – slammed the door on genuine diplomacy for the foreseeable future.

Current Situation

So what has prompted European leaders to suddenly shift their rhetoric and start talking of negotiations and what are they aiming for with these statements? For instance, the EU diplomacy head Kaja Kallas has stated: the purpose of any dialogue with Russia is to dictate Europe's terms. These include: paying "reparations" to Ukraine; withdrawing troops from Transnistria and the South Caucasus; abolishing the "foreign agents" law; and accept hard limits on the size of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces. In her framing, "there can be no just and lasting peace without accountability for Russia." During the UN Security Council session on 19 May 2026, an EU representative made the point unequivocally: "supporting Ukraine militarily does not contradict the pursuit of peace, but rather serves as a fundamental prerequisite for any credible, good-faith negotiations."

Europe's plan is to talk with Russia while simultaneously pressing ahead with a campaign of legal warfare orchestrated through the Council of Europe. Within this once-respected organization, an entire infrastructure is being assembled for the express purpose of "holding Russia accountable": a Register of Damage, a Claims Commission, and a Special Tribunal.

The European Union has also given the green light to detaining merchant vessels on the high seas. Several incidents have already taken place in the Baltic and the Atlantic. At the same time, the West studiously averts its gaze from the terrorist acts of sabotage perpetrated by the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.

The real objective of Europe's leaders, then, is not to negotiate with Russia. It is to shore up the Zelensky regime and preserve it as a launchpad for continued confrontation against Russia. With this in mind, European leaders are scrambling to secure a ceasefire as quickly as possible and for one reason only: to prevent the collapse of Armed Forces of Ukraine on the battlefield. The plan is to "freeze" the conflict without addressing its root causes, and then rapidly deploy military contingents from the Anglo-French "coalition of the willing" onto Ukrainian soil.

It is widely known that European elites have invested their "political capital" in the confrontation with Russia, pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into propping up the Kiev regime and on ramping up the military budgets of EU member states and NATO. Europe now aims to achieve "defence readiness" against Russia by 2030. Until then, they mean to buy time by whatever means available. In a strikingly candid remark this April, Belgium's chief of staff put it bluntly: "We still have a few years. Thanks to the courage and blood of the Ukrainians, who are buying us that time."

The united Europe continues to dream of expansion. It intends to absorb Ukraine and Moldova, while pulling Armenia into its sphere of influence. NATO has already expanded eastward, swallowing up Finland and Sweden. As for Ukraine, it is increasingly eyed as the "striking fist" of a future European military force, independent of the United States and independent of NATO.

Risks to Global Security

This state of affairs poses serious threats to global security. A direct confrontation between NATO and Russia could rapidly escalate into an exchange of nuclear strikes, with catastrophic consequences.

Under the banner of "strategic autonomy," Europe is witnessing a significant build-up of its military capabilities, including in the nuclear sphere. Paris's intention to extend its "nuclear umbrella" to several EU and NATO member states is a source of deep concern. This will do nothing to strengthen the security of France itself or the recipients of its so-called protection.

For all that, Europe's political and military establishment continues to attribute aggressive plans to Russia – plans that, they claim, reach far beyond Ukraine. The Russian President has stated on numerous occasions that all of this is nonsense, provocation, and disinformation, all aimed solely at extracting budget funds for the fight against Russia. That is scarcely the climate for substantive dialogue.

Russia's Position

As for negotiations, Vladimir Putin reiterated at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum that Russia is not opposed to contacts with any party. We see Europe, however, as a party bent on Russia's defeat – a stance the Europeans themselves openly avow. Dialogue with Europe, therefore, cannot be conducted as though it were an impartial third-party observer.

Russia would prefer to achieve the goals of the special military operation through diplomacy. That requires reliably guaranteeing security along Russia's western borders and ensuring respect and dignity for our citizens and compatriots, including the right to speak their native Russian language and practice Orthodox Christian faith. Further military, political and economic expansion by the West is unacceptable: it runs counter to the imperatives of a multipolar world.

European leaders should recognize that the model of regional security built in Europe over decades, ever since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, has been destroyed by their own hands. And it will never be restored. We must now move toward creating a continent-wide security architecture open to all Eurasian countries and that reflects today's multipolar reality.

The principle of equal and indivisible security trampled upon by the Euro-Atlantists, can be embodied within a new Eurasian architecture. When the time is ripe, Europe too will be able to join this great effort.

The key point is that meaningful dialogue requires the restoration of trust, shattered by the anti-Russian actions of the West, and Europe as part of it, in the post-Cold War era. Trust can be recovered only through concrete steps that demonstrate a sincere commitment to move away from using diplomacy as a cover for expansionist ambitions. Trust cannot be restored, nor can dialogue be resumed, through ultimatums such as the one issued to Russia in London on 7 June 2026.

P.S.: It is noteworthy that the London ultimatum was unequivocally reaffirmed by the ambassadors of Britain, France and Germany at the meeting at the Russian Foreign Ministry on 11 June 2026, – a meeting they had so insistently requested. That was the sole purpose of their visit to the Ministry.

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