



## Revealing OUTRAGE Over Trump Resuming Normal U.S./Russian Diplomacy

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** Marco Rubio spoke today, after his meeting, sitting with Mike Waltz, National Security Advisor, and Steve Witkoff, the negotiating envoy. And it's really interesting because this is what we were trying to say throughout the transition when Trump kept appointing people who had a history of neoconservatism, of war advocacy – including Marco Rubio. Look, I don't like these appointments, but I believe that there's a good possibility that Trump means it this time when he says that the only requirement he has in the people who work for him this time is that they follow his agenda and not sabotage it as it happened in the first administration. And that I'm not going to make judgments about what the Trump administration will be before it's even inaugurated based on who he's selecting. And I think Marco Rubio is a really good example of this. He's been an ardent vocal advocate of arming and supporting Ukraine. He was critical of the Biden administration for not doing enough. And yet listen to him now.

**Marco Rubio:** For three and a half years while this conflict has raged, for three years while it's raged, no one else has been able to bring something together like what we saw today because Donald Trump is the only leader in the world that can. So no one is being sidelined here. But President Trump is in a position that he campaigned on to initiate a process that could bring about an end to this conflict. And from that could emerge some very positive things for the United States, for Europe, for Ukraine, for the world. But first it begins by the end of this conflict. And so the only thing President Trump's trying to do is bring about peace. It's what he campaigned on. It's something the world should be thanking President Trump for doing. He's been able to achieve, what, for two and a half or three years, no one else has been able to achieve, which is to begin this process, a serious process. Obviously a lot of work remains before we have a result. But President Trump's the only one that can do it.

**GG:** You know, it's hard to argue with that given that we sat there for four years under the Biden administration and never saw any attempts to have real dialog with the Russians. And once the war in Ukraine started, the idea was we're not even interested in diplomacy. In fact, a

dozen or so members of the Democratic Party in Congress once issued a letter calling very tepidly, very politely, very deferentially for some degree of diplomacy to see if there was a possibility of ending the war. They were immediately vilified as Kremlin agents and Kremlin assets and they were forced to withdraw the letter saying, oh, no, we don't really mean this, we are fully behind Ukraine. Trump created the space single handedly to have the US talk to Russia. And it wasn't just about Ukraine.

Here's Tammy Bruce, the US state Department spokesperson who issued a readout, what's called a readout, a summary essentially of the communications between Secretary Rubio and Foreign Minister Lavrov. Quote, "President Trump wants to stop the killing. The United States wants peace and is using its strength in the world to bring countries together. President Trump is the only leader in the world who can get Ukraine and Russia to agree to that. We agreed to establish a consultation mechanism to address irritants to our bilateral relationship with the objective of taking steps necessary to normalize the operation of our respective diplomatic missions." Think how basic that is. All it's saying is, look, when we have some kind of conflict that arises in our relationship, we should be able to address it through a consultation mechanism, speaking to one another with the objective of taking whatever steps are needed to normalize how our diplomatic missions interact with one another. When we have a problem with you, we're going to pick up the phone and call you or meet with you and when you have a problem with us, do the same. That's normal diplomacy that has been suspended for years in Washington to the great danger of the world. They also agreed to quote, "appoint respective high level teams to begin working on a path to ending the conflict in Ukraine as soon as possible in a way that is enduring, sustainable, and acceptable to all sides." Precisely what Trump agreed on, this war is going to its fourth full year. It has killed hundreds of thousands of people, mostly soldiers. It's wrecked large parts of Ukraine. It has cost the United States hundreds of billions of dollars, Europe a hundred billion more or so. It's a senseless, pointless, horrific war that, as President Trump earlier today said, could have been avoided, would have been avoided, had Victoria Nuland and Boris Johnson not intervened with the demands that the war continue. They also agreed, quote, "the parties to today's meetings pledge to remain engaged to make sure the process moves forward in a timely and productive manner. One phone call followed by one meeting is not sufficient to establish enduring peace. We must take action. And today we took an important step forward." That said, that's what the New York Times calls a head spinning radical departure, abandoning Europeans efforts to punish Russia, just talking to the Russians and pledging to continue to keep dialog flowing with the intent to end the war, but also to resolve other future conflicts that could also result in very high level tensions, if not military confrontation – any sane person wants to avoid that.

NBC News today said *US and Russia agreed to restore embassy staffing in high level talks on the Ukraine war*. Quote, "Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that both countries had agreed to reestablish, quote, 'the functionality of our respective missions in Washington and Moscow'. And that Washington would create a high level team to work on a path to ending the war in Ukraine." Here is Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, talking about how he saw the meeting: "The first and certainly not the most difficult thing is to ensure the

earliest possible appointment of Russian ambassadors to the United States and the United States to Russia." Just to be clear, there is no diplomatic presence of the United States in Moscow or Russia in Washington. That is insane. Lavrov went on: "Second, to remove the obstacles that have been built for many years, primarily by the Biden administration over the past four years, on the direction of our diplomatic missions, seriously complicating their work, the endless expulsion of our diplomats to which we were forced to respond, the ongoing problems, the arrest of our real estate, and many, many more. The second agreement we agreed that a process for Ukrainian settlement will be formed in the near future. The American side will announce who will represent Washington within the framework of this work, and as soon as we know the name and position of the relevant representatives, we as President Putin told President Trump, will immediately designate our participant in this process.". I hate the phrase in politics, oh the adults are in the room, the adults have returned, whatever, I hate it. The Democrats constantly describe themselves that way, oh we're the adults in the room. What has been done between the United States and Russia since 2016, the narratives about the United States and Russia, the cutting off of diplomatic relations, the seizure of Russian assets all over the world has been childish, pathetic, dangerous, reckless, and it is very refreshing to see the restoration of just basic diplomatic dialog and communication between these two big, very powerful countries.

Here is Kirill Dmitriev, who is the head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, who said today that US-Russia cooperation is, quote, "very important for the world".

**Kirill Dmitriev:** I think the discussions today with the US team are very important, and we've been consistently saying that good US-Russia relations are very important for the whole world. Only jointly can Russia and the US address lots of world problems, resolve global conflicts, and offer solutions. We can do a lot in the economic area. It's very important to understand that US businesses lost around \$300 billion from leaving Russia. So there is a huge economic toll on many countries from what's happening right now, and we believe the way forward is through solutions, through problem solving. And we really see that President Trump and his team is a team of problem solvers, people who have already addressed a number of big challenges very swiftly, very efficiently, and very successfully. And we believe that this problem -solving approach is very important to address issues that the world is facing now.

**GG:** These things are so basic, they shouldn't even need to be stated, let alone depicted as a head -spinning departure, as the New York Times put it. And yet that's exactly what it has been, because we've had bellicose children throwing tantrums in lieu of foreign policy. Here, speaking of the attempt to reintroduce a sort of seriousness into foreign policy, is Trump today speaking earlier about the meeting in Saudi Arabia.

**Reporter:** We're hearing that Russia wants to force Ukraine to hold new elections in order to sign any kind of a peace deal. Is that something that the US would ever support?

**GG:** By the way, one of the things that the Russians asked for at this meeting was to hold elections in Ukraine. As you may recall, Zelensky suspended all elections, imposed martial law, and basically said, I'm going to be president, into the indefinite future. So while we're justifying the NATO role, the US role in Ukraine on the grounds that we have to defend democracy, there are no elections in Ukraine. Opposition media has been shut. Churches perceived to be unsupportive of Kiev have been shut. Even prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Zelensky closed opposition television stations and churches, alleging that they were too pro-Russian to permit them to exist. And so now you hear Russia saying, we'd like to have elections to see if the Ukrainians really want Zelensky in power, because there's a lot of opposition to Zelensky, a lot of anger toward him. But without an election, who knows? Maybe he's still supported by a majority of Ukrainians, but there's only one way to find out, and that's elections. And yet, the American media, the Europeans acted as though the demand for elections in a war that we're told is fought in favor of democracy, to preserve democracy and to advance democracy, was some sort of sinister, malicious, and even anti-democratic demand. So here you see this reporter asking Trump, you would never support something like that, would you? Elections in Ukraine? Sounds bizarre. How could you possibly even talk about that? Here's what he said.

**Donald Trump:** Well, we have a situation where we haven't had elections in Ukraine, where we essentially have martial law in Ukraine, where the leader in Ukraine – I mean I hate to say it, but he's down to 4% approval rating, and where the country has been blown to smithereens. Most of the cities are laying on their sides. The buildings are collapsed. It looks like a massive demolition site. The whole – I mean, so many of the cities, I mean, they haven't done it in Kiev because I guess they don't want to shoot too many rockets in there. They've done it 20%, but they haven't done it 100%. If they wanted to do it 100%, it would probably happen very quickly. But you have cities that are absolutely decimated. And yeah, I would say that, you know, when they want a seat at the table, you could say the people have to – wouldn't the people of Ukraine have to say like, you know, it's been a long time since we've had an election. That's not a Russia thing. That's something coming from me and coming from many other countries also.

**GG:** I just, I cannot tell you how bizarre I find it that people find it problematic, the idea that, hey, we should find out whether the Ukrainians are happy with Zelensky as their leader before we start making deals and saying they're at the table – like, let's find out who the Ukrainians want as their leader. And yes, Russia is occupying part of Ukraine. They have been since 2014 with Crimea. They are now in eastern Ukraine. But those are the parts of the country that have been pro-Russian, that identify as Russian speaking ethnic Russians anyway. We are told that we hear polls that Western think tank analysts promote all the time, so apparently it's possible to survey in a legitimate way Ukrainian public opinion, according to them, despite the Russian occupation. But how can anyone object to the idea that before there's resolution in Ukraine, Ukrainians should speak about who their leader should be.

Now, speaking of childish tantrums and pouting, Zelensky himself today spoke about the meeting between the Americans and the Russians in Saudi Arabia, and here's what he said:

"The Russian-American meeting in Saudi Arabia was a surprise for us just like to many others. Yes, we saw all this information from the media. I don't know who will stay there, who will leave, who is going where. To be honest, I don't care. What I care about is for the partners to overthink something about us. We are completely honest and open. That's why I don't want any, quote, 'coincidences'. That's why I won't go to Saudi Arabia. We reached out to our partners in Saudi Arabia. I have a very good relationship with His Royal Highness Muhammad. We have spoken just now and agreed that I will pay an official visit on March 10th. As for the United States, we are expecting them in Kiev." So he's thrown all caution to the wind. He clearly believes that the United States won't fight for Ukraine anymore given that Trump ran on that commitment and Americans ratified it in the election. He's probably right about that, and I guess there's really nothing left for him to do but to pout or to try and pressure the Europeans to step up and defend Ukraine, though they're Europe. They can't, which is a major part of the problem.

Here Newsweek reported yesterday: *Ukraine 'won't recognize' Russia-US talks in Saudi Arabia: Zelensky*. And again, you can recognize or not recognize whatever you want, but the fact is that Ukraine is in fact dependent on the United States and European leaders, despite wanting to sound tough and talk tough, having to face that reality as well. From ABC News yesterday: *European leaders gather for an emergency meeting over the fear that Trump has isolated allies*. Quote, "Three hours of emergency talks at the Elysee Palace in Paris left leaders of Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, NATO, and the European Union without a common view on possible peacekeeping troops after a US diplomatic blitz on Ukraine last week threw a once-solid transatlantic alliance into turmoil. French President Emmanuel Macron, who has long championed a stronger European defense, said their stinging rebukes and threats of non-cooperation in the face of military danger felt like a shock to the system. The tipping point came when Trump decided to upend years of US policy by holding talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in hopes of ending the Russia-Ukraine war." Yes. Oh, sorry that Trump, who was newly elected by the American public in our democratic election, decided to reverse the last four years of a policy by an administration and a party that he defeated. That's kind of what elections are for. Think about how disrespectful and anti-democratic it would be if Trump ran on a platform of ending the war in Ukraine, got into office after he convinced Americans he would do that and then decided to just keep supporting Biden's policy of funding the Ukrainians endlessly. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters a possible peace agreement with Russia cannot be forced on Ukraine. Okay. Quote, "For us, it must be and is clear: this does not mean that peace can be dictated and that Ukraine must accept what is presented to it", he insisted. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said that any peace agreement would need to have the active involvement of the EU and Ukraine so as not to be a false end to the war, quote, "as has happened in the past". He went on, quote: "What cannot be is that the aggression is rewarded." The aggressor is rewarded. Sorry, the aggressor has been rewarded, they won the war as many of us predicted was inevitable despite being called Russian agents three years ago just based on the superior military force and the size of Russia alone.

Sir Keir Starmer, the very unpopular labor leader of the UK, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, went around saying: we, the British, are going to send troops to Ukraine and we're going to keep the peace and protect Ukraine with France. And then he had to backtrack because, as The Guardian reported yesterday: the *US "backstop" is vital to deter future Russian attacks on Ukraine, says Starmer*. In other words, they don't have the capability to do any of that without US involvement. The British Prime Minister says that the force would need protections such as air cover that only the US can provide. If the Europeans want to talk tough, if they want to talk about protecting Ukraine, fighting Russia, whatever, then they should find the money to build up their military and go do that, if that's what their citizens actually want. I don't think it is. Macron is incredibly weak and unpopular, especially after that ridiculous debacle that happened with the EU elections where Marine Le Pen's party won and then he immediately dissolved the French parliament and called new elections. And the leftist coalition won. His party could not even get a majority in the French parliament and doesn't have that anymore. Keir Starmer is incredibly unpopular. European economies are hurting. There's little economic growth. It's very sluggish. Their budgets are overstretched. How are they going to find the money to build up to 5 % of GDP and present a credible fighting force against Russia? Their view has been, we're going to build up our welfare state. We're going to give our citizens a nice life because we don't have to spend money on our defense. The United States is going to do that for us. And that has been the deal, not just after World War II, but even with the fall of the Soviet Union, that for whatever reason, the bipartisan administrations in Washington, eager to serve the US security state and the military industrial complex, have continued to pursue. And Trump, for years now, has said, why do we have NATO again? What do we get out of that? We spend a lot of money to protect Europe. What do we get for that? And the Europeans are scandalized and indignant. But the reality of the world is that Ukraine and the EU cannot sustain a war against Russia. Only the United States can do that and Americans have decided democratically that they don't wish to do so anymore. And that's the end of the story.

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