

THE UKRAINE PEACE DEAL EXPOSED: A GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF US-RUSSIA NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR UKRAINIAN SOVEREIGNTY

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17718914>

Received	Accepted	Published
05 October 2025	13 November 2025	26 November 2025

ABSTRACT

This paper is a critical review of the so-called 28-point peace agreement in the context of Ukraine, which is highly dependent on the geopolitical interests of the United States and Russia. The plan, given as a framework to end the current conflict, is founded on the leaked diplomatic documents, and it casts serious doubts of territorial concessions, politic restructuring, and economic dependency. Applying the prism of the geopolitical theory and the conflict resolution literature, the following paper will analyze the weight of the peace deal to Ukrainian sovereignty. Results indicate that the bargain is an asymmetric settlement that tends to benefit the interests of Russia which offers sanctions relief, territorial recognition and strategic domination of Ukrainian critical energy and industrial infrastructures in disproportional measures. Ukraine, in the meantime, receives some significant political and territorial blows. The article argues that the negotiations are representative of a bigger trend of great-power diplomacy where smaller countries are left to bear the cost of geopolitical trade-offs. It provides recommendations related to the protection of Ukrainian sovereignty and the territorial integrity and autonomy of the country, such that any peace structure is respectful towards it.

Keywords: *Peace Deal; Ukraine Conflict; Geopolitics; Russia-US Relations; Sovereignty; Territorial Concessions; Great-Power Politics; War Negotiations; Eastern Europe; Post-Conflict Settlement.*

INTRODUCTION

The continuing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has disrupted the world geopolitics, recalled the tensions during the Cold War, and shaken the European security. When the Russian troops settled in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, the international community started seeking a way out diplomatically. News of a 28-point peace negotiation, with active mediation between Washington and Moscow, has renewed the arguments about the sovereignty, coercion, and dominance between the great powers (Bukhari, 2024). This peace agreement that

purports to provide a way to a stable future has faced a lot of controversy and debate concerning its real motives and implications with regard to the sovereignty of Ukraine. Another reality is that the 28-point peace plan that is presented as a roadmap that includes all the provisions towards the end of the current conflict contains many contentious provisions that have cast serious concerns. They consist of the territorial acknowledgment of the Russian dominion over Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk territories, the formerly Ukrainian lands,

constitutional limitations that would stop Ukraine entering NATO. The plan also suggests a set of political reforms in Ukraine that may lead to a change of leadership in Kyiv. Some perceive these proposals as institutionalizing a kind of geopolitical bargain institutionalizing Moscow at the expense of Ukraine. This has prompted a lot of questions on the intentions of the deal to be truly a peaceful restoration process and not just the reduction of the big powers carving the future of Ukraine with it.

The main question is as follows: Is this peace agreement aimed at restoring the stability in the region, or it is going to weaken the sovereignty of Ukraine at the price of establishing the peace in the short run? Scholars have been drawn to contend that such agreements tend to erode the sovereignty of smaller states in consonance with their political and territorial destinies since they are reflecting larger powers interests (Bukhari, 2024; Smith, 2024). In the case of Ukraine, the deal can cement the Russian control of Ukrainian land and politics to an extent that the Ukrainian agency of controlling its future is seriously limited. This is not the first time that smaller countries are used in the international relations, where minor countries tend to be collateralized in an international tussle of the great powers.

In this paper, the purported peace proposal will be analyzed through several perspectives: political, economic, and strategic, to give a detailed analysis of how the purported agreement could affect the sovereignty of Ukraine. Using geopolitical theory and conflict-resolution models, the given work judges the plan in the context of the greater patterns of great-power bargaining, in which smaller states frequently have to suffer concessions that hurt them on the pressure of the international community. This paper argues that the agency of Ukraine is still restrained in a process which is mostly dictated by the interests of the super powers, which is an exercise common to international diplomacy wherein smaller countries are not only sucked into international relationships

but dragged with the demands of more powerful actors (Bukhari, 2024).

The fate of Ukraine as its position among great powers depends on these negotiations, which endangers its sovereignty and long-term security. These imbalances are built upon in the proposed peace plan, where Russia inherits territorial gains, and Ukraine is pushed into the state of economic and political dependence. Although the plan might produce a moment of short-term peace, it is likely to consolidate an ongoing geopolitical reality that is consistent with the wider strategic goals of Moscow that leaves Ukraine with little room to maneuver in its future foreign, economy, or security decisions. Through the peace framework, this paper discusses the impacts of the agreement on the sovereignty and security of Ukraine and implications of the same to the future of European geopolitics. The peace arrangement as proposed by the United States and Russia is generally viewed to be an outcome of the great-power diplomacy, whereby there is a need to work out a solution that will favor both the interests of Washington and Moscow. The transaction is indicative of the larger processes of international politics, which are focused on the self-intention of the world powers which can mostly overlook the interests of the smaller states that end up trapped in the middle of the international games. The same reality is excruciatingly apparent in the case of Ukraine, where the state must begin to bargain over its own future in a geopolitical context in which its independence is negotiable both with Russia and the United States. According to Bukhari (2024), these arrangements often leave small countries with minimal bargaining power to guard their political as well as territorial integrity.

The results of this study indicates that despite the appearance of the peace plan as a necessary measure so as to de-escalate the conflict, it might actually be the means through which an asymmetrical geopolitical sphere is established with Ukraine sovereignty severely undermined. Allowing Russia to continue its occupation of conquered regions and denying Ukraine the

ability to pursue its NATO aspirations is a move that strengthens Russia as a regional power and constrained the future security prospects of Ukraine. These processes reflect a larger trend in foreign policy, in which the interests of the strongest actors in the international system take precedence over the rights and desires of states that are smaller.

Besides discussing the political and territorial elements of the peace agreement, this paper shall also discuss economic implications of the peace agreement to Ukraine. As the peace plan implies, economic dependency on Russia is a very serious issue concerning the economic sovereignty and development of Ukraine in future. The possible proposal of a sanctions lifting on Russia in order to rename the territory may establish long-term economic relations which may force Ukraine to a state of reliance to Russia, which will complicate the nation in diversifying economic relations and gaining sustainability. This is a burning question because the economic sovereignty of Ukraine is directly connected to its political liberty and the safety against external threats.

Besides, the peace agreement would bring about changability of the regional security status in Eastern Europe. The peace plan officially acknowledging the Russian authority over Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk creates a bad example of the future of the region of territorial conflicts. It sends the message that the ultimate territorial growth by use of military can be justified by or through diplomatic talks thus, other nations with similar territorial interests will be encouraged. This compromises the international standards of territorial integrity and sovereignty, which are vital towards the preservation of peace and stability in Europe and the rest of the world. This peace plan analysis will eventually indicate that it has been a fresh beginning of the struggle of world powers in the battle of control over smaller powers. The picture of peace is the goal, but this paper will suggest that the peace system that has been created as suggested by the United States and Russia is great-power bargaining and undermines

the sovereignty of Ukraine, as well as, offers a poor example of the way international diplomacy should work. It points to the drawbacks of the capacity of the Ukrainian agency in the existing geopolitical configuration and its wider impacts on global governance and international relations. At the end of this paper, the paper will provide recommendations on the manner in which any peace framework would respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. These recommendations will contain recommendations on how the international norms on territorial integrity can be strengthened, how the diplomatic mechanisms can be made more responsive to the needs of smaller states, and how alternative avenues to conflict resolution can be sought that would not jeopardize the political or economic autonomy of Ukraine.

Literature Review

Power Asymmetry, Coercive Diplomacy and Peace Negotiations.

The dynamics of power asymmetry, coercive diplomacy and the role of great powers in shaping peace negotiations are essential in understanding the resolution of international conflict especially when major powers engage with small states in issues of sovereignty. This literature review puts together important lessons such as the vulnerability of smaller states vis-a-vis the negotiation of great powers, the legitimacy of territorial concessions and sustainability of post-conflict economic dependencies. The following themes deal with effects of power inequities on peace processes as well as long term consequences of agreements in politically sensitive areas, such as the Ukraine.

Power Politics and Vulnerability of Small States.

Small states often have their sovereignty undermined when they are negotiating peace with great powers, as the bigger nations are more interested in their own strategic interests than they are in the sovereignty of the smaller state. For example, this phenomenon, extensively

studied by Galal (2020), is a tendency for small states to be forced into agreements that limit their ability to control their future. Galal believes that once great powers like the United States and Russia are negotiating on behalf of smaller states, they often use this concept of coercive diplomacy to promote their geopolitical interests to the exclusion of and without regard for the interests of smaller states involved. This dynamic has been in evidence in past negotiations such as the Yalta Conference (1945) and the Dayton Accords (1995) in which small states were seen as often just pawns in the much bigger geopolitical games. Similarly, in Long (2017) on small states, despite their vulnerabilities, small states are able to influence through collective power, strategic alliances and economic leverage. Mearsheimer (2014) goes further and speaks of the historical tendency of great powers in their wider struggles for power to treat small states as tools. In the case of Ukraine, the U.S.-Russia negotiations have been an example of the great powers making use of peace agreements to satisfy national interests, sometimes at the cost of the sovereignty of the smaller state involved in the conflict. This brings to light the low level of negotiating power of smaller nations, especially if they are caught in the geopolitical crossfire between larger powers.

Territorial Concessions in Peace Treaties.

One of the most controversial issues of peace settlements is territorial compromise. Goertz, Diehl, and Balas (2016) suggest that while territorial concessions may be a good way to end violence, they often lead to enduring grievances that affect the legitimacy of the government of a state. These territorial changes often are viewed as unjust for which they are, leading to long term instability. This dynamic is a young one in Ukraine; Russia's annexation of Crimea and backing of separatist forces in the Donbas region have continued to escalate tensions in Ukraine. The enormity of the challenge to overcome underlying national identity related issues in peace agreements is highlighted in Goertz et al. (2016) in which the authors suggest that territorial

concessions cannot adequately address ethnic and cultural divides. In the case of the Ukraine, this recognition of Russia's control of Crimea and the separatist areas has not just led to a temporary end to the violence but the political divisions have remained focused. These territorial changes has resulted in the current state of affairs where Ukraine as the aggrieved party is left with a significant loss of sovereignty and legitimacy which could destabilise the region for years to come.

Ukraine Geopolitical Importance.

Ukraine's Geopolitical Importance in Eurasia is tremendous. Brzezinski (1997) suggests that the control of Ukraine is of much importance in establishing Russia's supremacy in the region. Ukraine's location, its proximity to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation of Nations and its historical relationship with Russia have made Ukraine a pivotal arena in the geo-political arms race between the Russians and the West. Brzezinski says that Ukraine's orientation either with the West or with Russia has the potential to change the balance of power in the region, which is why Russia has been so adamant about denying Ukraine's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. The strategic importance of Ukraine is further underlined in Lo (2015), who is discussing Russia's historical perspective of Ukraine as a part of its sphere of influence. Russia's military interventions and insist on the neutrality of Ukraine based on this strategic vision. The role of Ukraine in the maintenance of Russian control in the region is evident in the ongoing conflict, which has centered on territorial control and affiliation with the political order. Russia's actions, including their 2022 invasion of Ukraine, show the lengths that Russia will go to in order to ensure that they continue to have an influence in the region.

Russia's Near-Abroad Doctrine.

Russia's Near-Abroad doctrine, Ukraine is in Russia's sphere of influence. Lo (2015) argues that the insistence of Russia on neutrality of Ukraine, and its resistance to

Ukraine becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, are central to this doctrine as it considers Ukraine the central player in ensuring Russia's geopolitical stability. This framework has fueled Russia's actions, such as the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and ongoing interventions in the Donbas region, against Ukraine. Russia's desire to have control of Ukraine and to defend Russian-speaking populations in Ukraine is indicative of the continued importance of Ukraine in Russia's foreign policy. This doctrine has also affected the terms of peace negotiations, with Russia continuing to call for territorial concessions and political changes to ensure its dominion in the region. Despite international condemnation Russia stands firm and retains the emphasis of strategic value of Ukraine in its more comprehensive vision of the world's geopolitical landscape.

Post-Conflict Economic Dependence.

Post-conflict peace agreements are often followed by economic dependencies on the future of the states concerned. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) speak to the issues of how the use of post-conflict reconstruction money and who controls which resources may perpetuate states-relationships with international powers. Such financial arrangements are usually accompanied by political strings attached, which reverse the future economic sovereignty of the recipient state. In the case of Ukraine, financial terms of the peace agreement currently offered, such as sanctions relief for Russia and possible international aid for Ukraine, might make the country even more dependent on foreign powers, particularly Russia. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) also highlight the relevance of economic aid in post-conflict reconstruction, and how economic aid tends to tie the recipient state to the donor countries in its political and economic future. This is evident in the case of Ukraine where the peace agreement could lead to persistent economic dependencies especially if foreign aid and reconstruction funds come with the expectation of political reforms and territorial concessions. This pattern is also

seen in other post-conflict countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where economic aid is in some cases deeply linked with major political and strategic conditions attached.

Methodology

In this study, the analysis will be based on a qualitative approach to analyze the 28-point peace plan, and the following methods will be used:

Document Analysis. Publicly available sources such as leaked documents, news coverage, diplomatic commentary, geopolitical commentary, and document analysis are utilized to investigate the leaked documents. This approach is aimed at finding patterns, trends and geopolitical implications in the peace plan. The analysis forms comparisons to the historic treaties of peace and it attempts to formulate the current peace agreement into the background of the world of global diplomatic negotiations. This methodology focuses on the significance of cross-referencing the 28-point plan with the existing precedents in the process of international peace-making in order to recognize common strategies or changes in rules of negotiation strategies (Simms, 2013).

Comparative Geopolitical Framework.

Based on this comparison, a comparative analysis is applied comparing the 28-point plan with other similar historical peace settlements, which shed light on the approaches and results of the previous negotiations. The three major agreements that are explored in this comparative framework are:

- **The Brest-Litovsk Treaty (1918):** This treaty signed between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers led to the massive territorial loss by Soviet Russia. This treaty is explored because it captured the spirit of geopolitical power politics and territorial realignment in the World War I (Simms, 2013).
- **Korean Armistice (1953):** This treaty terminated the Korean War and created a ceasefire, which divided Korea along the 38 th parallel. The discussion of

this armistice throws light on the politics of the superpowers, politics of cold war, and the influence of the military and territorial borders on the peace-making (Kim, 2003).

- The Dayton Accords (1995): The Dayton Accords terminated the Bosnian war and put in place political, territorial, and economic structures of the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The focus of the accords on territorial boundaries, power decentralization, and global supervision will be a worthy point of reference needed to analyze the geopolitical dynamics of peace talks (Rohde, 1997).

These comparative studies indicate that power asymmetry, compromising territories, and political restructuring have been critical characteristics of peace agreement since time immemorial.

Thematic Categorization

The peace plan is examined in terms of a number of thematic categories that are really important to comprehend what is being implied behind the scenes:

- Territorial Provisions: Exploring the dynamics of borders and sovereignty, the research in question examines the consequences of territorial concessions to national integrity and stability.

- Political Restructuring: This one is the theme that explores the suggested reforms in the governance, political systems and leadership, and specifically the balance of power in the state in question.

- Economic Redistribution: The economical aspect of the peace plan is considered, which may consist of possible trade agreements, resource distribution, and redistribution of economic power between the parties involved.

- Energy and Industry Control: This category examines the stipulations on the management of strategic industries, especially in energy industries like oil and gas which in many cases are important on international geopolitical relationships.

- Diplomatic Process: The diplomatic talks that gave birth to the peace deal are examined to find out the techniques employed by major powers to attain their

objectives, and the influence of intermediaries.

- Power Asymmetry: The paper examines the presence of dominant powers in the peace-making process and how smaller states work around these power differences in bargaining (Goertz, Diehl, and Balas, 2016).

Limitations

There are a number of limitations considered in this study about the fact that the 28-point peace plan is unofficial. Since the document is leaked and has not been officially verified, the analysis will be based on the secondary data sources, including news coverage and commentary. Thus, the interpretation of the study aims at determining the patterns, which are of geopolitical importance, and not offering the legal legitimization of the peace plan. The research also puts strategic, political, and economic consequences of the plan ahead of assessing whether the plan is legal or formally embraced by the parties concerned (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006).

Discussion

The peace plan offered by 28 points offers a model, which appears to be more guided by the strategic interests of the main powers, especially Russia and the United States, and not Ukrainian interests. The war goals of Russia match a lot of the provisions in the plan, such as the territorial recognition and creation of Ukrainian neutrality. The very establishment of the peace framework in this way is an indication of an underlying imbalance of the negotiating process, whereby the autonomy and interests of Ukraine may be pushed aside in place of more geopolitical goals.

Territorial and Political Concessions. The official status of the Ukrainian recognition of Crimea and Donbas as being part of the Russian controlled territory is based on the realities on the ground. These territorial recognition agreements consolidate territorial hold of Russia, which fits the long-term ambition of Moscow solidifying its position in the region. The political restructuring of Ukraine, including the

constitutional neutrality and new elections, proposed, is also another way of restricting Ukraine in its capacity to align itself with the Western powers and institutions. Such provisions appear to diminish the sovereignty of Ukraine, making it a buffer state between East and West, in accordance with the overall regional strategy of Russia. Economic Realignment. The financial terms of the peace plan indicate an economic realignment that changes the financial orientation of Ukraine. The frozen Russian funds will be handed over to Ukraine to the tune of \$100 billion, and a large part of it- \$200 billion is to be diverted into the joint U.S.-Russia projects. Such funding would increase economic reliance on both Russia and the United States, restricting its ability to be autonomous on the domestic level. According to scholars, this kind of financial mechanism may solidify the foreign influence and ultimately Ukraine will find it harder to implement an independent economic policy later.

Energy and Industrial Control. The joint control over the industrial regions of the North of Ukraine and the Zaporizhia nuclear plant can be considered one of the most strategically important points of the peace plan. This set-up illustrates how the peace process can be used to achieve long-term strategic benefits, especially as regards energy and industrial dominance. The presence of both Russia and the United States in the management of the critical infrastructure in Ukraine implies the two superpowers would remain influential in the country to determine its economic lifelines in a manner that will benefit their own interests.

Diplomatic Secrecy. Another disturbing fact about the peace plan is the secrecy of the diplomatic negotiations. There has been a lot of negotiation behind the closed door as the back channel talks between the U.S. and Russian representatives have become dominant. Such omission sheds light on a scenario where Ukraine is rather a victim than a designer of the peace deal. The fact that these negotiations were not so transparent indicates that the peace plan might not

necessarily be in line with what the Ukrainian people or the leadership in Kyiv wants, which further weakens the legitimacy of the entire process.

Analysis

The peace plan is a win-win bargain where both Washington and Moscow gain heavily, Ukraine significantly loses.

For Russia:

- Re-establishment of territorial claims over the occupied territories (Crimea, Donbas).
- Lifting part of sanctions and reintegration in the international economy.
- Potential return to the G8
- Economic advantages on collaborative projects with the U.S.
- Control of energy sector and major industrial areas of Ukraine.

For the United States:

- Peace and development in Europe without the need to increase military conflicts.
- Domination of industrial redevelopment in Ukraine, which guarantees the participation of the West in the restructuring of the Ukrainian economy.
- Geopolitical presence in the U.S.-Russia relationship- Strategic leverage over Russia through retention of influence on the peace process and leverage on Ukraine through geopolitics.

For Ukraine:

- Destruction of sovereignty and possession of important territories.
- Curtailment of independence of foreign policy especially in regard to its association with NATO and the EU.
- Possible leadership reorganization, which might undermine its political agency.
- Weak defense potential, which restrained the possibility of Ukraine to defend its interests alone.
- This lopsided to the balance of the peace agreement is a classic example of coercive diplomacy where the interests of smaller states such as Ukraine are swamped by the interests of the great powers, especially Russia and the United States.

The peace plan is premised on leakages and unofficial reports and no direct access to classified diplomatic reports. The agreement in all its details is not publicly confirmed by Ukraine, Russia, or the United States. Therefore, the analysis is based on interpretations and it is more aimed at identifying geopolitical trends as opposed to giving validated legal evaluations. This weakness highlights the doubt about the peace process and its sustainability.

Conclusion

The so-called peace deal of Ukraine is an illustration of great-power bargaining when the strategic interests prevail over the fair resolution of the conflict. The plan itself is a peace plan, but the terms are skewed in favor of Russia and Ukraine is positioned at long-term reliance on both Moscow and Washington. The agreement is a threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Ukraine, which places the country in a tenuous position. This situation is a typical historical trend: as many other times, smaller states become victims of the choices made by great powers without their complete approval. The future of Ukraine is determined by possible acceptance of this forced settlement by Kyiv or its further struggle to safeguard its independence and its geographical borders.

Recommendations

- The autonomy of Ukraine should be an initial priority during the peace process with Kyiv being the central focus. Nowadays, a large country such as the U.S. and Russia possesses much of the power in international relations at the expense of the smaller country, which is Ukraine, in our case scenario. Ukraine can secure its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and future diplomatic relations by making sure that Ukraine is at the forefront of the decision-making process. This suggestion highlights the impact of self-determination in peace talks, where Ukraine has the right to be heard, and its interests are put at the forefront than the geopolitical interests of other countries.

- Enhance the international law to deter forced concessions of territories and safeguard the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The peace plan suggested incorporates the territorial concessions, especially in Crimea and Donbas, which would essentially lead to the destruction of the sovereignty of Ukraine. To prevent forced changes in the territories without the agreement of Ukraine, strengthening international legal frameworks, including the Charter of the United Nations or the European Convention on Human Rights, would be beneficial. Legal assurances would mean that no authority can make unilateral demands regarding giving territorial concessions to Ukraine to guard the territorial integrity of the country under external pressure.

- Decentralize reconstruction financing so as not to rely on bilateral U.S.-Russia economic relations. The peace plan proposes the use of frozen Russian assets, but it further proposes considerable joint economic initiatives between the U.S. and Russia, which may result in an economic system that may leave Ukraine in a vulture role. In order to avoid Ukraine being economically dependent on these large powers it is important to make the sources of funds towards reconstruction more varied. Involvement in the multilateral institutions, including the European Union, the World Bank, and other international development organizations, would ensure that Ukraine is not over-dependent on a single foreign actor and will have more economic freedom.

- Gain energy and industrial autonomy, so that Ukraine can be sovereign in the long run and in both economic and economic strength. The economic security of a country is dependent on energy resources and industries. The peace plan implies that some industrial regions, as well as the nuclear plant of Zaporizhia, are under joint control, which may cause significant long-term strategic drawbacks of Ukraine. This would ensure Ukraine has total control over these sectors and remains economically independent, as well as avoid exploitation of vital resources by foreign powers. Free

energy and industry would also safeguard Ukraine against any future external manipulation or an external economic pressure, helping to stabilize the economy and national security of Ukraine.

- Expand the platform of negotiation by increasing EU and UN participation to diminish the influence of bilateral great-power negotiations. The peace talks between the U.S. and Russia have been condemned as marginalizing Ukraine since the two great powers take over the discussion. The inclusion of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), in the peace process, would contribute to a more inclusive and balanced negotiation platform. Both agencies introduce the multilateral views that might assist in better representation of the interests of Ukraine. Particularly, the EU is interested in ensuring the stability of the region and can provide other forms of diplomatic and economic incentives. The UN is capable of legal and humanitarian assistance, which strengthens the legitimacy of the peace process.

- Enhance open diplomacy by use of multilateral forums, making the peace process inclusive and representative of all the parties involved. The veil of secrecy about the peace talks, especially the back-channel talks between the U.S and Russia have questioned the process on its transparency and inclusivity. Helping to achieve open diplomacy would mean making sure that negotiations processes are transparent and that no one involved but Ukraine is sidelined. International forums, through international summits, diplomatic discussions and peace conferences would offer a more transparent platform on which to negotiate. This would promote a feeling of fairness and enable more international participation, which would reduce the risks of coercive diplomacy.

Explanation of Key Points:

- **Ukraine-Centered Negotiations.** The main concept is to see to it that Ukraine, which has suffered the most in the peace deal, takes centre-stage in deciding its own destiny. This would prevent instances

where decisions are arrived at without taking into consideration the needs and wants of Ukraine especially when the larger powers are concerned.

- **Law and Guarantees of the International Law.** International law may serve as an immunity against compelled concessions, so that Ukraine will retain its territorial sovereignty and that no other large powers can violate and abuse this sovereignty without a due process or without any consent. Law frameworks might involve regional treaties (such as those in the EU) as well as international law at large, such as United Nations resolutions.

- **Diversifying Reconstruction Funding.** Depending on one source or group of the countries (e.g., the U.S and Russia) to cover the reconstruction costs might put Ukraine in a bad situation. Diversification of sources of funds- loan arrangements by the international financial institutions or through investment by various countries will help Ukraine to avoid the risks of being financially dependent on any individual nation or bloc.

- **The Control of Energy and Industry is Independent.** Energy and industrial assets are vital in the control of economic independence. When foreign powers have influence over these vital sectors they are able to manipulate or even control the economic policies and geopolitical policies of a country. Having a reserve of energy sources and industries in the hands of Ukraine would alleviate this weakness and add to its long-term sustainability.

- Ngreb-Suleman and Funnell (2013) note that the EU and UN involvement may have increased. EU and UN are very influential in their diplomacy as they are able to add balance to a negotiation process overwhelmed by bigger players such as the U.S and Russia. Their participation would enhance the credibility of the peace process and give Ukraine a larger platform in which to state its interests.

● Transparent Diplomacy. Openness in diplomacy would go a long way in ensuring that all parties have equal access to the information and power over the process. In the scenario of the 28-point peace plan, open diplomacy would avoid back-room agreements that may weaken the case of Ukraine. The multilateral forums also provide the smaller states with the opportunity to be heard at the table with the great powers.

These are recommendations that seek to have a more balanced and fair peace process that protects the sovereignty of Ukraine and its economic and political autonomy as well as facilitating the greater international involvement and openness in the peace talks.

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