

# Donald Trump Still Does Not Understand the Russia's Position Regarding Ukraine

By Larry C. Johnson – Sonar 21

I continue to believe that it is more important to watch what Donald Trump does rather than focus on what he says. **However, his remarks during the meeting of his cabinet earlier this week regarding negotiations to end the war in Ukraine are alarming and merit attention.** When asked about Sergei Lavrov's comment that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is not legitimate, Donald Trump dismissed the statement, saying:

It doesn't matter what they say. Everybody's posturing. It's all bullshit, okay. Everybody's posturing.

He characterized Lavrov's remarks—and the broader Kremlin rhetoric on Zelensky's legitimacy—as meaningless showmanship, emphasizing that such claims should not obstruct peace efforts. Trump did not directly defend Zelensky, but instead focused on downplaying the significance of Russia's statements and suggested that “everyone is just putting on a show” in on-going negotiations.

I believe that Trump genuinely believes this, and he is dangerously mistaken. President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov are not posturing when they try to explain to clueless westerners that they do not believe that Zelensky is the legitimate President of Ukraine. While Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy did not explicitly “cancel” the presidential election, as Ukrainian law prohibits holding elections during martial law, which has been in effect since Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, the reality from the Russian perspective is that a negotiated agreement with Zelensky could easily be overturned or rejected once Ukraine holds the required election.

The scheduled presidential election, expected in March or April 2024, was automatically postponed due to this legal restriction under Article 19 of Ukraine's “On the Legal Regime of Martial Law,” which bans presidential, parliamentary, and local elections during martial law. Martial law has been extended in 90-day intervals by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's parliament), with the latest extension as of July 2025 lasting until November 5, 2025.

**Based on Zelensky's multiple public remarks since his last meeting with Trump at the White House, it is clear that he is completely disinterested in reaching a peace agreement with Russia.**

Stephen Bryen has just published a new piece on his [Substack](#), and it provides an explanation for Zelensky's recalcitrance... NATO is going to attack Russia. Steve writes:

**While Putin has flown off to meet with his two buddies, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un, in China on an unprecedented four day jaunt, NATO, with full US backing, is stepping up its effort to hand the Russian army a major defeat and, following that, introducing NATO troops to “stabilize” Ukraine.**

What is the evidence? First and very noticeable is the US decision to ship 3,350 missiles to Ukraine, ostensibly to be paid for (someday?) by the Europeans (which ones is not defined). These are known as Extended Range Attack Munitions (ERAM), a type of air launched cruise missile. The [Aviationist reports](#) that “Ukrainian Air Force’s [F-16s](#), [Mirage 2000s](#) and its fleet of Russian-origin [MiG-29s](#), [Su-25s](#) and [Su-27s](#) would be able to operate it. This new weapon would be an addition to the [AASM Hammer](#) and [GBU-39 SDB](#) already employed by Ukrainian fighters.”

According to open source intelligence, ERAMs have a range of 250 miles. However, that is the range once launched by an aircraft. Washington says it opposes Ukrainian missile attacks on Russian territory, and while it is restricting the use of long range HIMARS, it is not restricting the use of ERAM. Reportedly ERAM carried a 500 lb. warhead, far larger than any Ukrainian UAV and more than double any of the different HIMARS missiles (M31 Utility Warhead, ATACMS warhead). It may be that ERAMs can be fielded with cluster munitions, although much about the ERAM is uncertain.

**Ignore what Trump says, watch what he does. Deploying ERAMs is not a gesture of peace or de-escalation. While it is possible that this action was taken without Trump’s knowledge, now that the information is public he has not countermanded the order.**

Steve goes on in his article (I encourage you to read it in its entirety) to highlight the faulty assumptions that NATO planners and leaders are making:

NATO has understood Russia’s use of North Korean troops as an admission that Russia faces manpower shortages and instability in the Russian army, and that Russia is taking heavy casualties in the Ukraine war. NATO may be reading Putin’s statements that he has no intention of attacking Europe now or in future as an admission that he cannot attack Europe with an army that is too small and one that has been broken by the Ukraine war. Part of the pushback can be found in the [Saratoga Foundation report](#), “A Systems View of Russia’s Early Failure in Ukraine.”

Now Russian sources are reporting two developments that indicate that a new offensive will soon materialize, heavily supported by NATO, and aimed at Crimea.

Those sources say that the US and its NATO partners have significantly increased overhead intelligence gathering preparing for the coming attack.

Once again we have Western leaders — both military and political — wrongly interpreting Russia’s execution of a *special military operation* as a sign of weakness. The belief that Russia is suffering “manpower shortages and

instability" is beyond ridiculous. During the course of the last 42 months, Russia has doubled the size of its army and is now conducting multiple offensive operations in Zaporhyzhia, Dniepropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Sumy. Even if we accept as true the false Western claims about Russia suffering massive casualties, the fact remains that even with such losses Russia has 1.3 million men in uniform and carrying arms. Instead of being "broken," the Russian army has enhanced its capabilities and developed new techniques, especially with the use of drones, that far exceed anything NATO is capable of doing.

Besides conducting the ground war, Russia continues to enjoy a lopsided advantage in the use of missiles and drones. It has carried out massive strikes on missile production facilities and other key logistic nodes in the past week, and shows no sign of weakness on that front.

**A NATO-backed attack on Crimea will put increased pressure on President Putin to shift from the *Special Military Operation* to full war footing. NATO's inability to supply Ukraine with something as simple as artillery shells is just one indicator of NATO's impotence if it decides to up the ante with Russia.**