

To Give Peace A Chance, Should Russia Consider A Unilateral Ceasefire?

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Apart from causing large-scale distress the prolonged Ukraine conflict also has very dangerous possibilities of escalation. There do not seem to be any visible efforts on the part of Ukraine and its NATO backers for ending the war as early as possible despite all the adversities the Ukraine forces have suffered in recent times. In these circumstances, and keeping in view the urgent need for peace, Russia should take a bold initiative with unilateral declaration of ceasefire. This should be on the basis of the existing line of control. Russia should also announce that the ceasefire, if reciprocated, would be followed by extensive, longer-term talks to resolve various differences in conditions of peace.

If Russia announces such a unilateral ceasefire then this should be welcomed by various forces of peace all over the world as well as by various eminent persons known for their commitment to peace. This will increase the chances of a positive response by Ukraine.

If Ukraine respects the ceasefire and responds in similar fashion, a big breakthrough for peace would be achieved. Peace will get a big chance. Both sides should work carefully to build further on this so as to achieve more durable peace in a spirit of give and take. Meanwhile everyone can pray that NATO or the USA will not obstruct or sabotage this.

If Ukraine does not respond to this ceasefire, then Russia will still not lose much as it can regretfully continue its war effort after clarifying to the world that its ceasefire offer was not accepted or respected. In its existing strong position Russia will not incur any big loss and so it has nothing much to lose by declaring a unilateral ceasefire and initiating a peace effort on this basis.

On the other hand if Ukraine responds well and also declares a ceasefire, then a very big

achievement and opening for peace will be made and the entire world should support this.

If both sides cooperate in this way then chances will increase that the war ends not on a note of frozen conflict with all its continuing dangers and risks, but instead ends with genuine goodwill and peace. The United Nations should try its best to help to take this forward if and when such opportunities emerge.

Senior scholars, diplomats and statespersons of various countries, particularly Western countries, can make an important contribution to such efforts by extending their support. The peace movement worldwide should of course extend very enthusiastic support to any such initiative.

Of course such an initiative can also start with Ukraine making a ceasefire offer. The reason why a Russian initiative has been emphasized here is that while Russia is very capable of entirely independent decision making, in the case of Ukraine, for the time-being at least, the decision making is heavily impacted by the USA in particular and therefore the chances of such an independent initiative emerging from Ukraine are much lesser.

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