

“The US and the UK prefer a long war in Ukraine rather than peace,” Interview with Unver Sel

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Turkish President Erdogan had worked tirelessly to plan a peace negotiation meeting in Antalya, Turkey on April 7, 2022, between the delegations of both Ukraine and Russia. Erdogan was poised as the person who could facilitate the end of death and destruction, not to mention safeguarding the global supply of wheat. Turkey is a NATO member, a US ally, and has a working relationship with both sides of the conflict. All eyes were on Erdogan to make a peace deal.

On April 8, 2022 UK **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** made a surprise visit to Kyiv, and told Ukrainian President Zelensky to not make any peace deal, but to fight Russia in Ukraine and assured Zelensky the weapons would keep coming, thus undermining Erdogan’s push for peace. Johnson wasn’t there on his own, he was only a messenger sent by Washington.

David Arakhamia, the parliamentary leader of Zelensky’s “Servant of the People” party who led the Ukrainian delegation in peace talks with Moscow said in a recent televised interview that “Russia’s goal was to push us to take neutrality,” by not joining NATO, and that “they were ready to end the war if we accept neutrality.”

Steven Sahiounie of MidEastDiscourse interviewed Unver Sel, a Turkish political activist, President of the Federation of Crimean Tatar Cultural Associations in Turkey, and Chairman of the International Association “Friends of Crimea” in Turkey. The interview sheds light on the betrayal of Turkey at the hands of the US President Joe Biden, and the continuing pressure of the US on Turkey.

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Steven Sahiounie (SS): What do you think about Arakhamia's revelations that the Ukrainian delegation at the negotiations in Turkey rejected the Russian proposal to stop hostilities and withdraw troops? Turkey had been painstakingly preparing these negotiations for a long time, but Boris Johnson, who suddenly arrived in Kyiv, ruined everything by insisting that Ukraine should continue the war with the Russian Federation. After all, Erdogan personally controlled the preparations and progress of the negotiations, but Ukraine and Britain sharply rejected his peacemaking efforts.

Unver Sel (US): Even though Westerners deny it, the long-running conflict in Ukraine could have ended long ago. The United States and the United Kingdom first blocked a ceasefire and then a possible peace process over there. As you mentioned, Boris Johnson personally ruined everything by visiting Kiev at that time. The eyes that want to see, see everything. Remember: Boris Johnson had a phone conversation with French President Emanuel Macron after his visit to Kiev. Johnson himself confirmed during his statements after his term ended, that he encouraged Vladimir Zelenskiy to oppose peace and show resistance. These statements did not find much coverage in the West at that time. But we all remember.

Ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, even a peace process could have occurred for the last 22 months. However, NATO's desire to weaken and destabilize Russia was the biggest obstacle to this. In another statement by Fiona Hill, former U.S. national security official, she stated that both sides agreed on a mutual ceasefire before Boris Johnson's visit. Remember: former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan brought the parties together to negotiate. At the end of the day, NATO undermined every outcome of these negotiations.

In my personal opinion, the United States and the United Kingdom preferred a long war rather than an early peace. Because the goal of both is to create instability and weaken the Russian Federation. Moscow was open to negotiations from the beginning. I've been saying this from the beginning. This part is important. The starting date here is not February 24, 2022. The beginning here is the Maidan Coup that took place in Kiev in 2014. While evaluating the major events, people need to consider everything what happened further back in the calendar and events which have deeper consequences. Unfortunately, even so called experts are evaluated in a very superficial context.

On the other hand, if we consider this conflict in a geopolitical context: everything is a complete "Energy War". The USA and the UK have been trying for many years to prevent Europeans from accessing Russian gas. This is the main reason why they are preventing ceasefire and peace negotiations today. Washington and London blockaded the European Union and the Euro with an energy war. Europeans are knowingly being dragged into energy scarcity. Remember: when Saddam Hussein decided to sell oil in Euros, they started bombing Iraq. Nothing has changed since that day. What is happening is called an "Energy War".

SS: The US Treasury Department previously announced that Deputy Secretary Brian Nelson will soon visit Türkiye to discuss the sanctions regime against Russia. According to Bloomberg, the United States, in particular, is concerned about Türkiye's refusal to join American sanctions against Russian ships and airlines and is threatening Turkish companies with secondary sanctions. This is the second visit to Türkiye by Nelson, who oversees "counter-terrorism and financial intelligence" at the Treasury Department.

How do you feel about the US position to force Türkiye to join anti-Russian sanctions, despite the fact that it was the West, together with the US, that insisted on continuing the war with the Russian Federation, ignoring Turkey's mediating peacekeeping role?

US: In recent years, choosing sides has begun on a global scale. Following the current conflict in Ukraine, countries entered the race to choose sides one by one. Governments are making statements one after another about who they support and why. As you know, when the conflicts between Israel and Palestine increased in Gaza Strip in recent days, this process of choosing sides came to the agenda again in every country. About two years ago, we were considering to choose Russia or Ukraine and today we are at the same point about Palestine or Israel.

In such situations, pursuing a more independent foreign policy within the blocs and alliances you are in, requires great experience. Compared to many countries in the NATO alliance, Türkiye preferred an independent diplomacy path from the beginning and approached both Ukraine and Russia at equal distance. We did not participate in embargoes. Of course, while choosing this path of diplomacy today, the Republic of Türkiye has progressed by taking lessons from the experiences in its history. Remember: while there was great global destruction during the World War II, Türkiye saved its country from destruction by not choosing a side. It is best for Türkiye to act intelligently, realistically and pragmatically in such moments.

USA's "whatever I say happens!" attitude is a phenomenon known all over the world. The Republic of Türkiye is not a colony of the USA. It was founded with an independence character and anti-imperialist philosophy. Every country has its DNA. This attitude of the USA and the West in general towards Türkiye is against our DNA.

Türkiye does not participate in sanctions and continues its trade with Russia. This actually contributes to reducing tension in the region.

On the other hand, while it is not a problem for Germany, one of the USA's biggest allies, to trade with Russia through countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and indirectly break embargoes; it is nonsense that Türkiye's independent policy is a problem. If US officials want to take such a determined stance against Russia, they should first start investigations and secondary sanctions through Germany. If we look at the trade volumes carried out directly by Turkey and indirectly by Germany, you will see that Germany has achieved higher amounts.

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