

PERSPECTIVES FOR SOLUTIONS OF DONBAS CONFLICT: UKRAINIAN VIEW

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The first point that president Zelensky's great desire for peace is at the heart of his policy. Peace is the first priority in the new National Security Strategy of Ukraine, which draft was developed with collaborations of the National Institute for Strategic Studies.

But the road to peace is a two-way road. Unfortunately, we can't see, that Russia has changed significantly its attitude toward Ukraine and the West. Kremlin still wants to curb Ukraine sovereignty and weaken NATO and EU. Anyway, even if the real end of hostilities lies in distant future, unperfected armistice usually is much better than war.

A current strategic stalemate on Donbas costs much for Ukraine, not very beneficial for Kremlin and it is a completely disaster for Ukrainian citizens, who lives under occupation or in proximity of a front line. So there is some space for finding solution at least stop the violence.

There is no attainable alternative to Minsk agreements. But these agreements are only a framework. Some level of trust between sides is badly needed for filling the gaps in that framework by workable solutions.

There are some signs for very cautious optimism. These are exchange of some media-known detained persons last August, disengagements of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske, return of captured Ukraine navy vessels. All this moves signalize about a possibility at least limited progress in implementation of Minsk agreements.

But concession, which made Russia till now is rather «cheap». It is not clear, is Kremlin ready to give essential security guarantees. That's crucial for Ukraine. We sure any Ukrainian concessions in this sphere lead not to peace, but to escalation and expansion armed conflict in Donbas on new territories in a very nearest future.

There are three possible outcome of future Normandy Format meeting. The best one, but least possible is a start of a long process of reintegration on now Russia-controlled territories of Donbas. The worst one: we stay where we are now.

But it is also possible that will be found the path to “freeze” armed conflict. It is

not the best situation. But it`s much better than ongoing bloodshed.

Ukrainian workers rebuild bridge to Russia controlled territory in Stanytsia
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