**Le prix de la paix**

[Jean-Marie Choffray](https://www.amazon.com/kindle-dbs/entity/author/B00DNUGN64?_encoding=UTF8&node=283155&offset=0&pageSize=12&searchAlias=stripbooks&sort=author-sidecar-rank&page=1&langFilter=default#formatSelectorHeader)

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**Résumé**

Lundi 21 février 2022. Jour des présidents aux Etats-Unis (President's Day). Suite à l’échec des accords de Minsk, la Fédération de Russie reconnaît les deux républiques sécessionnistes du Donbass en tant que nations souveraines. L’armée reçoit l’ordre d’y assurer le maintien de l’ordre. Un nouveau monde vient de naître. La stratégie européenne de sécurité vacille. Dans les mois et années à venir, espérons que l’intelligence et la sagesse l’emportent sur la folie et la violence. Nous vivons des moments historiques à côté desquels la Grande Panique de 2020, les errements des marchés, l’évolution climatique, l’inflation et l’essoufflement de la croissance ne sont que des péripéties. Le temps des hésitations, des précautions, des démentis et de l’hypocrisie semble révolu. Le moment de choisir est arrivé : la paix ou la violence ? La vérité ou le mensonge ? Le partage ou la révolte ? Le travail ou l’oisiveté ? L’Histoire rappelle que **Le prix de la paix** n’est autre que le courage avec lequel l’Humanité renonce à la violence pour s’inscrire dans une logique de dépassement des craintes, de refrènement des passions, de renforcement de la confiance et de recherche de la coopération. Le 17 décembre 2021, la Fédération de Russie fait un premier pas. Les Etats-Unis (et l’Europe) en font un second le 26 janvier 2022. Le cours de l’Histoire semble reprendre vigueur. Le 14 février, la Fédération de Russie note le progrès et décide de donner une chance à la paix. Le 15 février, son armée commence à se retirer. Le Président Biden réagit. L’impatience prend le dessus. Les passions s’enflamment sur la ligne de front et ailleurs. L’inacceptable devient inévitable. Et la folie des uns risque d’entraîner celle des autres vers le néant d’un monde sans Dieu, sans foi ni loi. La vie n’apporte pas souvent l’opportunité d’observer en temps réel de tels événements stratégiques affectant le cours de l’Histoire. C’est pourquoi, avant que les principaux textes ne disparaissent dans le brouillard de la virtualité, je les ai regroupés dans un document susceptible d’alimenter l’analyse des intentions et des actes que chacun jugera utile d’en faire.

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*We should not believe any of them. »*

*« The most pressing human costs are in terms of physical deprivation and suffering.*

*The most pressing moral imperative in policy making is a calculus of pain. »*

*« Human beings have the right to live in a meaningful world. An assessment of*

*the cost of policy must also include a calculus of meaning. »*

Peter L. Berger

**Le prix de la paix**

Plus j’observe le comportement des hommes et des sociétés, plus je pense que l’*Irrationalité* pourrait bien en constituer la règle, et la *Rationalité* l’exception ! L’observation de Bossuet selon laquelle « *Dieu se rit des hommes qui déplorent les effets dont ils chérissent les causes*», me paraît conforme à la réalité. Cet état des choses, qui souvent contribue à la diversité, à la beauté et à la saveur de la vie, devient pénalisant dans la conduite des affaires mondiales, lorsqu’une succession de décisions irréfléchies pourrait conduire à l’anéantissement de la *Civilisation*. Situation que nous pourrions atteindre si nous n’y prenions garde.

La Russie dispose d’une force nucléaire imposante et d’une puissante armée active au plan international. Sa *Sécurité* et ses *Valeurs* méritent considération. Tout comme, sans le moindre doute, la *Sécurité* et les *Valeurs* des Etats regroupés au sein du Monde Occidental. L’histoire rappelle qu’en *Géopolitique*, personne ne détient le monopole de la *Vérité*. L’organisation « optimale » d’un ensemble humain est la résultante de facteurs économiques, démographiques et culturels, notamment, dont l’importance relative varie dans l’espace et dans le temps, et est en partie le fruit du *Hasard* et de la *Nécessité*. Dans *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change*, Peter L. Berger invite à l’humilité et à la sincérité dans le jugement du monde et de son développement ; personne ne détenant avec certitude les clés du bonheur… « The world today is divided into ideological camps. The adherents of each tell us with great assurance where we’re at and what we should do about it. We should not believe any of them […] The most pressing human costs are in terms of physical deprivation and suffering. The most pressing moral imperative in policy making is a *calculus of pain* […] Human beings have the right to live in a meaningful world. An assessment of the cost of policy must also include a *calculus of meaning.*” La prise en compte de la souffrance et de la nécessité d’apporter une *lueur d’espoir* aux autres – particulièrement aux plus jeunes –, devrait être au cœur de toute politique responsable et, certainement, de la réflexion à laquelle notre monde ne peut plus échapper aujourd’hui.

Le 17 décembre 2021, le Ministère des Affaires étrangères Russe prend l’initiative de publier deux projets de Traité : entre les Etats-Unis et la Russie, et entre l’OTAN et la Russie. Ces projets visent à répondre aux risques et menaces perçus par Moscou. Ils sont discutés au cours de trois réunions : Genève le 10 janvier 2022 ; Bruxelles le 12 janvier (OTAN) ; et Vienne, le 13 janvier (OSCE). Enfin, une réunion complémentaire entre Mr. Blinken et Mr. Lavrov a lieu à Genève le 21 janvier. Le 26 janvier se tient à Paris une réunion des conseillers des Chefs d’État et de gouvernement du format Normandie (Accords de Minsk). Ce même jour, l’ambassadeur J. Sullivan apporte la réponse Américaine. Celle-ci a la forme de *Principes fondamentaux* balisant la voie diplomatique susceptible de répondre aux attentes Russes en matière d’*Indivisibilité de la Sécurité*, tout en respectant le *Droit Souverain* des peuples à écrire leur avenir. « I believe that all of Russia’s fears could yet be allayed, and we could find a path to mutual security through patient and principled diplomacy, provided that President Putin avoids the trap of starting a terrible war » (Boris Johnson). Le 14 février, la Fédération de Russie note le progrès réalisé et donne une chance à la paix. Le 15 février, son armée commence à se retirer. Le Président Biden réagit. L’impatience prend le dessus. Les passions s’enflamment sur la ligne de front et ailleurs. L’inacceptable devient inévitable. Et la folie des uns risque d’entraîner celle des autres vers le néant d’un monde sans Dieu, sans foi ni loi.

La vie n’apporte pas souvent l’opportunité d’observer en temps réel de tels ***événements stratégiques*** affectant l’architecture du monde et le cours de la *Civilisation*. C’est pourquoi, avant que les principaux textes ne disparaissent dans le brouillard de la virtualité, je les ai regroupés dans un document susceptible d’alimenter l’analyse des intentions et des actes que chacun choisira d’en faire :

* Draft NATO-Russia Agreement on measures to ensure the security of The Russian Federation and member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. 17 December 2021 ([Source](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790803/?lang=en))
* Draft Treaty between The United States of America and the Russian Federation on security guarantees.17 December 2021 ([Source](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en))
* Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races. January 03, 2022. ([Source](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/03/p5-statement-on-preventing-nuclear-war-and-avoiding-arms-races/))
* Russia receives US response to security proposals. Envoy delivers US, NATO responses to Russian offer.January 26, 2022. ([Source](https://www.rt.com/russia/547447-russia-us-nato-security-response/))
* Déclaration des conseillers des chefs d’État et de gouvernement du format Normandie.Janvier 26, 2022. ([Source](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/01/26/declaration-des-conseillers-des-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-du-format-normandie))
* Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s answer to a media question.

January 27, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1796041/))

* Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s working meeting with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.February 14, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1798349/))
* Statement of the Russian Defense Ministry spokesperson, Major General Igor Konashenkov, on the return of formations and military units to permanent locations.February 15, 2022. ([Source](https://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12408929@egNews))
* Remarks by President Biden Providing an Update on Russia and Ukraine. February 15, 2022. ([Source](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/15/remarks-by-president-biden-providing-an-update-on-russia-and-ukraine/))
* Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to questions at Security Council meeting. February 21, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/1799823/))

**Draft NATO-Russia Agreement on measures to ensure the security of The Russian Federation and member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.**

17 December 2021 ([Source](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790803/?lang=en))

The Russian Federation and the member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

reaffirming their aspiration to improve relations and deepen mutual understanding,

acknowledging that an effective response to contemporary challenges and threats to security in our interdependent world requires joint efforts of all the Parties,

determined to prevent dangerous military activity and therefore reduce the possibility of incidents between their armed forces,

noting that the security interests of each Party require better multilateral cooperation, more political and military stability, predictability, and transparency,

reaffirming their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the 1999 Charter for European Security, and the Rome Declaration "Russia-NATO Relations: a New Quality" signed by the Heads of State and Government of the Russian Federation and NATO member States in 2002,

have agreed as follows:

**Article 1**

The Parties shall guide in their relations by the principles of cooperation, equal and indivisible security. They shall not strengthen their security individually, within international organizations, military alliances or coalitions at the expense of the security of other Parties.

The Parties shall settle all international disputes in their mutual relations by peaceful means and refrain from the use or threat of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The Parties shall not create conditions or situations that pose or could be perceived as a threat to the national security of other Parties.

The Parties shall exercise restraint in military planning and conducting exercises to reduce risks of eventual dangerous situations in accordance with their obligations under international law, including those set out in intergovernmental agreements on the prevention of incidents at sea outside territorial waters and in the airspace above, as well as in intergovernmental agreements on the prevention of dangerous military activities.

**Article 2**

In order to address issues and settle problems, the Parties shall use the mechanisms of urgent bilateral or multilateral consultations, including the NATO-Russia Council.

The Parties shall regularly and voluntarily exchange assessments of contemporary threats and security challenges, inform each other about military exercises and maneuvers, and main provisions of their military doctrines. All existing mechanisms and tools for confidence-building measures shall be used in order to ensure transparency and predictability of military activities.

Telephone hotlines shall be established to maintain emergency contacts between the Parties.

**Article 3**

The Parties reaffirm that they do not consider each other as adversaries.

The Parties shall maintain dialogue and interaction on improving mechanisms to prevent incidents on and over the high seas (primarily in the Baltics and the Black Sea region).

**Article 4**

The Russian Federation and all the Parties that were member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as of 27 May 1997, respectively, shall not deploy military forces and weaponry on the territory of any of the other States in Europe in addition to the forces stationed on that territory as of 27 May 1997. With the consent of all the Parties such deployments can take place in exceptional cases to eliminate a threat to security of one or more Parties.

**Article 5**

The Parties shall not deploy land-based intermediate- and short-range missiles in areas allowing them to reach the territory of the other Parties.

**Article 6**

All member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization commit themselves to refrain from any further enlargement of NATO, including the accession of Ukraine as well as other States.

**Article 7**

The Parties that are member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization shall not conduct any military activity on the territory of Ukraine as well as other States in the Eastern Europe, in the South Caucasus and in Central Asia.

In order to exclude incidents the Russian Federation and the Parties that are member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization shall not conduct military exercises or other military activities above the brigade level in a zone of agreed width and configuration on each side of the border line of the Russian Federation and the states in a military alliance with it, as well as Parties that are member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

**Article 8**

This Agreement shall not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting the primary responsibility of the Security Council of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security, nor the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations.

**Article 9**

This Agreement shall enter into force from the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification, expressing consent to be bound by it, with the Depositary by more than a half of the signatory States. With respect to a State that deposited its instrument of ratification at a later date, this Agreement shall enter into force from the date of its deposit.

Each Party to this Agreement may withdraw from it by giving appropriate notice to the Depositary. This Agreement shall terminate for such Party [30] days after receipt of such notice by the Depositary.

This Agreement has been drawn up in Russian, English and French, all texts being equally authentic, and shall be deposited in the archive of the Depositary, which is the Government of ...

Done in [the city of …] this [XX] day of [XX] two thousand and [XX].

**Draft Treaty between The United States of America and the Russian Federation on security guarantees.**

17 December 2021 ([Source](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en))

The United States of America and the Russian Federation, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties",

guided by the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the provisions of the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, the 1999 Charter for European Security, and the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation,

recalling the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations both in their mutual and international relations in general,

supporting the role of the United Nations Security Council that has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security,

recognizing the need for united efforts to effectively respond to modern security challenges and threats in a globalized and interdependent world,

considering the need for strict compliance with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs, including refraining from supporting organizations, groups or individuals calling for an unconstitutional change of power, as well as from undertaking any actions aimed at changing the political or social system of one of the Contracting Parties,

bearing in mind the need to create additional effective and quick-to-launch cooperation mechanisms or improve the existing ones to settle emerging issues and disputes through a constructive dialogue on the basis of mutual respect for and recognition of each other’s security interests and concerns, as well as to elaborate adequate responses to security challenges and threats,

seeking to avoid any military confrontation and armed conflict between the Parties and realizing that direct military clash between them could result in the use of nuclear weapons that would have far-reaching consequences,

reaffirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and recognizing the need to make every effort to prevent the risk of outbreak of such war among States that possess nuclear weapons,

reaffirming their commitments under the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War of 30 September 1971, the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas of 25 May 1972, the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers of 15 September 1987, as well as the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities of 12 June 1989,

have agreed as follows:

**Article 1**

The Parties shall cooperate on the basis of principles of indivisible, equal and undiminished security and to these ends:

shall not undertake actions nor participate in or support activities that affect the security of the other Party;

shall not implement security measures adopted by each Party individually or in the framework of an international organization, military alliance or coalition that could undermine core security interests of the other Party.

**Article 2**

The Parties shall seek to ensure that all international organizations, military alliances and coalitions in which at least one of the Parties is taking part adhere to the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

**Article 3**

The Parties shall not use the territories of other States with a view to preparing or carrying out an armed attack against the other Party or other actions affecting core security interests of the other Party.

**Article 4**

The United States of America shall undertake to prevent further eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and deny accession to the Alliance to the States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The United States of America shall not establish military bases in the territory of the States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that are not members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, use their infrastructure for any military activities or develop bilateral military cooperation with them.

**Article 5**

The Parties shall refrain from deploying their armed forces and armaments, including in the framework of international organizations, military alliances or coalitions, in the areas where such deployment could be perceived by the other Party as a threat to its national security, with the exception of such deployment within the national territories of the Parties.

The Parties shall refrain from flying heavy bombers equipped for nuclear or non-nuclear armaments or deploying surface warships of any type, including in the framework of international organizations, military alliances or coalitions, in the areas outside national airspace and national territorial waters respectively, from where they can attack targets in the territory of the other Party.

The Parties shall maintain dialogue and cooperate to improve mechanisms to prevent dangerous military activities on and over the high seas, including agreeing on the maximum approach distance between warships and aircraft.

**Article 6**

The Parties shall undertake not to deploy ground-launched intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles outside their national territories, as well as in the areas of their national territories, from which such weapons can attack targets in the national territory of the other Party.

**Article 7**

The Parties shall refrain from deploying nuclear weapons outside their national territories and return such weapons already deployed outside their national territories at the time of the entry into force of the Treaty to their national territories. The Parties shall eliminate all existing infrastructure for deployment of nuclear weapons outside their national territories.

The Parties shall not train military and civilian personnel from non-nuclear countries to use nuclear weapons. The Parties shall not conduct exercises or training for general-purpose forces, that include scenarios involving the use of nuclear weapons.

**Article 8**

The Treaty shall enter into force from the date of receipt of the last written notification on the completion by the Parties of their domestic procedures necessary for its entry into force.

Done in two originals, each in English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the United States of America For the Russian Federation

**Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races.**

January 03, 2022. ([Source](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/03/p5-statement-on-preventing-nuclear-war-and-avoiding-arms-races/))

The People’s Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America consider the avoidance of war between Nuclear-Weapon States and the reduction of strategic risks as our foremost responsibilities.

We affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. As nuclear use would have far-reaching consequences, we also affirm that nuclear weapons—for as long as they continue to exist—should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war. We believe strongly that the further spread of such weapons must be prevented.

We reaffirm the importance of addressing nuclear threats and emphasize the importance of preserving and complying with our bilateral and multilateral non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control agreements and commitments. We remain committed to our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations, including our Article VI obligation “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

We each intend to maintain and further strengthen our national measures to prevent unauthorized or unintended use of nuclear weapons. We reiterate the validity of our previous statements on de-targeting, reaffirming that none of our nuclear weapons are targeted at each other or at any other State.

We underline our desire to work with all states to create a security environment more conducive to progress on disarmament with the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all. We intend to continue seeking bilateral and multilateral diplomatic approaches to avoid military confrontations, strengthen stability and predictability, increase mutual understanding and confidence, and prevent an arms race that would benefit none and endanger all. We are resolved to pursue constructive dialogue with mutual respect and acknowledgment of each other’s security interests and concerns.

**Russia receives US response to security proposals. Envoy delivers US, NATO responses to Russian offer.**

January 26, 2022. ([Source](https://www.rt.com/russia/547447-russia-us-nato-security-response/))

Moscow has received the US response to the proposals concerning collective security in Europe, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed on Wednesday.

Ambassador John Sullivan delivered the responses from both the US and NATO to the Russian draft bilateral treaty made public in mid-December. Moscow proposed eight points in the draft, and expected a detailed response to each one.

The US was asked to stop any further NATO expansion to the east, halt military programs in non-member countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union – and pledge Ukraine and Georgia would “never” join the alliance – remove its nuclear weapons from Europe, and not deploy any offensive weapons capable of targeting Russia along its borders. Moscow demanded legally binding guarantees on all of those matters.

The State Department has reportedly asked Russia not to make its response public. Speaking at the Russian parliament earlier on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the ministry would communicate the “essence of their reaction” to the Russian public.

Lavrov explained that once the American response was received, the Foreign Ministry will work with other departments to give President Vladimir Putin a proposal of further steps concerning Russia’s security.

**Déclaration des conseillers des chefs d’État et de gouvernement du format Normandie.**

Janvier 26, 2022. ([Source](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/01/26/declaration-des-conseillers-des-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-du-format-normandie))

Les conseillers des Chefs d’État et de gouvernement du format Normandie, avec la participation de représentants des ministères des affaires étrangères, se sont réunis à Paris le 26 janvier 2022.

Ils réaffirment que les Accords de Minsk sont la base du travail du format Normandie, et restent engagés pour atténuer les désaccords actuels dans les travaux à venir.

Ils soutiennent un respect inconditionnel du cessez-le-feu et une pleine adhésion aux mesures de renforcement du cessez-le-feu du 22 juillet 2020, indépendamment des différences sur d’autres sujets relatifs à la mise en œuvre des accords de Minsk.

Ils ont discuté de l’importance du groupe de contact trilatéral et ses groupes de travail pour intensifier leurs activités en vue de progrès rapides dans la mise en œuvre des accords de Minsk.

Ils sont convenus de se réunir de nouveau à Berlin dans deux semaines.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s answer to a media question.**

January 27, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1796041/))

Question: You have received the Americans’ response to Russia’s security guarantee proposals. What does it say? What is their reaction? Antony Blinken has said that they are against releasing the document publicly. What has Russia decided on this score?

Sergey Lavrov: I believe that the general public will know the essence of this document soon. As our American colleagues have said, although they would like to keep this document confidential so as to provide space for confidential talks, they have coordinated it with their allies and with Ukraine. Are they sure that it will not be leaked very soon?

As for the essence of the document, the responses offer grounds for serious talks only on matters of secondary importance. There is no positive response to the main issue, which is our clear stand on the continued NATO enlargement towards the east and the deployment of strike weapons that can pose a threat to the territory of the Russian Federation, which we consider unacceptable. This stand did not appear out of the blue. As you may know, the issue of NATO’s non-enlargement or enlargement, however you put it, has a long history. In the early 1990s, or more precisely in 1990, when Germany was reunified and the issue of European security was raised, they solemnly promised that NATO would not expand even an inch eastward beyond the Oder River. These facts are well known and have been included in many memoirs by British, US and German officials. But now that this issue has become a matter of fierce debates, we have been told that the promises were only verbal. When we mentioned the memoirs, our Western partners responded that they were not serious and that their words were misinterpreted. They chose a rather immature way to explain the reckless expansion of the alliance.

But now that we have cited the promises made not in word but in the form of documents signed by the leaders of all OSCE states, including the US President (the 1999 Istanbul Declaration and the 2010 Astana Declaration), our Western partners have to find a way out of a very serious situation. The point is that both declarations set out the participating states’ commitment to the principle of indivisible security and their pledge to honour it without fail. This principle was formulated very clearly. It includes two interconnected approaches. The first is the freedom of states to choose military alliances. The second is the obligation not to strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other states. In other words, the freedom to choose security arrangements is conditioned by the pledge to respect the security interests of any other OSCE state, including the Russian Federation.

It is indicative that now when we propose coordinating legally binding security guarantees in the Euro-Atlantic region, our Western colleagues respond by urging us to respect the coordinated principles of security guarantees in that region. After saying this, they add that this means that NATO has a right to expand, and nobody can prohibit it from considering any country’s request for joining the alliance. The principle according to which no state may strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other states is being deliberately ignored. Our Western partners make no mention of the Istanbul or the Astana declarations during the ongoing discussions on European security. They are keeping away from this matter. We cannot accept this. They explained their failure to honour the non-enlargement promises in the 1990s by the absence of written obligations, but such promises were given in writing later. They have been reaffirmed within the OSCE framework several times, including at the top level. We will now focus on getting clarity regarding this hypocritical position of our Western partners.

During my talks with Antony Blinken in Geneva, I asked him to explain why they regard the obligations made within the OSCE as a menu from which they are free to choose the dishes that taste good to them, and why they are disregarding or talking round their pledge to honour the interests of other countries. Mr Blinken did not reply to my question. He only shrugged his shoulders, and that’s it. I told him, just as I have told our other colleagues, that we would shortly send them an official request for an explanation why they choose only one of their commitments and disregard the other commitments on which its implementation depends. It will be an official request sent to all countries whose leaders signed the Istanbul and Astana declarations. I hope that it will not take them long to explain the Western position.

Other than that, we are analysing the Americans’ response. As Antony Blinken has said, they have coordinated it with Ukraine and with the other Western countries, with US allies. We have also received NATO’s response from Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. We are analysing these two documents as a package, because they have been provided in response to the draft treaty and draft agreement we proposed in December 2021. After an inter-agency coordination of our conclusions, we will submit them to President Vladimir Putin, who will make a decision on our further actions.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s working meeting with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.**

February 14, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1798349/))

Mr President,

We have been working on your instructions since mid-December when we presented our initiatives to the Americans and to NATO member countries. We met with an American delegation and held a Russia-NATO Council meeting in mid-January during which we explained to our partners in detail the importance of our initiatives for resolving key security problems in the Euro-Atlantic Region. Afterwards US Secretary of State Antony Blinken asked me for a separate meeting to clarify certain questions, and we had a meeting in Geneva on January 21.

Several days later, on January 25 of this year, they sent us a response – a response from the United States and a response from the North Atlantic Alliance. We attentively studied these with our colleagues in the inter-departmental format. We are primarily interested in a reply from the United States since it is clear to everyone who is playing the main role in resolving these issues in the Western camp. The US response consists of two parts.

In the first part, they respond to the three major issues that we outlined: NATO’s non-expansion; non-deployment of strike weapons that are a threat to us; and, in general, returning military and military-technical configurations in Europe to 1997 positions when Russia and NATO signed the Founding Act that raised the task of ensuring indivisible security for the first time.

The responses to these issues were negative and of course, we cannot be satisfied with them. They basically said the right of a state to choose unions and join or replace them overrides everything else and is not a subject for discussion, as it were. We are reminding the Americans and our other Western colleagues that this right, formalised in OSCE top-level decisions at the 1999 and 2010 summits, the Russia-NATO 2002 Rome Declaration, and the Lisbon Declaration of the 2010 Russia-NATO summit, is not unconditional. This right is directly conditioned by other points that were supported, let me repeat, as a package by consensus.

The second part of the package basically says that each state’s right to choose alliances is limited by its own commitments not to enhance its security at the expense of any other state. And there is another point here, a very important one, which runs that no country, no group of countries or no organisation can dominate in the OSCE space. Unfortunately, we are seeing an attempt by our NATO colleagues and the European Union, which is groping for its own place, to somehow have them alone determine the further progress of our continent. Therefore, during the time between the meetings you had and the ones we had through the Foreign Ministry, I sent a special address to all our Western colleagues, drawing their attention to the fact that the obligations on the indivisibility of security are much more complex and complicated than they are trying to present them as they justify Ukraine’s joining NATO. They assure us, in parenthesis, that this is something that will not happen any time soon. We are well aware of how those assurances work.

I have received unsatisfactory responses; none of my fellow ministers have responded to my direct address. We have received two small papers – one from an official in the office of NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and another from an official in the office of Josep Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The messages read: don’t worry, the dialogue must continue; the main thing you need to do is to ensure de-escalation around Ukraine. I think this is exactly a neglect of the norm as stated at the top level which says that no organisation can consider itself the main and dominant one in the Euro-Atlantic Region. So, we will continue to seek a concrete response from each country since all the documents I reported to you were signed under national status, and the responsibility for their content and the commitments under these documents must be accounted for at the national level. This is about the first part of the response, basically the Americans, which does not suit us.

The second part is more constructive to a certain extent. It envisages rather specific measures to address the problems of land-based short and intermediate-range missiles after the Americans discarded the corresponding treaty, the INF. It also contains specific proposals on a range of measures to reduce military risks, confidence-building measures and military transparency. Interestingly, almost all of the components the Americans included in their response reflect initiatives that the Russian Federation has been promoting over the past few years. With regard to short and intermediate-range missiles, we have been waiting for a response to your address since September 2020, where you proposed agreeing on reciprocal and mutually verifiable moratoriums on the deployment of these types of weapons in Europe. Nobody ever responded. The proposals from our General Staff, sent to NATO in 2020, included measures to move military exercises away from the line of contact between Russia and NATO and to agree on a minimum distance for the rapprochement of military aircraft and warships, as well as a number of other military-technical confidence-building measures. Those two have been left without attention.

As of today, however, we have seen some very specific responses to the initiatives we advanced earlier. The other side is demonstrating a willingness to enter into serious negotiations. It is clear that our initiative on European security, on security guarantees we put forward and are strongly promoting, clearly stating our fundamental interests in this, has given our Western colleagues a shake. This is why they are no longer able to just ignore many of our previous calls.

So, I would say we can consider further progress in these areas, but only while maintaining the integrity of our December 2021 initiative, maintaining an integrated approach. This approach is broader than reaching some specific agreements on industry-specific, isolated, secondary aspects of maintaining military security, important though they are; but above all, this approach is about the legal settlement of issues that generally threaten the Euro-Atlantic Region. I am referring to where we started with in our initiatives, when you repeatedly emphasised, including during your recent telephone conversations and news conferences – we need to ensure indivisible security, including with regard to NATO’s non-expansion, non-deployment of strike weapons and returning to its 1997 configuration.

We at the Foreign Ministry are convinced that this approach must remain a priority. In developing a dialogue on some aspects that are of practical importance today, with our Western, primarily American colleagues, we will be seeking in parallel their responses to the legitimate concerns that we have raised and that you have repeatedly confirmed, including at the news conference with Emmanuel Macron. I believe you have very clearly described the potential for drawing Ukraine into NATO under these conditions, considering Kiev’s ambitions.

Vladimir Putin: Do you think we still have a chance of coming to terms with our partners on the key problems of our concern or is this simply an attempt to drag us into an endless negotiating process with no logical conclusion?

Sergey Lavrov: You, along with us and other representatives of the Russian Federation, have said that we are warning that an endless discussion on the issues that must be resolved today is unacceptable. That said, as the head of the Foreign Ministry, I must say that there is always a chance. I am referring to your recent meetings with the US and French leaders; the Federal Chancellor of Germany is coming tomorrow; our colleagues are addressing me: the Polish Foreign Minister will be here tomorrow; the Italian Foreign Minister will come here in two days, and other meetings are being planned. We have consistently conducted explanatory work; we are committed to explaining why we are right, and that we are ready to listen to serious counter arguments. That said, I think our opportunities are far from exhausted. Of course, they should not be endless, but I think we should still continue to pursue and build on them at this point.

Vladimir Putin: All right. Do you have a draft response yet to the documents that Brussels and Washington sent us? Has it been formulated?

Sergey Lavrov: It was formulated on ten pages.

**Statement of the Russian Defense Ministry spokesperson, Major General Igor Konashenkov, on the return of formations and military units to permanent locations.**

February 15, 2022. ([Source](https://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12408929@egNews))

In the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, a complex of large-scale measures for the combat training of troops and forces continues. Almost all military districts, fleets and airborne troops take part in them.

As part of check of reaction forces of the Union State on the territory of the Republic of Belarus a joint Russian-Belarusian exercise Union Courage 2022 is being held.

The troops of the Eastern Military District and the Airborne Troops participating in this exercise, in cooperation with the Belarusian Armed Forces, are practicing the issues of repelling aggression against the Union State during a defensive operation.

At the Obuz-Lesnovsky training ground, on February 19, a live fire-drill stage is planned. During this event, the marines brigade, together with formations and military units of the armed forces of the Republic of Belarus, with the support of operational-tactical and army aviation, will practice tasks of conducting a defensive battle and performing maneuvers in other directions.

Military attachés for defense at the embassies of foreign states in the Republic of Belarus and media representatives were invited to the practical actions as observers.

A series of naval exercises involving surface ships, submarines and naval aviation is being conducted in operationally important areas of the world's oceans and the waters of the seas adjacent to the territory of Russia.

Exercises are continuing with formations and military units at other training grounds on the territory of the Russian Federation. A number of combat training measures, including exercises, have been carried out in accordance with the plan.

As the combat training measures are completed, the troops, as always, will make marches in a combined way to the points of permanent deployment. The units of the Southern and Western military districts, having completed their tasks, have already begun loading onto rail and road transport and will begin moving to their military garrisons today. Separate units will march on their own as part of military columns.

**Remarks by President Biden Providing an Update on Russia and Ukraine.**

February 15, 2022. ([Source](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/15/remarks-by-president-biden-providing-an-update-on-russia-and-ukraine/))

Good afternoon. Today, I’d like to provide an update on the crisis involving Russia and Ukraine.

From the beginning of this crisis, I have been absolutely clear and consistent: The United States is prepared no matter what happens.

We are ready with diplomacy — to be engaged in diplomacy with Russia and our Allies and partners to improve stability and security in Europe as a whole.

And we are ready to respond decisively to a Russian attack on Ukraine, which is still very much a possibility.

Through all of the events of the last few weeks and months, this has been our approach. And it remains our approach now.

So, today I want to speak to the American people about the situation on the ground, the steps we’ve taken, the actions we’re prepared to take, and what’s at stake for us and the world, and how this may impact on us here at home.

For weeks now, together with our Allies and partners, my administration has engaged in non-stop diplomacy.

This weekend I spoke again with President Putin to make clear that we are ready to keep pursuing high-level diplomacy to reach written understandings among Russia, the United States, and the nations of Europe to address legitimate security concerns if that’s what — his wish. Their security concerns and ours.

President Putin and I agreed that our teams should continue to engage toward this end along with our European Allies and partners.

Yesterday, the Russian government publicly proposed to continue the diplomacy. I agree. We should give the diplomacy every chance to succeed. I believe there are real ways to address our respective security concerns.

The United States has put on the table concrete ideas to establish a security environment in Europe.

We’re proposing new arms control measures, new transparency measures, new strategic stability measures. These measures would apply to all parties — NATO and Russia alike.

And we’re willing to make practical, results-oriented steps that can advance our common security. We will not sacrifice basic principles, though.

Nations have a right to sovereignty and territorial integrity. They have the freedom to set their own course and choose with whom they will associate.

But that still leaves plenty of room for diplomacy and for de-escalation. That’s the best way forward for all parties, in our view. And we’ll continue our diplomatic efforts in close consultation with our Allies and our partners.

As long as there is hope of a diplomatic resolution that prevents the use of force and avoids the incredible human suffering that would follow, we will pursue it.

The Russian Defense Ministry reported today that some military units are leaving their positions near Ukraine.

That would be good, but we have not yet verified that. We have not yet verified that Russian military units are returning to their home bases. Indeed, our analysts indicate that they remain very much in a threatening position. And the fact remains: Right now, Russia has more than 150,000 troops encircling Ukraine in Belarus and along Ukraine’s border.

An invasion remains distinctly possible. That’s why I’ve asked several times that all Americans in Ukraine leave now before it’s too late to leave safely. It is why we have temporarily relocated our embassy from Kyiv to Lviv in western Ukraine, approaching the Polish border.

And we’ve been transparent with the American people and with the world about Russia’s plans and the seriousness of the situation so that everyone can see for themselves what is happening. We have shared what we know and what we are doing about it.

Let me be equally clear about what we are not doing:

The United States and NATO are not a threat to Russia. Ukraine is not threatening Russia.

Neither the U.S. nor NATO have missiles in Ukraine. We do not — do not have plans to put them there as well.

We’re not targeting the people of Russia. We do not seek to destabilize Russia.

To the citizens of Russia: You are not our enemy. And I do not believe you want a bloody, destructive war against Ukraine — a country and a people with whom you share such deep ties of family, history, and culture.

Seventy-seven years ago, our people fought and sacrificed side by side to end the worst war in history.

World War Two was a war of necessity. But if Russia attacks Ukraine, it would be a war of choice, or a war without cause or reason.

I say these things not to provoke but to speak the truth — because the truth matters; accountability matters.

If Russia does invade in the days or weeks ahead, the human cost for Ukraine will be immense, and the strategic cost for Russia will also be immense.

If Russia attacks Ukraine, it’ll be met with overwhelming international condemnation. The world will not forget that Russia chose needless death and destruction.

Invading Ukraine will prove to be a self-inflicted wound.

The United States and our Allies and partners will respond decisively. The West is united and galvanized.

Today, our NATO Allies and the Alliance is as unified and determined as it has ever been. And the source of our unbreakable strength continues to be the power, resilience, and universal appeal of our shared democratic values.

Because this is about more than just Russia and Ukraine. It’s about standing for what we believe in, for the future we want for our world, for liberty — for liberty, the right of countless countries to choose their own destiny, and the right of people to determine their own futures, for the principle that a country can’t change its neighbor’s borders by force. That’s our vision. And toward that end, I’m confident that vision, that freedom will prevail.

If Russia proceeds, we will rally the world to oppose its aggression.

The United States and our Allies and partners around the world are ready to impose powerful sanctions on [and] export controls, including actions that did not — we did not pursue when Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014. We will put intense pressure on their largest and most significant financial institutions and key industries.

These measures are ready to go as soon and if Russia moves. We’ll impose long-term consequences that will undermine Russia’s ability to compete economically and strategically.

And when it comes to Nord Stream 2, the pipeline that would bring natural gas from Russia to Germany, if Russia further invades Ukraine, it will not happen.

While I will not send American servicemen to fight Russia in Ukraine, we have supplied the Ukrainian military with equipment to help them defend themselves. We have provided training and advice and intelligence for the same purpose.

And make no mistake: The United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power. An attack against one NATO country is an attack against all of us. And the United States commitment to Article 5 is sacrosanct.

Already, in response to Russia’s build-up of troops, I have sent additional U.S. forces to bolster NATO’s eastern flank.

Several of our Allies have also announced they’ll add forces and capabilities to ensure deterrence and defense along NATO’s eastern flank.

We will also continue to conduct military exercises with our Allies and partners to enhance defensive readiness.

And if Russia invades, we will take further steps to reinforce our presence in NATO, reassure for our Allies, and deter further aggression.

This is a cause that unites Republicans and Democrats. And I want to thank the leaders and members of Congress of both parties who have forcefully spoken out in defense of our most basic, most bipartisan, most American principles.

I will not pretend this will be painless. There could be impact on our energy prices, so we are taking active steps to alleviate the pressure on our own energy markets and offset rising prices.

We’re coordinating with major enersy [sic] — energy consumers and producers. We’re prepared to deploy all the tools and authority at our disposal to provide relief at the gas pump.

And I will work with Congress on additional measures to help protect consumers and address the impact of prices at the pump.

We are not seeking direct confrontation with Russia, though I have been clear that if Russia targets Americans in Ukraine, we will respond forcefully.

And if Russia attacks the United States or our Allies through asymmetric means, like disruptive cyberattacks against our companies or critical infrastructure, we are prepared to respond.

We’re moving in lockstep with our NATO Allies and partners to deepen our collective defense against threats in cyberspace.

Two paths are still open. For the sake of the historic responsibility Russia and the United States share for global stability, for the sake of our common future — to choose diplomacy.

But let there be no doubt: If Russia commits this breach by invading Ukraine, responsible nations around the world will not hesitate to respond.

If we do not stand for freedom where it is at risk today, we’ll surely pay a steeper price tomorrow.

Thank you. I’ll keep you informed.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to questions at Security Council meeting.**

February 21, 2022. ([Source](https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/1799823/))

Mr President, colleagues,

As I reported to the President a week ago, we prepared our assessment of the proposals on the security guarantees that Russia submitted for consideration by the United States and NATO last December.

We received their response in late January. The assessment of this response shows that our Western colleagues are not prepared to take up our major proposals, primarily those on NATO’s eastward non-expansion. This demand was rejected with reference to the bloc’s so-called open-door policy and the freedom of each state to choose its own way of ensuring security. Neither the United States, nor the North Atlantic Alliance proposed an alternative to this key provision.

The United States is doing everything it can to avoid the principle of indivisibility of security that we consider of fundamental importance and to which we have made many references. Deriving from it the only element that suits them – the freedom to choose alliances – they completely ignore everything else, including the key condition that reads that nobody – either in choosing alliances or regardless of them – is allowed to enhance their security at the expense of the security of others.

In this context, I sent our Western European colleagues that are part of NATO, EU members, plus Switzerland, detailed letters with our legal analysis of the commitments that were assumed within the OSCE at the highest level in 1999 and 2010, as well as within the framework of Russia-NATO relations, including the 1997 Founding Act and the Rome Declaration, that the participants in the Russia-NATO meeting in Pratica di Mare approved at the highest level in 2002.

Our second priority concerns the time we established relations with NATO, in 1997. Considering that the 1997 documents declared that Russia and NATO were no longer opponents and were supposed, in part, to develop a strategic partnership, we suggested returning to the 1997 configuration of NATO forces on the eastern flank. This argument was rejected, like the first one. Indicatively, in their response, some NATO countries immediately urged us to stop “the occupation of Crimea” and “withdraw our troops from the territories of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.”

In general, these documents expressed support for the Minsk Package of Measures, but this support was absolutely “sterile.” It did not evince any readiness to compel Kiev to implement the provisions of this most important document.

In response to our other demands, including the need to rule out the deployment of arms systems that threaten us near our borders, the Americans expressed the desire to start discussing land-based intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. This issue emerged after the United States unilaterally walked out of the relevant treaty with the Russian Federation and ignored, Mr President, your initiatives of two years ago. At that time, you suggested replacing the treaty with at least a declaration on a mutual moratorium on deploying these systems with the relevant verification measures.

In the proposals we have received, the United States and NATO are also suggesting efforts in certain aspects of reducing military risks and on increasing transparency and predictability. These ideas are very close to the proposals we have repeatedly presented to both the Americans and to NATO in recent years. However, these issues were removed, separated from the context of the package agreement on security guarantees.

As for bilateral steps, the United States suggests regulating flights of strategic bombers, completing the work on measures to prevent incidents at sea and in the airspace over the sea. It is paying special attention to the transparency of surprise inspections, the resumption of contacts between the militaries, the creation of a civilian hotline, and a discussion of mechanisms to prevent dangerous military incidents.

Overall, our general impression is that our colleagues are trying to separate, as it were, Russia’s proposals, to single out from them some secondary, albeit important for us, points that can help maintain the dialogue and risk reduction but that will not affect the vital interests of the US and its allies in their unlimited expansion of NATO, and that will not limit their freedom to define the configuration of forces in the NATO space and around it.

That said, and this is particularly important in the context of the issue that the President outlined today, the beginning of a dialogue on any issue is contingent on our preliminary steps to deescalate tensions around Ukraine.

In evaluating these responses, we can say that we see some progress. These openings are small but they do exist. The consistency and principled approach that we have been displaying in promoting our initiatives since last December have, of course, shaken the United States and its allies and have compelled them to start working on many Russian proposals on the reduction of military tensions and arms control, which they ignored before.

As I reported to you, Mr President, in this context we believe it is necessary to continue this work. We responded in detail, in the spirit I described, to the documents from Washington and Brussels, but we have sent our response only to the United States for now, partly, primarily because we see NATO’s role as ancillary since they would determine their steps mainly, maybe even exclusively based on Washington’s position.

By the way, at the recent Munich Security Conference, every Western representative declared their absolute commitment to a unified approach. That unified approach was developed by the United States, so Munich has simply confirmed that we need to negotiate with Washington. This is what we are doing now, sending the response that you approved to the American document.

We believe we have clearly emphasised the most important part – that our proposals are not an a la carte menu to choose from, but they are not an ultimatum either. They actually stem from the absolutely obvious point that the global situation can only be resolved through a comprehensive approach at this stage. You, Mr President, have stressed that the Ukrainian crisis also largely depends on how relations develop between the Russian Federation and the West, led by the United States, so in our response, we underscored the integrity of the original Russian initiative.

We are also ready to discuss the matters that the Americans have recalled, including taking into account our previous proposals. But again, we will do this solely as part of addressing our main concerns: stopping NATO's eastward expansion and considering the configuration of NATO's presence on the European continent, primarily in Central and Eastern Europe, in line with the previous Russia–NATO agreements.

Naturally, our call is not a call but rather a demand, by and large, to explain why the assurances signed at the highest level that no one is to strengthen their security at the expense of others are now being ignored, and more than that, our colleagues from the respective countries are even refusing to explain what they had in mind when their leaders signed the relevant documents, and why now, regardless of what they had in mind, they are not going to fulfil their obligations.

Following your instruction, Mr President, we have sent these documents to Washington. A couple of days later, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken called me to say he had read our document and was ready to meet to discuss it, convey the American reaction and possibly ask some additional questions. With your consent, the meeting has been scheduled for later this week, February 24, in Geneva. We will be guided by the approach that you have approved, the one you defend during the meetings with your colleagues, and which we will certainly promote at the Foreign Ministry level.

Vladimir Putin: I am talking to my colleagues about this in fact, and my American colleague has assured me that they are not going to admit Ukraine tomorrow; moreover, even a moratorium is possible. But they also believe that Ukraine is not ready yet, so my answer was simple: “We do not see this as a concession to us; it is just the implementation of your plans. You believe you need to wait and prepare Ukraine for joining NATO. A moratorium, but not a moratorium for us; you are announcing this moratorium for yourself. So where is the step towards us, to meet us halfway? So far, we have not seen this.”

I spoke twice to the President of France yesterday; actually, we spoke until 2 am this morning, so you could say we talked today. He insists that the US position has undergone some changes. But regrettably, he was unable to answer the question of what those changes are.

I think first we need to see what these changes are, if they exist at all, because your colleague, to the contrary, publicly claimed as late as yesterday that there were no changes in the principal issues of expansion, of accepting new countries into NATO, including Ukraine. Do I understand it correctly?

Sergey Lavrov: Yes, Mr President, despite the multiplying publications of classified documents – and in the Western media at that – that were discussed by our Western colleagues in the early 1990s, in 1990 and 1991, both among themselves and with us; and even though they clearly indicated that even the West has no intention of expanding NATO to the east, confirming that in talks in a narrow circle; regardless of that, Mr Jens Stoltenberg, the current Secretary General of the North Atlantic Alliance, is still rejecting obvious facts that have been declassified by a British archive and published by Spiegel magazine.

Despite all that, they are adamant in not weakening their “open door” policy, even though you have explained several times that such a policy does not actually exist. There is the possibility under the Washington Treaty of proposing, with unanimous consent from the NATO countries, that a given country join the alliance under two conditions: if it meets the membership qualifications, and secondly, and most importantly, if that country can add a security dimension to the North Atlantic Alliance. We know, of course, that the second critical criteria has long been ignored by NATO.

As to what new ideas the Americans and their allies can offer, we presume that, as you said to President Macron, we first have to understand what the Americans mean. Because our French colleagues tell us that they have an understanding of what Washington can speak to us about. As you agreed with President Macron yesterday, I will have a telephone conversation with the French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian today. When we were scheduling the call, I asked the French Foreign Ministry to make sure that he clarifies, even if just a little, what the Americans are ready to discuss with us as they hinted to the French.

Vladimir Putin: I see, thank you.

Take your seat, please. Thank you.

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Lundi 21 février 2022. Jour des présidents aux Etats-Unis (President's Day). Suite à l’échec des accords de Minsk, la Fédération de Russie reconnaît les deux républiques sécessionnistes du Donbass en tant que nations souveraines. L’armée reçoit l’ordre d’y assurer le maintien de l’ordre. Un nouveau monde vient de naître. La stratégie européenne de sécurité vacille. Dans les mois et années à venir, espérons que l’intelligence et la sagesse l’emportent sur la folie et la violence. Nous vivons des moments historiques à côté desquels la Grande Panique de 2020, les errements des marchés, l’évolution climatique, l’inflation et l’essoufflement de la croissance ne sont que des péripéties. Le temps des hésitations, des précautions, des démentis et de l’hypocrisie semble révolu. Le moment de choisir est arrivé : la paix ou la violence ? La vérité ou le mensonge ? Le partage ou la révolte ? Le travail ou l’oisiveté ? L’Histoire rappelle que Le prix de la paix n’est autre que le courage avec lequel l’Humanité renonce à la violence pour s’inscrire dans une logique de dépassement des craintes, de refrènement des passions, de renforcement de la confiance et de recherche de la coopération. Le 17 décembre 2021, la Fédération de Russie fait un premier pas. Les Etats-Unis (et l’Europe) en font un second le 26 janvier 2022. Le cours de l’Histoire semble reprendre vigueur. Le 14 février, la Fédération de Russie note le progrès et décide de donner une chance à la paix. Le 15 février, son armée commence à se retirer. Le Président Biden réagit. L’impatience prend le dessus. Les passions s’enflamment sur la ligne de front et ailleurs. L’inacceptable devient inévitable. Et la folie des uns risque d’entraîner celle des autres vers le néant d’un monde sans Dieu, sans foi ni loi. La vie n’apporte pas souvent l’opportunité d’observer en temps réel de tels événements stratégiques affectant le cours de l’Histoire. C’est pourquoi, avant que les principaux textes ne disparaissent dans le brouillard de la virtualité, je les ai regroupés dans un document susceptible d’alimenter l’analyse des intentions et des actes que chacun jugera utile d’en faire.

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