
Arms support for Ukraine should be contingent on talks

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The provision of limited defensive weaponry to Ukraine should be strictly conditional on the agreement of Ukrainian authorities to launch official talks with the insurgents on settling the conflict. It should also be done only in conjunction with the creation of a humanitarian fund to provide medical and food supplies to civilians in the Donbas. By itself, “lethal aid” from the United States is only likely to prolong the conflict, increase the intensity of fighting, and reinforce the anti-American narrative presenting the war as the result of U.S. scheming. Any new ceasefire deal will not hold as long as there are no follow-up negotiations with the insurgent forces on a comprehensive peace agreement. If the goal of the U.S. government is to achieve a lasting peace in eastern Ukraine, it should use its leverage to compel the Ukrainian government to agree to the partitioning of the Donbas. The United States should also use its diplomatic experience from resolving secessionist conflicts to advise the Ukrainian side on the proper institutional terms of the settlement. Finally, the United States should begin a diplomatic dialogue with Russia to facilitate multilateral negotiations regarding the final status of breakaway

territories in the Donbas with the promise of lifting sanctions once the implementation of the final agreement begins.

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