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Meaningful talks on peace and security for Ukraine are the only chance for Russia to reduce the damage from its own mistakes - address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

19 March 2022 - 01:13



Good evening to everyone.

Usually on such days we used to say: "Spring has come".

But now we are saying: "War has come".

But we will definitely defeat everyone no matter what. Because we are free people of a free country.

Today, government officials have elaborated the decision to fully reboot the customs service.

Cargo for our defense, for our people will be brought into Ukraine as easily as the physics laws allow that.

We eliminate the whole bureaucracy, all paperwork, VAT, all customs duties.

The goal is clear - to prevent the human factor from hindering the speedy supply of goods, which are really needed now.

Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk and profile committees are working to ensure the support of people's deputies for the innovations. I emphasize: this decision is necessary for the defense of the state, for ensuring normal life during martial law.

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I urge certain MPs not to speculate on this issue, as it is for the benefit of our state, not the government or the opposition. We must all work jointly for the sake of our Ukraine, our people. Let's think about PR after the victory.

Another important area of government work is helping Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes due to hostilities.

I commissioned the Cabinet of Ministers to develop a comprehensive program to support such people, our citizens. Everyone who was deprived of home because of the war. We already have the outlines of this program. The first component is financial. State support for all displaced persons. Adults and children. Government support for jobs for such people - where they are temporarily staying. So that every person, every family has a basis for life.

The second component is housing. The government is preparing concrete proposals for housing for IDPs right now. And also organizes the reconstruction of destroyed housing after the war.

The third component is no less important. This is the support for the families who have housed people from areas of hostilities or temporary occupation. At a minimum, they will be reimbursed for the cost of utilities related to the stay of IDPs.

Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal will soon explain all the details of such a comprehensive program to support our citizens.

A coordination headquarters has been set up to regulate all issues related to the delivery of humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Under the chairmanship of Head of the Office of the President Andriy Yermak, a meeting was held with Ukrainian ambassadors to intensify the supply of humanitarian goods to Ukraine, primarily to help internally displaced persons.

I also commissioned the government to provide assistance together with the International Committee of the Red Cross to those of our citizens who found themselves abroad after February 24 and need the attention of our state and international organizations.

Today there were seven humanitarian corridors in Ukraine. Six - in the Sumy region, one - in the Donetsk region. More than 9,000 people were evacuated from the besieged Mariupol. In total, more than 180,000 Ukrainians have been rescued by the humanitarian corridors. Hundreds of tons of essential products were delivered.

But the occupiers continue to block the supply of humanitarian aid to the besieged cities in most areas. This is a totally deliberate tactic. They have a clear order to do absolutely everything to make the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukrainian cities an "argument" for Ukrainians to cooperate with the occupiers.

This is a war crime. They will be held accountable for this. 100%. Every Russian figure who gives such orders and every Russian soldier who carries out such orders will be identified. And will receive a compulsory one-way ticket to The Hague. To the city where the International Criminal Court is located.

People are being rescued from the rubble of the drama theater destroyed by the occupiers in Mariupol, where civilians had been hiding from Russian shelling and bombs. More than 130 people are already on the surface. Some of them are seriously wounded. But at the moment there is no information about the dead.

Thanks to the courage and professional training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the occupation forces were stopped in almost all directions.

Heavy fighting in the Kharkiv region - especially heavy near Izyum. Russian troops have already thrown people from training centers there. Absolutely unprepared contingent. People who can't endure half an hour in battle.

Kyiv region, Sumy region, Chernihiv region, the south of our state - the army stopped the occupiers. The initial plan of the Russian military to seize our state failed. And it seems that they do not know what else can be done to us. It seems that their military commanders are not able to offer their political leadership anything but cruel and erroneous tactics to exhaust us, to exhaust Ukraine. Nothing but constant strikes at the civilian population, peaceful cities, people, children, missiles, air bombs, shelling from "Grads", "Uragans". Nothing but the destruction of non-military infrastructure - residential buildings, hospitals, schools, churches.



On the Day of the National Guard of Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy awarded NGU servicemen

📅 26 March 2022 - 15:59

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But this tactic of their military only worsens the situation for the Russian state. Leads to new and new destructive sanctions. Encourages new members to join our anti-war coalition. It allows us to unite even those states that have always tried to remain neutral to put pressure on Russia.

Therefore, negotiations on peace, on security for us, for Ukraine - meaningful, fair and without delay - are the only chance for Russia to reduce the damage from its own mistakes.

We have always insisted on negotiations. We have always offered dialogue, offered solutions for peace. Not only during 23 days of invasion.

And I want everyone to hear me now, especially in Moscow. It's time to meet. Time to talk. It is time to restore territorial integrity and justice for Ukraine. Otherwise, Russia's losses will be so huge that several generations will not be enough to rebound.

Many words were heard in Moscow today in connection with the anniversary of the seizure of Crimea. A big rally took place. And I want to pay attention to one detail. It is reported that a total of about 200,000 people were involved in the rally in the Russian capital. 100,000 on the streets, about 95,000 at the stadium.

Approximately the same number of Russian troops were involved in the invasion of Ukraine.

Just imagine 14 thousand corpses and tens of thousands of wounded and maimed people at that stadium in Moscow. There are already so many Russian losses as a result of this invasion.

This is the price of war. In a little more than three weeks. The war must end.

Ukraine's proposals are on the table.

In the coming days, I will continue to appeal to the nations of the world to call for peace for Ukraine. My appeal to the Swiss people is ahead, to the people and to the state.

Appeals to Israel, Italy and Japan are also planned. The world hears Ukraine's position. The world supports our defenders, defenders of Ukraine.

Today I want to express my sincere gratitude to each defender of our strong Mariupol. Our heroic city, which is experiencing the greatest ordeal in its history, in the history of Ukraine.

36th Separate Marine Brigade.

501st Separate Marine Battalion.

1st Separate Marine Battalion.

12th Brigade of the National Guard.

And a separate detachment of special purpose "Azov".

I am grateful to each and every one of our defenders of Mariupol. I am grateful to everyone who defends Ukraine.

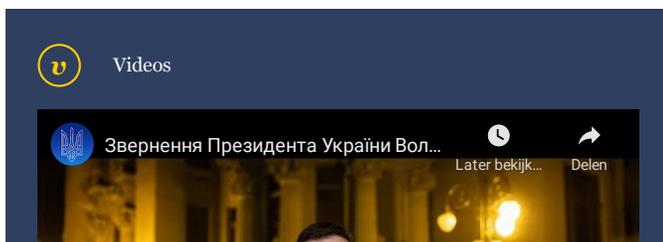
Also at the request of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine I decided to confer the title of Hero of Ukraine upon:

Colonel Baranyuk Volodymyr Anatoliyovych, Commander of the 36th Separate Marine Brigade.

And Major Prokopenko Denys Hennadiyovych, Commander of a separate detachment of special purpose "Azov". For courage, for effective actions to repel enemy attacks, for the defense of the hero city of Mariupol.

Glory to all our heroes!

Glory to Ukraine!





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