

PAX UKRAINIA, SLAVA RUSSIA

Five pillars for a settlement that survives contact with both publics: energy, territory, integration, security, and a Russian political transition — with the last one named as the term least likely to be signed, not smoothed over.

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In politics it is not about what you say. It is about what you do. A treaty clause demanding a head of state's resignation is not a diplomatic term — it is the one line in this framework that asks its own methodology to look away from itself. This brief names that instead.

Executive Summary

This brief merges and supersedes PAX-UKR-01 (the Energy-for-Peace Framework, September 2026) and PAX-UKR-02 (the Trust Vacuum Settlement, September 2026). It carries forward PAX-UKR-01's structural logic, sequencing, and risk analysis; PAX-UKR-02's revised territorial split and reciprocal tranche mechanism; and adds a fifth pillar, at the author's instruction, requiring Vladimir Putin's departure from office as a term of the settlement.

The five pillars: Nord Stream gas flow is restored under a Ukrainian transit-fee mechanism; Russia keeps occupied Donbas but returns Crimea to Ukraine, with a long-term Sevastopol basing lease as the practical bridge; Ukraine receives fast-tracked EU membership and a conditional euro roadmap; France extends a bilateral, nuclear-backed security guarantee outside NATO; and a Russian political transition away from Putin is written into the settlement's final phase. Sanctions relief, gas flow, and asset unfreezing move through the reciprocal tranche mechanism introduced in PAX-UKR-02, tied to verified de-escalation rather than a single signature.

READ THIS FIRST — Pillar Five breaks the premise the other four pillars are built on. Section I.A of the original framework states that Russia needs a revenue-generating off-ramp, not a verdict, precisely because no negotiating team signs a document that reads as capitulation. A clause requiring the resignation of the head of state they represent is the single clearest example of exactly that. This brief includes the pillar because it was instructed to, and treats it with the same analytical honesty it applies to everything else: as written, it is very likely the clause that prevents Moscow from ever signing the other four.

I. The Structural Logic: Why These Pillars, Together — and Where the Logic Breaks

No single element of this framework is new; what has not been tried is binding them into one instrument where no party can accept one pillar without the others. Four of the five pillars follow that logic cleanly. The fifth does not, and the reasoning for each follows.

A. Russia needs a revenue-generating off-ramp, not a verdict

Russia cannot exit this war through a settlement that reads as capitulation. It can exit through one that restores a central pre-war revenue stream — European gas exports — while formalising territorial control over Donbas that it already exercises on the ground. Nord Stream 2 and Nord Stream 3 are deliverable in a way that reversing troop positions is not.

B. Europe needs cheaper energy more than it needs to admit it

European industrial energy costs have stayed structurally elevated since 2022. A pipeline restart does not require anyone to say sanctions failed; it requires gas to flow again, under a new contractual and transit architecture that did not exist in 2022.

C. Ukraine needs a guarantee that is not a promise

Kyiv's core demand since 2022 has been a security guarantee credible enough to make a second invasion irrational. A bilateral treaty with a nuclear-armed P5 member, modelled on existing French bilateral defence treaties rather than routed through NATO's Article 5, offers a guarantee of comparable weight without the institutional trigger Russia has named as its *casus belli* since 2021.

D. The territorial question has to close the trust gap, not just the map

Formalising a full Russian claim to both Crimea and Donbas — PAX-UKR-01's original position — reads as reward for invasion in a way that undermines the whole framework's credibility, and sets a precedent every other revisionist power reads as a template. Returning Crimea while leaving Donbas under a supervised line of control (PAX-UKR-02's revision) closes most of that gap while still giving Russia the off-ramp described above. The Sevastopol basing lease exists because Crimea's return without addressing the Black Sea Fleet is not a serious offer, and this brief flags that clause, again, as an added assumption rather than something confirmed by the author.

E. A Russian political transition — the pillar that does not fit the pattern

Every other pillar gives its counterpart something it can point to and defend at home: gas revenue, a border it can call secured, EU membership, a nuclear-backed guarantee. Pillar Five gives Russia's negotiating team nothing to defend — it asks them to sign away the position of the person they represent. Historically, negotiated leadership transitions happen as the consequence of war termination (military collapse, coup, economic exhaustion), not as a signed term inside the peace document itself. Writing it into the treaty text does not make it more achievable; it makes the treaty less signable. This brief includes it as instructed, structures it to do the least damage to the other four pillars' chances, and says plainly in Section VI that it is the framework's largest single point of failure.

II. The Deal Architecture

Pillar One — Energy Normalisation

- Nord Stream 2 recommissioned under a new operating consortium with EU regulatory oversight, unbundling supply from pipeline control.
- Nord Stream 3 constructed under the same structure, financed jointly by Russian state capital and EU energy majors, with a mandatory Ukrainian transit-fee entitlement.
- A floor-price and volume-cap mechanism in the supply contracts, with automatic EU sanctions snap-back on any unilateral supply cut.
- Existing Ukrainian overland transit infrastructure guaranteed a minimum throughput share, so the Baltic route does not zero out Ukraine's remaining transit revenue.

Pillar Two — Territorial Settlement (revised)

- Donbas: Russia retains the Donetsk and Luhansk territory currently under its control, under an internationally supervised line of control with a binding non-recurrence clause, verified on a standing basis by an OSCE-led monitoring mission rather than a one-time inspection.

- Crimea: sovereignty reverts to Ukraine, formalised through a treaty requiring Ukrainian parliamentary ratification.
- Sevastopol: a long-term, internationally guaranteed lease of the naval facility to Russia, structured on the pre-2014 Kharkiv Pact model, so Russia loses the territory but not the fleet's home port. Flagged again here as this brief's own addition, not a term Thierry specified.
- A humanitarian and population protocol governs Ukrainian citizens remaining in Donbas — free exit rights, an international property-compensation claims commission, continued Ukrainian-language education guarantees.

Pillar Three — EU and Eventual Eurozone Integration

- A binding EU accession timeline, with interim benchmarks tied to anti-corruption and rule-of-law reform rather than to the territorial question, so the two are not held hostage to each other.
- Pre-committed transitional structural and agricultural funds for the accession period.
- A conditional Eurozone path on standard convergence criteria (inflation, deficit, debt, exchange-rate stability under ECB supervision), with no special carve-out that would invite legal challenge from other candidate states.

Pillar Four — The Franco-Ukrainian Security Guarantee

- A bilateral France–Ukraine mutual-defence treaty, an Article-5-equivalent commitment structured outside NATO, referencing this author's earlier Meridian Pact concept.
- A standing pre-positioned French force presence in Ukraine, sized as a genuine tripwire, with explicit language extending French nuclear doctrine's ambiguity to Ukrainian territory without a formal nuclear-sharing arrangement.
- Because the guarantee runs through France rather than NATO, it is not subject to a single member state's veto and does not constitute the NATO enlargement Russia has named as its core objection since 2021 — while still placing a nuclear-armed P5 member's treaty commitment between Russia and any renewed invasion.
- Other European states may accede to the same treaty instrument over time.

Pillar Five — Russian Political Transition

- Vladimir Putin's departure from office is written as a condition of the settlement's final phase (Phase 4 below), not as a precondition for opening the confidential trilateral channel — so talks are not blocked from starting by a term that would make starting them impossible.
- A transition mechanism is specified only at the level of outcome, not method: this framework does not and cannot prescribe how a sovereign state changes its own head of state, and does not propose external enforcement of Russian domestic succession.
- The remaining sanctions and tranche release (Section III) are conditioned on the transition being completed, giving Pillar Five real leverage inside the tranche architecture even though it cannot be a signed treaty clause in the way Pillars One through Four are.

ANALYTICAL NOTE — This is the honest version of Pillar Five, and it is materially weaker than 'Putin steps down' as a headline term. A hard treaty clause naming a sitting head of state's resignation is not something any state signs, regardless of what else is on offer — it would need to be extracted by defeat or internal collapse, not negotiated. Structuring it as a tranche-gated outcome rather than a signature-line clause is the only version of this pillar that does not unravel the other four on contact with a real negotiating table.

III. The Reciprocal Tranche Mechanism

Sanctions relief, frozen-asset questions, and gas flows move in linked, verified tranches rather than a single step, so both sides remain continuously and mutually exposed.

Tranche trigger	Russia receives	Europe / Ukraine receives
Verified troop withdrawal to the agreed line of control	First tranche of unfrozen euro-denominated reserves released from escrow	Nord Stream gas flows resume at initial volume, Ukrainian transit fees preserved
Line of control independently verified holding for an agreed period	Second tranche of euro reserves; partial sanctions relief on named sectors	Rouble-settlement capacity for gas and trade payments restored at matching scale
Full Crimea handover completed and Sevastopol lease ratified	Remaining reserve tranche; full sectoral sanctions relief	Full gas-trade normalisation; rouble convertibility for Russian energy trade restored
Political transition (Pillar Five) completed	Final release of remaining frozen sovereign assets	EU accession timeline advances to next benchmark stage
Any verified violation at any stage	Tranche release suspended; prior sanctions snap back	Gas and rouble-settlement flows suspended in parallel

The transition-gated final tranche in row four is what gives Pillar Five practical force without requiring Moscow's negotiators to sign their own resignation letter: the outcome is priced into the settlement's last stage, not demanded at the table.

IV. Sequencing

- Phase 0 — Confidential trilateral channel (France, Ukraine, Russia, with US and Germany as guarantors) establishes the outline in principle. Pillar Five is not raised in this phase; raising it here forecloses the channel before it opens.
- Phase 1 — Energy consortium and Franco-Ukrainian treaty announced together, so Kyiv visibly gains a hard security guarantee before being asked to accept the territorial terms.
- Phase 2 — Territorial settlement, non-recurrence clause, and EU accession timeline published together, so the Crimea return, the Donbas concession, and the compensation land in the same news cycle.
- Phase 3 — Ratification: Ukrainian referendum, Russian Duma ratification of Pillars One through Four only, EU Council unanimity (managing the Hungarian veto risk separately), French parliamentary ratification.
- Phase 4 — Tranche release begins per Section III; Pillar Five's transition outcome is tracked as the gate on the final tranche and on EU accession's next benchmark, not as a ratified treaty article.

V. Five Different True Stories

- Kyiv: the territorial provision is presented as formalising a reality that already exists, not a concession extracted under pressure — the Franco-Ukrainian treaty and Crimea's return are announced ahead of the Donbas loss so the guarantee leads the story, not the concession.
- Moscow: the outcome is presented as securing Donbas and keeping NATO formally out, while the negotiating team needs its own public not to notice that the French bilateral treaty delivers most of NATO's practical deterrent effect under a different name — and needs its public to hear nothing at all about Pillar Five until it is already a fact on the ground, since no version of announcing it in advance survives contact with a negotiating table.

- Washington: the deal is framed as ending the war on terms that reward Ukrainian resilience and Western support, with the US stepping back from an open-ended commitment while still claiming the diplomatic win.
- Paris: framed as European strategic autonomy in action — the power that filled the security-guarantee vacuum NATO could not fill without an Article 5 trigger.
- Brussels: gets no comparable narrative here, deliberately. The institutional leadership that produced the conditions for this war — documented in this author's own accountability series on the 2016 referendum override and the Maidan intervention — has not, on the price-test standard applied throughout this corpus, earned the credit for ending it.

VI. Risks and Structural Weaknesses

- Pillar Five signability: the largest single risk in this framework. As a stated term rather than a tranche-gated outcome, it very likely prevents Russian ratification of everything else. This brief has structured around that risk rather than resolved it.
- Precedent risk, reduced but not eliminated: returning Crimea weakens the 'reward for invasion' precedent problem that PAX-UKR-01 flagged as its strongest objection, but formalising Russian control of Donbas still sets a template other revisionist powers can point to.
- Baltic and Polish alarm: a non-NATO bilateral security substitute may still read, in Warsaw and the Baltic capitals, as evidence that NATO's collective guarantee is negotiable — this risk is largely unchanged from PAX-UKR-01.
- French capacity: a single nation's bilateral guarantee does not carry NATO's combined deterrent weight, and French domestic politics may not sustain the commitment through a change of government.
- Hungary and EU unanimity: Hungary's independent pattern of engagement with Moscow makes it the most likely single point of failure for the EU accession and sanctions-architecture elements.
- Infrastructure risk: Baltic Sea pipeline vulnerability, demonstrated in 2022, is not resolved by this framework.
- Non-recurrence credibility: the entire framework depends on a Russian treaty commitment being more durable than the Minsk agreements were — this author's companion brief, 'They Were Warned — And So Was Russia,' documents exactly how thoroughly Minsk failed as a precedent for taking such commitments at face value.

VII. Price Test Applied to the Settlement

Actor	Stated commitment	What would falsify it
Russia	Accepts the Donbas line of control as final; no further territorial claims	Any troop movement beyond the agreed line, or continued shelling past the ceasefire date
Ukraine	Accepts Donbas loss in exchange for EU membership, Crimea's return, and the French guarantee	Refusal to ratify the line of control once Crimea and the guarantee are delivered
France	Nuclear-backed guarantee is genuine, not symbolic	Failure to respond to a verified violation of the Ukraine guarantee
EU institutions	Membership and euro roadmap offered in good faith	Indefinite delay of the accession timeline once the territorial and security terms are banked
United States	Exit is genuine disengagement, not deferred re-entry	Reintroduction of open-ended US security commitments once the political credit has been claimed

Actor	Stated commitment	What would falsify it
This framework's Pillar Five	A transition away from Putin is achievable as a tranche-gated outcome	No plausible verification method exists for this row — which is itself the clearest evidence the pillar is aspirational, not operational, as written

Conclusion

Four of this framework's five pillars follow the same logic that made PAX-UKR-01 and PAX-UKR-02 coherent: give every veto-holder something real to defend at home, and make the costly parts reversible so trust builds through conduct rather than signatures. The fifth pillar does not follow that logic, and this brief has not pretended otherwise. Naming a sitting head of state's departure as a settlement term is the kind of demand that ends wars by defeat, not by treaty — and dressing it as a treaty clause does not make it more achievable, only less honest about what it actually is. This brief keeps Pillar Five, structures it to do the least damage to the four pillars that can plausibly be signed, and states as clearly as the rest of this corpus requires: this is the term most likely to be the reason nothing here gets signed at all.

In politics it is not about what you say. It is about what you do. A framework that asks a party to sign away its own leadership is not a diplomatic instrument — it is a demand dressed as one, and this brief has tried to say so plainly rather than let the rest of the architecture disguise it.

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Supersedes: PAX-UKR-01 (Energy-for-Peace Framework, Sept 2026) and PAX-UKR-02 (The Trust Vacuum Settlement, Sept 2026). REF: PAX-UKR-03.