



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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STATEMENT FROM THE DISARM/END WARS ISSUE COMMITTEE OF WILPF US ON MOVING TOWARDS DÉTENTE IN EUROPE

Dated 30 November 2025

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US national section (WILPF US) is a nonprofit membership organization committed to non-partisanship. WILPF International is a non-governmental organization (NGO), assigned consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), that engages in dialogue impartially with all governments. WILPF has national sections and groups in forty-eight countries, with an international Secretary General and Secretariat based in Geneva. The WILPF International website is <https://www.wilpf.org/>. The WILPF US website is: <https://wilpfus.org/>. We are celebrating our 110th anniversary in 2025.

Originally this statement was developed by the WILPF US Disarm/End Wars Committee and its Ad Hoc appointed Writing Committee. It was unanimously supported by Disarm members as a peace message intended to help find more solutions to the Ukraine-Russian conflict. It was sent as a letter to the President-Elect in December 2024 and then edited several times. Eight Embassies and many peace organizations and individuals received the December 2024 and June 2025 versions.

The letter-statement was prompted by DISARM because of the war developments between the 2 superpowers escalating to a possible nuclear war, as in 1962 and again in 1983. Without attempting to address the specifics of the intricate diplomatic steps needed to resolve the immediate crisis of the war in Ukraine, a topic we leave to unknown negotiators concerning political realities of today, we took the opportunity to address the President directly with historical reminders of previous presidential détente initiatives. The DISARM Committee sees that averting or ending a Cold War buildup of conventional and nuclear weapons between the USA and the Russian Federation, would bring about the vision of President Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the USSR, of "a common house of Europe."

1. The Need to Identify an Organization to Facilitate Peace Negotiations

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has concerned itself in the past with Ukraine both before and after the outbreak of the current conflict (February 24, 2022), however, we emphasize that the effectiveness of the OSCE, which we had suggested in our letter to President-Elect Trump be used as a peacemaker, depended upon the full inclusion of the Russian Federation (RF) in its proceedings. But now we realize OSCE is presently a "partner" of NATO, and being a NATO "partner", it cannot serve as a "go between" NATO and the Russian Federation to facilitate the détente needed today. See this NATO document: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49911.htm

The 110 million Russians living within the European portion of their country deserve the option of closer ties or integration into the civil society of Europe. Achieving this goal will be one important aspect of building a new and equitable global economic and political order based on multipolar plurality and peace. We note that Russia has deeply yearned for this integration into European civil society since the time of Czar Peter the Great (reigned 1682-1725), an aspiration recently and fittingly reaffirmed at St. Petersburg by an international conference of women, as detailed in Section 2 below.

We emphasize that using any European or Eurasian civilian non-military entity, respected for its neutrality, in the same manner as the neutrality of the United Nations, could be explored by diplomats and peacemakers as a negotiation bridge acceptable by the Russian Federation, to bring the warring sides together. Such an entity could be the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)*, composed of 11 European and Eurasian countries whose membership may vary according to political changes.

Another suitable entity could be the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** which maintains a global network of alliances, dialogue partners and diplomatic missions. Such an official regional non-military organization may provide a more navigable path to security for Ukraine and Russia than NATO affiliated or western allies.

As President Dwight David Eisenhower declared (April 16, 1953):

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

A regional non-military organization serving as the diplomatic go-between would be a safer path for Europe, the USA, and the world at large when we are still faced by the dangerous possibility of nuclear weapons usage, as signaled by this November 19, 2024 statement of the Russian Federation’s nuclear weapons doctrine:

“Furthermore, a nuclear response is considered possible in the event of a critical threat to Russia's sovereignty, including through conventional weapons, including an attack on Belarus or a massive attack by warplanes, cruise missiles, drones or other aircraft crossing the Russian border.”

We see resolving this immediate crisis and negotiating peace between Ukraine and Russia as only the first steps toward détente with the Russian Federation and further development and expansion of the structures of peace for a safer world which President-Elect Trump's predecessors Presidents Ronald W. Reagan and George H. W. Bush helped to establish. WILPF is ready to offer dialogue and suggestions throughout this process

2. The Importance of Women in Conflict Resolution (UNSC Resolution 1325) and the St. Petersburg Conference on Peace, Nature, and Cooperation in the Baltic and the Arctic Regions and its Declaration (October 23, 2024)

We also affirm the central role of women in peacemaking under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC Resolution 1325, October 31, 2000) and progeny. We see WILPF’s role of advising our government in the USA on war and peace issues as consistent with this UNSC resolution.

This role was highlighted by the St. Petersburg Conference on Peace, Nature, and Cooperation in the Baltic and Arctic Regions, which brought together an international group of women, including many from WILPF International, and their subsequent Declaration which is available here:

<https://worldbeyondwar.org/declaration-from-the-international-conference-in-saint-petersburg-russia/>

This Declaration urges: “Instead of the militarized concept of security, put emphasis on human and common security, prioritize peace, climate cooperation, environmental sustainability, equitable resource distribution as well as social, health and educational security.”

We emphasize that peacemaking in Ukraine and détente in Europe could serve as a model and precedent for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in other regions of the world, thus realizing the values of International WILPF.

3. Doveryay no proveryay: "Trust but verify"

We hold that a just and balanced peacemaking process resolving the Ukraine war should follow a favorite Russian adage for President Reagan: *Doveryay no proveryay*, or "Trust but verify." While saving Ukrainian and Russian lives is the immediate worthwhile goal, such a peace, beginning in good faith, can consist of and facilitate confidence-building measures which serve to verify the mutual trust of the parties and set the foundation for other agreements on arms control and peaceful and flourishing co-existence in a multipolar world. We see the fears of both sides, fueling a new Cold War, needing urgent attention:

(a) Fears on the part of the Russian Federation that the USA is out to dismember Russia and dominate the world. This worst-case scenario was regrettably made all too credible and plausible by the unwise "Wolfowitz Doctrine", shortly after the old Cold War, holding that the USA would not tolerate "rivals" on the world stage (1992). We urge a *swift* repudiation of this pernicious doctrine which might well illustrate renowned Senator J. William Fulbright's book title *The Arrogance of Power*.

(b) Fears on the part of the USA and some European nations that the Russian Federation is out to invade other European nations, a scenario much favored in the previous Cold War.

First and foremost, the DISARM/End Wars Committee of WILPF US declares that regardless of the specifics of a peace solution, the USA, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine must be willing to make compromises in treaty parameters and to prepare for a decade or more of cooperative restoration and rebuilding. This will be only one step in building détente in Europe with benefits for all nations.

The DISARM/End Wars Committee urges readers of this statement to forward it to their Congressional representatives as an example of alternative thinking on how to bring an end to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war - by diplomatic means which must allay the fears of all the participants in this terrible war that has already killed or injured, by some estimates, over one million people. Noting the ongoing negotiations our Committee will fully support any mutually agreeable terms between the parties if they will lead to a stop in the Ukraine-Russia hostilities and conclude with a lasting peace for Europe and the world.

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States

** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASEAN>