

## US Joins Ukraine Peace Force Talks, Plans Ready to Act

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The United States has, for the first time, stepped into European-led discussions to form a peacekeeping force for Ukraine, signaling a shift in Washington's approach as leaders announce that preparations are nearly complete.

After months of planning, French President Emmanuel Macron described the coalition, dubbed the "coalition of the willing," as ready to deploy once a ceasefire is established. Talks were held during Macron's state visit to the United Kingdom, where he and Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer addressed allies about the mission's progress. The initiative first

took shape in March after a summit in London, aimed at countering future Russian aggression and stabilizing Ukraine once fighting subsides.

The framework envisions troops from France and the United Kingdom stationed on the ground in Ukraine while other nations contribute logistical and operational support. However, the success of this effort is widely seen as reliant on a clear security commitment from the United States, particularly in the form of air support. Former President Donald Trump, who has so far refrained from any sweeping public promises of military backing, nonetheless authorized participation in the latest round of discussions.

A notable sign of changing sentiment in Washington came as Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, a retired U.S. general who served as special envoy to Ukraine under President Trump, joined the talks remotely, marking the first U.S. participation in the coalition discussions. Senators Lindsey Graham, a Republican who has been active in advancing sanctions against Russia, and Democrat Richard Blumenthal also participated. While Sir Keir Starmer portrayed the U.S. involvement as a milestone, many observers remain skeptical that the Labour-led government's assurances will translate into practical readiness on the ground.

In comments to reporters, Macron stated, "We have a plan that is ready to go and initiate in the hours after a ceasefire." According to Starmer, the headquarters for the peacekeeping coalition will be set up in Paris with a coordination cell operating inside Ukraine. Over time, leadership will rotate between Paris and London.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who joined the meeting virtually from the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome, underscored that American military aid and sanctions enforcement remain essential. Zelensky remarked that Kyiv "very much needs" sustained U.S. engagement to deter Moscow.

The plan, called "Multinational Force Ukraine," will draw on partners across the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, known as NATO, and other European countries to replenish Ukraine's weapon supplies and reinforce its defenses ahead of any negotiated peace.

Standing alongside Starmer at the British military headquarters in Northwood, northwest London, were Defense Secretary John Healey, National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell, and Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, chief of the defense staff. Despite Labour's claims that arrangements are "mature," critics note the government's record of overpromising while real progress has often lagged.

As Western allies deepen coordination, many in Washington and European capitals are waiting to see whether Labour's declarations can be matched by action or whether this coalition will become another stalled pledge in a long series of ambitious announcements.

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