

Wall Street Journal reports UK and France plan to send 30,000 peacekeepers to Ukraine



**Moscow has warned that the West could occupy the country after deploying troops
UK and France plan to send 30,000 'peacekeepers' to Ukraine – WSJ
FILE PHOTO. © Leon Neal/Getty Images**

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New York, February 23 (RHC)-- Britain and France are drafting a plan to deploy up to 30,000 "peacekeepers" in Ukraine, depending on whether Moscow and Kiev reach a ceasefire, The Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday, citing unnamed European officials.

However, that plan depends on persuading U.S. President Donald Trump to commit to a limited American military role, the report said. While Washington has ruled out sending its forces to Ukraine, the UK and France hope the U.S. agrees to supply a limited contingent with critical support, particularly when it comes to air defense, logistics, and intelligence.

European officials interviewed by the paper insist that “without Trump’s backing, the European plan to send peacekeepers faces a difficult path.”

The envisioned “reassurance force” would be primarily composed of British and French troops, and would focus on safeguarding vital infrastructure, cities, and ports, rather than being positioned along the front lines with Russia. Another facet of the roadmap would be the active use of drones and satellites to monitor Russia’s compliance with a potential ceasefire, WSJ reports.

Previous media reports said that while the UK and France have long been proponents of deploying troops to Ukraine, several other EU members have been reluctant to seriously entertain the idea.

Moreover, Kiev is also skeptical. Mikhail Podoliak, an adviser to Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky, said on Friday that the deployment of foreign peacekeeping forces “does not seem very realistic for now.” He suggested that Kiev’s Western backers increase their defense spending instead.

Zelensky previously indicated that Ukraine could require up to 200,000 European soldiers to guarantee any peace deal with Russia, with Western media reports arguing that amassing such a force would be a serious challenge for the West.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has firmly rejected the deployment of NATO troops in Ukraine as unacceptable, and Moscow has stated that any foreign military presence will be considered a legitimate target.

In November, Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) said that the West might attempt to “essentially occupy Ukraine” under the guise of deploying peacekeepers. The SVR claimed that the plans could involve deploying up to 100,000 troops in Ukraine and partitioning the country into four large occupation zones.

[SOURCE: RUSSIA TODAY / RT]

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