
Former security adviser: UK troops may be deployed in Ukraine for years



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A former UK national security adviser has cautioned that British troops may need to be stationed in Ukraine for several years to maintain peace, should a ceasefire agreement be reached. Lord Sedwill, speaking on BBC's *The Week in Westminster*, stated that the UK must be prepared to show “strategic patience” to provide Ukraine with the necessary security assurances in any potential peace agreement.

Both the UK and France have voiced their willingness to send troops as part of a “coalition of the willing” to support the implementation of a ceasefire in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. This coalition could involve up to 20 countries, though not all would necessarily contribute troops; some may provide other forms of assistance. The proposal was introduced during a summit hosted by UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer last weekend. While the specific countries involved remain undefined, the coalition is expected to include European and Commonwealth nations.

Lord Sedwill highlighted that ensuring lasting peace in Ukraine could require a long-term commitment, possibly lasting many years. He explained that, for the mission to succeed, it is essential that the UK and its allies are ready to sustain their efforts over an extended period. The challenge, however, lies in ensuring that Russia does not perceive such a mission as something they can outlast. Lord Sedwill emphasized that a failure to maintain the peacekeeping mission could risk destabilizing the region.

The proposal for peacekeeping troops comes amidst ongoing tensions, with Russian officials strongly opposing foreign military involvement in Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has previously argued that peacekeeping forces would constitute direct NATO involvement in the conflict. Russian officials have also issued threats, including warning that British troops would become direct targets if deployed in Ukraine.

On the diplomatic front, European leaders have committed to increasing military spending and bolstering defense capabilities. At a recent EU summit, leaders approved a €150 billion defense fund to enhance Europe's military strength. Meanwhile, the UK is working with France and Ukraine to draft a peace plan to present to US President Donald Trump, though Trump has been hesitant to fully commit to supporting Ukraine. His recent moves, such as halting military aid and intelligence sharing, have raised concerns over the US's level of involvement in ensuring a lasting peace.

Despite the challenges, Lord Sedwill stressed the importance of European nations stepping up their commitment to both regional defense and Ukraine's security. Some European leaders, such as former UK Defense Secretary Ben Wallace, have suggested that Europe should take greater responsibility in replacing technologies, like satellite imagery, that the US has withdrawn from providing to Ukraine.

As discussions continue, UK officials remain focused on working closely with NATO and European allies to ensure the long-term stability of Ukraine and the wider region.