
Macron doubts Putin's willingness for peace, urges stronger sanctions



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Washington, Aug. 18—French President Emmanuel Macron voiced doubts over Russian President Vladimir Putin's readiness to end the war in Ukraine, warning that peace is unlikely without firm security guarantees for Kyiv.

Speaking to NBC News after a White House meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, Ukrainian

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and European leaders, Macron said, “I don’t see President Putin very willing to get peace now. But perhaps I’m too pessimistic.”

While Trump expressed optimism about striking a deal with Moscow, Macron cautioned that any agreement must be backed by binding assurances to prevent future Russian aggression. “If you make any peace deal without security guarantees, Russia will never comply with its commitments,” he stressed.

Macron emphasized that Moscow must face increased pressure if talks fail, warning of stronger sanctions. “If the Russians don’t comply with this approach, yes, we have to increase sanctions, secondary and primary sanctions,” he said.

Highlighting Russia’s role as the aggressor, Macron condemned its attacks and abduction of Ukrainian children, insisting Kyiv could not be treated as an equal party in the conflict. He noted that Russian strikes in Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia continued even during discussions, making ceasefire negotiations untenable.

Asked about territorial concessions, Macron said the matter rested with Ukraine’s leadership and people. He underscored that the conflict’s implications extend beyond Ukraine, calling it a test of Europe’s collective credibility in confronting a nuclear power violating international borders.

Macron was joined in Washington by a heavyweight delegation, including European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.