



By: TA | AP Brief

# Western allies agreed on post-war stabilization forces in Ukraine



Countries prepared to provide troops for a post-cease-fire force in Ukraine agreed to set up a headquarters in Paris for a rapid **deployment** after hostilities end in Russia's war on its neighbor.

A U.S. delegation was present for the first time at a meeting of the group on Thursday.

Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, was on hand for the meeting, which took place on the sidelines of the fourth annual conference on Ukraine's recovery held in Rome.

Also present were Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham and Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal, who have co-sponsored a new sanctions bill against Russia, **calling** in part for a 500% tariff on goods imported from countries that continue to buy Russian oil.

French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined the meeting via videoconference from Britain, where Macron is on a state **visit**.

In a statement, coalition members said they had agreed on a Paris headquarters for the first year of the force, which is to be known as the Multinational Force Ukraine, and then rotating it to London, with plans for a coordination cell in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital.

The force, whose 30 or so members weren't identified, is expected to provide logistical and training experts to help reconstitute Ukraine's armed forces, secure Ukraine's skies and the Black Sea.

No specific commitments were announced and Blumenthal and Graham ruled out any plans for U.S. troops on the ground.

## Sign of Western unity in backing Kyiv

Starmer said the "reassurance force" is essential for delivering security to Europe.

"That is why the coalition of the willing is ensuring we have a future force that can deploy following a ceasefire to deter Russian aggression for years to come," he said in a statement.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni said she was proud that Washington's participation in the coalition meeting, the sixth since the war began, happened in Rome and said it was a "fundamental" sign of Western unity in backing Kyiv.

"I do agree on the fact that we must also increase pressure on Moscow to achieve as soon as possible a ceasefire that will finally make way for diplomacy," she said. "But as always we have to remind that it only can happen thanks to deterrence, it only can happen thanks to deterrence, as anyone who is not naive perfectly understands."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, for his part, also thanked Kellogg, Graham and Blumenthal for their attendance, as well as recent signs from Trump of **support** for Ukraine.

He repeated a comment that Blumenthal had made in the closed-door meeting, when he noted the number of countries willing to back Kyiv on the ground. Blumenthal said the picture of so many leaders "was worth more than 1,000 words."

"The announced aid packages for Ukraine, and very decisive signals about sanctions - I believe that these words aren't empty, and the picture, as our American partner said today, is speaking for itself," Zelenskyy said.