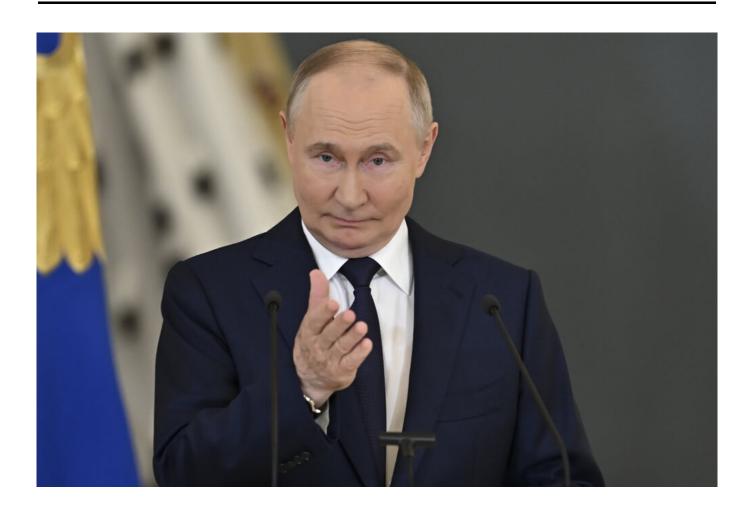


Analysis of today Assessment of tomorrow



By: TA | AP Brief

For Russia, foreign troops deployed to Ukraine before any peace deal would be 'legitimate targets'



Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that any foreign troops deployed to Ukraine before a peace agreement has been signed would be considered "legitimate targets" by Moscow's forces.

Putin's comments came hours after European leaders repledged their commitment to a potential peacekeeping force.

"If any troops appear there, especially now while fighting is ongoing, we assume that they will be legitimate targets," he said during a panel at the Eastern Economic Forum in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok.

Putin also dismissed the idea of peacekeeping forces in Ukraine after a final peace deal, saying "no one should doubt" that Moscow would comply with a treaty to halt its 3½-year full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

He said that security guarantees would be needed for both Russia and Ukraine.

Reassurance force

The Russian leader's comments follow remarks from French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday that 26 of Ukraine's allies have pledged to deploy troops as a "reassurance force" for Ukraine once fighting ends.

Macron spoke after a meeting in Paris of the so-called coalition of the willing, a group of 35 countries that support Ukraine.

He said that 26 of the countries had committed to deploying troops to Ukraine — or to maintaining a presence on land, at sea or in the air — to help guarantee the country's security the day after any ceasefire or peace is achieved.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, almost eight years after Moscow illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. Moscow has repeatedly described the presence of NATO troops in Ukraine as part of a peacekeeping force "unacceptable."