

## **Starmer hosts meeting of leaders of the “Coalition of the Willing”**



British Prime Minister Starmer at press conference today after virtual meeting of the leaders of states in the “Coalition of the Willing.”

On March 2, British Prime Minister Starmer, coordinating with French President Macron, hosted a summit meeting in London of European leaders and officials to discuss how to bring about an end to Russia’s war in Ukraine and guarantee Ukraine a lasting peace. The meeting was attended by President Zelenskyy and the leaders of Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Canada, and a number of other states as well as the foreign minister of Turkey, NATO Secretary General Rutte, European Council President Costa and European Commission President von der Leyen. Following the meeting, Starmer said, “Together, we reaffirmed our determination to work for a permanent peace in Ukraine, in partnership with the U.S.... We will work with President Trump to ensure a strong, just, and lasting peace that ensures Ukraine’s future sovereignty and security.... We have agreed that the UK, France, and others will work with Ukraine on a plan to stop the fighting which we will discuss further with the US and take forward together. We also agreed that Ukraine must have robust security arrangements in place at the time of any future peace deal so that Russia does not invade again.... In addition, many of us expressed readiness to contribute to Ukraine’s security, including through a force consisting of European and other partners, and will intensify our planning. We will continue to work closely together to drive forward next steps and will take decisions in the coming weeks.”

On Saturday, the leaders of more than two dozen countries participated in a virtual follow-up meeting organized by Starmer to discuss their participation in a “Coalition of the Willing” to support and defend the 30-day ceasefire agreed by the U.S. and Ukraine last week in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia that would take effect if and when Russia accepts it.

Among the leaders participating in the meeting, in addition to Starmer, Macron, and Zelenskyy, were those of Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. Rutte, Costa, and von der Leyen also participated in the meeting

In starting today's call, Starmer said, "Now what we see, and this is the centrepiece for our discussions today, is that Putin is the one trying to delay...My feeling is that sooner or later Putin is going to have to come to the table and engage in serious discussions. But we can't sit back and simply wait for that to happen. We have to keep pushing ahead, pushing forward and preparing for peace. And a peace that will be secure and that will last, and I think that means strengthening Ukraine so they can defend themselves...Secondly, being prepared to defend any deal ourselves through a Coalition of the Willing...Thirdly, and very importantly given the developments of the past few days, to keep the pressure on Putin to come to the table....And so it's those three areas we'll focus on in this meeting: strengthening Ukraine, being prepared to defend any deal ourselves through a Coalition of the Willing, and keeping that pressure on Russia at this crucial time."

Following the meeting, which went on for 90 minutes, Starmer said, "We underlined our unwavering commitment to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine, both now and long into the future. We welcomed the efforts of President Trump, President Zelenskyy and their negotiating teams to secure the remarkable breakthrough on the peace agreement in Jeddah this week, and President Zelenskyy's commitment to the U.S. proposal for an immediate and unconditional 30-day ceasefire, subject to agreement by Russia. We agreed that now the ball was in Russia's court, and President Putin must prove he is serious about peace and sign up to a ceasefire on equal terms. The Kremlin's dithering and delay over President Trump's ceasefire proposal, and Russia's continued barbaric attacks on Ukraine, run entirely counter to President Putin's stated desire for peace." Turning to the reason for the meeting, Starmer said, "Robust and credible security arrangements are the best way to ensure that any deal ends in a lasting peace. We agreed military planners would convene again in the UK...to progress practical plans for how our militaries can support Ukraine's future security. We will build up Ukraine's own defences and armed forces, and be ready to deploy as a 'Coalition of the Willing' in the event of a peace deal, to help secure Ukraine on the land, at sea, and in the sky....We agreed that in the case that President Putin refused to agree to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, we would need to increase our efforts to strengthen Ukraine, weaken Russia's war machine, and ratchet up pressure on President Putin to convince him to come to the negotiating table. To deliver this, we will accelerate our military support, tighten our sanctions on Russia's revenues, and continue to explore all lawful routes to ensure that Russia pays for the damage it has done to Ukraine." And, Starmer said, "We agreed to accelerate our practical work to support a potential deal. So we will now move into an operational phase. Our militaries

will meet on Thursday here in the UK to put strong and robust plans in place to swing in behind a peace deal and guarantee Ukraine's future security."

David R. Cameron

March 15, 2025