

Are France and the UK Plotting a Ukrainian Power Play Right Under Germany's Nose?

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There are indeed plans for a conventional Western intervention in Ukraine despite their leaders' denials over the past two weeks, but they've yet to fully form and their execution can't be taken for granted, but they also can't be ruled out either.

The debate that French President Macron provoked over [whether NATO should conventionally intervene](#) in Ukraine exposed the existence of two distinct schools of thought on this issue inside of Europe. [France](#), [the Baltic States](#), and [Poland](#) appear to be in favor of "non-combat deployments" there for demining and training missions, which could be carried out through a "coalition of the willing", while the rest of the bloc supports Germany's [stance](#) that this shouldn't happen under any circumstances.

["Scholz's Slip Of The Tongue Spilled The Beans On Ukraine's Worst-Kept Secret"](#), however, since he inadvertently revealed that there are already British and French troops there helping Ukraine with "target control". The [subsequently leaked Bundeswehr recording](#) about bombing the Crimean Bridge confirmed that the Americans are there too. Nevertheless, what's being proposed by Paris is a formalization of these deployments along with their gradual expansion in a "non-combat" capacity.

Nobody should be fooled into thinking that France and the other four that appear to be in favor of this scenario are solely interested in demining and training missions. Rather, their intent seems to be to prepare these on-the-ground forces for surging eastward in the event that [the worst-case scenario from Kiev's perspective](#) materializes whereby the frontline collapses and Russia starts steamrolling westward. These NATO members would then try to draw a red line in the sand as far as possible to save Ukraine.

Germany's approach is altogether different in that it prefers to formally stay out of the fray

in order to focus on building “[Fortress Europe](#)”.

This refers to Berlin’s policy of [resuming its long-lost superpower trajectory through “defensive” military means with US support](#) in order to lead Russia’s containment in Europe at Washington’s behest while America “Pivots (back) to Asia” to contain China. A major component of this plan is the “[military Schengen](#)” between Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland.

The Baltic States and Poland are unlikely to participate in a conventional intervention in Ukraine without the official participation of a nuclear power because they fear being hung out to dry in the scenario that they clash with Russia inside of that crumbling former Soviet Republic. Therein lies the strategic importance of France’s involvement since it could assuage their concerns due to the possibility of Paris resorting to nuclear brinksmanship with Moscow if its own troops take part in the aforesaid clashes.

The UK wouldn’t sit on the sidelines in that event since it’s already playing a leading role in NATO’s [proxy war](#) on Russia through Ukraine and previously signed a [trilateral security pact](#) with Kiev and Warsaw in the week before the latest phase of this [decade-long conflict](#) started in mid-February 2022. Like France, the UK also doesn’t want to see Germany resuming its superpower trajectory, and both might wager that they can either get the US’ approval for their intervention or do it unilaterally to make it a fait accompli.

France isn’t yet part of the “military Schengen”, which could impede its ability to move large amounts of troops and equipment into Ukraine, so it can either soon join this pact or negotiate its own version with Poland and/or [Greece-Bulgaria-Romania](#) to complement its [new deal with Moldova](#). Romania’s “[Moldovan Highway](#)” that’s being built in “emergency” mode is creating a new military corridor in the Balkans from which France can counter Germany’s growing military influence across the continent.

This emerging Greek-Ukrainian corridor is already one of the West’s most important logistical routes for perpetuating the proxy war after the traditional Polish one became unreliable following the farmers’ protests. It therefore makes perfect sense not only to invest in it for that sake alone, but also for countries like France and the UK to entrench their influence along the route in order to create their own “sphere of influence” there for decelerating Germany’s superpower trajectory.

That’s precisely what France is doing via its new security deal with Moldova, which will lead to closer security ties of the “military Schengen” sort with Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece in order to facilitate the dispatch of “trainers” to that landlocked country. The UK can either follow suit in some way or redouble its influence in the Baltic States and especially Poland, possibly culminating in its troops conventionally intervening in Ukraine through the last-mentioned while France’s enter from Romania-Moldova.

The possibility of France and the UK either receiving the US’ approval for this intervention or doing it unilaterally as a “coalition of the willing” in order to make it a fait accompli could pressure Germany to participate in order to not be left out and made to “look weak”. Its Air Force officers already claimed in the earlier cited leaked recording that the missiles that those two sent to Ukraine pressures them to do the same with the Taurus so the precedent is established for why they might think the same in that case.

While it initially seems counterintuitive that France and the UK might want Germany to

participate in this intervention when one of the reasons why they're arguably plotting it is to decelerate its newly resumed superpower trajectory, there's actually a clear logic to these calculations. Deeper German involvement in this conflict could further reduce the already dismal chances of it entering into a rapprochement with Russia after everything ends like many hawks still fear is possible and desperately want to prevent.

It could also become overextended in some sense and thus lose the military-strategic grip that it's recently obtained, thus creating openings for France and the UK to chip away at Germany's influence in the Balkans and Baltics respectively in order to keep their historical rival's rise somewhat in check. Berlin might not bite the bait though since Scholz has yet to even approve sending Taurus missiles there with the clandestine troop deployment that they require so there's a chance that he'll stick to his guns.

If Germany formally stays out of the fray while France and the UK embroil themselves in it with disastrous or at least unimpressive results, including those that see their Baltic and Polish "junior partners" exploited as cannon fodder, then Germany might actually benefit a lot. Those two's approach would be discredited, the possibility of which might be why the US thus far appears reluctant to approve their "coalition of the willing", and by contrast lend credence to Germany's approach.

"Fortress Europe" might then be built at an even faster pace in the aftermath of this conflict as the only two possibly countervailing forces to keep its influence in check would have discredited themselves. On the other hand, a partially "successful" conventional Franco-British intervention in Ukraine could discredit Germany if it literally ends up saving Ukraine from collapse and stopping the Russian steamroller. In that event, "Fortress Europe" might be built a lot differently than Germany planned.

Instead of the EU as a whole functioning as a pro-US German-led proxy bloc in the [New Cold War](#), Berlin would have to accept London's "sphere of influence" in the Baltics and a condominium with it in Poland while Paris would have its own "sphere" in the Balkans. Rather than relying on one country to rule the EU by proxy, the US would depend on three, with the advantage being that there'd be less of a chance that Germany would ever "go rogue" but at the detriment of this being more complex to manage.

It remains to be seen whether France and the UK will go through with this Ukrainian power play right under Germany's nose, but there's little doubt that this is what they're planning. The US could possibly disapprove, however, and they might then lack the confidence to conventionally intervene through their own "coalition of the willing". There's also the chance that the US takes the lead in this respect if Russia achieves a breakthrough before NATO's largest drills in three decades end in June.

It would be easier for the US to do this on its own with everyone else following it than to depend on others, but this could risk World War III by miscalculation much more than if France and the UK conventionally intervene while the US "Leads From Behind", hence the latter scenario's appeal. In any case, the top takeaway from this analysis is that there are indeed plans for a conventional Western intervention in Ukraine, but they've yet to fully form and their execution can't be taken for granted.

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