

Italy Blasts France and Poland for Wanting to Send Troops to Ukraine

By [Ahmed Adel](#)

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The French government intends to build an alliance with the Baltic countries that agree with the proposal to send troops to fight against Russia, according to Politico. However, the fact France is working with the minnow states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to send troops to Ukraine is a demonstration of the failure to materialise support in major EU countries, such as Germany and Italy.

According to an article in the American magazine The Atlantic published on March 9, the French Foreign Minister, Stéphane Séjourné, made the proposal during his meeting in Lithuania on March 8 with his Baltic and Ukrainian counterparts.

"It is not for Russia to tell us how we should help Ukraine in the coming months or years. It is not for Russia to organise how we deploy our actions or to set red lines. So we decide it among us," the French minister declared, as reported by Politico.

French President Emmanuel Macron surprised many in Europe by recently saying that he does not rule out sending ground troops to Ukraine. Despite opposition to Macron's statement from most EU countries, the report states that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are much more open to the idea.

On February 27, Macron reported that the leaders of Western countries discussed the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine during a conference held in Paris but did not reach a consensus. Two days later, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned in his annual speech before the Federal Assembly about the consequences if Macron's idea were implemented.

Even before Putin's warning, though, Moscow has repeatedly warned that NATO is "playing with fire" by supplying weapons to Ukraine and that foreign weapons shipments would be a "legitimate target" for Russia once they cross the border. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has stressed that Moscow sees direct clashes between Russia and NATO as inevitable if the West decides to send its troops to Ukraine.

Many major EU countries, including powerhouse Germany, have humiliated Macron by distancing themselves from his idea. With France only working with the Baltic countries and Poland seemingly changing its mind on Macron's idea, this is an omission of failure since they are minnows of the European Union and NATO.

In another blow to Macron's reckless idea, Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto [told](#) La Stampa newspaper in an interview published on March 10 that Paris and Warsaw do not have the right to speak on behalf of all NATO members when it comes to troop deployment to Ukraine and warned that sending alliance soldiers to Ukraine would block any diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between Kiev and Moscow.

The Italian official stressed when commenting on recent statements by Macron and Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, each of whom considered the possibility of sending troops to help Kiev, that such a move would only lead to escalation and undermine any potential diplomatic efforts to end hostilities.

On March 8, the top Polish diplomat stated that Russia's special military operation in Ukraine requires an "asymmetric escalation" by the West and that "the presence of NATO forces in Ukraine is not unthinkable."

"France and Poland can speak for themselves, [but] not on behalf of NATO," Crosetto said of the developments. He also stated that making such arguments now "makes no sense" since any potential deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine "means taking a step towards a unilateral escalation that would block the path to diplomacy."

According to Crosetto, Kiev's Western backers should focus on diplomacy since they are struggling to keep up with Russia's military production capacity. The defence minister said Moscow is "more equipped and agile than NATO" when it comes to military production, adding that "the West has discovered that it has a much lower production capacity than Russia."

The Italian minister particularly noted that although NATO has managed to increase its ammunition production capacity somewhat in a year since promising to supply Kiev with one million artillery rounds, "it still remains inferior to the Russian one." Under such circumstances, the West "should give all possible support to Kiev" but should also "think about helping" Ukraine in "another way," Crosetto said, stressing that Western nations should "activate diplomatic channels."

At the same time, Pope Francis called on Kiev to "have the courage" to begin talks with Moscow as, in his view, "the strongest one is the one who looks at the situation, thinks about the people, has the courage of the white flag, and negotiates." The pontiff also said that there was no shortage of nations and international actors, including himself, willing to act as mediators in this regard.

Although the Pope's intentions are positive, it is recalled that Kiev withdrew from the

Istanbul talks with Russia in the spring of 2022 and has since put forward a “peace plan” that unrealistically calls for the withdrawal of Russian troops from all former Ukrainian territories and for Russian leaders to be prosecuted as war criminals. The whole world can see that Ukraine has lost the war, which is why not only is the Pope calling for peace but why Macron is desperate to send NATO troops to save the Kiev regime but is frustrated as he is only receiving the backing of the most Russophobic but minnow states of the Baltics.

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Ahmed Adel is a Cairo-based geopolitics and political economy researcher. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Featured image: Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto in Paris, France, June 19, 2023. /CFP

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