



Britain Considering 'Major' Military Deployment To Eastern Europe Amid Russia Tensions

Description

UK: Prime Minister Boris Johnson says Britain is considering a “major” deployment of troops, warships, and fighter jets in Eastern Europe to counter Russian “hostility” toward Ukraine.

“This package would send a clear message to the Kremlin: We will not tolerate their destabilizing activity, and we will always stand with our NATO allies in the face of Russian hostility,” Johnson said in a statement late on January 29.

The comment comes as NATO members stepped up vows of additional support for Ukraine in the face of a Russian military buildup along their common border in what many in the West fear could be the prelude to an invasion.

Earlier on January 29, [France unveiled plans](#) to send hundreds of troops to Romania.

That came a day after the United States said it would soon move a small number of U.S. troops to Eastern European and NATO countries and that it has put thousands more on standby. The United States already has tens of thousands of troops stationed across Western Europe.

Amid the tensions, Moscow has denied any plans to invade Ukraine.

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia erupted in February 2014, when months of street protests culminated in violent clashes in Kyiv and the ouster of the country’s pro-Russian president. Shortly after, Russia moved to annex Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula and began stoking a war in the eastern region known broadly as the Donbas.

Washington and London, among others in the West, have said that any new Russian incursion into Ukraine would lead to swift and devastating sanctions against Moscow.

Britain is set to present its offer of bolstered military presence to NATO military chiefs next week, his office said.

The move could see the British force in Eastern Europe double to some 1,150 troops, officials said. Additional weapons could be sent to Estonia, they added.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Johnson, who is scheduled to visit the region next week, will also speak to Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone, his office said.

Johnson's office said the deployment would be focused on supporting NATO allies in the Nordic and Baltic regions.

"I have ordered our Armed Forces to prepare to deploy across Europe next week, ensuring we are able to support our NATO allies."

Johnson, who has been under pressure following a series of political scandals at home, said, that if Putin chooses "bloodshed and destruction" in Ukraine, it would be "a tragedy for Europe."

"Ukraine must be free to choose its own future," he argued.

Ukraine is not in NATO but has received military, economic, and political support from the West.

Johnson is also scheduled to send Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace to Moscow for talks with their Russian counterparts in the coming days.

France, in its announcement, said it plans to send "several hundred" troops to Romania as part of a "defensive alliance." Defense Secretary Florence Parly said she had visited Romania on January 27 to discuss the issue.

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