



UK Vows to 'Support' Poland 'Whatever Choice It Makes' Regarding Transfer of Jets to Ukraine

Description

POLAND/UK: Earlier, Poland officially stated it had no plans to transfer its warplanes to Ukraine, with Prime Minister Andrzej Duda emphasizing that such a move would drag NATO into the conflict. He added his country was supporting Ukraine with humanitarian aid.

British defence minister Ben Wallace said on Tuesday that his country, as a fellow NATO member, would support [Poland](#) if it changed its stance and opted to provide Ukraine with Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets. "I would support the Poles and whatever choice they make," Wallace was [cited](#) as saying by Sky News.

He also warned that doing so might have direct consequences for Poland.

"Poland will understand that the choices it makes will not only directly help Ukraine, which is a good thing, but also may bring them into direct line of fire from countries such as Russia or Belarus... They will have to calibrate that. That's a really big responsibility on the shoulders of the president of Poland and, indeed, defence minister," said Wallace.

The UK defence minister reiterated that he would not "second-guess" Poland's choice.

Ben Wallace, who promised that MPs would be updated Wednesday on the support being offered by the UK to Ukrainian forces, claimed that his country was in "a good place" to ensure that Kiev has access to "better defence and more defence".

In a different Tuesday interview, weighing in on Russia's operation to "demilitarise and de-Nazify" Ukraine, announced by Vladimir Putin on 24 February, Ben Wallace referred to the Russian President as a "spent force".

“Whatever ... happens, President Putin is a spent force in the world and he is done, his army is done ... and he needs to recognise that... The international community has united against him ... he is in a position where he is going to cause huge economic hardship to his people,” Wallace told Times Radio.

Ben Wallace’s remarks regarding Poland’s stance on the issue of possibly transferring planes to Ukraine came after Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) implored American lawmakers on Saturday in a Zoom call to give him planes to resist Russian forces, according to Mike Quigley, the chairman of the House Ukrainian Caucus, cited by CBS News.

The Ukrainian President’s address to British MPs via video link is slated for later on Tuesday. Despite the Ukrainian leadership’s entreaties, the US and NATO have refused to directly intervene in the Ukraine crisis.

Poland earlier stated it would not be sending its warplanes to Ukraine.

“We are not sending any jets to Ukraine because that would open a military interference in the Ukrainian conflict. We are not joining this conflict. NATO is not a party to this conflict. We are supporting Ukraine with humanitarian aid, however we are not sending any jets to the Ukrainian airspace,” Prime Minister Andrzej Duda said at [a press conference](#) with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on 1 March.

Nevertheless, reports that Washington was considering a deal whereby Poland would deliver Soviet-era aircraft to Ukraine in exchange for American F-16 jet fighters had circulated over the weekend. The move would come as part of an effort to provide Kiev authorities with more lethal weapons – something that Moscow has repeatedly warned the West against.

The Russian Foreign Ministry noted earlier that the supply of weapons to Ukraine by other countries would result in an increase in losses and the spread of weapons in European countries.

[Polish Air Force Mig-29 aircrafts perform during a military parade celebrating the Polish Army Day in Wars](#)

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[Poland, US Reportedly Considering Supplying Ukraine With Aircraft From Soviet Era](#)

After the reports had gained traction, Washington confirmed it was ready to continue to provide Kiev with military aid, and was, indeed, considering assistance to Poland if it decided to hand over warplanes to Ukraine under a swap deal.

“We are looking actively now at the question of airplanes that Poland may provide to Ukraine, and looking at how we might be able to backfill it should Poland decide to supply those planes,” US State Secretary Antony Blinken said on Sunday, during a briefing in Chisinau, Moldova.

“I can’t speak to a timeline but I can just say we’re looking at it very, very actively,” Blinken added.

The following day, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said that the US was working with Warsaw and other NATO allies on this issue. “...this is Poland’s sovereign decision to make,” Psaki had added.

Rescuers stand outside a heating point for refugees from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics ne

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