



Starmer says US 'backstop' needed for Ukraine peace deal



Sir Keir Starmer has said any Ukraine peace deal would require a "US backstop" to deter Russia from attacking its neighbour again. Speaking after a hastily convened meeting with European leaders in Paris, the prime minister repeated that he would consider deploying UK troops to Ukraine in the event of a lasting peace agreement. But he said "a US security guarantee was the only way to effectively deter Russia", and vowed to discuss the "key elements" of a peace deal with US President Donald Trump when the pair meet in Washington next week.

He was keen to avoid explaining exactly what he meant by a "backstop" - but his allies suggest this could involve air support, logistics and intelligence capabilities.

European leaders convened at the Élysée Palace to discuss concerns over the Trump administration's decision to initiate peace talks with Russia - due to start in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday - alone.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said Kyiv did not know about the talks and would not recognise any agreement made without its involvement. Sir Keir has indicated any troop contributions from the UK would be part of a multinational force to police the border between Ukrainian-held and Russian-held territory.

But experts say to do so effectively would be a massive undertaking that would require a large increase in defence spending.