Military Escalation: Poland and Baltic Countries Could Send Troops to Ukraine – Former NATO Chief

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Former NATO Secretary General **Anders Rasmussen** *told The Guardian on June 7 that a group of countries in the Atlantic Alliance could take individual action and send troops to Ukraine in case member states fail to provide security assurances to Kiev at the NATO summit in Lithuania's capital Vilnius in July.*

Rasmussen said:

> "If Nato cannot agree on a clear path forward for Ukraine, there is a clear possibility that some countries individually might take action. We know that Poland is very engaged in providing concrete assistance to Ukraine. And I wouldn't exclude the possibility that Poland would engage even stronger in this context on a national basis and be followed by the Baltic states, maybe including the possibility of troops on the ground.

> "I think the Poles would seriously consider going in and assemble a coalition of the willing if Ukraine doesn't get anything in Vilnius. We shouldn't underestimate the Polish feelings, the Poles feel that for too long western Europe did not listen to their warnings against the true Russian mentality."

Rasmussen said security guarantees needed to cover intelligence sharing, Ukraine's joint training, NATO interoperability, and improved munitions production and weapons supply.

The former NATO chief also noted that some NATO allies might favour security guarantees to avoid a real discussion about Ukraine's membership aspirations, adding, "They hope that by providing security guarantees, they can avoid this question."

> "I don't think that is possible. I think the Nato issue will be raised at the summit in

Vilnius. I've spoken with several eastern European leaders, and there is a group of hardcore, eastern central European allies that want at least a clear path for Ukraine towards Nato membership," he added.

Despite what Poland and the Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) want, according to Rasmussen, Ukraine's accession to the alliance is impossible. Even if Ukraine does not receive the invitation to the NATO summit, it could very well be extended for the summit in Washington next year because, as Rasmussen noted, "Anything less than that would be a disappointment to Ukraine."

Earlier, the current NATO secretary general, **Jens Stoltenberg**, said that Ukraine's security would be the first issue at the summit in Vilnius. The problem for Ukraine is that complete guarantees are provided only to full members of the bloc.

Ukraine's application process to join the military bloc accelerated in September last year. However, as White House **National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan** later pointed out, such a procedure is ill-timed.

For his part, Kremlin spokesman **Dmitry Peskov** stressed that Moscow is monitoring the situation and recalled that Ukraine's persistence in wanting to join the Atlantic Alliance was one of the reasons for launching the special military operation.

According to Stoltenberg, NATO countries will agree on the intensification of aid to Ukraine and make a significant decision at the upcoming summit. He specified that the alliance members would increase aid to Ukraine with a comprehensive package that would enable the transfer of the armed forces of Ukraine to NATO standards and bring Ukraine closer to the Western military bloc.

Stoltenberg has stressed that Ukraine will not be admitted into the Western military alliance while the war continues, but NATO has prepared a consolation plan for Kiev. The first is the creation of the Ukraine-NATO Council, based on the one that exists with Israel, and the second concerns some steps that will be taken so that Ukraine has the false impression that it is on the cusp of becoming a NATO member.

Ukraine is asking to join the alliance hoping that Article 5, NATO's mutual defence pact, will be activated immediately and force other countries to go to war with Russia. Obviously, the overwhelming majority of NATO countries, including the US, categorically refuse this. The main exceptions to this line of thinking are the countries Rasmussen believes "would seriously consider […] assembling a coalition of the willing" to fight Russia – Poland and the Baltic countries.

Stoltenberg claims that all allies agree that NATO's "door remains open," that Ukraine will become a member of the alliance, and that Russia has no right to veto it. However, the alliance only deceives Kiev by promising to sell its weapons and eventual membership. Therefore, the "open door" is just a false promise that Ukraine has fully believed.

Ukraine's purpose for the US is to serve as a permanent threat and tension point against Russia. This is why Ukraine will not be accepted into NATO in the foreseeable future , even if Poland and the Baltic countries push for it, as the rest of the member states do not want Article 5 invoked for the sake of Ukraine.

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