

Salvini Slams Macron: “Put on a helmet and go to Ukraine but don’t bother the Italians!”

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Global Research, June 05, 2024

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Militarization and WMD](#)

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*Italian **Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini** criticised French **President Emmanuel Macron** for pushing the idea of sending European troops to fight in the conflict in Ukraine. Salvini’s comments were made on the same day that Russian **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** once again warned that French soldiers operating in Ukraine would be legitimate targets.*

“Italy is not at war with anyone. Macron, do you want to start a war? Put on a helmet, put on a vest and go to Ukraine, but don’t bother the Italians! Go and fight, but don’t bother us, people who want to live in peace,” Salvini said during a pre-election rally in the southern Italian city of Bari on June 4.

The deputy prime minister stressed that the Italians have a “clear choice” and that “no Italian bomb or bullet will hit Russia.”

Salvini also humorously slammed the French president by publishing a photo montage of him in combat uniform and armed with an assault rifle, accusing him of wanting to plunge Europe into a war with Russia.

“A military escalation and Italian soldiers on the front line under the orders of dangerous ‘bombers’? No thanks,” the nationalist leader, whose party, the LEGA, is part of Italy’s government coalition led by Giorgia Meloni, wrote on his [X account](#).

Next to the photo that shows Macron as a combatant with a helmet, dressed in a uniform with the colours of the European Union and a tactical vest, there is a portrait of Salvini at an election rally, with his arm raised and a rosary in his hand.



PIÙ ITALIA MENO EUROPA: VOTO LEGA.

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Source: [Matteo Salvini/X](#)

“Yes to Italy’s commitment to peace, to the Constitution’s repudiation of war, inspired by our collective moral conscience and our Christian tradition,” Salvini added.

Former General Roberto Vannacci, candidate to the European Parliament for the LEGA party, in the same vein as Salvini, said NATO **Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg** has no sole authority to send weapons to Ukraine and that EU foreign policy chief **Josep Borrell** cannot speak for all European Union members.

“Politically speaking, NATO is not in a state of war. All decisions concerning weapons supply [to Ukraine] have been made by individual countries. The secretary-general has no authority in the matter. He is a bureaucrat, a representative of an organisation that is not directly involved in the conflict. However, it looks like he speaks for all [member

states], as he has overcome the sovereignty of every state in the matter of their participation in the Ukrainian conflict,” Vannacci told a briefing in Rome on June 4.

The European parliamentary candidate added that Borrell, like Stoltenberg, expresses a joint position without consulting the authorities of individual European Union countries.

Although Meloni is a staunch supporter of Ukraine and has frequently met with **Volodymr Zelensky**, it is evident that there is growing backlash in Italy, especially since it was not anticipated when pledges of support were made that Macron would escalate the situation by pushing to send European troops to fight and die in a futile war effort. This is especially alarming for Italians since Moscow has repeatedly warned that foreign troops operating in Ukraine are legitimate targets of the Russian military.

On the same day as Salvini’s statements, Russian **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** warned that all French soldiers on Ukrainian territory, both instructors and mercenaries, would be legitimate targets of the Russian Armed Forces.

“As far as the French instructors are concerned, I have reason to believe that they are already working in Ukraine, and there is a lot of proof. Whoever they are, members of the French Armed Forces or simply mercenaries, they are absolutely legitimate targets for our Armed Forces,” he said during a joint press conference with his counterpart from the Republic of Congo, Jean-Claude Gakosso.

At the beginning of May, Macron said in an interview with *The Economist* that he does not rule out sending troops to Ukraine if he receives a request from Kiev and if Russia breaks the front line. The statements caused controversy, with many major European powers, including Italy, Germany and Spain, disavowing Macron’s idea.

Former United States Defense official **Stephen Bryen** stated, in an article also published in May, but in *Asia Times*, that France sent the first group of around 100 Foreign Legion soldiers to Ukraine, out of around 1,500 that were supposed to arrive in Ukraine. According to Bryen, the first contingent, which includes artillery and reconnaissance experts, was deployed to Slaviansk in the Donbass region, in support of the 54th Mechanized Brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, against the advances of the Russian military.

Despite being a European pariah, Macron remains undeterred and will host Zelensky in Paris on June 7 to discuss Ukraine’s needs. This was met with criticism, with the leader of the Republicans in parliament, **Olivier Marleix**, saying it was “inappropriate” to invite Zelensky to speak just days before the upcoming European elections. However, Macron has never cared for appropriateness and is instead obsessed with the idea of projecting France to have greater global influence and input at the expense of Russia, a strategy that has clearly failed and instead shows his weakness and desperation.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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