The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Floats National Guard, Police Deployment in Contested Ukrainian Regions After Kyiv's Withdrawal

December 12, 2025



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A senior Kremlin official has proposed a post-war arrangement that would see Russian National Guard and police forces replacing Russian troops in contested Ukrainian territories should Kyiv agree to a U.S.-backed peace proposal, the Kommersant business newspaper reported Friday.

Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yury Ushakov maintained that Moscow would only accept Ukraine's full withdrawal from the remaining 13% of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions not under Russian control.

"After that, there can be discussions about what will happen next. It's entirely possible that there will be no military presence — neither Russian nor Ukrainian," Ushakov told Kommersant.

“But there will be the National Guard, our police, everything necessary to maintain order and organized life,” he stressed.

The potential shift in strategy follows increasing pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump for a peace settlement that would involve significant territorial concessions from Ukraine.

U.S.-led talks have hit a point of contention around the idea of a neutral “demilitarized zone” in the Donetsk and Luhansk, known as Donbas, which Kyiv insists on maintaining its sovereignty over.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has pushed back against the idea of ceding any part of Donbas, but allowed that the issue could be put to a public vote.

“Whether through elections or a referendum, there must be a position from the people of Ukraine,” Zelensky told reporters Thursday.

Related article: Trump’s Ukraine Peace Push Was Always a Naked Cash Grab

He said the U.S. peace plan envisions Ukrainian forces leaving the Donbas “and the supposed compromise that Russian forces do not enter this territory.”

He said Kyiv sent a 20-point counterproposal to Washington this week that revises the 28-point U.S. peace plan that heavily favored Moscow. Ushakov said he expects the Kremlin to reject the revisions, the full details of which have not been published.

“That’s why this will be a long process,” Ushakov told Kommersant. “We’ll strongly press our case.”

Trump’s spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said Thursday that the U.S. president was “extremely frustrated” with Russia and Ukraine.

“He doesn’t want any more talk. He wants action. He wants this war to come to an end,” she told reporters.

Russia claimed to formally annex the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions from Ukraine in September 2022 despite not having full control over them.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/12/12/russia-floats-national-guard-police-deployment-in-contested-ukrainian-regions-after-kyivs-withdrawal-a91425