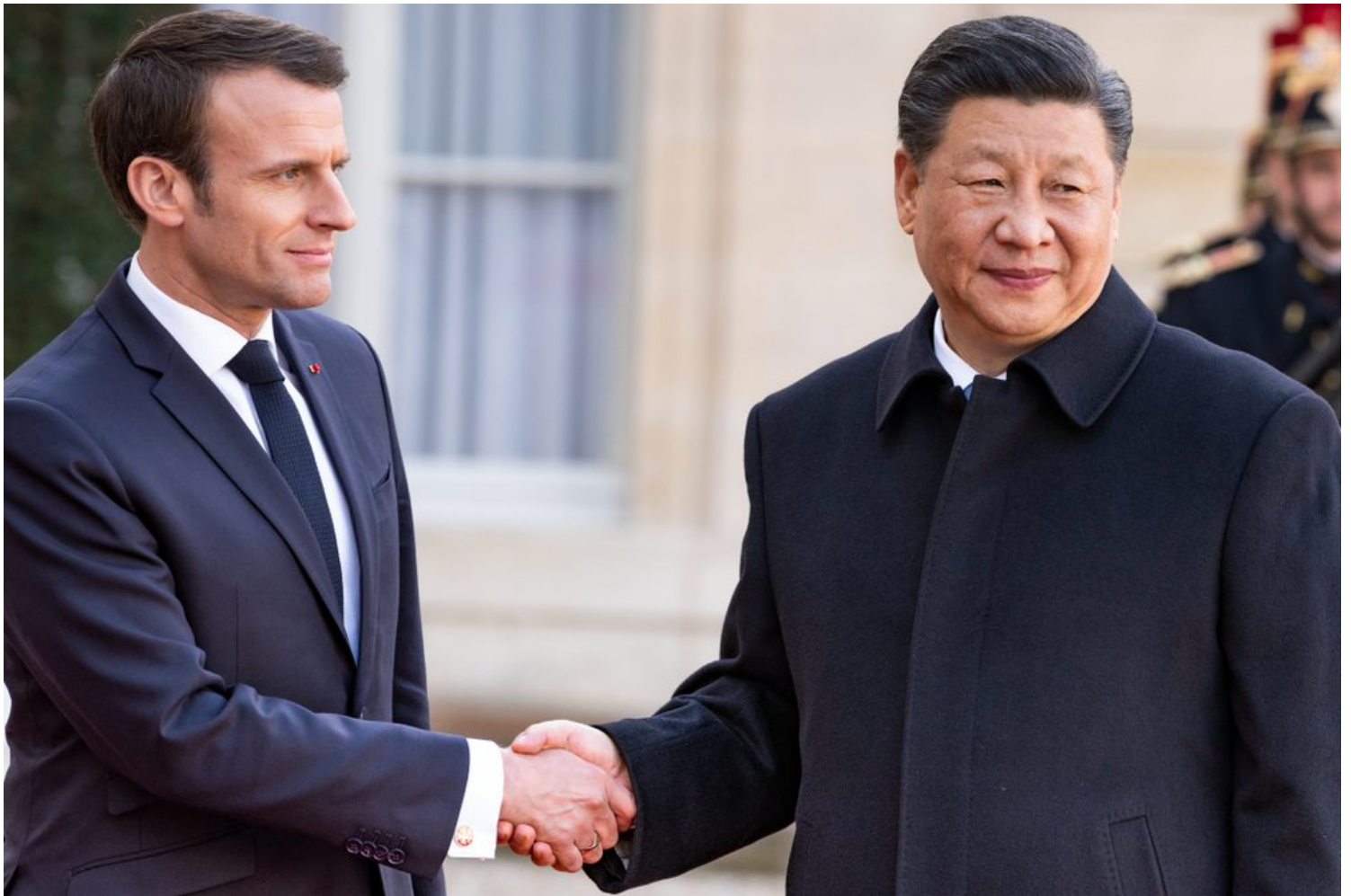


MACRON TO WORK WITH CHINA ON PEACE PLAN FOR UKRAINE

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UK officials have dismissed the plan as

foolish—perhaps even dangerous.

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Emmanuel Macron has long believed China “can play a [major role](#)” in bringing Russia and Ukraine to the negotiation table, and is determined to turn this idea into reality. Following his [state visit](#) to the Asian nation, the French president has started working on a not-so-[secret plan](#) to secure Beijing’s help in creating a foundation on which talks can commence.

Citing “people familiar with the plans,” *Bloomberg*, on April 18th, [reported](#) that Mr. Macron has charged his foreign policy advisor, Emmanuel Bonne, to work with Wang Yi, Beijing’s top diplomat, to establish “a framework that could be used as a basis for future negotiations.”

The individuals, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, gave few details about the operation, other than that if, as *Bloomberg* put it, “all goes well,” talks between Moscow and Kyiv could begin this summer. It is also not yet clear whether the Élysée has the support of Volodymyr Zelensky. This is perhaps unlikely, given the Ukrainian president earlier this year said that Mr. Macron was “[wasting](#)” his time trying to end the war through diplomacy, despite other world leaders insisting that this is the [only](#) way the conflict will stop.

Responding to the report, other French sources [told](#) *The Daily Telegraph* that

Mr. Macron said publicly during his trip that he wanted to get China to commit to playing a constructive role. Naturally, diplomatic discussions took place and there is a follow-up.

Asked by *Bloomberg* about the plans, China's foreign ministry said it was "difficult to verify the authenticity" of its claims because it was unaware of the source. An official from Mr. Macron's office has, however, [confirmed](#) that Mr. Bonne has been tasked with talking to Mr. Wang about bringing the war in Ukraine to a close.

The news of new France-China plans is likely to further frustrate Mr. Macron's friends in Brussels, who have already responded negatively to the president's insistence that Europe should avoid becoming a "[vassal](#)" in tensions between Washington and Beijing. UK officials have dismissed this attempt to bring about talks over the Ukraine conflict as foolish—perhaps even dangerous. Tory politician Tobias Ellwood, who chairs the defence select committee, [told](#) the *Telegraph* that Mr. Macron "may think he's pursuing a noble cause but he is in fact falling into China's playbook, bypassing common international practices and the recognised machinery to resolve international disputes."