
We must be ready to use 'hard power' against Moscow and Beijing – UK defense chief

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The UK must be ready to use 'hard power' against Russia and China, defense chief Gavin Williamson has said. The remark has raised eyebrows in Moscow, which calls it "irrelevant" to reality and aimed at securing a larger budget.

The UK needs to strengthen its "*lethality*" and must be ready to "*use hard power*" to uphold its interests against nations like Russia and China, Secretary of State for Defense Gavin Williamson said on Monday.

Delivering a speech at the Royal United Services Institute in London, he accused "*resurgent*" Moscow of boosting its "*military arsenal*" to bring former Soviet states like Georgia and Ukraine "*back into its orbit*."

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The UK defense chief lashed out at Beijing as well, warning the audience that China is "*developing its modern capability and commercial power*."

We have to be ready to show the high price of aggressive behavior, ready to strengthen our resilience.

The politician made the remarks as London prepares to send its largest warship, the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, to the South China Sea on a mission to enforce freedom of navigation rights.

Williamson's statement was met with a mixed reaction in Russia, with the nation's embassy in the UK calling it "*completely irrelevant*" to reality, yet "*worrying*" in its militaristic spirit.

"Certainly, it's convenient to threaten society with the so-called 'Russian threat', distracting it from the relevant internal and external problems that Great Britain faces today," the embassy said in a [statement](#).

"Apart from that, the British minister is pursuing a very particular goal with such statements: painting our country as an 'aggressor', he is trying to steadily expand the state funding of the UK's military-industrial complex."

Williamson, 42, is known for pushing Britain to reassert its role as an influential military power. He also often makes headline-grabbing bombastic statements. In September, commenting on plans to send British troops to the Arctic, he called the region the nation's "*backyard*."

At the end of last year, he unveiled plans to build military bases in the Far East and the Caribbean, [suggesting](#) that it will help the UK to become a "*true global player*" after leaving the EU.

During the tensions over the Skripal poisoning case, Williamson went on a fiery tirade against Moscow, [saying](#) that Russia should "*go away and shut up*."
