



Britain is 'running out of weapons to give Ukraine' because the UK's Armed Forces are under-funded, defence expert warns

Description

The UK has just sent Ukraine the Storm Shadow non-nuclear missile

By Mark Nicol Defence Editor

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Britain has precious few weapons left to give Ukraine because our armed forces are under-funded, a defence expert has warned.

Strategic analyst Howard Wheeldon offered the concerning assessment as Rishi Sunak promised to stand by the country in the face of Russian aggression.

The UK has just sent Ukraine its most potent non-nuclear missile, the Storm Shadow, which can strike targets from a range of 150 miles.

But the quantity of Storm Shadows gifted to President Zelensky was not disclosed. Most of the UK's stocks must be held back in case of a conflict directly involving our forces.

He suggested the missiles transported to the warzone might already be past their use-by date.



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Britain also cannot afford to offer fighter jets because its existing fleet is too small to defend these shores, Mr Wheeldon indicated.

He told the Mail: 'All credit to the UK government for its fast response and actions, but the sad fact is that after providing an unquantified number of probably time-expired Storm Shadow missiles, the UK has little else it can give.

'The notion that we might also have been able to provide fast jet capability left much to be desired, for the simple reason we haven't got enough to defend the UK and continue our international commitments.

'When it comes to equipment capability and overall available capacity, we are a nation that, when it comes to defence, is already drained of available resource.'

Addressing the London Defence Conference yesterday, Mr Sunak insisted Britain was committed to supporting Ukraine in the long-term.

He also warned Vladimir Putin that any suggestion the UK and other allies would 'get bored' of the conflict and 'move on', was wrong.

The Prime Minister said: 'We were the first country to provide [Ukraine] with main battle tanks and longer-range weapons, we've also helped with air defence and trained Ukrainian forces.

'We've led the charge on making sure they've had the resources and we are going to be steadfast in our support of Ukraine. Our support is not going to go away.

'Ukraine can count on its allies, particularly the UK, to continue supporting them. We are united.'

Mr Sunak added that Britain was 'leading the conversation' with its allies on what long-term agreements can be made with Ukraine to ensure the country's security.

The Prime Minister also reiterated his ambition to increase UK defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP – but did not set a date for doing so.

He also challenged the suggestion that the UK is declining as a global power.

Mr Sunak pointed to the AUKUS submarine partnership with Australia and the United States and the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) – a partnership with Japan and Italy to produce a next generation fighter jet.

He said: 'Britain is doing great stuff that's making an enormous difference in the world.'

By MARK NICOL DEFENCE EDITOR

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