

Former UK Civil Service Chief Warns of Rising Threat from China, Calls for Faster Defence Spending

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The former head of the UK's civil service, Simon Case, has labeled Chinese President Xi Jinping a “dictator” and urged Britain and its European allies to accelerate defence spending in response to growing global threats. Speaking at a defence industry event in London, Case argued that Europe must step up its military preparedness amid

increasing warnings from China and persistent concerns about the future of NATO.

Case, who served as cabinet secretary until stepping down in December for health reasons, said China's public rhetoric about Taiwan should be taken more seriously. He pointed to Xi's explicit statements regarding reunification with Taiwan, suggesting they represent a clear timeline for potential conflict. Case criticized the West's tendency to overlook such declarations, emphasizing that while substantial resources are spent on intelligence gathering, there is often a failure to heed public warnings made by authoritarian leaders.

The pressure from the White House," Case said, referring to the United States' long-standing push for European nations to meet and exceed defence spending targets. He acknowledged that this position, often advanced by former U.S. President Donald Trump, was unpopular in some circles but necessary. Trump had repeatedly questioned whether the U.S. would defend NATO allies if they failed to meet their financial commitments, sparking years of debate across the alliance.

The UK has committed to spending 2.6% of its GDP on defence by 2027 and, along with other NATO members, aims to raise that figure to 5% by 2035, encompassing military forces and broader security infrastructure. This shift follows a period of underinvestment and growing recognition that NATO must be prepared for large-scale conflict, particularly in Europe and the Atlantic.

Case's comments came during an event funded by BAE Systems, the UK's largest defence contractor and a key producer of fighter jets,

artillery, and nuclear submarines. The company is expected to benefit significantly from increased defence spending across Europe.

While the Chinese government strongly objects to the use of the term “dictator” about Xi Jinping, the former civil service chief doubled down, citing Xi’s consolidation of power and aggressive foreign policy. The UK’s latest strategic defence review also flagged Chinese military activities near Taiwan as a major source of global instability, reinforcing the urgency for stronger, coordinated Western deterrence.