

## Putin May Target NATO Ally, Sparking Nuclear Risk, Warns Ex-Army Chief

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A former head of the British Army has issued a stark warning that Russian President Vladimir Putin could choose to invade a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), triggering a potential nuclear crisis if Western powers are unprepared to respond.

Lord Richard Dannatt, who served as Chief of the General Staff from 2006 to 2009, said the United Kingdom must urgently prioritise national defence and modernise its military

capabilities to deter Russian aggression. Speaking to the Daily Express, Dannatt emphasised that repeated global warning signs from the illegal annexation of Crimea to the ongoing war in Ukraine have yet to awaken policymakers to the scale of the threat.

“How many wake-up calls does it take to stir a slumber into action?” he asked. He cited not only Putin’s track record but also shifting U.S. foreign policy signals and instability in the Middle East as reasons for the UK to take national defence more seriously.

The Strategic Defence Review (SDR), released last month, laid out 62 key recommendations to modernise the British Armed Forces. These include investing in traditional military hardware, enhancing cyber and artificial intelligence capabilities, and improving personnel recruitment and retention. The report also highlighted a commitment to spend 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence in the next parliamentary term.

However, Lord Dannatt expressed concern that unless these reforms are adequately funded, they risk becoming empty gestures. “If the 62 recommendations of the Healey/Robertson Strategic Defence Review were intended to be the body of the UK’s claim to be the leading NATO member in Europe, then the lack of fiscal commitment has left that body starved of lifeblood,” he stated.

He further warned that without urgent action, the UK could be “drinking in the last chance saloon,” facing outcomes such as mass conscription, a shift from a welfare state to a warfare economy, and substantial tax increases to finance national defence efforts.

NATO members recently pledged to increase defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035, with 3.5% designated for military assets and 1.5% for homeland security and national resilience. Whether the UK can meet or exceed these targets remains to be seen, but the urgency conveyed by military experts like Dannatt underscores the strategic crossroads Britain now faces.

In an increasingly volatile world, decisive leadership and robust investment in defence may be the only path to safeguarding national sovereignty and honouring international commitments.