

UK Defence Chief Warns Russia Cannot Secure Victory in Ukraine

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Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, the outgoing Chief of the Defence Staff, has delivered an assessment of Russia's current military situation, stating that Moscow faces significant challenges in achieving its objectives in Ukraine. Speaking at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, Radakin said that while Russian President Vladimir Putin may

continue to pursue territorial gains, the Kremlin is constrained by economic and logistical pressures.

“Russia does not seek a direct war with NATO, and its campaign in Ukraine has revealed major difficulties,” Radakin noted, referring to the strain on Russia’s armed forces and resources. He explained that the prolonged conflict has forced Russia to adjust its economy to support military operations, placing serious pressure on state resources and limiting its operational flexibility. These pressures, Radakin added, are expected to persist, reducing Moscow’s options.

The Defence Chief described two scenarios for Putin. The first is a ceasefire, which would not fully achieve Moscow’s stated territorial goals. The second is to continue the war, which would further strain Russia’s military capability and wider economy, affecting its population over time. Radakin referred to this as a difficult strategic choice for Russia with no straightforward outcome.

Admiral Radakin also highlighted Russia’s use of sabotage and covert actions below the threshold of open warfare, presenting them as indications of the limits on its conventional military escalation. “Russia’s reduced capacity increases the risk of unpredictable actions,” he said, noting that this situation requires NATO to remain alert rather than rely solely on defensive measures.

On NATO’s role in deterrence, Radakin stated, “We need to defend forward. The policy of NATO is to deter. And we deter by demonstrating to Russia that we are stronger, that we are ready to fight, and that we will respond to aggression.” His remarks stressed the importance of maintaining a visible posture to signal readiness against potential threats.

The Defence Chief's assessment is consistent with recent statements from UK officials, including Defence Secretary John Healey, who identified Russia as the most pressing and immediate security concern for the United Kingdom. The UK has also indicated its willingness to continue military support to Ukraine, including in the event of a ceasefire, reflecting a stated commitment to Ukrainian sovereignty and deterrence of further hostilities.

As Admiral Radakin concludes his tenure, his comments highlight the challenges linked to Russian military activity and the importance of continued vigilance, coordination among NATO allies, and strategic planning. Analysts note that Russia continues to possess significant military resources, but that its sustained pressure on the economy and armed forces may limit its capacity for major advances in Ukraine.

His final public address served as a call for NATO unity, stressing the need for deterrence, operational readiness, and international cooperation to address the conflict in Eastern Europe.