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## UK Defense Chief warns of potential conflict with global rivals



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British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps has raised concerns over the growing threat of military conflict involving China, Russia, and Iran within the next five years. Speaking at a defense strategy summit in London, Shapps emphasized the rising military capabilities and global assertiveness of these nations, calling it a major challenge to Western stability.

Highlighting geopolitical flashpoints, Shapps pointed to Russia's aggressive maneuvers in Eastern Europe, China's assertive activities in the South China Sea, and Iran's expanding influence across the Middle East. "We are witnessing a strategic realignment that challenges Western stability. The possibility of confrontation cannot be ignored," Shapps remarked, urging stronger defense measures and reinforced alliances.

The UK defense chief also advocated for bolstered cooperation within NATO and deeper strategic ties with Indo-Pacific allies. He underscored the importance of collective deterrence to counter emerging threats. "Security cannot be taken for granted. We must be prepared to defend our interests alongside our allies," he added.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg responded by affirming the alliance's commitment to collective defense, pledging increased military readiness and enhanced intelligence-sharing. European leaders echoed the sentiment, with Germany and France committing to boost their defense budgets to strengthen regional security.

Shapps' warning comes amid escalating global tensions, including the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and rising U.S.-China competition. Analysts suggest his remarks indicate a strategic shift in Western defense policies toward a more proactive stance.

Concluding his address, Shapps stressed the need for preparedness: "We must act now to prevent

war, not just respond to it.” His comments have ignited debate over Europe’s military readiness and its role in safeguarding global security.