



Written by [James Murphy](#) on December 14, 2024

British Military Warns Against EV Expansion

British military experts are warning that the Ministry of Defence's plan to replace existing battlefield vehicles with electric-powered equipment (EVs) could cause problems for personnel. They warn that current EV technology isn't up to the task of supporting troops in a battlefield environment.

Virtue Signaling?

In 2021, the Defence Ministry [called](#) man-made climate change a "clear and present danger," and pledged to do their part in getting the U.K. to net zero. With the Labour Party's takeover of the government last year, those plans, including the electrification of their fighting vehicles have escalated.



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But some in the U.K.'s military are doubtful that net zero can be attained while maintaining a ready fighting force. Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of British forces in Afghanistan [said](#):

What this amounts to is virtue signalling by [the Defense Ministry], trying to get into the climate change agenda. I suspect it will be wasting quite a lot of people's time and resources in trying to show they are playing their part. At the moment the technology is just not there.

It is hard enough to keep the current vehicles supplied with fuel, that is a massive operation on its own — I just can't see how it would possibly work with EVs.

Naval personnel are also dubious about the reliability of electric vehicles in wartime situations. [According to](#) Admiral Lord West of Spithead:

The aim must be to get war-winning equipment that we can use in the conditions we find ourselves fighting in; that enable us to fight, win and defeat enemies like Russia. That should be the aim of what we are developing.

If they are saying we should have things that will achieve net zero, I don't think that is the priority. We need things that we can use to fight and win — because we may well be at war in the next few years. I have a horrible feeling some people might be thinking net zero is so important, but that is not the important thing in warfare terms.

Enemies Not "Green"

Potential enemies of the U.K.'s military likely won't be concerned with how green its armed forces are purported to be.

Colonel Tim Collins, who commanded the Royal Irish in Iraq, [explained](#):



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I doubt our adversaries will be looking much at this sort of thing. They'll be looking for immediate effect, not approval ratings or whatever.

I doubt a battery can currently provide the horsepower necessary for warfare. What's driving this? Is it battlefield necessity or fashion? If it's fashion then it's a bad idea.

Renewables alone aren't sufficient to deliver the power we need for potential conflicts.

But battery powered vehicles seem to be the plan of Britain's military going forward. General Mark Carleton-Smith noted in 2019 that the current military fleet would be the "last to depend on fossil fuels."

"My personal view is that the internal combustion engine is on its last legs and we could see a switch to new technologies quickly," said Brigadier James Vigne, who is in charge of climate change and sustainability for the British Army.

"Renewable" Military Not Feasible

It seems that in the U.K., some commanders in the military are at odds with the government's net-zero goals, at least when they pertain to fighting readiness. Where the government's goal is green before everything, the U.K.'s actual fighting men question the wisdom of that attitude.

Is an army in the field expected to drag their own solar panels and wind turbines with them? Can they drag extra lithium-ion batteries? Wouldn't such a thing be dangerous in a war zone when those batteries are [prone](#) to fire? Just how much renewable energy is a battalion or a division capable of hauling with them?

In the United States, climate zealotry may have stalled just a bit due to the election of Donald Trump. But rest assured, other Western nations are still engaged in unrealistic dreams of net-zero emissions — even if that makes it harder to defend themselves.



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