



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on August 10, 2023

China Poised to Dominate EV Market in U.K.

A recent [report](#) from *The Times* has cautioned that permitting China to flood the U.K. market with electric vehicles would be a significant security risk.

As Chinese EV models are 40 percent cheaper to manufacture in China than in Europe, they are poised to inundate the British market in the near future, particularly in wake of the incumbent Conservative government's plan to prohibit the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

For the past 20 years, China's car industry has outpaced that of Britain's in terms of production, with some of China's biggest car producers already manufacturing cars that could rival longstanding Western marques. At the moment, China produces around 27 million vehicles annually, with passenger cars comprising about 21 million of those vehicles.

Moreover, Chinese automakers will be entering the European market in the next few years, with at least five supposedly arriving at British shores by the end of 2024. Up to 30 new electric vehicle brands are placing their bets on the U.K. car market, with most of these brands being Chinese.

Firms such as BYD and Ora, which already have agreements in place with U.K. dealers, will be joined by [other car makers](#) such as Chery, Dongfeng, and Haval.

In light of these trends, some British officials have expressed concern that China's vehicle dominance could bring the U.K. domestic car industry to its knees.

For instance, Professor Jim Saker of the Institute of the Motor Industry was [quoted](#) in *The Times* as saying that "the threat of connected electric vehicles flooding the country could be the most effective Trojan horse that the Chinese establishment has."

Saker elaborated that there would be no way to stop Chinese state-owned manufacturers from incorporating technology in cars that could bring them all to a halt. He said, "The car manufacturer may be in Shanghai and could stop 100,000 to 300,000 cars across Europe thus paralyzing a country."

Although regulators can investigate samples of cars for spyware or other security vulnerabilities, testing thousands of vehicles would not be possible, Saker added.

Likewise, limited testing samples enabled Volkswagen to cheat emissions tests prior to the Dieselgate scandal.

New vehicles would have the ability to communicate via a network, allowing them to leverage the



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Internet of Things (IoT) to supposedly offer motorists more services, ranging from vehicle software updates to car maintenance. [Vodafone's Connected Mobility Senior Product Manager David Brown](#) said, "Because the connected car concept existed before the EV, EVs have effectively been built from the ground up with two focuses: software and connected car. As a result, EVs give priority to in-car experience, which is enriched by connected car capabilities, rather than having it as an add-on to an [internal combustion engine] vehicle."

"The same network we use for our smartphones also allows the vehicle to communicate, albeit specially designed for optimum data transfer. Most recently, we are seeing vehicles connected using 5G, which allows for lower latency," Brown pointed out.

Also, the boss of Vauxhall-owner Stellantis warned of an "invasion" of Chinese EVs. Carlos Tavares said Stellantis faces a "brutal scenario" where it must pit itself against Chinese-made cars that are less expensive while having to invest billions into electrification.

British officials' fears of Chinese espionage came after a Chinese tracking device was discovered in a British government vehicle earlier this year. The tracker was sealed inside a part of the vehicle that had been imported from China. At least one SIM card that could share location data was discovered during a check of the car, which was used to transport senior government officials and diplomats, prompting worries of widespread espionage.

However, with the U.K. government's push to phase out gasoline-powered cars and introduce more Chinese EVs in the market, it seems that the establishment is not taking the threat of foreign espionage seriously enough, even after trying to expel Chinese Huawei phones from the 5G network owing to security concerns.

Some MPs have voiced their fears about the coming dominance of Chinese EVs, with the *Mail* quoting Alicia Kearns, chairwoman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Select Committee, as maintaining that "we must ... not to allow the Chinese Communist Party to secure a back door into our security by forcing dependency or inserting technologies that map and exfiltrate data on our daily lives. We must learn from the Huawei experience. The Chinese Communist Party is seeking to build a tech totalitarian state."

Meanwhile, a spokesman from the Department for Business and Trade told the paper that it was "committed to ensuring the future of the car industry in the UK."

Government sources [cited](#) in *The Telegraph* have warned that technology in Chinese-made vehicles could collect "huge" amounts of information, such as audio and video recordings and location data. One official [said](#), "If it is manufactured in a country like China, how certain can you be that it won't be a vehicle for collecting intel and data? If you have electric vehicles manufactured by countries who are already using technology to spy, why would they not do the same here?"

The source portrayed electric vehicles from China as "high-risk products," adding, "we know that China always thinks in very long terms. So if they were providing a product that could do more than just deliver the consumer's desire to go from A to B, why would they not be doing it?"

In turn, the Chinese propaganda mouthpiece *Global Times* [replied](#) that British concerns were rooted in a "paranoia" about Beijing that was "comical."

Given Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party's attempts at steering Britain toward carbon "net zero," former Cabinet minister Sir John Redwood earlier this year [told](#) *The European Conservative* that Sunak's administration has proved "unwilling" to reconsider amending the restrictions on selling gasoline-



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powered cars in the country.

Grant Shapps, the secretary of state for net zero since February this year, seemed intransigent about his government's 2030 plan, despite having been exposed as *not* installing a heat pump in his home while pressuring other Britons to do so. The *Financial Times* [reported](#) that Shapps "has vowed to press ahead with plans to ban the sale of new petrol- and diesel-engined cars by 2030 despite the EU recently agreeing to a possible exemption."

Alluding to his government's "net-zero" stance, Shapps even declared to reporters that "we've always been more forward-leaning on this stuff than the EU."



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