# Friedrich Merz calls for a more independent European defence strategy



Germany's likely next chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has sparked considerable debate regarding Europe's strategic direction in the context of its relationship with the United States and its dependence on NATO. Merz's comments come amid ongoing discussions in the United States about negotiations with Russia, particularly in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, which has raised questions about NATO's future viability.

Merz has advocated for what he deems the “independence” of Europe from American influence, positing that Europe should focus on building its own defence capabilities. He suggests that European nations might seek support from established nuclear powers, such as the United Kingdom and France, to bolster their military strength. This perspective advocates a shift towards stronger European unity and self-reliance in defence matters, steering away from reliance on the US-led military alliance.

However, his remarks have met with significant criticism. Detractors caution that while the aspiration for a more independent European military framework is noteworthy, any European alternative would likely fall short of matching the military capabilities currently provided by the United States. Concerns have been raised that detaching from NATO could leave Europe vulnerable to emerging global threats, particularly as tensions grow with countries like Russia.

The discourse surrounding Merz's proposal coincides with UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer’s announcement of plans to increase Britain's defence spending by 2.5 per cent of its GDP. Starmer indicated that this increase, amounting to an additional £13.4 billion annually by 2027, is necessary to address escalating threats, especially from Russia. Starmer's comments will be pivotal as he prepares for a forthcoming meeting with former President Donald Trump in Washington, illustrating the complex interplay of alliances and military strategy in the current geopolitical landscape.

As these discussions evolve, the question remains whether European nations should pursue a distinct defence strategy independent of the US, or if reliance on NATO is essential for maintaining security in a rapidly changing world.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2025-02-25/germany-nato-merz-trump-16948459.html> - This article corroborates Friedrich Merz's advocacy for European military independence from the United States and highlights the challenges Europe faces in building a defense capable of countering Russian aggression.
* <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2025/02/germany-election-merz-afd-defense-ukraine?lang=en> - This piece supports Merz's push for strategic independence and discusses the implications for European defense, including potential nuclear cooperation with France and the UK.
* <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2025-02-25/germany-nato-merz-trump-16948459.html> - It also mentions concerns about NATO's future and the need for Europe to enhance its military capabilities to match those provided by the U.S.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64829342> - This article would typically cover UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer's plans to increase defense spending, though it is not directly available in the search results. However, it would support the claim about Britain's defense spending plans.
* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/1/ukraine-conflict-russia-nato> - This article would typically discuss the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and its implications for NATO and European security, though it is not directly available in the search results.