# Keir Starmer announces plans to increase UK defence spending amid rising tensions



Keir Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party and the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, has announced plans to increase the country's defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by the year 2027. This proposal has sparked criticism from former defence chiefs, who describe the announcement as a reaction to pressure rather than a robust strategic move. The announcement comes just before a scheduled meeting between Starmer and US President Donald Trump in Washington, heightening the scrutiny of its timing and intentions.

Former British Army intelligence officer Philip Ingram characterised the announcement as "too little, too late," suggesting that immediate commitment to a 2.5 per cent investment was necessary in light of the current strategic defence review which could determine a need for spending between 3 to 5 per cent. Speaking to the Daily Mail, Ingram further accused the Prime Minister of attempting to placate Trump, asserting that this approach would not suffice in the face of impending discussions with the US President.

The shadow armed forces minister, Mark Francois, acknowledged the announcement as a welcome development but raised concerns regarding the linkage of this financial boost to a potential agreement involving the Chagos Islands. He expressed a desire for assurances that none of the new spending would be earmarked for payments related to the Chagos Islands deal, which involves a significant lease to facilitate a military airbase.

Former Royal Navy commander Tom Sharpe observed that while any increase in defence spending is positive amid current fiscal challenges, the planned figure remains insufficient to address the pressing needs of the armed forces. He emphasised that the focus should also be placed on the effective allocation of funds, considering the existing strains on military resources.

Admiral Lord West, ex-head of the Royal Navy, highlighted an urgent priority in resolving what he termed the "hollowing out" of UK forces, particularly in areas such as ammunition, missiles, and artillery supplies. Meanwhile, Tan Dhesi, chairman of the defence committee, recognised the current climate as volatile and critical, stating that increasing spending is a necessary step, although questioning the overall efficacy of spending strategies.

Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Mike Martin added that while Starmer's announcement is a positive initial move, a minimum of 3 per cent of GDP is required to maintain a credible defence posture in conjunction with NATO allies. Commenting on the evolving landscape of European security, Martin emphasised the diminishing role of the US in underwriting defence, which necessitates greater commitment from NATO members.

Against this backdrop of UK defence spending discussions, Ukraine has been making headlines with a significant shift in its negotiations with the United States regarding the development of its mineral resources. Following a period of contentious negotiations, Ukrainian officials have indicated readiness to sign an agreement with Washington, aimed at jointly developing critical minerals. This decision comes after the US withdrew its earlier demands related to substantial revenue shares, which had prompted resistance from President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The new arrangement reportedly involves Ukraine contributing 50 per cent of proceeds from future monetisation of state-owned mineral resources to a fund, with certain exclusions for resources already generating revenue for the Ukrainian government. However, there remains ambiguity regarding US security commitments as part of the agreement—commitments that Kyiv previously insisted were necessary.

Zelensky's deputy prime minister, Olha Stefanishyna, described the minerals agreement as only one component of broader negotiations, indicating that the US administration perceives it within a wider strategic context. This shift occurs against the backdrop of a recent gathering of European and Canadian leaders in Kyiv to commemorate three years since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion, during which Zelensky had initially floated the idea of economic commitments with the US and other allies.

As these significant discussions unfold, both in terms of Ukraine's defence alliances and the UK's military funding strategies, the international community continues to monitor developments closely, reflecting heightened geopolitical tensions and the emerging dynamics of international military cooperation.

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

## References

* <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-says-he-wants-to-increase-uk-defence-spending-to-3-and-announces-foreign-aid-cut-13316719> - This article supports the claim that Keir Starmer plans to increase UK defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 and aims for 3% in the next parliament. It also mentions the reduction in foreign aid to fund this increase.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-biggest-sustained-increase-in-defence-spending-since-the-cold-war-protecting-british-people-in-new-era-for-national-security> - This government news release corroborates the announcement of increasing defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 and the ambition to reach 3% in the next parliament, highlighting its significance in national security.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwXG9fbJueM> - This YouTube video from Sky News discusses Keir Starmer's announcement to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 and his ambition for 3% in the next parliament, providing additional context on the timing and implications.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13420453/Keir-Starmer-defence-spending-25-GDP-2027.html> - This article from the Daily Mail could provide insights into Philip Ingram's comments on the defence spending announcement, though it is not directly available in the search results.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63311155> - This BBC article might cover the broader geopolitical context, including Ukraine's negotiations with the US and European security dynamics, though it is not directly available in the search results.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-signs-deal-with-us-develop-mineral-resources-2024-02-20/> - This Reuters article could provide details on Ukraine's agreement with the US regarding mineral resources development, offering context on the strategic negotiations between Ukraine and its allies.