# UK relegated behind South Korea and Japan in US trade talks under Trump



The unfolding dynamic between the United Kingdom and the United States concerning trade negotiations has been marked by a significant development, as President Donald Trump appears to have relegated the UK to a lower-tier status in the queue for trade talks. Reports suggest that the UK will now have to vie for attention behind nations such as South Korea and Japan, a move that has prompted a mixed reaction among British officials and commentators.

Amid a backdrop of complex diplomatic relations, British negotiators reportedly began their discussions with a sense of optimism, only to quickly encounter the familiar sting of disappointment. The sentiment captures the long-standing difficulties faced by the UK in its dealings with the current US administration, particularly given Trump's unpredictable nature. The Guardian highlights how past strategies of appeasement towards Trump have often yielded minimal long-term benefits. For instance, Columbia University recently experienced the repercussions of such an approach after making concessions in the hope of restoring federal funding, only to find that negotiations had stalled further.

Complicating matters is the recent invitation sent by King Charles III to President Trump, inviting him to Balmoral Castle—an invitation that some analysts suggest carries subtle connotations regarding its significance. Balmoral, while a royal residence, is not considered as prestigious as Buckingham Palace, which could reflect the UK’s cautious diplomatic stance. The invitation serves to keep channels open while signalling a degree of distance.

The UK's predicament is further exacerbated by the apparent advantages that major corporations possess in their engagements with the Trump administration. Companies like Apple, Target, and Walmart are seen as wielding more influence than the UK, resulting in a sense of frustration among British officials. Observers note that unlike the UK, which often navigates negotiations with caution and respect, these corporations have employed a more assertive tone, sometimes forcing the administration to reconsider its positions on tariffs and trade restrictions.

The situation raises critical questions about the future of the UK’s special relationship with the US. As government officials seek to balance respect for Trump's approach with the necessity of achieving favourable trade terms, there is a palpable tension that mirrors the complexities often found in negotiations characterised by power imbalances. Observers have noted how other countries, such as Canada, seem to be adopting a more assertive posture in their dealings with the US, potentially leaving the UK to reconsider its strategy.

Finally, the broader implications of the UK’s approach to trade negotiations under Trump come into sharp focus, particularly as traditional diplomatic tactics may fall short in a landscape where the President’s behaviour is frequently described as capricious. The choice of Balmoral as the venue for Trump’s summer visit also suggests logistical considerations, including the potential for public protests, further complicating the proceedings.

As these discussions unfold, the UK must navigate a delicate balance: maintaining its diplomatic ties while striving to secure advantageous terms in trade deals that are increasingly influenced by the volatility of US politics. The ongoing situation serves as a reminder of the challenging terrain that defines international diplomacy in an era marked by shifting allegiances and unpredictable leadership.

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

## References

* <https://www.ft.com/content/98c90666-0ff9-407f-b0da-a38976010a34> - This article discusses UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves' meeting with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, highlighting the UK's efforts to negotiate a trade deal with the US, which may be behind other nations like South Korea and Japan in the queue for trade talks.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-reeves-says-she-met-uss-bessent-discuss-trade-deal-2025-04-25/> - This report details British Finance Minister Rachel Reeves' meeting with U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to discuss a prospective UK-U.S. economic prosperity trade deal, indicating the UK's position in the trade negotiation queue.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/some-us-trade-deals-could-be-reached-weeks-no-china-talks-underway-ustr-greer-says-2025-04-30/> - U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced that the Trump administration anticipates finalizing initial tariff agreements with some nations within weeks, focusing on increasing market access, reducing trade barriers, and boosting economic security, suggesting that the UK may be behind other nations like South Korea and Japan in the queue for trade talks.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/7a5ae30b-5e46-43e4-8a26-bdd35e71362c> - UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves emphasized the importance of strengthening Britain's trade relationship with the EU, which she described as 'arguably even more important' than its ties with the US, indicating the UK's cautious diplomatic stance amid trade negotiations.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/38569b78-6932-47e8-bdc2-11b737ca7fcf> - This article discusses the implications of Donald Trump's newly imposed trade tariffs, particularly a 10% levy on UK exports to the U.S., highlighting the UK's challenges in trade negotiations with the current US administration.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/rishi-sunak-south-korea-kemi-badenoch-japan-singapore-b2450741.html> - The UK and South Korea are set to sign a new long-term agreement covering defence and technology co-operation, indicating the UK's efforts to strengthen trade relations with other nations amid its trade negotiations with the US.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/01/britain-white-house-donald-trump-toadying> - Please view link - unable to able to access data