# FTSE nudges higher as Washington talks boost defence stocks ahead of Jackson Hole



The FTSE 100 made modest gains on Monday as investors digested a high‑profile diplomatic meeting in Washington and waited for fresh signals from central bankers. According to market reports, the blue‑chip index closed up 18.84 points, or 0.2%, at 9,157.74, while the FTSE 250 and AIM showed only marginal moves as traders balanced geopolitical uncertainty with pockets of UK‑specific corporate news. Market commentary reproduced by Morningstar noted the summit between US and European leaders and Ukraine’s president as a key backdrop to sentiment.

The Washington gathering — described by Reuters as a follow‑up to last week’s bilateral summit between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin in Alaska — was dominated by discussions of security guarantees and potential arms purchases for Ukraine. Reuters reported that Mr Trump told Volodymyr Zelenskiy the United States would help assure Ukraine’s security as part of any eventual peace settlement, but the meeting underlined persistent differences over ceasefires, territorial demands and the shape of any final agreement. That assessment echoed Al Jazeera’s analysis of the Alaska encounter, which concluded no concrete ceasefire or deal emerged from the shorter‑than‑expected talks with President Putin.

Against that fraught diplomatic backdrop, investors stayed focused on the mechanics of markets. European bourses were mixed — Paris’s CAC 40 fell while Frankfurt’s DAX closed marginally lower — and US indices showed only slight moves, with the Dow slightly firmer as the S&P 500 and Nasdaq slipped. Currency and bond markets reflected the same ambivalence: sterling eased against the dollar, the euro dipped, and the US 10‑year Treasury yield rose a few basis points. Those movements were reported alongside the headline UK and international equity numbers in the original market coverage.

A further source of market attention this week is Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell’s speech at the Jackson Hole symposium. Reuters set out the tension Powell faces between stubborn inflation readings and signs of softening in the labour market, and noted that while past Jackson Hole addresses have sometimes clarified policy, they have not always broken new ground. Market participants cited by the market reports warned not to expect a clear pivot to easing next month; some banks have argued Powell is unlikely to firmly guide markets toward a cut at the immediate meeting.

Defence and security names led gains on the FTSE as investors priced in continued geopolitical risk. Babcock International jumped after RBC Capital Markets initiated coverage with an “outperform” rating and a 1,200p price target, a broker note picked up in the market commentary said, and BAE Systems also rose. Analysts and strategists cited in the coverage suggested that uncertainty over the Ukraine conflict had lifted demand expectations for defence contractors, though such moves were described in the market note rather than presented as guarantees of sustained earnings upgrades.

On the domestic corporate front, Dr Martens was a standout in the mid‑cap index after Peel Hunt upgraded the retailer to “buy”, saying new management appeared to be making progress. Close Brothers, by contrast, led FTSE 250 fallers after RBC downgraded the stock following its post‑ruling rally. In smaller‑cap trading, oil and gas explorer Pantheon Resources reported appraisal results from Alaska that the company said exceeded pre‑drill expectations; the firm’s regulatory filing recorded a pilot hole drilled to a measured depth of 12,833 feet and a thicker‑than‑expected hydrocarbon column in its primary target. The company described the results as a success in its RNS, while commentators cautioned that appraisal findings require further testing and development planning before being treated as definitive production forecasts.

Commodity markets were steady to softer: Brent crude traded slightly lower than on Friday and gold eased from its recent levels, reflecting the mix of safe‑haven flows, oil supply dynamics and investor positioning influenced by the diplomatic developments and central‑bank calendar. Those price moves were included in the market closing reports summarising the day’s activity.

Closer to home, UK household mood showed a modest lift in August. S&P Global Market Intelligence’s consumer sentiment index rose to 47.0 from 45.1 in July — still below the neutral 50 threshold but the strongest reading since last October — and S&P Global’s economist Maryam Baluch told S&P Global that the data collection began shortly after the Bank of England’s rate cut, providing “a timely snapshot” of sentiment in the wake of monetary easing. The uptake was supported by stronger perceptions of labour‑market conditions, although analysts stress the reading remains within negative territory and households continue to face economic headwinds.

Investors now head into a busy calendar slot with corporate results due from miners and service providers and international data, including Canadian inflation figures, slated for release. Against a backdrop of unresolved diplomatic fault lines over Ukraine, cautious central‑bank positioning and selective company newsflow, market participants said they would be watching both policy signals from Jackson Hole and any follow‑through from the Washington talks for firmer cues on risk appetite.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/jerome-powell-volodymyr-zelensky-michael-brown-donald-trump-vladimir-putin-b2809771.html), [[4]](https://www.morningstar.co.uk/uk/news/AN_1755532974282039600/london-market-close-ftse-100-edges-up-ahead-of-trump-zelensky-talks.aspx)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/us-would-help-assure-ukraines-security-peace-deal-trump-tells-zelenskiy-2025-08-19/), [[3]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/16/no-deal-at-trump-putin-meeting-key-takeaways-from-alaska-summit), [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/jerome-powell-volodymyr-zelensky-michael-brown-donald-trump-vladimir-putin-b2809771.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/jerome-powell-volodymyr-zelensky-michael-brown-donald-trump-vladimir-putin-b2809771.html)
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* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/jerome-powell-volodymyr-zelensky-michael-brown-donald-trump-vladimir-putin-b2809771.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/us-would-help-assure-ukraines-security-peace-deal-trump-tells-zelenskiy-2025-08-19/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/jerome-powell-volodymyr-zelensky-michael-brown-donald-trump-vladimir-putin-b2809771.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/us-would-help-assure-ukraines-security-peace-deal-trump-tells-zelenskiy-2025-08-19/> - Reuters reports on a high‑profile Washington meeting in which US President Donald Trump pledged that the United States would help assure Ukraine’s security as part of any eventual peace settlement. The article describes the gathering of Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskiy with European leaders and the US administration, positioning the talks as a follow‑up to a recent bilateral summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. While the meeting emphasised a willingness to discuss security guarantees and possible arms purchases, it underlined unresolved differences over ceasefires, territorial issues and the shape of any final agreement. The piece sets out diplomatic hopes and remaining obstacles.
3. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/16/no-deal-at-trump-putin-meeting-key-takeaways-from-alaska-summit> - Al Jazeera’s analysis of the Alaska summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin explains that the meeting concluded without any formal deal to secure a ceasefire in Ukraine. The report notes the summit was shorter than expected, the leaders gave brief statements and no detailed agreement emerged. It highlights key takeaways: differing expectations among Western partners, Putin’s continued territorial demands, and criticism that a ceasefire was not achieved. The piece frames the encounter as high in symbolism but low in tangible outcomes, underlining scepticism from European and Ukrainian officials about progress toward an immediate end to hostilities.
4. <https://www.morningstar.co.uk/uk/news/AN_1755532974282039600/london-market-close-ftse-100-edges-up-ahead-of-trump-zelensky-talks.aspx> - A London market‑close report reproduced by Morningstar (sourced from Alliance News) describes the FTSE 100 making modest gains ahead of Washington talks between President Trump and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskiy alongside European leaders. The story records index moves, highlights sector winners such as defence stocks and singled‑out risers and fallers, and quotes market strategists including Michael Brown of Pepperstone, who described the prior Trump‑Putin meeting as a 'damp squib' that produced little concrete progress. The note also remarks on broker actions (for example RBC initiating coverage on some names) and investor focus on upcoming US central bank signals.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/powell-has-used-jackson-hole-battle-inflation-buoy-jobs-hes-now-caught-between-2025-08-18/> - This Reuters piece previews Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell’s anticipated appearance at the Jackson Hole symposium and explains why markets are watching for clues on future interest‑rate policy. The article outlines the tension between stubborn inflation and a softer labour market, and notes that Powell’s remarks could influence expectations about a potential rate cut in September. It sets out differing views among Fed officials and market strategists, and explains the challenge of signalling policy intent at a high‑profile gathering where past speeches sometimes set or clarified central‑bank direction but often offered limited new guidance.
6. <https://www.ajbell.co.uk/news/articles/uk-consumer-confidence-improves-august-after-rate-cut-sp-global> - AJ Bell reports on S&P Global Market Intelligence’s UK Consumer Sentiment Index for August, which rose to 47.0 from 45.1 in July, marking the strongest reading since the previous October. Although still below the neutral 50 threshold, the data show a modest improvement in household confidence following a recent Bank of England rate cut. The article quotes Maryam Baluch of S&P Global, who stresses that data collection began shortly after the easing decision and that labour‑market perceptions and household finances supported the uptick. The piece summarises sub‑indices and places the reading in the context of ongoing economic headwinds.
7. <https://www.investegate.co.uk/announcement/rns/pantheon-resources--panr/dubhe-1-appraisal-well-exceeds-pre-drill-estimates/9060088> - Pantheon Resources’ regulatory announcement (RNS) details results from the Dubhe‑1 appraisal well on Alaska’s North Slope, stating the pilot hole was drilled, logged and cored to a measured depth of 12,833 feet. The company reports the primary SMD‑B horizon delivered a gross hydrocarbon column measured at 565 feet true vertical thickness, exceeding pre‑drill expectations by about 26%. Additional hydrocarbon‑bearing horizons were encountered in secondary targets (SMD‑C and slope fans), indicating material upside. The RNS explains next steps, including planning a lateral sidetrack in SMD‑B to enable flow testing and further reservoir evaluation ahead of development planning.