# Keir Starmer faces scrutiny over defence spending increase amid aid budget cuts



In the UK House of Commons, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has opened himself up to intense scrutiny after his recent announcement of an increase in defence spending from 2.3% to 2.5% of GDP. Framed as a necessary response to threats from Vladimir Putin and uncertainty surrounding US military commitments to European security, this announcement has sparked outrage, particularly due to the accompanying cuts to the UK's aid budget. Labour MP Diane Abbott raised her voice against this move, highlighting the absurdity of robbing funds from humanitarian aid to ramp up military expenditures. “The whole country stands behind the people of Ukraine... but taking money from aid and development to spend on armaments and tanks makes people less safe,” she lamented, making it clear that the Prime Minister’s priorities are deeply misplaced.

As Defence Secretary John Healey reluctantly confirmed, the actual increase in spending amounts to approximately £6 billion—far less than the £13.4 billion originally touted by Starmer. Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch seized the opportunity during Prime Minister's Questions to challenge Starmer, accusing him of “playing silly games” with the figures related to defence spending. Healey’s admission that “the definition of defence numbers can be done in different ways” only adds to the confusion and concern, as clarity and accountability should be the hallmark of any government dealing with national security.

This increase in military spending comes at a time when Starmer is reportedly negotiating a significant deal involving the Chagos Islands, revealing how dubious priorities have become under his leadership. Reports indicate that the UK may cede sovereignty over the Chagos Islands while leasing the US-UK military base on Diego Garcia for an estimated £90 million annually. Alarmingly, it has been speculated that funds for this potentially troublesome deal could be sourced from the newly announced defence budget—an issue that Starmer and his ministers have yet to adequately clarify.

As part of an expected push to bolster relations with the US, Starmer plans to discuss this controversial Chagos deal with President Donald Trump during his upcoming Washington visit. Foreign Secretary David Lammy has stressed the importance of US support, warning that if Trump disapproves of the arrangement, it may face serious jeopardy. “If President Trump doesn’t like the deal, the deal will not go forward,” Lammy stated, hinting at the perilous entanglement of UK interests in a foreign power's dictates.

Given the magnitude of these issues, severe scrutiny over Starmer's handling of defence budgets continues to mount. Dissenting voices from within his party echo the call for transparency and accountability concerning both military spending and international aid commitments. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister maintains that national security is paramount, a notion echoed by his Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, who insists that “the number one responsibility of any government is to keep its citizens safe.” However, with misleading figures and questionable international deals on the table, one must wonder if these words truly resonate in the halls of power.

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

## References

* <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/uk-to-reduce-aid-to-0-3-of-gross-national-income-from-2027/> - This URL corroborates the announcement by Prime Minister Keir Starmer regarding the increase in defence spending and the reduction of aid spending from 0.5% to 0.3% of gross national income by 2027.
* <https://aeralis.com/2025/02/26/pm-announces-defence-spending-increase/> - This URL supports the claim that the UK defence spending will rise to 2.5% of GDP by 2027, aligning with previous commitments and further increasing to 2.6% in 2027.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-> - This URL would typically provide news coverage on UK politics, including recent announcements by the Prime Minister regarding defence spending and aid budget cuts.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/26/keir-starmer-defence-spending-uk-aid-budget> - This URL would likely cover the reaction to Prime Minister Starmer's defence spending announcement and the controversy surrounding aid budget cuts.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/keir-starmer-defence-spending-uk-aid-budget-b2304266.html> - This URL would provide independent coverage of the Prime Minister's defence spending plans and the associated cuts to the aid budget.
* <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-defense-spending-keir-starmer-europe-security/> - This URL would offer analysis on how the UK's defence spending increase impacts European security and relations with other countries.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2019719/keir-starmer-labour-pmqs-clash> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/chagos-deal-will-not-go-ahead-if-trump-rejects-it-lammy-says-AO4S7FGFYNII5OLLT4OEQ3IVTM/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/defence-spending-numbers-defended-by-starmer-amid-silly-games-criticism-FWNEWSCFV5OWLJ2K5QDVTDBL44/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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