# Keir Starmer’s trade deal with Donald Trump raises serious doubts over its benefits and legality



# Keir Starmer's Trade Deal with Donald Trump: A Critical Perspective

The recent trade agreement announced between UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and former U.S. President Donald Trump is a concerning milestone in post-Brexit UK-US relations. Set against a backdrop of global trade tensions, this agreement, which reduces certain tariffs on British automobiles and agricultural products, raises serious questions about the effectiveness of Starmer's leadership and the long-term implications for British industries.

The press conference unveiling the details of this trade pact faced considerable delays, highlighting the logistical ineptitude that has characterized Starmer’s tenure. Originally scheduled for 3 PM UK time, the event was postponed, underscoring the difficulties in navigating transatlantic diplomacy.

### A Questionable Bargain

The deal results from a series of negotiations under Starmer's aegis, but skeptics are right to question its viability. While it eases the 25% tariffs on British automobiles and metals and eliminates tariffs on steel and aluminium, a universal 10% tariff on many British goods remains firmly in place. Critics, including figures from the Conservative party, assert that this agreement fails to deliver the robust benefits it promised for UK industries, making it a half-hearted attempt at revitalizing the economy.

Moreover, legal experts have raised serious concerns about whether the agreement is compliant with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. The stipulation that bilateral agreements cover “substantially all trade” to benefit from preferential tariffs casts a pall over the deal's legality and long-term sustainability.

### Economic Fallout and Uncertain Future

Analysts have noted that, despite a veneer of optimism, the agreement is severely limited in its scope. While allowing increased trade access for certain U.S. agricultural products in exchange for maintaining stringent food standards, it begs the question: is this really beneficial for our producers? Starmer's attempts to balance Trump's aggressive trade policies appear inadequate, raising doubts about whether this deal is genuinely advantageous for the UK or simply a political distraction.

The agreement has been touted as a framework for future negotiations with countries like India and Japan. However, one must wonder if this fragile arrangement merely serves as a template for a failure to address pressing trade issues at home rather than fostering genuine market access.

### Diplomatic Gains and Domestic Gaps

Starmer's navigation of these complex negotiations may seem noteworthy, but it is overshadowed by mounting domestic challenges. Having only recently concluded a trade pact with India, Starmer is focused on displaying international diplomacy, yet his domestic agenda remains weak amid rising economic uncertainty and the cost-of-living crisis. Is this trade deal the best he can achieve while managing our fundamental industries?

While the immediate reactions to the agreement may be cautiously optimistic, the broader implications for UK industries—particularly in sensitive sectors like pharmaceuticals and agriculture—are alarmingly unclear. The persistent baseline tariffs raise pressing concerns over whether this deal signals a genuine commitment to free markets or is simply a temporary political sleight of hand.

### Conclusion

In summary, the recent trade agreement between the UK and the U.S. reflects a worrying advancement characterized by uncertainty and potential setbacks. Despite the self-congratulatory tone from both leaders, critics are justifiably vigilant. The road ahead is fraught with challenges that could fundamentally alter both countries' economic landscapes. As Starmer attempts to solidify his position on the global stage, it is evident that the real test will lie in navigating the complexity of trade relations and addressing the increasing demands from the British electorate for genuine economic revival.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2052526/keir-starmer-donald-trump-trade-deal-press-conference> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/e9d311f3-ce7d-4f72-8a46-a84b1181ff33> - The UK and US have finalized their first trade agreement since President Donald Trump initiated a global trade war, easing some tariffs on British exports. The pact, announced by Trump and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, removes additional 25% tariffs on British cars and metals, and zero-rates steel and aluminium exports. However, a flat 10% levy on most British goods remains. In return, the UK will lower tariffs on some US agricultural products and ethanol, but maintain its food standards. The agreement also sets the stage for a digital trade pact and preferential treatment for the UK in potential future tariff hikes on pharmaceuticals and films. While both leaders hailed the deal, critics, including UK Conservative leaders, labeled it insufficient. Legal experts expressed concern over its compliance with WTO rules, as the agreement does not cover 'substantially all trade,' which is required for bilateral deals offering preferential tariffs. The deal could serve as a model for future US agreements with other countries such as India and Japan. However, Trump indicated high tariffs may still apply to nations with significant trade surpluses with the US.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/1acf796a-4cfd-4c10-88c9-31901c353df5> - In a last-minute agreement, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer secured a trade deal with US President Donald Trump, marking a milestone in UK-US relations amidst Trump’s global trade war. The accord came after months of negotiations, capped by an urgent phone call while Starmer was watching a football match. Trump sought final concessions on agriculture, partially granted by the UK. The resulting arrangement increased American agricultural access to British markets and included UK gains such as protection for car manufacturers and the removal of tariffs on steel and aluminium. Starmer, praised for his measured approach to Trump’s aggressive trade policies—including threats of tariffs on foreign films—managed to finalize the deal with the help of UK ambassador Lord Peter Mandelson and business chief Varun Chandra. The agreement, though less ambitious than post-Brexit aspirations, was politically significant as Starmer became the first world leader to negotiate with Trump following recent tariff announcements. The UK also finalized a trade deal with India and plans to formalize a strategic partnership with the EU. Despite domestic political challenges, Starmer is leveraging international diplomacy to bolster his leadership image.
4. <https://time.com/7283842/united-states-united-kingdom-trade-deal-trump-starmer-tariffs-agreement/> - On May 8, 2025, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 'full and comprehensive' trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom via his Truth Social platform, calling it a significant milestone in the longstanding alliance between the two countries. A press conference is scheduled at the Oval Office, although it remains unclear whether trade documents will be signed today. More trade agreements with other nations are reportedly in negotiation. The agreement follows Trump's earlier implementation of a 10% tariff on the U.K. and subsequent 25% tariffs on imports such as steel and cars. These tariffs were partially paused, with the U.K. exempted from higher rates due to its trade surplus with the U.S. British industries, especially the automotive sector, hope the deal will reduce tariffs. U.K. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer confirmed ongoing U.S. negotiations, emphasizing national interest and economic renewal. Details remain limited, but British officials mention a 'heads of terms' agreement, while lawmakers raise concerns about agricultural standards and protections for U.K. farmers. Despite their initially tense relationship, Trump and Starmer appear to have built a cooperative rapport since Starmer assumed office in 2024.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/81151da7-0b2d-4d4b-a315-a995a7fc5e2d> - On May 8, 2025, President Donald Trump is expected to announce a landmark trade agreement with the United Kingdom, marking the first U.S. trade deal since the recent imposition of sweeping tariffs. The agreement, although limited in scope, will primarily focus on the car and steel sectors, which were hit hardest by the 25% tariffs. Described by Trump as 'full and comprehensive,' the deal includes tariff reductions and paves the way for broader negotiations covering sectors such as pharmaceuticals and aerospace. British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer is pursuing this agreement urgently, following his recent trade pact with India, as these tariffs have posed significant threats to UK industries. While the deal falls short of a full post-Brexit free trade agreement, it opens avenues for future negotiations, including potential reductions to the U.S. baseline tariffs and the UK's tariffs on products like cars, meat, shellfish, and digital services. This deal is one of 17 the Trump administration is working on to reduce global trade tensions following its April 2 tariff announcement. Talks are also underway with other global partners, including Japan, India, and EU countries, amid concerns over U.S.-China trade relations.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/view-trump-heralds-breakthrough-deal-with-uk-2025-05-08/> - On May 8, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced a 'breakthrough' trade deal aimed at strengthening bilateral economic ties. The agreement maintains a 10% universal U.S. tariff on UK goods but sees the UK lowering its import duties from 5.1% to 1.8%, providing increased market access for U.S. products. Key sectors benefit immediately, notably UK automobile exports, as U.S. tariffs are reduced from 27.5% to 10%, and steel and aluminum levies are cut to zero. While financial markets reacted modestly, with FTSE indices showing mixed results, analysts expressed cautious optimism. Experts noted that although the agreement offers immediate sectoral relief and removes some economic uncertainty, it falls short of being comprehensive and maintains relatively high overall tariffs. Industry representatives and economists highlighted that the deal does not resolve long-term trade challenges and is not a replicable model for other nations. Key concerns remain over future tariffs, particularly in sensitive sectors like pharmaceuticals, and whether this pact signifies a broader move toward strategic trade partnerships or merely a symbolic political gesture.
7. <https://apnews.com/article/79d55b8ade0dd8c9265ada9400d079db> - President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with the United Kingdom that reduces tariffs on British autos, steel, and aluminum while maintaining a 10% baseline tariff on other British goods. Under the agreement, tariffs on UK autos drop from 27.5% to 10% for a quota of 100,000 vehicles, and tariffs on British steel and aluminum imports fall to zero. In return, the UK agreed to purchase more U.S. beef and ethanol, streamline customs for American goods, and reduce tariffs on 2,500 U.S. products, including olive oil and wine. U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick also revealed a $10 billion aircraft purchase from Boeing by a British company. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer hailed the agreement as historic and beneficial for British jobs, particularly in the auto sector. He emphasized ongoing efforts to reduce global trade barriers. The deal represents progress in U.S.-UK trade talks that began post-Brexit but stalled under President Biden. Trump continues to threaten higher tariffs on other countries, particularly China, and has suggested he may impose tariffs as high as 100% on certain goods. Despite economic concerns such as inflation and trade-related uncertainty, Trump asserted confidence in the U.S. economy’s resilience and growth.