# Starmer’s US trade deal criticised as a political quick fix amid concerns over long-term strategy



Sir Keir Starmer's recent trade agreement with the United States, touted by some as a diplomatic breakthrough, faces sharp criticism from experts who question its long-term effectiveness and viability. Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, a leading economist, voiced strong doubts, stating that “any agreement with Trump isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.” In an interview with Sky News, he argued that the UK, rather than accepting a mediocre deal, could have forged a much more advantageous agreement by collaborating closely with the European Union. This perspective underscores a troubling narrative that the UK is accepting second-best in its post-Brexit trade strategy.

The pact aimed at reducing the burdensome 25% tariffs on British automobiles and steel exports to a mere 10% for up to 100,000 car imports, while removing tariffs on UK steel and providing limited access for agricultural products. Yet, many tariffs remain, disproportionately impacting sectors perceived to be struggling—raising significant doubts about the effectiveness and ambition of the agreement. Critics argue that this limited deal starkly contrasts with the bold post-Brexit vision that many believed was achievable.

In government circles, the agreement has garnered some backing, with Home Secretary Yvette Cooper emphasizing the importance of strengthening US trade relations, particularly for the beleaguered automotive sector that heavily relies on export opportunities. However, her reluctance to address the UK's relationship with the EU—an essential component of any comprehensive trade strategy—reveals a deeper concern about the government's current priorities.

Starmer’s trade agreement seems more a reaction to his diminishing domestic approval ratings in the aftermath of disappointing local election results than a robust international strategy. Marking the first trade deal under Trump's reinstated tariffs, the Prime Minister has attempted to frame it as a leap forward in US relations, hoping to instill a sense of optimism. Yet, many see this timing as politically expedient rather than strategically sound.

While Lord Peter Mandelson praised the negotiations for securing some concessions, he admitted that the deal fails to restore pre-Trump trading conditions. This is a critical point, as it highlights the inadequacy of the agreement in addressing pressing economic realities while promises of robust transatlantic relations remain unfulfilled.

Moreover, alongside this deal, Starmer’s administration has recently completed a trade agreement with India and is looking toward future negotiations with the EU. However, this tapestry of agreements illustrates a leader seemingly more intent on band-aid solutions rather than a cohesive, forward-thinking strategy for the UK’s place in global markets—especially in agriculture and manufacturing.

Starmer now faces an intricate challenge: balancing international trade dynamics with pressing domestic concerns regarding the quality and fairness of trade agreements. The mixed reactions to the US deal illustrate the precarious position he occupies as he attempts to elevate the UK's global standing while grappling with the discontent of key domestic and international stakeholders. As ties with the US are reaffirmed, the lingering question remains whether this trade deal will truly facilitate a more formidable and effective engagement strategy or merely reinforce the notion that the UK is settling for less in a volatile international landscape.

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2053593/keir-starmer-donald-trump> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/43194672-0c7a-4d54-b3ff-38a23628a981> - UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, facing domestic political challenges after poor local election results, secured a significant diplomatic win by reaching a trade agreement with US President Donald Trump. The deal, narrow in scope, aims to reduce damaging 25% US tariffs on UK car and steel exports, shielding major British sectors. Details of the concessions Starmer offered remain under scrutiny, and critics question whether the UK achieved terms comparable to other US partners. The agreement follows Starmer's recent trade deal with India and precedes an expected UK-EU strategic partnership. Despite opposition concerns, particularly over food and agricultural standards, Starmer has resisted major concessions on beef and chicken imports. The deal may involve UK tariff cuts, notably on cars and meat, but Downing Street has not confirmed if Parliament will vote on it. Lord Peter Mandelson played a key role in managing US relations, focusing on key industries and potential future cooperation, such as a tech partnership. The agreement marks the first international deal under Trump’s new tariff regime, offering Starmer a foreign policy boost amid falling domestic approval ratings and internal Labour dissent.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-britain-expected-announce-tariff-deal-thursday-2025-05-08/> - On May 8, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced a limited bilateral trade deal aimed at boosting transatlantic commerce despite maintaining a 10% U.S. tariff on British exports. The agreement slightly expands agricultural trade access, lowers U.S. tariffs on British vehicle imports from 27.5% to 10% for up to 100,000 cars, and removes U.S. tariffs on UK steel and British tariffs on U.S. ethanol and beef for specific quotas. However, many of Trump's steep tariffs—imposed to address a $1.2 trillion U.S. goods trade deficit—remain intact. The deal does not cover digital services taxes or fully resolve pharmaceutical import tariffs. Trump emphasized this agreement is not a template for negotiations with other countries that have large U.S. trade surpluses, signaling potentially harsher terms for others. The British-American Business group welcomed the breakthrough but expressed disappointment over lingering tariffs. U.S. officials also announced upcoming trade talks with China, hoping to ease tariffs as high as 145%. While the immediate economic impact appears modest, both sides anticipate this deal will form the basis for deeper trade engagement and support long-term economic growth.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/1acf796a-4cfd-4c10-88c9-31901c353df5> - After months of negotiations, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer secured a last-minute trade deal with US President Donald Trump aimed at mitigating the fallout from Trump’s global trade war. The accord was finalized in a surprise phone call on Wednesday evening while Starmer was watching a football match, with last-minute haggling over agricultural concessions. Though not the sweeping free trade agreement envisioned post-Brexit, the deal offers significant benefits, including scrapping US tariffs on UK steel and aluminium and introducing limited protection for UK carmakers and the pharmaceutical sector. Varun Chandra and Lord Peter Mandelson played key roles in the UK’s negotiating team. The UK was notably the first country to strike a trade deal with Trump since he imposed sweeping tariffs a month prior. Despite the disorderly rollout, with logistical missteps on announcement day, the deal helped Starmer appear diplomatically effective amid domestic political struggles. Starmer also finalized a trade agreement with India earlier in the week, and a new partnership with the EU is expected soon. While the deal may not fully restore pre-Trump conditions, Starmer emphasized progress over perfection, claiming it improved relations from the previous day.
* <https://elpais.com/internacional/2025-05-08/el-reino-unido-anuncia-un-inminente-un-pacto-comercial-con-ee-uu-para-mitigar-el-impacto-de-los-aranceles-de-trump.html> - Estados Unidos y el Reino Unido han alcanzado un acuerdo comercial destinado a mitigar los aranceles impuestos por la administración de Donald Trump cinco semanas antes, convirtiéndose el Reino Unido en el primer país en lograr dicho pacto. Trump y el primer ministro británico Keir Starmer anunciaron conjuntamente el acuerdo, considerado "histórico" y "muy beneficioso". Aunque los detalles completos del pacto se conocerán más adelante, se establecen reducciones parciales de aranceles: las tasas a coches británicos bajan del 25% al 10% hasta 10.000 unidades anuales, y se eliminan los aranceles al acero, aluminio, carne vacuna británica (13.000 toneladas), etanol y otros productos. A cambio, Londres permitirá acceso a su mercado para productos cárnicos y agrícolas estadounidenses. Permanecen en vigor ciertas restricciones como los estándares alimentarios, debido al interés británico de pactar también con la Unión Europea. El acuerdo supone un alivio político y económico tanto para Trump como para Starmer, quien busca afianzar lazos tanto con EE.UU. como con la UE. Además, coincide con un nuevo tratado entre el Reino Unido y la India. El pacto fortalece la posición del Reino Unido como socio estratégico de EE.UU. y marca una victoria clave para el gobierno de Starmer.
* <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/trump-revelareino-unido-eliminara-barreras-productos-agricolas-quimicos-eeuu.html> - El presidente de Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, anunció que el Reino Unido eliminará numerosas barreras no arancelarias para productos agrícolas y químicos estadounidenses como parte de un nuevo acuerdo comercial entre ambos países. Este cambio permitirá un mayor acceso de estos productos al mercado británico. Durante una rueda de prensa en la Casa Blanca, Trump destacó que estas regulaciones anteriores discriminaban injustamente a los productos estadounidenses. El primer ministro británico, Keir Starmer, calificó el acuerdo como un tributo a la estrecha colaboración histórica entre ambas naciones y lo describió como un día histórico. Sin embargo, el secretario de Comercio de EE.UU., Howard Lutnick, aclaró que Estados Unidos mantendrá un arancel del 10% sobre ciertos productos británicos, lo que generará 6.000 millones de dólares en ingresos para el país. Además, Starmer entregó a Trump una invitación del rey Carlos III para una segunda visita de Estado al Reino Unido, resaltando el fortalecimiento de los lazos bilaterales.