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Britain Goes All in on Defence: Starmer Signs Off on NATO's 5% Pledge

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In a move that signals a dramatic shift in both foreign and domestic priorities, Prime Minister Keir Starmer has committed the UK to NATO's bold new target of spending 5% of GDP on defence by 2035. The announcement, made ahead of a major NATO summit, marks Britain's biggest defence spending promise in generations. It's a powerful

message to allies and adversaries alike: the UK is ready to lead on the global stage, but not without cost or controversy at home.

Currently, the UK spends about 2.3% of its GDP on defence, and Starmer has already pledged to reach 2.5% by 2027. But this latest commitment goes much further, with spending set to more than double over the next decade. Starmer insists the decision is a direct response to what he calls an “era of radical uncertainty.” With wars raging in Ukraine and Gaza, cyber threats rising, and global power dynamics shifting fast, the government says Britain must be ready not just for traditional warfare, but for a whole new era of hybrid threats, from cyberattacks to foreign interference in domestic politics.

The 5% target includes more than just military expansion. Around 3.5% will be allocated to traditional defence spending, troops, submarines, weapons systems, while the remaining 1.5% will go toward strengthening cyber defence, energy security, and border resilience. It’s a modernised vision of national security that reflects how blurred the lines have become between war, espionage, and everyday life.

However, the scale of this financial commitment has raised eyebrows. Critics question where the money will come from and what might be sacrificed to pay for it. The government has already revealed plans to cut foreign aid from 0.5% to 0.3% of gross national income, sparking backlash from humanitarian organisations and MPs alike. There’s also concern that domestic services, healthcare, education, and welfare may feel the squeeze as the defence budget expands.

Still, Starmer appears undeterred. To him, this is a defining moment where Britain must choose strength and preparedness over short-term comfort.

He argues that in an increasingly dangerous world, underinvestment in defence is not just risky, it's irresponsible. Whether the public agrees, and whether this massive increase in spending will deliver real security remains to be seen. One thing is certain: Britain is betting big on its future, and it's doing so with its sights set far beyond its borders.