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Mounting National Debt Raises Alarms Over Fiscal Discipline and Future Tax Burdens

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Concerns over the United Kingdom's ballooning debt have taken centre stage as senior figures warn of the long-term financial impact of rising interest payments and excessive borrowing. During a recent interview, Mel Stride MP issued a sharp rebuke of current economic management, warning that the country is on course for unsustainable debt levels not seen since the 1960s.

Speaking to *GB News Originals* on 4 August 2025, Stride criticised recent fiscal decisions that have led to what he described as "the peak level of Government debt in over half a century." The Chair of the Treasury Select Committee stressed that the consequences of this trend are not abstract. "The more we borrow, the more interest we must pay. That directly reduces what can be spent elsewhere on schools, defence, policing, or tax relief," he explained.

Public sector net debt, as measured by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), recently exceeded 100% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the first time in decades. GDP, or Gross Domestic Product, refers to the total value of goods and services produced in a country over a given time. As debt continues to rise relative to GDP, the financial strain becomes more pronounced, limiting the Government's fiscal room to manoeuvre.

Stride pointed to changes in fiscal rules as a critical turning point. While previous administrations imposed self-imposed borrowing limits tied to forward-looking debt reduction forecasts, he noted that these guardrails have now been weakened. "There used to be control rules that insisted on declining debt projections. But those have been torn up," Stride remarked, accusing policymakers of embracing a "borrow, borrow, borrow; spend, spend, spend" mentality.

The Treasury Committee Chair emphasised that high servicing costs and interest paid on Government borrowing leave taxpayers on the hook. He warned that unless fiscal discipline is restored, the public will face mounting pressure in the form of reduced services or increased taxation. "It's not just numbers on a spreadsheet," he added. "This affects every working family when inflation climbs, taxes rise, or vital services fall short of expectations."

Economists have echoed similar concerns. While some level of borrowing is considered normal in modern economies, sustained borrowing without corresponding growth can erode confidence, raise borrowing costs, and make the UK more vulnerable to external shocks. A senior research fellow at a leading think tank, who spoke under condition of anonymity, described the current trajectory as "risky and politically shortsighted," citing historical examples of economic instability linked to unchecked debt growth.

As inflationary pressures persist and interest rates remain above pre-pandemic norms, the cost of borrowing is expected to stay elevated. The UK paid over £120 billion in debt interest for the fiscal year ending March 2025, a record high.

With a general election looming, the political stakes are high. Voters are increasingly wary of promises made without a clear roadmap for economic stability. The issue of national debt may become a defining battleground, one that could influence not just budgets but the broader question of trust in financial stewardship.