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British negative views of US soar in wake of Trump's war in Iran

Britons have turned sharply against the US after Donald Trump's war in Iran, with most now seeing America as a negative force in the world.

Polling by Public First for the London Defence Conference, which begins on Friday (10 April) shows a majority of the public (53%) believe the US is a negative force in the world, up 19 percentage points since before the Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro was captured in January. This is compared to 29% who see it as a positive force for the world today, down 12 percentage points since December 2025.

The British public are also opposed to deeper military involvement in Iran and want the UK to prioritise closer cooperation with European allies. Just 26% support the action in Iran, compared to 41% who oppose it. Nearly half (48%) say the UK should not get involved if the US requests support.

However, support for involvement does increase when British interests are directly at stake. A clear majority (59%) say the UK should get involved if its own military infrastructure were attacked, and 47% would support involvement if the UK had the best chance of reopening vital oil trade routes in the region.

The polling also shows a clear preference for strengthening European cooperation. The public is twice as likely to prioritise increasing cooperation with European countries (38%) as strengthening ties with the United States (19%).

Meanwhile, 40% would support the UK joining an EU-led standing army (vs 36% opposed). Support is strongest for Brits currently considering voting Labour, with 58% in favour. This is followed by voters for the Lib Dems (52%), Greens (50%), SNP (41%), Conservatives (39%) and Reform (29%).

A clear majority (61%) say the UK's priority should be protecting its own interests, even if that limits support for allies, and only 27% believe Iran poses a significant threat to the UK.



More broadly, 53% believe the government is too focused on international issues over domestic priorities, despite widespread concern about global instability, with 85% agreeing the world is becoming more dangerous and 60% saying it feels the most unstable in their lifetime.

Iain Martin, Director of London Defence Conference, said:

“The British public has dramatically shifted in attitudes towards the US after the war in Iran. That represents a profound challenge to the transatlantic alliance with potentially serious implications for the special relationship. These poll numbers emphasise the need to strengthen British and allied defences in the face of growing threats and global instability.”

“This year’s London Defence Conference could not be more timely, bringing together senior policy makers and leading industry figures to discuss the global security crisis, and the urgent need to increase UK spending on defence.”

Jeegar Kakkad, Partner at Public First, said:

“Brits can see the world is getting more dangerous, but they don’t want to be dragged into another war. There’s no appetite for getting involved in Iran unless the UK is directly under threat. Instead, people want the government focused on protecting Britain, not policing conflicts overseas.

“At the same time, there’s a clear shift in how people see our allies. Voters are far more likely to prioritise closer cooperation with Europe than stronger ties with the US and are open to going further with European partners if it helps keep the UK secure.”

Notes to editors

Public First conducted five nationally representative polls of adults in Canada, France, Germany, the UK and the US in April 2026. UK n=2,024; US n=2,007; France n=2,074; Germany n=2,082; Canada n=2,067. Public First also conducted a nationally representative poll of adults for Politico in the UK between 5-8 December 2025 (n=2003).



The London Defence Conference is the annual geopolitical gathering held in central London. It was established in 2022 following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The LDC is a conference of friendly countries dedicated to increasing the salience and visibility of defence and security in an increasingly dangerous global environment.

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Iran conflict

- Support for US action in Iran is highest in the United States and net negative in every allied country. In the US, opinion is divided, with 38% supporting the strikes and 35% opposing them. Among allies, opposition is higher than support in every case: UK 26% support / 41% oppose; France 25% / 37%; Germany 22% / 45%; Canada 22% / 52%.
- Allied publics broadly think their own government has been involved about the right amount so far. A plurality says the current level of involvement is right in Canada (56%), Germany (54%), the UK (49%) and France (45%). Americans are more sceptical: 46% say the US has been too involved, compared with 31% who say its involvement has been about right.
- If the US directly asks for help, most allies say their country should refuse. The share saying their country should not get involved even if the US directly asks is 62% in Germany, 56% in Canada, 54% in France and 48% in the UK.
- Support for involvement rises when direct national interests are at stake. If Iran directly attacked their country's military infrastructure in the region, support for involvement rises to 59% in the UK, 55% in Canada and 50% in France. Germany is split: 40% say Germany should get involved and 42% say it should not.
- Oil disruption is a weaker trigger than a direct attack. If their country had the best chance of reopening oil trade in the region, the UK (47% involved vs 31% not involved), Canada (42% vs



35%) and France (40% vs 32%) lean towards involvement, while Germany leans against it (29% vs 49%).

- Across all five countries, protecting national interests outweighs supporting allies. The share saying national interests should take priority, even if this limits support for allies, is 61% in the UK, 59% in Germany, 58% in Canada, 55% in France and 53% in the US.

Europe, alliances and defence cooperation

- Among US allies, publics are more likely to prioritise closer ties with Europe than closer ties with Washington. Asked for their country's top international priority over the next 10 years, the share choosing increasing cooperation with European countries is 42% in Germany, 40% in France, 38% in the UK and 41% in Canada. The share choosing strengthening the alliance with the US is much lower: 9%, 10%, 19% and 17% respectively.
- That preference for Europe carries through into defence procurement. The share saying their country should buy military technology from Europe, even if it takes longer or costs more, is 60% in Germany, 58% in France, 55% in Canada and 46% in the UK. The share preferring cheaper or faster purchases from the US is 20%, 19%, 25% and 31% respectively.
- In Europe, voters are more comfortable with shared EU forces than with a fully federal EU army. The share saying the EU should have some shared forces, but national armies should remain primary is 45% in the UK, 39% in France and 39% in Germany. By contrast, support for a standing federal army under EU control is lower: 17% in the UK, 18% in France and 23% in Germany.

Broader geopolitical mood

- Concern about instability is widespread in every country polled. The share agreeing that the world is becoming more dangerous is 85% in the UK, 83% in France, 82% in Canada, 77% in Germany and 76% in the US.



- The share saying the world currently feels the most unstable it has in their lifetime is 64% in France, 62% in Germany, 60% in the UK, 60% in Canada and 48% in the US.
- Donald Trump's foreign policy is widely seen as escalating risk. The share saying Trump's approach to foreign policy makes a global conflict more likely is 71% in Canada, 65% in Germany, 64% in the UK, 59% in France and 52% in the US.