



UK-US trade deal could mean tariffs 'not necessary', says Trump



A trade deal between the US and UK could happen "very quickly", President Donald Trump said at a joint press conference with Sir Keir Starmer

Speaking during the prime minister's visit to the White House, Trump envisaged "a real trade deal" which could see the UK avoid the kind of tariffs the president has been threatening on some of the US's other trading partners. The trip had been seen as a key moment in Sir Keir's premiership as he sought to influence Trump's decisions on topics including Ukraine, as well as trade.

Sir Keir kicked off his White House visit by presenting Trump with a letter from King Charles inviting him to an "unprecedented" second state visit to the UK. Receiving the letter in front of cameras in the Oval Office, Trump said it would be a "great honour" and described the King as "a wonderful man". Sir Keir said the offer of a second state visit was "truly historic". Traditionally US presidents have only been given one state visit. Having confirmed he would be accepting the invite, Trump, along with Sir Keir took questions from reporters for 30 minutes. Asked if he would provide such assurances, Trump said a minerals agreement he plans to sign with Ukraine on Friday could provide a "backstop".

He said "nobody will play around" if US workers were in the country, as part of the deal on minerals. The US president was pressed on whether he stood by his accusation that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was a "dictator". The deal would see the UK cede sovereignty of the Indian Ocean archipelago, but maintain control over the island of Diego Garcia, which includes a US-UK military airbase, by leasing it back. After taking questions in the Oval Office, the two leaders took part in talks and then held a formal press conference, during which Trump repeatedly spoke about a possible US-UK trade deal which could be agreed "very quickly". "I think there's a very good chance that in the case of these two great, friendly countries, I think we could very well end up with a real trade deal where the tariffs wouldn't be necessary. We'll see."

In a bid to convince the president against UK tariffs, Sir Keir said the US-UK trade relationship was "fair, balanced and reciprocal". Since leaving the European Union, successive British leaders have hoped to get a general free trade deal with the US.