



# Britain Leads: A Conservative Roadmap for restoring British leadership on the world stage



Tuesday, 7 October



10:00 to 11:00



Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland



**Kitty Donaldson (Chair)**

The i  
Paper



**Sophie Stowers**

More in  
Common



**Olivia O'Sullivan**

Chatham  
House



**John Whittingdale MP**

Member, Foreign  
Affairs Committee



**Lincoln Jopp MP**

Member, Defence  
Committee



**Wendy Morton MP**

Shadow Minister -  
Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

## Progressive Activists



## Incrementalist Left



## Established Liberals



## Sceptical Scrollers



## Rooted Patriots



## Traditional Conservatives



## Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

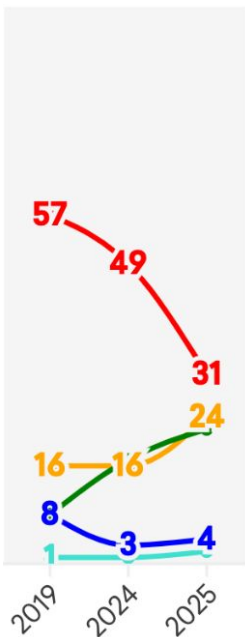
... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

# How would the seven segments vote?

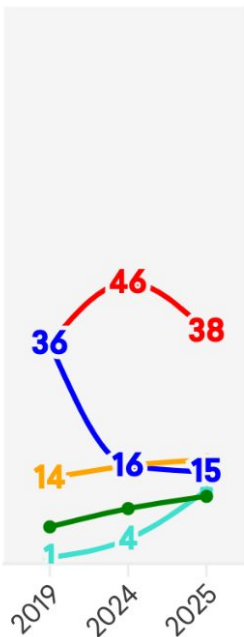
## Progressive Activists

"Corbynites"



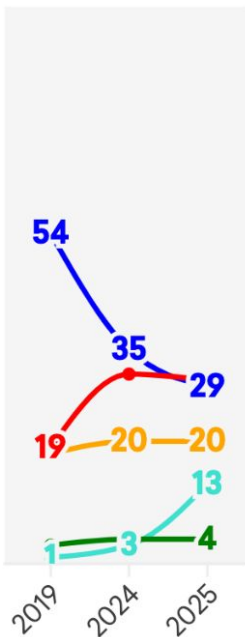
## Incrementalist Left

"Social democrats"



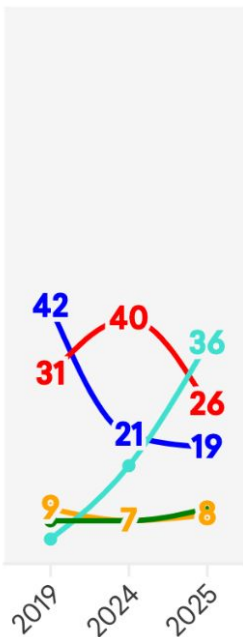
## Established Liberals

"Blue Wall"



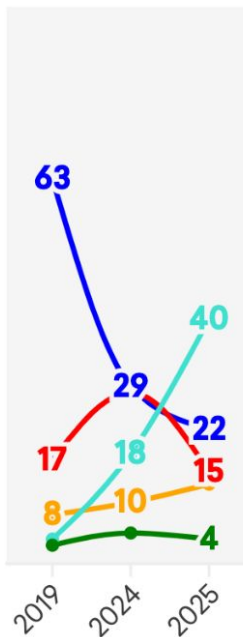
## Sceptical Scrollers

"Online Disengaged"



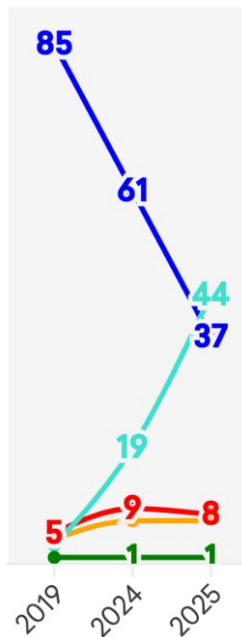
## Rooted Patriots

"Red Wall"



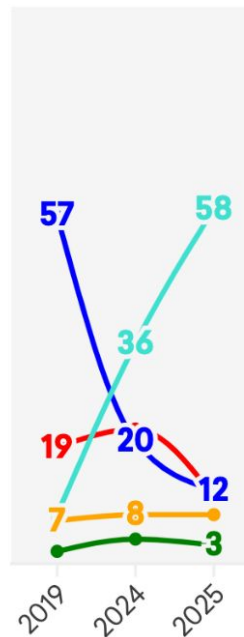
## Traditional Conservatives

"Shire Tory"



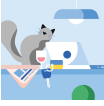






## Dissenting Disruptors

"Populist Right"



# The segments on foreign policy

	<b>Progressive Activists</b>	They have a global outlook but are outliers in thinking we <b>spend too much on defence</b> . To them if the UK is to get involved it should be keeping peace or <b>preventing human rights abuses</b> .
	<b>Incrementalist Left</b>	Co-operatists, they <b>see countries around the world as our allies</b> . They are most likely to support intervention to defend other NATO members and broadly favour UK involvement.
	<b>Established Liberals</b>	Internationally minded, they are most likely to <b>support UK foreign policy interventions</b> . Proudly pro-Europe and most likely to say we still have a special relationship with the US.
	<b>Sceptical Scrollers</b>	They keep out of international issues and <b>question whether the UK should involve itself</b> in conflicts around the world.
	<b>Rooted Patriots</b>	While they focus more on domestic rather than international issues, their <b>high threat perception</b> means they worry about rising threat from cyber-attacks and Chinese influence.
	<b>Traditional Conservatives</b>	Most likely to say Brexit has been a success. This groups wants <b>higher defence spending</b> and compulsory <b>national service</b> . Particularly proud of the UK's role in Ukraine.
	<b>Dissenting Disruptors</b>	Frustrated by a perceived prioritisation of global over national issues, they are more likely than other conservative segments to say we <b>spend too much on defence</b> and least in favour of supporting Ukraine.



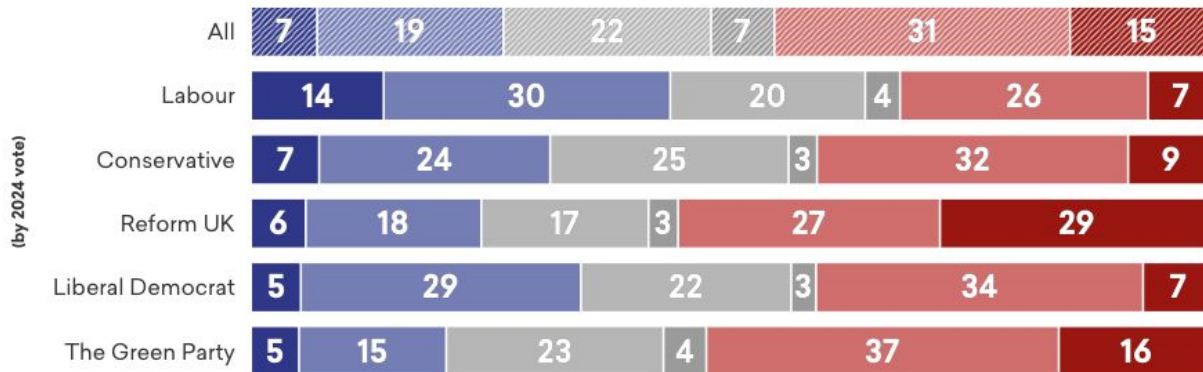
# Starting points on foreign policy

# Just one in four think the rest of the world views Britain positively

Almost half the British public, 46 per cent, think the UK is perceived negatively. This opinion unites Reform and Green voters - a majority of Green (53 per cent) and Reform (56 per cent) voters think the UK is perceived negatively.

How do you think the UK is perceived by the rest of the world?

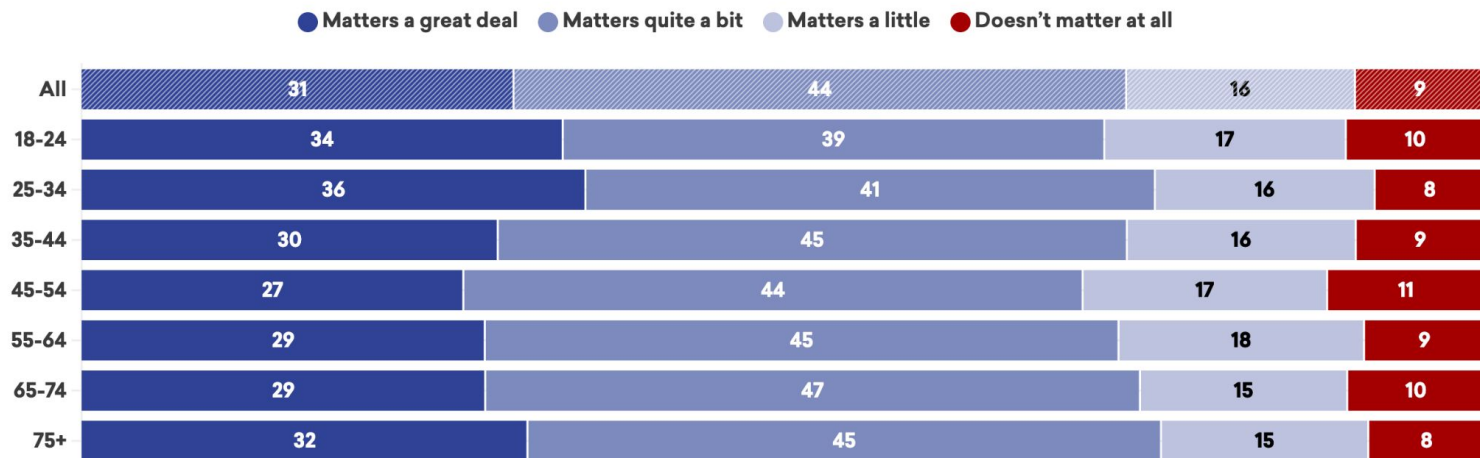
● Very positively ● Somewhat positively ● Neither positively nor negatively  
● Don't know ● Somewhat negatively ● Very negatively



# The UK's international perception matters to the British public

75 per cent of Britons say it matters how positively or negatively the UK is perceived by the rest of the world. This view is shared by every voter group and age group.

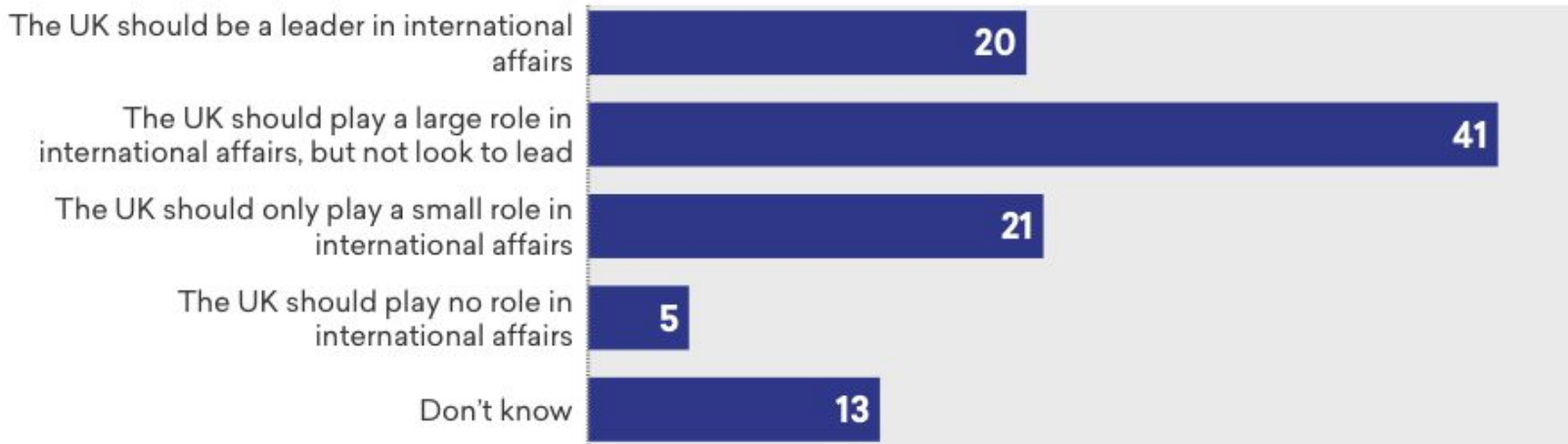
To what extent do you think it matters how positively or negatively the UK is perceived by the rest of the world?



# Public thinks Britain has a role to play on the world stage

Three in five (61 per cent) say the UK should play a large role in international affairs. Just 5 per cent think the UK should not play a role.

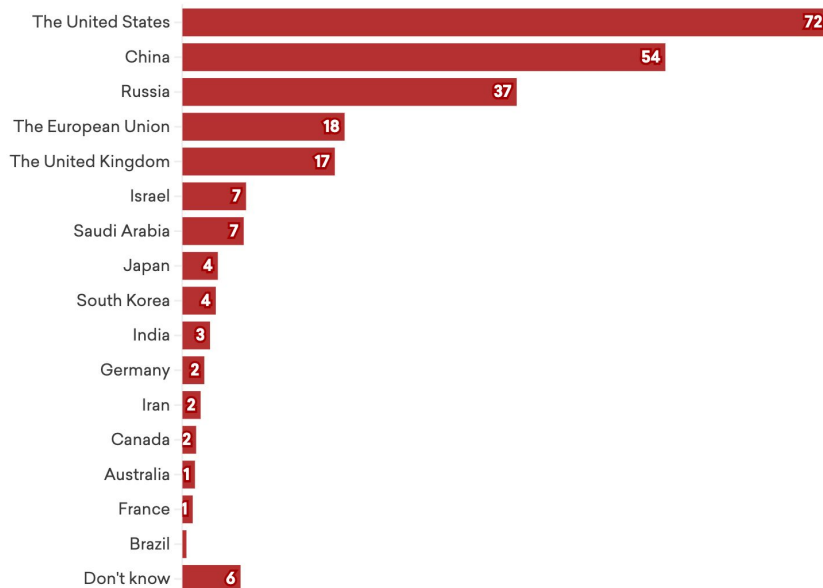
Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?





# The US, China and Russia are seen as dominant powers

**Britons think the US is still the most powerful country in the world, followed by China and Russia**



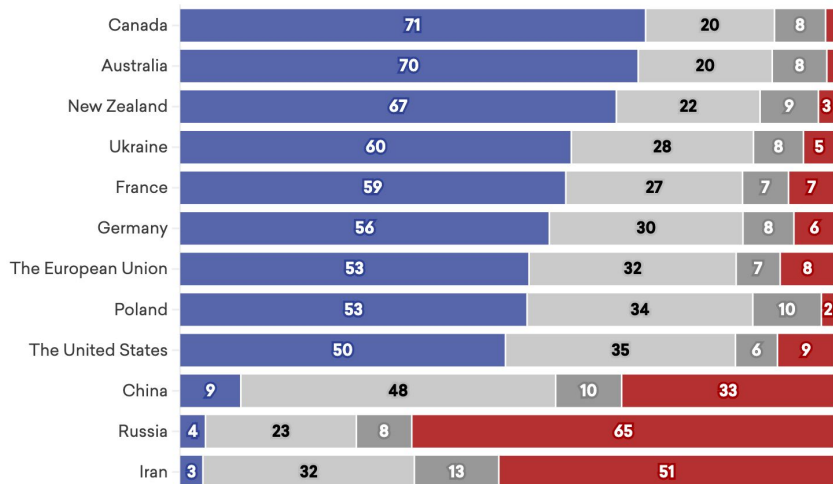
The USA, China and Russia are viewed by the British public as the world's dominant powers, with the UK in fifth place. Just 17 per cent of Britons put the UK in their top three most powerful countries, narrowly behind the EU (18 per cent) but ahead of Israel (7 per cent).

# Friend or foe? Britons are unsure about the US

## Britons see key Commonwealth and European partners as our closest allies, while fewer than one in ten would say the same of China, Russia, and Iran

Overall, do you think the following countries and organisations are allies or enemies of the UK, or neither?

● An ally ● Neither an ally nor an enemy ● Don't know ● An enemy



Britons largely see Commonwealth countries - such as **Canada, Australia and New Zealand** - and key European nations as close partners and allies. In contrast, **China, Iran and Russia** are viewed more as **enemies** than allies.

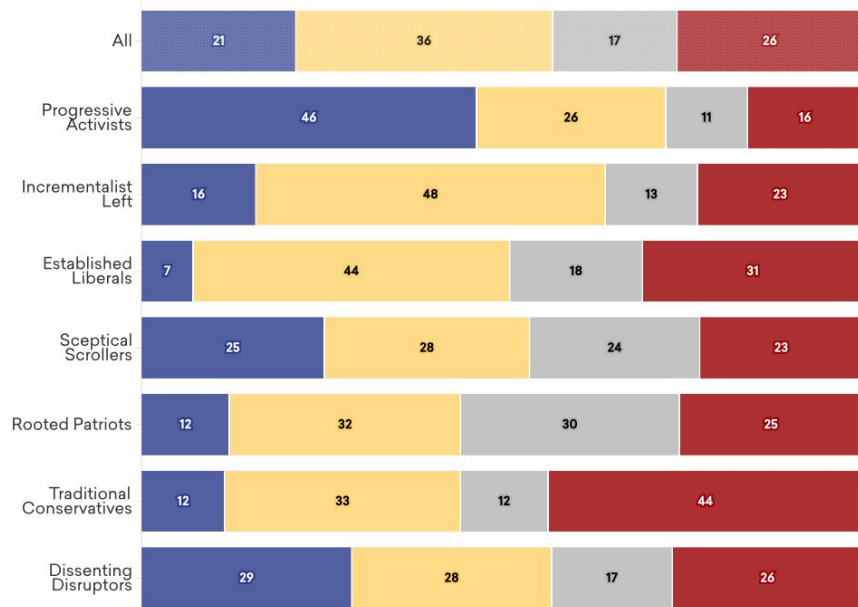
Views on the US are mixed. **Only 50 per cent** say they see the **US** as an ally of the **UK**, although that number has risen slightly since its low point in the aftermath of the Zelenskyy Oval Office meeting.

# The public is split on defence spending

## Following increases to military spending, the average Briton believes that military spending is about right

Government spending plans suggest that defence spending is set to total £59.8 billion in 2025/26 - around 2% of GDP. In your opinion, is this amount about right, too little, or too much?

● Too much ● About right ● Don't know ● Too little



Public opinion on UK defence spending is mixed. **36 per cent** say the current level is about right, while the rest are split: **26 per cent** think it's too low and **21 per cent** say it's too high.

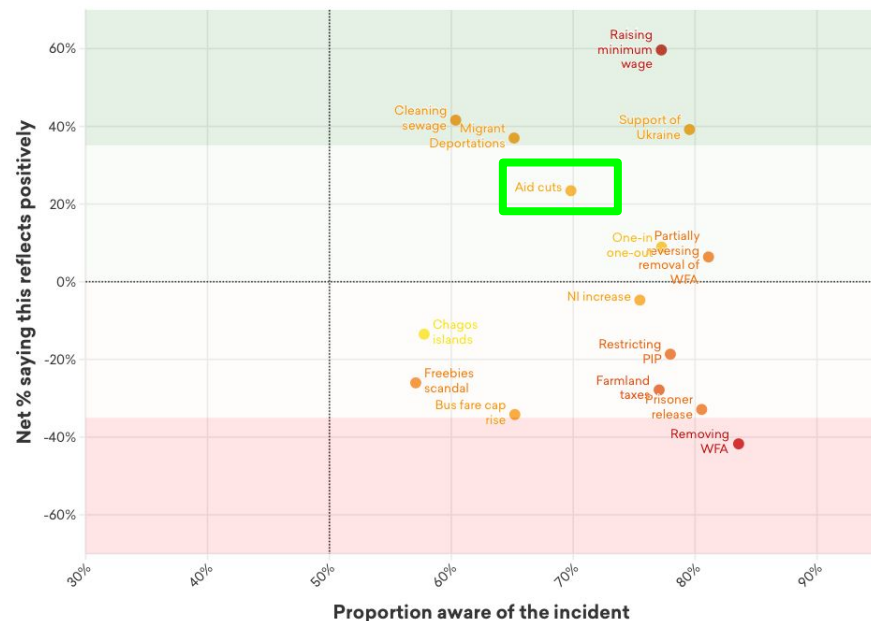
Those who see the war in Ukraine as one of the top issues for the country are more likely to want increased spending, while those more concerned about conflict in the Middle East are inclined to think the UK is overspending.

Reform and Conservative voters are the most likely to say we spend too little on defence, whereas Green voters are the most likely to say we spend too much.

# Aid cuts to fund defence spending had public support

## The government's successes and failures

Lighter colours indicate greater ambivalence (more people expressing neither a negative nor positive view of the event)



In general, the public backed the government's decision to increase the defence budget through aid cuts by a margin of more than two to one.

The cut to aid was most popular among Reform and Conservative voters.

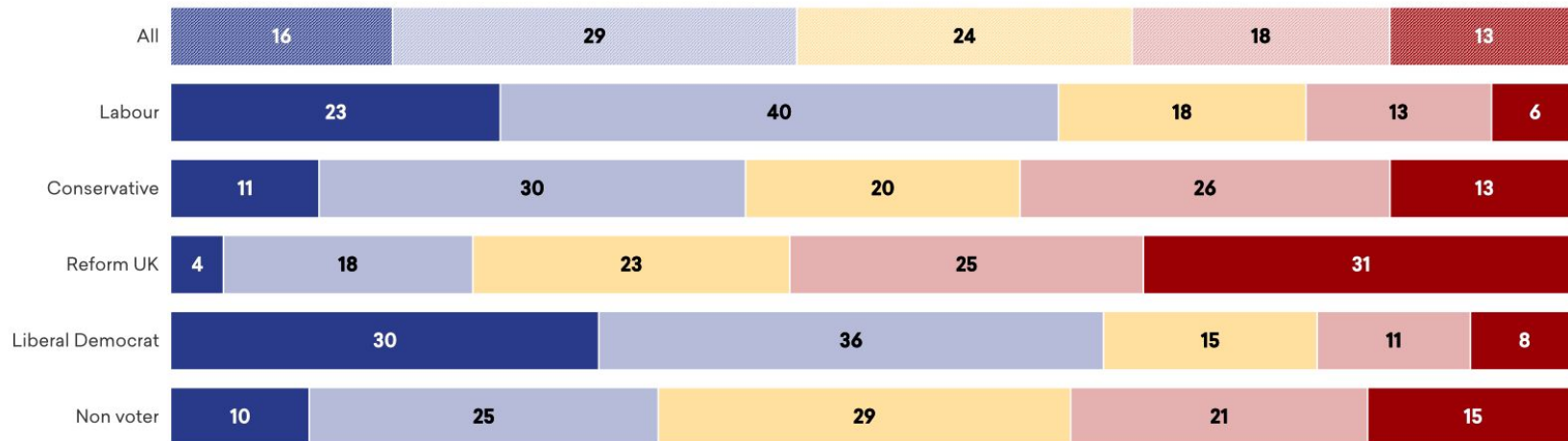
# Yet Britons tend to support the principle of international aid

The public is more likely to support than oppose the UK providing international aid. This view is not strongly held - seven in ten do not hold strong views on the UK providing international aid.

## To what extent do you support or oppose the UK providing international aid?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

2024 GE Vote



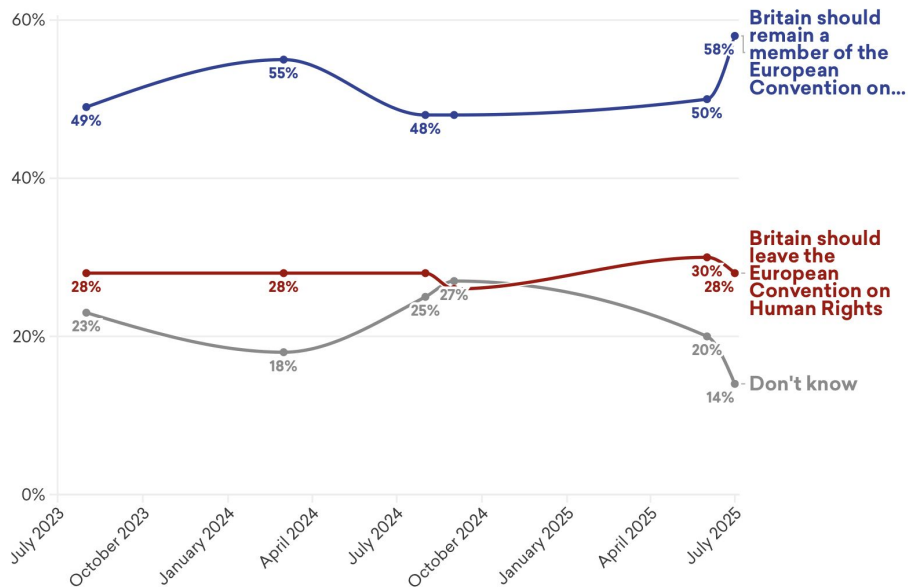


# Ukraine

# Support for remaining in the ECHR has increased

## Support for remaining in the European Convention on Human Rights has increased in recent months

Which of the following come closest to your view?



A majority (58 per cent) believe that Britain should remain a member of the European Convention of Human Rights - an increase of 8 points since June this year.

The number saying Britain should leave the ECHR has dropped two points since then, to 28 per cent.

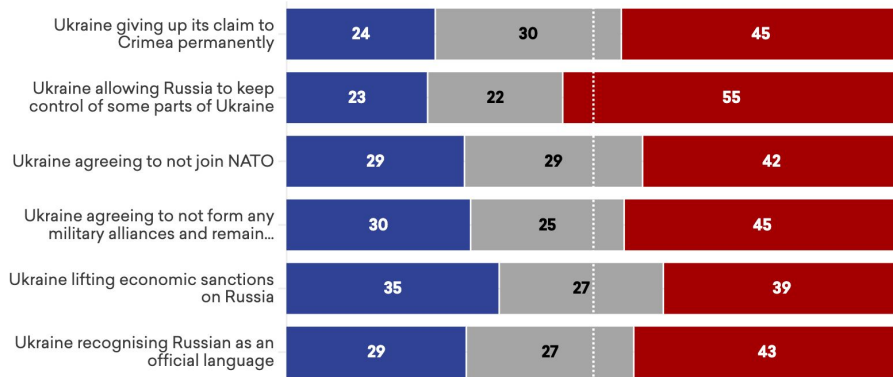
2024 Reform voters are the voter group most likely to say Britain should leave (68 per cent), with those concerned about crime (41 per cent), asylum (64 per cent) and migration (55 per cent), also supporting leaving the ECHR.

# Public support for Ukraine remains strong

## Britons are largely opposed to Ukraine making any concessions to Russia

Which of the following do you think would be an acceptable concession for Ukraine to make to end the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?

● This would be an acceptable concession ● Don't know ● This would not be an acceptable concession



Public support for Ukraine remains strong. Only 17 per cent say the UK should stop assisting Ukraine, with over half backing continued support until Ukraine regains the territory it held before 2022.

Britons are broadly opposed to Ukraine making concessions to Russia to end the conflict, viewing most proposed compromises as unacceptable. Even the least contentious option - Ukraine lifting economic sanctions against Russia - faces significant resistance, with 45 per cent against it. Most reject any peace deal that would see Ukraine cede territory to Russia.

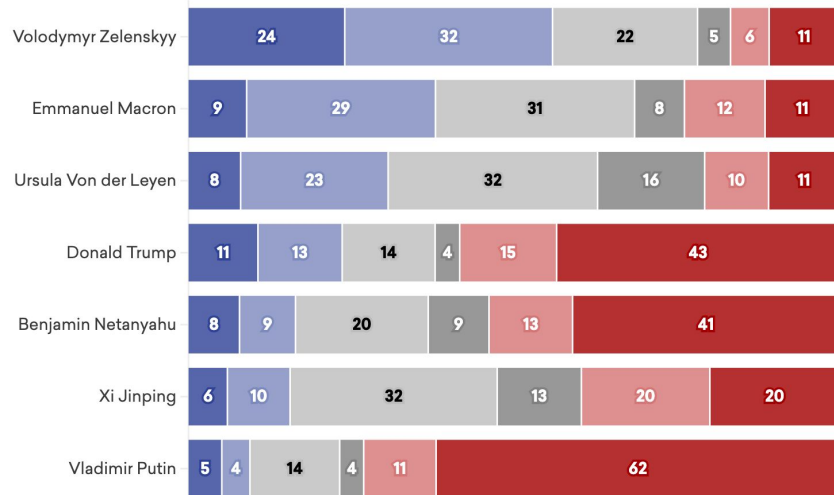


# President Zelenskyy is widely admired

## Zelenskyy is the most popular foreign leader, while less than one in ten have a positive view of Putin

Thinking about the following world leaders, do you have a positive or negative opinion of them?

Very positive   Quite positive   Neither positive nor negative   Don't know   Quite negative   Very negative



Volodymyr Zelenskyy stands out as the only world leader widely admired by Britons. 56 per cent hold a positive view of him. Emmanuel Macron and Ursula von der Leyen are also viewed more positively than negatively, though to a lesser extent. Von der Leyen's ratings vary sharply by Brexit vote: 48 per cent of Remainers view her positively, compared to 21 per cent of Leavers. Britons see Trump, and Putin in particular, the most unfavourably.

*"He was absolutely set up from the first question of why aren't you wearing a suit? I mean, come on, that's ridiculous. The guy was absolutely set up in front of the world and ridiculed and I thought he held himself incredibly well and I respect him for it."*

**Peter, Dockyard Manager, Plymouth**



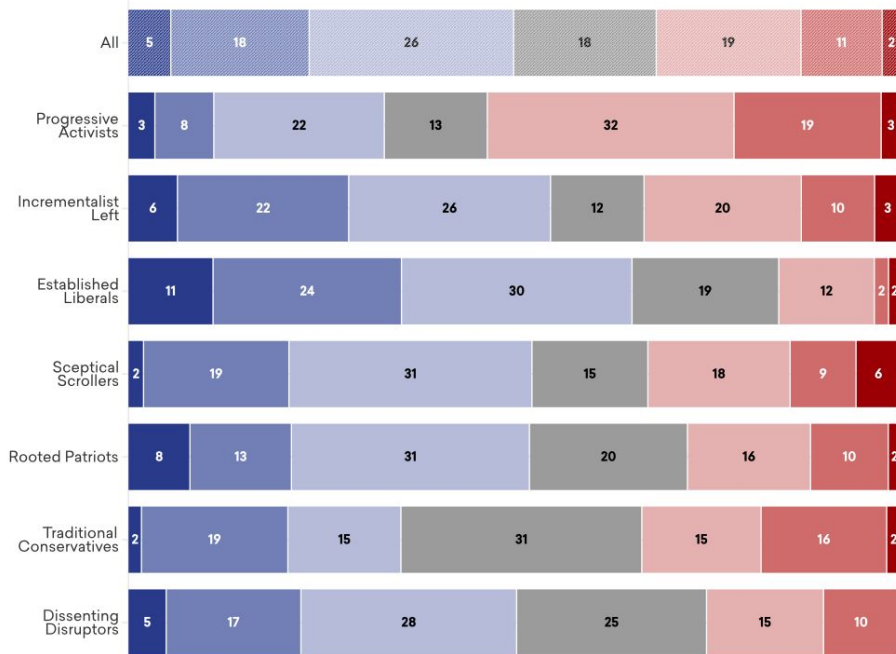
# United States

# The UK-US relationship is under strain

## A third of Britons think the US would not assist another NATO country if it were attacked

How likely or unlikely do you think it is that the US would assist another NATO country if it was attacked?

● Certain to happen ● Very likely ● Quite likely ● Don't know ● Quite unlikely ● Very unlikely ● Certain not to happen



**Public opinion of the US-UK relationship is increasingly poor under the second Trump Presidency.**

Only 38 per cent believe the 'special relationship' still exists, while 36 per cent think it has ceased. 15 per cent say it never existed at all.

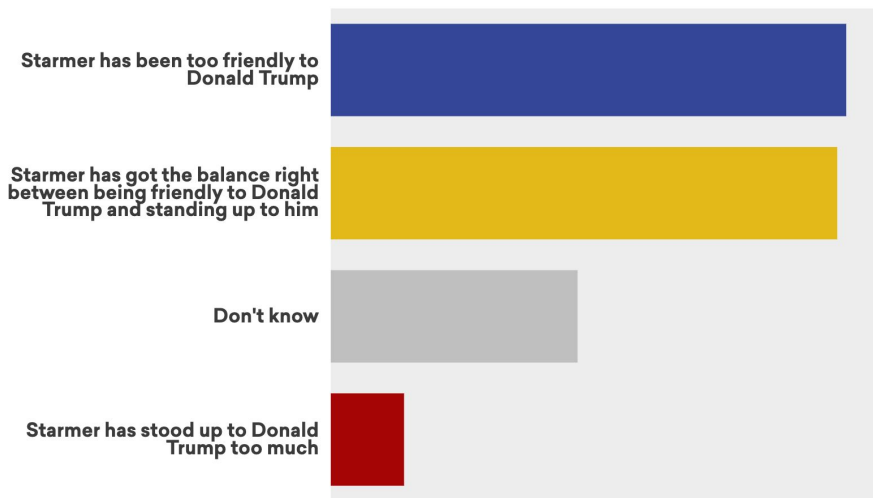
While half believe the US would honour its NATO obligations under Article 5, there is some caution. Just 5 per cent are certain the US would aid another NATO member, while 32 per cent say it either wouldn't happen or would be unlikely.

# The public is split on the PM's approach to Trump

## Over a third of the public think Starmer has been too friendly when dealing with Trump

Thinking about how Keir Starmer has managed his relationship with Donald Trump so far, which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Starmer has been too friendly to Donald Trump
- Starmer has got the balance right between being friendly to Donald Trump and standing up to him
- Don't know
- Starmer has stood up to Donald Trump too much



**38 per cent say that Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has got the balance right between being friendly to the President and standing up to him - an increase of 8 points since March this year.**

However, an equal number (38 per cent) say the PM has been too friendly to Trump. For many, this reinforces the negative view they have of Starmer's performance overall: **53 per cent of those who think Starmer is doing a bad job overall say he is too friendly with the US President.**



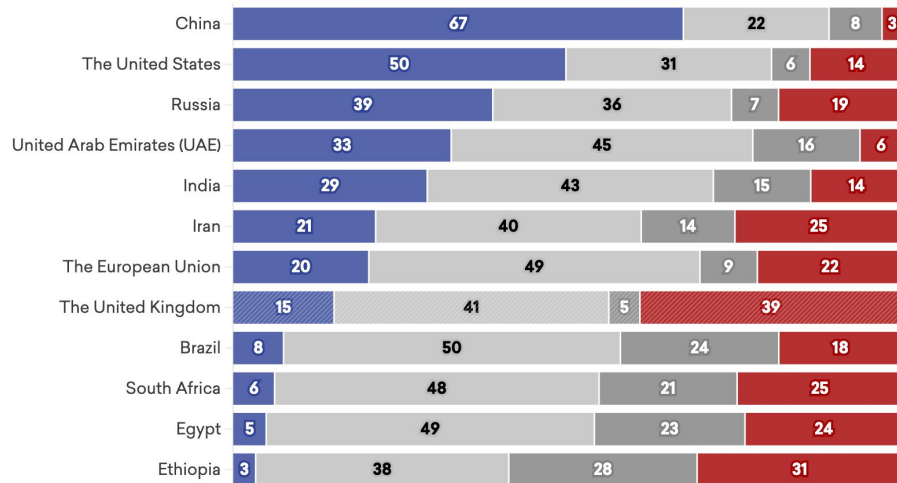
# China

# China's power seen as rising while UK power fades

## Most believe China is becoming more powerful, while two in five Britons believe Britain is becoming weaker

For each of the following countries or blocs, please indicate whether you think they are becoming more powerful, less powerful, or staying about the same.

● More powerful ● About the same ● Don't know ● Less powerful



Looking to the future, China is the country most widely seen to be on the rise: 67 per cent of Britons say it is gaining power. The US follows, with 50 per cent saying its influence is growing from an already strong base, followed by Russia at 39 per cent.

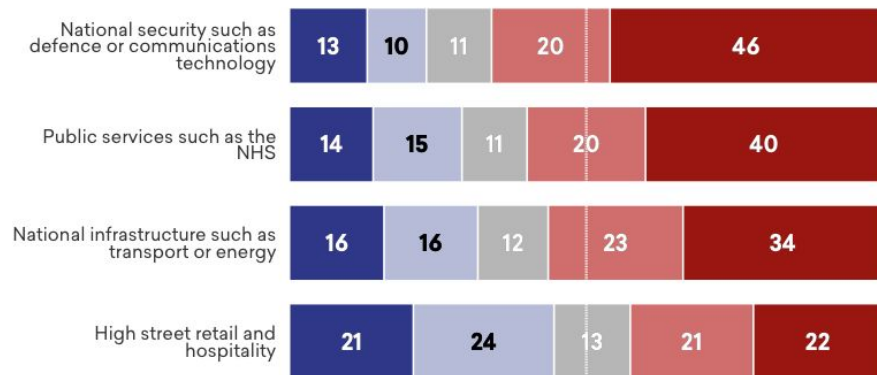
The public is most negative about the UK's global influence with 39 per cent believing the country is becoming less powerful. This feeling is strongest among Reform and Green voters, whereas 2024 Labour voters are the only group among which more people see the UK as becoming more powerful than think it is becoming less powerful.

# Britons are wary of Chinese investment in the UK

## Britons are wary of Chinese investment in the UK, particularly in public services and national security

For each of the following sectors, please indicate which comes closest to your view. Please use the 1-4 scale below.

- 1- Chinese companies should be able to significantly invest in this UK industry, like any other company
- 2
- Don't know
- 3
- 4- Chinese companies should not be able to significantly invest in this UK industry

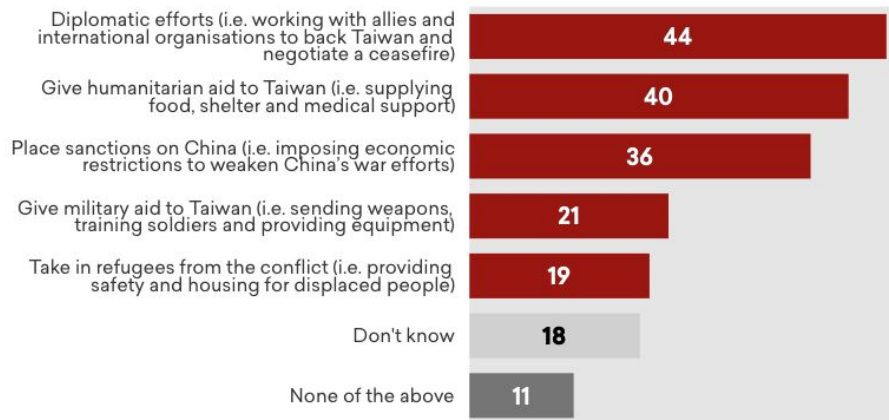


**Most Britons oppose Chinese investment in UK transport and energy infrastructure** (56 per cent oppose, 32 per cent support), and the public is particularly opposed to Chinese investment in public services, such as the NHS (60 per cent oppose, 29 per cent support).

The public is more relaxed - though still relatively split - about Chinese investment in UK high street retail or hospitality (44 per cent support, 43 per cent oppose).

# Many see conflict in Taiwan as a real possibility

In the event that Taiwan were invaded by China, which of the following do you think the UK should do? Select all that apply.



**More than four in ten (43 per cent) Britons believe it's likely that China will attempt to invade Taiwan within the next five years. 12 per cent say it is unlikely.**

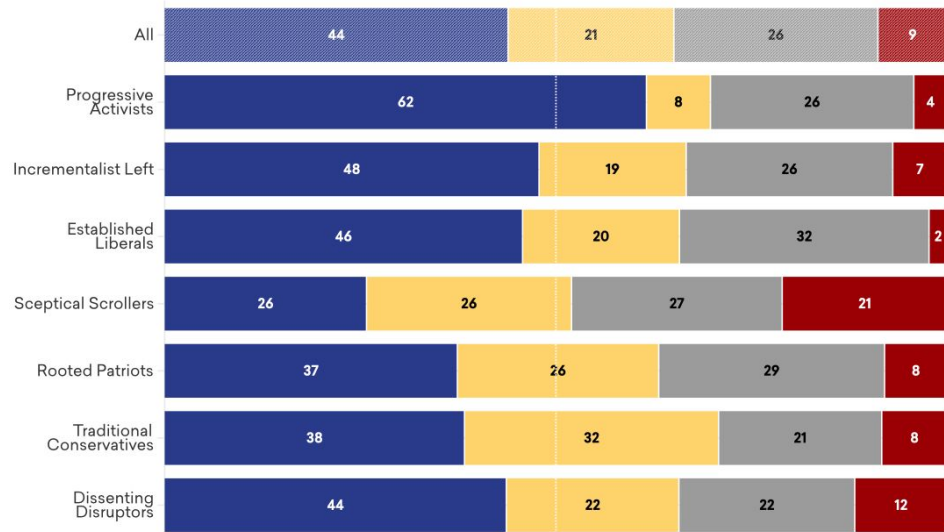


# Many Britons believe the government should be more vocal about human rights abuses in China

## A plurality of voters think the government should speak more about human rights abuses in China

Do you think the UK government should speak out more or less about human rights abuses in China?

- The UK government should speak more about human rights abuses in China
- Don't know
- The UK government speaks the right amount about human rights abuses in China
- The UK government should speak less about human rights abuses in China



**44 per cent of Britons think the UK government should speak out more on human rights abuses in China.** Only Liberal Democrat voters are more likely to be satisfied with the current approach than not, with **41 per cent** saying the government speaks out enough on the issue.



More in  
Common

# Britain Leads: A Conservative Roadmap for restoring British leadership on the world stage



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**Wendy  
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Shadow Minister -  
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# Later today...

**More in Common**



 **Tuesday, 7 October**

 **11:30 to 12:30**

 **Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland**

## Economic Reset: The Future of Conservative Economics



**Sophie Stowers**  
(Chair)  
More in Common



**James Wild MP**  
Shadow Exchequer Secretary



**Charlotte Pickles**  
Re:State



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Lord Willetts**  
Resolution Foundation



**Professor Geraint Rees**  
UCL

**More in Common**



 **Tuesday, 7 October**

 **18:00 to 19:30**

 **Stanley Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland**

## Rebuilding the Coalition: A Tory Reset



**Emily Maitlis**  
(Chair)  
The News Agents



**Greg Smith MP**  
Shadow Transport & Shadow Energy Security & Net Zero Minister



**Claire Coutinho MP**  
Shadow Energy Security & Net Zero Secretary



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Cllr Aled Richards-Jones**  
Leader, Conservative Group, Wandsworth Council



**Sir Gavin Williamson MP**  
MP for Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge

**More in Common**



 **Tuesday, 7 October**

 **13:00 to 14:00**

 **Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland**

## A new future for universities: how can we ensure universities support British success and build local pride?



**Alex Newton** (Chair)  
More in Common



**George Freeman MP**  
Member, Science, Innovation & Tech Committee



**Steve O'Neil**  
UCL



**Matt Warman**  
Former MP & Minister



**Sophie Stowers**  
More in Common

**More in Common**



 **Tuesday, 7 October**

 **16:00 to 17:00**

 **Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland**

## A Reset on Immigration: Can Conservatives regain public trust?



**Rachel Sylvester** (Chair)  
The Observer



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Chris Philp MP**  
Shadow Home Secretary



**Gavin Rice**  
Onward



**Robbie Moore MP**  
Shadow Farming Minister



**Salma Shah**  
Broadcaster & former SpAd



**Lord Davies**  
Shadow Home Office Minister