

FINANCIAL TIMES

New York City's super-rich are up in arms over a new tax on second homes proposed by mayor Zohran Mamdani and state governor Kathy Hochul. Mamdani, the democratic socialist mayor who assumed office in January, said the tax, which will apply to second homes worth more than \$5mn, was aimed at "the richest of the rich" who "store their wealth in New York City real estate, but who don't actually live here". President Donald Trump weighed in on the proposed measure, writing on his Truth Social platform that "Mayor Mamdani is DESTROYING New York!... the TAX, TAX, TAX Policies are SO WRONG". The Democratic governor Kathy Hochul said the proposed "pied-à-terre" tax would raise at least \$500mn a year for New York, which is facing a multibillion-dollar budget deficit.

INEWS

Britons face potential shortages of favourite breakfast staples like bacon and croissants if the Iran war continues to rock food supply chains. UK fruit and veg growers say soaring energy costs have already hit home, warning that gaps could emerge in fresh produce aisles from May. Prices at both supermarkets and pubs are expected to rise: shoppers face an extra £470 a year in food shopping bills, while pub owners have warned that £9 pints could become normal in London and £7 elsewhere in the country.

PBS

Trump clashes with Pope Leo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt219sujNTk>



NEWS IN BRIEF 12

April 4th – 24th 2026

to be up in arms over/against sth: s'élever contre

a 'second home: une résidence secondaire

a 'mayor /'meɪər US - meə GB/

to a'ssume [ju:] 'office: prendre ses fonctions

to ap'ply [aɪ] to: se rapporter à

worth more than: d'une valeur supérieure à

\$5mn – *se lit* "5 million dollars" – ▲ *noter que* "million" — *ainsi que* "dozen, hundred, thousand" *sont invariables lorsqu'ils sont précédés d'un nombre*

to store: emmagasiner

Ø **wealth:** les richesses, la fortune

Ø **real es'tate:** l'immobilier

to weigh in (on sth): intervenir (au sujet de)

a policy = a course or action that is proposed by a government, an individual, business firm, or any party ≠ politics = the theory and practice of governance

to raise [eɪ]: lever

\$500mn – *se lit* "5 hundred million" – ▲ *voir plus haut*

a 'shortage /'ʃɔ:tɪdʒ/: une pénurie

a 'staple [eɪ]: un article de base

to rock = to disturb

I'ran /ɪ' rɑ:n/ - I'ranian /ɪ'reɪniən/ (N, Adj)

a food su'pply /sə'plai/ **chain:** la chaîne d'approvisionnement des denrées alimentaires

veg /vedʒ/ is short for 'vegetables

to soar = to increase suddenly above the normal or usual level

to hit home: *ici*, se faire sentir

to warn: avertir

a gap: un trou, un vide

Ø **pro'duce** [ju:]: des produits alimentaires

an aisle /aɪl/: un rayon

from May: à partir du mois de mai – ▲ *noter que les mois en anglais prennent une majuscule contrairement au français*

£470 – *se lit* "four hundred and seventy pounds" – ▲ *voir plus haut*

Pope Leo XIV, who was born Robert Francis Prevost in Chicago in 1955, was elected to the papacy on May 8, 2025, becoming the first American pope in history. He is also a naturalized citizen of Peru, where he did extensive missionary work

0:20 – **to relent:** revenir sur une décision, s'adoucir

0:26 – **to apologize for sth:** présenter des excuses au sujet de qch

0:34 – **to double** [Λ] **down:** redoubler d'ardeur, enfoncer le clou

0:38 – **a lengthy tirade** /taɪ'reɪd/: une longue tirade

1:03 – **to take issue with** = to disagree with

1:12 – **in a landslide** = by a very large margin

1:35 – **the Gospel:** l'Évangile

2:23 – **to spark** = to activate, to set in motion

2:40 – **a delusion:** une illusion

3:07 – **to owe sb an apology:** devoir des excuses à quelqu'un

3:30 – **disparaging** = désobligeant, méprisant

Why the UK is not ready for war

Will Barker

The Week UK

23 April 2026

Chancellor Rachel Reeves has proposed to increase defence spending by less than £10 billion over the next four years, despite the Armed Forces highlighting a £28 billion funding gap in the same period, and warning that Britain's "national security and safety is in peril", said *The Times*.

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, a former NATO secretary-general, accused the Treasury in a speech on Tuesday of "vandalism" for inaction on defence. Leader of the 2025 Strategic Defence Review, Robertson said that for the UK "building deterrence will not be quick or cheap". He added that "the public need to face that uncomfortable fact or suffer the consequences of not being safe in a very turbulent world."

With a fragile ceasefire in the Middle East and continued conflict in Ukraine, many fear that the government's pledges to defence will prove difficult to fulfil.

Minister of State for the Defence Readiness and Industry Luke Pollard stated in the House that the government was undertaking the "largest sustained increase in defence spending since the Cold War", in response to Lord Robertson's claims, but this is a "low bar", said Ben Chu on BBC News. Defence spending has been on an "almost constant downward path since the fall of the Berlin Wall".

The UK government currently spends 2.4% of GDP on defence, and Keir Starmer has committed to hitting 2.5% from April next year. This will then rise to 3% "at some point during the next parliament", said *The Times*, though some critics think that the UK "should be hitting the 3% target now".

In 1990, at the end of the Cold War, the Army had "153,000 regular soldiers in its ranks", said the *BBC*. Now, it has less than half that number, just 73,790, according to the Ministry of Defence.

When it comes to recruitment, "Britain is at serious risk of being left behind" as other countries look to bolster their ranks, said Cahal Milmo and Jane Merrick in *The i Paper*. European neighbours Germany, Finland, Poland and France are "forging ahead with rearmament schemes" and programmes to increase numbers applying to their armed forces.

In the year to September 2025, the number of applications to the British Army Regular Forces (108,020) decreased by 36.6% compared to the previous year (170,380), according to the *MoD (Ministry of Defence)*.

In terms of equipment, in 1990, the Royal Navy had 13 destroyers and 35 frigates, which has since dropped to six and 11 respectively, said the *BBC*. Similarly, in 1990 the RAF had 300 combat jets. Though the current 137 Eurofighter Typhoons and minimum 37 Joint Strike Fighter F-35 Lightning IIs are "technically superior", they are fewer in number. The use in combat of unmanned drones, which did not exist in 1990, is rising, and these also form part of the UK's military aircraft.

The "sad state" of the Armed Forces was illustrated by the delay in the deployment of HMS Dragon to the Middle East, said Richard Norton-Taylor in *The Guardian*. Even after the delay, the destroyer "needed further repairs almost as soon as it arrived". It is the Navy's "lone destroyer available to help protect British interests" in the Middle East, as the Navy's "largest and most expensive" ships, the Queen Elizabeth and the Prince of Wales – which "cost more than £6 billion" – were unavailable.

On land, ministers are facing "scrapping" the Ajax armoured vehicle programme, due to health concerns for its operators. Its issues are "so serious that vibration and noise have made soldiers training on it sick, with some suffering hearing loss". More than £6 billion has been spent on the project, and it is "already eight years late". (...)

The war in the Middle East should be a "wake-up call" for the UK to recognise its "vulnerabilities", said George Robertson in *Prospect*. "There are many." Public attention is mostly focused on the tangibles – such as planes, tanks and ships – but they are the "baubles on the Christmas tree". "We need to focus on the tree itself" by addressing "crises in logistics, engineering, cyber, ammunition, training and medical resources".

The Week is a weekly British magazine that is left-center.

the Chancellor = the Chancellor of the Exchequer: le Ministre des Finances (UK)

to accuse sb of V-ing/sth

deterrence: force de dissuasion

fragile /'frædʒaɪl/

a pledge: une promesse, un engagement

to undertake (-took, -taken): se charger de

GDP = Gross Domestic Product: le PIB

to commit to V-ing/sth: s'engager à faire/qch

to bolster their ranks: renforcer leurs troupes

a scheme /ski:m/

a frigate /'frɪɡɪt/

unmanned: *ici*, sans pilotes

to scrap: jeter, bazarder

a bauble: une babiole

to address Ø sth = to focus on