# UK lacks a coherent China policy, new report finds

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## Inconsistent Strategy?

An investigation by the Commons business, innovation, science and trade select committee found that the government has failed to present a strategy on China since coming into power in 2024. Despite promises on the campaign trail, the report criticised Labour for "making up its China policy as it goes along". The report concluded the government must block sensitive data transfers to Beijing, provide businesses with clear rules on trading with China, and ban imports of products suspected of forced labour.

The chair of the committee, Liam Byrne, warned that Britain's partners, notably the EU, are taking a more assertive approach to their relationship with Beijing, embracing new trade protection measures. This risks the UK being shut out of the bloc's market, unless closer alignment is pursued.

A government spokesperson has rejected the report's findings, stating its own approach has been "consistent".

## A Difficult Balancing Act

The report describes China as Britain's "most complex economic partner". On the one hand, British businesses have been profitable within China and British households have enjoyed cheap Chinese imports amid rising cost of living. On the other hand, the UK remains vulnerable to economic coercion and economic dependency on China.

Closer engagement will be necessary to directly address concerns over cybersecurity, China's support for Russia, and human rights. Nevertheless, engagement requires a clear strategy to manage potential risks. As China remains a key economic partner, it is essential that the government strike a balance between cooperation and competition.

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