

Global Trade

MAGAZINE

Tariffs, Tariffs, Tariffs

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President Donald Trump's recent tariffs on steel and aluminum, like his earlier tariffs on solar panels and washing machines, have tongues wagging from the Beltway and beyond. What we've done is present some choice words on the topic, including some that commend the Commander-in-Chief—and several more that ... gulp ... do not.

“We applaud the administration's efforts to fix this problem.” -*AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka*

“We hope that eventually common sense will triumph. Unfortunately, the actions taken ... by the American government do not seem to be headed in that direction. This is not the American people. We have to believe that, at some point, common sense will prevail. But we see no sign of that in this action ... by the U.S. administration.” -*Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau*

“We are not protectionists. We want a level playing field ... The trans-shipments (of Chinese steel) that go on ... we call it the whack-a-mole game. It's time for whack-a-mole to end. It's time for some fairness here. It's past time.” -*Dave Burritt, CEO of U.S. Steel Corp.*

“Trade barriers make Americans as a whole poorer and they especially harm those already disadvantaged. Trade wars hurt everyone. They trigger retaliatory tariffs from our trade partners and that raises prices on American families who need affordable access to household goods. We urge the Trump administration to abandon these tariffs.” -*Brian Schwartz, spokesman for the conservative billionaire Koch brothers' network*

“China fired the first shots in this 'trade war' more than a decade ago when Beijing added more steel production capacity than it could possibly use. The flood of imports devastated our steel industry and distorted the global market. No one did a thing. Until now.” -*Scott Paul of the Alliance for American Manufacturing*

“We strongly oppose these new tariffs on steel and aluminum. Tariffs are a kind of tax increases foisted on all Americans. They wreak self-inflicted damage on our consumers, workers and businesses. Today marks a step back from a pro-growth agenda and we urge the Trump administration to reconsider imposing tariffs.” -*Americans for Prosperity Senior Policy Fellow Alison Acosta Winters*

“For too long, our political leaders have talked about the problem, but have largely left enforcement of our trade laws up to the private sector. This is not what hard-working Americans want from their government.” -*United Steelworkers*

“Instead of addressing the real problems in the international trade of these products, [the] action targets America’s allies when we should be working with them to address the unfair trading practices of countries like China. ... There are better ways to help American workers and consumers.” -*House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin)*

“I commend [@realDonaldTrump](#) for announcing his intent to take action to protect our steelworkers from countries, like China, that cheat on trade ... For years, foreign countries have been dumping steel into our markets and costing our workers their jobs and suppressing their wages.” -*Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania)*

“Tariffs on steel and aluminum imports are a tax hike on Americans and will have damaging consequences for consumers, manufacturers and workers. I will continue to push the administration to change course.” -*Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah)*

“This welcome action is long overdue for shuttered steel plants across Ohio and steelworkers who live in fear that their jobs will be the next victims of Chinese cheating. If we fail to stand up for steel jobs today, China will come after other jobs up and down the supply chain tomorrow.” -*Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio)*

“We’ve been down this road before—blanket protectionism is a big part of why America had a Great Depression. ‘Make America Great Again’ shouldn’t mean ‘Make America 1929 Again.’” -*Senator Ben Sasse (R-Nebraska)*

“This is a big mistake. These tariffs will raise prices and destroy manufacturing jobs, especially auto jobs, which are one-third of all Tennessee manufacturing jobs.” -*Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee)*

“Time and time again I have voiced my concerns on steel and aluminum tariffs and the damage they will cause across many sectors of the economy. Agriculture in particular is likely to face harm from retaliatory action and the uncertainty that comes with it.” -*Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kansas)*

“The president’s rash actions again show that he has no real ideas about how to increase American manufacturing jobs. Slapping tariffs on three of our four largest trade partners would be bad enough, since retaliatory tariffs will erode demand for American exports. But the president incredibly is also acting without any plan to invest in American steel and aluminum workers here at home to take any advantage of this action. Canada is Vermont’s largest trading partner, and Vermonters stand to lose big under this ham-handed policy. Vermont brewers for example have told me that the uncertainty has already raised the price of their cans, and the promised EU and Mexican tariffs on U.S. cheese are another example of the reckless harm the president is risking for Vermont and the nation.” -*Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont)*

“The administration continues to unilaterally push forward with a protectionist trade policy that is not in America’s best interest. Once again, the president has moved forward with a policy impacting trade relations with some of our closest allies and trading partners without consulting Congress. A U.S. trade policy should be about setting strong standards, not on targeting allies under the false pretense, and against the interest of, national security. This tit-for-tat tariff-focused policy has real consequences, first and foremost through retaliation and the impact on down-stream industries and consumers, including rising prices of U.S. goods. While the president may not feel the impacts of these retaliations, U.S. farmers, workers, consumers and businesses will.” -*Reps. Rick Larsen (D-Washington) and Gregory W. Meeks (D-New York), co-chairmen of the New Democrat Coalition Trade Task Force*

“These new tariffs will hurt our state, our energy industry, our economy. Not only does Texas import more steel and aluminum than any other state in the country but our two largest trading partners are Mexico and Canada.” -*Rep. Beto O’Rourke (D-Texas)*

“Initiating a trade war with our closest allies is a bad idea. As I’ve said before, we should be working with our allies instead of using an 18th century tool that has repeatedly failed in the past. I urge the administration to reconsider this decision.” -*Rep. Will Hurd (R-Texas)*

“I don’t know about you, but occasionally I like to crack open a cold one on a hot day. President Trump’s aluminum tariffs may raise the price of beer, just as we head into summer—costing you more at the store, and hurting the U.S. economy.” -*Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Virginia)*

“Tariffs raise taxes on Americans. Economic protectionism and other forms of central planning harm our economy and erode liberty.” -*Rep. Justin Amash (R-Michigan)*

“We think that’s going to put the industry in real peril. We were very excited by the tax bill, but it turns out the tax bill giveth, and tariffs taketh away.” -*Jerry Howard, president of the National Association of Home Builders*

“Our members could face having to pay double tariffs on some materials necessary to manufacture parts in the U.S. Industries like ours, which require long-term investments in facilities and employees, depend on regulatory and market stability. These actions have thrown all of that up in the air.” -*Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association*

“Today’s White House announcement to unilaterally impose new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the European Union, Canada and Mexico will have a negative impact on every sector of the American economy. The downstream impact of these tariffs will raise the cost of doing business for thousands of American companies, including retailers, and will stifle efforts to expand and create jobs. Imposing tariffs raises the stakes for our allies to take retaliatory measures that will hurt America’s exporters while creating more uncertainty for American businesses. The administration has created a three-front trade war, targeting NAFTA, China and now the European Union, with no resolution to any of these disputes in sight.” -*Retail Industry Leaders Association’s Vice President of International Trade Hun Quach*

“This is a \$13 trillion complex economy. The idea that three or four politicians in Washington can laser beam and pick industries and specific folks as winners and losers in these tariff wars—

it doesn't work that way. We know that that is not economic freedom and that is not the way to prosperity." –*Stuart Varney of Varney and Co.*

“Trade barriers make us poorer. Tariffs are a tax on American consumers, workers and businesses and undermine economic growth. They inflict the most pain on those who can afford it the least, by making everyday goods more expensive. They raise costs for U.S. exports which rely on imports in production, which makes them less competitive. And, of course, there are the costs from retaliatory tariffs imposed by our trade partners.” –*Brent Gardner, chief Government Affairs officer, Americans for Prosperity; Nathan Nascimento, executive vice president, Freedom Partners; and David Velazquez, executive director, The LIBRE Initiative*

“Republicans Fighting Tariffs was formed to remind everyone why the Republican Party is the party of free trade. Tariffs are regressive taxes on American businesses and families, repeatedly proven to be both harmful and ineffective. Free trade simply gets the government out of Americans' daily transactions, producing strong businesses, good jobs, low prices and a thriving economy in the process. Implementing unwarranted tariffs is a direct threat to our growing economy and presence on the world stage. Republicans everywhere need to come together and tell Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to allow a vote on the bill that would restore Congress' constitutional trade power, save jobs and stop these tariffs.” –*Scott Lincicome, senior visiting lecturer, Duke Law School and senior policy adviser, Republicans Fighting Tariffs*

“The marine manufacturing industry relies on free and fair trade, which has been a hallmark of the American economy for decades. The NMMA and our members appreciate Congress' leadership on this issue and stand ready to work with all stakeholders to secure substantive trade agreements that truly benefit American consumers, workers and businesses. We need the administration to recognize the negative effects of its current direction and focus on finding real, tangible solutions.” –*Thom Dammrich, president, National Marine Manufacturers Association*

“The Trump administration's extension of its steel and aluminum tariffs to the EU, Canada and Mexico will do nothing to support national security, but rather will antagonize some of our key security partners. The economic impact of the tariffs themselves, combined with the expected retaliation, will harm the U.S. economy significantly. Instead of working with our allies on constructive ways to address Chinese protectionism, we are alienating everyone by going it alone and trying to take on the whole world. –Simon Lester, trade policy analyst, Cato Institute's Herbert A. Stiefel Center for Trade Policy Studies

“[Trump] doesn't have a strategy that's going to lead to making American manufacturing great again. There will continue to be a series of tit-for-tat battles.” –*Robert Scott, American Enterprise Institute trade expert*

“There's no question this is a hit to consumers. Sooner or later prices will reflect those increased costs of steel and aluminum.” –*Lawrence White, New York University's Stern School of Business economics professor*

“It's clearly going to have a negative impact on all the users of steel throughout the economy. For every one job in the U.S. steel industry that could be protected by this tariff, there are about

80 jobs in manufacturing industries that use steel. If companies in those industries have to absorb greater costs incurred by the tariffs, they may respond by reducing employment or wages.” - *Emily J. Blanchard, associate professor of business administration at Dartmouth University’s Tuck School of Business*

“Canada could add a tax to Trump properties equal to any tariff unilaterally imposed by Washington. The European Union could revoke any travel visas for senior staff in the Trump organization. And the United Kingdom could temporarily close his golf course.” -*Canadian writer Scott Gilmore, in Maclean’s*