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China Ship Fees Announced

The US Trade Representative's office announced a schedule for the imposition of fees on Chinese-built vessels calling on US ports. Markedly less punitive than initially proposed, Thursday's announced Section 301 measures will be implemented in two phases an escalating per-ton charge on foreign ships and, three years out, a scheme to penalize non-US LNG carriers, [READ MORE](#)

GOP Senators Call to Scrap AI Diffusion Rule

Seven Republican senators have sent a letter to Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick urging the Trump administration to withdraw the Biden-era Artificial Intelligence Diffusion Rule (AIDR). The senators argue that the rule, which imposes tiered restrictions on global access to U.S. AI technology, threatens American innovation and global competitiveness while failing to adequately counter China's ambitions. [READ MORE](#)

Senator Shaheen Presses Pentagon on Readiness

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sent a letter to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth raising concerns over the national security implications of President Trump's sweeping tariffs. Shaheen warned that tariffs imposed on imports from nearly every country risk undermining the Department of Defense's purchasing power, weakening industrial supply chains, and driving up costs for defense contractors—particularly small businesses. [READ MORE](#)

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MORE TARIFFS

[232 Investigations: Chips & Pharma](#)

The U.S. Department of Commerce formally announced the initiation of two separate investigations under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 to assess the impact of semiconductor-related and pharmaceutical-related imports on national security. The investigations, which will be conducted by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), Office of Strategic Industries and Economic Security. [READ MORE](#)

[Critical Minerals 232 Investigation](#)

President Trump has signed an Executive Order directing the Secretary of Commerce to initiate a Section 232 investigation under the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 into the national security implications of U.S. reliance on imported processed critical minerals and their derivative products. [READ MORE](#)

[Administration Backs Out of Tomato Pact](#)

Monday the U.S. Department of Commerce announced its intent to withdraw from the 2019 Agreement Suspending the Antidumping Investigation on Fresh Tomatoes from Mexico, with termination effective in 90 days. [READ MORE](#)

[Sen. Markey Rues "Backbreaking" Tariff Impact](#)

Ranking Member Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, released a report titled "The Trump Tariffs: A Small Business Crisis," sharply criticizing the economic fallout of President Trump's sweeping tariff increases. The report details how the tariffs impact American small businesses. [READ MORE](#)

POLITICS & POLICY

[Sen. Warren Presses to Block Nvidia China Exports](#)

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ranking Member of the Senate Banking Committee, has called on the Department of Commerce to immediately block exports of Nvidia's H20 and other advanced AI chips to the People's Republic of China (PRC), citing national security concerns and reports of undue influence in the administration's export control decisions. [READ MORE](#)

Rep. Moolenaar Takes His Battery War to Wall Street

Continuing his crusade against Chinese battery makers, Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI) sent a letter to the CEOs of two banks "demanding the banks withdraw from their role" in the upcoming Hong Kong initial public offering (IPO) of Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Limited (CATL). [READ MORE](#)

America First Trade Policy Reports In

On April 3, 2025, the Trump Administration announced the America First Trade Policy Report, a 24-chapter document addressing U.S. trade imbalances, non-reciprocal practices, and national security concerns. The reports themselves were not made public, rather the White House released a brief summary of the report, noting that chapters include reviews of unfair foreign trade practices, renegotiation of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and assessments of foreign currency manipulation and existing trade agreements. [READ MORE](#)

DCSA Set to Expand Foreign Ownership Reviews

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) is preparing to implement sweeping changes that will expand foreign ownership, control, or influence (FOCI) reviews to thousands of unclassified U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) contracts, marking a major shift in federal acquisition policy under Section 847 of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (FY20 NDAA). [READ MORE](#)

China Committee Deep Seek Report

Chairman John Moolenaar (R-MI) and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party today released a report identifying DeepSeek, a Chinese AI platform, as a direct threat to U.S. national security. [READ MORE](#)

SANCTIONS & ENFORCEMENT

Anticorruption: UK Picks up the Baton in Ecuador

The U.K. Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has charged United Insurance Brokers Limited (UIBL) with failing to prevent bribery by its associates in a case involving multimillion-dollar reinsurance contracts in Ecuador. *(continued next page)*

UIBL, a London-based reinsurance firm, is accused of allowing U.S.-based intermediaries to bribe Ecuadorean officials between October 2013 and March 2016 in exchange for awarding contracts valued at approximately \$38 million. The contracts were issued by state-owned insurers covering Ecuador's public sector infrastructure, including water and electricity companies. [READ MORE](#)

OFAC Advisory: Iran Maritime Sanctions

On April 16, 2025, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) released updated guidance for the maritime sector titled Advisory for Shipping and Maritime Stakeholders on Detecting and Mitigating Iranian Oil Sanctions Evasion. In coordination with the advisory, OFAC also designated seven entities and five vessels allegedly engaged in Iranian petroleum and petrochemical sales. One of the most prominent targets is a Chinese "teapot" refinery, sanctioned for purchasing over \$1 billion worth of Iranian crude. [READ MORE](#)

New AML Rules: Report Cash Over \$200

Residents in select ZIP codes across California and Texas will soon be subject to heightened federal financial surveillance under a new order issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). The move significantly lowers the threshold for reportable cash transactions from \$10,000 to just \$200 in 30 ZIP codes along the U.S.-Mexico border. [READ MORE](#)

USMCA Action in Mexican Parts Plant

The Office of the United States Trade Representative has invoked the Rapid Response Labor Mechanism (RRM) in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to review whether workers at Modern Metal Alloys, S.A. de C.V. (MMA), located in Querétaro, Mexico, are being denied the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. [READ MORE](#)

Hungarian Sanction Reversed

The United States on April 15 lifted sanctions imposed in January on the head of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's cabinet, Antal Rogan, over accusations of corruption and cronyism. Rogan was sanctioned January 7th for public corruption which "is affecting Hungary's decision-making on issues that impact the security of the United States of America and our allies." [READ MORE](#)

[More Apparel Imports Customs Evasion](#)

The U.S. Department of Justice has filed a civil complaint against Barco Uniforms Inc. and several affiliated entities and individuals, alleging violations of the False Claims Act stemming from an alleged scheme to underpay customs duties on imported apparel. [READ MORE](#)

CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

[DCSA Virtual Security Conference on April 23-24](#)

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) Security Training (ST) is announcing the Virtual Security Conference for Industry on April 23-24, 2025. Registration for this online conference is live now. [READ MORE](#)

[CBP Trade and Cargo Security Summit](#)

Customs and Border Protection will host the 2025 Trade and Cargo Security (TCS) Summit in New Orleans, LA, on May 6-8, 2025. The 2025 TCS Summit will be open for the public to attend in person or via webinar.... [READ MORE](#)

[CBP May 2025 Webinars](#)

The National Commodity Specialist Division, Office of Trade, presents the next round of approximately 30+ commodity-specific, educational webinars to support internal and external stakeholders. The May schedule begins with Arms & Ammunition, then Antiques, Decorative Ceramics, and Pillows, Mattresses, Quilted Bedding, etc. [READ MORE](#)