

Washington Tariff & Trade Letter

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TOP STORIES

[Iron Man: President Touts Steel Deal, Jacks Tariffs](#)

Speaking Friday at the U.S. Steel Irvin Plant, President Trump trumpeted the investment partnership between U.S. Steel and Japan's Nippon Steel, as well as a major tariff escalation on foreign steel. The measures, he declared, would "secure American steel for generations" and reinstate Pittsburgh's status as the "Steel City." The President also declared a new increase in tariffs on foreign steel from 25% to 50%, calling it a necessary move to protect the domestic industry. [READ MORE](#)

[State Dept. Purge Guts Arms Control & Security](#)

The proposed reorganization of the State Department will result in the elimination of more than one in five members of the Arms Control and International Security division, (T Family), according to preliminary reports. The division will now include the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, as Foggy Bottom eliminates the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. [READ MORE](#)

[Courts Nix President's 'Emergency' Tariffs](#)

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) ruled that President Trump exceeded his statutory authority in imposing sweeping tariffs on global imports under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). Tariffs imposed under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 remain valid. In a Thursday ruling, a Federal appeals court granted a stay "until further notice." Tariffs can be collected during the stay. [READ MORE](#)

[Trade Gap Narrows as Imports Plunge](#)

The U.S. trade deficit in goods declined sharply in April 2025, driven by a significant reduction in imports, according to preliminary figures released Friday by the U.S. Census Bureau. [READ MORE](#)

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POLICY AND POLITICS

[AGOA Review Announced; Authorization Up in Air](#)

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced the commencement of its annual review of sub-Saharan African countries' eligibility for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for calendar year 2026. The AGOA remains authorized through September 30, 2025. While there is bipartisan support for its renewal, Congress has not yet enacted legislation to extend the program [READ MORE](#)

[Japan Trade Talks Inch Along](#)

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick met in Washington, D.C. with Japan's Economic Revitalization Minister Ryosei Akazawa to advance bilateral trade negotiations. The meeting addressed tariffs, non-tariff measures, investment, and broader economic security issues. Minister Akazawa emphasized Japan's position that it would not accept any trade agreement unless the United States revisits the 25% tariff imposed on Japanese automobiles, a key export sector. [READ MORE](#)

[ASEAN, China, Gulf States Cement Trade Ties](#)

Delegations from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the People's Republic of China convened in Kuala Lumpur for their inaugural trilateral summit, issuing a joint declaration affirming a commitment to multilateral trade norms and voicing concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. [READ MORE](#)

[Foreign Drug Pricing E.O. Comments Sought](#)

The USTR has issued a request for public comments on foreign government policies that may result in U.S. patients covering a disproportionate share of global pharmaceutical research and development costs. The request is issued pursuant to Executive Order 14297, Delivering Most-Favored-Nation Prescription Drug Pricing to American Patients, signed by the President on May 12, 2025. [READ MORE](#)

[E.O. Promotes Microreactors for DoD and Data Centers](#)

President Trump signed an Executive Order May 23, calling for the Army to begin operating a nuclear reactor at a domestic military base in three years and for U.S. diplomats to negotiate at least 20 new "123 Agreements" to facilitate peaceful nuclear trade, and for agencies to deliver financing and export competitiveness strategies within 90 days. [READ MORE](#)

[House Dems Decry Commerce's Retreat from Multilaterals](#)

Representatives Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, sent a letter Wednesday to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick expressing concern over reports that the Department of Commerce may retreat from key multilateral agreements intended to restrict China's access to advanced technologies. [READ MORE](#)

Senators Bash NVIDIA China Investment

Senators have sent a joint letter to NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang expressing “serious concern” over the company’s reported plans to establish a new research and development facility in Shanghai. The bipartisan letter from Sen. Jim Banks (R-IN) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) warns the move poses “significant national security and economic security issues.” [READ MORE](#)

EXPORT CONTROLS & SANCTIONS

Commerce Targets Chinese Aircraft and Semiconductor Design Purchases

The Trump administration has initiated a sweeping suspension of U.S. technology exports to China, targeting sectors deemed vital to national security, including jet engines and semiconductor design tools. [READ MORE](#)

Multilateral Sanctions Report on DPRK

The Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), a coalition comprising Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States, today released its inaugural report on the implementation of United Nations sanctions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). [READ MORE](#)

OFAC Syria FAQs Updated

Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Wednesday issued a fact sheet containing updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Syria General License 25 (GL 25), providing authoritative clarification on the scope of U.S. sanctions relief for Syria. [READ MORE](#)

Dunlap adds to Akin Trade Security Bench

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld announced Wednesday that Gregory Dunlap, a former Special Agent in Charge in the Office of Export Enforcement at the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) has joined the firm’s international trade practice as a senior regulatory advisor. [READ MORE](#)

VIRTUAL SERIES

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