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Trade Lines

Policy Intelligence for Global Business Leaders

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Welcome to Trade Lines, your view from DC on the evolving landscape of international trade and regulatory policy. Curated for business leaders and decision-makers, this newsletter delivers timely insights into the issues shaping global commerce—from tariff shifts and supply chain disruptions to legislative developments and compliance trends. Our goal is to help you anticipate change, assess impact, and act with confidence in a fast-moving policy environment.

Global Signals

President declares new national emergency with respect to Cuba

On January 29, President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#), “Addressing the Threats to the United States by the Government of Cuba,” in which he declared a new national emergency with respect to Cuba and authorized the imposition of tariffs on goods from foreign countries who directly or indirectly sell or provide oil to Cuba.

According to the Executive Order, the President has concluded that “the policies, practices, and actions of the Government of Cuba are designed to harm the United States and support hostile countries, transnational terrorist groups, and malign actors that seek to destroy the United States.” Actions by the Government of Cuba “constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”

The Executive Order authorizes the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to determine whether “a foreign country directly or indirectly sells or otherwise provides any oil to Cuba.” If such a determination is made, then a recommendation is made to the President whether and to what extent to impose duties on goods from that country.

In issuing this Executive Order and the authorization for new tariffs, the President invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). A decision by the Supreme Court on whether IEEPA authorizes the President to impose tariffs is still pending. The Court is currently on recess, and the justices are not scheduled to retake the bench until February 23.

EU Parliament delays decision on enactment of US trade deal

In response to President Trump's January 17 threat to impose tariffs on European countries related to Greenland, the EU Parliament paused ratification of the EU-US trade deal. Trump subsequently backtracked on the proposed tariffs after "a very productive meeting" with the NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte via a [post](#) on Truth Social. On January 23, the European Commission said it would suspend an EU package of retaliatory trade measures against the US for another 6 months. The Commission's spokesperson Olof Gill said, "With the removal of the tariff threat by the U.S. we can now return to the important business of implementing the joint EU-US statement."

However, following a closed-door meeting on January 26, lawmakers from the EU Parliament failed to agree on whether to resume the enactment a transatlantic trade deal with the U.S. Commenting on the meeting, Social Democrat lawmaker Kathleen van Brempt said "we want the deal" but that "we need clarity" on the framework deal struck between Trump and Rutte. Bernd Lange, the Parliament's International Trade Committee Chair, [said](#) that lead negotiators would meet on February 4th to discuss next steps. Lawmakers broadly agree that the EU-U.S. deal should proceed but that there is still some disagreement among policymakers over how the EU should approach its trading relationship with the U.S. moving forward.

Trump threatens 100% tariffs on Canada if they sign a trade deal with China

After a visit last week to China, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced that Canada would lower tariffs on electrical vehicles and certain food products. In response, Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social that "If Canada makes a deal with China, it will immediately be hit with a 100% tariff against all Canadian goods and products coming into the U.S."

On January 26, Carney suggested he views Trump's 100% tariff threat as "positioning" for the U.S.-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA) Joint Review. Regarding the USMCA review, in a [speech](#) Carney said, "it'll be a robust review...The President is a strong negotiator, and I think some of these comments and positioning should be viewed in the broader context of that." On January 27 during Parliamentary question period, Carney [said](#) "we are having continued discussions with our American partners" and that having a trade agreement with the U.S. "is the intention...official negotiations will begin in a few weeks." Carney also suggested on January 26 that it is "obvious" there are no free-trade talks occurring with Beijing.

The USMCA contains a provision requiring a Party to the Agreement to provide notice if it intends to enter into a free trade agreement with a non-market country. If a Party enters into such an arrangement, the other USMCA Parties have the right to "terminate this Agreement on six months' notice and replace this Agreement with an agreement as between them (bilateral agreement)."

U.S. Trade Representative Greer meets with Mexican Secretary of Economy Marcelo Ebrard

On January 28, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer met with the Mexican Secretary of Economy, Marcelo Ebrard, ahead of the upcoming USMCA review. In an official press [release](#), the USTR

readout stated, “Both sides recognized substantial progress in recent months and agreed to continue intensive engagement to address non-tariff barriers.” The readout continues, “they agreed to begin formal discussions on possible structural and strategic reforms in the context of the first USMCA Joint Review, including stronger rules of origin for key industrial goods, enhanced collaboration on critical minerals, and increased external trade policy alignment to defend workers and producers in the United States and Mexico and to combat the relentless dumping of manufactured goods in our region.”

Trump threatens increased tariffs on Korean goods, including pharmaceuticals

On January 26, President Trump threatened to increase the tariff rate on goods from South Korea. In a Truth Social [post](#), Trump stated, “Because the Korean Legislature hasn’t enacted our Historic Trade Agreement, which is their prerogative, I am hereby increasing South Korean TARIFFS on Autos, Lumber, Pharma, and all other Reciprocal TARIFFS, from 15% to 25%.”

No official action has been posted yet by the White House. Meanwhile, Korean officials are expediting their engagement with the Trump Administration, including moving up the Korean trade minister’s trip to the U.S.

Policy Pulse

Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee recommendations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) provided a [list](#) of 8 recommendations during a January 14 meeting on the duties imposed by the Trump administration under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. This includes the recommendation that CBP creates “clear and easy to understand Section 232 tariff guidance...to make information more accessible to all importers” and that “CBP recognize, and allow importers to utilize, publicly available commodity pricing as one of the means for determining and declaring the value of metal included in steel, aluminum, and copper products that are subject to Section 232 tariffs on the value of the metal content.” COAC also recommended that CBP better coordinate with the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) on inclusions and that “CBP allow importers to declare ‘Other than Russia’ origin when importers are unable to determine the exact single country of origin but can confirm that the aluminum is not Russian origin.”

CBP issues Withhold Release Order on coffee harvested by Mexican coffee farm

On January 29, CBP issued a new Withhold Release Order (WRO) “against coffee harvested by Finca Monte Grande, a Mexican coffee farm.” According to the [CBP release](#), CBP has reasonable suspicion that “workers at Finca Monte Grande are subject to six International Labour Organization indicators of forced labor.” The agency said that, effective immediately, it will begin detaining imports of “coffee harvested by Finca Monte Grande.”

Hill Highlights

House Agriculture Committee Democrats introduce bill to repeal IEEPA tariffs

Ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee Angie Craig (D-MN) introduced the Farm and Family Relief Act which would terminate the executive orders used to impose tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. It would also provide payments to farmers who have been impacted by the administration's trade policies. This bill was co-sponsored by all but five of the other Democrats on the House Agriculture panel. A summary of the Act can be found [here](#).

Reps. Miller and Beyer introduce The Secure Revenue Clearance Channel Act

Rep. Carol Miller (R-WV) and Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) introduced The Secure Clearance Act to address the "growing backlog of goods at America's express ports by fostering close cooperation between express carriers and U.S. CBP." Miller's press [release](#) describes the bill as allowing "low-value shipments to move quickly to their final destinations while ensuring the collection of tariffs and halting the flow of fentanyl and other illicit goods."

House Ways and Means Committee Vice Chair announces retirement

House Ways and Means Committee Vice Chair Vern Buchanan (R-FL) [announced](#) his retirement on January 27. Buchanan was formerly the ranking member of the Trade Subcommittee and worked with the first Trump administration to pass the USMCA. His retirement statement described the USMCA as "modernizing North American trade and strengthening protections for American workers and manufacturers."

Upcoming Deadlines

February 18: USTR will hold a public hearing in its 2026 Special 301 Review.

February 25: Post-hearing written comments due to USTR in its 2026 Special 301 Review.

March 1: The President's 2026 Trade Agenda is due to Congress.

March 26: The 14th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference begins in Cameroon.

March 27: Deadline for President to decide whether to act in the section 232 investigation concerning pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical ingredients.

March 28: Commerce Department to send the President its findings on its section 232 investigations into drones and polysilicon and derivative products by this date.

March 31: U.S. and Switzerland to finalize their trade agreement by this date.

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