

Trump Says Tariffs Will Stay Until Trade Deficit Disappears

The president said he would not quickly reverse last week's steep tariffs, which have sparked pushback and roiled markets.

**By Tony Room and Ana Swanson
New York Times**

President Trump said on Sunday that he would not reverse tariffs on other nations unless the trade deficits that the United States runs with China, the European Union and other nations disappeared.

His comments indicated that the steep import taxes that have panicked global businesses and investors would be in place for the long run.

“Hundreds of billions of dollars a year we lose with China,” Mr. Trump told reporters on Air Force One. “And unless we solve that problem, I’m not going to make a deal.” He added that he was “willing to deal with China, but they have to solve their surplus.”

Mr. Trump’s comments came just hours after his top aides raced to defend the president’s expansive global tariffs, which sent global markets into a tailspin last week. As Mr. Trump departed his Mar-a-Lago estate for another day of golfing at his club in Jupiter, Fla., his leading economic advisers dismissed the turmoil the tariffs have unleashed in financial markets around the world, insisting that the president’s trade war would ultimately improve the nation’s economic fortunes.

But they also sent mixed signals over the extent to which Mr. Trump sees tariffs as a negotiating tool, even as many of his aides said on Sunday that they had heard from more than 50 nations looking to find a way out of the tariffs.

“The tariffs are coming. Of course they are,” Howard Lutnick, the commerce secretary, said on CBS’s “Face the Nation.”

Mr. Trump said that he had spoken to officials in Europe and Asia and that they were “dying to make a deal.” He reiterated that Europe had treated the United States badly and added that “there’s no talk unless they pay us a lot of money on a yearly basis.”

The president wrote on social media on Sunday evening that the only way to cure “massive Financial Deficits” with China, Europe and many others was with tariffs, saying that they were now bringing tens of billions of dollars into the United States.

“Some day people will realize that Tariffs, for the United States of America, are a very beautiful thing!” he wrote.

Mr. Trump's 10 percent baseline tariff on nearly every trading partner went into effect on Saturday morning. A second round of tariffs will snap into place on Wednesday morning. Those levies, when added with tariffs the president recently imposed on foreign metals, cars and exports from Canada, Mexico and China, increase the tariffs the United States puts on imports [by nearly tenfold](#).

Mr. Trump has long seen tariffs as a cudgel to punish other countries that he believes treat America unfairly and to push companies to make their products in the United States. But his efforts have triggered pushback from countries like China, which said it would match Mr. Trump's plans to impose 34 percent tariffs with the same level of duties.

Beijing also appears to have pulled out of an agreement with the White House to separate TikTok, the popular app, from its Chinese owner, ByteDance.

The president told reporters on Air Force One that China "changed the deal because of tariffs."

"If I gave a little cut in tariffs, they'd approve that deal in 15 minutes, which shows you the power of tariffs," he said. Mr. Trump [announced](#) on Friday that he would extend the deadline for TikTok to comply with a federal law that requires it to change its structure to resolve national security concerns.

Mr. Trump's top advisers spent much of Sunday trying to reassure the public that the president's plans would ultimately benefit Americans.

Kevin Hassett, the head of the White House National Economic Council, said in an appearance on ABC's "This Week" that he did not expect to "see a big effect on the consumer in the U.S.," even as he acknowledged that prices "might go up some" as a result of the tariffs.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent dismissed the steep declines in global markets last week as short-term, while emphasizing the need for an economic "adjustment process" in the United States. He added on NBC's "Meet the Press" that there "doesn't have to be a recession," as the administration works toward "building the long-term economic fundamentals for prosperity."

"We're going to hold the course," he said.

The reassurances come after Mr. Trump [struck a defiant tone](#) over his tariffs in recent days. On Saturday, as the 10 percent levy went into effect, the president [told his followers](#) on Truth Social: "HANG TOUGH, it won't be easy, but the end result will be historic."

Mr. Trump has maintained that his tariffs can reset trade relationships that he sees as unfair and detrimental to American jobs and industries by reviving domestic

manufacturing. He also wants the levies to raise new revenue to help pay for the costs of his economic agenda, including a [package to cut corporate and individual taxes](#).

But his trade policies have provoked substantial, widespread blowback, leading even U.S. allies to condemn Washington.

Last week, China announced a slate of aggressive retaliatory measures that raised the odds of a persistent and economically damaging trade war. Other nations have sought to negotiate lower rates: Vietnam, facing a 46 percent tariff rate that would be among the highest faced by any U.S. trading partner, is seeking a 45-day delay and [proposed dropping its own tariffs to zero](#).

Fanning out on the Sunday news show circuit, the president's top aides responded to the fallout by boasting that they had already heard from dozens of countries that wanted to discuss trade.

"Listen, we've got 50 countries that are burning the phone lines into the White House," Brooke Rollins, the agriculture secretary, said on CNN's "State of the Union." She said Mr. Trump's tariffs had left some countries "desperate and willing" to cut a deal.

But the White House has sent conflicting messages about its true appetite for [negotiation](#). Mr. Trump suggested last week that he could cut a deal in exchange for a "phenomenal" return, but then [posted on Saturday](#) that the tariffs were "here to stay."

Mr. Bessent, asked whether Mr. Trump would be willing to cut a deal, suggested that there was room to negotiate but that nothing would happen quickly. "They've been bad actors for a long time," he said. "And it's not the kind of thing you can negotiate away in days or weeks."

The confusion is unlikely to salve investors' fears as markets prepare to open Monday, fresh off a weeklong rout during which major indexes fell precipitously. It was the [worst weekly decline](#) for the S&P 500 since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

At one point, Mr. Trump even appeared to suggest that the market chaos was part of his strategy: He [circulated](#) a video from another user on Truth Social that argued the president was "purposely CRASHING" the markets in part to force the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates.

Pressed on the matter, Mr. Hassett on Sunday initially responded by saying the Fed was independent, before adding, "He's not trying to tank the market."

The market gyrations in recent days have spooked even some Republicans on Capitol Hill. Representative Don Bacon, Republican of Nebraska, predicted that deeper losses could convince members of his party to support a bill that would help Congress reclaim some of its authority over tariffs.

"It's time that Congress restores its authorities here," he said on "Face the Nation."