

# Escalating U.S. Tariffs: Timeline

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The [trade practices of U.S. trading partners](#) and the [U.S. trade deficit](#) are a focus of the Trump Administration. Citing these and other concerns, the President has imposed tariff increases under three U.S. laws:

- (1) [Section 201](#) of the Trade Act of 1974 (**Table 1**) on U.S. imports of washing machines and solar products due to concerns over their injurious effects on domestic U.S. industry;
- (2) [Section 232](#) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (**Table 2**) on U.S. imports of steel and aluminum, and potentially [motor vehicles](#)/parts and titanium sponge due to concerns that imports threaten to impair the national security; and
- (3) [Section 301](#) of the Trade Act of 1974 on U.S. imports from China (**Table 3**) due to concerns over its intellectual property rights practices, from the European Union (EU) due to concerns over subsidies on the manufacture of large civil aircraft, and potentially on U.S. imports from France (**Table 4**) due to concerns over its digital services tax (DST).

Congress delegated aspects of its constitutional authority to regulate foreign commerce to the President through these trade laws. These authorities allow the President, based on agency investigations, to take various actions, including imposing import restrictions to address specific concerns (see text box). They have been used infrequently in the past two decades, in part due to the 1995 creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its enforceable dispute settlement system. Prior to this Administration, U.S. import restrictions were last imposed under these trade laws in [1986 for Section 232](#), in [2009 for Section 301](#), and in [2002 for Section 201](#). The President also proposed increasing tariffs on imports from Mexico using authorities delegated by Congress under the [International Emergency Economic Powers Act](#)

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(IEEPA), but they were subsequently suspended. The tables below focus on U.S. unilateral tariff actions and do not include Section 301 tariffs related to the [large civil aircraft dispute with the EU](#), which were authorized by a WTO dispute settlement panel. For information on retaliatory tariffs by U.S. trading partners, see CRS Insight IN10971, *Escalating U.S. Tariffs: Affected Trade*.

Increasing U.S. tariffs or imposing other import restrictions through these laws potentially opens the United States to complaints that it is violating its WTO and free trade agreement (FTA) commitments. Several U.S. trading partners, including [China](#) and the [European Union](#), have initiated dispute settlement proceedings and responded with retaliatory tariffs. The retaliatory actions also raise questions with regard to their adherence to WTO commitments, which the United States has raised.

## Timeline and Status of U.S. Trade Actions

The tables below provide a timeline of key events related to each trade action. In addition to tariffs, the President has imposed quotas, or quantitative limits, on U.S. imports of certain goods from specified countries, as well as tariff-rate quotas (TRQs), for which one tariff applies up to a specific quantity or value of imports and a higher tariff applies above that threshold.

**Table 1. Section 201 Global Safeguard Investigations**

<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5/17/2017—U.S. industry petition initiates ITC injury investigation on solar cells/modules.</li> <li>6/5/2017—U.S. industry petition initiates ITC injury investigation on large residential washers.</li> <li>9/22/2017—ITC makes affirmative <a href="#">solar cells/modules injury determination</a>.</li> <li>10/5/2017—ITC makes affirmative <a href="#">large residential washers injury determination</a>.</li> <li>11/13/2017—ITC submits <a href="#">report and recommended action on solar cells/modules</a> to President.</li> <li>12/4/2017—ITC submits <a href="#">report and recommended action on large residential washers</a> to President.</li> <li>1/23/2018—President proclaims actions on <a href="#">solar cells/modules</a> and <a href="#">large residential washers</a>, effective February 7, 2018.</li> <li>8/7/2019—ITC releases its <a href="#">mid-term review</a> on the safeguard on large residential washers.</li> <li>12/23/2019—ITC announces <a href="#">investigation</a>, as directed by the President, to consider the economic effect of potentially increasing TRQ threshold for solar cells.</li> <li>1/23/2020—President proclaims change to quarterly basis for <a href="#">allocation of large residential washer quota</a>, beginning February 7, 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Import Restriction</b>	<p><b>Solar Cells:</b> 4-year TRQ with 30% above quota tariff, descending 5% annually.</p> <p><b>Solar Modules:</b> 4-year 30% tariff, descending 5% annually.</p> <p><b>Large Residential Washers:</b> 3-year TRQ, 20% in quota tariff descending 2% annually, 50% above quota tariff descending 5% annually.</p> <p><b>Large Residential Washer Parts:</b> 3-year TRQ, 50% above quota tariff, descending 5% annually.</p>
<b>Countries Affected</b>	Canada excluded from the duties on washers. Certain developing countries excluded if they account for less than 3% individually or 9% collectively of U.S. imports of solar cells or large residential washers, respectively. All other countries included.
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Effective February 7, 2018.</b>

**Table 2. Section 232 Steel, Aluminum, Auto, Uranium, and Titanium Sponge Investigations**

<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4/2017—Commerce self-initiates investigations on U.S. <a href="#">steel</a> and <a href="#">aluminum</a> imports.</li> <li>1/2018—Commerce submits <a href="#">steel</a> and <a href="#">aluminum</a> reports to President.</li> <li>3/23/2018—United States imposes <a href="#">steel</a> and <a href="#">aluminum</a> duties. Temporary exemptions to May 1 in place for certain U.S. security partners (later extended to June 1).</li> <li>4/30/2018—President exempts South Korea from <a href="#">steel</a> duties; imposes a quota arrangement.</li> <li>5/23/2018—Commerce self-initiates investigation on U.S. <a href="#">motor vehicle and parts</a> imports.</li> <li>5/31/2018—President permanently exempts Argentina and Brazil from <a href="#">steel</a> duties, and Argentina from <a href="#">aluminum</a> duties, based on quota arrangements. Australia permanently exempted from both duties without a quota.</li> <li>7/18/2018—Commerce initiates <a href="#">uranium</a> investigation based on industry petition.</li> <li>2/17/2019—Commerce submits motor vehicle report to President (no public release).</li> <li>3/4/2019—Commerce initiates <a href="#">titanium sponge</a> investigation based on industry petition.</li> <li>4/16/2019—Commerce submits uranium report to President (no public release).</li> <li>5/17/2019—President <a href="#">proclaims</a> motor vehicle and parts imports a national security threat and directs USTR to negotiate with European Union (EU), Japan, and others to resolve.</li> <li>5/19/2019—President exempts Canada and Mexico from <a href="#">steel</a> and <a href="#">aluminum</a> duties. <a href="#">Canada</a>, <a href="#">Mexico</a>, and United States announce process for reinstating tariffs should imports surge.</li> <li>7/12/2019—President <a href="#">does not concur</a> with Commerce findings that uranium imports threaten to impair national security, but establishes U.S. Nuclear Fuel Working Group to develop recommendations to revive domestic industry.</li> <li>10/14/2019—President <a href="#">announces</a> plans to increase the steel tariffs on imports from Turkey to 50% in response to Turkish military actions but later <a href="#">suspends</a> the planned increase.</li> <li>11/19/2019—Commerce submits titanium sponge report to President (no public release).</li> <li>12/2/2019—President <a href="#">announces</a> plans to reinstate steel and aluminum tariffs on imports from Argentina and Brazil due to currency issues. (Tariffs have not been reinstated to date.)</li> <li>1/24/2020—President <a href="#">proclaims</a> certain derivative products of steel and aluminum (e.g., nails, wires, and select motor vehicle body parts) subject to 25% and 10% tariffs, respectively, effective February 8, 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Import Restriction</b>	<p><b>Aluminum:</b> 10% tariffs on certain <a href="#">aluminum</a> and <a href="#">aluminum derivatives</a>, effective indefinitely.</p> <p><b>Steel:</b> 25% tariffs on certain <a href="#">steel</a> and <a href="#">steel derivatives</a>, effective indefinitely.</p> <p><b>Autos and Parts:</b> No tariffs currently in effect, pending negotiations.</p>
<b>Countries Affected</b>	<p><b>Aluminum:</b> Argentina,* Australia, Canada, and Mexico exempted. All other countries included.</p> <p><b>Steel:</b> Argentina,* Australia, Brazil,* Canada, Mexico, and South Korea* exempted. All other countries included.</p> <p><b>Autos and Parts:</b> EU, Japan, and other countries “deemed necessary” targeted for negotiations.</p> <p>(*) <a href="#">Quantitative import restrictions</a> imposed in place of tariffs.</p>
<b>Current Status</b>	<p><b>Aluminum:</b> Tariffs effective March 23, 2018. Effective February 8, 2020 for aluminum derivatives.</p> <p><b>Steel:</b> Tariffs effective March 23, 2018. Effective February 8, 2020 for steel derivatives.</p> <p><b>Autos and Parts:</b> National security threat declared, but no import restrictions imposed within 180 days raising questions over possible <a href="#">expiration of tariff authority</a> under this investigation.</p> <p><b>Uranium:</b> President determined imports are not a national security threat.</p> <p><b>Titanium Sponge:</b> Investigation completed. Determination on national security threat pending. (Retaliation also in effect, see CRS Insight IN10971, <i>Escalating U.S. Tariffs: Affected Trade</i>.)</p>

**Table 3. Section 301 Investigation of China's IP and Innovation Policies**

<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8/14/2017—President <a href="#">directs USTR</a> to consider investigation on China's laws, policies, practices, or actions affecting U.S. intellectual property and forced technology transfers.</li> <li>3/22/2018—USTR releases <a href="#">Section 301 report</a> and finds that China's policies are "unreasonable or discriminatory, and burden or restrict U.S. commerce." President signs <a href="#">memorandum</a> proposing to (1) implement tariffs on certain Chinese imports; (2) initiate a WTO dispute settlement case against China's discriminatory technology licensing; and (3) propose new investment restrictions on Chinese efforts to acquire sensitive U.S. technology.</li> <li>7/6/2018—United States <a href="#">imposes stage 1 tariffs</a> (25% tariff on \$34 billion of U.S. imports).</li> <li>8/23/2018—United States <a href="#">imposes stage 2 tariffs</a> (25% tariff on \$16 billion of U.S. imports).</li> <li>9/24/2018—In response to Chinese retaliatory tariffs, United States <a href="#">imposes stage 3 tariffs</a> (10% tariffs on \$200 billion of U.S. imports).</li> <li>12/1/2018—President <a href="#">announces new negotiations</a> with China to resolve U.S. concerns.</li> <li>5/5/2019—President <a href="#">tweets</a> negotiations are moving too slowly, and plans to increase stage 3 tariffs to 25% and to prepare tariffs on remaining Chinese imports (stage 4, on approximately \$300 billion of U.S. imports).</li> <li>5/10/2019—United States <a href="#">imposes stage 3 tariff increase</a> to 25%.</li> <li>8/2019—President Trump <a href="#">tweets</a> that China has not followed through with commitments to buy U.S. agricultural products and USTR releases a two-part plan to impose 10% tariffs on approximately \$300 billion of U.S. imports (<a href="#">stage 4</a>). The first part (4A) is to take effect on September 1, 2019; the second part (4B) is to take effect on December 15, 2019.</li> <li>8/23/2019—In response to Chinese retaliatory tariffs, President Trump <a href="#">directs USTR</a> to further increase tariffs by raising stage 1-3 tariffs to 30% in October 2019, and <a href="#">stage 4</a> tariffs to 15% on their effective dates (September 1, 2019 – 4A, December 15, 2019 – 4B).</li> <li>9/1/2019—United States <a href="#">imposes stage 4A tariffs</a> of 15%.</li> <li>10/11/2019—President Trump <a href="#">suspends</a> the proposed October tariff increases, and announces a forthcoming "phase one" deal with China.</li> <li>12/15/2019—USTR <a href="#">suspends</a> potential stage 4B tariffs of 15% before they take effect.</li> <li>1/15/2019—United States and China sign "<a href="#">phase one</a>" deal, addressing some trade and investment issues and committing China to purchase \$200 billion in additional U.S. exports. The agreement leaves in place the majority of existing tariffs.</li> <li>1/15/2020—USTR issues a notice to <a href="#">reduce stage 4A</a> tariffs from 15% to 7.5%, effective February 14, 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Import Restriction</b>	<p><b>Stage 1</b>—25% import tariff on <a href="#">818 U.S. tariff lines</a> (approx. \$34 billion).</p> <p><b>Stage 2</b>—25% import tariff on <a href="#">279 U.S. tariff lines</a> (approx. \$16 billion).</p> <p><b>Stage 3</b>—25% import tariff on <a href="#">5,733 U.S. tariff lines*</a> (approx. \$200 billion).</p> <p><b>Stage 4A</b>—15% import tariff on <a href="#">3,229 U.S. tariff lines*</a> (approx. \$126 billion) (proposed reduction to 7.5% on February 14, 2020).</p> <p><b>Stage 4B</b>—proposed 15% import tariff on 542 tariff lines (approx. \$156 billion) (suspended).</p> <p>(*) A limited number of <a href="#">stage 3 tariff lines were adjusted</a> to align with changes to the HTSUS in September 2018. Stage 3 and 4 tariff lists also include a small number of partial tariff lines.</p>
<b>Countries Affected</b>	China.
<b>Current Status</b>	<p><b>Stage 1</b>—Effective July 6, 2018 (25%);</p> <p><b>Stage 2</b>—Effective August 23, 2018 (25%);</p> <p><b>Stage 3</b>—Effective September 24, 2018 (10%), increased May 10, 2019 (25%), or June 15, 2019 on products exported from China before May 10 (25%);</p> <p><b>Stage 4A</b>—Effective September 1, 2019 (15%), proposed reduction February 14, 2020 (7.5%).</p> <p><b>Stage 4B</b>—Suspended indefinitely.</p> <p>(Retaliation also in effect, see CRS Insight IN10971, <i>Escalating U.S. Tariffs: Affected Trade.</i>)</p>

**Table 4. Section 301 Investigation of France's Digital Service Tax (DST)**

<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>07/16/2019—USTR <a href="#">initiates investigation</a> of France's Digital Services Tax (DTS).</li> <li>12/2/2019—USTR <a href="#">issues report</a> on France's DST, finding the tax discriminates against major U.S. digital companies.</li> <li>12/6/2019—USTR seeks comments on proposed 100% tariffs on <a href="#">a preliminary list</a> of French products, and schedules hearings for January 7 and 8.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Import Restriction</b>	Proposed (potentially up to 100%) tariff on selected imports from France (63 U.S. tariff lines, approx. \$2.4 billion in annual imports), and potential fees or restrictions on services from France.
<b>Countries Affected</b>	France.
<b>Current Status</b>	Proposed.

**Table 5. Proposed Tariffs on Mexico under IEEPA**

<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5/30/2019—President <a href="#">announces</a> intent to invoke IEEPA authorities to impose 5% tariff on all imports from Mexico, starting June 10, 2019, and increasing by 5% monthly to 25% in response to concerns over Mexico's immigration policies affecting the United States.</li> <li>6/7/2019—President <a href="#">tweets</a> that the United States reached an agreement with Mexico (see <a href="#">State Department announcement</a>), suspending the proposed tariffs indefinitely.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Import Restriction</b>	Proposed 5% import tariff on all U.S. imports from Mexico, increasing by 5% monthly to a maximum of 25% (currently suspended).
<b>Countries Affected</b>	Mexico.
<b>Current Status</b>	Suspended indefinitely.

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