

## Trump making economic threats against everyone

# What is POTUS after?

**International Desk**  
**PERSPECTIVE** Perhaps for many international analysts and observers, hearing the news of Donald Trump imposing new tariffs on the United States' neighbors is not surprising, as he had repeatedly emphasized that he would during his election campaigns and even right before his inauguration on January 20.

Now, in any case, his desired strategy has been put into action. The 47th president of the United States announced on the last day of January that, starting from Saturday, a 25% tariff would be imposed on imports from Canada and Mexico, and a 10% tariff on Chinese goods. Reuters reported that Trump emphasized that no action from these countries can forestall the implementation of these tariffs, but the oil tariff rate will be 10% versus the 25% planned for other goods from the United States' northern neighbor.



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Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (front) arrives on Parliament Hill to give his statement after US President Donald Trump ordered 25% tariffs on Canadian imports, in Ottawa, Canada, on February 1, 2025. "We're certainly not looking to escalate, but we will stand up for Canada, for Canadians, for Canadian jobs," Trudeau said.  
● PATRICK DOYLE/REUTERS

Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, announced that "Starting [Saturday], those tariffs will be in place, and these are promises made and promises kept by the president." Leavitt also said that Trump rejects the idea that his threat to impose tariffs is a negotiating tactic and believes that the US has a large trade deficit with all three countries, which must be addressed. On the other hand, Trump announced that his administration will likely impose tariffs on oil and gas from February 18. So far, however, it seems that he will impose a mere 10% tariff on Canadian oil. Trump stated that these tariffs are primarily aimed at ensuring greater cooperation from the aforementioned countries to prevent illegal immigration and the smuggling of fentanyl-producing materials into the US, but he also considered another aspect of imposing these tariffs to be strengthening domestic production and increasing federal government revenue.

According to Euronews, Canada and Mexico are the largest oil exporters to the United States, and according to the US Energy Information Administration, the country imported approximately 4.6 million barrels of oil from Canada and 563,000 barrels from Mexico in October, which is a significant figure.

### Canada's tough days

Without a doubt, Canada, as the United States' ally and northern neighbor, will be severely harmed by Trump's action, and this can be explicitly seen in the words of Justin Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada. In his speech at the Council on Canada-US Relations,

Trudeau stated that his country is at a critical moment, and "we're ready with a response (to the tariffs) — a purposeful, forceful but reasonable, immediate response." He emphasized that Ontario does not want this situation, but if these tariffs are implemented, it will take action and take reciprocal measures. Trudeau stated that Canadian citizens may face tough days and weeks ahead and may be worried and anxious, but "I want them to know the federal government, and indeed, all orders of government, have their backs."

### Against Europe

A more important issue is that Trump, in his announcement of imposing tariffs on Canada, China, and Mexico, also made a reference to Europe. It is clear that he wants to put his European partners under the strain of tariffs as well. He explicitly told journalists that more tariffs, including those on European goods, steel, aluminum, copper, medicines, and semiconductors, are on the way, although imposing tariffs on copper will take a bit longer.

Trump said in another part of his speech that he will undoubtedly impose tariffs on imported goods from the European Union and claimed that Europeans have behaved very badly towards the US, which must be rectified.

### Targeting BRICS

It should be noted that he has not spared BRICS from tariff threats either. He announced on his social media platform, Truth Social, that "we are going to require a commitment from these seemingly hostile countries that

they will neither create a new BRICS currency, nor back any other currency to replace the mighty US dollar or, they will face 100 per cent tariffs, and should expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful US economy."

### Clash with China

Undoubtedly, what can be highly significant regarding the announcement of tariffs by the United States is whether it will impose them on Beijing, too. We recall that a series of tariffs during Trump's first presidency led to a trade war between the two economic giants, and now, after six years, Chinese businesses are preparing for the challeng-

es ahead as he takes the full rein of the White House. BBC Global reported: "Trump may have pressed pause on the looming battle with Beijing. But many believe it's still coming. It's hard to find an exact figure on how many businesses are fleeing China, but major firms such as Nike, Adidas, and Puma have already relocated to Vietnam. Chinese businesses too have been moving, reshaping supply chains, although Beijing remains a key player. Already business sentiment is nervous: an annual survey by the American Chamber of Commerce in China showed just over half of them were concerned about the US-China relationship deteriorating further."

### Concerns about domestic implications

Another point that should be considered is the impact of Trump's tariffs on European partners, China, neighbors, and even some other countries that can be his target on the US economy. Trump claimed to journalists that the tariffs may cause short-term disruptions for American consumers but will have long-term benefits for the US manufacturing industry. He stated, "Tariffs don't cause inflation, they cause success." In his opinion, tariffs may cause some temporary and short-term disruptions, and people will understand this, but they can help improve the US economy. According to a study by the Tax, Trump's proposed 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico, as well as 10% tariffs on Chinese goods, would shrink economic output by 0.4 percent and increase taxes by \$1.2 trillion between 2025 and 2034. The results of

this study indicate that tariffs will threaten the US household economy more than previously thought. This is while Trump repeatedly criticized the Biden administration's policies during his election campaigns and promised to control inflation, the future of which is now unclear.

### Rubio's attack on foreign countries

Simultaneous with Trump's actions, Marco Rubio, the US secretary of state, spoke out. He supported Trump's order to suspend billions of dollars in foreign aid, stating that the US government is not a charity. Newsweek wrote: "His remarks signal a tougher stance on international assistance under the Trump administration, as policymakers reassess America's financial commitments abroad. The move reflects growing skepticism among conservatives about unchecked overseas spending and could reshape America's role on the global stage."

The final point to note about the foreign policy of Trump's team is that they are drawing new lines in their neighborhood. According to a statement by the US State Department, Marco Rubio's first destination will be Latin America, starting with a visit to Panama on February 1 and continuing until February 6 with visits to El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. This action can be seen as a change in the US partnerships with its southern neighbors, but overall, we are witnessing Trump encircling the world.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Saazandegi.



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US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (c) boards a plane on February 1, 2025, at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland en route to Panama, after Trump charged that China has unfair influence over the canal and vowed that the United States would be "taking it back".  
● MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AFP