

Global Reactions to New U.S. Tariffs: Allies Adjust, Critics Push Back

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A sweeping executive order by U.S. President Donald Trump has triggered a wave of global responses after the White House confirmed fresh tariffs on a range of trade partners. Effective August 7, the administration's directive introduces or adjusts import duties on countries including Canada, Switzerland, Japan, and several Southeast Asian nations. The moves come amid renewed efforts by the U.S. to realign trade policies with what Trump described as "national interests and fair cooperation."

The most notable change came with a 35% tariff on Canadian goods, a sharp increase from the prior 25%. The White House cited Canada's alleged inaction in curbing illicit drug flows and cross-border criminal activity. The Canadian government has not yet responded publicly, but the increase marks one of the highest tariffs issued in this latest round of trade measures.

In contrast, several Southeast Asian nations secured lower-than-expected rates. Thailand's new 19% rate, down from an initial 36%, was welcomed by Finance Minister Pichai Chunhavajira, who described it as a necessary step to maintain economic competitiveness, despite expected challenges in some sectors. He confirmed that further negotiations are ongoing.

Pakistan also welcomed its revised 19% tariff, reduced from the original 29%, with the Ministry of Finance calling it a "forward-looking" decision. The ministry emphasized potential benefits to the country's vital textile sector and highlighted ongoing cooperation with the U.S. for mutual economic gains.

Malaysia echoed similar sentiments, with the Ministry of Trade labeling the outcome a "significant achievement." Officials noted the tariff, down from 25% to 19%, did not compromise core national policies, even as discussions reportedly touched on sensitive areas such as halal certifications and digital trade.

Cambodia praised the U.S. decision to cut its proposed tariff from 49% to 19%, with Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol announcing Cambodia will, in turn, impose zero tariffs on American imports. He also revealed plans to purchase 10 aircraft from Boeing. The gesture followed U.S.-mediated efforts to halt armed conflict with neighboring Thailand, which led to a ceasefire earlier in the week. Cambodian officials went as far as suggesting that President Trump be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his role in ending the border clashes.

Australia emerged with one of the most favorable outcomes, a 10% tariff on its exports. Trade Minister Don Farrell credited "cool and calm negotiations" and stressed that Australia imposed no retaliatory tariffs during talks. Despite some domestic criticism over Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's failure to secure a face-to-face meeting with Trump, officials portrayed the deal as a strategic win, particularly for agricultural exporters.

Japan, facing a 15% tariff, down from an earlier 25%, responded cautiously. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi welcomed the clarity brought by the executive order but

noted Japan would closely monitor the rollout and provide support to affected industries, particularly small and mid-sized exporters.

Switzerland, however, reacted with disappointment to the sudden imposition of a 39% tariff. The Swiss Federal Council expressed “regret” over what it called a unilateral move by Washington, despite “constructive” prior negotiations. The government reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing a negotiated resolution.

Norway, affected by a 15% tariff, continued advocating for a zero-tariff arrangement. Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told local media that talks with Washington are ongoing, and he remains hopeful for a better outcome aligned with Norway’s trade priorities.

New Zealand officials expressed concern after the U.S. raised its tariff rate to 15% from an expected 10%. Trade Minister Todd McClay questioned the justification, arguing the trade imbalance with the U.S. is marginal and should not warrant steeper duties. With the U.S. recently overtaking Australia as New Zealand’s second-largest export market, officials plan to intensify lobbying efforts.

Taiwan saw its tariff reduced from 32% to 20%, though President Lai Ching-te emphasized that further negotiations were necessary. Lai tied trade talks to broader security collaboration, reaffirming the strategic importance of U.S.-Taiwan relations. The U.S. remains Taiwan’s largest export destination and primary security ally.

Finally, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet credited President Trump for not only de-escalating a regional conflict but also for easing tariff pressure. Calling the 19% rate “good news,” Hun said the decision would support Cambodia’s ongoing development.

As the new tariffs take effect, Trump’s administration continues to press its broader agenda of reshaping global trade dynamics. While some allies see compromise and opportunity, others remain wary of abrupt policy shifts. Negotiations are still underway for several countries, and further revisions to tariff rates remain possible depending on political and economic developments.