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Trump Imposes 50% Copper Import Tariff for National Security.

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In a surprise move that sent shockwaves through global markets, President Donald Trump has announced a hefty 50% tariff on copper imports into the United States. The decision, revealed during a televised cabinet meeting, marks a bold step in the administration's ongoing push to reshape American trade policy and revive domestic manufacturing.

"Today we're doing copper," Trump said offhandedly during the meeting. "We're going to make it 50%." The statement quickly drew attention from industry leaders, investors, and foreign governments alike.

The announcement is the result of an investigation launched earlier this year into the impact of imported copper on national security. Copper is a key component in a wide range of industries, from military hardware and electric vehicles to construction and telecommunications. With about half of U.S. copper consumption coming from imports, the administration sees the new tariff as a way to reduce reliance on foreign sources and support domestic production.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick confirmed that the tariff is expected to take effect by the end of the month. He also noted that President Trump will sign the necessary documents in the coming days to formalize the measure.

Markets were quick to react. U.S. copper prices surged to record highs shortly after the announcement, reflecting both the expected supply crunch and the uncertainty surrounding the policy's broader implications.

While Trump has long championed tariffs as a tool to protect American industry, this latest move takes many by surprise due to the steep rate of 50% being significantly higher than the current rates on copper, which have traditionally been far lower. The increase brings copper in line with the tariffs already imposed on steel and aluminum under the same national security justification.

Chile, the United States' largest supplier of copper, is watching the situation closely. The chairman of Chile's state-run copper producer, Codelco, said it's too early to conclude, emphasizing the need to see the final version of the order. It's still unclear whether the tariff will apply to all countries or just select ones.

This copper tariff is part of a broader wave of trade actions being considered by the Trump administration. Similar investigations are underway in other sectors, including pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and lumber, signaling that more changes may be on the horizon.

Scott Lincicome, Vice President of Economics and Trade at the Cato Institute, described the move as "more of the same," noting that while it may benefit some domestic producers, it also brings increased uncertainty for U.S. businesses that rely on copper as a raw material.

As with many of Trump's trade decisions, reactions remain mixed. Some see it as a necessary step toward industrial independence. Others worry about rising costs and potential global trade tensions. Either way, the copper tariff marks another turning point in the administration's hardline trade strategy.

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