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'Liberation Day II' Struggles at Box Office Amid Criticism of Trump's Trade Policies

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Former President Donald Trump's sequel-themed political rally, branded as "Liberation Day II," has been met with underwhelming results at the box office and renewed criticism of his trade policies. Economist Alan S. Blinder, a professor at Princeton University and contributor to *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), argues that Trump's economic approach has undermined the United States' standing as a global trade leader.

Blinder points to Trump's \$79 billion tariff program as a central factor in the nation's economic shift. According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, the tariff measures are expected to increase household taxes by roughly \$1,300 per family in 2025. The foundation's analysis also notes a reduction in U.S. import volumes and retaliatory trade measures from other countries, costing the American economy an estimated \$1.6 billion.

Historically, the United States played a key role in creating and upholding international trade rules through institutions such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) following World War II. Blinder's critique underscores a departure from those free trade principles, a move he has consistently opposed in his published work. He specifically cites the tariffs introduced in 2018, when the Trump administration imposed a 25 percent duty on imported steel and a 10 percent duty on imported aluminum. Those measures followed a U.S. government investigation into China's trade practices and were justified by the administration on national security grounds.

Supporters of the tariffs argue that they were designed to protect American industries, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and address what the administration described as unfair trade practices by China. However, Blinder contends that these policies have instead prompted economic retaliation from trading partners, disrupted supply chains, and isolated the U.S. in the global market.

The WSJ column frames "Liberation Day II" not just as a political event, but as a symbolic representation of what Blinder sees as economic mismanagement and foreign policy overreach. He warns that the continuation of such policies could further strain diplomatic relationships and hinder economic growth.

Recent global shipping forecasts project the container shipping market's value from 2023 to 2029 will be influenced by shifting trade flows, policy changes, and retaliatory tariffs. Analysts note that U.S. trade decisions under Trump have already impacted these patterns, with some exporters diverting goods to alternative markets.

While Trump's trade measures continue to receive strong backing from some domestic manufacturing advocates, critics like Blinder maintain that the long-term effects will be higher consumer costs, reduced market access for American goods, and diminished global influence. The debate over tariffs and trade policy remains a central issue as political and economic leaders look ahead to the next election cycle.