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Trump Hints at New Tariff Rates for Smaller Trade Partners

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Former President Donald Trump announced that letters detailing new U.S. tariff rates for smaller trade partners will be released soon, with most set to face a uniform rate likely “a little over 10%.” The move, according to Trump, is part of a broader effort to streamline trade policy and secure more favorable terms for American industries.

Speaking to reporters following his return from an event in Pittsburgh, Trump reaffirmed his support for what he called “simple deals” already made with over 20 countries, where blanket tariffs have been successfully agreed upon. He emphasized that the focus now turns to smaller nations that have yet to reach trade agreements with the United States.

“We’ll be releasing a letter soon, talking about many countries that are much smaller,” Trump said. “We’ll probably set one tariff for all of them … probably a little over 10%.” Trump’s comments reflect a continuing push for uniformity and predictability in trade, an approach aimed at reducing bureaucratic red tape while still protecting U.S. producers from unfair competition.

The former president’s tariff strategy remains rooted in the same philosophy he championed during his first term, leveraging America’s market power to secure more balanced trade relationships. Critics of previous administrations have long argued that U.S. trade policy allowed too many foreign-made goods to enter the country at artificially low prices, undermining American manufacturing and discouraging domestic investment. Trump’s recent remarks signaled that he remains committed to a tough-on-trade approach, especially with countries that benefit disproportionately from access to U.S. markets.

Although he did not specify which nations would be included under the new tariff scheme, Trump’s team is reportedly focused on countries that have maintained lopsided trade surpluses with the U.S. or have avoided formal negotiations under broader trade frameworks. Uniform tariffs of over 10%, while moderate compared to past penalties, would still mark a significant shift for smaller economies that have previously relied on low duty access to American consumers.

Trade experts are watching closely, as a move toward flat tariffs could simplify enforcement and reduce manipulation, but it may also trigger diplomatic responses or retaliatory measures. Still, Trump’s supporters argue that decisive trade action is long overdue and necessary to restore fairness to a system that has too often worked against American interests.

Whether these letters serve as the beginning of a broader renegotiation or as a final warning to non-compliant trade partners remains to be seen. However, the message from Trump was clear: when it comes to trade, the days of one-sided arrangements may be coming to an end.