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Trump Warns of Steeper Tariffs on Indian Goods Amid Ongoing Russian Oil Trade

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Donald Trump announced Monday that the United States will move to significantly increase tariffs on Indian imports in response to India's continued purchases of Russian oil, calling the practice "profiteering off war" as the conflict in Ukraine enters its third year.

The decision follows last week's declaration of a 25% tariff on Indian imports, set to take effect at 12:01 a.m. Thursday. However, Trump signaled that the rate could climb even higher, citing India's resale of Russian crude oil on global markets for profit as a key factor in the policy shift.

“India is not only buying massive amounts of Russian Oil, they are then, for much of the Oil purchased, selling it on the Open Market for big profits,” Trump wrote on Truth Social. “They don’t care how many people in Ukraine are being killed by the Russian War Machine. Because of this, I will be substantially raising the Tariff paid by India to the USA.”

The announcement puts additional strain on the historically cooperative relationship between Washington and New Delhi. While India has positioned itself as a strategic partner to the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, the country’s refusal to align with Western efforts to isolate Moscow economically has drawn criticism.

India has increased its Russian crude intake from about 1% of its oil imports prior to the war to over one-third today, importing roughly two million barrels per day. India’s strategy, largely driven by economic pragmatism, has allowed it to benefit from steep discounts while skirting direct condemnation of Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

President Trump has imposed an August 8 deadline for Russia to begin peace negotiations with Ukraine or face broad secondary sanctions targeting nations that maintain commercial ties with Moscow—particularly in the energy sector. While it remains unclear whether Trump’s threat pertains to secondary penalties or an increase to the newly announced 25% base tariff, the administration is sending a clear message that ongoing trade with Russia will carry economic consequences.

Trump’s special envoy, real estate executive Steve Witkoff, is scheduled to travel to Moscow on Wednesday in an attempt to persuade Russian leadership to return to the negotiating table. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed that President Vladimir Putin remains open to meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, but only after “expert-level groundwork” is completed.

The shift marks a notable change in tone from the Trump administration’s earlier relationship with India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During his first term, Trump joined Modi at major rallies in Houston and Ahmedabad and was briefly nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for attempting to mediate tensions between India and Pakistan.

However, Modi has shown little interest in capitulating to tariff threats, stating publicly that “India also has to be vigilant about its economic interests,” signaling that New Delhi intends to continue pursuing a foreign policy based on national priorities rather than geopolitical pressure.

As tensions escalate and economic consequences loom, the U.S.-India trade relationship faces renewed uncertainty, with broader implications for global supply chains and diplomatic alliances.