

China's Revenge Politics Against USA Taxes

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Abstract. *In 2025, the United States will again implement a new tariff policy on a number of strategic commodities from the People's Republic of China (China), as part of efforts to protect domestic industries and limit China's technological dominance in the global market. The tariffs cover the electric vehicle, semiconductor, solar panel, and strategic metal sectors, with additional tariffs reaching 35%. The US government argues that this policy is intended to respond to unfair trade practices and threats to national security. However, this action is viewed by the Chinese government as a form of economic aggression and a trigger for ongoing bilateral tensions. In response, China launched a policy of revenge in the form of retaliatory tariffs that are measured and strategic. China targets American agricultural products, including soybeans, corn, and beef—sectors that have a direct impact on the US government's political support base. In addition, China has also tightened regulations on American technology companies operating in its territory, and accelerated import substitution programs in national strategic industries. The economic retaliation between the two superpowers has put significant pressure on the global economy. Market uncertainty has increased, foreign investment has slowed, and there have been disruptions in international supply chains, especially in the technology and renewable energy sectors. Developing countries have also been affected by commodity price fluctuations and declining export demand. This tariff conflict shows a shift in international trade patterns from the principles of liberalism to geopolitically based strategic protectionism. This study aims to comprehensively analyze the dynamics of US tariff policy in 2025, the form of China's revenge politics, and its impact on global economic stability in the context of contemporary international political economy.*

Keywords: *Economic; Geopolitics; International; Revenge; Trade.*

1. Introduction

The trade relationship between the United States and China has long been a key foundation of the global economic architecture. As the world's two largest economies, the trade policies adopted by Washington and Beijing not only affect the bilateral trade balance but also the stability and direction of international economic growth as a whole. The year 2025 marks a new chapter in this complex dynamic, as the United States unilaterally introduces new tariff policies that directly target strategic Chinese products. Officially claimed to be an effort to protect domestic industries and balance the trade deficit, this policy actually reflects a broader geopolitical dimension: an effort to curb China's growth and technological dominance in the global market.¹

The new tariff policy imposed by the United States in the first quarter of 2025 includes increased duties on a number of crucial sectors, including electric vehicles (EVs), semiconductor components, lithium batteries, rare earth elements products, and renewable energy equipment such as solar panels. The additional tariffs range from 15% to 35% depending on the category of goods, with a primary focus on industries deemed to be a threat to the United States' technological advantage and economic resilience. The US government says the move is necessary to "protect American workers and manufacturers" and to encourage the diversification of global supply chains that have long been seen as overly dependent on China.²

However, the policy immediately triggered a strong reaction from Beijing. The Chinese government considered the US tariff policy as an unfair form of economic provocation and a violation of the principles of free trade. Within weeks of the announcement of the new tariffs, China responded with a strategic and measured countermeasure. Beijing imposed additional tariffs on key agricultural products from the United States, including soybeans, corn, and beef—commodities that have significant political influence in the agricultural states of the US. In addition, China also imposed technical and regulatory barriers on American companies operating in its territory, and accelerated import substitution policies by promoting the use of local products.

Interestingly, China's response has not been purely reactive. Beijing has taken a more systematic approach, known as measured retaliation. This means that each retaliatory move is tailored to exert maximum pressure on sensitive economic and political sectors for the United States, but remains within limits that allow room for negotiation and do not trigger an escalation towards open conflict. China has also engaged multilateral forums such as the World Trade Organization (WTO),

¹Lee, Giacomo. "New China Chip Data Shows Industry Growth - but Beijing Remains Dependent on Imports," accessed on January 18, 2022. <https://www.verdict.co.uk/new-china-chip-data-shows-industry-growth-but-beijing-remains-dependent-on-imports/>.

²Goh, Evelyn and Sheldon W. Simon, eds. *China, the United States, and Southeast Asia*. (London: Routledge, 2008).

ASEAN, and BRICS to strengthen its diplomatic position and form strategic alliances with developing countries to reduce dependence on the United States market.³

The impact of the tariff war is not only felt by the two countries, but spreads throughout the global economy. Trade uncertainty lowers investor confidence, slows cross-border investment, and disrupts the stability of international stock markets. Developing countries that depend on raw material exports to China or the United States are experiencing a decline in demand. In addition, disruptions to global supply chains have caused inflation in consumer prices in various parts of the world, including Europe and Southeast Asia. Multinational companies have begun relocating factories from China to alternative countries such as Vietnam, India, and Mexico, creating a new configuration in the geopolitics of global manufacturing.

Furthermore, the escalation of tariffs in 2025 shows that the trade war between the US and China has evolved from a mere trade dispute to a politics of economic revenge. The US uses tariffs as a tool to curb China's dominance in strategic sectors, while China uses measured retaliation as a negotiating tool and protection of its economic sovereignty. This retaliation is not impulsive, but rather part of a long-term calculation in the broader hegemonic competition between the two global powers.⁴

2. Research Methods

This research is qualitative using a descriptive approach method, namely research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Qualitative research is based on a holistic natural background, positions humans as research tools, conducts inductive analysis, prioritizes the process rather than the results of research conducted from analyzing events, phenomena, or conditions socially.⁵

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. USA New Tariff Policy 2025 Against China

In 2025, the United States under President Donald Trump's administration imposed a series of significant new tariff policies against China, triggering an escalation of tensions in trade relations between the two countries. These policies

³Semi-Literate. "Made in China 2025 and Semiconductors: A 2020 Progress Report." Substack newsletter. <https://semiliterate.substack.com/p/made-in-china-2025-and-semiconductors>.

⁴McBride, James & Chatzky, Andrew. "Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade?" <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade>.

⁵Lexy J. Meleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2007). p.4.

include drastically increasing import tariffs and causing various economic impacts both domestically and internationally.

1. Chronology of US Tariff Policy towards China in 2025:

- a) February 1, 2025: President Trump signed Executive Order 14195, which places an additional 10% tariff on all imports from China. The policy will go into effect on February 4, 2025.
- b) February 10, 2025: In response, China imposed retaliatory tariffs of 15% on US coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, and 10% tariffs on crude oil and agricultural machinery. In addition, China added several US companies to its list of unreliable entities and imposed export controls on certain metals such as tungsten.
- c) March 12, 2025: The US is increasing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to 25%, covering all countries without exception. The move is aimed at strengthening the US domestic industry.
- d) April 2, 2025: In a speech billed as "Liberation Day," President Trump announced a base tariff of 10% on all imports, with higher tariffs for about 60 countries deemed to have unfair trade practices. For China, the effective tariff would reach 54% when the policy goes into effect on April 5, 2025.
- e) April 8, 2025: The US announced a tariff increase to 104% on Chinese exports to the US, effective at midnight. The move comes after China imposed retaliatory tariffs of 34% on US goods.⁶

2. Economic Impact and Global Reaction

This drastic increase in tariffs has caused various reactions and economic impacts:

- a) Energy Market: Global oil prices fell nearly 4%, hitting their lowest level since early 2021, in response to rising trade tensions and fears of a global economic recession.
- b) Domestic Reactions in the US: Some Republicans have expressed concerns over President Trump's tariff strategy, worrying about its impact on the domestic economy and U.S. consumers.
- c) China's response: China has launched a media campaign mocking labor conditions in the US in response to new tariffs.⁷

3. Analysis and Prospects

The US tariff policy in 2025 reflects a strong protectionist approach aimed at reducing the trade deficit and encouraging domestic production. However, these measures also raise the risk of a prolonged trade war, with potential negative impacts on global economic growth and diplomatic relations. Economists estimate that the new tariffs could reduce China's economic growth by 0.5 to 1 percentage point. In addition, US companies and consumers may face higher costs due to

⁶<https://nypost.com/2025/04/08/us-news/us-warns-china-of-big-mistake-in-tariffs-standoff-as-beijing-vows-to-fight-till-the-end/>.

⁷<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/oil-slides-nearly-4-us-kicks-off-104-tariffs-china-2025-04-09/>.

higher import tariffs. Overall, the US tariff policy towards China in 2025 marks a new phase in the dynamics of international trade, with broad implications for the global economy and the stability of international relations.⁸

3.2. China's Response: Counter-Tariffs and Measured Retaliation

China announced it would impose additional tariffs of up to 15% on some US goods and restrict exports to 15 US companies starting March 10, 2025. The retaliatory moves by China's Finance Ministry and Commerce Ministry came just as additional U.S. tariffs were set to take effect on Beijing's goods. China's additional tariffs mostly cover U.S. agricultural goods, including corn and soybeans, which will be subject to new duties of 15% and 10%, respectively, according to the Chinese Finance Ministry's website.⁹

Meanwhile, the companies affected by the export controls include Leidos and General Dynamics Land Systems, according to the Commerce Ministry. China's relationship with the U.S. will inevitably experience friction, but Beijing will not accept pressure or threats, Lou Qinjian, spokesman for the third session of the 14th National People's Congress, told reporters Tuesday morning. The congress will begin its annual meeting on Wednesday. The White House has confirmed that new 10 percent tariffs on Chinese goods will take effect Tuesday, bringing the total new tariffs imposed in just over a month to 20 percent. In a statement published earlier in the day, China's Commerce Ministry said Beijing "firmly opposes" additional U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods and will take countermeasures.

The tariffs would "damage" U.S.-China trade relations and Beijing urged Washington to withdraw them, the ministry said in Mandarin. Beijing had previously warned of retaliatory measures but had not detailed them as of Tuesday morning.¹⁰

After the first round of new U.S. tariffs in February, China's retaliatory measures included raising duties on certain U.S. energy imports and placing two U.S. companies on an unreliable entity list that could limit their ability to do business in the Asian country. As a result, the average effective U.S. tariff on Chinese goods is set to reach 33%, up from about 13% before U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January, according to estimates by Nomura's Chief China Economist Ting Lu.

China's state-backed Global Times reported Monday, citing a source, that Beijing is considering retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural products such as soybeans to China accounted for the largest share of U.S. goods exported to China at 1.2%, or \$22.3 billion, in 2023, according to an analysis by Allianz Research. Oil and gas

⁸Morisson, M. W. (2025). *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States*, Congressional Research Service.

⁹CNBC *International* accessed on March 4, 2025.

¹⁰Noonari, Majid Ali, and Abdul Latif Tunio. (2011). "China-ASEAN Relations: Opportunities and Challenges." *Asia Pacific*: p.71-82.

ranked second by share at 1%, or \$19.3 billion, the study said. Pharmaceuticals ranked third at 0.8%, or \$15.6 billion.¹¹

An additional 10 percent tariff on all Chinese imports into the United States went into effect Tuesday at 12 p.m. Eastern time. Trump has repeatedly warned Beijing that it is not doing enough to stop the flow of illegal drugs into the United States. Within minutes, China's Finance Ministry announced it would impose levies of 15 percent on American coal and liquefied natural gas, or LNG, and 10 percent on crude oil, farm equipment and some types of cars.

China also announced that it has launched an antitrust investigation into Alphabet Inc.'s Google, and added PVH Corp., the parent company of brands such as Calvin Klein, and American biotech firm Illumina, to its "unreliable entity list." China's Ministry of Commerce and Customs Administration also imposed export controls on some rare earth metals and other critical metals used in high-tech devices and the clean energy transition. China's new tariffs targeting American exports are scheduled to take effect on Feb. 10, giving the two countries time to try to reach a deal. Trump is scheduled to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping later this week, according to a White House spokesman.

On Monday, Trump suspended the threat of 25 percent tariffs on Mexico and Canada, agreeing to a 30-day pause in exchange for concessions on border enforcement and crime with the two neighbors. The United States accounted for 1.7 percent of China's total crude oil imports last year, about \$6 billion, making it a relatively small source. For LNG, however, more than 5 percent of China's imports came from the United States.¹²

In 2018, Trump began a two-year trade war with China, fueled by America's large trade surplus. The trade war involved retaliatory tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods, disrupting global supply chains and hurting the world economy. Trump has warned that he could raise further tariffs on China if Beijing does not stop the flow of fentanyl, a deadly opioid, into the United States.

"Hopefully China will stop sending us fentanyl, and if they don't, the tariffs will go much higher," Trump said Monday.

Beijing has called fentanyl an American problem and said it would challenge tariffs at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and take other retaliatory measures, but left the door open for talks.

China's Ambassador to the UN Fu Cong on Monday (3/2) said America's plan to impose new tariffs on his country violates World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

"Of course, we strongly oppose this unreasonable tariff increase, and we believe that it violates WTO rules. So that is why China filed a complaint with the WTO. We also realize that we may be forced to retaliate. I want to emphasize that there is

¹¹<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20250304132346-4-615487/china-balas-dendam-perang-dagang-trump-ketok-tarif-tambahan-15-ke-as>

¹²<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/balas-trump-china-berlakukan-tarif-tambahan-pada-barang-impor-amerika-7962196.html>

*no winner in a trade war. We hope that the US president will examine his own domestic problems and find a solution that is beneficial not only to himself but also to the whole world. Frankly, I don't think raising tariffs will be beneficial to the US itself," Fu explained.*¹³

President Donald Trump said over the weekend he would impose 25 percent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico, and 10 percent tariffs on imports from China. The threat of new tariffs is intended to stem the flow of fentanyl, a banned drug, into the U.S. Mexican and Chinese officials say the opioid crisis is an American problem. The policy has again sparked a trade war between the world's two largest economies, even as President Donald Trump has decided to suspend tariffs on Mexico and Canada.

Fu stressed that the reason for imposing the tariffs was "unwarranted," as "China is one of the countries with the strictest laws on fentanyl."¹⁴

The Commerce Ministry said Beijing would file a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO), arguing that the United States' "unilateral tariffs seriously violate WTO rules." The ministry added that the tariffs "not only do not help solve America's own problems, but also undermine normal economic and trade cooperation." "China hopes the United States will objectively and rationally view and handle its own problems such as fentanyl, instead of threatening other countries with tariffs at every opportunity," the ministry said.

China's Commerce Ministry was referring to fentanyl, an opioid used to relieve acute pain. However, in recent years, cases of abuse of the drug have increased in the US, leading to a spate of overdose deaths. The ministry said Beijing "urges the US to correct its wrong practices, find a middle ground with China, face its problems head on, have honest dialogue, strengthen cooperation and manage differences on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect". In a separate statement, China's Foreign Ministry said "no one wins in a trade war or a tariff war".¹⁵

3.3. The Impact on the Global Economy

China's retaliatory policies have triggered a shift in global trade flows. Multinational companies have begun moving operations from the US to regions with stable relations with China. Developing countries have become increasingly cautious about establishing economic partnerships with the US or China, for fear of becoming victims of a major conflict between the two economic giants. On the other hand, global markets are facing pressure from rising commodity prices, supply chain disruptions, and investment uncertainty.

¹³Fu cong, *Duta Besar China Untuk PBB*. Accessed on March 2, 2025.

¹⁴<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/kecam-pemberlakuan-tarif-as-dubes-china-di-pbb-ajukan-gugatan-ke-wto/7961984.html>

¹⁵<https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/china-tolak-tegas-tarif-impor-baru-oleh-amerika-bertekad-terapkan-balasan/7959869.html>

In 2025, the United States again escalated global trade tensions by implementing a new tariff policy against China. This tariff covers various strategic sectors such as electric vehicles, solar panels, semiconductors, rare earth metals, and certain consumer products. This step is a continuation of America's economic protectionism strategy aimed at stemming China's technological and industrial dominance. However, this policy not only impacts the two countries, but also creates a big wave in the global economic system. The impact is felt in various aspects, ranging from international supply chains, market fluctuations, declining global growth, to pressure on developing countries.¹⁶

a. Disruption to Global Supply Chains

One of the most significant impacts of these tariffs is the disruption of global supply chains. Over the past two decades, China has become the world's manufacturing hub. Many multinational companies rely on Chinese factories to produce goods at low cost and with high efficiency. When the United States imposes high tariffs on Chinese-made products, global production and distribution costs increase.

The technology industry is the sector that is most affected. Semiconductors and electronic components from China are subject to tariffs of up to 30%, increasing production costs and slowing supply. Companies in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Latin America that have long relied on Chinese inputs are starting to experience production delays and stock shortages. This is exacerbating post-pandemic instability and slowing the recovery of the global manufacturing sector.¹⁷

b. Global Inflation and Rising Commodity Prices

Tariffs imposed on consumer goods such as electronics, home appliances, and electric vehicles have contributed to rising prices of these goods in global markets. These price increases are felt not only by consumers in the United States, but also in countries that export or import components from the two countries. As a result, inflationary pressures that had previously begun to ease after the pandemic have increased again.¹⁸

Developing countries that are highly dependent on imports of finished products from China are also affected. Consumer prices are rising, people's purchasing power is declining, and there is pressure on socio-economic stability. On the other hand, producers of raw materials such as metals, energy, and agricultural products are also affected by uncertain demand and market fluctuations.

¹⁶<https://internasional.tvrinews.com/berita/thnxfos-perang-dagang-as-china-kembali-memanas-sejarah-balas-dendam-tarif-sejak-era-trump>.

¹⁷ Shih, G, (2019). *Central Asia's forbidding highlands, a quiet newcomer: Chinese troops*. New York Times. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20_story.html), accessed on May 11, 2021).

¹⁸ Vu, Truong-Minh. (2017). *"International Leadership as a Process: The case of China in Southeast Asia."* *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* Volume 40, No. 1: 1-21. (<https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201600109>, accessed on May 26, 2021).

c. Global Investment Decline and Market Uncertainty

Aggressive tariff policies have created uncertainty among global investors. Uncertainty over trade relations between the world's two largest economies has caused many investors to hold back expansion, divert investments, or even withdraw capital from emerging markets. Stock markets in various countries have experienced high volatility, especially in the technology and energy sectors. In addition, global market players are now more careful in determining production locations. Many multinational companies have begun to consider a supply diversification strategy, also known as the China +1 strategy, which is to look for alternative production outside China such as Vietnam, India, or Mexico. Although this strategy is beneficial in the long term, in the short term it causes supply uncertainty and increased relocation costs that burden corporate finances.¹⁹

d. Impact on Developing Countries

Developing countries are most vulnerable to the impact of the US-China tariff conflict. These countries, especially in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, are in the middle of the global supply chain. They supply raw materials to China and export finished products to the United States. When trade flows are disrupted, these countries lose markets and face pressure on their trade balances.

In addition, the price fluctuations of commodities such as metals, energy and agricultural products make the economies of developing countries increasingly unstable. Some countries that depend on agricultural exports, such as Brazil and Argentina, are also affected by China's retaliatory tariffs on US agricultural products, as global demand becomes uncertain.²⁰

e. Political and Diplomatic Implications

These trade tensions also have a significant political dimension. Diplomatic relations between the US and China have deteriorated, with confrontational rhetoric escalating in international forums. These tensions have spilled over into each other's allies, creating political tensions within economic blocs such as the G7, BRICS, and APEC. Several countries have been forced to choose a position or at least limit their relations with one party, which has had an impact on the direction of their respective foreign and economic policies. The tariff conflict has ultimately gone beyond the economic realm and become part of an ideological struggle between liberal capitalism and state capitalism.²¹

¹⁹Zhao, Suisheng. (2013). *"Chinese Foreign Policy as a Rising Power to find its Rightful Place."* PERCEPTIONS. Volume 18, No. 1: 101-128. (https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/805_90842.pdf, accessed 13 May 2021).

²⁰Donnan, S., & Yadoo, J. (2019). US-China Trade War Cost Tops \$40 Billion in Lost U.S. Exports - Bloomberg. Bloomberg.com.

²¹Roy, Denny. (2020). *"China Won't Achieve Regional Hegemony."* The Washington Quarterly Volume 43, No. 1: 101-117. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2020.1734301>).

4. Conclusion

The new tariff policy imposed by the United States on China in 2025 marks the next round of the trade war that has been going on since the late 2010s. Under the pretext of protecting domestic industries and facing threats to national security and technological dominance, the US government has imposed additional tariffs on a number of strategic products from China. This policy targets the electric vehicle sector, solar panels, semiconductors, and strategic metals - sectors that are directly related to technological competitiveness and the future of the global industry. This move by the United States is not only economic, but also full of geopolitical content. The policy shows a shift in the direction of US trade towards more aggressive and selective protectionism, with a specific target on China as a major competitor in the global economic order. In this context, China's response can be seen as a form of measured but strategic economic revenge. China, instead of retaliating directly and massively, chose careful retaliatory measures. China imposed retaliatory tariffs on politically sensitive US agricultural products, such as soybeans, beef, and other agricultural products. In addition, China has tightened its control over American technology companies in its territory, and accelerated its national import substitution program to reduce dependence on foreign technology. China's retaliation aims to exert political and economic pressure simultaneously, without worsening domestic conditions or accelerating open escalation. This revenge policy illustrates a new form of global economic competition that is no longer based solely on free market logic, but rather on defensive and offensive strategies within the framework of great power rivalry. The tariff conflict between the US and China in 2025 has a real impact on the global economy. Market uncertainty has increased, investment has been delayed, and global supply chains have been disrupted. Developing countries that depend on exports to both countries have also been affected by price and demand fluctuations. Thus, this conflict is not only a bilateral issue, but also a threat to international economic stability as a whole.

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