



The ICAS Bulletin

Institute for China America Studies

A Survey of Scholarship on U.S.-China Relations

April 23, 2025

What's Going On?

Escalating U.S.-China trade tensions shaken global supply chains



President Trump holds a Cabinet meeting - April 10, 2025 (Source: Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok via Flickr, public domain)

- China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned Global South nations against "unilateral bullying," criticizing U.S. trade tariffs without naming Trump, as Beijing intensified diplomatic efforts to rally opposition to Washington's protectionist measures.
- Trump's renewed tariffs threaten Southeast Asian exporters like Vietnam, which had benefited from earlier U.S. restrictions on China but now face potential levies themselves.
- The Trump administration is considering forming a high-level task force to address potential supply chain disruptions from U.S.-China tariffs, as key goods like medicines and semiconductors face pressure.
- On April 17, President Trump signaled a possible easing of U.S.-China tariff escalation, expressing reluctance to raise rates further amid market concerns, while admitting that a TikTok divestment deal may delay talks with Beijing.

Trade War stir up internal debate in the U.S.



On April 16, 2025, Chair Powell delivered remarks on the economic outlook at the Economic Club of Chicago. (Source: Federal Reserve via Flickr, public domain)

- Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer announced plans to force a Senate vote to overturn Trump-era tariffs, but acknowledged the greater challenge lies in the House, where Republican support remains firm.
- President Trump replaced acting IRS chief Gary Shapley amid a power struggle between Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Elon Musk, after Bessent objected to Shapley's appointment—reportedly pushed through by Musk without Treasury's approval.
- JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon warned against complacency amid praise for Trump's tariff tactics, urging caution and noting that no one has a "divine right to success," reflecting ongoing skepticism in the business community despite some conservative approval.
- President Trump attacked Fed Chair Powell for not cutting interest rates, and threatened to remove him

- The Trump administration announced escalating port fees on Chinese-built vessels, aiming to curb China's dominance in shipbuilding and revive U.S. maritime manufacturing; the phased fees—up to \$140 per net ton by 2028—face criticism from China and U.S. trade groups.

- China's Ministry of Commerce condemned the Trump administration's new port fees on Chinese vessels as discriminatory and protectionist, warning they undermine global supply chains and vowing retaliatory measures to defend Chinese interests and uphold WTO rules.

- The White House clarified that China faces up to 245% tariffs on select goods like EVs and syringes—reflecting existing levies rather than new measures—while most Chinese imports face lower, though historically high, tariff rates.

Associated News Sources:

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-pushes-anti-bullying-agenda-amid-tensions-with-us-2025-04-18/>,

Reuters, April 18

["Trump's tariffs leave China's neighbors with an impossible choice,"](#) BBC, April 18

["Trump administration may form task force to handle China tariff impact,"](#) CBS News, April 17

["Trump signals tit-for-tat China tariffs may be near end: TikTok deal on ice,"](#) Reuters, April 17

<https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/17/trump-administration-announces-fees-on-chinese-ships-docking-at-us-ports.html>,

CNBC, April 17

["How Did Trump's Team Get to a 245% Tariff Level for China? Is That New?,"](#) The Wall Street Journal, April 16

despite legal uncertainty. Previously, Fed Chair Jerome Powell issued his sharpest warning yet about Trump's tariffs, saying they risk triggering stagflation by simultaneously driving up inflation and unemployment.

Associated News Sources:

["Schumer says Democrats will force Senate floor vote on Trump tariffs,"](#) Times Union, April 21

["I.R.S. Head Is Ousted in Treasury Leader Bessent's Struggle With Musk,"](#) The New York Times, April 18

["JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon cautions Donald Trump again, warns U.S could lose credibility over tariffs and trade war,"](#) The Economics Times, April 18

["Trump amps up feud with Fed over rates, accuses Powell of 'playing politics',"](#) Reuters, April 17

Europe navigates between U.S. tariffs and China trade outreach



Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy signs the guest book in the Roosevelt Room, April 17, 2025, before a bilateral meeting with President Donald Trump. (Source: Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok via Flickr, public domain)

- On April 18, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke with President Trump to discuss trade and global issues, as the UK seeks a deal following Trump's imposition of 10–25% tariffs on British imports, including cars, steel, and aluminum.
- The U.S. lobbied hard to counter Beijing's pressure campaign, which offered investments and threatened retaliation ahead of the EU's vote on tariffs against Chinese EVs.
- China's ambassador to Spain urged the EU to strengthen ties with Beijing and resist U.S. "economic abuse," calling for the removal of European export controls and EV tariffs while promoting China-EU cooperation as a counterweight to Trump's unilateral trade agenda.
- Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and emphasized the need for mutually beneficial relations and balanced trade and investments.
- The EU and China agreed to begin talks on setting minimum prices for Chinese-made electric vehicles as an alternative to existing EU tariffs of up to 45.3%, with negotiations backed by Germany's auto industry and aimed at resolving trade tensions through enforceable price commitments.

Associated News Sources:

["UK PM Starmer discussed trade with Trump, Downing Street says," Reuters, April 18](#)
["EU draws lessons from China clashes as it faces off](#)

China sticks to free trade amid global uncertainty



Shanghai Bund Skyline Sunrise 2016 (Source: Royalty Free via Getty Images)

- On April 18, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang met with Shanghai's mayor following talks with China's vice-premier, reaffirming Nvidia's commitment to the Chinese market amid rising U.S. export controls, and highlighting Shanghai's importance as a key R&D hub and AI innovation center.
- Amid ongoing trade turmoil with the U.S., Chinese President Xi Jinping went on his 3-nation Southeast Asia tour from April 15 to 17 through Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia.
- President Xi began his tour in Vietnam, urging regional unity against "unilateral bullying" as Trump's tariffs disrupt global trade; Xi emphasized China's market openness and signed major cooperation deals with Hanoi.
- During his state visit to Malaysia, Xi Jinping positioned China as a stabilizing partner for Southeast Asia amid global economic shocks and U.S. tariffs, pledging deeper trade ties, promoting a China-ASEAN free trade pact, and signing cooperation deals with Malaysia on industrial development and exports.
- Xi Jinping concluded his Southeast Asia tour in Cambodia, reaffirming China as a "reliable partner" amid U.S. tariff pressure, signing 37 cooperation deals, and pledging continued support for Cambodia's development.

Associated News Sources:

["China vows to hit back at US' new 'discriminatory' port fees," South China Morning Posts, April 19](#)

[against US under Donald Trump,” South China Morning Post](#) April 17
[“China wants partnership with EU to counter US ‘abuse’ says envoy to Spain,” Reuters](#), April 16
[“Spanish Premier Sticks to China Pivot, Ignores US Warnings,” Bloomberg](#), April 11
[“EU, China will look into setting minimum prices on electric vehicles, EU says,” Reuters](#), April 10

[“Nvidia boss Jensen Huang meets Shanghai mayor in wake of new US export controls on chips,” South China Morning Posts](#), April 19
[“Xi says China will stand with Southeast Asian countries in face of economic shocks,” AP News](#), April 17
[“China’s leader Xi Jinping holds talks in Cambodia to wrap up his 3-nation Southeast Asia tour,” AP News](#), April 17
[“China urges Vietnam to resist ‘unilateral bullying’ as Xi tries to rally region in face of Trump tariffs,” CNN](#), April 15

Rising tensions in Asia as regional powers flex military, political, and strategic influence



Sailors rappel out of an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter onto the flight deck of the USS Nimitz in the Pacific Ocean on April 13, 2025.
 (Source: Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jaron Wills via DoD, public domain)

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged China and Indonesia to jointly oppose unilateralism and protectionism after the first “2+2” dialogue, emphasizing cooperation on economic integration and defending Global South interests amid rising U.S.-China trade tensions.
- On April 21, China’s navy claimed it expelled a Philippine warship from waters near the disputed Scarborough Shoal, asserting the vessel had “illegally intruded” just hours before U.S.-Philippine joint military drills began.
- China unveiled footage of its J-36 sixth-generation fighter, showcasing a stealthy tri-engine design aimed at signaling rapid military advancement and strategic deterrence despite ongoing technical challenges.
- On April 19, two Japanese warships made a port call at Cambodia’s China-renovated Ream Naval Base,

- In Other News -



A photo of the United States Treasury Building.
 (Source: Rchuon24, Wikicommons, CC3.0)

[“The showdown between Harvard and the White House – day by day | Harvard University,” The Guardian](#), April 19
[“Newsom sues DOGE over AmeriCorps cuts, saying it ‘gives the middle finger to volunteers,’” Politico](#), April 18
[“Supreme Court temporarily pauses deportations under Alien Enemies Act,” CNN Politics](#), April 18
[“Trump Advisers Took Advantage of Navarro’s Absence to Push for Tariff Pause,” The Wall Street Journal](#), April 18
[“Peter Navarro denies tensions with Elon Musk after Musk calls him a ‘moron,’” NBC News](#), April 13

marking the first such visit amid U.S. concerns that the facility could serve as a strategic hub for China near the contested South China Sea.

Associated News Sources:

[“China calls on Indonesia to jointly oppose protectionism as US trade war deepens,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, April 21

[“China, Philippines in Scarborough Shoal naval encounter ahead of US joint drills,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, April 21

[“China releases footage of 6th-generation J-36 fighter. What clues does it offer?,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, April 19

[“Cambodia’s renovated naval base welcomes 2 Japanese warships despite US concerns,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, April 19

What Are We Reading? ↓

- *The South China Morning Post*: [“My Take | Magic of Hong Kong’s coastal areas must not be lost in the drive for tourist dollars”](#) by Cliff Buddle (April 19)
- *The South China Morning Post*: [“Opinion | A world on edge is headed for a geopolitical reckoning – in May”](#) by Hao Nan (April 19)
- *The New York Times*: [“Trump’s Trade War With China Puts Bromance With Xi Beyond Reach”](#) by Edward Wong (April 18)
- *The Washington Post*: [“Opinion | From Harvard to China to Ukraine, Trump is playing a dangerous game”](#) by Kathleen Parker (April 18)
- *The Washington Post*: [“America’s 250-year-old promises, not always kept”](#) by Drew Goins (April 18)
- *The Washington Post*: [“Trump revives a 1930s mistake that hurt more than it helped”](#) by Fareed Zakaria (April 18)
- *Foreign Affairs*: [“How to Survive a Constitutional Crisis”](#) by Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar (April 18)
- *Foreign Affairs*: [“Why America Shouldn’t Underestimate Chinese Power”](#) by Kurt Campbell and Rush Doshi (April 17)
- *The Wall Street Journal*: [“Now Trump Wants a Shipping Tax”](#) by the Editorial Board (April 17)
- *The Wall Street Journal*: [“Trump Misunderstands the ‘China Shock’”](#) by William A. Galston (April 17)

What’s Happening Around Town? ↓

- Past Events -

- [Finding a way out of the debt morass: A conversation featuring the United Nations Expert Group on Debt](#) April 23 hosted by The Brookings Institution
- [2025 Global Development Forum](#) April 23 hosted by CSIS
- [2025 Carnegie Global Dialogue: China and Southeast Asia](#) April 23 hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- [Phase 2: The Art of the Deal with China](#) April 22 hosted by Asia Society
- [Press Briefing: Analyzing the Escalating U.S.-China Trade Conflict and Rare Earth Export Restrictions](#) April 15 hosted by CSIS
- [Global responses to an American reset of international trade](#) April 14 hosted by The Brookings Institution
- [2025 Global Technology Summit](#) April 10 hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

- Upcoming Events -

- [Through South Asia's Eyes: Trump's 100-Day Impact](#) May 22 hosted by Asia Society
- [2025 Global Security Forum. Strength Through the Storm: Industry, Innovation, and the Future of U.S. Military Power](#) May 13 hosted by CSIS
- [Conversation with Former USTRs](#) May 12 hosted by CSIS
- [Rebuilding America's Maritime Industrial Base with Senators Mark Kelly and Todd Young](#) April 30 hosted by Hudson Institute
- [Economic security at a pivotal moment: What's next for the United States and Japan?](#) April 30 hosted by The Brookings Institution
- [New Centers of Gravity: How China and India Are Vying for Influence in the European Union](#) April 29 hosted by Asia Society
- [Geo-Economics in Transition: Adapting to Global Economic Fragmentation in Central and Eastern Europe](#) April 29 hosted by GMF
- [Domestic Politics, the US-Japan Alliance, and Tokyo's Global Role: Bipartisan Views from the Diet](#) hosted by HUDson Institute

What ICAS Is Up To

Commentary

The Nordic Reaction to America's Arctic Posture

*By Nong Hong
April 18, 2025*



Recently, the Nordic countries—Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland—have faced a series of challenges stemming from U.S. policies under President Donald Trump. These include attempts to acquire Greenland, broad tariff impositions, and a perceived wavering of U.S. commitment to NATO. This commentary examines how these Nordic nations have responded to these pressures, highlighting the implications for regional dynamics and transatlantic relations.

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---ICAS In the News---



On Monday April 21, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was [quoted](#) by China Daily on the global impact and consequences of the US tariffs.

- "The US wants a weaker dollar, but at the same time, they want to keep the dollar as the king of the currency jungle."
- "China's response has been firm, maintaining a measured approach has become difficult because the US keeps "ratcheting up" the stakes, resulting in a possible collapse in bilateral trade."

On Friday April 18, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was [quoted](#) by SCMP on China's interaction with Europe and its Asian neighbors during the Trump trade war.

- "Trump's trade war against all and sundry, including allies and partners, is an obvious gift to China. It is a ripe plum that has dropped into China's lap."
- "China's friends, foes and some of those in between are showing a more amenable attitude in their geopolitical approaches towards Beijing."

On Friday, April 18, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was [interviewed](#) by CGTN America on President Xi Jinping's recent visit to Cambodia.

- "I think what the two sides want to do is deepen those wide frameworks - from politics and security, to economics, trade, agriculture, manufacturing and of course culture and people-to-people ties - and integration between the two parties."

On Tuesday, April 15, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was [interviewed](#) by CGTN on the recent visit of President Xi Jinping's to Vietnam and bilateral negotiations..

- "I think it is important now for regional integration, basically Europe and Asia becoming more integrated from an economic standpoint. China and Vietnam are splendid example of that integration."