

During the [first](#) Trump administration, the February 14, 2020 implementation of the so-called US-China [phase one](#) agreement established new US tariffs on imports from China. US tariffs on Chinese exports in February 2020 averaged 19.3 percent, more than six times higher than in January 2018. Those tariffs covered 66.6 percent of US imports from China, or roughly \$335 billion of trade (measured in terms of 2017 import levels).

Average Chinese tariffs on US exports starting in February 2020 were also at elevated levels of 21 percent, up from 8.0 percent prior to the trade war. China's retaliatory tariffs at the time covered 58.3 percent of imports from the United States, worth roughly \$90 billion (measured in terms of 2017 import levels). On February 17, 2020, the Chinese government [announced](#) an exclusion process whereby Chinese companies could apply for a temporary exemption from the retaliatory tariffs. Nevertheless, China did not live up to the commitment of purchasing an additional [\\$200 billion](#) of US goods and services over 2020 and 2021, as established by the legal [agreement](#) signed on January 15, 2020.

Overall, the US-China trade war has proceeded in six stages between 2018 and today. The first six months of 2018 featured a moderate increase in tariffs.

Second, the months of July through September 2018 resulted in a sharp tariff increase on both sides: US average tariffs rose from 3.8 percent to 12.0 percent, and China's average tariffs increased from 7.2 percent to 18.3 percent.

In stage three, there was an 8-month period (September 25, 2018, through June 2019) of little change in tariffs.

From June to September 2019, another set of tariff increases kicked in.

In stage five, and despite the phase one agreement, tariffs between the two countries remained elevated but mostly stable until February 2025.

In the current stage six, the US has suddenly increased tariffs again by significant amounts and China has increased its average tariff by even more.

Also noteworthy is that China's average tariffs on imports from the rest of the world declined from 8.0 percent in early 2018 to 6.5 percent by early 2022, where they mostly remain today. Again, the United States increased its average tariffs on imports from the rest of the world from 2.2 percent in January 2018 to 10.3 percent today.

**Note:** This chart was [updated](#) from the original data available in Chad P. Bown, 2021, *The US-China Trade War and Phase One Agreement* (also published in the *Journal of Policy Modeling* 43, no. 4: 805-843). The chart does not include data on antidumping or countervailing duties. For information on those, as well as the temporary product exclusions that each side granted to the tariffs in 2018–20, see the paper. The chart has also been updated to fix an error in the original paper regarding the size of China's tariff change in January 2021.