

NEWS ANALYSIS

Favoring Tough Guy Act
For Allies and Foes Alike

Trump’s Rejecting Soft Power Has Risks

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — Soft power is out. Hard power is in. Since returning to the White House, President Trump has demonstrated that he prefers to bludgeon, not bargain, his way to foreign policy goals.

With counterparts from Asia, the Middle East and North and South America, Mr. Trump has shown a willingness to use American power in a way that most of his modern predecessors have not. His favorite blunt instrument is not military force but economic coercion, like the tariffs he ordered on Saturday on goods from Canada, Mexico and China.

The tariffs, set to take effect Tuesday, amount to a declaration of economic war against America’s three largest trading partners, which have threatened to retaliate in a tit for tat that could escalate beyond any such conflict in generations. Mr. Trump’s decision to follow through on his tariff threat raises the stakes in his hard-edged America First approach to the rest of the world, with potentially profound consequences.

If he makes the targeted countries back down quickly in response to his demand to do more to stop drug trafficking, Mr. Trump will take it as a validation of his strategy. If not, and the tariffs take force and remain in place for a prolonged period, American consumers could pay a price through higher costs on

many goods.

Even as he opts for strong-arm tactics, Mr. Trump is dispensing with other traditional tools of American foreign policy. He has suspended much of the international aid provided by the United States and may try to dismantle the U.S. Agency for International Development, whose website went offline on Saturday. Such aid, while a tiny fraction of the overall federal budget, has for generations been seen as a way to build good will and influence around the world.

“President Trump’s confrontational style has resulted in foreign policy gains and can result in more — provided he is careful about the targets of his pressure and the specific implied or actual threats,” said Evelyn N. Farkas, executive director of the McCain Institute at Arizona State University and a former Pentagon official.

The objective, she said, “should be to pressure China and Russia,” not “bullying our allies and partners” or seeking to claim the territory of other countries.

“The cost of taking any punitive actions against our allies and partners,” she added, “will likely be shared by U.S. citizens and interests, and would thereby erode U.S. power and influence.”

A brief flare-up with Colombia a week ago demonstrated just how quickly Mr. Trump is ready to climb the escalatory ladder.

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MEXICO Heading to an inspection facility in San Diego. Mexican goods will face a 25 percent tariff. ARIANA DREHSLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



CHINA Yangshan Port in Shanghai. Beijing has promised “countermeasures” to protect its interests. THE NEW YORK TIMES



CANADA The Ambassador Bridge between Ontario and Detroit. Canada also faces a 25 percent fee. BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TRUMP’S TARIFFS
SAID TO IMPERIL
GLOBAL TRADING

TILTS IN CHINA’S FAVOR

Speed and Scope Seen as
Crippling Industries
and Raising Costs

By ALAN RAPPEPORT

WASHINGTON — President Trump’s move this weekend to slap sweeping tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China is threatening to fracture the global trading system and a world economic order that once revolved around a U.S. economy that prized open investment and free markets.

The speed and scope of the import duties that Mr. Trump unveiled in executive orders on Saturday prompted widespread criticism from many lawmakers, economists and business groups, who assailed the actions as economic malpractice. They warned that the tariffs, which were levied in response to Mr. Trump’s concerns about fentanyl smuggling and illegal immigration, could inflame inflation, cripple American industries and make China an even more powerful global trade hub.

Mr. Trump on Sunday defended the tariffs while acknowledging that there could be some negative consequences.

“WILL THERE BE SOME PAIN? YES, MAYBE (AND MAYBE NOT!),” he wrote on social media.

The executive orders mean that on Tuesday at 12:01 a.m., all goods imported from Canada and Mexico will be subject to a 25 percent tariff, except Canadian energy products, which will face a 10 percent tariff. All Chinese goods will also face a 10 percent tariff.

Canada and Mexico have vowed to retaliate swiftly with tariffs of their own, and China said it would pursue unspecified “countermeasures” to safeguard its interests.

Speaking on NewsNation on Sunday, Mr. Trump’s senior trade adviser, Peter Navarro, said it was unlikely that the tariffs would be stopped at the last minute.

“The magnitude of this particular problem is huge,” Mr. Navarro said, pointing to drugs entering the United States and killing Americans. “It’s time to stop the carnage.”

Although Mr. Trump’s tariffs were clearly telegraphed for months, they were broader than many analysts expected. The president’s top economic aides, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, have defended the use of tariffs, but have suggested that they would be used as a tool for negotiations or that they should be phased in gradually to allow businesses time to adjust.

“The tariff gun will always be loaded and on the table but rarely discharged,” Mr. Bessent wrote in

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CHINA’S DILEMMA Beijing is carefully weighing its response to the tariffs. News Analysis. PAGE B1



ALLISON ROBERT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Ken Martin leads the Democratic National Committee.

For Democrats,
Unity Is Absent
Against Trump

By LISA LERER
and REID J. EPSTEIN

OXON HILL, Md. — As Democrats face the reality of President Trump’s second term, they share a fundamental belief: This moment calls for an inspirational message from their party.

They just cannot decide what, exactly, that should be.

In private meetings and at public events, elected Democrats appear leaderless, rudderless and divided. They disagree over how often and how stridently to oppose Mr. Trump. They have no shared understanding of why they lost the election, never mind how they can win in the future.

And in a first step toward elevating new leaders, an election last weekend for chair of the Democratic National Committee, the party chose a candidate, Ken Martin of Minnesota, who said he planned to conduct a post-election review largely focused on tactics and messaging. Mr. Martin said he had not determined the parameters of the review, other than that he was not interested in discussing whether former President Joseph R. Biden Jr. should

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Europe Weighs
How to Bolster
Military Might

By JEANNA SMIALEK
and STEVEN ERLANGER

BRUSSELS — Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago convinced Europe’s leaders that they needed to spend more money on defense. On Monday, leaders from across the European Union and Britain will meet in Brussels to debate a vexing question: how to pay for it.

It is a concern made more acute by President Trump’s return to the White House.

The United States is the largest military funder of Ukraine’s war effort, but Mr. Trump has suggested he will rapidly withdraw U.S. financial and military support and leave it to the Europeans. He has also insisted that NATO nations ramp up defense outlays to 5 percent of their annual economic output, a drastic increase from the 3 percent or 3.5 percent NATO plans to make its goal at its next summit meeting this summer.

The United States itself spends only about 3.4 percent of gross domestic product on defense.

With the war, the European Union, which was founded on free trade and termed itself a “peace project,” has become more committed to deterrence and defense. It is now scrambling to expand its defense industries and make spending more efficient and collaborative. Prime Minister Keir Starmer of Britain will attend Monday’s gathering, the first time since Britain left the European Union that a British leader has met with the 27 leaders of the bloc in Brussels.

Part of the debate will be whether the European Union will be able to raise more money to pay for defense through common debt, as it did to fight Covid.

But the issue is thorny: Such joint fund-raising might impede

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A NASA Diversity Goal Trump Once Accepted Is Now in Danger

By KENNETH CHANG

Since 1978, every new group of NASA astronauts has included women and usually reflected a multiplicity of races and ethnicities.

That is not simply by chance. NASA’s process for selecting its astronauts is not entirely gender- and race-blind. With so many outstanding applicants, choosing a diversified, highly qualified group of candidates has been achievable, said Duane Ross, who

worked as manager of NASA’s astronaut selection office from 1976 until he retired in 2014.

“You didn’t lose sight of wanting your astronaut corps to be reflective of society,” he said.

Over most of its history, NASA has risen above partisan bickering, with broad support in Congress from Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals. But the makeup of its most visible employees — its astronauts — could now collide with President Trump’s crusade against pro-

D.E.I. Ban Setting Up
Clash With Agency

grams that promote diversity, equity and inclusion — or D.E.I.

For NASA to consider race and gender at all in the choosing of astronauts appears to run counter to an executive order that Mr. Trump signed on Jan. 22. That order declares that hiring for federal jobs will “not under any circumstances

consider D.E.I.-related factors, goals, policies, mandates, or requirements.”

On the same day, echoing language in a template used by agency heads across the federal government, Janet Petro, the current acting administrator, told NASA employees that D.E.I. programs “divided Americans by race, wasted taxpayer dollars, and resulted in shameful discrimination.”

NASA’s astronauts have served

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First, Lose the Palm Trees
Around the world, other communities are experimenting with ideas that Los Angeles could borrow as it rebuilds from disastrous wildfires. PAGE A12

Amnesty for Venezuelans Ends
The revocation signals that President Trump will dismantle a program that aims to protect migrants from dangerous countries. PAGE A20

Politics Versus Independence
If the interim U.S. attorney drops the prosecution of Mayor Eric Adams, the decision could gut the reputation of New York’s Southern District. PAGE A16

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As the country wrangles a decades-long saga of who can fish, and when, threats are heating up the conflict. PAGE A4

Divinity and Politics Converge
The presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India and his allies is felt by pilgrims at a Hindu festival. PAGE A10



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Ex-Baseball Commissioner
Fay Vincent presided in a period of union strife, steroid use and the banning of Pete Rose. He was 86. PAGE B5

Artist With Indigenous Focus
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith was best known for works evoking Native American stereotypes. She was 85. PAGE B6

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A Blockbuster N.B.A. Trade
Luka Doncic was acquired by the Los Angeles Lakers in a deal that sent Anthony Davis to Dallas. PAGE D2

Bidding to Keep Their Slopes
The skiing community devoted to Mount Bachelor in Oregon wants to outbid corporations for it. PAGES D4-5



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Connection Is the Key
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