US-China trade war

Source: <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-us-china-trade-war-a-timeline/>

Total US tariffs applied exclusively to Chinese goods: US$250 billion

Total Chinese tariffs applied exclusively to US goods: US$110 billion

**Day 313: May 13, 2019** – China announces tariff hikes on US products

China announces that it will increase tariffs on US$60 billion worth of US goods from June 1, 2019, in response to the tariff increases imposed by the US on May 10.

The tariffs will apply to products originally released in Announcement 6, which amends the tariffs announced last September.

Products affected include beef, lamb, pork, vegetables, juice, cooking oil, tea, coffee, refrigerators, and furniture, among many others.

The specific changes are as follows:

Products in list 1 will be subject to a tariff of 25 percent, up from 10 percent;

Products in list 2 will be subject to a tariff of 20 percent, up from 10 percent;

Products in list 3 will be subject to a tariff of 10 percent, up from five percent; and

Products in list 4 will still be subject to a 5 percent tariff.

Alongside tariff increases, the State Council Customs Tariff Committee have also launched a tariff exemption system for certain eligible products. (See full Chinese announcement here and unofficial English version here).

The USTR also announces that they will hold a public hearing on June 17, 2019 on the possibility of imposing 25 percent tariffs on a further US$300 billion worth of Chinese imports, including cellphones and laptops.

**Day 310: May 10, 2019** – US increases tariff from 10 percent to 25 percent

US increases tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (List 3) from 10 percent to 25 percent, as the US and China fail to reach a deal following the end of the first day of the eleventh round of high-level trade talks.

The tariff increase will be effective from May 10, 2019 at 12:01 am (EST), with goods leaving from China to the US before midnight still taxed at the previous 10 percent rate. (See full notice here).

In response, China’s Ministry of Commerce releases a statement announcing that it “deeply regrets” the tariffs and that “necessary countermeasures” will be taken.

**Day 305: May 5, 2019** – Trump threatens to raise tariffs on China

Trump says that the US will increase tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese products from 10 percent to 25 percent, effective Friday, May 10. The tariffs would apply to the products included on List 3, which have been subject to 10 percent tariffs since September 24, 2018. The tariffs on List 3 were initially scheduled to increase to 25 percent on January 1, 2019, until the US and China agreed to delay the increase until March 1, 2019 and then later agreed to delay them indefinitely.

Trump also says that he would come up with new tariffs of 25 percent on an additional US$325 billion worth of Chinese goods, which would cover essentially all remaining Chinese products. Trump says that the tariff increase is being done because the Chinese side is attempting to “renegotiate” the trade deal and is backsliding on commitments.

**Day 299-300: April 30-May 1, 2019** – US and China hold trade talks in Beijing

US and Chinese negotiators continue trade talks in Beijing on Tuesday, April 30 and Wednesday, May 1. Mnuchin calls the talks “productive” and confirms that the two sides will continue negotiations in Washington the next week.

Day 279: April 10, 2019 – US and China agree to establish trade deal enforcement offices

US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin says that the US and China have agreed to establish “enforcement offices” to monitor the enforcement of the trade deal, which has yet to be finalized. According to media reports, other issues relating to enforcement have yet to be agreed upon, such as whether the US will have the right to unilaterally re-implement tariffs if China is deemed to have reneged on its commitments.

**Day 272-274: April 3-5, 2019** – US and China hold trade talks in Washington

US and Chinese negotiators continue trade talks in Washington from Wednesday, April 3 to Friday, April 5, a week after holding negotiations in Beijing. On Thursday, April 4, Trump meets with Liu He, and says that the two sides will know “over the next four weeks” whether they can strike a deal. US and Chinese negotiators agree to continue talks the following week.

**Day 270: April 1, 2019** – China bans all types of fentanyl

China announces that it will ban all variants of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, effective May 1, 2019, in what is considered a concession to the US amid trade talks. China previously banned some strains of fentanyl, but only banned other strains on a case-by-case basis rather than as a class of drug. Because of the opioid crisis in the US, China’s treatment of fentanyl production and distribution had been a source of tension in bilateral relations.

**Day 269: March 31, 2019** – China extends the suspension of additional tariffs on US autos and auto parts

China extends the suspension of additional tariffs on US autos and auto parts, which were set to go back into force on April 1, 2019. China previously placed retaliatory tariffs of 25 percent on such products in reaction to US tariffs, but suspended them in December 2018, effective January 1 to April 1, 2019. The announcement did not state when the suspension would expire. US autos are still subject to China’s standard tariff rate of 15 percent.

**Day 266-267: March 28-29, 2019** – US and China hold trade talks in Beijing after one month break

US and Chinese negotiators resume trade talks in Beijing on Thursday, March 28 and Friday, March 29 after not meeting face-to-face for nearly one month. The month-long break was partly due to the Two Sessions meetings held in early March, which were China’s biggest political meetings of the year. Officials call the trade talks constructive, with an enforcement mechanism to monitor China’s commitment to trade concessions reportedly a sticking point.

**Day 231-234: February 21-24, 2019** – US and China hold trade talks in Washington; Trump extends tariff deadline

On Thursday, February 21, US and Chinese negotiators resume trade talks in Washington. The day after, on Friday, February 22, Trump meets with Liu He in front of the media, expressing optimism about a trade deal.

On Sunday, February 24, Trump announces that he will extend the March 1 trade deal truce deadline, citing progress in trade talks. Trump does not give a concrete date for a new deadline, but expresses hope that Xi will visit Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida in March to finalize a trade deal.

**Day 221-225: February 11-15, 2019** – US and China hold trade talks in Beijing

The US and China hold trade talks in Beijing. On Friday, February 15, Xi meets with the top negotiators from the US, in what is widely interpreted as a goodwill gesture. At the end of negotiations, the US and China continue to have differences, but agree to keep talking in Washington the following week.

**Day 217: February 7, 2019** – Trump says he will not meet with Xi before trade deal deadline

Trump says that he will not meet with Xi in-person before the tariff ceasefire expires on March 1, 2019. Previously, on January 31, Trump said that he would meet with Xi in-person in February.

**Day 209-210: January 30-31, 2019** – US and China hold 2-day trade talks in Washington D.C.

The US and China hold in-person talks in Washington D.C., with Liu He leading China’s trade delegation. During the negotiations, China offers to buy five million tons of US soybeans. Trump announces that he will meet with Xi in-person in February.

**Day 201: January 22, 2019** – US cancels preparatory talks with China

The US White House reportedly cancel a trade planning meeting with two Chinese vice ministers ahead of trade talks to be held in Washington D.C. US officials cited disagreements over the enforcement of IP rules as the reason for the cancellation.

**Day 186-188: January 7-9, 2019** – US and China engage in 3-day trade talks in Beijing

On January 7, official delegations from US and China began trade talks, which were held in Beijing – the first face-to-face meeting since agreeing to a 90-day truce, which ends March 1.

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Originally scheduled to take place over two days, the discussions extended a day further after many issues remained unresolved. China’s top economic adviser Liu He also made a surprise appearance at the talks, which were intended to be at a vice-ministerial level only.

The discussions were divided into two areas – ‘trade issues’, which included trade imbalances in certain sectors and ‘structural issues’, such as forced technology transfers, intellectual property protection, and non-tariff barriers.

After the talks, China’s Commerce Ministry issued a statement that the talks were “extensive and established a foundation for the resolution of each other’s concerns.”

The USTR issued a statement announcing China’s pledge to purchase a “substantial amount of agricultural, energy, manufactured goods, and other products and services from the US”, but noted that several outstanding issues remain. The official statement can be found here.

Both sides have agreed to continue to keep in close contact.

**Day 162: December 14, 2018 –** China to temporarily lower tariffs on US autos; resumes buying US soybean exports

China’s Ministry of Finance announces that it will temporarily remove additional 25 percent tariffs on US autos and five percent tariffs on certain US auto parts for three months, beginning on January 1, 2019.

During this period, US auto imports will be subject to China’s standard 15 percent tariff rate on foreign autos.

The suspension of these tariffs will affect 144 auto products as well as 67 auto-parts and marks the first concrete concession since the 90-day trade war truce made at the G20 Buenos Aires Leaders’ Summit. The official announcement can be found here.

China also resumes its purchase of US-soybeans, with reports showing that a large purchase of 1.5 million tons of beans was made.

In July 2018, China stopped purchasing US-produced soybeans in retaliation to US-tariffs on Chinese imports, marking the beginnings of the trade war as we know it.

**Day 150: December 2, 2018** – US and China agree to temporary truce

The US and China agree to a temporary truce to de-escalate trade tensions, following a working dinner at the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires on December 1, 2018. According to the agreement, both the US and China will refrain from increasing tariffs or imposing new tariffs for 90 days (until March 1, 2019), as the two sides work towards a larger trade deal.

More specifically, the US will refrain from increasing the tariffs described in List 3 that were slated to increase from 10 percent to 25 percent on January 1, 2019, and will not impose previously threatened tariffs on an additional US$267 worth of Chinese goods. For its part, China will purchase more US products – especially agricultural and energy products – and will crack down on the production and distribution of Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid produced primarily in China.

The official US statement can be found here.

The official Chinese statement can be found here.

**Day 137: November 19, 2018** – US releases list of proposed export controls on emerging technologies

The US Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) publishes proposed export control rules on emerging technologies for public comment. According to the proposed rules, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and quantum computing could be subject to export controls because they are dual-use technologies that could be used for military purposes. The rules do not specify China, but are widely considered by observers to be related to US efforts to prevent China from acquiring sensitive technologies.

**Day 127: November 9, 2018** – US and China resume trade talks

The US and China reportedly resume trade talks, via a phone call between US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He. According to the report, the two sides discussed a framework for a trade deal, or at least a “ceasefire” to reduce tensions.

**Day 117: October 30, 2018** – US reportedly prepared to announce tariffs on remaining Chinese products

The US is reportedly prepared to announce tariffs on all remaining Chinese products by early December if talks between Trump and Xi at the G20 in Argentina are not successful. Based off trade figures from 2017, that would mean new tariffs on about US$257 worth of Chinese goods. If announced in early December, the tariffs would likely take effect in February 2019.

**Day 112: October 25, 2018** – US and China officials resume contact

US and China working-level officials reportedly resume contact after weeks of silence. The officials are reportedly preparing for Trump and Xi to meet on the sidelines of November’s G20 meetings in Argentina.

**Day 81: September 24, 2018** – US and China implement third round of tariffs

US: The US implements tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (List 3), bringing the total amount to US$250 billion. The tariffs carry an initial rate of 10 percent, and will be increased to 25 percent by January 1, 2019. The full and finalized List 3 can be found here.

CN: China responds to US tariffs by implementing tariffs on US$60 billion worth of US goods (List 3). List 3, originally published on August 3, can be found here, but with updated tariff rates of either five percent or 10 percent, as announced here.

China also released a White Paper, laying out the government’s official position on the US-China trade relationship. The White Paper can be accessed here.

**Day 79: September 22, 2018** – China cancels trade talks with US

China cancels trade talks planned with the US ahead of the impending implementation of US tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (List 3).

**Day 75: September 18, 2018** – China announces retaliation for US tariffs

China announces that it will implement tariffs on US$60 billion worth of US goods (List 3) after the latest round of tariffs from the US (worth US$200 billion) go into effect on September 24.

**Day 74: September 17, 2018** – US finalizes tariffs on US$200 billion of Chinese goods

The USTR announces the finalized list of tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (List 3). The US says that the tariffs will go into effect on September 24 at an initial rate of 10 percent, to be increased to 25 percent by January 1, 2019. The full and finalized List 3 can be found here.

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**Day 69: September 12, 2018** – US invites China to re-open negotiations

The White House’s top economic advisor, Larry Kudlow, says that the US has invited China to restart trade negotiations before tariffs on US$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (List 3) go into effect.

**Day 64: September 7, 2018** – Trump threatens new tariffs

After the public comment period for List 3 of US tariffs on Chinese products ended on September 6, 2018, Trump threatens to impose tariffs on US$267 billion more. That would bring the total amount of tariffs threatened or imposed by the US on China to US$517 billion, accounting for essentially all Chinese exports to the US. In 2017, the US imported US$505 billion worth of products from China.

**Day 49: August 23, 2018** – US and China implement second round of tariffs, China files second WTO complaint

US: US implements a 25 percent tariff on 279 goods originating from China (worth US$16 billion). Goods targeted include: semiconductors, chemicals, plastics, motorbikes and electric scooters. The full and finalized List 2 can be found here.

CN: China implements retaliatory 25 percent tariffs on 333 goods originating from the US (worth US$16 billion), including commodities such as: coal, copper scrap, fuel, buses and medical equipment. The full and finalized List 2 can be found here.

China also files a new WTO complaint against the United States’ Section 301 tariffs on Chinese goods issued on August 23 under List 2 (25 percent tariffs on US$16 billion).

**Day 48-49: August 22-23, 2018** – US-China dialogue

US and Chinese mid-level representatives meet for the first time since early in the trade war. US Treasury Under Secretary David Malpass and Chinese Commerce Vice Minister Wang Shouwen met in Washington DC to discuss ways to resolve the deepening trade conflict and escalating tariffs. Discussions end with no major breakthroughs.

**Day 40 : August 14, 2018** – China files WTO claim against US

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce announces that a formal case has been lodged at the WTO against the US for its tariffs on solar panels, alleging that US tariffs have damaged China’s trade interests.

**Day 33: August 7, 2018** – Second round of tariffs finalized and released

US: US releases a revised version of tariffs on a final list of US$16 billion worth of imports from China (List 2). Set to take effect August 23, List 2 announces that the US$16 billion of imports will now be subject to a 25 percent tariff rather than previously announced 10 percent.

Five of the 284 items in the original list published on June 15 were removed, these being: alginic acid, splitting machines, containers, floating docks, and microtomes (collectively worth US$400 million in 2017).

CN: China’s Ministry of Commerce announces a reciprocal 25 percent additional tariff on US$16 billion of US exports to China, effective August 23, 2018. The tentative List 2 ca be found here.

**Day 29: August 3, 2018** – China announces second round of tariffs on US products

In response to potential US tariffs on US$200 billion worth of products announced on August 1, 2018 (List 3), China’s Ministry of Commerce proposes a range of additional tariffs on 5,207 products originating from the US (worth US$60 billion), including the following:

25 percent on 2,493 products (agricultural, products, foods, textiles and products, chemicals, metal products, machinery);

20 percent on 1,078 products (foods, paperboard, chemicals works of art);

10 percent on 974 products (agricultural products, chemicals, glassware); and

5 percent on 662 products (chemicals, machinery, medical equipment).

The tentative List 3 can be found here.

**Day 28: August 2, 2018** – US tariffs revisions (US$200 billion)

The USTR, at the direction of Trump, considers a 25 percent tariff rather than a 10 percent one on List 3, which was originally announced on July 10, 2018. The list targets approximately US$200 billion worth of goods and includes categories such as: consumer products, chemical and construction materials, textiles, tools, food and agricultural products, commercial electronic equipment and vehicle/automotive parts.

The US Department of Commerce also adds 44 Chinese entities to its export control list that pose a “significant risk” to US national security.

**Day 5: July 10, 2018** – US releases second tariff list

**Day 1: July 6, 2018** – US implements first China-specific tariffs

June 16, 2018: China revises its initial tariff list (25 percent on 106 products) to now include a 25 percent tariff on 545 products (valued at US$34 billion). This tariff will take effect July 6, 2018. China also proposes a second round of 25 percent tariffs on a further 114 products (valued at US$16 billion).

June 15, 2018: Initial list of products reduced and finalized. List 1 now implements a 25 percent tariff on a reduced 818 products (from 1,334) and is set to take effect on July 6, 2018. List 2 of 284 new products is also announced and under consideration.

June 7, 2018: US and ZTE agree to deal that will allow ZTE to resume business.

June 4-5, 2018: Two days of trade talks between US and China held in Beijing.

May 29, 2018: US reinstates tariff plans after brief truce.

May 20, 2018: US and China agree to put the trade war on hold after China reportedly agrees to buy more US goods.

May 18, 2018: China’s Commerce Ministry announces that it will stop tariffs on US sorghum at negotiations.

May 13, 2018: Trump promises to help ZTE in a tweet.

May 3-7, 2018: US-China engage in trade talks in Beijing, where the US demands that China reduce the trade gap by US$200 billion within two years. Talks end with no resolution.

April 17, 2018: China announces antidumping duties of 178.6 percent on imports of sorghum from the US.

April 16, 2018: US Department of Commerce concludes that Chinese telecom company ZTE violated US sanctions. US companies are banned from doing business with ZTE for seven years.

April 4, 2018: China reacts to USTR’s initial list, and proposes 25 percent tariffs to be applied on 106 products (worth US$50 billion) on goods such as soybeans, automobile, chemicals (list revised on June 16).

April 3, 2018: The USTR releases an initial list of 1,334 proposed products (worth US$50 billion) subject to a potential 25 percent tariff (list revised June 15).

April 2, 2018: China imposes tariffs (ranging 15-25 percent) on 128 products (worth US$3 billion) including fruit, wine, seamless steel pipes, pork and recycled aluminium in retaliation to the US’ steel and aluminum tariffs.

March 23, 2018: US imposes a 25 percent tariff on all steel imports (except from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Korea) and a 10 percent tariff on all aluminium imports (except from Argentina and Australia).

March 22, 2018: Trump signs a memorandum directing the following acts:

To file a WTO case against China for their discriminatory licensing practices;

To restrict investment in key technology sectors; and

To impose tariffs on Chinese products (such as aerospace, information communication technology and machinery).

February 7, 2018: The US implements ‘global safeguard tariffs’ – placing a 30 percent tariff on all solar panel imports, except for those from Canada, (worth US$8.5 billion) and a 20 percent tariff on washing machine imports (worth US$1.8 billion).

November 8-10, 2017: Trump pays a “state visit plus” to China, where relations were considered to have warmed.

August 18, 2017: The USTR initiates an investigation into certain acts, policies and practices of the Chinese government relating to technology transfer, intellectual property and innovation.

May 22, 2017: US and China agree to a trade deal that would give US firms greater access to China’s agriculture, energy, and financial markets, while China gains access to sell cooked poultry to the US.

April 28, 2017: The USTR is authorized to investigate whether steel/aluminium imports pose a threat to national security.

April 6-7, 2017: Xi visits Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, where they agree to set up a 100 Day Action Plan to resolve trade differences.

May 2, 2016: While campaigning for the Republican Party’s presidential nomination, Trump says “We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country and that’s what they’re doing. It’s the greatest theft in the history of the world.” The statement is one of many that Trump makes on the campaign trail about China’s trade practices.