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Divide et Impera 分化与征服

How Trump Gets Away with Protectionism

特朗普贸易保护主义政策的奥妙

Articles in our Policy Forum series are commentaries on current political issues. They reflect the opinion of the authors and – although researched to our best knowledge – are not scientific papers. If there are CFDS papers on related issues, they will be referred to in the text.

Since the inauguration of president Trump, his protectionist rhetoric has been anxiously eyed by observers around the globe. It already became apparent, that this protectionist agenda is more than just empty campaign threats when he withdrew the American signature to TPP as one of his first policy measures in his very first week in office.

Yet, the international community remained fairly calm, mostly trusting in the WTO to prevent steps that might actually reverse the trend towards more free trade, rather than just slowing it down. Therefore, although the Trump administration has been investigating tariffs on steel and aluminum since early 2017, the actual decision to go through with those plans was met by an international uproar.

The tariffs (which are to be enacted starting March 23rd) are officially justified with national security reasons, one of the few exceptions to its free trade agenda that the WTO officially allows since its very beginning based on article XXI of the GATT. They came with the promise to

自特朗普当选美国总统，全世界都担心其贸易保护主义论调。随着新一届美国政府退出跨太平洋贸易伙伴协定以及频频发起的贸易调查，事态的发展已经非常明朗，贸易保护主义已经不再是特朗普竞选中的空头支票。

不过，直至昨夜国际社会仍然表现得非常的平静，因为他们寄希望于世界贸易组织确立的多边贸易框架结构能够有效地避免贸易自由化进程的倒退。因此，尽管早在去年美国就开始了针对钢铁和铝的贸易调查，但美国特朗普当局的实际行动却一直面对国际社会的声讨。

美国政府即将于3月23日正式实施针对钢铁和铝的惩罚性关税，并声称这一决定是建立在美国国家安全受到威胁的基础上的。这源自于世界贸易组织的前身关贸总协定的第二十一条。如果任何国家想获得惩罚性关税的豁免，美国则要求作为战略伙伴或者同盟的国家主动增加军费或者其他国家自发降低对美国的



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exclude allies and partners if they increase their military spending (which Trump has been nagging NATO partners about since he came into office) or reduce their trade surplus to the US voluntarily. What initially seemed to be just another one of Trump's peculiarities, might turn out to be the most ingenious part of Trump's machination:

The world should stand united against this ludicrous attempt to blackmail allies and rival alike into a policy to Trump's liking. While it might be difficult to tackle an invocation of article XXI by legal means, since it is questionable whether the WTO has jurisdiction over what can be deemed necessary for national security, this blatant abuse should be met with unequivocal rejection. Yet, with Trump's promise to consider exemptions, he was able to drive a wedge between his trade partners. Rather than aiming to dismantle the new US protectionism, the European Union sent its trade commissioner to "demand" that the EU is granted one of those exceptions. European media reported about confident EU negotiators who demand this exemption without preconditions. Now, the European commission is basking in its own glory over its success to be temporarily exempt from the tariffs, at least while negotiations over a permanent exemption (that will require something from the EU in return) last. This might well turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory. Having even asked for the exemption, already is a first win for Trump. With their strategy, the EU has implicitly accepted the legitimacy of Trump's move to implement those tariffs for national security reasons, rather than refuting this claim in general.

"Divide and Conquer", the strategy said to be invented by Alexander the Great, apparently works for modern trade wars just as well as it did to forge an empire. Currently, the EU is doing its best to prove Trump right when he tweeted "Trade wars are good, and easy to win."

In the short term the victim of this move is China. The initial US moves towards more protectionism (in particular abandoning TPP) might even have helped China to position itself as an advocate of free trade, and reliable trade

贸易顺差。结合这一层面的分析，现阶段形势简直是特朗普无厘头政治动议又一次天才级别的华丽转身，因为这两项要求也一直是其疯狂政治主张的一部分。

全世界应该联合起来去抵制特朗普政府通过敲诈战略盟友和竞争对手的方式去实现自己主张的行为。世界贸易组织是很难阻止美国针对钢铁和铝的惩罚性关税，因为作为国际组织，它很难代表一国去判断其国家安全问题所涉及的范畴。对于这种国家安全借口的滥用，应该遭受国际社会异口同声的抗议。但是，在这一方面，特朗普似乎展现了其极具天赋的谈判能力。通过提供豁免，特朗普在美国和其贸易伙伴之间架设了一个微妙的台阶。欧盟对特朗普当局这一套路的反应叹为观止，他们没有设法对抗特朗普政府的贸易保护主义，却要求给予豁免。欧洲媒体报道，信心十足的欧盟谈判代表要求这项豁免必须是无条件的。是的，欧盟现在可以为他们暂时成功获得此时惩罚性关税豁免欢欣鼓舞，但是令人沮丧的是关于豁免的实质性谈判仍在继续，长期前景尚不明朗。这其实是欧盟的一场残胜，真正胜出的是特朗普。通过目前的既成事实，欧盟已经默认了特朗普滥用国家安全借口提出贸易主张的合法性。这是标准的“绥靖主义”态度。

分化与征服，这是由亚历山大大帝所创立的征服世界的策略，它成功地缔造了一个伟大帝国。显然，这个古老的策略在当今的贸易战争中依然奏效。欧盟在用实际行动极好地证明了“推特总统”特朗普的雄才大略：“贸易战争非常好，而且（美国）可以轻松获胜”

短期内美国政策的受害者是中国。中国一度是特朗普政府贸易保护主义政策的受益者，因为新政府彻底地抛弃了上届政府的跨太平洋贸易伙伴协定，帮助中国成为国际社会自由贸易的领袖和倡导者。甚至有评论员一度不解美国为什么会中国取代其在国际贸易自由化

partner that can pick up the slack left by the US. Indeed, major commentators were wondering why Trump was allowing China to take over this strategic role. Yet, the recent developments change the picture. With the EU not being subject to the US tariffs for now, this leaves China as the major target of US protectionism without allies to fight against it. Trump is already investigating more tariffs specifically against China. In the long run, however, the EU might have shot itself in the foot, by showing Trump that he succeeds with the aggressive pursuit of his “America First” paradigm. At this point, it is by no means certain that the EU will not be subject to Trump’s bullying again much sooner than they hope.

Most interestingly, even traditional proponents of protectionism will have some concerns regarding the current US tariffs. They are not protecting promising growth industries, but on the contrary the proven losers of globalization in the US. Tariffs that mostly target raw materials that US production relies on, will not make the US more but less competitive. Even if imposing tariffs does not spark a global trade war (which it easily might), and despite the size of the US (that would allow them to benefit from tariffs that do not incite retaliation), this type of protectionism is bound to hurt the US economy. It is quite apparent that Trump did not have economic objectives in mind but was mostly aiming to rally support in the Rust belt. So, it comes as no surprise, that his move comes right after Republicans lost the special elections for congress in the 18th district in Pennsylvania, where Trump won the presidential elections by quite some margin, but in time to turn the tide before the upcoming midterm elections.

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中的领导地位。但是，最近发生的一切彻底改变了这个格局。当欧盟成功获得美国惩罚性关税豁免的时候，中国顺其自然地成为了美国贸易保护主义的主要目标，而且身边几乎没有其他主要经济体作为盟友。从长期来看，欧盟可能是搬起石头砸了自己的脚，因为欧盟目前的贸易纠纷绥靖政策纵容了特朗普“美利坚第一”的国际社会主张。从这个意义上讲，欧盟可能很快会面对美国又一轮的压榨，到时候又该如何了？

更加有趣的是，即使传统的贸易保护主义支持者也会对美国现在的关税政策持有怀疑态度，因为这些政策不是在保护未来的经济增长，而是在保护在全球化当中败下阵来的夕阳行业。美国的关税政策主要针对的是国内生产所需要的原材料，这会使美国的生产环节更加缺乏竞争力。即使本次贸易摩擦不会升级到贸易战的程度，考虑到美国的经济体量，这样级别的贸易保护主义也会造成严重的伤害。那么，特朗普的意图非常显而易见，经济目标不是最重要的，他最需要的是来自美国中西部经济衰退铁锈地带的选票。共和党在最近的特殊选举中丢掉了宾夕法尼亚州第 18 选区的国会议员席位，而两年前特朗普还在这里大幅领先横扫对手，这是一个危险的信号。特朗普太需要利用现在的贸易政策在未来的中期选举中力挽狂澜。

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