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# BR INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORT BLANKROME



**ANTHONY RAPA**

PARTNER

## Note from the Editor

By Anthony Rapa

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Welcome to this month's issue of The BR International Trade Report, Blank Rome's monthly digital newsletter highlighting international trade, sanctions, cross-border investment, geopolitical risk issues, trends, and laws impacting businesses domestically and abroad. We invite you to share this resource with your colleagues and visit Blank Rome's International Trade [webpage](#) for more information about our team.

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## Recent Developments

**President Trump drives forward with “America First” trade policy.** Shortly after taking office on January 20, President Trump issued a [memorandum](#) to various department heads outlining his “America First” trade policy. Notably, the memorandum paves the way for robust tariffs and calls for executive branch review of various elements of U.S. trade policy. Read our [alert](#) for additional analysis.

**United States delays tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico but imposes 10 percent tariffs on imports from China.** On February 1, President Trump, acting under the authority of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (“IEEPA”), [imposed a 25 percent tariff](#) on imports from [Canada](#) and [Mexico](#) (excluding energy resources from Canada, which were subject to a tariff of 10percent) and a 10percent tariff on [imports from China](#). After first threatening to [respond in kind](#)—with retaliatory tariffs or other measures—both Canada and Mexico negotiated a [30-day pause](#) in exchange for increased enforcement measures at America’s borders. There was no similar agreement between the United States and China, which became [subject to additional tariffs](#) on February 4. Notably, the President initially [eliminated the de minimis exemption](#) for certain Chinese-origin imports of items valued under \$800, but then later [reinstated](#) the exemption.

**President Trump announces 25 percent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports entering the United States.** On February 10, President Trump signed [a proclamation](#) imposing 25percent tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum from [all countries](#) and cancelling previous tariff exemptions. Peter Navarro, a trade advisor to the president, [remarked](#) that “[t]he steel and aluminum tariffs 2.0 will put an end to foreign dumping, boost domestic production, and secure our steel and aluminum industries as the backbone and pillar industries of America’s economic and national security.” The new tariffs will take effect on March 12.

**President Trump announces reciprocal tariff regime.** On February 13, the president paved the way for what he called “the big one,” [reciprocal tariffs](#) directed against countries that impose trade barriers on the United States. Under the new framework, the United States will impose tariffs on imports from countries that levy tariffs on

imports of U.S. goods, maintain a value-added tax (“VAT”) system, issue certain subsidies, or implement “nonmonetary trade barriers” against the United States. The president stated that the U.S. Department of Commerce will conduct an assessment, expected to be completed by April 1, to determine the appropriate tariff level for each country.

**President Trump sets tariff sights on European Union.** President Trump has said he “[absolutely](#)” plans to impose tariffs on goods from the European Union to address what he considers “terrible” treatment on trade. In an effort to stave off such measures, the European Union reportedly has [offered](#) lower tariffs on imports of U.S. automobiles. Experts suggest that, in the event of U.S. tariffs, the European Union may retaliate with countermeasures against [U.S. technology services](#).

**Trump and Putin discuss commencing negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.** President Trump [stated](#) on February 12 that he had a “lengthy and productive” phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin in which the two leaders discussed “start[ing] negotiations immediately” and “visiting each other’s nations.” The president followed up with a call to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who reported that the call was “meaningful” and focused on “opportunities to achieve peace.” The dialogue comes amidst [Russia](#) and [Belarus](#) releasing American detainees in recent days.

**President Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meet to discuss deepening cooperation.** On January 27, President Trump [spoke with Indian Prime Minister](#) Narendra Modi to discuss regional security issues, including in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe. Notably, following the phone call, India [cut import duties](#) on certain U.S.-origin motorcycles, potentially in an effort to distance itself from President Trump’s [claims on the campaign trail](#) that India was a “very big abuser” of the U.S.-India trade relationship. Prime Minister Modi followed up the discussion with a [meeting](#) with President Trump at the White House on February 13.

**Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets with “Quad” ministers on President Trump’s first full day in office.** On January 21, foreign ministers of the “Quad”—a diplomatic partnership between the United States, India, Japan and Australia—convened in Washington, D.C. In a [joint statement](#), the group expressed its opposition to “unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo [in the Indo-Pacific] by force or coercion.”

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**U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets with Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino.** In early February, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [traveled to Panama](#) to meet with Panama’s President José Raúl Mulino and Foreign Minister Javier Martínez-Acha. During the meeting, Secretary Rubio criticized Chinese “influence and control” over the Panama Canal area. Notably, following the meeting with Secretary Rubio, [Panama announced](#) that it would let its involvement in China’s Belt and Road initiative expire.

**DeepSeek launches an artificial intelligence app, prompting U.S. national security concerns.** In January, DeepSeek—a Chinese artificial intelligence (“AI”) startup—[released DeepSeek R1](#), an AI app reportedly less expensive to develop than rival apps. Reports indicate that the United States is [investigating](#) whether DeepSeek, in developing its platform, accessed AI chips subject to U.S. export controls in contravention of U.S. law. Commerce Secretary nominee Howard Lutnick echoed these concerns in his recent [confirmation hearing](#).

**President Trump issues memorandum launching “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran.** On February 4, the president issued a [National Security Presidential Memorandum](#) (“NSPM”) restoring his prior administration’s “maximum pressure” policy towards Iran, with a focus on denying Iran a nuclear weapon and intercontinental ballistic missiles. The NSPM directs the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of State to take various measures exerting such pressure, including imposing sanctions or pursuing enforcement against parties that have violated sanctions against Iran; reviewing all aspects of U.S. sanctions regulations and guidance that provide economic relief to Iran; issuing updated guidance to the shipping and insurance sectors and to port operators; modifying or rescinding sanctions waivers, including those related to Iran’s Chabahar port project (which India has developed at considerable expense); and “driv[ing] Iran’s export of oil to zero.” See the White House [fact sheet](#).

**Dispute between the United States and Colombia over deportation flights prompts brief tariff threat.** On January 26, Colombian President Gustavo Petro [barred](#) “U.S. planes carrying Colombian migrants from entering [Colombia’s] territory” due to concerns over migrants’ treatment. President Trump responded by ordering [25 percent tariffs](#) on Colombian goods, to be raised to 50 percent in one week, visa restrictions on Colombian government officials and their families, and [cancellation of visa applications](#). The standoff between the two countries was resolved later that same day, signaling President Trump’s intention to use tariffs as a key foreign policy tool.

**Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol officially charged with insurrection.** On January 26, South Korean prosecutors formally charged impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol with insurrection. Yoon becomes the [first president](#) in South Korean history to be criminally charged while still in office. In addition to criminal charges, Yoon faces potential removal from office via impeachment. Should the Constitutional Court uphold the impeachment, as [many experts anticipate](#), South Korea will have two months to hold a new election.

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## In Case You Missed It

### Supreme Court Unanimously Upholds Forced Sale of TikTok from Chinese Parent Company

Blank Rome partner [Anthony Rapa](#), co-chair of the firm's International Trade practice group, was featured in this New York Post article discussing the Supreme Court's position of the sale of TikTok from its Chinese parent company. [Read More >>](#)

### Anthony Rapa Appointed to International Trade Council's Board of Directors

Blank LLP is pleased to announce that [Anthony Rapa](#), partner and co-chair of the firm's International Trade group, has been appointed to the International Trade Council's ("ITC") Board of Directors for the 2025–2027 term. [Read More >>](#)

### Japanese Leader Arrives in Washington

Blank Rome partner [Anthony Rapa](#), co-chair of the firm's International Trade practice group, was featured in this NBC News article discussing how the United States' business ties with Japan could move forward under the new administration. [Read More >>](#)

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## Upcoming Events

### February 19, 2025 Navigating Global Trade: Critical Insights for the Evolving Supply Chain 2025

Blank Rome partner [Anthony Rapa](#) will serve as a speaker for a comprehensive two-hour course which will provide a deep dive into key aspects of global trade compliance and supply chain management. Topics include U.S. import/export regulations, the current tariff landscape and proposed policy changes, de minimis and Foreign Direct Product Rule (FDPR) applications, and evolving sanctions impacting exports to numerous destinations. The course will equip participants with the tools to navigate complex trade environments and ensure compliance in an ever-shifting global market. This program is eligible for CLE credit. [Read More >>](#)

### February 25, 2025 Advanced Forum on Global Export Controls

Blank Rome partner [Anthony Rapa](#) will serve as a session moderator at American Conference Institute's ("ACI") Advanced Forum on Global Export Controls, being held February 25 and 26, 2025, in Arlington, Virginia. [Read More >>](#)

### March 7, 2025 Congressional Trade Agenda - WITA

Attorneys in Blank Rome's [International Trade](#) group will be attending the Washington International Trade Association 2025 Congressional Trade Agenda event being held on Friday, March 7, 2025 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. [Read More >>](#)

### March 13, 2025 Mergers and Acquisitions in the Technology Sector Conference

Blank Rome partner [Anthony Rapa](#) will be attending the International Bar Association ("IBA") conference on Mergers and Acquisitions in the Technology Sector in Geneva, Switzerland from March 13-14. Anthony will be co-moderating a roundtable titled on "M&A and Military Technology." [Read More >>](#)

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