

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks on Signing Executive Orders on Trade

March 31, 2017

The President. Thank you. During the campaign, I traveled the Nation and visited the cities and towns devastated by unfair trade policies, probably one of the major reasons I'm here today—trade. Nobody has ever made bad trade deals like our country has made.

I saw the shuttered factories and spent time with the laid-off factory workers. I heard their stories, and I promised them action, and I promised them a solution. And all over America, you're already seeing that solution start to take place. Take a look at what's going on Michigan, with Ford and General Motors and Fiat Chrysler, and so many more.

The jobs and wealth have been stripped from our country, year after year, decade after decade, trade deficit upon trade deficit—reaching more than \$700 billion last year alone—and lots of jobs. Thousands of factories have been stolen from our country. But these voiceless Americans now have a voice in the White House. Under my administration, the theft of American prosperity will end. We're going to defend our industry and create a level playing field for the American worker—finally.

Today I am signing two Executive orders that send this message loud and clear and that set the stage for a great revival of American manufacturing. And you saw that today; you saw what happened. You saw the kind of numbers we have. The survey actually showed 93 percent of manufacturers are now optimistic about the future—a record high—and that's up from about 56 percent just a couple of months ago. We're going to build on that tremendous momentum. And we're bringing manufacturing and jobs back to our country.

First, I'm signing an Executive order to ensure that we fully collect all duties imposed on foreign importers that cheat. They're cheaters. From now on, those who break the rules will face the consequences, and they'll be very severe consequences.

Second, I am ordering the first-ever comprehensive review of America's trade deficits and all violations of trade rules that harm the United States and the workers of the United States, just as I promised during my campaign. This review will be led by Secretary Wilbur Ross, who is joining us here today. Wilbur is a outstanding success story, an unbelievable businessman, a great but very, very fair negotiator, and on Wall Street, he's simply known as Wilbur, and everybody knows him. And now we have him on our side. So I thank you, Wilbur. It's really—you're going to do a fantastic job.

We're going to investigate all trade abuses, and based on those findings, we will take necessary and lawful action to end those many abuses. I am not beholden to any political or financial interest. I don't care. I'm here to do a job. I'm doing a job for the American worker. I really don't care. I'm not thinking about my business or anybody's business. Wilbur isn't. Peter isn't. None of the folks that we have up here are. We're doing a job. It's an opportunity like nobody has ever given. And we're here to do a great job for the American worker and for our companies where the American workers are employed.

I work for the American people. Whether you're a Democrat, a Republican, or belong to no party at all, you are an American, and I'm here to represent you and your family. We're going to get this thing straightened out. We're going to get these bad trade deals straightened out. Right, Peter?

Director of the National Trade Council Peter Navarro. Yes, sir.

The President. It's time. You've been looking at it for years. Right, Wilbur?

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr. Yes, sir.

The President. This combination over here, it can't be beaten.

That's why I defied the special interests and followed through on my pledge to withdraw immediately from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And that's why I am taking these very historic steps today. The well-being of America and the American worker is my north star. And these two orders will point out our Nation, and point to everybody, point to the world.

Next week, as you know, in Florida, at the Southern White House, we're having the President of China and a large group from China as representatives. And we're going to get down to some very serious business. So we look forward to it. I've spoken to him numerous times on the phone. We look very much forward to it. But it's been very bad what's been happening to our country in terms of our companies and in terms of our jobs. So we're going to start turning it around. We're going to turn it around fast; it's not going to take a long time. It's going to go fast.

So I just want to end by saying that we have a team that's second to none. And when everybody is assembled and fully in gear after these two orders, I think it's going to be something very special. I'd like to ask Wilbur to say a few words, and then, Peter, you say a few words. And we're all set. Our Vice President—I think I'm speaking for both, but I'm not 100 percent sure.

Vice President Michael R. Pence. Yes, you are.

The President. I will tell you one thing: He has one hell of a good marriage going.
[Laughter]

Come on, Wilbur.

Secretary Ross. Thank you, Mr. President. If anyone had any doubt about the President's resolve to fix the trade problems, these two Executive orders should end that speculation now and for all time. This marks the beginning of a totally new chapter in the American trade relationship with our partners overseas.

Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you, Wilbur. Peter.

Director Navarro. I remember well during the campaign the day the President made the speech outside of Pittsburgh and laid down a set of promises to the American people on trade. And today this is the beginning of the fulfillment of those promises in a grand way, with Wilbur Ross at the helm and the President being the grand strategist of this. And we're going to get it done for the American people, workers, domestic manufacturers.

Thank you.

The President. Mr. Vice President. Would you like to say something?

Vice President Pence. This is a great day for the American worker and a great day for the American economy. Once again, President Trump is keeping his word. As we look for ways to expand exports from this country, imports to this country, this President is determined that we're going to have free trade, but it's going to be fair trade. And arms-length negotiations with

nations, holding them accountable to the promises that they make, and the review the President is initiating today and the work of members of this team on the President's behalf will ensure that we put America first when it comes to trade; we put American jobs and American workers first.

The President. All right, thank you, Mike. Thank you, everybody. You're going to see some very, very strong results very, very quickly. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Xi Jinping of China. He also referred to Executive Order 13785, Establishing Enhanced Collection and Enforcement of Antidumping and Countervailing Duties and Violations of Trade and Customs Laws; and Executive Order 13786, Omnibus Report on Significant Trade Deficits.

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