

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

The President

Proclamation 9888 of May 17, 2019

Adjusting Imports of Automobiles and Automobile Parts Into the United States

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. On February 17, 2019, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) transmitted to me a report on his investigation into the effects of imports of passenger vehicles (sedans, sport utility vehicles, crossover utility vehicles, minivans, and cargo vans) and light trucks (collectively “automobiles”) and certain automobile parts (engines and engine parts, transmissions and powertrain parts, and electrical components) on the national security of the United States under section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862).
2. The report found that automotive research and development (R&D) is critical to national security. The rapid application of commercial breakthroughs in automobile technology is necessary for the United States to retain competitive military advantage and meet new defense requirements. Important innovations are occurring in the areas of engine and powertrain technology, electrification, lightweighting, advanced connectivity, and autonomous driving. The United States defense industrial base depends on the American-owned automotive sector for the development of technologies that are essential to maintaining our military superiority.
3. Thus, the Secretary found that American-owned automotive R&D and manufacturing are vital to national security. Yet, increases in imports of automobiles and automobile parts, combined with other circumstances, have over the past three decades given foreign-owned producers a competitive advantage over American-owned producers.
4. American-owned producers’ share of the domestic automobile market has contracted sharply, declining from 67 percent (10.5 million units produced and sold in the United States) in 1985 to 22 percent (3.7 million units produced and sold in the United States) in 2017. During the same time period, the volume of imports nearly doubled, from 4.6 million units to 8.3 million units. In 2017, the United States imported over 191 billion dollars’ worth of automobiles.
5. Furthermore, one circumstance exacerbating the effects of such imports is that protected foreign markets, like those in the European Union and Japan, impose significant barriers to automotive imports from the United States, severely disadvantaging American-owned producers and preventing them from developing alternative sources of revenue for R&D in the face of declining domestic sales. American-owned producers’ share of the global automobile market fell from 36 percent in 1995 to just 12 percent in 2017, reducing American-owned producers’ ability to fund necessary R&D.
6. Because “[d]efense purchases alone are not sufficient to support . . . R&D in key automotive technologies,” the Secretary found that “American-owned automobile and automobile parts manufacturers must have a robust presence in the U.S. commercial market” and that American innovation capacity “is now at serious risk as imports continue to displace American-owned production.” Sales revenue enables R&D expenditures that are necessary for long-term automotive technological superiority, and automotive

technological superiority is essential for the national defense. The lag in R&D expenditures by American-owned producers is weakening innovation and, accordingly, threatening to impair our national security.

7. In light of all of these factors, domestic conditions of competition must be improved by reducing imports. American-owned producers must be able to increase R&D expenditures to ensure technological leadership that can meet national defense requirements.

8. The Secretary found and advised me of his opinion that automobiles and certain automobile parts are being imported into the United States in such quantities and under such circumstances as to threaten to impair the national security of the United States. The Secretary found that these imports are “weakening our internal economy” and that “[t]he contraction of the American-owned automotive industry, if continued, will significantly impede the United States’ ability to develop technologically advanced products that are essential to our ability to maintain technological superiority to meet defense requirements and cost effective global power projection.”

9. The Secretary therefore concluded that the present quantities and circumstances of automobile and certain automobile parts imports threaten to impair the national security as defined in section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended.

10. In reaching this conclusion, the Secretary considered the extent to which import penetration has displaced American-owned production, the close relationship between economic welfare and national security, *see* 19 U.S.C. 1862(d), the expected effect of the recently negotiated United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and what would happen should the United States experience another economic downturn comparable to the 2009 recession.

11. In light of the report’s findings, the Secretary recommended actions to adjust automotive imports so that they will not threaten to impair the national security. One recommendation was to pursue negotiations to obtain agreements that address the threatened impairment of national security. In the Secretary’s judgment, successful negotiations could allow American-owned automobile producers to achieve long-term economic viability and increase R&D spending to develop cutting-edge technologies that are critical to the defense industry.

12. I concur in the Secretary’s finding that automobiles and certain automobile parts are being imported into the United States in such quantities and under such circumstances as to threaten to impair the national security of the United States, and I have considered his recommendations.

13. I have also considered the renegotiated United States-Korea Agreement and the recently signed USMCA, which, when implemented, could help to address the threatened impairment of national security found by the Secretary.

14. Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended, authorizes the President to take action to adjust the imports of an article and its derivatives that are being imported into the United States in such quantities or under such circumstances as to threaten to impair the national security. If that action is the negotiation of an agreement contemplated in 19 U.S.C. 1862(c)(3)(A)(i), and such an agreement is not entered into within 180 days of the proclamation or is not being carried out or is ineffective, then the statute authorizes the President to take other actions he deems necessary to adjust imports and eliminate the threat that the imported article poses to national security. *See* 19 U.S.C. 1862(c)(3)(A).

15. I have decided to direct the United States Trade Representative (Trade Representative) to pursue negotiation of agreements contemplated in 19 U.S.C. 1862(c)(3)(A)(i) to address the threatened impairment of the national security with respect to imported automobiles and certain automobile parts from the European Union, Japan, and any other country the Trade Representative deems appropriate, and to update me on the progress of such negotiations

within 180 days. Under current circumstances, this action is necessary and appropriate to remove the threatened impairment of the national security.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended, do hereby proclaim as follows:

(1) The Trade Representative, in consultation with the Secretary, the Secretary of the Treasury, and any other senior executive branch officials the Trade Representative deems appropriate, shall pursue negotiation of agreements contemplated in 19 U.S.C. 1862(c)(3)(A)(i) to address the threatened impairment of the national security with respect to imported automobiles and certain automobile parts from the European Union, Japan, and any other country the Trade Representative deems appropriate.

(2) Within 180 days of the date of this proclamation, the Trade Representative shall update me on the outcome of the negotiations directed under clause (1) of this proclamation.

(3) The Secretary shall continue to monitor imports of automobiles and certain automobile parts and shall, from time to time, in consultation with any senior executive branch officials the Secretary deems appropriate, review the status of such imports with respect to the national security. The Secretary shall inform the President of any circumstances that in the Secretary's opinion might indicate the need for further action by the President under section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended.

(4) Any provision of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that is inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation is superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-third.

