



Footwear & Politics

By Thomas Crockett • Mar 11, 2026

Smart Brevity® count: 1.5 mins...370 words



The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) [announced](#) the first in a series of 301 investigations against multiple countries in a plan to reimpose tariffs.

Tell me more: After last month's Supreme Court decision striking down the reciprocal tariffs, the administration pivoted to Plan B. The new plan involves short term Section 122 tariffs on all countries (currently 10% tariffs) ... followed by a host of soon-to-be-announced Section 301 actions against specific countries.

- Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent predicted that by August this plan would allow the administration to bring the tariffs back to the same rates that existed before the Supreme Court decision.
- We are very familiar with Section 301, because the President used this tool during his first administration to put in place 7.5% tariffs on 🇨🇳 Chinese-made 👟 footwear, which are still in effect.

Give me the details: This first 301 investigation will look at “structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors.”

- This investigation covers 🇨🇳 China, 🇪🇺 the European Union (EU), 🇸🇬 Singapore, 🇨🇭 Switzerland, 🇳🇴 Norway, 🇮🇩 Indonesia, 🇲🇾 Malaysia, 🇰🇲 Cambodia, 🇹🇭 Thailand, 🇰🇷 South Korea, 🇻🇳 Vietnam, 🇹🇼 Taiwan, 🇧🇩 Bangladesh, 🇲🇽 Mexico, 🇯🇵 Japan, and 🇮🇳 India.

👉 **Another 301 tomorrow:** USTR plans to announce another 301 investigation tomorrow that will look at how countries address forced labor.

What's next: For the first 301 investigation, on excess capacity, USTR will hold a public hearing on May 5th. USTR will determine whether these countries have discriminatory or unreasonable practices/policies that burden or restrict U.S. commerce. The agency will then propose remedies for the President to consider ... like tariffs.

- **Take note:** One silver lining with Section 301 is it requires a process that will take months, even if the administration expedites the process as planned. The public — and affected industries — will have an opportunity to weigh in. Also, USTR has another opportunity to recommend a more tailored approach that doesn't hit all industries.
- **One more thing:** While the 301 investigations take place, each of these countries will also continue to negotiate with the administration on possible deals.

Go deeper: Read USTR's press release [here](#) and the official notice [here](#).

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Matt and Thomas

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