

Trump weighs tariffs on steel imports

Critics say such restrictions amount to a protectionist move

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President Donald Trump suggested on Tuesday that the US was likely to impose restrictions on imported metals, reviving the prospects for a continuing investigation whose future has been called into question amid months of pushback and delays.

Meeting with a bipartisan group of lawmakers, the president said such restrictions would help save struggling steel companies from foreign competitors that “dump” low-priced metal on American markets. “What we’re talking about is tariffs and/or quotas,” Trump said.

The White House had billed the meeting as a listening session to let lawmakers air concerns about pending actions on aluminum and steel imports, as well as Trump’s infrastructure plan that was proposed on Monday and current trade measures like the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In April, the president began twin investigations into imports of steel and aluminum under the little used Section 232 of a 1962 trade law, which permits sweeping restrictions to protect national security. Supporters of the action say American metal makers badly need the assistance to survive and continue producing planes, armored vehicles and other products for the military. But the measure also has plenty of critics, who fear that such restrictions amount to a protectionist grab by metal makers and will raise prices for steel and aluminum.

They argue that because the metals are widely used to make other products, other industries — including automobile manufacturers and food packagers — would suffer.

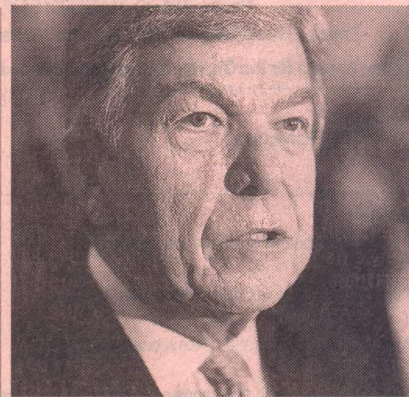
Republican and Democratic lawmakers who gathered at the White House on Tuesday are generally split along party lines on the restrictions. Most Democrats voiced support for the president’s action on metals, and Republicans, with the exception of Senator Rob Portman of Ohio, urged caution. “I committed to continuing to work with him to identify a narrow and targeted remedy that is balanced, effective, protects national security and economic interests across America, and addresses the root problem of China’s distortive practices,” Brady said. Senator Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat at the meeting, said afterward that Trump “seems to understand the

MIXED REACTIONS



I THINK WE DO NEED TO BE CAREFUL HERE THAT WE DON'T START A RECIPROCAL BATTLE ON TARIFFS

Senator Roy Blunt,
Missouri Republican



THE BIGGEST QUESTION IS WHAT TOOLS THE PRESIDENT DECIDES TO PURSUE WITH RESPECT TO US' POSITION IN GLOBAL MARKETS

Senator Ron Wyden,
Oregon Democrat

China expresses concerns over protectionism

China has expressed concerns over excessive protectionism in the steel sector by the US, and urged it to show restraint in a probe into steel imports, an official with Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said on Tuesday.

Wang Hejun, the head of MOFCOM's Trade Remedy and Investigation Bureau, made the comments ahead of a meeting later in the day between US President Donald Trump and a group of US lawmakers to discuss trade.

In a statement published on the

MOFCOM website, Wang said excessive protection is not a remedy and will only lead to a “vicious circle” of trade actions. Trump’s meeting comes a month after the US Commerce Department handed him the results of an investigation into steel and aluminium imports.

The Commerce Department has offered no insight into its conclusions, although the probe could lead to broad tariffs or import quotas among other steps.

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enforcement challenge.” “The biggest question outstanding, of course, is 232 and what kind of tools he finally decides to pursue as the president with respect to America’s position in global markets,” he said.

‘Spend on public works, not West Asia’

Trump pitched his infrastructure plan to a dozen Republican and Democratic lawmakers at a White House meeting

Wednesday, urging them to fund better roads and bridges for Americans instead of wars in the West Asia. “After spending trillions of dollars overseas rebuilding other countries, it’s time to rebuild our own country and to take care of our citizens,” Trump told the lawmakers. “If we have to fix a road, we can’t fix it. If we have to fix a tunnel, we don’t do it because we don’t have the money. We spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East