

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Senate Finance Committee Hearing on The President's 2025 Trade Policy Agenda

April 8th, 2025

Q&A with USTR Jamieson Greer

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Greer, good to see you. You and I have had many conversations about trade. I think my question this morning, though, starts with the consultation that Congress deserves on trade issues from the Trade Ambassador. What did the Trump administration do to prepare us, to communicate with us, to tell us about findings as it relates to these emergency orders by the President?

Geer: Thank you, Senator. As you know, I find consultation requirements very important, and not just as a requirement, just matter of good practice. Our staff, the USTR staff, in the in the past two months that we've been in office, have had over 200 formal engagements with staff on the Hill, obviously here in the Senate, also in the house. The day of the reciprocal trade announcement, we had our staff also up here briefing your staff, and we also had the President issue very publicly his America first trade policy memorandum, which specifically said that he was going to look into the trade deficit and the possibilities of tariffs.

Sen. Cantwell: So, we've wreaked havoc on the economy by having one of the largest drops of the market. We have people's 401(k)s, in panic. We have retail organizations, like the retail industry, National Retail Federation, American Apparel Industry, Outdoor [Industry] Association, Consumer Technology [Association], Computer [and] Communications Industry [Association], Main Street Alliance, Small Business Majority, all anxious, asking us to do something, and you're saying, "Well, some people have passed some notes to staff."

What the requirement is, and this is where I believe the President has mis-constructed and actually exploited this authority, is not communicated to us, nor these interest groups that are now panicked over the effect of tariffs. So I would say that the skill set of a USTR office or even a Treasury Secretary could have opened these conversations with these countries without the tariffs and saved a lot of people a lot of pain and anguish.

I worry about this trust issue, because I have a different world view, that we should be building alliances as a way to counter China, that the alliance building process now will become harder, and people are going to wonder, well, is the United States going to pull another fast one again and just wreak havoc, when, in reality, countering China with a tech NATO or something like that is a more powerful tool. Do you have a comment about that?

Greer: I do, and I think we need to be -- I think we do need to be thoughtful about this. I think what we can't do is wait. We have had many, many times in past decades when we have had real robust trade disputes with our partners. Japan in the 80s and early 90s over cars, semiconductors, and they ended reshoring a lot of those factories here, and it didn't make us less of a security partner to Japan. I think we can have these conversations like friends do, and that's what the

President said yesterday. He said, "Listen, China is trying to retaliate. They're taking a different path, but for others who want to have meetings, we'll negotiate."

Sen. Cantwell: Ok, I want to reclaim my time for a second, because I only have five minutes, and you have lots of time to answer lots of questions for members. But you can see all my colleagues, we are thoughtful people with specific issues about our constituencies. I just met with raspberry growers. They're concerned. They want to know if they're going to get some seat on a council so they can have their issues heard.

I'm for trade. I represent trade. I represent a trade economy. I represent the success of what innovation and trade gets you. But you're coming here this morning with this, not only tanking of the market and 401(k)s, now you're coming here telling me that tariff is the tool. And I'm telling you, innovation is the tool!

You're telling us in your testimony you want a tariff on semiconductors. I'm saying that the last administration, and this organization here, passed the CHIPS & Science Act so we could reshore semiconductors here in the United States. So, you're not going to win the innovation economy by tariffing semiconductors and reshoring that. I don't know what you think. I'm not trying to get the semiconductor -- I want to lead on next generation semiconductor manufacturing because I'm pretty sure I'm sitting next to the [Senate Intelligence Committee] Ranking Member here who's going to tell me if we don't lead on semiconductor manufacturing and semiconductor next generation technology, then we're not going to be leading in defense or in AI or in anything!

So, I want to innovate my way to that future, and I want to use the alliance power of different countries to force China and other people to follow us, instead of this berating of the American consumer who has to pay the price for this policy.

Geer: Senator, TSMC has announced a new a new announcement where they're going to have more investment here the United States so they can make those things here and have that innovation.

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you. Thank you to the people who voted for the CHIPS & Science Act in the past administration, thank you for that. We are going to lead on innovation despite this administration.