

Trump Selects Peter Navarro as Top Trade Adviser

Navarro also served as a senior adviser on trade in the first Trump administration.

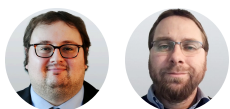
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The former director of the U.S. Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, Peter Navarro, speaks on the third day of the Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, on July 17, 2024. Joe Raedle/Getty Images



President-elect Donald Trump announced on Dec. 4 that he has selected Peter Navarro as senior counselor for trade and manufacturing.

During Trump's first term, Navarro, a staunch advocate of tariffs, served as director of the National Trade Council and as director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy.

Share Trump said the new role "leverages Peter's broad range of White House experience while harnessing his extensive policy analytic and media skills."



Navarro's "mission will be to help successfully advance and communicate the Trump manufacturing, tariff, and trade agendas," the president-elect said.



Navarro was released from prison on July 17 after serving a four-month sentence for refusing to appear before the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, breach of the U.S. Capitol.



Tariffs were an integral economic policy feature of Trump's 2024 election campaign. Since his victory last month, Trump has threatened to impose 25 percent tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports, slap 10 percent levies on Chinese goods, and implement a 100 percent tariff on countries engaged in anti-dollar activities.

As one of the top White House economic and trade advisers in Trump's first administration, Navarro was a leading voice in enacting tariffs on the United States' trading partners, particularly China.

Navarro said levies would help level the playing field and rectify what he viewed as unfair imbalances in international trade.

"President Trump has made it clear he's a free trader. He's made it abundantly clear that for this administration, free trade means is free, fair, reciprocal, and balanced," Navarro said in [prepared remarks](#) at a

June 2018 Hudson Institute event outlining Trump's policy regarding the U.S.–China trade relationship.

In 2019, he also championed Trump's threat of tariffs on Mexico in response to Mexico's "exports" of "illegal aliens."

"This is strictly about national security and threats to our economy from illegal immigration from a criminal enterprise," Navarro [told](#) CNBC's "Squawk on the Street."

Despite various criticisms that Trump's tariffs would ignite inflation pressures and weigh on economic growth prospects, Navarro defended his trade agenda as "one of the most successful applications of a defense trade policy in U.S. history."

Appearing at a Harvard University [event](#) in April 2019, Navarro declared that "Ricardo is dead." This was in reference to 19th-century economist David Ricardo, who touted that international trade is always beneficial and that nations can prosper with the theory of "comparative advantage."

However, according to Navarro, 19th-century economic philosophies have little relevance in modern global markets filled with "industrial espionage, rampant cheating, intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, state capitalism, and currency misalignments."

Navarro has been reluctant to back trade agreements supported by whom he called "globalist elites" on Wall Street.

"If Wall Street is involved and continues to insinuate itself into these negotiations, there will be a stench around any deal that's consummated because it will have the imprimatur of Goldman Sachs and Wall Street," Navarro said in a 2019 [speech](#) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Navarro will not be the only pro-tariff official in the incoming administration.

Trump has been surrounding himself with staunch defenders of his trade agenda.

Scott Bessent, a Wall Street financier tapped to lead the Treasury Department, has been vocal in supporting levies on U.S. trading partners.

Bessent has spoken favorably about tariffs, describing the measure as a negotiating tool to accomplish the president-elect's foreign policy objectives.

“Whether it is getting allies to spend more on their own defense, opening foreign markets to U.S. exports, securing cooperation on ending illegal immigration and interdicting fentanyl trafficking, or deterring military aggression, tariffs can play a central role,” Bessent [wrote](#) in a recent Fox News op-ed.

In an [interview](#) with CNBC's “Squawk Box,” Bessent also said that tariffs should be “layered in gradually” to prevent immediate inflationary pressures and allow disinflationary measures to offset higher prices.

Trump selected billionaire Howard Lutnick as commerce secretary.

Lutnick, the CEO of investment firm Cantor Fitzgerald, has also endorsed tariffs, calling them “bargaining chips” to negotiate better trade pacts that can slash levies.

“I think tariffs make sense,” Lutnick [told](#) CNBC's “Money Movers” in September. “We should compare what people tariff us and put the exact same tariffs on them and make it equal.”

The president-elect recently rounded out his economic team with Kevin Hassett as director of the White House National Economic Council and international trade attorney Jamieson Greer as U.S. trade representative.

Hassett was the previous head of the Council of Economic Advisers, a position that Trump has yet to announce.

According to Trump, Greer was integral in his first term in replacing the decades-old North American Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.–Mexico–Canada Agreement and implementing tariffs on China.

Greer was the chief of staff to Robert Lighthizer, who served as Trump’s former trade representative.

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