

# Splash

## 247.com

**Trump's tariff war only directly impacting 1.5% of global seaborne trade volumes for now**

[Sam Chambers](#)

March 24, 2025



White House Archives

Despite their high profile, US trade tariffs – and retaliatory actions – are to date impacting directly only 1.5% of global seaborne trade volumes, according to the latest data from Clarksons Research, which notes that in the previous 2018-19 trade war tonne-miles were cut by only 0.5%.

With US policy described by Clarksons as “fluid”, analysts at the world’s largest shipbroker concede there is potential for escalation, deepening of indirect impacts but also for new trade agreements to be made and for new trading patterns to evolve.

This week the office of the United States Trade Representative will hold a public hearing on March 24 and March 26, 2025, regarding proposed actions in the Section 301 investigation on China’s targeting of the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors for dominance.

The remedies include potential port service fees for Chinese-built vessels that arrive in US ports and requirements for exporters to ship a percentage of their cargo on US-owned, operated and eventually built vessels.

Judah Levine, head of research at box booking platform Freightos, admitted the tariff landscape remains extremely uncertain.

“Federal agency findings that could lead to sharp tariff increases on China, reciprocal tariffs on a long list of countries, the USTR’s proposed port fees on Chinese-made vessels, as well as the reinstatement of 25% tariffs on all Canadian and Mexican imports are due in early April,” Levine said.

Peter Sand, chief analyst at container freight rate platform Xeneta, said:” “Given the massive uncertainty surrounding the US trade policy towards tariffs and proposals for port fees targeted at Chinese ships and carriers, shippers will seize any opportunity to lower their overall import costs during freight rate negotiations.”