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## Navigating Tariffs through Trade Diplomacy: Strategies and Lessons from Select Countries

Gary Ador Dionisio

School of Diplomacy and Governance

De La Salle - College of Saint Benilde, Philippines

ORCID: 0009-0006-8967-8097

[gary.adordionisio@benilde.edu.ph](mailto:gary.adordionisio@benilde.edu.ph)

Jovito Jose Katigbak

Department of Political Science and Development Studies

De La Salle University, Philippines

ORCID: 0000-0002-9291-8251

[jovito.katigbak@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:jovito.katigbak@dlsu.edu.ph)

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the vital role of trade diplomacy in navigating the global economic volatility spurred by the broad-based US tariffs imposed since January 2025, which were anchored on national security concerns. More specifically, it reviews the trade diplomacy tactics employed by Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam vis-à-vis the US tariffs. Using a qualitative, descriptive methodology, the findings reveal both similarities and differences in their approaches. On one hand, all countries deployed a multi-pronged strategy and are pursuing trade diversification efforts to de-risk from great powers such as the US and China. Further, initiatives are being intensified to promote domestic industry resilience while balancing political, economic, social, and geostrategic factors. On the other hand, advanced economies (Canada and Germany) adopted a "retaliate-to-negotiate" approach, matching US tariffs tit-for-tat and filing WTO complaints while emerging economies (Mexico, Vietnam) used a "concession-to-de-escalate" strategy, delaying retaliation and offering proactive concessions on security, non-tariff barriers, and major purchases to secure lower tariff rates. The study also finds that countries with existing FTAs (Canada, Mexico) were significantly shielded from the tariffs. This paper thus provides a timely analysis of key trade diplomacy strategies amid unilateral, reciprocal tariffs and outlines practical lessons for other economies operating in a fragmented and increasingly protectionist economic landscape.

**Keywords:** US tariffs; trade diplomacy; global economy; free trade agreements; retaliatory measures; trade diversification; Global Trading System.

**JEL Classification:** F10; F13; F51.

### Introduction

The broad-based, expansive tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump since January 2025 has catalysed systemic tremors in the world economy and gradual shifts among global value chains. Anchored on the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), non-trade concerns such as illegal migration and drug trafficking are also used to justify the application of universal reciprocal tariffs on all imports, higher tariff rates on China, and suspension of de minimis exemption for low-value imports from all countries (Zirpoli, 2025). These measures prompted economies and businesses to quickly recalibrate their trade concentration and search for alternative markets amid a turbulent and increasingly protectionist global economic environment. Correspondingly, the vital roles of governments in directing trade policies and ensuring the continuous flow of goods and services across borders are magnified. Hence, the skilful navigation of the current trade intricacies by state actors through diplomatic channels, or simply trade diplomacy, becomes a paramount means to attaining a successful trade diversification endeavour.

This research thus seeks to answer the primary question: “How has select countries deployed trade diplomacy to manage the universal reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US?” It similarly attempts to address the following sub-queries: (i) How has the recent tariffs impacted global trade?; (ii) What are the strategies employed by Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam in response to the reciprocal tariffs?; and (iii) What lessons can other economies learn from the experiences of Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam?

Accordingly, this paper aims to achieve three main objectives, namely: (a) Describe the effects of US tariffs on global trade; (b) Characterize the trade diplomacy efforts of Canada, Germany, Mexico and Vietnam vis-à-vis the enforcement of reciprocal tariffs; and (c) Outline key takeaways and policy options for other economies to effectively navigate the tariff-ridden global landscape. The significance of this study falls under the practical aspect of international relations and political economy given its focus on the notable strategies and approaches devised by select countries to effectively overcome the adverse impacts of US tariffs.

## 1. Literature Review

The sweeping tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump since returning to office in January 2025 has negatively affected the global economy as evidenced by slower growth and global supply chain restructuring. Primarily motivated by reducing its trade deficits, the US has likewise utilized illegal migration and drug trafficking as grounds for imposing a 10 percent baseline tariff on all imports and reciprocal, targeted tariffs ranging from 20 to 50 percent on specific countries/blocs such as China, Canada, European Union, and Mexico, among others (Diaz, 2025; J.P. Morgan Global Research, 2025). Steel, aluminum, motor vehicles and parts, and electronics are hit hardest by the cited tariffs while economies that acquiesced to tariff negotiations with the US enjoyed lower rates (Kawasaki, 2025). De minimis exemption covering low-value imports worth USD800 was then removed in August 2025 thereby increasing costs for smaller-scale exporters (The White House, 2025).

These measures are expected to decelerate global growth to 3 percent in 2025 according to the International Monetary Fund (2025) while the World Bank (2025) estimates a lower 2.3 percent expansion in the same year. Conteduca *et al.* (2025) identified three scenarios associated with the potential impact of US tariffs, which are status quo (as of April 2025), full scenario (*i.e.*, extended tariffs to pharmaceuticals and electronics), and full + retaliation (*i.e.*, US trade partners raise their respective sector-level tariffs). Across these scenarios, they project a net global welfare loss of 1.2 percent and world trade slowdown by 5 percent coupled with supply chain disruptions, especially in electrical equipment and electronics and transport equipment sectors (Conteduca *et al.* 2025). Jakubik and Sztajerowska (2025) note that the US-China decoupling is occurring at a faster rate than the 2018-2019 episode as demonstrated by greater Chinese exports to third-country markets such as Asia and Europe and by Canada and Mexico's negative contributions to US export expansion. They similarly emphasize that trade flows from China are being diverted to automobiles and parts sector in Asia and to steel and aluminum sectors in Europe.

In response to the steep tariffs, US trading partners implemented retaliatory tariffs therefore bolstering volatility worldwide (Department of Finance Canada, 2025). Multinational corporations then diversified their supply chains, relocated production to areas with tariff exemptions, and/or moved final assembly locations (Engelland, 2025; Johnson *et al.* 2025). The heightened uncertainty and elevated anxiety among business groups and households should thus be allayed by governments to minimize economic disruptions and stimulate robust trade flows. The conduct of trade diplomacy thus becomes an essential tool in effectively managing the adverse impacts of US tariffs. More particularly, it can be defined as the “practice and process of managing international trade relations through negotiation, cooperation, and policymaking, involving not only states but also a wide range of non-state actors, networks, and institutions” (Lee *et al.* 2010, p.13). Pigman (2016) traced the evolution of trade diplomacy from the trade-as-diplomacy phase to liberalization, institutionalization, and judicialization and underscored the entry of new actors in a multilateral trading system featuring lower tariffs and dispute settlement mechanisms. Okano-Heijmans (2016) underlined that trade diplomacy became a reliable tool of governments in the 1990s due to the threat of economic crises worldwide and the stalemate in the multilateral trade negotiations in the Doha round of the WTO. The shift of focus from unilateral liberalization to bilateral and regional FTAs was primarily shaped by economic, political, legal, and geostrategic factors. Trade diplomacy thus became politicized, especially in the Asia-Pacific, since negotiations centered on norm setting, resource allocation, network-building, and contention for influence. Nevertheless, the practical nature of trade diplomacy renders its theoretical aspect underdeveloped.

Perhaps a worthwhile review of trade diplomacy personified are the US' and China's respective actions during the 2018-2019 tariff war. On one hand, the US' decision to initiate a tariff battle was perceived as a coercive drive to bring China to the negotiating table to agree ultimately on “significant changes to...its economic system

that facilitate unfair Chinese trade practices, including forced technology transfer, limited market access, intellectual property theft, and subsidies to state-owned enterprises” (Hass and Denmark, 2020, par.5). It can be noted that the provocation started as early as the 2016 presidential campaign when Donald Trump exclaimed that “we can’t continue to allow China to rape our country” and promised to “cut a better deal with China that helps American businesses and workers compete” (BBC News, 2016). A failed 100-day action plan in 2017 between the two parties subsequently ignited the first tariff war in 2018 upon imposition of the 25 percent duty on high-tech industrial products and another 10 percent tariff on an additional USD200 billion of Chinese imports (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2018). Two years later, the Phase One deal was reached which committed China to higher goods purchases plus better intellectual property protection, currency management, and forced technology transfer. Reports show that President Trump exchanged political favors for trade concessions as evidenced by US silence on Hong Kong democracy protests (Sciutto *et al.* 2019) and on human rights issues perpetrated by the Chinese government (Hass and Denmark, 2020).

On the other hand, China’s response to the unilateral tariffs was an immediate tit-for-tat retaliation as exemplified by the 25 percent tariff on US agricultural and manufacturing goods and a consequent 5-10 percent tariff on USD60 billion of US exports (Bown, 2018). This was complemented by diplomatic and legal measures such as official condemnation of US trade bullying (Xinhua, 2018) and filing a complaint to the WTO questioning the legality of unilateral tariffs (Reuters, 2018). Chinese President Xi Jinping maintained constant communication with President Trump which was critical in resolving the trade conflict in 2020.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study is descriptive-exploratory. It examines the strategies and tactics employed by third countries such as Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam to manage the unilateral tariffs imposed by the US in 2025. The notable patterns and peculiarities may serve as key takeaways for other economies. Accordingly, the selection of the third countries is based on two main criteria, namely: (i) nature of trading relationship with the US; and (ii) market size. Canada and Mexico are members of the USMCA trade agreement, while Germany (through EU) and Vietnam do not have trade agreements with the US prior to 2025. In addition, Canada and Germany are advanced economies while Mexico and Vietnam are classified as emerging and developing economies according to the International Monetary Fund.

This research mainly utilizes a qualitative approach to ascertain the extent of the research problem by qualifying the indicators, while supporting them with qualitative data. The main method for data gathering is secondary research which involves review of related literature and content analysis. It utilizes secondary resources such as journals, news articles, official government websites, and interviews, among others. Specific keywords were inputted to generate results via online search engines. The numerous data were then screened based on relevance (*i.e.*, date – since January 2025), content (*i.e.*, responses to the 2025 US tariffs), and reliability (*i.e.*, reputation of the source, government-run websites). The key findings were analyzed through an inductive approach given the scant literature on the subject matter. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that the research mainly depends on media sources and less on primary data and triangulation. The study is exploratory since it assesses the tariff-induced responses by Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam via the lens of trade diplomacy. The focus of analysis is the governments’ initial trade policy responses to the 2025 US tariffs.

## 3. Results

**Canada’s** reaction to the 2025 tariffs has both short-term and long-term components. The immediate response was retaliatory 25 percent tariffs on home products, steel, aluminum, and US-made automobiles (Government of Canada, 2025a). It likewise filed a complaint to the WTO regarding the unilateral duties imposed by the US. A de-escalation was reached through the tariff-free scheme under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) when the US government exempted over 85 percent of commodities that are compliant with the cited agreement. Canada reciprocated by eliminating its retaliatory tariffs on US goods covered by the USMCA. Nonetheless, it maintained surtaxes on strategic US sectors such as steel, aluminum, and automobiles (Government of Canada, 2025b). At the local level, the Canadian government launched several programs to support domestic enterprises and workers affected by the tariffs. These include the CAD5 billion Strategic Response Fund, Buy Canadian Policy (*i.e.*, prioritizing Canadian suppliers for federal government contracts, CAD1 billion Regional Tariff Response Initiative (for small- and medium-sized enterprises), and Reskilling Package (for 50,000 workers) (Prime Minister of Canada, 2025a).

Irked by President Trump’s tariff threats and repeated comments about Canada’s accession as the 51st US State, Canadian Prime Minister (PM) Mark Carney has also stressed that the country should “take care of [itself]

because we can't rely on one foreign partner" and shared that it is "re-engaging with the global giants India and China" (Gillies, 2025). Canada's objective of doubling non-US exports by 2035 is being advanced by its pivot to growing markets as exemplified by fast-tracked talks regarding a Canada-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and a Canada-Philippines bilateral FTA, during the visit of PM Carney to the region in October 2025 (Prime Minister of Canada, 2025b). In the same month, Canada-US trade talks were halted over a Canadian television advertisement featuring a 1987 clip of former US President Ronald Reagan cautioning about the dangers of protectionism (Davies, 2025). The ad was paused after President Trump threatened an additional 10 percent tariff on Canadian products. The aftermath of the mentioned fiasco further revealed the friction between the two parties as the US administration bared that it "has repeatedly sought to address Canada's longstanding, unfair trade barriers" but "good-faith efforts...have not led to any constructive progress" (Boynton, 2025). PM Carney replied by stating that the country is ready to resume discussions "when the Americans are ready to have those discussions" (Boynton, 2025).

**Germany**, another developed economy and the third largest in the world, deployed simultaneously a retaliate-to-negotiate approach and a national de-risking strategy from US and China. German companies such as Adidas, Bosch, and Volkswagen lamented about rising costs and enormous profit losses. As a member of the European Union, the country capitalized on the size and strength of the regional grouping to pressure the US with retaliatory tariffs and a formal WTO complaint in defense of free and fair world trade (Agence France-Presse, 2025). This was balanced by the pledge of cooperation in January 2025 by former German Chancellor Olaf Scholz: "to be clear, the United States is our closest ally outside of Europe. And I will do everything I can to ensure that it stays that way" (Agence France-Presse, 2025). He added that "close cooperation between Europe and the USA is essential for peace and security worldwide" and a "driver for successful economic development." The credible EU countermeasures along with the promise of compromise eventually led to negotiations and a US-EU trade deal in July 2025, which set a 15 percent surtaxes cap on many EU goods and 0 percent tariffs on other critical German exports such as aircraft parts, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals (European Commission, 2025).

Despite the landmark deal, Germany is pushing through with diversification to reduce dependence on a single market. The EU-Indonesia trade deal in September 2025 as well as the final rounds of EU-Mercosur trade talks (Business Europe, 2025) demonstrate the country's commitment in de-risking from both the US and China. Future trade pacts with Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand along with tighter foreign investment screening of Chinese products are likewise expected to boost Germany's long-term economic transition (Dutch Financial Times, 2025; US Department of State, 2025). The country has similarly embarked on a "strategic sovereignty" path via the channeling of massive public investments on critical sectors including infrastructure, defense, energy, and technology (US Department of State, 2025).

In **Mexico's** case, President Claudia Sheinbaum pursued direct communication and dialogue with President Trump to diffuse tensions and leverage the USMCA to preserve exemptions for over 84 percent of the country's exports to the US (Corona, 2025). The 25 to 50 percent levies on automobiles, steel, aluminum, and copper, among others, was supposed to be matched with Mexico's "Plan B" retaliatory measures but decided to delay its enforcement, opting to adopt a pragmatic approach and continue negotiations on the elimination of 54 specific non-tariff barriers (Nicas and Mega, 2025). The US also received concessions on border security and China concerns after Mexico stationed thousands of troops to its norther border to curb fentanyl trafficking and illegal immigration and explored additional tariffs on Chinese vehicles imports (Ballesteros, 2025).

This "cool-head" diplomacy proved to be beneficial for the country since the planned tariff raise on non-USMCA products was suspended followed by negotiations between the two parties (Corona, 2025). President Trump expressed his satisfaction with the arrangement: "I like the extension with Mexico...We get a lot of tariffs. They're paying a lot of money" (Martin and Dlouhy, 2025). Notwithstanding this temporary reprieve, Mexico has likewise fortified its domestic industries and somehow adopted a US-like tariff policy against non-FTA goods through Plan Mexico (Mexico News Daily, 2025).

For **Vietnam**, an emerging Southeast Asian economy, proactive diplomacy coupled with unilateral tariff reductions were applied to effectively manage the negative impact of 46 percent US tariff on Vietnamese exports. A day after the announcement of US tariffs, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee To Lam had a phone conversation with President Trump and assured Vietnam's commitment to reduce taxes on US imports to zero percent and to purchase more US goods (Vietnam Law and Legal Forum, 2025). Deputy Prime Minister Bui Thanh Son subsequently hosted a reception for US Ambassador to Vietnam Marc E. Knapper to communicate the country's concern regarding the high reciprocal tariffs. President Trump seemed pleased with the Vietnam's efforts: "very productive call with To Lam, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, who told me that Vietnam wants to cut their tariffs down to zero if they are able to make an agreement



with the US. I thanked him on behalf of our country, and I said I look forward to a meeting in a near future” (Vietnam Law and Legal Forum, 2025). As a gesture of goodwill, Vietnam unilaterally slashed import duties on 23 tariff lines for US goods.

These steps eventually led to lower tariffs (*i.e.*, 20 percent) commencing in August 2025. Moreover, the Joint Statement on United States-Vietnam Framework for an Agreement on Reciprocal, Fair, and Balanced Trade was signed in October 2025 which will guarantee the following: (i) preferential market access for all US industrial and agricultural exports; (ii) purchase of 50 Boeing aircrafts and US agricultural commodities totaling to USD10.9 billion; and (iii) acceptance of US auto safety standards and streamlining approvals for US pharmaceuticals (US Mission to ASEAN, 2025). On the flip side, the US agreed to retain the 20 percent tariff rate and allow the entry of specific Vietnamese goods at zero percent tariff rate. An agreement is being finalized as of the time of writing.

Another important dimension of the US-Vietnam trade relations is Washington’s accusations against Hanoi as a “transshipment point for Chinese goods seeking to circumvent US tariffs and accused Vietnamese facilities of repackaging Chinese products” (Do, 2025). Correspondingly, the Ministry of Industry and Trade enhanced the inspection and supervision of Certificate of Origin (C/O) documents to combat origin fraud and falsification and duty evasion (Viet Nam News, 2025). In spite of the country’s delicate diplomatic balancing act, it has simultaneously joined numerous large FTAs and ventured into non-traditional trade partners hence underlining an aggressive diversification strategy.

Table 1. Trade Profile of Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam and their Responses to the 2025 US Tariffs

Finding	Canada	Germany	Mexico	Vietnam
Level of Development	Advanced	Advanced	Emerging	Emerging
Total Trade with the US (as of Aug 2025)	Second at USD56.6 billion	Sixth at USD18.1 billion	First at USD74.4 billion	Seventh at USD17.9 billion
Response to US Tariffs	Retaliatory tariffs and WTO complaint (short-term); Diversification (long-term)	Retaliate-to-negotiate (immediate); National de-risking strategy (long-term)	“Cool-head” diplomacy (diffuse and negotiate); US-like tariff policy against non-FTA goods (Plan Mexico)	Unilateral tariff reductions on US products; Enter into FTA with the US; Diversification
Existing FTA with US	Yes (USMCA)	No (EU handled negotiations of the US-EU Trade Deal)	Yes (USMCA)	No (Bilateral deal signed in Oct 2025)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Top Trading Partners – August 2025.

#### 4. Discussion

The trade diplomacy strategies of Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam vis-à-vis the 2025 US tariffs possess both parallelisms and peculiarities that substantially contributed to the (non)achievement of their respective objectives. **On the similarities** (see Table 2), all utilized a **multi-pronged approach** characterized by simultaneous efforts at various levels including domestic, bilateral, and regional (*i.e.*, towards EU and/or ASEAN). The decision to pursue several tracks depict the multi-layered and networked landscape of the global trading system comprised of states, multi-national corporations, international organizations (*e.g.*, WTO), and civil society organizations, among others (Pigman, 2016). Another pattern is that the chosen countries are **currently implementing a trade diversification approach** to de-risk and gain “strategic sovereignty” from great powers such as the US and/or China in the long-term. This highlights the diminishing trust and confidence of the cited economies on the stature of the US as a reliable partner and of China as a responsible actor. The search for alternative markets therefore results in rapid restructuring of global supply chains and the rise/reinforcement of economic centres including ASEAN, India, and Mercosur. Next, there is **strong emphasis on building domestic capabilities and resilience** as shown by massive public investments in the workforce and in critical sectors such as automotives, chemicals, and technology (*e.g.*, Buy Canadian Policy, Plan Mexico). Governments hence recognize the volatility and uncertainty of the global economy and the unequivocal need to strengthen local industries. Lastly, **trade diplomacy** has come to mean **more than just an economic endeavour** (Okano-Heijmans, 2016). The previous section showed that political (*e.g.*, controversial television ad in Canada), social (*e.g.*, fentanyl trafficking and illegal immigration in Mexico), and geostrategic (*e.g.*, Vietnam as a transshipment point for Chinese goods) factors have significantly influenced the responses of the selected countries and the success of post-tariff negotiations.

Table 2. Similarities across Trade Diplomacy Strategies of Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam vis-à-vis 2025 US Tariffs

Pattern	Description
Multi-Pronged Approach	Simultaneous efforts at domestic, bilateral, and regional levels
Trade Diversification	Implement strategies to de-risk and gain "strategic sovereignty" from great powers (US/China)
Domestic Capabilities and Resilience	Strong emphasis on building domestic capabilities through massive public investments in critical sectors (e.g., Plan Mexico, Buy Canadian).
Expanded Scope of Diplomacy	Trade diplomacy extends beyond pure economics to include political, social, and geostrategic factors (e.g., immigration, transshipment, controversial ads).

Concerning differences (refer to Table 3), the data reveal that the nature of response is highly influenced by the country's level of development. Canada and Germany – developed economies – matched the US tariffs tit-for-tat and lodged complaints to the WTO while Mexico and Vietnam – emerging economies – delayed retaliatory measures, proactively communicated with the US, and performed positive gestures. This accentuates two interesting observations, namely: (1) countries with greater economic power and capabilities tend to act decisively and forcefully against other actors; and (2) advanced economies still perceive the multilateral trading system, governed by the WTO, as a vital and credible avenue for trade dispute settlement. On the contrary, emerging economies concentrated on de-escalation activities and acquiesced to major concessions given the US' economic standing and clout. In addition, countries with existing FTA with the US (*i.e.*, Canada, Mexico) enjoyed better preferences despite the reciprocal tariffs than those without (*i.e.*, Germany, Vietnam). To illustrate, the USMCA shielded over 80 percent of Canadian and Mexican exports to the US thus providing relief for local businesses while Germany, through the EU, and Vietnam only concluded trade deals with the US, respectively, at the height of the tariff war. Finally, membership to a regional organization does not automatically translate to a regional outcome. This is evident in the signed trade deals between the US and EU (including Germany) and the US and Vietnam (outside of ASEAN). The supranational nature of the EU prohibits individual countries from signing bilateral FTAs with third parties while the intergovernmental character of ASEAN enables Member States to simultaneously enter into bilateral economic agreements.

Table 3. Differences in Trade Diplomacy Strategies of Selected Countries vis-à-vis the 2025 US tariffs

Feature	Advanced Economies (Canada, Germany)	Emerging Economies (Mexico, Vietnam)
Initial Retaliation	Decisive & forceful (Tit-for-tat tariffs, lodged complaints to WTO)	Delayed & de-escalating (delayed measures, proactive communication, major concessions)
View of WTO / Multilateralism	Perceive the WTO as a vital and credible avenue for trade dispute settlement	Concentrated on de-escalation activities; acquiesced to major concessions given U.S. economic clout
FTA Shielding Effect	Canada and Mexico enjoyed better preferences due to USMCA, shielding exports.	Germany (via EU) and Vietnam had no pre-existing shield; concluded deals only at the height of the tariff war.
Regional Organization Membership	Supranational (EU, Germany); Individual member countries cannot sign bilateral FTAs with third parties.	Intergovernmental (ASEAN, Vietnam); Member States may simultaneously enter into bilateral agreements.

## Conclusions and Further Research

The sweeping, expansive 2025 US tariffs is indeed a major challenge for economies operating in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. Plagued with power asymmetry and shifting alliances, the multilateral trading system has been waning as affirmed by the prominence of regional and bilateral FTAs and stalemate in the Doha round negotiations. It is in this vein that trade diplomacy emerges as an indispensable tool used by governments to effectively manage recurring and novel trade issues and ensure sustained economic growth. The experiences of Canada, Germany, Mexico, and Vietnam present important lessons for economies seeking to overcome the hostile economic environment. Nevertheless, deeper examination of the tariff-related strategies and tactics utilized by states should be advanced to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the subject matter. Future research may hence expand the scope to include more economies and/or incorporate a historical analysis of trade diplomacy efforts by select countries. Studies may similarly scrutinize the role of other actors such as the private sector, international/regional organizations, and civil society organizations in participating in dialogue and facilitating cooperation between and among states. Although the term of President Trump and his tariffs may

appear to be temporal, its long-lasting impacts are already manifested in the conscious diversification and inward orientation of several economies. This makes trade diplomacy a current and future topic of interest and contestation.

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### Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

**Gary Ador Dionisio:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Software, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Data curation, Validation, Writing – review and editing.

**Jovito Jose Katigbak:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Software, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Data curation, Validation, Writing – review and editing.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### Declaration of Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors declare that they have not used generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process before submission.

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