

WORLD

China expects new govt of Canada to advance ties

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Beijing expressed hope on Monday that the new Canadian government would maintain an objective and rational perception toward China, and adopt a positive, pragmatic policy to improve bilateral relations.

Mark Carney, former governor of the Canadian central bank and Bank of England, who succeeded Justin Trudeau as the leader of the ruling Liberal Party, is set to become Canada's prime minister and form a new government following his election victory on Sunday.

During a news conference on Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning congratulated Carney on his election and reiterated China's long-standing position of fostering bilateral ties based on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.

Beijing hopes that Canada will work in the same direction with China to advance and enhance the relationship between the two countries, Mao said.

On another issue, Mao defended China's decision on Saturday to impose additional tariffs on some Canadian imports based on the ruling of an anti-discrimination probe, calling the move "fully necessary,

justified, reasonable and lawful".

She emphasized that despite China's repeated persuasion, Canada has continued to impose discriminatory restrictions on certain Chinese imports — which severely violate the rules of the World Trade Organization, disrupt normal trade order, and seriously infringe upon China's legitimate rights and interests.

Mao called on Canada to take concrete steps to rectify its mistakes and ensure a fair, nondiscriminatory and predictable environment for normal trade and cooperation between enterprises in both countries.

Canada announced tariff hikes last year on Chinese electric vehicles, steel and aluminum, which prompted China's anti-discrimination probe in September.

The decision on Saturday came after China's first anti-discrimination probe into foreign countries and regions, which found that Canada's trade restrictions on certain Chinese products constitute discriminatory practices.

The new tariffs, effective on March 20, will include a 100 percent duty on rapeseed oil, oil cakes, and peas imported from Canada, while aquatic products and pork will face an additional 25 percent tariff.



Mark Carney (right) speaks to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after Carney was elected as the leader of Canada's ruling Liberal Party in Ottawa on Sunday. SEAN KILPATRICK VIA AP

Briefly

CHINA Lao foreign minister to pay official visit

Lao Foreign Minister Thongsavanh Phomvihane will pay a four-day official visit to China starting on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning announced on Monday. The visit marks Thongsavanh's first trip to China since taking office in November, as well as the first of its kind by a foreign minister to the country following the annual two sessions this year, which Mao said highlights the high importance both sides place on their ties. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will hold talks with Thongsavanh and they will exchange views on strengthening bilateral and multilateral strategic coordination, she said.

PHILIPPINES Duterte 'will accept' possible arrest by ICC

Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte said in Hong Kong that he was ready for possible arrest amid reports the International Criminal Court was about to issue a warrant over his crackdown on drugs while in power. The office of the current President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Monday no official communication had been received from Interpol yet, but indicated Duterte could be handed over. A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry Commissioner's Office in Hong Kong said it was aware of Duterte's visit, which is "a private holiday". Duterte has denied he authorized extrajudicial killings.

CHINA DAILY — AGENCIES

Calling for peace



Protesters gather during a news conference demanding the scrapping of the Freedom Shield military exercise between the US and South Korea, near the Defense Ministry in Seoul, on Monday. The placards read "Stop war exercise". JEON HEON-KYUN / EPA-EFE

Von der Leyen marks 100 days of 2nd term

EU chief sees Washington as 'an ally' despite differences over Kyiv, tariffs

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
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European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen touted her first 100 days of second term by claiming the US is still an ally despite the actions of President Donald Trump's administration.

Von der Leyen started her speech with a somber reminder of the harsh reality of the world.

"The world around us is changing at lightning speed. Geopolitical shifts are shaking alliances. Decades-old certainties are crumbling," she told a news conference on Sunday.

She did not specifically mention any of the Trump administration's behavior that was regarded as total betrayal in Europe.

When asked by reporters why she still called the US an "ally", she said, "My position is clear: The United States is an ally in the trans-Atlantic alliance".

"In the face of adversity, the US and Europe have always been stronger together," she said.

"Yes, there are differences. We might have different views on some topics, but if you look at the common interests that we have, they always outweigh our differences. So, I think it's important that we work together and find common avenues."

Von der Leyen said "no" when asked if the European Union seeks to "de-risk" from the US, a message contradicting what Friedrich Merz, the likely next German chancellor, has said about becoming "independent" from the US, namely in security and defense.

"That's fine to say, but does Trump America see Europe as an ally? There aren't really any signs of that," Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister and co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations, commented on X on von der Leyen's remarks.

'New reality'

"The EU's staunchly Atlanticist president is not adjusting to the new reality," said Dave Keating, a Brussels-based journalist and commentator, referring to von der Leyen's reputation as extremely pro-US.

Von der Leyen has not secured a face-to-face meeting with Trump since the US president took office on Jan 20.

"I think we will have a personal meeting when the time is right and this is the state of play at the moment," she told reporters when asked about a possible meeting.

Europeans overwhelmingly preferred Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris during the 2024 US presidential

campaign, according to various polls. Trump's return in the last seven weeks has sent shock waves across the EU when he threatened the bloc with punitive tariffs, talked about annexing Greenland, made dramatic policy changes on Ukraine and verbally attacked President Volodymyr Zelensky, who has been regarded as a hero by EU politicians.

On Sunday, von der Leyen praised the "unanimous support" for "ReArm Europe", an 800-billion-euro (\$867 billion) package on defense.

"Europe's economic and innovation potential is an asset for its security. Vice versa, Europe's defense efforts can give a massive boost to a more competitive single market in the mid and long term," she said.

While EU leaders' emergency summit last week agreed to boost defense, they have yet to agree on where the money should come from, given the tough economic situation faced by many member states.

The EU now buys about 80 percent of its defense equipment from non-EU supplies, with a large share coming from US companies.

According to a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on Monday, NATO countries in Europe more than doubled their arms imports in the past five years, more than 60 percent of which were purchases of US weaponry.

Trump won't 'predict' on a recession

By HENG WEILI in New York
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US President Donald Trump, when asked in an interview that aired on Sunday if he was expecting a recession this year, said, "I hate to predict things like that."

In the interview with Fox News' *Sunday Morning Futures* with Maria Bartiromo, which was filmed at the White House on Thursday, Trump said: "There is a period of transition, because what we're doing is very big. We're bringing wealth back to America... It takes a little time, but I think it should be great for us."

On March 4, Trump imposed tariffs of 25 percent on Canada and Mexico, and raised duties to 20 percent on China. But on March 6, he paused tariffs on goods covered under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a trade deal that replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement in Trump's first administration.

Trump also heard complaints from CEOs of US automakers, whose supply chains are highly interconnected with Canada and Mexico. On March 6, he announced a 30-day pause in those tariffs.

The Canadian Department of Finance announced on March 6 that it was moving forward with 25 percent tariffs on C\$155 billion (\$107 billion) worth of imported US goods.

"This was not the outcome Canada hoped for — but we must respond in order to protect our economy and Canadian jobs," the statement said.

This week, Trump reportedly plans to impose 25 percent tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports, and on April 2, across-the-board reciprocal tariffs on most trading partners.

"The public companies want to make sure that we have clarity after April 2, when those reciprocal tariffs go in. Are you going to change anything after that?" Bartiromo asked. "Will we have clarity?"

Trump replied: "We may go up with some tariffs. It depends. We may go up. I don't think we'll go down, or we may go up. They have plenty of clarity. They just use that. That's almost a sound bite."

"They always say that 'We want clarity.' Look, our country has been ripped off for many decades, for many, many decades, and we're not going to be ripped off anymore," Trump said.

Worst week

The flurry of tariff rollouts and reversals jarred the stock market last week, which had its worst week in six months. The S&P 500 has fallen nearly 4 percent since Jan 20, the day Trump was inaugurated.

Bartiromo said, "I think CEOs want to see predictability."

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta on March 6 projected that US economic output will contract by 2.4 percent in the first quarter.

Gennadiy Goldberg, head of US interest rate strategy at TD Securities, told Bloomberg, "Just a few weeks ago, we were fielding questions about whether we think the US economy's reaccelerating — and now all of a sudden, the R-word (recession) is being brought up repeatedly."

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, told CNN: "The kinds of changes that are occurring under Trump are arguably unprecedented, and it's making people very nervous."

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, when asked on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday about forecasts from major investment banks saying that a recession in the next 12 months is possible, replied, "Absolutely not... There's going to be no recession in America."

He said the administration's efforts to bring down government deficits would lower interest rates, while increased oil production would cut energy costs.

The Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, led by Elon Musk has been combing through federal departments and agencies to root out what DOGE considers excess or unnecessary spending.

"It's important for people to realize we run \$2 trillion deficits, and Donald Trump is going to try to balance the budgets of the United States of America," Lutnick said.

US to assess Ukraine's peace stance in Saudi Arabia meeting

WASHINGTON — The US side is planning to use Tuesday's meeting with a Ukrainian delegation in Saudi Arabia in part to determine whether Ukraine is willing to make material concessions to Russia to end the conflict, according to two US officials.

The US delegation will also be watching for signs that the Ukrainians are serious about improving ties with the Donald Trump administration after a meeting between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky devolved into an argument last month, said one of the officials who requested anonymity.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was expected to arrive in Jeddah on Monday for the bilateral talks on Tuesday with Ukrainian officials, who will be led by Andriy Yermak, a top Zelensky aide. Rubio will be joined by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

"You can't say 'I want peace', and, 'I refuse to compromise on anything,'" one of the US officials said of the upcoming talks.

"We want to see if the Ukrainians

are interested not just in peace, but in a realistic peace," said the other official. "If they are only interested in 2014 or 2022 borders, that tells you something."

Trump expressed optimism about the talks. "We're going to make a lot of progress, I believe, this week," he told reporters traveling with him on Air Force One.

Zelensky traveled to Saudi Arabia on Monday to "continue to work for the sake of peace". He said he hopes the talks between his team and US officials will bear results.

Aerial and naval truce

Kyiv will propose an aerial and naval cease-fire with Russia during talks, a Ukrainian official told AFP on Monday.

"We do have a proposal for a cease-fire in the sky and cease-fire at sea because these are the cease-fire options that are easy to install and to monitor and it's possible to start with them," the official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

US officials had met with Russian officials in the Saudi capital of Riyadh in February for separate bilateral discussions which were focused largely on rebuilding a

working relationship after a near-total freeze on official contact under former US president Joe Biden.

On the battlefield, Russian troops have been making slow but steady progress in eastern Ukraine, while thousands of Ukrainian troops who stormed into Russia's Kursk region last summer are nearly surrounded.

The Ukrainian military said on Monday that Russia launched 176 drones during its overnight attack.

The country's armed forces shot down 130 drones and another 42 did not reach their targets, likely due to electronic warfare countermeasures, the military said in a statement on Telegram.

In a statement, National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said Zelensky had made progress in restoring the US-Ukraine relationship following his acrimonious meeting with Trump on Feb 28.

Hanging over Jeddah is the fate of a minerals deal between the US and Ukraine, in which Kyiv wants a security guarantee from Washington in exchange for access to certain mineral resources in Ukraine.

Zelensky and Trump were slated



People look at a damaged building two days after Russian shelling in Donetsk, on Sunday. MARIA SENOVILLA / EPA-EFE

to sign that accord during Zelensky's Washington visit, but it was not signed after the White House blow-up between the two men.

Since then, both sides have expressed a renewed willingness to sign the deal, but no signing has taken place yet. Trump said on Sunday he thought Ukraine would sign

it, with a caveat that he wanted Zelensky's government to show that it wanted peace.

The US State Department and the Ukrainian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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