

# GTM, Washington sets... the record straight??



*'To me, the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariff, and it's my favorite word'*<sup>1</sup>.

Donald Trump, October 15, 2024.

## Summary



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<sup>1</sup> Details in annex 1, pages 6 to 8.

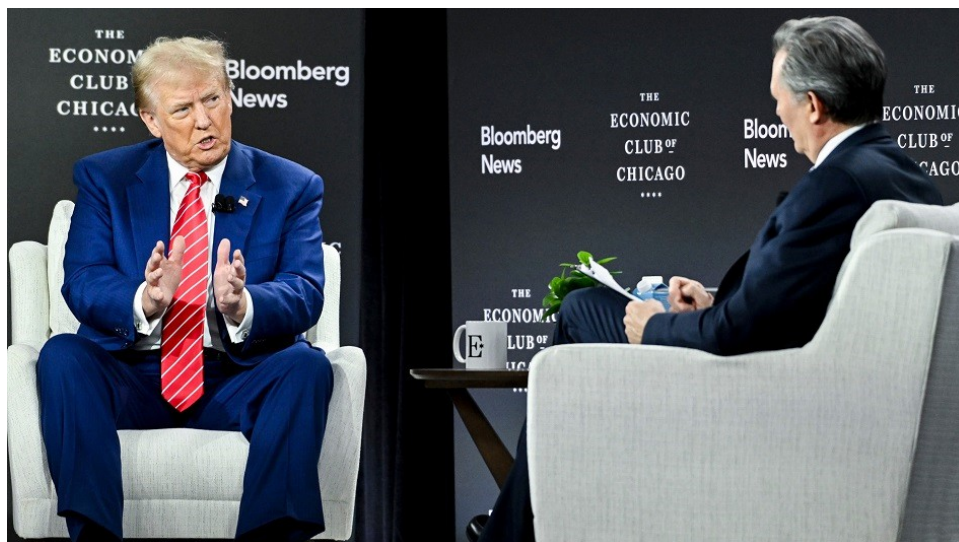


# GTM, Washington sets ... the record straight??

'We will  
abolish the GTM'

'No, the Great  
Transatlantic  
Market'

'And we will  
continue  
to trade,  
but in a strictly  
regulated way'



'Greenwich  
Mean Time ?  
You want  
to abolish  
time?'

'Yes, right'

*Editor's note:  
Fictional dialogue!  
The truth on pages 6  
to 8.*



## Introduction: on both sides of the Atlantic, the dogma of unfortunate globalization?

**This November, the European Commission is pushing for a deepening of freak trade** through the signing of the free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union (EU) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR ou MERCOSUL)<sup>2</sup>.

An agreement aiming at dismantling what remains of customs duties between the 2 zones...

**On the other side of the North Atlantic, the situation is quite different.** The creation of a large transatlantic market is failing !

- The negotiations on a proposed comprehensive free trade agreement between the United States and the EU have been suspended since 2016 thanks to :
  - the mobilization of civil societies in France<sup>3</sup> and elsewhere in the EU,
  - the first election of Donald Trump in the United States.
- In 2024, we're far from coming to such an agreement. Public comments across the Atlantic are indeed quite explicit:

Great Transatlantic Market (GTM): A monstrous project with multiple denominations	
In English	In French
Trans Atlantic Free Trade Agreement/Area (TAFTA)	Accord de Libre Echange Trans-Atlantique (ALETA)
Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)	Partenariat Transatlantique sur le Commerce et l'Investissement (PTCI)

**'to me, the most beautiful word in dictionary is tariff'**  
(see Annex 1, p.8).

<sup>2</sup> An agreement better known under the Spanish denomination Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) and the Portuguese denomination . Mercado Comum do Sul (MERCOSUL). Details in our statement *Mercosur, non à la forfaiture !* available here: <https://solidaires-douanes.org/UE-Mercosur>

<sup>3</sup> See in particular our file *Demain l'atlantide ?* available here: <https://solidaires-douanes.org/GMT-TAFTA>



# I – The pivot policy of the United States: the announcement of a relocation through an assumed regulation of borders.



## A – Behind the conservative ideology, a commercial rationality.

The new president of the United States does not indeed meet most of the values held by our union.

The conservative program that he could apply includes numerous regressions.

Thus, without being exhaustive:

- a weakening of counter powers, particularly in matter of
  - unionism
  - and public broadcasting,
- a questioning of the right to abortion and single-parent families
- as well as a rejection of environmental standards, in particular in the agricultural field<sup>4</sup>.

But the extent of its electoral dynamism among the poor and working population compels us to find economically rational explanatory factors.

Then, contrary to what the attitude and comments of many media in France suggest, moral condemnation is useless and not enough. The US elections are not ours, unless we clearly accept that we would be some kind of colony of this country.

Indeed, the question may be raised when we see:

- the number of useless and often ridiculous anglicisms a certain category of leaders and their followers heavily rely on, both political and business leaders.
- or the importation into our country of struggles that don't concern us nor have anything to do with our history, at least the way they arise in the United States, a country built on the double crime of slavery of Africans and genocide of Native Americans.



## B – The return of customs 'tariffs' (which means customs duties).

On the other hand, what concerns us as customs officers, and could even under certain conditions make us happy, is the love displayed by the 47th President of the United States for customs tariffs, which is by the way a cornerstone of customs activities as a tax administration.


Trump says he wants to put his country first. That's understandable. In order to achieve this, he wants to launch a trade war.

In absolute terms, we would of course prefer a cooperative international policy based on the Havana Charter (details in Annex 2, pages 9 and 10).

Moreover, between allied countries, even a war that is 'only' commercial is questionable, including from a US point of view.

But 3 arguments support this protectionist bias:

- On the one hand, as French citizens, we have no more legitimacy to question Washington's policies than they themselves would have to question ours.
- Besides, from a historical perspective, the United States has always alternated, depending of course on its own interests, between times of relative opening of borders and protectionism.
- Moreover, the idea that some countries, in particular Germany, can wage commercial war against the United States while enjoying military protection of the Pentagon for free can legitimately annoy, as the elections have just showned, most of the US citizens.

 **United States trade deficit**  
(in 2022 in goods and services  
with the main trading partners)

Country / Area	Trade balance (in billions of dollars)	Country / Area	Trade balance (in billions of dollars)
China	-338,1	Japan	-55,0
EU	-165,3	Taiwan	-41,1
including:	-58,1	South Korea	-35,6
Germany	-54,6	Thailand	-36,6
Ireland	-33,7	India	-33,8
Italy	-11,3	Malaysia	-31,0
Austria	-9,8	Indonesia	-21,1
France	-108,2	Suitzerland	-19,0
Mexico	-99,9	Russia	-11,7
Vietnam	-72,5	<b>World total</b>	<b>-1 012,8</b>
Canada			

Source : [https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/ft900/ft900\\_2210.pdf](https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/ft900/ft900_2210.pdf) (p36)

<sup>4</sup> Source : Project 2025 – Presidential transition project. Available here: <https://www.project2025index.com/>.

Critical extracts on trade unionism, public broadcasting, the right to abortion, single-parent families, ecology, can be found pages 81, 247, 284, 476 and 292.





## II – The EU project must rethink itself




### A – the fiction of ‘a friendly based commerce’ facing the harsh reality.

So, the EU has its back to the wall. The fake ideology of a ‘friendly commerce’ is over.

In the current state of ultra-liberalism and capitalism, that has never been anything else than :

- plundering the ressources of poor countries while destroying our industries, exploiting workers elsewhere to put our own people out of work more easily,
- while ravaging the planet in the same time,
- and only for the benefit of a few oligarchs organizing fraud and tax optimization before reinvesting part of their fortune in media that spread moral panics and fake news, blaming easy scapegoats to better cover up their huge responsibility in this disaster.

 **France trade deficit**  
(in 2023, in goods and services with the main trading partners)

Country / Area	Trade balance (in billions of euros)	Country / Area	Trade balance (in billions of euros)
EU including Germany Spain	-47,2 -8,6 -5,4	The whole world (without military equipment)	-122,6
Asia including China Other Asians countries combined	-57,6 -40,8 -16,8	The whole world (including military equipment)	-99,6
United States	-6,6		
Russia	-1,6		

Source : <https://lekiosque.finances.gouv.fr/fichiers/etudes/the-matiques/A2023.pdf> (p19)

The United States, like China, only applies free market principles of free movements of goods and services for export anyway. The other way round, borders are, to say the least, very tight.

Finally, unlike what we often hear, ‘free trade’ hasn’t moved populations of emerging countries out of poverty. The poor population has indeed globally fell from 40% of the population to 10% in their countries. But if we look further afield, we can notice that these good results are due to policies of very protectionist states, such as China or South Korea.

While African countries, which have strictly followed the recommendations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are sinking one after the other into poverty<sup>5</sup>.



### B – Give yourself the means, by getting away from budget austerity.

So there will be a war, a commercial war, and in this commercial war, the soldiers are the customs officers.

It should be noted by the way that this war is not as new as we are led to believe: ever since Barack Obama's terms, the United States did not shy away from strongly regulating its imports.






And Joseph Biden did nothing else with his various investment plans costing a total of 3,500 billion dollars (3,300 billion euros).

Seen from Europe, where stifling and sterile budget austerity is the rule, such a public investment effort is a dream (details of the recovery plans can be found in the adjacent table).

This makes it more urgent than ever the necessity to give up the ideological madness of the unconditional and uncontrolled free circulation of goods and capital, to come to our senses and to finally move towards customs rearmament.



### Post Covid-19 recovery plan

Area	Denomination	Amount (in billions of dollars)	
 <b>United States</b>	American Rescue Plan - ARP	≈ 1 800	
	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - BIL	≈ 1 100	
	Build Back Better Plan - BBBP	≈ 400	
	<b>United States Total</b>	<b>≈ 3 300</b>	
 <b>EU</b> <i>Next generation EU)</i>	 <b>Contributions</b>	France	85
		Germany	105
		<b>EU subtotal</b>	<b>445</b>
	 <b>What is givent back</b>	France	37,5
		Germany	25,6
		<b>EU subtotal</b>	<b>390</b>
	 <b>Balance</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>-47,5!</b>
		Germany	-79,4
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>-55!</b>	

<sup>5</sup> Source : Thomas Porcher, « le débat économique », France Inter, November 8, 2024, at 8 min 40

<https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/le-debat-economique/le-debat-eco-du-vendredi-08-novembre-2024-4899215>



### III – A trade war?



#### A – The SOLIDAIRES Douanes union is ready

**The only union to have never sold out the DGDDI** (Direction Générale des Douanes et Droits Indirects, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise), **SOLIDAIRES Douanes has a project.**

In order to be effective again, we have published a map, including a robust estimate:

- of the staff that will have to be recruited,
- of the equipment that we will need
- but also of the reorganizations that we will have to carry out.

**We will support reforms which for once will truly deserve such a name.**

We know what needs to be done. Both in the Surveillance branch (SURV) and in the Commercial Operations branch (OPCO), in terms of:

- overhaul of ranks and working conditions,
- remuneration as well as housing,
- legal point of view, with the overhaul of the Customs Code
- practice, in mainland France as well as in our overseas territories across the entire surface of the globe.



#### B – EU project on hold? All together at a standstill!

No matter what you think of Trump, he is the grenade that will blow up the cesspit of deregulated free trade.

**Despite the upheavals our world is undergoing, the EU will without a doubt persist in this deadly ideology** that is leading, slowly but surely, the peoples of Europe towards the precipice.

Because it has never thought of itself as anything else than a free trade zone (see Articles 26, 28 and 30 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) since the Treaty of Rome which proclaimed the necessity to remove customs barriers (articles 3 and 9, details in Annex 3, p11)!

**Each time the EU was up against the wall, it could have reformed itself** and finally behave like a real power protecting the nations that make it up. **Nothing happened, nothing else than weak-willed and empty speeches.**

- Did the EU support Airbus in the US Air Force tanker aircraft contract?
- Did the EU have any reaction at all when, under pressure from Joe Biden, France lost the Australian submarine market ?
- Does the EU have any opinion on the extraterritoriality of US law, which has caused us to lose control of several of our industrial flagships, including in areas as sensitive as the turbines of nuclear power plants?
- We have been talking about autonomous European defense for decades. Is it serious as most EU countries buy their weapons from the United States, even though a founding member state like France has a competitive military industry renowned throughout the world?



#### Taking charge to take control of your destiny

**No more than the Soviet Union in its time, the EU, this gerontocracy stuck in its outdated liberal ideology of globalization will therefore not be able to reform itself** and be any match for the empires.

**It will therefore be up to each nation-state and in particular France, to once again take control of its future. We have the power to do so, without a doubt we will soon have to do so.** Our union is ready for it. We are up against the wall.

**It is up to our leaders to finally be up to such high stakes**, if they are able to, because the future will be merciless for the pseudo-naïve, the cowards and all subject people.

Paris, November 21, 2024



# **Annex 1:**

## **United States**

# **Presidential election**

**November 15, 2024**  
**Donald Trump interview**

Source :

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2024-10-15/in-trump-s-economic-plan-tariff-is-the-most-beautiful-word>



### Discussion content

- Journalist : [...] You are on course to push up debt up to 150% of GDP. This is a very businesslike audience, why should they trust you with that ?

- Mr. Trump : Because we are about growth. She [Kamala Harris]'s got no growth whatsoever. And we are all about growth.

We gonna bring companies back to our country. You look at even today as I was driving over I see these empty old beautiful like steel mills and factories that are empty and falling down, some have been converted to senior citizens homes.

But that's not gonna do the trick. And we gonna bring the companies back. We gonna lower taxes still further for companies that are going to make their product in the USA. **We're going to protect those companies with strong tariffs because I am a believer in tariffs I'm not sure that you are.**

I don't think you are. But I congratulate you on this career. But **to me the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariff. And it's my favorite word.** It needs a public relations firm. To help it. **But to me it is the most beautiful word.**

- Mr Trump : Look I brought in with tariffs and I was just getting started. Then Covid came.

Because I tell you what I did a very good job in covid. Nobody knew what the hell it was. I called it the China virus because I liked being a little more accurate when that came. But we got hundreds of billions of dollars just from China alone. And I had not even started yet.

**But tariffs are 2 things if you look at it. Number one is for protection of the companies that we have here and the new companies that will move in because we will have thousands of companies coming into this country.** We will grow it like it has never grown before.

**And we will protect them like when they come in because we we're not gonna have somebody undercut them. And I could give you an example of this if you want ?**

- Journalist : Give me a quick example then I will come back.

- Mr Trump : Because I just found out about it.

So I have been talking about this for the last year. About Detroit , and how horrible it has been. It is just horrible.

We have been talking about Detroit coming back from 40 years and it has never come back and it is very dependent on the car industry.

(continued on next page)



### Discussion content

*(continued from previous page)*

*Well, they have lost 60% of their business over a long period of time. And what happened is I found out, a friend of mine builds auto plants, that's all he does, he builds auto plants, that is what he is good at. He does not want to build an apartment. All he wants to build... and he builds the biggest in the world.*

*And for the last year and a half if anybody has heard me speak, I was talking about Mexico is it, tremendous challenge to us right now, tremendous. China is building massive auto plants in Mexico. And they gonna build them or they gonna take those cars and sell them to the United States they're very near the border.*

*They gonna have all of the advantages and none of the disadvantages. And that's gonna be the end of Michigan. And it's gonna be the end of frankly south carolina. It's gonna be the end of everything.*

*So I've been talking about this and I said to him about 9 months ago. I said you know what? I want you to do me a favor John, his name is John, I don't want to give his last name because he might not like it.*

*But I said I want to see an auto plant. I want to go and see one of these where you press a button and everything works right? I want to see one of the big ones.*

*He said well I could. I said where do we go? I'd like to go to Michigan, I'd like to go to some place in the US.*

*He said no we can't do that. Why? We're not building anything big in the United States. We don't build the big ones here.*

*I said where are you building the biggest ones?*

*He said in Mexico. We're building giant plants. The biggest plants anywhere in the world.*

*In Mexico I said. So you mean they gonna make cars cheaply and have advantages over labor and other things and they're gonna sell them into the US, and they're gonna put Michigan out of business?*

*Is that what. I don't know anything about that. All I do is build the plants. If you want to see a plant we go to Mexico I show you the biggest plant in the world.*

*That was 9 months ago. I saw him. And I talked about it all the time because I think it is a serious threat to our country, because not only autos, but other things.*

*So, then I see him 2 days ago I was talking at another club, very nice club. And like this except I don't know I think you people are probably even wealthier ok. This was in Detroit, ok, which was appropriate. And I was talking I was showing all sorts of charts about their car.in.. she's gone down just like terrible. And I saw him.*

*And I said how are you doing, how have you been? I said could I ask you how are those plants you mentioned those giant plants you're building in Mexico? How is that coming along? Have you finished them?*

*No sir, they abandoned the project when they heard you were running. They abandoned the project when they saw that you were winning and doing well. [...]*





# **Annex 2:**

## **Customs war?**

## **Alternative trade!**

**Presentation of  
the International Trade Organization  
and of the 1948 Havana Charter.**



## Annex 2: Customs war? Alternatif trade!

*(Presentation of the ITO and the Havana Charter of 1948)*

If Mr Trump wants to put his campaign words into statesman actions; it is up to him to put right what could not be done in 1948: the adoption of the Havana Charter!



### A – History

This charter provided for the creation of an International Trade Organization and **was developed in line with the San Francisco Conference**, paving the way for the creation of the United Nations (UN).

It was the new United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) that decided to convene an international conference on trade and employment<sup>6</sup>.

Far from being utopian, it results from a several months-long round of negotiations (from November 1947 to March 1948) between experts and jurists.



*A studious atmosphere (photograph taken on March 24, 1948)!*



### B – A balanced trade

Barely emerging from the horror of World War Two, **the framers of this charter wanted to change ('reform') the way international trade works.**

They were aware that the trade imbalances (visible in terms of balances of trade) between the two world wars were one of the reasons:

- of the international economic stagnation that occurred following the financial crisis of 1929...
- the destabilization of liberal democracies and their replacement by authoritarian regimes in various countries,
- of an exacerbation of international tensions, ultimately leading to World War Two.



### D – The outcome

**Signed by the various government bodies on March 24, 1948<sup>8</sup>, it unfortunately could not come into force** because of its non-ratification by the United States Senate (the parliamentary majority having changed in the meantime).

**Diplomacy being an 'art of seeking to combine points of view' (!)**, it was agreed at the time to continue working on what was consensus between everybody, including the United States Senate, on this Havana Charter. Namely the reduction of customs duties.

This was the beginning of the rounds of negotiation on the General Agreement on Customs Tariffs and Trade (GATT)... prefiguring the future WTO.

The framers of the Havana Charter considered that this reduction was possible at the end of the process, once wages and social contributions would be equal, and then the process was reversed!

**It was the beginning of undistorted free trade facilitation<sup>9</sup>...** The beginning of a missed historic opportunity.

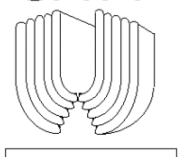


### C – The means

This is why this charter provided for:

- an integration into the UN as a specialized agency<sup>7</sup> and,
- the balance of payments,
- the adoption of fair labor standards,
- control of capital flows,
- a ban on dumping and the inclusion of full employment into its objectives.

GATT



<sup>6</sup> Text available on the World Trade Organization website: [https://www.wto.org/french/docs\\_f/legal\\_f/havana\\_f.pdf](https://www.wto.org/french/docs_f/legal_f/havana_f.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Which the WTO isn't. The WTO is independent from the United Nations. This brings consequences.

<sup>8</sup> Which is at least a decade before the Cuban Revolution (1958-1959) and the rise to power of Fidel Castro in February 1959?

<sup>9</sup> More details in *Le Monde diplomatique* articles: <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/mav/91/NIKONOFF/52458> and *Encyclopedia Universalis*: <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/charte-de-la-havane/>



# Annex 3:

## EU ban on customs barriers

**A few articles from the EEC and EU treaties.**

### **Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (TEEC),**

*also known as the Treaty of Rome*

*which was signed on March 25, 1957, and came into force on January 1st, 1958. It was renamed Treaty establishing the European Community after the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty.*

### **Treaty of Lisbon amending the EU treaty and the Treaty establishing the European Community**

*turning*

*the Treaty establishing the European Community into the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*

*which was signed on December 13, 2007, and came into force on December 1st, 2009.*

*It ignored the rejection by people from different countries through referendums of the Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe.*

#### **Article 3**

For the purposes set out in Article 2, the activities of the Community shall include, as provided in this Treaty and in accordance with the timetable set out therein

(a) the elimination, as between Member States, of customs duties and of quantitative restrictions on the import and export of goods, and of all other measures having equivalent effect;

(b) the establishment of a common customs tariff and of a common commercial policy towards third countries;

(c) the abolition, as between Member States, of obstacles to freedom of movement for persons, services and capital; [...]

#### **Article 9**

1. The Community shall be based upon a customs union which shall cover all trade in goods and which shall involve the prohibition between Member States of customs duties on imports and exports and of all charges having equivalent effect, and the adoption of a common customs tariff in their relations with third countries.

#### **Article 26 (ex Article 14 TEC)**

[...] 2. The internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties.

#### **Article 28 (ex Article 23 TEC)**

1. The Union shall comprise a customs union which shall cover all trade in goods and which shall involve the prohibition between Member States of customs duties on imports and exports and of all charges having equivalent effect, and the adoption of a common customs tariff in their relations with third countries. [...]

#### **Article 30 (ex Article 25 TEC)**

Customs duties on imports and exports and charges having equivalent effect shall be prohibited between Member States. This prohibition shall also apply to customs duties of a fiscal nature.

#### **Article 34 (ex Article 28 TEC)**

Quantitative restrictions on imports, and all measures having equivalent effect, shall be prohibited between Member States.

#### **Article 35 (ex Article 29 TEC)**

Quantitative restrictions on exports, and all measures having equivalent effect, shall be prohibited between Member States.

#### **Sources**

- Treaty of Rome of 1957 : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teec/sign>
- Treaty of Lisbon and consequences : <http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/lis/sign> and <http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu/2012/oj>

## **GTM, Washington sets... the record straight??**



*'To me, the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariff, and it's my favorite word'*

Donald Trump, October 15, 2024.



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