



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 16, 2018

## U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Turkish Steel; Turkey Retaliates

President Trump, in an August 10 proclamation, said that he was following a recommendation from Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to apply a higher tariff to a list of countries, including Turkey. Based on that, the president determined that it was necessary to impose a 50-percent *ad valorem* tariff on steel articles imported from Turkey, beginning on August 13. Trump noted: “The Secretary has advised me that this adjustment will be a significant step toward ensuring the viability of the domestic steel industry.”



The announcement quickly sent the value of the Turkish lira to a record low against the U.S. dollar.

In response, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (shown) said on August 14 that his country would boycott electronic products from the United States. Indeed, videos posted on social media can be found showing [Turks smashing iPhones with hammers](#), shooting them, dumping Coca-Cola down the toilet, and tearing up fake U.S. dollars in protest of the U.S. sanctions and in support of Erdogan.

However, Erdogan’s pledge drew mixed reactions from Turkish shopkeepers quoted by Reuters. “We supported him with our lives on July 15,” shopkeeper Arif Simsek said, referring to a failed 2016 military coup. “And now we will support him with our goods. We will support him until the end.”

But another shopkeeper, Umit Yilmaz, reacted quite differently: “I have a 16-year-old daughter. See if you can take her iPhone away.... All these people are supposed to not buy iPhones now? This can’t be.”

An August 16 Reuters report cited a statement from Turkish Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan, reported by the state-run Anadolu news agency, that his country’s doubling of customs tariffs on some imported U.S. products would amount to \$533 million.

Turkey doubled tariffs on some U.S. imports including alcohol, cars, and tobacco in retaliation for U.S. increases.

The United States has taken punitive actions against Turkey for reasons other than economic, however. On August 1, the United States imposed sanctions on two Turkish cabinet ministers because of Turkey’s detainment of U.S. evangelical Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was arrested in 2016 and charged with having terrorist connections. After spending two years in jail, Brunson was recently released to house arrest and his trial is set to resume in October.

Trump first threatened Turkey over the Brunson case in July, when he tweeted: “The United States will impose large sanctions on Turkey for their long time detainment of Pastor Andrew Brunson, a great Christian, family man and wonderful human being. He is suffering greatly. This innocent man of faith should be released immediately!”

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