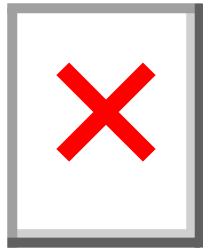


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Sent: Apr 08, 2025 09:58:11.000000000 UTC
Subject: Chinese walls
To: jperperian@cityofmelrose.org <jperperian@cityofmelrose.org>

Apr 08, 2025

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BY JACK BLANCHARD



Presented by

With help from Eli Okun, Garrett Ross and Bethany Irvine



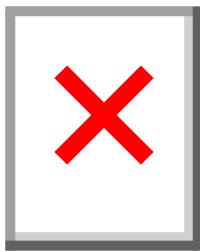
Listen to today's Daily Briefing

Good Tuesday morning. This is **Jack Blanchard**, offering hearty congrats to comeback kings the Florida Gators ... and commiserations to the Houston Cougars after a [dismal final play](#) in the NCAA men's final game. [***The Curse of Cruz strikes again.***](#)

In today's Playbook ...

- Reciprocal tariffs kick in tonight as China talks tough on trade ...
- ... but markets rally as **Donald Trump** decides it's time to cut some deals.
- SCOTUS rules on El Salvador deportations — and both sides claim the win.

DRIVING THE DAY



Asian equities collapsed on a black Monday on April 7 for markets after China hammered the United States with its own hefty tariffs, ramping up a trade war many fear could spark a

LAST SHOPPING DAY BEFORE ‘LIBERATION’: Donald Trump’s global trade war will shift into overdrive tonight when his “reciprocal” tariffs on imported goods come into force. Last week’s [meme-friendly scorecard](#) becomes this week’s stark economic reality when the most punitive U.S. tariff regime in over a century comes into effect at **midnight**. And the trade struggle with China is only intensifying after Beijing last night warned of further retaliation, having been threatened by Trump with even more severe tariffs. But the news elsewhere is looking rosier for the stock market, with clear signs the president is ready to cut some deals.

Bull vs. China shop: The big — if unsurprising — news out of Beijing last night was that the Chinese government is not backing down in its escalating standoff with Trump. China responded to last week’s “Liberation Day” announcement with new trade barriers of its own — further enraging the U.S. president and triggering a threat of even bigger tariffs on Chinese goods. But Beijing is refusing to budge, and this could all get real messy, real fast.

In their own words: In a statement last night responding to Trump’s [latest social media threats](#), the Chinese Ministry of Commerce accused America of “blackmail” and said Beijing would “never accept” such treatment. “If the U.S. insists on going its own way, China will fight it to the end,” the Chinese statement read, [per AP](#). “If the U.S. escalates its tariff measures, China will resolutely take countermeasures to safeguard its own rights and interests.” [Analysts tell the FT](#) they don’t see China backing down.

All of which means ... that in theory, tariffs of *104 percent* on Chinese imports come into force tonight. (That’s [20 percent](#) fentanyl + [34 percent](#) reciprocal + [50 percent](#) presidential hissy fit, trade equation fans.) If it comes to fruition, that’s going to be a pretty massive deal for consumers, given how much cheap stuff America buys from over there.

But but but: The picture *beyond* China is looking a bit less dramatic (for now) after Trump bowed to pressure / showed off his dealmaking genius (delete as preferred) and signalled he’s ready to use these tariffs as leverage for negotiations. Japan bagged the lucky first ticket and will open trade talks shortly with Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent** and U.S. Trade Representative **Jamieson Greer**. Other U.S. allies will be looking on

enviously, but with rising hope that tonight's tariffs will ultimately be short-lived. Crucially, the stock market free-fall appears to have been halted, and key Asian markets *rose* on opening this morning. [Reuters has the latest on that](#).

Not just Japan: Trump spoke to Vietnam's leader **To Lam** last week about [cutting tariffs on both sides](#), while Israeli PM **Benjamin Netanyahu** essentially [opened direct talks](#) at the White House yesterday. Italian PM **Giorgia Meloni** expects to visit the White House next week, my Brussels Playbook colleague [Sarah Wheaton reports](#), and there will be plenty more leaders lining up behind. Indeed, Bessent [told Fox News](#) close to 70 nations have now been in touch to open talks. [The NYT](#) has more detail on some of the others.

A steer from Greer? With excellent timing, Jamieson Greer is in the Senate this morning for a big committee hearing on the admin's trade policy. He's due up at **10 a.m.**, and you can expect plenty of cable news networks to be following the hearing live. In pre-prepared remarks ([per POLITICO's Doug Palmer and colleagues](#)), Greer will echo Bessent about the number of nations now seeking trade talks or offering to cut tariffs on the U.S., telling senators: "These obviously are welcome moves." The overall shift in tone feels pretty clear.

Other moments to watch for: We also get a **1 p.m.** televised briefing today from White House press secretary **Karoline Leavitt**, and we'll see a fair bit of Trump himself, too. The president's schedule includes a **3 p.m.** executive order session to revive ****checks notes**** coal-fired power plants, as [POLITICO's Josh Siegel scooped](#), and a **6:45 p.m.** speech at an NRCC dinner at the National Building Museum. So there's plenty of opportunity to tell us more about what's being planned.

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FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: So watch out Trump: Plenty of GOP types have been unnerved by the events of the past seven days, [POLITICO's Adam Cancryn and Myah Ward report](#). "Higher prices and slower growth are exactly the opposite of what Americans voted for," notes Republican pollster **Whit Ayres**.

EXCLUSIVE: ALL GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN: But inside the White House itself, the outlook is downright rosy among a select group of Trump's inner circle, POLITICO White House bureau chief Dasha Burns writes in to Playbook. "Ebullient" is how one insider close to the administration described the mood in the West Wing. "Nobody is fearful. They knew [this stock market reaction] was coming. They feel like everything is going according to plan."

Promises made, promises kept? Trump's inner circle feels strongly that levying tariffs was a promise made to working-class voters, and that they're delivering. The Trump team's "backbone is as tough as I have ever seen on any issue," the same insider told Dasha.

Poll position: Three people who have seen the numbers tell Dasha private polling circulating among Trump's allies is also boosting spirits. It shows the tariffs strategy is playing well among working-class voters who agree with Trump that other nations have taken advantage of the U.S., they say. "I thought we were getting clobbered but we're not," one of the people added. (Playbook has not independently reviewed the numbers, but they are informing the mood inside the White House.)

So how about these deals? "We'll see what countries come to us with," the same person said. "If they present deals that are better for the worker, we'll take them." Insiders tell Dasha to expect a country-by-country approach. Trump believes strongly that some nations (read: China) have been ripping off the U.S. for too long; the bar for budging will be much higher there. But others may bring a deal to the table that advances American interests, they say. Watch this space.

GREAT SCOTT? POLITICO's [Megan Messerly and Sam Sutton revealed](#) that Bessent lobbied Trump on Sunday to switch his tariff messaging onto dealmaking. "Bessent's view was, 'The markets will keep melting unless you shift,'" one person with knowledge of the conversation told POLITICO.

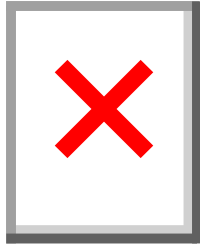
“You’re not going to abandon the policy, but you have to talk about negotiating and what the endgame is.”

Also lobbying Trump for lower tariffs: Elon Musk, [per WaPo’s Elizabeth Dwoskin and colleagues](#), along with a selection of other business chiefs. And plenty of MAGA-friendly members of Congress have started to speak out too, as [POLITICO’s Jordain Carney and Benjamin Guggenheim report](#).

For Pete’s sake: All of this looks like bad news for Trump’s tariff supremo **Peter Navarro**, who — along with Commerce Secretary **Howard Lutnick** — has been pushing for a hardline approach. Indeed, Navarro’s [latest article on tariffs in the FT](#) insisting “this is not a negotiation” was published at 1:45 p.m. yesterday — exactly half an hour before Bessent announced formal negotiations with Japan. Ouch. The final nail in the coffin came later when the White House later [deleted a post on X](#) endorsing Navarro’s op-ed, per WaPo’s Aaron Blake. The briefing against Lutnick is also getting louder, as evidenced by [this brutal Josh Dawsey takedown](#) in the Journal last night.

But before you all start checking your 401(k)s excitedly... It’s important to note this new approach still lacks any real detail. As Megan said in [this great tariff roundtable discussion](#) with ace POLITICO colleagues last night, it’s unclear how many tariff deals Trump is actually prepared to strike, or how meaningful they’ll be. The assumption has to be that a fair number of these tariffs are here to stay... which is probably why White House staffers are mulling plans to bail out U.S. exporters, [per Bloomberg’s Nancy Cook and Saleha Mohsin](#).

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COURT IN THE ACT

SCOTUS WATCH: Both sides claimed victory last night after the Supreme Court's dramatic intervention in the case of the Trump administration's mass deportation of Venezuelan migrants to an El Salvador prison. Trump and his top team flooded the airwaves with victory celebrations after the court's

conservatives overturned judge **James Boasberg's** ruling blocking deportations under the wartime Alien Enemies Act, [per POLITICO's Josh Gerstein](#). And the court ruled any future hearings must be heard in Texas — where deportees are held — rather than here in D.C., effectively throwing Boasberg off the case. You can hear the GOP champagne corks popping from here.

But but but: [POLITICO's Kyle Cheney notes](#) the ruling is actually pretty mixed for Team Trump, given the judges also ruled that deportees must never again be denied the chance to defend themselves before they are sent to **Nayib Bukele's** mega-prison. That means future deportations will require proper court hearings first, which may delay the process significantly (while also reducing the chance of deporting the wrong people, as has clearly happened in this case).

And there's more: “The Supreme Court also left entirely unresolved whether Trump is using the Alien Enemies Act properly,” Kyle writes in via a 2:07 a.m. message to Playbook (he has a toddler at home too, bless him). “This ruling is, in effect, very narrow and guaranteed to force new challenges to the specific invocation of his war powers — does Tren de Aragua really count as a ‘foreign government?’ Can a gang really be considered an invading force for purposes of the AEA? Those are still live issues. They’ll just be decided in Texas rather than Washington, and likely be SCOTUS-bound once again.”

The dissent: The three liberal justices and Justice **Amy Coney Barrett** — the Trump appointee showing an increasingly independent streak — said they would have left Boasberg's block in place.

The other big question: Is there any recourse for the men already deported, given the Supreme Court has now ruled they should have been given due process to appeal?

Still among them: **Kilmar Abrego Garcia**, the man whom members of the Trump administration have admitted it should not have deported to El Salvador. He remains in jail after Chief Justice **John Roberts** temporarily stayed a lower court's rulings that demanded he be brought back by last night, [per CNN](#). We're expecting a decision from SCOTUS on his future any day.

MEANWHILE ON THE HILL

RECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES: Speaker **Mike Johnson** is still aiming for a floor vote tomorrow on the GOP’s budget plan — which likely means getting it through the House Rules Committee today, [POLITICO’s Jennifer Scholtes and colleagues report](#). The speaker got crucial backup last night from Trump, who piled public pressure on the holdouts in [a Truth Social post](#) that declared: “THE HOUSE MUST PASS THIS BUDGET RESOLUTION, AND QUICKLY.” Border czar **Tom Homan** also waded in, [telling Semafor’s Shelby Talcott](#) that he urgently needs the cash for immigration enforcement.

Hardest job in politics: But Johnson is still trying to placate both ends of his conference, meeting last night with Freedom Caucus members who want steeper cuts, *and* moderates concerned about Medicaid cuts. Rep. **Ralph Norman** (R-S.C.) [told CNN’s Sarah Ferris](#) he’s undecided on the Rules vote today, while the informal count [from CNN’s Haley Talbot](#) finds more than a dozen House Republicans opposed or undecided on the wider vote. [Fox News’ Chad Pergram reports](#) there are five to 10 fiscal-hawk holdouts who may not be swayed even by Trump.

Elsewhere on the Hill: The Senate will take confirmation and procedural votes throughout the day on **Elbridge Colby’s** nomination as undersecretary of Defense for policy, **George Glass’** nomination as ambassador to Japan and **Mike Huckabee’s** nomination as ambassador to Israel. ... The House Administration Elections Subcommittee will hear about the 2024 election from five secretaries of state at **2 p.m.** ... Rep. **Anna Paulina Luna** (R-Fla.) has largely capitulated to Johnson in the fight over proxy voting, ending up with a concession which “is unlikely to give absent mothers much opportunity to influence what happens in the House,” [NYT’s Annie Karni reports](#).

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BEST OF THE REST

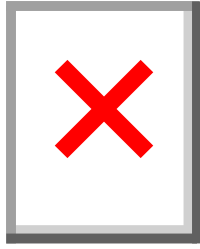
IRAN LATEST: Trump announced that the U.S. and Iran will take a major step forward by holding **direct** talks Saturday. Those would be the first such talks in several years. But Iran responded that the two countries will have **indirect** talks in Oman that day, [NYT's David Sanger and Farnaz Fassihi report](#). **But but but:** “After Mr. Trump spoke on Monday ... three Iranian officials said Ayatollah [**Ali**] **Khamenei** had shifted his position to potentially allow direct talks,” if the indirect talks go well.

SIREN: [“Trump administration food aid cuts put millions at risk, aid sources say,”](#) by Reuters’ Jonathan Landay and Patricia Zengerle: “The U.N. World Food Programme warned that the termination of U.S. funding for emergency food assistance ‘could amount to **a death sentence for millions** of people facing extreme hunger and starvation.’”

THE MAHA AGENDA: HHS Secretary **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**, currently on tour through the Southwest, said he’ll have the CDC end its recommendations for fluoridating water, [AP’s Hannah Schoenbaum and Mike Stobbe report](#) from Salt Lake City. The EPA said it will review the matter too. ... Ousted FDA vaccine leader **Peter Marks** [told AP’s Matthew Perrone](#) that Kennedy forced him out after he opposed granting Kennedy’s team the ability to edit a crucial vaccine database.

RACE FOR THE STATES: Rep. **John James** (R-Mich.) announced that he’ll run for governor of Michigan, giving the GOP a high-profile entrant in what could be a crowded primary field, [per The Detroit News](#). His decision opens up a swing Macomb County-based House seat Democrats hope to flip in 2026.

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FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: **Deb Haaland's** New Mexico gubernatorial campaign has raised a record \$3 million from more than 39,000 donors since she entered the race in mid-February.

FEELING SPECIAL: Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott** announced that the special election to replace the late Rep. **Sylvester Turner** (D-Texas) will take place

Nov. 4, [per the Houston Chronicle](#). That angered Democrats, given that it leaves the seat open for several months, padding the GOP's House margin.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: AIPAC is launching a six-figure ad campaign in the 11 states with senators who voted for Sen. **Bernie Sanders'** (I-Vt.) motions to block arms sales to Israel. The 30-second spot will air on connected TV and social media starting today. [The Chris Van Hollen version](#)

DEMOCRACY WATCH: ["NC Supreme Court temporarily halts order for 60,000 challenged voters to prove eligibility,"](#) by The Charlotte Observer's Kyle Ingram.

ANOTHER ONE: The Trump administration may target Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, [NYT's Maggie Haberman, Ben Protess and Michael Schmidt report](#). The law firm used to be home to now-Deputy AG **Todd Blanche**, until "most of the firm's leadership balked at the idea" of Blanche representing Trump in 2023. It's not clear if that's the reason for retribution.

THE PURGE: The Trump administration has fired Navy Vice Adm. **Shoshana Chatfield**, a top leader at NATO, [Reuters' Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali and Lili Bayer scooped](#). The reason isn't yet clear.

MAN OF STEEL: There may be life yet in Nippon Steel's bid to buy U.S. Steel, as Trump ordered a new Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States national security review of it, [per the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's Anya Litvak](#).

STICKING TO HER GUNS: AG **Pam Bondi** is planning a series of major moves to unwind gun control policies, [NYT's Glenn Thrush reports](#). Bondi is expected to scrap the "zero tolerance" policy that pulls licenses from lawbreaking gun dealers, and she'll order reviews of a pistol brace ban and a background check requirement for private sales.

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SPOTTED: Sen. **Rick Scott** (R-Fla.) at the Royal Sands for a Florida Gators watch party of the NCAA national championship game last night. [Pic](#)

SPOTTED: At last night's annual gala dinner for the Shakespeare Theater Company at the Mellon Auditorium, where guests dined on wedged beet salad, butter-poached beef tenderloin and Chilean sea bass. Honorees included **Hugh Bonneville**, **Abbe Lowell** and Rep. **Michael McCaul** (R-Texas). ... Gala co-chairs **Emily Lenzner**, **Michael Paese** and **Melissa Moss**. ... Plus **Katty Kay**, Washington Mayor **Muriel Bowser**, Sens. **Chris Coons** (D-Del.) and **Amy Klobuchar** (D-Minn.), U.K. Ambassador **Peter Mandelson** and **Reinaldo Avila da Silva**, **Nichole Francis Reynolds**, **Lee Satterfield** and **Patrick Steel**, **Elizabeth Bagley**, **Carolyn Maloney**, **Jane Harman**, **Nicole Greenidge-Hoskins**, **Renée Fleming**, **Anit Antenucci**, **Simon Godwin**, **Lisa Winans**, **Angela Gieras**, **Sarah Kahn**, **Molly Meegan**, **Chris Matthews** and **Kathleen Matthews**.

BEST WISHES: **Donald Norcross** [has been hospitalized](#) for a "medical event likely related to his gallbladder," but is in stable condition.

NEW GIG: **Amber Ruffin** [will host](#) the PEN America gala after getting cut from the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT: **Marco Rubio's** security detail supervisor [was arrested](#) after a hotel fight in Brussels.

SPOTTED at the 31st commemoration of the Rwandan genocide at the Capitol yesterday, hosted by Rwandan Ambassador **Mathilde Mukantabana**: Rep. **Tim Walberg** (R-Mich.), Guinean Ambassador **Troy Fitrell**, **Catalina Crespo Sancho**, **Yannick Tona**, **Peter Pham** and **Damien Cristofari**.

SPOTTED last night at the Russell Senate Office Building for a reading of the new play "Electionland," by former Senate staffer **Jean Parvin Bordewich**, about the 1876 election of Rutherford B. Hayes: **Sharon Pratt**, **Colleen Joy Shogan**, **Jane Campbell**, **Spencer Overton** and **Brad Fitch**.

MEDIA MOVE — Lauren Skowronski has been named SVP of global comms at CNBC. She most recently was senior director of comms at Snap, and is an NBCUniversal alum.

TRANSITIONS — Jen Berlin is now VP of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' economic security and technology department. She most recently was assistant national cyber director for stakeholder engagement at the White House. ... **Adrienne Petz** is now a partner at Trident GMG. She most recently was interim global director of crisis comms at McDonald's. ... **Sydney Butler** is now VP of government affairs and special projects for Paramount Global. She previously was chief of staff in the secretary of the Senate's office. ...

... **Becky Boles** is joining the Herald Group as chief client services officer. She most recently has been founder of Scout Strategies. ... **Anthony Giannetti** is rejoining TC Energy as director of external relations. He previously established and led the U.S. external relations function at South Bow. ... **Alain Xiong-Calmes** is now a public policy manager at Airbnb. He most recently was Northeast political director for the Harris campaign.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS — Alyssa Anderson, chief of staff for Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.), and **Max Becker**, VP at Smith-Free Group, got married Saturday in Alexandria, Virginia. They met when Alyssa was working as scheduler in the personal office of then-NRCC Chair Tom Emmer (R-Minn.) and Max was his special assistant at the NRCC. [Pic](#)

— **Naomi Shavin**, senior podcast producer at Bloomberg, and **Ben Samuels**, U.S. correspondent for Haaretz, got married Sunday night in Atlanta, where guests enjoyed Southern BBQ, a Middle Eastern spread, 2000s indie remixes and Atlanta hip-hop. The couple met on Bumble when Naomi messaged Ben, "hey fellow journo." [Pic](#) ... **SPOTTED: Justin Green, Erica Pandey, Natalie Daher, Ashley Gold, Alison Snyder** and **Miriam Kramer**.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): TAG Strategies' **Woodham Kemmer**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Sen. **Ron Johnson** (R-Wis.) ... **Chuck Todd** ... POLITICO's **Nicholas Wu, Christian Guirrerri, Grant Verploeg, Emily Lussier** and **Corbin Hiar** ... **Mary Beth Cahill** ... former House Majority Leader **Tom DeLay** ... **Dave Shaw** ... **Seymour Hersh** ... **Robin**

Sproul of Javelin ... **Mike Leiter** of Skadden Arps ... WaPo's **Zach Goldfarb** ... **John Williams** of Amundsen Davis ... **Annie Palisi** ... **Mike Cohen** of the Cohen Research Group ... Ro's **Meghan Pianta** ... **Jim Garamone** ... **Jessica Nigro** of Lucid Motors ... **Joel Rubin** ... **David Crane** ... **Melissa Wagoner Olesen** ... **Aaron Klein** ... **Dan Gainor** ... **Emily Hamilton** ... **Brencia Berry** ... **Susan Brophy** ... Gray TV's **Priscilla Huff** ... **Ellen Fern** ... **CJ Warnke** of House Majority PAC ... **Raymond Siller** ... **Bryant Gardner** of Winston and Strawn ... **Allen Jamerson**

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*Send Playbookers tips to playbook@politico.com or text us at **202-556-3307**. Playbook couldn't happen without our deputy editor **Zack Stanton** and Playbook Daily Briefing producer **Callan Tansill-Suddath**.*

Correction: Yesterday's Playbook misspelled Wayne Gretzky's name.

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