
CHINA URGES SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS TO REJECT TRADE PROTECTIONISM

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13.09.2018

Deutsche Welle (13 September 2018)

Speaking at the regional World Economic Forum in Hanoi, Vietnam, China's Vice Premier Hu Chunhua (pictured above left) said the Southeast Asian countries must support multiculturalism and reject unilateral trade policies.

"Some individual countries' protectionist and unilateral measures are gravely undermining the rules-based multilateral regime, posing a most serious hazard to the world economy," Hu said Wednesday, in an apparent reference to China's ongoing trade dispute with the US.

"We must categorically reject protectionism and unilateralism, firmly support multilateralism, and uphold world economic and multilateral trading regime," he added.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration imposed steep tariffs on steel and aluminum from key trading partners, as well as punitive duties on \$50 billion (22 billion) in annual imports from China, with the possibility that another \$200 billion will be imposed soon.

Read more: [US trade deficit surges, hits all-time highs with China and EU](#)

China's Ministry of Commerce said last month that it had held "constructive meetings" with US officials after talks resumed between the countries over the trade spat.

The resumption of talks, however, did not prevent an additional \$16 billion of tariffs being levied by the US and China on each other's goods.

Southeast Asian countries 'to benefit from US-China spat'

Countries in Southeast Asia, whose economies depend heavily on China and the US, are closely watching the tariff dispute between Beijing and Washington.

But economic experts say the US-China trade conflict is likely to boost Southeast Asian economies in the short term.

Read more: [Southeast Asian nations defy Donald Trump's trade protectionism](#)

Several Chinese firms have already moved their production to regional countries in a bid to avoid US tariffs.

"ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries don't want to count their chickens before they hatch," Fred Burke, a managing partner at multinational law firm Baker McKenzie's

Vietnam offices, told AFP news agency.

"But I think they see it on a net basis as a gain for them because it means shifting manufacturing into Southeast Asia that was... (earlier) in China," he added.

But Rajiv Biswas, Asia-Pacific chief economist at IHS Markit analytical firm, says the region is "very export-driven.... so any shift toward more trade barriers... is not good."

ASEAN trade grew by a value of nearly \$1 trillion between 2007 and 2014, according to the World Economic Forum, as the 10-nation bloc has enthusiastically embraced trade liberalization contrast to US President Donald Trump's policies.

Southeast Asian countries are also looking for stronger regional economic alliances to counter Trump's protectionist measures.

<https://www.dw.com/en/china-urges-southeast-asian-nations-to-reject-trade-protectionism/a-45452893>

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