

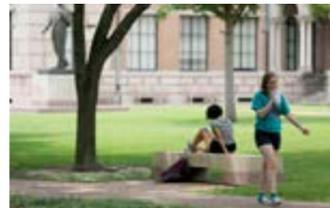


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U.S.-China talks on trade war resume as new tariffs kick in

BEIJING/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States and China escalated their acrimonious trade war on Thursday, implementing punitive 25 percent tariffs on \$16 billion worth of each other's goods, even as mid-level officials from both sides resumed talks in Washington.

The world's two largest economies have now slapped tit-for-tat tariffs on a combined \$100 billion of products since early July, with more in the pipeline, adding to risks to global economic growth. China's Commerce Ministry said Washington was "remaining obstinate" by implementing the latest tariffs, which kicked in on both sides as scheduled at 12:01 p.m. in Beijing (12:01 a.m. EDT/0401 GMT).

"China resolutely opposes this, and will continue to take necessary countermeasures," it said in a brief statement, adding that Beijing will file a complaint over the latest tariffs with the World Trade Organization.

The tariffs, scheduled weeks ago, did not interfere with the start of a second day of trade talks in Washington led by Chinese Commerce Vice Minister Wang Shouwen and David Malpass, the U.S. Treasury under secretary for international affairs.

Wang, asked by a Reuters reporter how the talks were progressing, declined to comment as he and his delegation entered the U.S. Treasury building on Thursday morning.

President Donald Trump has threatened to put duties on almost all of the more than \$500 billion of Chinese goods exported to the United States annually unless Beijing agrees to sweeping changes to its intellectual property practices, industrial subsidy programs and tariff structures, and buys more American goods.

That figure would be far more than China imports from the United States, raising concerns that Beijing could consider other forms of retaliation, such as making life more difficult for American companies in China or allowing its yuan currency to weaken further to support its exporters.

"WE HAVE MORE BULLETS"

Trump administration officials have been divided over how hard to press Beijing, but the White House appears to believe it is winning the trade war as China's economy slows and its stock markets tumble.



Workers inspect COSCO shipping containers at a container manufacturer in Jinzhou

"They're not going to give that up easily. Naturally they'll retaliate a little bit," U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said on CNBC on Wednesday at a Century Aluminum Co (CENX.O) smelter in Kentucky that has benefited from Trump's aluminum tariffs. "But at the end of the day, we have many more bullets than they do. They know it. We have a much stronger economy than they have, they know that too," Ross said.

Economists reckon that every \$100 billion of imports hit by tariffs would reduce global trade by around 0.5 percent.

They have assumed a direct impact on China's economic growth in 2018 of 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points, and somewhat less for the United States, but the impact will be bigger next year, along with collateral damage for other countries and companies tied into China's global supply chains.



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Editor's Choice



Trump presents the Medal of Honor at the White House in Washington



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, leaves a federal court in New York City



2018 Asian Games - Swimming



Ukrainian servicemen shout slogans during a rehearsal for the Independence Day military parade in central Kiev



Refugees from Ghana and Guinea search for food at a garbage dump in Fnideq



Firefighters try to extinguish a fire at a residential building in Mumbai



Muslims offer Eid al-Adha prayers at the Jama Masjid (Grand Mosque) in the old quarters of Delhi



A girl jumps through water fountains at a shopping street in Vienna

In Dreams: Roy Orbison In Concert - The Hologram Tour plays Oct. 26 at Smart Financial Centre in Sugar Land.

The tour had a successful U.K. run and promises "breathtaking state-of-the-art cutting-edge digital and laser technology and extraordinary theatrical stagecraft." The Orbison hologram will perform classic hits and newly recorded arrangements of his originals, including "Oh, Pretty Woman," "You Got It," "Only the Lonely," "Crying" and "I Drove All Night." Orbison died in 1988 and came in at No. 23 on The Chronicle's list of the greatest Texas musicians.

A Selena hologram was commissioned a few years ago but eventually canceled after her family had second thoughts. (Courtesy chron.com)

Related

Bringing musical stars back via hologram

Overview

Special effects are now being employed to help bring beloved performers of the past back, almost as good as new. Many opera fans consider Maria Callas one of the greatest sopranos who ever lived. When she died in 1977, they were heartbroken.

So they might be shocked to learn that Maria Callas is going on tour again this spring, complete with a live 60-piece orchestra. Her return is brought to you by hologram technology-- or what's being called a hologram.



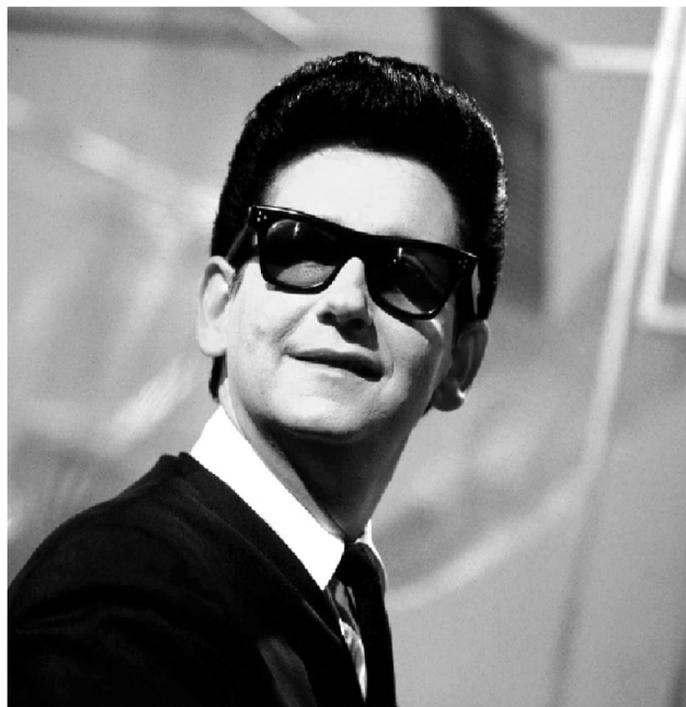
Maria Callas is (virtually) back on tour. (Photo/BASE HOLOGRAM) "We're celebrating iconic performers and their performances," said Brian Becker,

the CEO of Base Entertainment, which created the Maria Callas show. "And we're presenting them to audiences to either see them again, or audiences that have never seen them before."

Most of us think of a hologram as a three-dimensional futuristic projection technology, like Princess Leia in the first "Star Wars" movie: You could walk all the way around her, even see her from the

Entertainment
A Roy Orbison Hologram Is Coming To Sugar Land - Seriously

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



A Roy Orbison hologram -- seriously -- is coming to town.

back. That's not quite what we're talking about here. "No, no. This is a 3-D illusion. But 'holographic technology' or 'hologram' is just a good name that people recognize," said Becker.

Maria Callas is hardly the first dead musician to take the stage again. The first example that really caught the public's attention was at the Coachella music festival in 2012, when rapper Tupac Shakur rose from the dead.

The projection technology for that stunt is now owned by a company called Hologram USA. At its theater on Hollywood Boulevard, Hologram USA offers a vari-

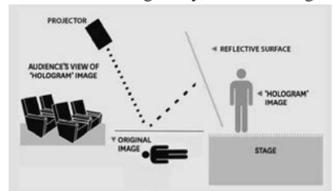
ety of holographic shows, featuring stars like Billie Holiday.



Dancers on stage interact with a virtual Billie Holiday. (Photo: CBS NEWS)

As it turns out, these high-tech shows aren't really new. They're based on a stage effect called Pepper's Ghost -- an illusion popularized in 1862 by a scientist named

John Pepper. An off-stage actor is reflected by a sheet of glass at a 45-degree angle, appearing to the audience as a ghostly, life-like image.



(GRAPHIC/CBS NEWS)

"The projectors are up there, bouncing off a cinema screen that's nestled to the floor," said CEO Alki David. "And the image is reflected up, at a 45° angle."

But how do they get the video of the dead performers in the first place? Especially of Maria Callas, who died well before the age of high-definition video?

Marty Tudor, head of Base Entertainment's hologram projects, had to re-create her from scratch. "We start with a body double who has to perform, literally," Tudor said. "And our director worked with our body double for 12 weeks. And then we take the results of that and go to work on it digitally."

Just as in the movies, special-effects artists then seamlessly superimpose the computer-generated face onto the footage of the body double.

Maria Callas is re-created.



A virtual Maria Callas is back on tour, courtesy of holographic projection

equipment. (Photo/ BASE ENTERTAINMENT)

But what about the audio? In Maria Callas' day, the orchestra and the singer were recorded all at once, in one pass, on one monophonic track. But in this concert, the pre-recorded Callas will be accompanied by a live orchestra! Which means that the company's engineers had to somehow remove the sound of the orchestra from the 1960 recordings.

"It's magic!" Tudor laughed. No, it's software! "It's software, and it's technology, and it's artistry, frankly. It's [a] time-consuming, expensive, tedious job. But worth it."

Base Entertainment is also launching a Roy Orbison concert this Spring, using the same techniques.



Mercy! Roy Orbison performs on stage. (Photo/CBS NEWS)

"For those of us of a certain age, those artists are all passing. So, the idea that we can relive and recapture some of our youth, I think that's what's really drawing people to it," said Todd Richmond, the director of the Mixed Reality Lab at the University of Southern California.

Richmond spends a lot of time thinking about technology and art, and using a device to digitally scan actors for movies, video games, and even holograms.

"Pretty soon, you'll be able to have performances for the songs you don't have footage for, and you can have them singing songs that they never sang before," Richmond said.

"So, someday not only could you have Tupac singing opera, but you could have Maria Callas singing hip-hop?" Pogue asked.

"Absolutely."

As though that's not boggling enough: One of the most popular singers in Japan today is Hatsune Miku. She's a computer-generated voice coming from a computer-generated body. (Courtesy https://www.cbsnews.com/)

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(WASHINGTON)—The Trump administration is close to striking a deal with Mexico on a revamped North American Free Trade Agreement, analysts said, but thorny issues are yet to be resolved with Canada, the third party in the trilateral pact.

Reaching an agreement with Mexico would mark a breakthrough for the administration after a year of roller-coaster talks and tension with its longtime North American trading partners. President Trump has frequently threatened to withdraw from NAFTA, linked the renegotiations to his call for a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border and slapped tariffs on Mexican and Canadian steel to apply pressure to make concessions.

But both Mexico and the U.S. have strong incentives to push through a deal quickly. Mexico wants to lock in an agreement before its new leftist president takes office, and the White House is keen on achieving a win on trade ahead of the midterm elections.

Canada, meanwhile, has shown less urgency to complete a revision of the 24-year-old pact, but is expected to return to the bargaining table once the U.S. and Mexico settle their differences.



President Donald Trump, accompanied by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, left, looks around the room during a cabinet meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House, Thursday, Aug. 16, 2018, in Washington. (AP Photo)

And then the question will be “whether Canada is finally willing to reengage in the process, sign off on what has been agreed and quickly resolve any key outstanding issues of concern to Canada,” said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch.

Trump’s trade negotiators this week have been meeting with senior Mexican officials in Washington, and sources familiar with the discussions say the two sides have largely agreed to new rules on auto

Issues With Canada Still Remain

Trump Administration Nearing Deal With Mexico On Revised NAFTA

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



trade — a top priority for the White House — that could boost investment in the U.S. and curb a flight of domestic production and jobs to Mexico.

In exchange, the United States trade representative, Robert Lighthizer, appears to be showing flexibility on an earlier demand for an automatic five-year termination of NAFTA and a proposal to make it easier for the U.S. to press anti-dumping claims against seasonal produce like tomatoes from Mexico.

Multilateral trade negotiations typically include bilateral talks between nations, but the administration’s strategy to close a deal first with Mexico — without parallel discussions with Canadian officials — is unusual and could backfire.



Donald Trump holds a press conference with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Aug. 31, 2018.

“I think the Trump administration is playing a risky game if you have a final deal with Mexico and you present it (to Canada) as a fait accompli,” said Daniel Ujcz, an international trade lawyer who specializes in Canada-U.S. affairs at the law firm Dickinson Wright.

It’s all the more risky because of the short time frame in which Mexico and the U.S. are looking to seal a trilateral agreement. U.S. congressional rules on trade require that there be a 90-day period between the administration’s notification of a deal and the actual signing of an agreement. Mexico’s new president, Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador, was elected in July and takes the oath of office Dec. 1. That means a NAFTA agreement would need to be announced by the end of August to allow for the 90 days to pass and for the current Mexican president, Enrique Peña Nieto, to sign the pact before Lopez Obrador takes office.

But that leaves only about two weeks for Lighthizer and his team to reach an accord with their Canadian counterparts. And by most accounts, that will be tough to do. Even if Canada signs on by month’s end

and there’s a three-way preliminary agreement, in the U.S., that would only begin a lengthy process that includes a period of public review and economic assessment by the U.S. International Trade Commission. A revised NAFTA wouldn’t be voted on by lawmakers until next year at the earliest, when a new Congress is seated.



Canada isn’t likely to have a major issue on the new auto rules, but is expected to go to the mat on at least two U.S. demands. Trump administration officials want to pry open Canada’s restricted dairy market and do away with an existing NAFTA provision that allows Canada to challenge U.S. anti-dumping claims through an independent panel.

U.S.-Canada negotiations will have to overcome the recent deterioration in bilateral relations following Trump’s refusal to give Canada an exemption from steel and aluminum tariffs, and harsh criticisms directed at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by Trump and his trade advisor, Peter Navarro.

Trudeau faces considerable domestic political pressure to stand up to Trump — unpopular in Canada — and his strong-arm tactics to extract trade concessions. At the same time, Lighthizer and his negotiating team have shown they are not going to take a deal that maintains the status quo, said Stephen Orava, a trade lawyer at King & Spalding in Washington.

Regardless of whether one agrees with Trump’s negotiating tactics, Orava said, if the administration can land a good agreement on a new NAFTA, “it will validate their approach to U.S. trade policy is effective and generating results and worthwhile.”



Analysts who have been closely monitoring the talks say that U.S. and Mexican trade officials are working out details and that a deal still could unravel. No issue has occupied as much time as NAFTA’s auto rules. Cars account for the biggest trade among the three countries, and Trump and other critics blame NAFTA for the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico and the loss of domestic manufacturing jobs.

NAFTA’s current rules specify that at least 62.5 percent of the content of cars come from North America to qualify for zero tariffs; anything lower than that threshold subjects a vehicle to a 2.5 percent duty for cars and 25 percent for trucks and sport utility vehicles.

The understanding with Mexico would raise the regional-content level to 70 percent or higher and set a similar rule of origin for steel and aluminum in vehicles. The new rules also would include language aimed at having more cars and parts produced by workers who make wages well above the average low rates in Mexico. The hope is that more jobs would stay in the U.S. and that European and Japanese automakers would source more parts in the U.S. to avoid the tariffs.

Lawyer Ujcz said those changes and a broader deal on NAFTA will play very well to Trump’s base. “It would be political gold going into the midterms,” he said. (Courtesy <https://pilotonline.com/business/>)

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