The Broken Cog

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Well-oiled machines often have an Achilles heel: a significant weakness causing their demise at the slightest hint of malfunction. World Trade is no exception. The rise of globalization has enabled several countries to unite under the flag of trade, boosting businesses and their profits. The particular weakness with this is if a country suddenly chooses to forego foreign relations in support of its domestic supply. In other words, utilizing tariffs to discourage trade with external nations damages international trade and instead bolsters domestic business-building. Alas, the very tariffs that vowed to protect domestic businesses are doing the exact opposite. They are the culprit in a catastrophic cycle where small businesses' profits are decreased, leading to a weakened overall economy, ultimately discouraging world trade even further. As a prominent world superpower, the USA must get rid of unnecessary tariffs to bolster trade, saving dependent businesses along with destitute consumers, ultimately easing global tensions.

Tariffs have been around for an incredibly long time. Great Britain employed the use of tariffs during the Industrial Revolution, further complicating the tumultuous period. The USA and Mexico shielded their businesses from foreign takeovers before the start of NAFTA in the late 20th century. China had tariffs restricting foreign goods ever since the rise of the earliest dynasties. That said, times are changing. The world is more interdependent now than ever before, making tariffs obsolete. These world superpowers all house independent small businesses and communities that thrive off successful world trade. Increasing the use of tariffs would be akin to cutting off the power supply of any machine. Even self-sufficient businesses that don't necessarily need world trade still rely on it for supplementary profits. In short, tariffs are an entity of the past, clinging desperately to world trade, hurting destitute consumers.

Recently, the case of *Simplified V. Trump* demonstrated the adverse effect of tariffs on small companies. To summarize, the company Simplified lost millions in revenue from the extreme tariffs, leading the owners to end up suing President Donald J Trump for misusing tariffs.. The tariffs were seen as unconstitutional because they held too much power over the business affairs of the people. The case is currently ongoing, but the broader impact is that suppliers are starting to stand up against crazy tariffs. Secondly, the Tuna-Dolphin GATT cases are a more historic example of tariffs impacting foreign relations, not just domestic businesses. The USA limited tuna imports, damaging relations with foreign tuna producers. Eventually, the ban was lifted, but struggles with trade persisted.

The two aforementioned cases serve to reflect the animosity propelled by tariffs. On a smaller scale, small businesses are facing losses, inflation, and even bankruptcy. Meanwhile, foreign nations are inching closer and closer to trade wars over tariff disputes. What does all of this mean at the consumer level? Higher prices for any good, be it foreign or domestic. Prices don't discriminate, any goods will face inflation, which shows how the tariffs backfire. Not to mention, a significant portion of the world's goods will be all but cut off from the USA. Popular online retailers, including Shein and AliExpress, will become harder to purchase from. Consequently, cultural diffusion will lessen, regressing the last century of progress for many communities who simply wish to expand.

Common reactions to Trump's tariffs are extremely negative. On the other hand, lifting trade restrictions is extremely beneficial to the general population. As a general trend, consumers tend to be happier with access to more diverse goods, meaning foreign markets have some of the most appeal. Also, domestic businesses can benefit from trade with foreign companies, and vice versa. Furthermore, the American Government relies on other countries for raw materials, turning them into goods. Finally, trade relations with China suffer most from tariffs. Many Chinese goods that once flooded American markets will now see an extreme increase in price, leading to a deep plunge in demand levels. Frustratingly for consumers, the tariffs fall upon them to pay instead of any middleman distributor. Lifting these hindrances will instead help the general population, lowering prices and encouraging trade once again.

In conclusion, the jaded tools of economic protection known as tariffs have become outdated burdens in today's economically interdependent world. As demonstrated by both the *Simplified* and GATT cases, tariffs strain small businesses, hurting consumers in the process. This vicious cycle discourages trade with foreign countries, which could jeopardize international relations. Clinging to tariff-heavy policies is socially harmful as well as economically regressive. There are consequences not limited to the economic welfare of the world associated with trade limits. To pave the way for an economic utopia, the United States of America must take the first step in eliminating antiquated practices to support businesses and consumers alike, thereby easing international tensions.

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