

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA)**

**Senate Committee on Finance Hearing to Consider Jamieson Greer to be United States Trade Representative**

**February 6, 2025**

[VIDEO](#) | [AUDIO](#)

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this important meeting. Mr. Greer, it's great to visit with you and it's good to see your family here.

Yesterday, the Department of Commerce reported that the United States goods and trade deficit set a record last year of \$1.2 trillion, so I want to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Grassley, which is, I believe our approach here should be opening markets.

I believe that we should have an aggressive trade strategy, particularly at a time when we have a growing middle class around the world. In fact, in 2019, before the pandemic hit, the first time, the world population, the majority, had reached middle class. I think we calculated in my office, if you just sold those people one more latte, what was the value of that? So clearly, the fact that right now China has, I think, it's something like they import something like [\$34] billion of agriculture product. That's just one example, but these other markets represent a huge opportunity for us.

So, when you say in your comments, in answering the question to Senator Grassley, well, we need concrete examples. I think this is where you and I are going to differ. And I get that you work for a guy who thinks that you throw down the tariffs and you force something -- some little deal out of China -- when I'm saying I want an aggressive continuation of U.S. policy over decades and decades and decades. Yes, the Bush administration, the Clinton administration, and others in opening up markets for our agriculture products.

So, I don't like the fact that we taxed taxpayers \$28 billion last time during the Trump administration. That's what they came and asked us for to compensate farmers during that loss. And believe me, I'm definitely being nicer to you than I've been to Katherine Tai. Okay, I did not agree with the last trade ambassador's approach, to say that I'm going to be the trade ambassador, but I'm not going to spend any time on opening markets.

So, my question to you is -- when you look at apples, and about [50%] of our market export is to Canada and Mexico, and the U.S. Free Trade Agreement increased that capacity, and so why are we arguing with our closest neighbors, our biggest export markets for apples. And in the meantime, not going out and opening up more apple markets.

The tariffs that were put on cost us an unbelievable retaliatory tariff in India. It basically decimated the market. It went from 120 million in India down to 1 million. And hundreds of families lost their economic livelihood. We have about 68,000 people that are employed in the apple sector in our state. So this is no small number.

I fought hard and did get the Biden administration to work with India and reverse that tariff on apples. And I have to say we are now back to recapturing that market. But I don't understand why you think a tariff first approach is the way to capitalize on the biggest task at hand.

The biggest task at hand is to get more free trade agreements, to get U.S. products into more places. And I think I mentioned to you in my office that I am for an alliance strategy, I mentioned on technology. I'd rather have a technology NATO. I'd rather bring the five biggest democracies in tech, sophisticated nations like us, and Japan, and Australia, and Israel and say, 'okay, these are the rules of the road, China, and nobody in the world should buy from you if, in fact, you have a government back door and evangelize that.

So, I believe in competing with China and making this market work, but I don't understand how the administration can ignore this very big challenge of going and opening up markets and instead get in a fight, for me, with our biggest market [Canada and Mexico] when they're not really our problem, and not go chase another market like India. Or, as my colleague from Iowa said, these very interesting markets that people are ignoring.

Now, look, every administration comes along and says, 'Oh, I like bilaterals, okay, I like FTAs, or I like ... I'm not religious necessarily on tactics, but I want you to have the most aggressive office possible. Not to sit here and get into a tariff trade war that doesn't get resolved for five years, but one that's empowered to open up markets and to go get the job done. So, I don't understand why this tariff approach.

Mr. Chairman, my time is expired. But if somebody could just ... I guess we don't have our apple.

I just, I have to fight for these people. I think I mentioned to you -- in this tariff war, when we lose, it's not that you won't have farmland, it's just that it will be owned by some corporation like Goldman Sachs or Bill Gates or somebody else. But those farm jobs, as we saw with this retaliatory tariffs as a result of the Trump tariffs, did cost families, and we can't afford it, and we can't bail them out with taxpayer dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.