

# The madness of King Donald is on the march again

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Trump opened new ground in his tariff war yesterday, [as the FT noted](#):

*Donald Trump has threatened to hit Brazil with tariffs of 50 per cent and accused it of attacking free speech, in a significant escalation of tensions between the US and Latin America's biggest economy.*

*In a letter posted to Truth Social on Wednesday, Trump lashed out at the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva over the treatment of Brazil's former rightwing president Jair Bolsonaro.*

Trump is now seemingly going to use tariffs to support far-right politicians who, when deposed from office in elections, try to stage coups to stay in post, as Bolsonaro did (sound familiar, anyone?)

As [Paul Krugman](#) has said on Substack overnight:

*Trump barely even pretends that there's an economic justification for this action. This is all about punishing Brazil for putting Jair Bolsonaro on trial.*

He added:

*Now, this wouldn't be the first time America has used tariff policy for a political purpose. On the contrary, the international trading system we set up after World War II was in part motivated by the belief of U.S. officials that trade, in addition to being economically beneficial, was a force for peace and would strengthen democracy around the world. They were probably right, and in any case it was a noble goal.*

*Now Trump is trying to use tariffs to help another wannabe dictator. If you still thought America was one of the world's good guys, this should tell you whose side we're on these days.*

I agree. As [his actions on Francesca Albaese also show](#), intimidation and threats are the far-right way.

But let's also be clear, after Trump's apparent backtracking on tariffs in late April, they are very much back on his agenda. [As the FT also noted](#):

*The letter to Brazil was the eighth Trump posted on Wednesday and comes as part of a broader barrage against 22 countries in recent days as he ratchets up pressure on the US's trading partners to strike deals or face levies. He also confirmed that the 50 per cent tariff on copper would go into effect on August 1.*

*Earlier on Wednesday, Trump imposed tariffs of between 25 per cent and 30 per cent on Algeria, Brunei, Iraq, Libya, Moldova, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The letters followed threats of 25 per cent tariffs on Japan and South Korea, among others, on Monday.*

He deferred his madness soon after first announcing it in the spring. Now he is relying on the idea that the world has grown accustomed to the idea that this is going to happen, and is proceeding with it. The outcomes will be the same. Most especially:

- \* The cost of living in the US will rise.
- \* As will US inflation.
- \* The US economy may well enter a recession.
- \* US interest rates might well rise.
- \* The impacts will be felt in the wider world, being especially punishing through interest rates on developing countries, but we will not escape their impact.

Let's not beat about the bush here: fascists are a threat to the well-being of people right across the world now. It cannot be said otherwise. Sometimes, they will threaten individuals. Sometimes they threaten collectively, but they are always a threat. That is all they know how to do.