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He warned there would be no exceptions, saying he was "simplifying" the rules, which are set to come into effect on 4 March. This is a big deal, the beginning of making America rich again," Trump said. Our nation requires steel and aluminium to be made in America, not in foreign lands," he added. When asked if tariffs could increase prices for consumers, the US president responded: "Ultimately it will be cheaper."

"It's time for our great industries to come back to America...this is the first of many," he added, suggesting other tariffs could focus on pharmaceuticals and computer chips. The US is the world's largest importer of steel, counting Canada, Brazil and Mexico as its top three suppliers. Canada alone accounted for more than 50% of aluminium imported into the US last year. If the tariffs come into force, they are expected to have the most significant impact on Canada.

Ahead of the announcement, Ontario premier Doug Ford, whose province is home to much of Canada's steel production, accused Trump of "shifting goalposts and constant chaos, putting our economy at risk". The lobby group for Canadian steel makers called on the Canadian government to retaliate against the US "immediately", while Kody Blois, a leading MP from Canada's governing Liberal Party, said his country was looking for ways to reduce its trade relationship with the US.

"This is completely upending what has been a very strong partnership," he told BBC Newshour ahead of the official order.