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IMPACT OF GEOECONOMIC TENSIONS ON THE WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM

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The World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) has long served as the foundation of rules-based global trade governance. However, the rising geoeconomic tensions, mainly among the superpower nations such as the United States, China, and the European Union, have challenged the system's integrity and effectiveness. This article critically examines how geopolitical conflicts and strategic economic policies have contributed to the current immobilisation of the WTO Appellate Body and undermined trust in multilateral adjudication. It explores the relationship between trade law and foreign policy, focusing on cases where national security, industrial policy, and strategic divergence have been invoked to justify trade-restrictive measures. The article also assesses ongoing reform proposals and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, weighing their potential to restore credibility to the Dispute Settlement Mechanism. Ultimately, it contends that without addressing the deeper political gaps among key WTO members, technical fixes alone cannot revive the system's legitimacy or enforceability in an era of increased geoeconomic competition.

Keywords: Dispute Settlement Mechanism, Foreign Policy, Global Trade Governance, National Security, WTO