

FOREWORD

The 2008 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE) is the twenty-third in an annual series that surveys significant foreign barriers to U.S. exports.

In accordance with section 181 of the Trade Act of 1974 (the 1974 Trade Act), as amended by section 303 of the Trade and Tariff Act of 1984 (the 1984 Trade Act), section 1304 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (the 1988 Trade Act), section 311 of the Uruguay Round Trade Agreements Act (1994 Trade Act), and section 1202 of the Internet Tax Freedom Act, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative is required to submit to the President, the Senate Finance Committee, and appropriate committees in the House of Representatives, an annual report on significant foreign trade barriers.

The statute requires an inventory of the most important foreign barriers affecting U.S. exports of goods and services, foreign direct investment by U.S. persons, and protection of intellectual property rights. Such an inventory facilitates negotiations aimed at reducing or eliminating these barriers. The report also provides a valuable tool in enforcing U.S. trade laws, with the goal of expanding global trade, which benefits all nations, and U.S. producers and consumers in particular.

The report provides, where feasible, quantitative estimates of the impact of these foreign practices on the value of U.S. exports. Information is also included on some of the actions taken to eliminate foreign trade barriers. Opening markets for American goods and services either through negotiating trade agreements or through results-oriented enforcement actions is this Administration's top trade priority. This report is an important tool for identifying such trade barriers.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This report is based upon information compiled within USTR, the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and other U.S. Government agencies, and supplemented with information provided in response to a notice in the *Federal Register*, and by members of the private sector trade advisory committees and U.S. Embassies abroad.

Trade barriers elude fixed definitions, but may be broadly defined as government laws, regulations, policies, or practices that either protect domestic products from foreign competition or artificially stimulate exports of particular domestic products. This report classifies foreign trade barriers into ten different categories. These categories cover government-imposed measures and policies that restrict, prevent, or impede the international exchange of goods and services. They include:

- Import policies (e.g., tariffs and other import charges, quantitative restrictions, import licensing, customs barriers);
- Standards, testing, labeling and certification (including unnecessarily restrictive application of sanitary and phytosanitary standards and environmental measures, and refusal to accept U.S. manufacturers' self-certification of conformance to foreign product standards);
- Government procurement (e.g., buy national policies and closed bidding);

- Export subsidies (e.g., export financing on preferential terms and agricultural export subsidies that displace U.S. exports in third country markets);
- Lack of intellectual property protection (e.g., inadequate patent, copyright, and trademark regimes);
- Services barriers (e.g., limits on the range of financial services offered by foreign financial institutions,¹ regulation of international data flows, and restrictions on the use of foreign data processing);
- Investment barriers (e.g., limitations on foreign equity participation and on access to foreign government-funded research and development (R&D) programs, local content and export performance requirements, and restrictions on transferring earnings and capital);
- Anticompetitive practices with trade effects tolerated by foreign governments (including anticompetitive activities of both state-owned and private firms that apply to services or to goods and that restrict the sale of U.S. products to any firm, not just to foreign firms that perpetuate the practices);
- Trade restrictions affecting electronic commerce (e.g., tariff and nontariff measures, burdensome and discriminatory regulations and standards, and discriminatory taxation); and
- Other barriers (barriers that encompass more than one category, e.g., bribery and corruption,² or that affect a single sector).

The NTE covers significant barriers, whether they are consistent or inconsistent with international trading rules. Many barriers to U.S. exports are consistent with existing international trade agreements. Tariffs, for example, are an accepted method of protection under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Even a very high tariff does not violate international rules unless a country has made a bound commitment not to exceed a specified rate. On the other hand, where measures are not consistent with international rules, they are actionable under U.S. trade law and through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This report discusses the largest export markets for the United States, including: 58 nations, the European Union, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Southern African Customs Union and one regional body. Some countries were excluded from this report due primarily to the relatively small size of their markets or the absence of major trade complaints from representatives of U.S. goods and services sectors. However, the omission of particular countries and barriers does not imply that they are not of concern to the United States. Based on an assessment of the evolving nature of U.S. trade and investment relationships in the various regions of the world, the section on Uzbekistan has been deleted from this year's NTE. U.S. exports to Uzbekistan fell consistently from 2003 through 2006. Our largest exports to Uzbekistan the last few years have been charitable goods for humanitarian relief. Overall, Uzbekistan accounts for less than 0.01 percent of U.S. exports.

In this Foreword, we are also providing an update on progress the Administration has made in reducing trade-related barriers to the export of greenhouse gas intensity reducing technologies (GHGIRTs), as called for by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. In October 2006, pursuant to section 1611 of the Act,³ USTR prepared a report that identified trade barriers that face U.S. exporters of GHGIRTs in the top 25 greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting developing countries and described the steps the United States is taking to reduce these and other barriers to trade.⁴ The Act also calls for USTR to report annually on progress

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made with respect to removing the barriers identified in the initial report. USTR submitted the first annual progress report in October 2007; this report, as well as the initial report, are available at <http://www.ustr.gov>. As noted in the October 2007 report, USTR will submit further annual progress reports as part of the NTE Report.

Since the October 2007 GHGIRT report, the United States, together with the European Communities (EC), have submitted a ground-breaking proposal as part of the WTO Doha Round negotiations to increase global trade in and use of environmental goods and services, including GHGIRTs. The proposal lays the foundation for an innovative new environmental goods and services agreement (EGSA) in the WTO and would include a commitment by all WTO Members to remove barriers to trade in a specific set of climate-friendly technologies. The initiative was prompted by President Bush's initiative earlier this year to seek an agreement with major economies on a new international climate agreement. The proposal underscores the importance of liberalizing trade in environmental goods and services in parallel by recognizing, for the first time, how the market works in this sector – how goods are bundled with services. For example, designing more energy efficient buildings can require consulting, design and construction services, as well as solar panels for heating.

The joint proposal seeks to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental technologies and services on a global scale through a two-tiered approach: 1) A first-ever in the WTO agreement on worldwide elimination of tariffs on a specific list of climate friendly technologies recently identified by the World Bank; and 2) A higher level of commitment on the part of developed and the most advanced developing countries to eliminate barriers to trade across a broader range of other environmental technologies and an array of environment-friendly services. USTR will be working this year to advance this proposal and ensure that it is an integral part of the Doha round package of trade liberalization.

The United States is also continuing its efforts in APEC in connection with the initiative on environmental goods in APEC's Market Access Group (MAG), launched in 2007. The work is focused on building a better understanding throughout the APEC region of cutting edge environmental technologies and building momentum for trade liberalization in this important sector. This year, the United States is working with Canada and New Zealand to organize a second environmental goods and services workshop highlighting climate mitigation and adaptation technologies and services. We also hope to develop an APEC database of environmental goods and services that could be updated regularly and used for unilateral, bilateral/regional or multilateral liberalization efforts.

The merchandise trade data contained in the NTE report are based on total U.S. exports, free alongside (f.a.s.)⁵ value, and general U.S. imports, customs value, as reported by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. (NOTE: These data are ranked according to size of export market in the Appendix). The services data are from the October 2007 issue of the Survey of Current Business (collected from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce). The direct investment data are from the September 2007 issue of the Survey of Current Business (collected from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce).

TRADE IMPACT ESTIMATES AND FOREIGN BARRIERS

Wherever possible, this report presents estimates of the impact on U.S. exports of specific foreign trade barriers or other trade distorting practices. Also, where consultations related to specific foreign practices were proceeding at the time this report was published, estimates were excluded, in order to avoid prejudice to those consultations.

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The estimates included in this report constitute an attempt to assess quantitatively the potential effect of removing certain foreign trade barriers on particular U.S. exports. However, the estimates cannot be used to determine the total effect upon U.S. exports to either the country in which a barrier has been identified or to the world in general. In other words, the estimates contained in this report cannot be aggregated in order to derive a total estimate of gain in U.S. exports to a given country or the world.

Trade barriers or other trade distorting practices affect U.S. exports to another country because these measures effectively impose costs on such exports that are not imposed on goods produced domestically in the importing country. In theory, estimating the impact of a foreign trade measure upon U.S. exports of goods requires knowledge of the (extra) cost the measure imposes upon them, as well as knowledge of market conditions in the United States, in the country imposing the measure, and in third countries. In practice, such information often is not available.

Where sufficient data exist, an approximate impact of tariffs upon U.S. exports can be derived by obtaining estimates of supply and demand price elasticities in the importing country and in the United States. Typically, the U.S. share of imports is assumed to be constant. When no calculated price elasticities are available, reasonable postulated values are used. The resulting estimate of lost U.S. exports is approximate, depends upon the assumed elasticities, and does not necessarily reflect changes in trade patterns with third countries. Similar procedures are followed to estimate the impact upon our exports of subsidies that displace U.S. exports in third country markets.

The task of estimating the impact of nontariff measures on U.S. exports is far more difficult, since there is no readily available estimate of the additional cost these restrictions impose upon imports. Quantitative restrictions or import licenses limit (or discourage) imports and thus raise domestic prices, much as a tariff does. However, without detailed information on price differences between countries and on relevant supply and demand conditions, it is difficult to derive the estimated effects of these measures upon U.S. exports. Similarly, it is difficult to quantify the impact upon U.S. exports (or commerce) of other foreign practices such as government procurement policies, nontransparent standards, or inadequate intellectual property rights protection.

In some cases, particular U.S. exports are restricted by both foreign tariff and nontariff barriers. For the reasons stated above, it may be difficult to estimate the impact of such nontariff barriers on U.S. exports. When the value of actual U.S. exports is reduced to an unknown extent by one or more than one nontariff measure, it then becomes derivatively difficult to estimate the effect of even the overlapping tariff barriers on U.S. exports.

The same limitations that affect the ability to estimate the impact of foreign barriers upon U.S. goods exports apply to U.S. services exports. Furthermore, the trade data on services exports are extremely limited in detail. For these reasons, estimates of the impact of foreign barriers on trade in services also are difficult to compute.

With respect to investment barriers, there are no accepted techniques for estimating the impact of such barriers on U.S. investment flows. For this reason, no such estimates are given in this report. The NTE includes generic government regulations and practices which are not product-specific. These are among the most difficult types of foreign practices for which to estimate trade effects.

In the context of trade actions brought under U.S. law, estimations of the impact of foreign practices on U.S. commerce are substantially more feasible. Trade actions under U.S. law are generally product-specific and therefore more tractable for estimating trade effects. In addition, the process used when a specific trade action is brought will frequently make available non-U.S. Government data (U.S.

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company or foreign sources) otherwise not available in the preparation of a broad survey such as this report.

In some cases, industry valuations estimating the financial effects of barriers are contained in the report. The methods computing these valuations are sometimes uncertain. Hence, their inclusion in the NTE report should not be construed as a U.S. Government endorsement of the estimates they reflect.

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Endnotes

¹ The current NTE report covers only those financial services-related market access issues brought to the attention of USTR by outside sources. For the reader interested in a more comprehensive discussion of financial services barriers, the Treasury Department publishes quadrennially the National Treatment Study. Prepared in collaboration with the Secretary of State, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Reserve Board, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Department of Commerce, the Study analyzes in detail treatment of U.S. commercial banks and securities firms in foreign markets. It is intended as an authoritative reference for assessing financial services regimes abroad.

² Corruption is an impediment to trade, a serious barrier to development, and a direct threat to our collective security. Corruption takes many forms and affects trade and development in different ways. In many countries, it affects customs practices, licensing decisions, and the awarding of government procurement contracts. If left unchecked, bribery and corruption can negate market access gained through trade negotiations, undermine the foundations of the international trading system, and frustrate broader reforms and economic stabilization programs. Corruption also hinders development and contributes to the cycle of poverty.

Information on specific problems associated with bribery and corruption is difficult to obtain, particularly since perpetrators go to great lengths to conceal their activities. Nevertheless, a consistent complaint from U.S. firms is that they have experienced situations that suggest corruption has played a role in the award of billions of dollars of foreign contracts and delayed or prevented the efficient movement of goods. Since the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) in 1977, U.S. companies have been prohibited from bribing foreign public officials, and numerous other domestic laws discipline corruption of public officials at the state and federal levels. The United States is committed to the active enforcement of the FCPA.

The United States Government has taken a leading role in addressing bribery and corruption in international business transactions and has made real progress over the past quarter century building international coalitions to fight bribery and corruption. Bribery and corruption are now being addressed in a number of fora. Some of these initiatives are now yielding positive results.

The United States Government led efforts to launch the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (Antibribery Convention). In November 1997, the United States and 33 other nations adopted the Antibribery Convention, which currently is in force for 37 countries, including the United States. The Antibribery Convention obligates its parties to criminalize the bribery of foreign public officials in the conduct of international business. It is aimed at proscribing the activities of those who offer, promise, or pay a bribe. (For additional information, see <http://www.export.gov/tcc> and <http://www.oecd.org>).

The United States played a critical role in the successful conclusion of negotiations that produced the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the first global anti-corruption instrument. The Convention was opened for signature in December 2003, and is pending entry into force. The Convention requires countries to adopt such measures as may be necessary to criminalize fundamental anticorruption offenses, including bribery of domestic as well as foreign public officials. As of early March 2006, one hundred forty-one countries, including the United States, have signed the Convention and forty-nine have ratified it.

In March 1996, countries in the Western Hemisphere concluded negotiation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (Inter-American Convention). The Inter-American Convention, a direct result of the Summit of the Americas Plan of Action, requires that parties criminalize bribery throughout the region. The Inter-American Convention entered into force in March 1997. The United States signed the Inter-American Convention on June 2, 1996 and deposited its instrument of ratification with the Organization of American States (OAS) on September 29, 2000. Twenty-eight of the thirty-three parties to the Inter-American Convention, including the United States, participate in a Follow-up Mechanism conducted under the auspices of the OAS to monitor implementation of the Convention. The Inter-American Convention addresses a broad range of corrupt acts including domestic corruption

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and transnational bribery. Signatories agree to enact legislation making it a crime for individuals to offer bribes to public officials and for public officials to solicit and accept bribes, and to implement various preventive measures.

The United States Government continues to push its anti-corruption agenda forward. The United States Government seeks binding commitments in free trade agreements (FTAs) that promote transparency and that specifically address corruption of public officials. The United States Government also is seeking to secure a meaningful agreement on trade facilitation in the World Trade Organization and has been pressing for concrete commitments on customs operations and transparency of government procurement regimes of our FTA partners. The United States Government is also playing a leadership role on these issues in the G-8 Forum, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum, the Southeastern Europe Stability Pact and other fora.

³ Section 1611 of the Act amends the Global Environmental Protection Assistance Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-240) to add new Sections 731-39. Section 732(a)(2)(A) directs the Department of State to identify the top 25 GHG emitting developing countries for the purpose of promoting climate change technology. The Secretary of State has submitted its report to Congress identifying these 25 countries. Section 734 calls on the United States Trade Representative “(as appropriate and consistent with applicable bilateral, regional, and mutual trade agreements) [to] (1) identify trade-relations barriers maintained by foreign countries to the export of greenhouse gas intensity reducing technologies and practices from the United States to the developing countries identified in the report submitted under section 732(a)(2)(A); and (2) negotiate with foreign countries for the removal of those barriers.”

⁴ These 25 countries were identified in the Department of State’s 2006 “Report to Congress on Developing Country Emissions of Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change Technology Deployment.” They are: China; India; South Africa; Mexico; Brazil; Indonesia; Thailand; Kazakhstan; Malaysia; Egypt; Argentina; Venezuela; Uzbekistan; Pakistan; Nigeria; Algeria; Philippines; Iraq; Vietnam; Colombia; Chile; Libya; Turkmenistan; Bangladesh; and Azerbaijan.

⁵ Free alongside (f.a.s.): Under this term, the seller quotes a price, including delivery of the goods alongside and within the reach of the loading tackle (hoist) of the vessel bound overseas.