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Trade Briefs

U.S. Reactions to Japanese Election

In the eyes of U.S. observers, the recent election in Japan and the rise of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has made real the possibility of a significant change in the relationship between the two countries. In particular, some fear that the progress the two countries have made on the trade front could slow or even reverse under Japan's new leadership and the cautious Obama Administration. While there may be a prolonged period of uncertainty, it is not at all clear that Japan-U.S. trade will be adversely affected by the change in leadership.

Since the Obama Administration took over, there has been some low-level friction with Japan. Notably, President Obama's choice for Ambassador to Japan, John Roos, was somewhat controversial, as he was known more for his close ties to Obama than for his expertise on Japan. Some saw this as an indication that Obama would not be as focused on the Japan-U.S. alliance as on other areas of the world.

On Japan's side, the campaign raised some fears that Japan was turning away from the U.S. The DPJ's campaign was marked by conflict with the Liberal Democratic Party's traditionally close ties to the U.S., especially on defense issues. The DPJ seeks to reduce the U.S. presence in Japan, and it also would like Japan to end its logistical support for U.S. military actions.

However, despite campaign rhetoric from the DPJ and an early stumble from the Obama Administration in choosing an envoy, observers of the relationship believe that Japan and the U.S. will continue to cooperate on major issues because there are incentives to do so. Both the U.S. and Japan have concerns about China and Russia, and the North Korea issue is certainly of mutual unease.

A former Bush Administration official said that the Obama Administration has put a priority on showing Japan that they are America's most important ally in East Asia. The Obama Administration likely sees Japan as a crucial partner in two international policy areas: regulating global financial markets and curbing man-made global warming.

On the trade issue, some in the U.S. were worried by the words of Yukio Hatoyama, the next Japanese Prime Minister. Hatoyama wrote an Op-Ed in the *New York Times* that challenged the U.S. as the leader of a globalization movement.

However, American observers of Japan point out that the DPJ is not substantially more protectionist than the LDP. Also, the DPJ called for an FTA with the U.S. in its manifesto. This position was challenged from within the party, but it shows that there are significant parts of the DPJ that support liberalized trade with the U.S.

In the age of the financial crisis, it will be difficult for any government to resist the urge to pass measures intended to protect their home markets. However, according to U.S. experts, it does not appear that the rise of the DPJ is likely to seriously upset the long-standing Japan-U.S. relationship.

Dumping Watch

Rescission of AD Review of Hot-Rolled Flat-Rolled Carbon-Quality Steel Products from Japan

On September 1, the Department of Commerce (DOC) gave notice that it was rescinding the administrative review of the antidumping (AD) duty order on certain hot-rolled flat-rolled carbon-quality steel products from Japan. On July 29, the DOC gave notice of initiation of this administrative review. Nippon Steel Corporation (NSC) had made a timely request that the DOC conduct a review of NSC. NSC was the only party to this review. On August 14, NSC withdrew its request for review. As this withdrawal was within the 90-day limit and therefore timely, the DOC decided to rescind the review.

Federal Register Notices

International Trade Administration

[A-552-801] Certain Frozen Fish Fillets From the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: Notice of Preliminary Results of New Shipper Reviews and Fifth Antidumping Duty Administrative Review *74 FR 45805-45811*, September 4, 2009.

[C-552-805] Polyethylene Retail Carrier Bags from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: Preliminary Affirmative Countervailing Duty Determination and Alignment of Final Countervailing Duty Determination with Final Antidumping Duty Determination *74 FR 45811-45820*, September 4, 2009.

[A-533-838] Carbazole Violet Pigment 23 From India: Extension of Time Limit for Preliminary Results of Antidumping Duty Administrative Review *74 FR 45610-45611*, September 3, 2009.

[A-489-807] Certain Steel Concrete Reinforcing Bars From Turkey; Final Results and Final Partial Rescission of Antidumping Duty Administrative Review *74 FR 45611-45612*, September 3, 2009.

[A-570-890] Wooden Bedroom Furniture From the People's Republic of China: Notice of Partial Rescission of Antidumping Duty Administrative Review *74 FR 45424-45427*, September 2, 2009.

Notice of Solicitation of Applications for Allocation of Tariff Rate Quotas on the Import of Certain Worsted Wool Fabrics to Persons Who Cut and Sew Men's and Boys' Worsted Wool Suits, Suit-Type Jackets and Trousers in the United States *74 FR 45427-45428*, September 2, 2009.

Notice of Solicitation of Applications for Allocation of Tariff Rate Quotas on the Import of Certain Worsted Wool Fabrics to Persons Who Weave Such Fabrics in the United States *74 FR 45427*, September 2, 2009.

[A-570-827] Certain Cased Pencils from the People's Republic of China: Amended Final Results of Antidumping Duty Administrative Review *74 FR 45177-45178*, September 1, 2009.

Antidumping or Countervailing Duty Order, Finding, or Suspended Investigation; Advance Notification of Sunset Reviews *74 FR 45181*, September 1, 2009.

Antidumping or Countervailing Duty Order, Finding, or Suspended Investigation; Opportunity to Request Administrative Review 74 FR 45179-45180, September 1, 2009.

[A-588-846] Certain Hot-Rolled Flat-Rolled Carbon-Quality Steel Products from Japan: Rescission of Antidumping Duty Administrative Review 74 FR 45181-45182, September 1, 2009.

U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board: Meeting of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board 74 FR 45186, September 1, 2009.

[A-552-802] Certain Frozen Warmwater Shrimp From the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: Notice of Extension of Time Limit for the Final Results of the Third Administrative Review 74 FR 44818-44819, August 31, 2009.

[A-427-801, A-428-801, A-475-801, A-588-804, A-412-801] Ball Bearings and Parts Thereof From France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom: Final Results of Antidumping Duty Administrative Reviews and Revocation of an Order in Part 74 FR 44819-44822, August 31, 2009.

Department of Commerce: Industry Outreach in San Francisco, CA, for Climate Change Negotiations Under the UNFCCC 74 FR 44824-44825, August 31, 2009.

[A-549-502] Circular Welded Carbon Steel Pipes and Tubes from Thailand: Preliminary Results of Antidumping Duty New Shipper Review 74 FR 44825-44828, August 31, 2009.

International Trade Commission

[Inv. No. 337-TA-685] In the Matter of Certain Flash Memory and Products Containing Same; Notice of Investigation 74 FR 45468-45469, September 2, 2009.

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Request for Comments and Notice of Public Hearing Concerning China's Compliance With WTO Commitments 74 FR 44895-44896, August 31, 2009.

The Week Ahead

- The ITC was closed on September 7 for the Labor Day holiday.
- On September 9, the ITC will hold a hearing on five-year reviews of cut-to-length carbon steel plate from China, Russia, and Ukraine.