



China-U.S. Trade Issues

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Summary

U.S.-China economic ties have expanded substantially over the past three decades. Total U.S.-China trade rose from \$5 billion in 1980 to \$409 billion in 2008. In 2008, China was the second largest U.S. trading partner, its third largest export market, and its biggest source of imports. In 2008, about 12% of total U.S. global trade was with China, although trade flows have declined in 2009 as a result of the global economic slowdown. According to U.S. data, U.S. firms have invested around \$46 billion in China through 2008, some of which is aimed at the Chinese domestic market, while other investment has gone into export-oriented manufacturing facilities.

With a huge population, a rapidly expanding economy, and over \$2 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, China is a potentially huge market for U.S. exporters and investors. However, bilateral economic relations have become strained over a number of issues, including large and growing U.S. trade deficits with China (\$266 billion in 2008), China's failure to fully implement its World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments (especially in regards to protection of intellectual property rights), its refusal to adopt a floating currency system, its use of industrial policies (such as subsidies) and other practices deemed unfair and/or harmful to various U.S. economic sectors, and its failure in some cases to ensure that its exported products meet U.S. health and safety standards.

Further complicating the bilateral economic relationship is China's large holdings of U.S. debt, such as Treasury securities. In September 2008, China overtook Japan to become the largest foreign holder of such securities; these totaled \$801 billion as of July 2009. Some analysts welcome China's purchases of U.S. debt securities, which help fund U.S. budget deficits, while others have expressed concerns that growing Chinese holdings of U.S. debt may increase its leverage over the United States.

The current global economic crisis could further challenge China-U.S. economic ties. Many analysts have expressed concern that the Chinese government, in an effort to help its sagging export industries, is implementing new trade barriers and boosting industrial subsidies, which, many charge, could harm some U.S. firms and workers. U.S. policymakers have urged China to lessen its reliance on exports for its economic growth and instead implement policies to promote domestic consumption.

Several Members of Congress have urged the Obama Administration to take a more assertive approach in dealing with Chinese economic practices, including increasing the use of U.S. trade laws (such as antidumping, countervailing, and safeguard provisions) to respond to unfair trade practices or to assist U.S. workers injured by imports from China; bringing more WTO dispute resolution cases against China (where the United States has prevailed in a number of cases); and continuing to pressure China to appreciate its currency and make other economic reforms. Others have warned against using "protectionist" measures to block imports of Chinese goods and have advocated using high-level bilateral talks, such as the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, to resolve major trade disputes.

On September 11, 2009, President Obama announced that he would impose additional tariffs on U.S. imports of certain car and light truck tires from China, due to market disruption caused by such imports. China responded by filing a WTO case against the United States and stating that it had initiated anti-dumping and anti-subsidy cases against U.S. auto parts and poultry.

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Economic and trade reforms (begun in 1979) have helped transform China into one of the world's fastest growing economies. China's economic growth and trade liberalization, including comprehensive trade commitments made upon entering the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, have led to a sharp expansion in U.S.-China commercial ties. Yet, bilateral trade relations have grown increasingly strained in recent years over a number of issues, including a large and growing U.S. trade deficit with China, the refusal by China to adopt a floating currency, its failure to fully implement many of its WTO obligations, especially in regards to protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), and problems relating to the health and safety of Chinese-made products. Several Members of Congress have called on the Obama Administration to take a tougher stance against China to induce it to eliminate economic policies deemed harmful to U.S. economic interests and/or are inconsistent with WTO rules.

This report provides an overview of U.S.-China economic relations, surveys major trade disputes, and lists bills introduced in the 111th Congress that would impact bilateral commercial ties.

U.S. Trade with China¹

U.S.-China trade rose rapidly after the two nations re-established diplomatic relations (in January 1979), signed a bilateral trade agreement (July 1979), and provided mutual most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment beginning in 1980.² In 1978 (before China's reforms began), total U.S.-China trade (exports plus imports) was \$1 billion; China ranked as the 32nd largest export market and the 57th largest source of U.S. imports. In 2008, bilateral trade hit \$409 billion, making China the second largest U.S. trading partner (after Canada), the third largest U.S. export market, and the largest source of U.S. imports. In recent years, China has been one of the fastest growing U.S. export markets and the importance of this market is expected to grow even further as living standards continue to improve and a sizable Chinese middle class emerges.

The U.S. trade deficit with China has surged in recent years as imports from China have grown much faster than U.S. exports to China (although it grew by only \$10 billion in 2008). That deficit rose from \$34 billion in 1995 to \$266 billion in 2008 (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**); it was significantly larger than that with any other U.S. trading partner and several trading groups. For example, it was nearly equal to the combined U.S. deficits with the countries that make up the Organization of the Petroleum Export Countries (OPEC) and the 27 countries that make up the European Union (EU27), and it was more than three times larger than the trade deficit with Japan (see **Table 2**). Some analysts view the huge U.S. trade deficit with China as an indicator that China's economic and trade policies are restrictive or unfair, while others contend that the growing deficit reflects a shift in export-oriented production from other countries (largely in Asia) to China.

¹ For more information on China's economy, see CRS Report RL33534, *China's Economic Conditions*, by Wayne M. Morrison. For general information on U.S.-China ties, see CRS Report RL33877, *China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy*, by Kerry Dumbaugh.

² The United States suspended China's MFN status in 1951, which cut off most bilateral trade. China's MFN status was conditionally restored in 1980 under the provisions set forth under Title IV of the 1974 Trade Act, as amended (including the Jackson-Vanik freedom of emigration provisions). China's MFN status (which was re-designated under U.S. trade law as normal trade relations status, or NTR) was renewed on an annual basis through January 2002, when permanent NTR was extended to China (after it joined the WTO).

The global financial crisis has had a significant impact on U.S.-China trade flows. During the first half of 2009, U.S. exports to, and imports from, China were down 17.2% and 13.4%, respectively over the same period in 2008. At this rate, the U.S. trade deficit with China could decline to \$233 billion in 2009, a \$33 billion drop from last year's deficit.

Table 1. U.S. Merchandise Trade with China: 1980-2008 and Projections for 2009*
(\$ in billions)

Year	U.S. Exports	U.S. Imports	U.S. Trade Balance
1980	3.8	1.1	2.7
1985	3.9	3.9	0.0
1990	4.8	15.2	-10.4
1995	11.7	45.6	-33.8
2000	16.3	100.1	-83.8
2001	19.2	102.3	-83.1
2002	22.1	125.2	-103.1
2003	28.4	152.4	-124.0
2004	34.7	196.7	-162.0
2005	41.8	243.5	-201.6
2006	55.2	287.8	-232.5
2007	65.2	321.5	-256.3
2008	71.5	337.8	-266.3
2009 projection*	59.2	292.5	-233.3

Source: USITC DataWeb.

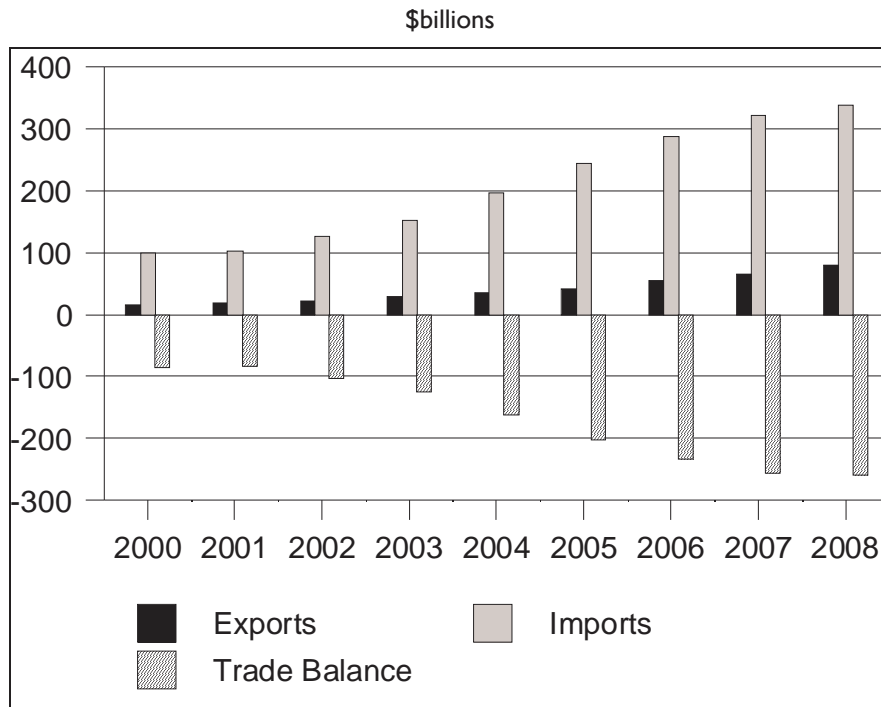
* 2009 projections based on actual data for January-June 2009.

Table 2. U.S. Merchandise Trade Balances with Major Trading Partners: 2008
(\$ in billions)

Country or Trading Group	U.S. Trade Balance
World	-800.0
China	-266.3
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)	-175.6
European Union (EU27)	-93.4
Canada	-74.6
Japan	-72.7
Mexico	-64.4
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	-50.6

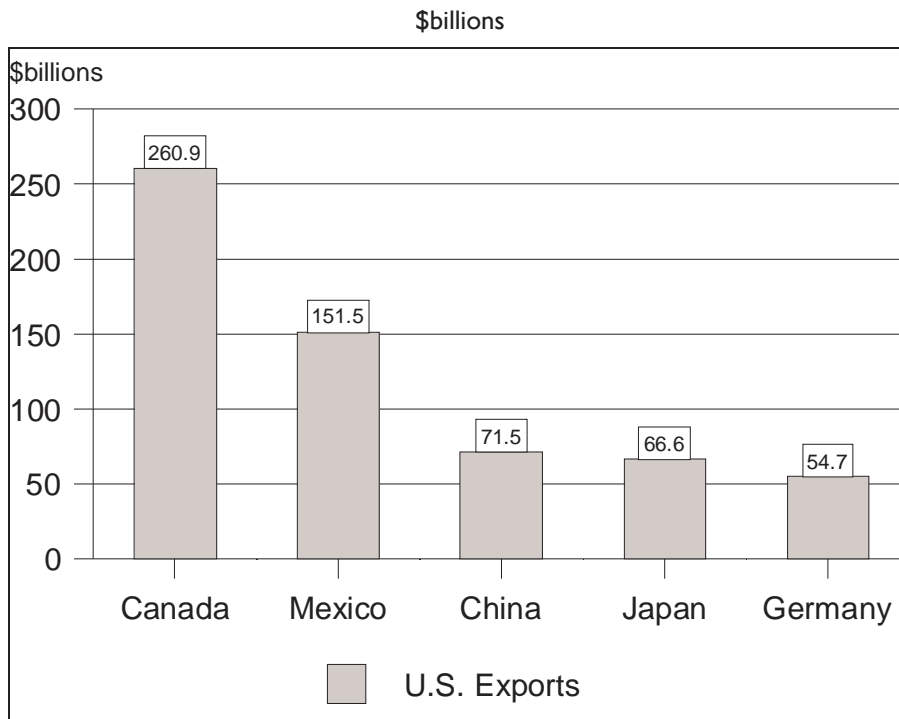
Source: USITC DataWeb.

Figure 1. U.S. Trade With China: 2000-2008



Source: USITC DataWeb.

Figure 2. Top Five U.S. Export Markets: 2008



Source: USITC DataWeb.

Major U.S. Exports to China

U.S. merchandise exports to China in 2008 were \$71.5 billion, up 9.5% (compared to an 18.1% rise in 2007) over the previous year.³ In 2007, China overtook Japan to become the third largest U.S. export market and was third in 2008 (see **Figure 2**). U.S. exports to China in 2008 accounted for 5.5% of total U.S. exports (compared to 3.9% in 2003). The top five U.S. exports to China in 2008 were waste and scrap, semiconductors and electronic components, oilseeds and grain, aircraft and parts, and resins and synthetic rubber and fibers (see **Table 3**).⁴ China is a significant market for U.S. agricultural products. It was the fourth largest destination for U.S. agricultural exports in 2008 at \$12.1 billion, up 46.5% over the previous year. Major U.S. agricultural exports to China include soybeans, meat products, and cotton.⁵

Over the past few years, China has been one of the fastest growing U.S. export markets, as can be seen in **Table 4**. U.S. exports to China rose by nearly 240% from 2001 to 2008, which was higher than that of any other top 10 U.S. trading partner.

During the first half of 2009, China has remained the third largest U.S. export market. The decline in U.S. exports to China (at -17.2%) was smaller than the decline in U.S. exports to every other top 10 U.S. export markets except France (at -7.8%), and was much smaller than the overall decrease in U.S. exports during this period (-24.6%).

Table 3. Major U.S. Exports to China: 2008
(\$ in millions and percent change)

NAIC Number and Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Percent Change 2007 - 2008
	\$ millions					
9100 Waste and scrap	2,508	3,670	6,071	7,331	7,562	3.1%
3344 Semiconductors and other electronic components	3,565	4,015	6,830	7,435	7,475	0.5%
1111 Oilseeds and grains	2,829	2,339	2,593	4,145	7,316	76.5%
3364 Aerospace products and parts	2,111	4,535	6,309	7,447	5,471	-26.5%
3252 Resin, synthetic rubber, and artificial & synthetic fibers & filament	1,631	2,127	2,548	3,290	3,524	7.1%

Source: USITC DataWeb

Notes: North American Industry Classification system, 4-digit level.

³ The United States also exports a significant level of private services to China; these totaled \$14.2 billion in 2007.

⁴ Based on the North American industry Classification System, 4-digit level.

⁵ Some U.S. analysts have expressed concern over the composition of U.S. exports to China, noting that much of it consists of scrap products, components, and food, as opposed to high-value assembled manufactured products (such as cars). Chinese officials complain that U.S. export controls on high tech trade has a significant negative impact on the composition and size of U.S. exports to China.

Table 4. U.S. Merchandise Exports to Major Trading Partners in 2001 and 2008
(\$ in billions and % change)

	2001	2008	% Change from 2007-2008	% Change from 2001-2008
Canada	163.7	260.9	5.0	59.4
Mexico	101.5	151.5	11.0	49.3
China	19.2	71.5	9.5	272.3
Japan	57.6	66.6	6.2	15.6
Germany	30.1	54.7	10.2	31.9
United Kingdom	40.8	53.8	6.9	31.9
Netherlands	19.5	40.2	21.9	106.2
South Korea	22.2	34.8	6.9	56.8
Brazil	15.9	32.9	33.6	106.9
France	19.9	29.2	6.5	46.7
World	731.0	1,300.1	11.8	77.9

Source: USITC DataWeb. Ranked by top 10 U.S. export markets in 2008.

Many trade analysts argue that China could prove to be a much more significant market for U.S. exports in the future. China is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, and rapid economic growth is likely to continue in the near future, provided that economic reforms are continued. China's goals of modernizing its infrastructure, upgrading its industries, and improving rural living standards could generate substantial demand for foreign goods and services. Finally, economic growth has substantially improved the purchasing power of Chinese citizens, especially those living in urban areas along the east coast of China. China's growing economy, large foreign exchange reserves (at over \$2 trillion), and large population make it a potentially enormous market. To illustrate:

- China currently has the world's largest mobile phone network and one of the fastest-growing markets, with an estimated 679 million mobile phone users (as of April 2009), compared to 87 million users in 2000.
- Boeing Corporation predicts that China will be the largest market for commercial air travel outside the U.S. for the next 20 years (2008-2027); during this period, China will buy 3,710 aircraft valued at \$390 billion.⁶ On April 11, 2006, Boeing announced it had signed a general purchase agreement with China for 80 Boeing 737s. On September 6, 2007, China announced it would buy 55 Boeing aircraft valued at \$3.8 billion.
- It is estimated that China in 2008 replaced the United States as the world's largest Internet user: 253 million users versus 221 million respectively (as of June

⁶ Boeing, Current Market Outlook, 2008-2027,

2008).⁷ Yet, the percentage of the Chinese population using the Internet is small relative to the United States: 19% versus 73%, respectively.

- The Chinese government projects that by the year 2020, there will be 140 million cars in China (seven times the current level), and that the number of cars sold annually will rise from 7.2 million units (2006) to 20.7 million units in 2020. According to some estimates, China is now the world's second largest market for new cars. General Motors (GM) and Ford reportedly sold 1.09 million and 306 thousand vehicles, respectively, in China in 2008.⁸

Major U.S. Imports from China

China was the largest source of U.S. imports in 2008 at \$338 billion, or 16.1% of total U.S. imports (up from 6.5% of total in 1996). U.S. imports from China rose by 5.1% in 2008 over the previous year (compared with an 11.7% rise in 2007). The importance (ranking) of China as a source of U.S. imports has risen dramatically, from eighth largest in 1990, to fourth in 2000, to second in 2004-2006, to first in 2007-2008. The top five U.S. imports from China in 2008 were computers and parts, miscellaneous manufactured articles (such as toys, games, etc.), communications equipment, apparel, and audio and video equipment (see **Table 5**).

During the first half of 2009, China has remained the largest source of U.S. imports. The decline in U.S. imports from China (at -13.4%) was the smallest percentage decline in U.S. imports among any of its top 10 import trading partners, and was significantly smaller than the overall decline in U.S. imports (at -32.2%).

Table 5. Major U.S. Imports From China: 2008
(\$ in millions and percent change)

NAIC Number and Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Percent Change 2007 – 2008
3341 computer equipment	29,486	35,467	40,046	44,462	45,820	3.1%
3399 Misc. manufactured commodities	23,712	26,449	28,888	34,827	35,835	2.9%
3342 Communications equipment	9,015	14,121	17,977	23,192	26,618	14.8%
3152 Apparel	10,530	16,362	19,228	22,955	22,583	-1.6%
3343 Audio and video equipment	12,421	15,287	18,789	19,075	19,715	3.4%

Source: USITC DataWeb

Notes: North American Industry Classification system, 4-digit level.

⁷ New York Times, "China Surpasses U.S. in Number of Internet Users," July 26, 2008.

⁸ According to GM's website, it operates seven joint ventures and two wholly owned foreign enterprises and has more than 20,000 employees in China.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, nearly all of U.S. imports from China were low-value, labor-intensive products such as toys and games, consumer electronic products, footwear, and textiles and apparel. However, over the past few years, an increasing proportion of U.S. imports from China has comprised of more technologically advanced products, such as computers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2008, U.S. imports of advanced technology products from China totaled \$91.4 billion (27.1% of total U.S. imports from China), compared with \$29.3 billion in 2003 (19.2% of total U.S. imports from China). In addition, imports of advanced technology products from China accounted for 27.5% of total U.S. imports of such products in 2008, compared with 14.1% in 2003. U.S. exports of advanced technology to China in 2008 were \$18.7 billion; these accounted for 26.2% of total U.S. exports to China and 6.8% of total U.S. advanced technology exports.⁹

Many analysts contend that the sharp increase in U.S. imports from China (and hence the growing trade deficit) is largely the result of movement in production facilities from other (primarily) Asian countries to China.¹⁰ That is, various products that used to be made in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc., and then exported to the United States are now being made in China (in many cases, by foreign firms in China) and exported to the United States. An illustration of this shift can be seen in **Table 6**, which lists U.S. imports of computer equipment and parts from 2000-2008. For example, in 2000, Japan was the largest foreign supplier of U.S. computer equipment (with a 19.6% share of total shipments), while China ranked fourth (with a 12.1% share). In just eight years, Japan's ranking fell to fourth, the value of its shipments dropped by over half, and its share of U.S. computer imports declined to 7.7% (2008). China was by far the largest foreign supplier of computer equipment in 2008 with a 53.6% share of total U.S. imports. While U.S. imports of computer equipment from China rose by 452% over the past eight years, the total value of U.S. computer imports from the world rose by only 25%. Many analysts contend that a large share of the increase in Chinese computer production has come from foreign computer companies that have moved manufacturing facilities China.

Table 6. Major Foreign Suppliers of U.S. Computer Equipment Imports: 2000-2008
(\$ in billions and % change)

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2000-2008 % change
Total	68.5	62.3	73.9	83.8	85.4	24.7
China	8.3	12.0	29.5	40.0	45.8	451.8
Malaysia	4.9	7.1	8.7	11.1	9.0	83.7
Japan	13.4	8.1	6.3	6.3	6.6	-50.7
Mexico	6.9	7.9	7.4	6.6	6.2	-10.1
Singapore	8.7	7.1	6.6	5.6	4.0	-54.0

Source: U.S. International Trade Commission Trade Data Web.

Note: Ranked according to top five suppliers in 2008.

⁹Note, these figures do not indicate the level of sophistication of these products. Many U.S. imports of advanced technology products are parts.

¹⁰ Chinese data indicate that the share of China's exports produced by foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) in China rose from 1.9% in 1986 to 55% in 2008.

China has become a major source of U.S. agricultural imports. It was the third largest supplier of such imports in 2008 (compared with 12th largest in 2000), at \$4.7 billion. U.S. agricultural imports from China rose by 42.2% in 2008 and by 104.5% from 2004-2008. Major agricultural imports from China include seafood products, vegetables and fruit, and animal foods.

Investment Ties

Investment plays a major role in U.S.-China commercial ties.¹¹ China's investments in U.S. assets can be broken down into two categories: holdings of U.S. securities and foreign direct investment (FDI). The Treasury Department defines foreign holdings of U.S. securities as "U.S. securities owned by foreign residents (including banks and other institutions) except where the owner has a direct investment relationship with the U.S. issuer of the securities." These include long-term (LT) U.S. Treasury securities, LT U.S. government agency securities,¹² LT corporate securities (some of which are asset-backed), equities (such as stocks), and short-term debt.¹³ The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) defines FDI (in the United States) as "the ownership or control, directly or indirectly, by one foreign resident of 10 percent or more of the voting securities of an incorporated U.S. business enterprise or the equivalent interest in an unincorporated U.S. business enterprise."¹⁴ BEA classifies FDI flows according to broad industrial sections, including mining; utilities; manufacturing (broken down into nine subsectors¹⁵); wholesale trade; information; depository institutions; finance (excluding depository institutions); professional, scientific, and technical services; nonbank holding companies; and other industries.

China's Holdings of U.S. Securities¹⁶

The Treasury Department performs annual surveys of foreign holders of U.S. securities, the latest of which was released in February 2009 (preliminary data) for holding as of June 2008.¹⁷ China's total holdings of U.S. securities at the end of June 2008 were estimated at \$1,205 billion, compared to \$922 billion in June 2007 (an increase of 31%). From June 2002 to June 2008, China's holdings of U.S. securities as a share of total foreign holdings of U.S. securities rose from 3.9% to 11.7% and its ranking increased from fifth to second (after Japan at \$1,250 billion).

¹¹ U.S. data on FDI flows to and from China differ sharply from Chinese data on FDI flows to and from the United States. This section uses U.S. data.

¹² Agency securities include both federal agencies and government-sponsored enterprises created by Congress (e.g., Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) to provide credit to key sectors of the economy. Some of these securities are backed by assets (such as home mortgages).

¹³ LT securities are those with no stated maturity date (such as equities) or with an original term to maturity date of more than one year. Short-term debt includes U.S. Treasury securities, agency securities, and corporate securities with a maturity date of less than one year.

¹⁴ The 10% ownership share is the threshold considered to represent an effective voice or lasting influence in the management of an enterprise. See, BEA, *International Economic Accounts, BEA Series Definitions*, available at <http://www.bea.gov/international>.

¹⁵ These sectors include food; chemicals; primary and fabricated metals; machinery; computers and electronic products; electrical equipment, appliances and components; transportation equipment, and other manufacturing.

¹⁶ For additional information on this issue, see CRS Report RL34314, *China's Holdings of U.S. Securities: Implications for the U.S. Economy*, by Wayne M. Morrison and Marc Labonte

¹⁷ U.S. Treasury Department, *Preliminary Report on Foreign Portfolio Holdings of U.S. Securities as of June 30, 2008*, February 27, 2009. A final report expected in April 2009.

China likely became the largest holder in late 2008 or early 2009 (see **Table 7**). From June 2002 to June 2008, China's holdings of U. S. securities grew by nearly \$1.1 trillion (or 566%), which was by far the largest increase in U.S. securities holdings of any other country.¹⁸ These holding are largely the result of China's currency policy (discussed below). The largest type of U.S. securities held by China are U.S. Treasury securities, which are used to finance U.S. budget deficits; data for foreign holdings of these type of securities are reported on a monthly basis. China's holdings of U.S. Treasury securities rose from \$118 billion (or 9.6% of total foreign holdings) at the end of 2002 to \$727.4 billion (23.6% of foreign holdings) in December 2008. China's holdings as of July 2009 were \$800.5 billion or 23.4% of total foreign holdings (see **Table 8**).¹⁹ In September 2008, China become the largest foreign holder of U.S. Treasuries, and from January-July, it accounted for 17% of new purchases by foreign investors.

Table 7. China's Holdings of U.S. Securities: June 2002-June 2008
(\$ billions and percent change)

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2002-2008 % change
188	255	341	527	699	922	1,205	566%

Source: U.S. Department of Treasury.

Notes: U.S. securities include short term and long-term debt, including Treasury securities, U.S. government agency securities, corporate securities, and equities.

Table 8. China's Holdings of U.S. Treasury Securities: 2002-2008 and July 2009
(\$ billions and as a percent of total foreign holdings)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	July 2009
China's Holdings (\$billions)	118.4	159.0	222.9	310.0	396.9	477.6	727.4	800.5
Holdings As a Percent of Total Foreign Holdings	9.6%	10.4%	12.1%	15.2%	18.9%	20.3%	23.6%	23.4%

Source: U.S. Treasury Department.

Notes: Data based on periodical surveys by the Treasury Department, which often revises estimates for the previous year but not for all years and thus should be interpreted with caution. Annual data are year-end values

Many U.S. policymakers have raised concern over China's large and growing holdings of U.S. securities, stating that while such purchases have helped the United States meet its investment needs and have helped fund the growing U.S. Federal budget deficit, they could give China increased leverage over the United States on major political and economic issues. On the other hand, Chinese officials have expressed concern over the "safety" of their large holdings of U.S.

¹⁸ U.S. Treasury Department, *Report on Foreign Portfolio Holdings of U.S. Securities*, various editions. Note, 2002 was the first year in which surveys listed data as of June. Prior to that, survey data were listed as of March or December.

¹⁹ U.S. Treasury Department, *Major Foreign Holders of U.S. Treasury Securities*, June 15, 2009. Note, the Treasury Department often revises its estimates of foreign holdings for a given year, but not for previous years. Thus comparisons of multi-year data should be interpreted with caution.

debt. Many analysts contend that China's economy is so dependent on a healthy and stable U.S. economy that China has no choice but to keep buying U.S. government debt. However, Chinese officials have expressed concern that growing U.S. government debt will spark inflation in the United States and a sharp depreciation of the dollar, which would diminish the value of China's dollar assets.²⁰

U.S. Holdings of Chinese Securities

The Treasury Department also does surveys on U.S. holdings of Chinese securities; these data are on a year-end basis. The last survey (issued in October 2008) estimated total U.S. holdings of Chinese securities at \$97.2 billion in 2007 (98% of which were in equities), up from \$13.7 billion in 2003. U.S. holdings of Chinese securities in 2007 were equal to about 1.3% of total U.S. holdings of foreign securities.²¹

Bilateral FDI Flows

China's FDI in the United States is quite small relative to its holdings of U.S. securities: \$1.2 billion (cumulative at the end of 2008) versus an estimated \$1.4 trillion, respectively.²² In 2008, China's ranked as the 30th largest source of FDI in the United States.²³ Cumulative U.S. FDI in China in 2008 was \$45.6 billion, roughly the size of U.S. FDI in Brazil and half that in Mexico. China was 17th largest overall destination of U.S. FDI (up from 21st in 2007).²⁴

Table 9. China's Cumulative FDI in the United States and U.S. FDI in China: 2002-2008

(\$ in millions and percent change)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2002-2008 percent change (%)
China's FDI in the U.S.	385	284	435	574	974	1,091	1,235	220.8
U.S. FDI in China	10,570	11,261	17,616	19,016	23,405	28,298	45,695	332.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Notes: Data on a historical-cost basis.

²⁰ See China View, "U.S. stimulus-related debt could hurt investors, China warns," February 18, 2009.

²¹ U.S. Treasury Department, *Report on U.S. Portfolio Holdings of Foreign Securities as of December 31, 2007*, October 2008.

²² All BEA data is on a historical-cost, or book value, basis.

²³ In comparison, total U.S. FDI in China in 2007 was \$28.3 billion—nearly 26 times China's FDI in the United States—making China the 21st largest U.S. destination for FDI.

²⁴ Chinese FDI data on its FDI in the United States and U.S. FDI in China differ significantly from U.S. data.

Major U.S.-China Trade Issues

Although China's economic reforms and rapid economic growth have expanded U.S.-China commercial relations in recent years, tensions have arisen over a wide variety of issues, China's mixed record on implementing its obligations in the WTO, including its failure to provide adequate protection of U.S. intellectual property rights (IPR); China's use of industrial policies to promote various domestic industries; the U.S. use of trade laws, such as safeguards, countervailing, and antidumping measures to respond to Chinese imports that are deemed harmful U.S. industries and workers; China's refusal to adopt a floating currency; and various problems relating to the health and safety of certain Chinese imports. Legislation has been introduced to respond to several of these issues (see "U.S.-China Trade Legislation in the 111th Congress").

China and the World Trade Organization

Negotiations for China's accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and its successor organization, the WTO, began in 1986 and took over 15 years to complete. During the WTO negotiations, Chinese officials insisted that China was a developing country and should be allowed to enter under fairly lenient terms. The United States insisted that China could enter the WTO only if it substantially liberalized its trade regime. In the end, a compromise was reached that requires China to make immediate and extensive reductions in various trade and investment barriers, while allowing it to maintain some level of protection (or a transitional period of protection) for certain sensitive sectors. China's WTO membership was formally approved at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar on November 10, 2001. Taiwan's WTO membership was approved the next day. On November 11, 2001, China notified the WTO that it had formally ratified the WTO agreements, and on December 11, 2001, it formally joined the WTO. Under the WTO accession agreement, China agreed to:

- Reduce the average tariff for industrial goods and agriculture products to 8.9% and 15%, respectively (with most cuts made by 2004 and all cuts completed by 2010).
- Limit subsidies for agricultural production to 8.5% of the value of farm output and eliminate export subsidies on agricultural exports.
- Within three years of accession, grant full trade and distribution rights to foreign enterprises (with some exceptions, such as for certain agricultural products, minerals, and fuels).
- Provide non-discriminatory treatment to all WTO members. Foreign firms in China will be treated no less favorably than Chinese firms for trade purposes. End discriminatory trade policies against foreign invested firms in China, such as domestic content rules and technology transfer requirements.
- Implement the WTO's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement upon accession. (That agreement establishes basic standards on IPR protection and rules for enforcement.)
- Fully open the banking system to foreign financial institutions within five years (by the end of 2006). Joint ventures in insurance and telecommunication will be permitted (with various degrees of foreign ownership allowed).

WTO Implementation Issues

China's record on implementing its WTO commitments has been mixed. China's average overall tariff has dropped from 15.6% in 2001 to 9.9% in 2009 (the tariff rate on industrial goods and agricultural products is 8.9 and 15.2, respectively) and a number of non-tariff measures have been eliminated. However, there have been several areas where China's implementation is considered to be incomplete. The USTR's seventh annual China WTO compliance report (issued in December 2008) identified several areas of concern, including failure by the Chinese government to maintain an effective IPR enforcement regime (discussed below), industrial policies and national standards that attempt to promote Chinese firms (while discriminating against foreign firms), restrictions on trading and distribution rights (especially in regards to IPR products, such as movies, books, and music), discriminatory and unpredictable health and safety rules on imports (especially agricultural products), burdensome regulations and restrictions on services (including excessive capital requirements), and failure to provide adequate transparency of trade laws and regulations.²⁵

The USTR's December 2008 China WTO report stated that China's failure to comply with key areas of its WTO commitments largely stemmed from its incomplete transition to a market based economy. A significant part of the economy, including the banking system and state owned enterprises (SOEs), are controlled by the central government—remnants of the old command economy that existed before reforms began in 1979. Although China agreed to make SOEs operate according to free market principles when it joined the WTO, U.S. officials contend that SOEs are still being subsidized, especially through the banking system. In addition, China is attempting to promote the development of several industries (such as autos, steel, telecommunications, and high technology products) deemed by the government as important to China's future economic development and has implemented policies to promote and protect them.

When China joined the WTO, it agreed to provide a full description of all its subsidy programs, but to date has failed to fully do so. In addition, China agreed to make its state-owned enterprises operate according to market principles; yet such firms continue to receive direction and subsidies. Some major issues of concern to the United States include the following.

- In November 2008, the government announced a \$586 billion economic stimulus plan, which included policies that would be implemented to assist 10 pillar industries (including, autos, steel, shipbuilding, textiles, machinery, electronics and information, light industry, petrochemicals, non-ferrous metals, and logistics) to promote their long-term competitiveness. Government support policies for the 10 industries are expected to include tax cuts and incentives (including export tax rebates), industry subsidies and subsidies to consumers to purchase certain products (such as consumer goods and autos), fiscal support, directives to banks to provide financing, direct funds to support technology upgrades and the development of domestic brands, government procurement policies, the extension of export credits, and funding to help firms invest overseas.²⁶ Some analysts contend that these new subsidy programs could violate China's WTO

²⁵ USTR, *2008 Report to Congress on China's WTO Compliance*, December 23, 2008.

²⁶ On May 18, 2009, China's State Council, announced plans to create 3 million new jobs in light industry over the next three years by providing financial support to small and medium-sized light industry firms with "good development potential."

commitments. In addition, in July 2009, the central government issued “buy China” regulations requiring that services, goods, and materials used for infrastructure projects funded by the stimulus plan come from Chinese sources (unless such products are not available locally).

- According to the New York Times, China has issued rules banning foreign participation in certain renewable energy technologies (such as wind power) or has imposed domestic content requirements for foreign firms. For example, the government requires that foreign solar power manufacturers in China source 80% of their equipment purchases from Chinese suppliers.²⁷
- In December 2006, the Chinese government designated seven industries (military equipment, power generation and distribution, oil, telecommunications, coal, civil aviation, and shipping) as critical to the nation’s economic security and stated it must retain “absolute control” and limit foreign participation.²⁸
- On June 30, 2006, China announced a partial opening of its beef market, which had been completely closed to U.S. imports in 2003, due to concerns over mad cow disease. However, U.S. officials have expressed disappointment that China has failed to develop a science-based trading protocol for importing beef from the United States, which would enable the United States to resume beef trade with China.²⁹
- In July 2005, the Chinese government issued new guidelines on steel production, which reportedly include provisions for the preferential use of domestically produced steel-manufacturing equipment and domestic technologies; extensive government involvement in determining the number, size, location, and production quantities of steel producers in China; technology transfer requirements on foreign investment; and restrictions on foreign majority ownership. On June 14, 2006, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for China Tim Stratford stated that China’s steel guidelines were “troubling, because it attempts to dictate industry outcomes and involves the government in making decisions that should be left to the marketplace.”³⁰ The U.S. steel industry has expressed growing fears that Chinese government policies have led to overinvestment and overcapacity in China’s domestic steel industry, which could lead it to flood world markets with cheap steel.³¹ Such concerns led the USTR to begin a Steel Dialogue with China (which first met in March 2006) to discuss issues of concern to the U.S. steel industry.
- China’s Automotive Industrial Policy, issued by the government in May 2004, includes provisions discouraging the importation of auto parts and encouraging the use of domestic technology, while requiring new automobile and automobile

²⁷ New York Times, *China Builds High Wall to Guard Energy Industry*, July 13, 2009.

²⁸ *China Daily*, “Nation Lists Sectors Critical to National Economy,” December 19, 2006.

²⁹ In 2009, China imposed restrictions on pork imports from certain U.S. states because of concerns relating to the outbreak of influenza A(H1N1), or swine flu.

³⁰ Statement of Timothy Stratford, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for China Affairs, before the Congressional Steel Caucus, June 14, 2006.

³¹ China is now the world’s largest steel producer, accounting for 31% of the world’s steel production. Its steel production levels rose by 25% over the previous year. According to U.S. officials, China’s excess steel capacity in 2006 could be larger than total U.S. steel production.

engine plants to include substantial investment in research and development facilities. New auto parts regulations that went into effect in April 2005 discriminate against imported auto parts by assessing an additional charge on imported parts if they are incorporated into a vehicle that does not meet minimum levels of domestic content, discussed below.³²

To date, the United States has initiated eight WTO dispute resolution cases against China, six of which have been resolved or ruled upon.³³ China has filed three cases against the United States. These cases are summarized below.

Pending U.S. Cases Against China

- On June 23, 2009, the United States and the EU filed a case against China's export restrictions (such as export quotas and taxes,) on raw materials (bauxite, coke, fluorspar, magnesium, manganese, silicon metal, silicon carbide, yellow phosphorus, and zinc). The United States charges that such policies are intended to lower prices for Chinese firms (steel, aluminum, and chemical sectors) in order to help them obtain an unfair competitive advantage.
- On December 19, 2008, the USTR filed a WTO case against China over its support for "Famous Chinese" brand programs, charging that such programs utilize various export subsidies (including cash grant rewards, preferential loans, research and development funding to develop new products, and payments to lower the cost of export credit insurance) at the central and local government level to promote the recognition and sale of Chinese brand products overseas.

Resolved Cases or a WTO Panel Ruling Has Issued a Ruling

- On March 3, 2008, the USTR requested WTO dispute resolution consultations with China regarding its discriminatory treatment of U.S. suppliers of financial information services in China. On November 13, 2008, the USTR announced that China had agreed to eliminate discriminatory restrictions on how U.S. and other foreign suppliers of financial information services do business in China.
- On April 10, 2007, the USTR filed two IPR-related cases against China: the first case charges that China has failed to comply with the TRIPS agreement (namely in terms of its enforcement of IPR laws) and the second case charges that China has failed to provide sufficient market access to IPR-related products, namely in terms of trading rights and distribution services. On January 26, 2009, the WTO ruled that many of China's IPR enforcement policies failed to WTO obligations and on August 12, 2009 it ruled that many of China's regulations on trading rights and distribution were WTO inconsistent (see "Violations of U.S. Intellectual Property Rights").
- On February 5, 2007, the USTR announced it had requested WTO dispute consultations with China over government regulations that give illegal (WTO-

³² This provision was found by the WTO to be inconsistent with WTO rules. See list of WTO cases brought by the United States against China.

³³ For an overview of the WTO dispute resolution process, see CRS Report RS20088, *Dispute Settlement in the World Trade Organization (WTO): An Overview*, by Jeanne J. Grimmer.

inconsistent) import and export subsidies to various industries in China (such as steel, wood, and paper) that distort trade and discriminate against imports.³⁴ China's WTO accession agreement required it to immediately eliminate such subsidies. On November 29, 2007, China formally agreed to eliminate the subsidies in question by January 1, 2008.

- On March 30, 2006, the USTR initiated a WTO case against China for its use of discriminatory regulations applied to imported auto parts (which often applies the high tariff rate on finished autos to certain auto parts), stating that the purpose of these rules was to discourage domestic producers from using imported parts and encouraging foreign firms to move production to China. On February 13, 2008, a WTO panel ruled that China's discriminatory tariff policy was inconsistent with its WTO obligations (stating that the auto tariffs constituted an internal charge rather than ordinary customs duties, which violated WTO rules on national treatment). China appealed the decision, but a WTO Appellate Body largely upheld the WTO panels decision.
- On March 30, 2006, the USTR initiated a WTO case against China for its use of discriminatory regulations applied to imported auto parts (which often applies the high tariff rate on finished autos to certain auto parts), stating that the purpose of these rules was to discourage domestic producers from using imported parts and encouraging foreign firms to move production to China. On February 13, 2008, a WTO panel ruled that China's discriminatory tariff policy was inconsistent with its WTO obligations (stating that the auto tariffs constituted an internal charge rather than ordinary customs duties, which violated WTO rules on national treatment). China appealed the decision, but a WTO Appellate Body largely upheld the WTO panels decision.
- On March 18, 2004, the USTR announced it had filed a WTO dispute resolution case against China over its discriminatory tax treatment of imported semiconductors. The United States claimed that China applied a 17% VAT rate on semiconductor chips that were designed and made outside China, but gave VAT rebates to domestic producers. Following consultations with the Chinese government, the USTR announced on July 8, 2004, that China agreed to end its preferential tax policy by April 2005. However, the USTR has expressed concern over new forms of financial assistance given by the Chinese government to its domestic semiconductor industry.

Chinese WTO Cases Against the United States

- On September 14, 2009, China brought a WTO case against the United States because of its imposition of additional duties on Chinese tires that resulted from a China-specific safeguard investigation (see discussion of this case, below).
- On April 17, 2009, China brought a WTO case against the United States over a provision in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 that effectively prohibits the establishment or implementation of any measures that would allow poultry

³⁴ Some programs give tax preferences, tariff exemptions, discounted loans, or other benefits to firms that meet certain export performance requirements, while others give tax breaks for purchasing Chinese-made equipment and accessories over imports.

products to be imported from China. (Congress is currently consideration legislation to make this provision consistent with WTO rules; see “U.S.-China Trade Legislation in the 111th Congress.”)

- On 14 September 2007, China initiated a case against the United States regarding its use of anti-dumping and countervailing duty determinations on free sheet paper from China.
- On September 19, 2008, China initiated a WTO case against the United States in regards to its use of antidumping and countervailing measures against certain Chinese-made steel pipes, tires, and laminated woven sacks.

Violations of U.S. Intellectual Property Rights

The United States has pressed China to improve its IPR protection regime since the late 1980s. In 1991, the United States (under a Section 301 case) threatened to impose \$1.5 billion in trade sanctions against China if it failed to strengthen its IPR laws. Although China later implemented a number of new IPR laws, it often failed to enforce them, which led the United States to once again threaten China with trade sanctions. The two sides reached a trade agreement in 1995, which pledged China to take immediate steps to stem IPR piracy by cracking down on large-scale producers and distributors of pirated materials and prohibiting the export of pirated products, establishing mechanisms to ensure long-term enforcement of IPR laws and providing greater market access to U.S. IPR-related products.

Under the terms of its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, China agreed to immediately bring its IPR laws in compliance with the WTO’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, which include a commitment to establish an effective IPR enforcement regime. The U.S. Trade Representative’s (USTR) office has stated on a number of occasions that China has made great strides in improving its IPR protection regime, noting that it has passed several new IPR-related laws, closed or fined several assembly operations for illegal production lines, seized millions of illegal audio-visual products, curtailed exports of pirated products, expanded training of judges and law enforcement officials on IPR protection, and expanded legitimate licensing of film and music production in China. However, the USTR has indicated that much work needs to be done to improve China’s IPR protection regime, especially in terms of deterrence.

Many business groups contend that poor IPR protection is one of the most significant obstacles for doing business in China. To illustrate:

- According to IPR industry groups, China has some of the highest piracy rates in the world: 95% for entertainment software, 90% for records and music, and 82% for business software. Piracy in China for business and entertainment software alone is estimated to cost U.S. firms \$3.5 billion in lost trade in 2008, which were was than losses from any other foreign country.³⁵

³⁵ Estimates made by the International Intellectual Property Rights Alliance..

- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported that China accounted for 81% (\$221 million domestic value) of pirated goods seized by the agency in FY2008.³⁶

Piracy also has a number of negative effects on China's economy. For example:

- The Chinese government estimates that counterfeits constitute between 15% and 20% of all products made in China and are equivalent to about 8% of China's annual gross domestic product.
- A study by the Motion Picture Association of America estimated that China's domestic film industry lost about \$1.5 billion in revenue to piracy in 2005 (and that the combined losses of both foreign and Chinese film makers totaled \$2.7 billion).³⁷ It also found that about half of pirated films in China are Chinese movies.
- A Business Software Alliance study estimates that a 10 percentage point reduction in China's PC software piracy rates would raise its GDP by \$20.5 billion and create an additional 355,179 jobs.

Opinions differ as to why the Chinese government has been unable (or unwilling) to make a significant reduction in the level of piracy in China. Some explanations put forward by various analysts include the following:

- China's transformation from a Soviet-style command economy (in which the government owned and controlled nearly every aspect of the economic life) to one that is becoming more market-based is a very recent occurrence. IPR is a relatively alien or unfamiliar concept for most people in China to grasp (as is the concept of private property rights) and thus it is difficult for the government to convince the public that piracy is wrong.³⁸
- Chinese leaders want to make China a major producer of capital-intensive and high-technology products, and thus, they are tolerant of IPR piracy if it helps Chinese firms become more technologically advanced.³⁹
- Although the central government may be fully committed to protect IPR, local government officials are often less enthusiastic to do so because production of pirated products generates jobs and tax revenue, and some officials may be obtaining bribes or other benefits which prompts them to tolerate piracy. The USTR's April 2009 report on IPR stated it was concerned by reports that government officials in China were urging more lenient enforcement of IPR laws because of the impact of the global financial crisis.
- Pirated products, such as music, games, and videos, may be tolerated by the government because they provide China's citizens with diversions from politically sensitive issues.

³⁶ See CBP website at <http://www.CBP.gov>.

³⁷ *Reuters*, "China Piracy Costs Film Industry \$2.7 Billion in 2005," June 19, 2006.

³⁸ Some Chinese officials have noted that some individuals who were arrested for IPR piracy violations expressed shock at their arrest because in their minds they were not harming anybody.

³⁹ On the other hand, IPR piracy may prevent foreign firms from investing in high-tech production in China.

- As a developing country, China lacks the resources and a sophisticated legal system to go after and punish IPR violators, and establishing an effective enforcement regime will take time.⁴⁰
- As a practical matter, IPR enforcement in China will be problematic until Chinese-owned companies begin to put pressure on the government to protect their own brands and other IPR-related products. U.S. trade officials note that the Chinese government took aggressive action during the 2008 summer Olympics in Beijing to stop infringement activities.
- Chinese trade barriers and regulatory restrictions on IPR-related products and their distribution are so onerous that they prevent legitimate products from entering the market, or raise costs so high that they are unaffordable to the average individual, thus creating a huge demand for low-cost pirated products.

The U.S. WTO Cases Against China on IPR

On April 10, 2007, the USTR brought two IPR cases against China in the WTO involving a number of complaints:⁴¹

- The thresholds for criminal prosecutions of IPR violations in China are too high, meaning the government will only pursue cases it considers to be serious or excessively large, creating a safe harbor for smaller producers or violators. In addition, the thresholds for prosecuting IPR violations are based on the value of the pirated products rather than the value such legitimate products would fetch in the marketplace. Such thresholds make it very difficult to pursue cases against many commercial producers of illegal IPR-related products.
- China often allows seized imported pirated goods to re-enter the market rather than disposing of them.
- China's copyright laws fail to protect imported works (such as movies) that are under review by Chinese censorship authorities (and must be approved before the works can be distributed in China). As a result, pirated copies of the works can be widely distributed without violating copyright law and thus do not face prosecution.
- Chinese IPR laws do not appear to allow producers of pirated products to be prosecuted unless they also illegally distribute such products.
- China has not abided by its 2001 WTO accession agreement to liberalize its rules on trading rights and distribution services. As a result, U.S. IPR-related products face significant trade barriers in China, and such barriers are a major factor for causing the high rate of piracy in China.

On January 26, 2009, a WTO panel ruled on the case dealing with IPR enforcement issues, finding that China failed to protect IPR works under review by the government for content and in regards to the disposal of seized pirated products. However, the panel determined that it needed

⁴⁰ Some critics of this argument note that China seems to be very efficient at going after political dissenters and others deemed to be "threats" to social stability.

⁴¹ See USTR April 9, 2007, Press Release and related documents at <http://www.ustr.gov/index.html>.

more evidence on the issue of thresholds for criminal prosecutions of IPR piracy before a determination could be made. The USTR, while admitting disappointment on the WTO findings on thresholds, noted that, right before it filed the WTO case on China's IPR enforcement, China lowered its threshold criminal copyright threshold from 1,000 to 500 infringing copies.

On August 12, 2009, a WTO panel ruled that a number of China's restrictions on trading rights and distribution of IPR-related products (including reading material, audiovisual home entertainment products, sound recordings, and films for theatrical release) were inconsistent with WTO rules, namely discriminatory regulations on distribution services in China (where foreign firms are treated less favorably than domestic firms) and rules that designate only state-owned monopolies as entities that can import such products. However, the WTO panel did not address whether of China's censorship policies violated WTO rules or China's limits on the number of foreign films that can be imported each year.

China and Safeguards

When China entered the WTO in 2001, it agreed to allow the United States to continue to treat it as a non-market economy for 12 years (codified in U.S. law under Sections 421 of the 1974 Trade Act, as amended) for the purpose of U.S. safeguards.⁴² This provision enables the United States (and other WTO members) to impose restrictions (such as quotas and/or increased tariffs) on imported Chinese products that have increased in such quantities that they have caused, or threaten to cause, market disruption to U.S. domestic producers.⁴³ The Bush Administration on six different occasions chose not to extend relief to various industries under the China-specific safeguard (even though in four cases, the USITC recommended relief). A number of U.S. industries and labor groups have called on the Obama Administration to utilize the China safeguard provision, especially in the face of the current U.S. recession and because of "unfair" Chinese trade practices.

The Chinese Tire Case

On April 24, 2009 the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW) filed a petition with the USITC contending that U.S. imports of passenger vehicle and light truck tires from China caused or threatened to cause market disruption to U.S. domestic producers of like or directly competitive products. In June 2009, the USITC announced that it had determined such imports did in fact cause or threaten to cause market disruption, and recommended the imposition of additional tariffs over three years (55% in the first year, 45% in the second, and 35% in the third) and to provide expedited consideration of Trade Adjustment Assistance for firms and/or workers that are affected by such imports.⁴⁴

⁴² The U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) is in charge of making market disruption determinations under the safeguard provisions for most products (with the exception of textiles and apparel, which are handled by the Committee for the Implementation of the Textile Agreements, an inter-agency committee chaired by the U.S. Commerce Department). Import relief is subject to presidential approval.

⁴³ Normally, safeguard provisions apply to all imported products. The China safeguard in U.S. trade law applies only to China.

⁴⁴ The USITC determined that the U.S. tire industry had suffered a continuous decline from 2004-2008 in employment, hours worked, and earnings, and that producers' domestic capacity, production, and shipments had fallen as well. It concluded that the sharp increase in tire imports from China was a major factor in this decline. See, *USITC Publication* (continued...)

As indicated in **Table 10**, China is currently the largest foreign supplier of certain passenger vehicle and light truck tires, at about \$2 billion in 2008, accounting for nearly 25% of total U.S. imports in 2008 (up from 12% in 2004).⁴⁵ From 2004 to 2008, the dollar value of U.S. imports of tires covered under the China safeguard action grew by 222%.⁴⁶ During the first seven months of 2009, U.S. imports of Chinese-made tires fell by 5.2% (while total U.S. imports of such tires were down 18.5%) over the same period in 2008;

Table 10. Top Five Suppliers of U.S. Imports of Certain Vehicle Tires: 2005-July 2009

Country	2004 (\$billions)	2007 (\$billions)	2008 (\$billions)	2004-2008 % change	July 2009/July 2008 % change
China	613	1,783	1,975	222.2	-5.2
Canada	1,304	1,484	1,444	10.7	-10.3
Japan	1,165	1,128	1,161	-0.3	-5.7
South Korea	598	772	787	31.6	-28.3
Thailand	29	272	334	1,051.7	-30.0
Total Imports	5,268	7,675	7,963	51.2	-18.5

Source: USITC. Total imports of HTS categories 4011.10.10, 4011.10.50, 4011.20.10, and 4011.20.50.

Note: Ranked according to top 5 sources of imports in 2008.

The USW argued that the “extraordinary increase in imports” of tires from China had hurt tire producers in the United States and contributed to the loss of 5,100 U.S. tire-related jobs from 2004-2008, and that 3,000 more jobs would be lost in 2009. Producers of tires in the United States, many of whom have joint venture operations in China, did not express support for the safeguard case and some actively opposed it.⁴⁷ Some industry representatives argued that a large share of U.S. tire imports from China were low-end products, that the USITC proposed increase in tariffs were excessive and punitive, and that such tariffs would hurt U.S. consumers and do little to boost employment in the U.S. tire industry.

On September 11, 2009, President Obama announced that he would impose additional tariffs on certain Chinese tires for three years (35% in the first year, 30% in the second year, and 25% in the final year); these level were less than the USITC’s recommendations).⁴⁸ China responded to the safeguard announcement by filing a WTO case against the United States and stating that it had initiated antidumping and anti-subsidy cases against imports of U.S. auto parts and poultry products.

(...continued)

4085, *Certain Passenger Vehicle and Light Truck Tires From China*, Investigation No. TA-431-7, July 2009

⁴⁵ The number of tires imported from China from 2004 to 2008 rose from 17.9 million units to 48.9 million. In 2008, 42% of the quantity of U.S. tire imports were from China.

⁴⁶ The tires affected by the safeguards action fall under sections 4011.10.10, 4011.10.50, 4011.20.10, and 4011.20.50 of the U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS).

⁴⁷ The USITC identified 10 tire producers in the United States, some of which are foreign-owned.

⁴⁸ Some analysts have speculated that the President’s decision was partly motivated by the belief that strong “enforcement” of U.S. trade laws would help induce lawmakers to support U.S. free trade agreements. See *Inside U.S. Trade*, “Reid, USTR See Tire Relief As Essential For Support Of Future Trade Deals,” September 10, 2009.

China's Currency Policy⁴⁹

Unlike most advanced economies (such as the United States), China does not maintain a market-based floating exchange rate. Between 1994 and July 2005, China pegged its currency, the renminbi (RMB) or yuan, to the U.S. dollar at about 8.28 yuan to the dollar. In July 2005, China appreciated the RMB to the dollar by 2.1% and moved to a “managed float,” based on a basket of major foreign currencies, including the U.S. dollar. In order to maintain a target rate of exchange with the dollar (and other currencies), the Chinese government has maintained restrictions and controls over capital transactions and has made large-scale purchases of U.S. dollars (and dollar assets). According to the Bank of China, from July 21, 2005, to September 17, 2009, the dollar-yuan exchange rate went from 8.11 to 6.83 yuan per dollar, an appreciation of 18.7%.⁵⁰ During 2009, China's has kept the exchange rate with the dollar at about 6.83 yuan per dollar, indicating that it has abandoned (at least for now) its policy of gradual appreciation.

Many U.S. policymakers and business representatives have charged that China's currency policy has made the RMB significantly undervalued vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar (with estimates ranging from 15% to 40%) and that this makes Chinese exports to the United States cheaper, and U.S. exports to China more expensive, than they would be if exchange rates were determined by market forces. They complain that this policy has particularly hurt several U.S. manufacturing sectors (such as textiles and apparel, furniture, plastics, machine tools, and steel), which are forced to compete against low-cost imports from China, and further contend that it has been a major factor in the size and growth of the U.S. trade deficit with China. Numerous bills have been introduced over the past few years to pressure China to either significantly appreciate its currency or to let it float freely in international markets.

Chinese officials have argued that its currency policy is not meant to favor exports over imports, but instead to foster domestic economic stability. They have expressed concern that abandoning its currency policy could cause an economic crisis in China and would especially hurt its export industries sectors at a time when painful economic reforms (such as closing down inefficient state-owned enterprises and restructuring the banking system) are being implemented. Chinese officials view economic stability as critical to sustaining political stability.

Further complicating the issue of China's currency policy is its large holdings of U.S. debt, such as Treasury securities, as noted earlier. The Chinese government has had to make large-scale purchases of U.S. dollars to meet its exchange rate targets. Rather than hold dollars (which earn no interest), China has sought to invest its dollars in U.S. assets, primarily U.S. government debt securities. If China were to sharply appreciate its currency, it is likely it would no longer need to make large-scale purchases of U.S. dollar assets, including U.S. Treasury securities, which could contribute to higher U.S. interest rates.

⁴⁹ For additional information on this issue, see CRS Report RS21625, *China's Currency: A Summary of the Economic Issues*, by Wayne M. Morrison and Marc Labonte.

⁵⁰ Source: Calculated from Bank of China data using the official middle rate.

Health and Safety Concerns Over Certain Imports from China⁵¹

Numerous incidents of unsafe food, consumer products (including seafood, pet food, toys, and tires), and medicines from China raised concerns in the United States (especially in 2007) over the health, safety, and quality of imports from China. Some analysts contend that China maintains a poor regulatory framework for enforcing its health and safety regulations and standards, and that this is proving to be a growing problem for U.S. consumers. Many U.S. policymakers have sought to press China to improve enforcement of its health and safety standards of its exports as well as the ability of U.S. regulatory agencies to ensure the health and safety of imports from China (and other countries).

There have been numerous recalls, warnings, and safety concerns involving Chinese products, as the following instances illustrate.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in March 2007 issued warnings and announced voluntary recalls on over 150 brands of pet foods (and products such as rice protein concentrate and wheat gluten used to manufacture pet food and animal feed) from China believed to have caused the sickness and deaths of numerous pets in the United States.⁵² In May 2007, the FDA issued warnings on certain toothpaste products (some of which were found to be counterfeit) found to originate in China that contained poisonous chemicals. In June 2007, the FDA announced import controls on all farm-raised catfish, basa, shrimp, dace (related to carp), and eel from China after antimicrobial agents, which are not approved in the United States for use in farm-raised aquatic animals, were found. The FDA ordered that such shipments will be detained until they are proven to be free of contaminants.⁵³ On January 25, 2008, the FDA posted on its website a notice by Baxter Healthcare Corporation that it had temporarily halted the manufacture of its multiple-dose vials of heparin (a blood thinner) for injection because of recent reports of serious adverse events associated with the use of the drug, including 246 deaths from January 2007 to May 2008. Some analysts have speculated that an unlicensed drug company in China, which produces ingredients for the drug, may be the source of the problem.⁵⁴ On September 12, 2008, the FDA issued a health information advisory on infant formula in response to reports of contaminated milk-based infant formula manufactured and sold in China, and later issued a warning on other products containing milk imported from China. On November 12, 2008, the FDA issued a new alert stating that all products containing milk imported from China would be detained unless proven to be free of melamine. On December 2, 2008, the Chinese government reported that melamine-tainted formula had so far killed six children and sickened 294,000 others (51,900 of whom had to be hospitalized and 154 were in serious condition).⁵⁵

⁵¹ For additional information on this issue, see CRS Report RS22713, *Health and Safety Concerns Over U.S. Imports of Chinese Products: An Overview*, by Wayne M. Morrison.

⁵² For a legal overview of FDA recalls, see CRS Report RL34167, *The FDA's Authority to Recall Products*, by Vanessa K. Burrows.

⁵³ In addition, FDA has refused shipments of a variety of Chinese food and drug products. See CRS Report RL34080, *Food and Agricultural Imports from China*, by Geoffrey S. Becker.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, "China Didn't Check Drug Supplier, Files Show," February 16, 2008.

⁵⁵ On October 15, 2008, the Chinese government issued an urgent notice to recall all dairy products made prior to September 14, 2008, so that they could be tested.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in June 2007 was informed by Foreign Tire Sales, Inc., an importer of foreign tires, that it suspected that up to 450,000 tires (later reduced to 255,000 tires) made in China may have a major safety defect (i.e., missing or insufficient gum strip inside the tire). The company was ordered by the NHTSA to issue a recall. The Chinese government and the manufacturer have maintained that the tires in question meet or exceed U.S. standards.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has issued alerts and announced voluntary recalls by U.S. companies on numerous products made in China. From January-December 2007, over four-fifths of CPSC recall notices involved Chinese products. Over this period, roughly 17.6 million toys were recalled because of excessive lead levels. Recalls were also issued on 9.5 million Chinese-made toys (because of the danger of loose magnets), 4.2 million “Aqua Dots” toys (because of beads that contained a chemical that can turn toxic if ingested) and 1 million toy ovens (due to potential finger entrapment and burn hazards).⁵⁶ China is the dominant supplier of toys to the United States, accounting for 89% of total U.S. imports (2007). U.S. recalls of lead-tainted Chinese-made toys were sharply down in 2008, totaling about 2.5 million toy units.⁵⁷ During the first five months of 2009, recalls of lead-tainted Chinese toys totaled 1.1 million units.

China and the United States have signed a number of agreements to boost cooperation, training, and communication on health and safety issues. In 2008, the FDA opened offices in three major Chinese cities.

Recent Issues

There have been a number of media reports in 2009 about potential health and safety hazards of Chinese-made drywall products that have been installed in homes in several states (including Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia) over the past few years. It has been claimed that these products emit sulfur gases that corrode copper coils and electrical and plumbing components.⁵⁸ The CPSC reports that it has received 1,192 reports (through August 2009) from residents in 24 states and the District of Columbia who believe their health symptoms or the corrosion of certain metal components in their homes are related to the presence of drywall produced in China.⁵⁹ The CPSC is currently attempting to evaluate the relationship between the drywall and the reported health symptoms and electrical and fire safety issues and to trace the origin and distribution of the drywall. CPSC officials have also traveled to China to meet with Chinese officials and to inspect mines and drywall manufacturing plants. U.S. imports of plaster products, which includes drywall, from China rose from \$3.6 billion in 2005 to \$32.3 billion in 2006, then fell to \$5.7 billion by 2008.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ For a list of company recalls of Chinese products, see the CPSC website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prerel.html>. In addition, several U.S. retailers have announced that they have halted sales of certain Chinese products, due to health and safety concerns, which do not appear on the CPSC website.

⁵⁷ Congressional concerns over product safety led to the enactment of the *Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008* (P.L. 110-314) in August 2008. The law tightened requirements on children products, including mandatory testing. See CRS Report RL34684, *Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008: P.L. 110-314*, by Margaret Mikyung Lee.

⁵⁸ USA Today, “Drywall from China Blamed for Problems in Homes, March 17, 2009.

⁵⁹ See CPSC drywall information center website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html>.

⁶⁰ The sharp increase in drywall imports from China (and other countries) in 2006 was reportedly caused by a shortage of domestically-made drywall that occurred because of reconstruction efforts after hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

Congressional concerns over the safety of Chinese poultry products have led it to effectively block U.S. imports of Chinese processed chicken over the past few years. This policy has been criticized by Chinese officials as protectionist and a violation of WTO rules China recently filed a WTO case on this issue against the United States. (see “WTO Implementation Issues”).⁶¹

Applying U.S. Countervailing Laws to China⁶²

Many critics of Chinese trade policies contend that the Chinese government provides a significant level of subsidies to many of its industries, such as preferential bank loans and grants, debt forgiveness, and tax breaks and rebates.⁶³ In addition, some analysts charge that China’s currency policy constitutes a form of government export subsidy.⁶⁴ Such critics contend that U.S. countervailing laws, which seek to address the negative impact foreign government subsidies on exported products may have on U.S. producers in the United States, should be applied to nonmarket economies such as China.⁶⁵

Until recently, the Commerce Department contended that U.S. countervailing laws could not be applied to a non-market economy because of the assumption that most production and prices in such an economy are determined by the government, and thus it would be impractical to determine the level of government subsidy that might be conveyed to various exported products. However, in November 2006, the Commerce Department decided to pursue a countervailing case against certain imported Chinese coated free sheet paper products. On March 30, 2007, the Commerce Department issued a preliminary ruling to impose countervailing duties (ranging from 11% to 20%) against the products in question. Commerce contends that, while China was still a non-market economy for the purposes of U.S. trade laws, economic reforms in China have made several sectors of the economy relatively market based, and therefore it is possible to identify the level of government subsidies given to the Chinese paper firms in question.⁶⁶ Thirteen countervailing cases have been brought against a number of other Chinese products since 2006.⁶⁷

Many Members of Congress have called on the Administration to expand its use of countervailing measures against Chinese products. Some have proposed codifying the use of countervailing laws against non-market economies, and others have sought to make China’s undervalued currency a factor in determining the level of countervailing duties (see “U.S.-China Trade Legislation in the 111th Congress”).

⁶¹ See CRS Report R40706, *China-U.S. Poultry Dispute*, by Geoffrey S. Becker.

⁶² For additional information on this issue, see CRS Report RL33550, *Trade Remedy Legislation: Applying Countervailing Action to Nonmarket Economy Countries*, by Vivian C. Jones.

⁶³ See USTR 2007 *National Trade Estimates of Foreign Trade Barriers*, April 2, 2007.

⁶⁴ They charge that government intervention in currency markets to keep the value of the yuan low vis-a-vis the dollar, keeps the price of Chinese exports low.

⁶⁵ The relief comes in the form of additional duties that are imposed on the imported products in question after a determination is made that a foreign government subsidized export to the United States has harmed a U.S. producer. The additional duties are intended to offset the impact of the subsidy.

⁶⁶ Countervailing investigations have also been initiated of Chinese off-the-road tires (June 18, 2007) and Chinese steel pipe (June 14, 2007).

⁶⁷ *Inside U.S. Trade*, “China-Focused Trade Remedy Cases Expected To Increase,” November 26, 2008.

Textile and Apparel Products⁶⁸

Various U.S. industry groups have called on the Administration to invoke special safeguard provisions (included in China's WTO accession package) that would enable the United States to restrict imports of certain Chinese products deemed harmful to U.S. industries. U.S. producers of textile and apparel products have been particularly vocal over the competitive pressures they face from China, especially since U.S. textile and apparel quotas on Chinese goods were eliminated in January 2005.⁶⁹ According to the U.S. Commerce Department, China is the largest foreign supplier of textiles and apparel to the United States at \$32.7 billion, or 35.1% (2008); from 2002 to 2008, U.S. textile and apparel imports from China rose by 274%.⁷⁰

The sharp rise in textile and apparel imports from China, and U.S. industry contention that these imports were disrupting U.S. markets, led the Bush Administration to seek an agreement with China to limit its exports to the United States. On November 8, 2005, China agreed to restrict various textile and apparel exports to the United States (according to specified quota levels) from January 2006 through the end of 2008.

The U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue

On September 29, 2006, President George Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao agreed to establish a Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) in order to have discussions on major economic issues at the "highest official level." According to a U.S. Treasury Department press release, the intent of the SED was to "discuss long-term strategic challenges, rather than seeking immediate solutions to the issues of the day," in order to provide a stronger foundation for pursuing concrete results through existing bilateral economic dialogues.⁷¹ The first meeting was held in December 2006. Four subsequent rounds of talks were held (the last was in December 2008).

While attending the G-20 summit in London on the global financial crisis on April 1, 2009, President Obama and Chinese President Hu agreed to continue the high-level forum, renaming it the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED). The new dialogue is based on two tracks. The first (the "Strategic Track") is headed up by the Secretary of State on the U.S. side and focuses on political and strategic issues, while the second track (the "Economic Track") is headed up by the U.S. Treasury Secretary on the U.S. side and focuses on financial and economic issues. Areas of discussion include the economic and trade issues, counterterrorism, law enforcement, science and technology, education, culture, health, energy, the environment (including climate change), non-proliferation, and human rights. The first round of the S&ED was held in Washington, D.C. on July 27-28, 2009. The two sides agreed to continue cooperation on promoting balanced economic growth and financial reforms; expanding bilateral trade and investment ties; and deepening dialogue and cooperation on energy, climate change, and health issues.

⁶⁸ For additional information, see CRS Report RL34106, *U.S. Clothing and Textile Trade with China and the World: Trends Since the End of Quotas*, by Michael F. Martin.

⁶⁹ For additional information on U.S.-China textile issues, see CRS Report RL32168, *Safeguards on Textile and Apparel Imports from China*, by Vivian C. Jones.

⁷⁰ For more detailed data on U.S. imports of textile and apparel products from China, see Department of Commerce, Office of Textiles and Apparel Office website at <http://www.otexa.ita.doc.gov/>.

⁷¹ U.S. Treasury Department press release, December 15, 2006.

The effectiveness of the S&ED/SED process has been hotly debated. Some have praised the dialogue as a highly effective forum for dealing with major long-term bilateral economic (as well as environmental and energy) issues, while others criticize it for failing to yield major concrete results, especially in regards to resolving major trade disputes, such as Chinese restrictions on U.S. beef imports and reforming China's currency policy.

Some analysts contend that the United States and China, as the world's two largest economies (on a purchasing power parity basis), should agree to conduct regular high-level talks (some have referred to this forum as the "G-2") on working together to promote global economic recovery, free trade, and multilateralism, and could possibly include environmental issues as well.⁷² Some contend that by treating China as a full and equal partner of the United States on global economic issues might induce greater Chinese cooperation on a number of fronts of concern to both countries. Some critics of the proposal contend that such a forum might alienate the European Union, Japan, and other major economic powers.

U.S.-China Trade Legislation in the 111th Congress

Several bills have been introduced in the 111th Congress to address various concerns over China's economic policies, boost U.S. exports to China, or to promote greater cooperation with China on energy and climate change. These include:

- H.Res. 44 would condemn China for its "socially unacceptable business practices, including the manufacturing and exportation of unsafe products, casual disregard for the environment, and exploitative employment practices."
- H.R. 471 would limit the President's discretion to deny relief under the special China safeguard provision.
- H.R. 496 would ensure that the Commerce Department continued to apply U.S. countervailing laws to non-market countries (such as China), establish an alternative method for determining countervailing duties on Chinese products, and would limit the President's discretion to deny relief under the special China safeguard provision.
- H.R. 499 would codify the application of U.S. countervailing laws to non-market economies, establish an alternative method for determining countervailing duties on Chinese products, and would require congressional approval before China (and other non-market economies) could be treated as a market economy.
- H.R. 1105 (P.L. 111-8) contains a provision to continue a prohibition on the U.S. Department of Agriculture from rulemaking that would allow imports of cooked chicken from China.
- H.R. 2310 and S. 1616 would attempt to boost U.S. exports to China, especially by small-and-medium sized firms. It would provide grants to States to establish and operate offices to promote exports to China, establish 50 China market advocate

⁷² See C. Fred Bergsten, Peterson Institute for International Economics: "A Partnership of Equals: How Washington Should Respond to China's Economic Challenge," July 2008, available at <http://www.iie.com/publications/papers/paper.cfm?ResearchID=955>

- positions in U.S. Export Assistance Centers, and provide assistance to U.S. small- and medium-sized businesses (such as for trade missions to China).
- H.R. 2312 would authorize the Secretary of Energy to make grants to encourage cooperation between the United States and China on joint research, development, or commercialization of carbon capture and sequestration technology, improved energy efficiency, or renewable energy sources.
 - H.Amdt. 119 to H.R. 1728 would require the Secretary of HUD to study the effects of the presence of Chinese dry wall on foreclosures and the availability of property insurance for residential structures where Chinese dry wall is present.
 - S.Res. 76 would express the sense of the Senate that the United States and China should work together to reduce or eliminate tariff and nontariff barriers to trade in clean energy and environmental goods and services.
 - S.Res. 77 would express the sense of the Senate that the United States and China should negotiate a bilateral agreement on clean energy cooperation.
 - S.Res. 91 would call on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to take action on Potential safety issues relating to drywall imported from China.
 - S. 739 would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to study drywall imported from China in 2004 through 2007 in regards to potential safety hazards and to ban future drywall imports from China.
 - S. 1254 would require the Treasury Department to identify currencies that are fundamentally misaligned and to designate currencies for “priority action” under certain circumstances. Such action would include factoring currency undervaluation in U.S. anti-dumping cases, banning federal procurement of products or services from the designated country, and filing a case against that country in the WTO.
 - S. 1191 and S. 1462 would require the Secretary of Energy to prepare a report on climate change and energy policy in China and India.
 - S. 1406 (FY2010 appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies programs) would forbid the use of to establish or implement a rule allowing poultry products to be imported into the United States from China unless the Secretary of Agriculture formally commits in advance to conduct audits of inspection systems, on-site reviews of slaughter and processing facilities, laboratories and other control operations before any Chinese facilities are certified as eligible to ship fully cooked poultry products to the United States.
 - S.Amdt. 1908 (an amendment to H.R. 2997), making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related Agencies programs for FY2010) would forbid the use of to establish or implement a rule allowing poultry products to be imported into the United States from China unless the Secretary of Agriculture formally commits in advance to conduct audits of inspection systems, on-site reviews of slaughter and processing facilities, laboratories and other control operations before any Chinese facilities are certified as eligible to ship fully cooked poultry products to the United States.

- H.R. 2997 (appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related Agencies programs for FY2010), as passed by the House (July 2, 2009) states that no funds may be made available to establish or implement a rule allowing poultry products to be imported into the United States from China. The Senate-passed version (passed on August 4, 2009) states that no funds may be made available in this Act to establish or implement a rule allowing poultry products to be imported into the United States China unless the Secretary of Agriculture formally commits in advance to conduct audits of inspection systems, on-site reviews of slaughter and processing facilities, laboratories and other control operations before any Chinese facilities are certified as eligible to ship fully cooked poultry products to the United States. Further requires that at least once annually in subsequent years, that the Secretary commits in advance to implement a significantly increased level of port of entry re-inspection, commits in advance to conduct information sharing with other countries importing poultry products from China that have conducted audits and plant inspections, and requires that these procedures be applied in a manner consistent with U.S. obligations under international trade agreements.

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