COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL

"SERVING AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSES SINCE 1914"

Council Highlights is a bi-monthly summary of news and events of the National Foreign Trade Council exclusively for its members.

CELEBRATING A NEW CENTURY 1914-2014 NFTC NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL

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View from the NFTC Chair

The world is full of surprises, many of them positive. Who would have predicted that a community organizer from Chicago with little exposure to international trade would become a champion of the negotiation of the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific free trade agreements? Who would have predicted that a career Brazilian trade official would be the one to break the decade and a half deadlock in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and deliver the first multilateral agreement since the Uruguay Round was concluded – the trade facilitation agreement? For those who have negotiated with Japan or observed Japan in prior negotiations, it was unforeseen that on most of the subjects under negotiation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – that is on the chapters on rules – Japan would be the closest ally of the United States – wanting to go the furthest in obtaining far-reaching results.

(*Continued on page 3*)

A Word From the President

Fair warning – rant coming on. It has become fashionable recently to criticize large companies. This is not new. Big has always equaled bad for a certain segment of our population, but that sentiment seems currently to be growing exponentially. Here at the NFTC we see it in both our tax and our trade work. Congress has held repeated hearings attacking the overseas tax practices of large multinational companies, and the anti-trade folks regularly remember to criticize TPP and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as Machiavellian plots by big companies to benefit them and impoverish everybody else.

(Continued on page 2)

13th Annual International Human Resource Management Forum - Houston

The NFTC hosted its 13th Annual International Human Resource Management Forum in Houston on March 4-5, 2014, with its highest turnout there to date.

NFTC's James Wilkinson, Bill Sheridan and Grace O'Rourke

In addition to subject matter experts from Aon Hewitt, Berry Appleman Leiden, the Canadian Employee Relocation Council, KPMG, Met-Life, Net Expat and Paragon Relocation, the faculty included speakers from Airinc, Dell, Living Abroad, NYU, Baker Hughes, FMC Technologies, Halliburton, ConocoPhillips, Schlumberger, Worley Parsons, Bristow Group, Texas Instruments, Newmont Mining, Google, PZI Consulting, Global Guardian, CH2M Hill and Cameron.

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Inside this Issue:

1625 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington DC, 20006-1604
Phone: (202) 887-0278 | Fax: (202) 452-8160
If you have suggestions for articles or comments, please e-mail us at
nftcinformation@nftc.org

A Word From the President

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These arguments ignore the key role multinational companies play in our economy. A few facts:

- Multinationals contributed to 11 percent[1] of employment growth and created 1.5 million jobs in the United States between 1990 and 2010.
- Total employment by U.S. parent companies accounts for roughly one-fifth of total U.S. employment in private industries[2].
- Large companies are the principal drivers of small business job creation. (Facebook, for example, employs 1,500 people, but the business of Facebook application development created approximately 53,000 jobs[3]).
- The multiplier effect of multinationals is indisputable: 90 percent of their intermediate inputs come from other U.S.-based firms.
- Larger companies offer better pay opportunities to American workers than small and medium-size businesses: the average per-worker was $63,272 in 2010. This was 18.7 percent above the rest of the private sector average of $53,315[4].
- 74 percent of the nation's private sector R&D spending is made by multinationals.[5] R&D and product innovation are the main drivers to increase economic productivity and to create growth and new job opportunities.

Since our members are mostly multinational companies, these figures are no doubt well-known to you, but they bear repeating, and we will do so in the future as the tax and trade debates continue. Multinational companies may be an easy target, but they are the bedrock of our economy, not only in terms of the jobs they create directly but because they support thousands of SME suppliers. As Pogo said, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Instead of focusing on companies that include so many Americans, our critics should focus on the barriers and policies, both trade and tax, that divide us and that retard growth.

"A Word From the President" is written by NFTC President Bill Reinsch. If you have questions or comments, please forward them to breinsch@nftc.org.

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1. McKinsey Global Institute, "Growth and competitiveness in the United States: The role of its multinational companies", June 2010, http://alturl.com/ynfa3.
2. Bureau of economic Analysis, "Summary Estimates for Multinational Companies", http://goo.gl/ac1LxF
3. Tamny, John, "Sorry Class Warriors, Small Businesses Are Not The Backbone Of The U.S. Economy", Forbes, June 2013.
4. Slaughter, Matthew, "How U.S. Multinational Companies Strengthen the U.S. Economy", United States Council for International Business, March 2013.
5. McKinsey Global Institute, Ibid.

This Week in Trade History

April 16, 1997: NFTC launched the USA*Engage to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad and educate the public and policy-makers about the ineffectiveness of unilateral economic foreign policy sanctions.

View from the NFTC Chair

(Continued from page 1)

There is even a glimmer of hope across the Atlantic that the European Union might accept our dipping outward bound chickens in a natural substance that will kill off salmonella, rather than simply telling the chickens to live a good life. There are also good prospects now for a services agreement in Geneva and a new push toward an agreement on environmental goods and services. For a change, high-level meetings are yielding substantive commitments rather than empty rhetoric. And at home, Congress can debate whether to export natural gas, rather than looking at an ever increasing dependence on foreign sources of energy.

Of course, if one is looking for negatives in the area of international trade, there are examples of those as well. China – which would be a very large beneficiary of expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) in terms of elimination of the tariffs paid on its goods arriving in foreign markets – cannot bring itself to admit that basic economic reality and remains the chief obstacle to closing a deal on expansion of that agreement. The Japanese Prime Minister, who was breaking the mold of his immediate predecessors and embracing economic reform and trade liberalization, seems to have lost his momentum. The remains of the Doha Development Agenda have the potential of blocking the path to the WTO addressing new issues, such as making sure that digital trade remains unimpeded.

Also at home, two Nobel Prize winning economists have decided that further trade agreements can only cause harm to the United States. In addition, a number of senior leaders in Congress from the President's own party are not convinced that moving right now on Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) is a good idea. And as was pointed out to us recently, most of the current sitting members of Congress have not voted on a major trade bill, and simply are not familiar with the benefits that can flow from trade agreements, and why TPA is essential to delivering those results.

Lessons drawn: There are plenty of vitally important trade objectives that are obtainable to motivate our 100-year-old organization, as well as challenges which will make the endeavor more than a little interesting. None of the negative elements need pose insuperable obstacles. We, and those who are like minded, will engage to do the job, and do it well. The NFTC has a vitally important role to play. This is a large part of the reason the NFTC has endured for a century. And the best is yet to come.

One additional thought, on a personal note: My old boss, Bob Strauss, who was Special Trade Representative in the Carter Administration, died last month. We would meet for lunch once or twice a year. The last time that I saw him, he pronounced himself satisfied with what he had achieved in life. He would not exchange the mixture of high points and difficulties that he had encountered along the way for a more placid existence. To others, he expressed this in a more Texan fashion – he said that he liked the "whole damn deal." He was entrusted with major tasks by both Presidents Carter and Bush (41). He could not whip inflation nor bring peace to the Middle East (my wife and I accompanied him on his first trip over as peace negotiator to meet with Egypt's President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin – that is yet another Strauss story for another time), but when it came to trade negotiations or commercial deals, he knew how to close them – successfully.

Strauss was proud of his legacy. The last big round of trade negotiations before creation of the Uruguay Round, called the Tokyo Round, he moved by sheer personal will from complete stasis in its fourth year to completion in under two years. The result included the first GATT agreements on nontariff barriers – the Agreements on Government Procurement Agreement, the Customs Valuation, and Standards. The trade bill approving the Tokyo Round agreements passed the Senate by 96 to 4 and the House by 395 to 7, and included the new Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) among other things. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his efforts.

President Obama and Prime Minister Abe will meet within a few weeks. Each has to decide what his legacy will be. Strauss would have said that the shelf life of a politician is like that of a ripe berry. A Japanese Prime Minister would be more likely to think of the evanescence of a cherry blossom, a symbol of the beauty and fragility of life. It is time for hard decisions to be taken to move TPP forward to successful completion. We at the NFTC cannot influence Prime Minister Abe, but we can and have offered our solid support to President Obama for a major result in this negotiation. And we make the same pledge to Chairmen Wyden and Camp with respect to TPA, which the NFTC had as a special project in its formative stage. For our second century, getting TPP and TPA would make a very good start.

Ambassador Alan Wm. Wolff is a Senior Counsel of the International Trade Practice at McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP and is the Chairman of the NFTC Board of Directors.

NFTC Leading New Coalition on Green Trade

NFTC is working with its member companies and other business associations in the United States and around the world to support the negotiation of a new agreement under the WTO to eliminate tariffs on a range of environmental goods. The initiative was first announced in Davos at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

U.S. Trade Representative notified Congress of its intent to initiate negotiations on March 21, and published a notice in the Federal Register on March 28 seeking public comment and testimony at a public hearing. NFTC plans to testify at the hearing, scheduled for June 5, 2014.

NFTC will build on the work it has done through its Trade and Climate working group since 2007 at the WTO and in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, where economies agreed to cap tariffs at 5 percent or less on a set of 54 environmental products, a list that provides a floor for negotiations at the WTO.

NFTC is working to ensure that negotiators find strong support within the business community for eliminating tariffs on environmentally-friendly goods, and to identify additional items that could be included in an expanded effort under the WTO.

For more information, contact Jake Colvin at jcolvin@nftc.org.

NFTC Urges Congress to Enact an IM Quota Increase

The G-20 agreed at their 2012 meeting to double the funds available to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by means of a quota increase. They also agreed to implement several reforms to bring the IMF in line with altered global economic conditions. These reforms have been approved by all major IMF member countries except the United States. With the deadline to approve them approaching, NFTC President Bill Reinsch wrote several key members of the Senate on March 24 to urge them to approve a reform package that includes a quota increase for the IMF and increases the voting rights and representation of several rapidly growing emerging markets. The measure does not require appropriation of any new funds by the U.S. The text of the letters sent to the Senators is below…

> *I am writing on behalf of the NFTC, an association of some 250 American corporations engaged in international trade and investment, to urge you to support enactment of the funding and governance reforms for the International Monetary Fund agreed to at the G-20 in 2010. Those reforms, including a quota increase, would double the resources available to the Fund to lend to its members without any cost to the U.S. taxpayer and shift 6% of voting rights to dynamic emerging economies, currently underrepresented. The reforms also increase the representation of those economies on the IMF's day-to-day decision-making body.*
>
> *Importantly, the reforms do not require any additional financial commitment by the U.S. and would not add a single dollar to the U.S. deficit since these are funds already authorized by the Congress. The U.S. is the only major member of the IMF that has not enacted legislation implementing these reforms. Under the reforms the U.S. remains the IMF's largest shareholder and retains its veto power. Without congressional approval, the IMF will probably seek funds elsewhere which would dilute U.S. influence in the IMF.*
>
> *Given the critical role of the IMF in stabilizing the international financial system, the member companies of the NFTC urge Congress to enact the IMF reforms before the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank in April.*

Ukraine and Economic Sanctions

Predictably, U.S. response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and military buildup on its border with Eastern Ukraine has been to implement sanctions, targeting "persons" and one Russian bank with asset freezes and visa bans.

The President has issued three executive orders to date under the *International Emergency Economic Powers Act* (IEEPA). The first, EO 13660, targets individuals, Ukrainian and Russian, deemed to have interfered with Ukrainian governance and territorial integrity. The second, EO 13661, expands the target set to additional persons in the Russian Federation. The third expands prospective authority to sanction persons and entities in sectors of the Russian economy, "such as energy, metals and mining, engineering and defense…"

As former Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul has noted, the sanctions implemented to date targeting individuals are a "punitive" response to Crimea's annexation; the potential sectoral sanctions are meant to forestall any further Russian military incursion into Ukraine.

The U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) implementation of the sanctionable scope of what is deemed a "person" is notably aggressive. Anecdotal evidence indicates U.S. competitors in Europe and Asia have begun to bid for business currently held by U.S. companies in Russia.

EU sanctions are notably more circumscribed, and do not evidence any intent to enact material economic damage to sectors of the Russian economy.

Congress for its part has codified the sanctions in the first two EOs, recommending that the president add to the sanctions target list, persons responsible for "significant corruption in the Russian Federation" (sic).

No one can predict with any confidence what will occur next on the ground in Ukraine. One school of thought believes further overt Russian military incursion into Ukraine is a clear, present and remaining danger. Another points to a variety of reasons that Russian President Putin will entertain a diplomatic settlement with the United States (and therefore the EU and NATO) that (a) in effect acknowledges Crimea's annexation as a fait accompli, (b) keeps the remaining territorial integrity of Ukraine, and (c) results in a Ukraine going forward that is neither overtly under Russian control nor headed for EU association.

Whatever the near-term development in Ukraine, the response of the West to Russian nationalism vis a vis its "near abroad" (the Russian equivalent of the U.S. Monroe Doctrine) will have to be strategic: a matter, among other things, of the change that the U.S. energy production renaissance can bring to the European energy market and NATO reinvigoration.

Sanctions, as always, are at best tactical, inevitably counter-productive if unilateral, and strategically irrelevant. As usual for U.S. companies, sanctions entail substantial risk management.

For more information, contact Richard Sawaya at rsawaya@nftc.org.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing Held on Tax Treaties

On Wednesday, February 26, 2014, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on the pending tax treaties and protocols with Switzerland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Chile and the OECD Multilateral Convention on the Mutual Administration Assistance on Tax Matters.

The treaties and protocols with Switzerland, Luxembourg and Hungary had been the subject of a Committee hearing in July 2011, however, when the treaties failed to move on the Senate floor, they were recommitted back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which was required to hold another hearing on them. The treaty with Chile and the OECD Multilateral Convention had been submitted to the Committee since its last treaty hearing. Witnesses testifying before the Committee included: Tom Barthold, Chief of Staff, Joint Committee on Taxation; Robert Stack, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Tax Affairs, Department of the Treasury; Bill Reinsch, President, NFTC; Paul Nolan, Vice President, Tax, McCormick & Company, Inc., and Tax Committee Chairman of the NFTC; and Nancy McLernon, President and CEO, Organization for International Investment (OFII). Senator Ben Cardin presided over the hearing. Senator John Barrasso attended as the ranking member.

In his opening statement, Senator Cardin said that, *"The primary purpose of tax treaties is to avoid double taxation so that U.S. companies can do business overseas and not be discriminated against, and foreign companies can do business in the United States. The second primary function is to help enforcement of our respective tax laws to combat tax evasion and corruption.*

Now, there are many other side benefits in addition to avoiding double taxation and assisting in proper tax administration. The side benefits of tax treaties are open markets. It is a clear signal of our willingness to do business in other countries. It removes barriers to trade. And it also encourages new countries to join our treaty network, making it easier for us to do international business."

Mr. Barthold did an overview of the pending treaties, and raised some questions as to whether Treasury has the ability to determine if a country that is party to the OECD Multilateral Convention is reliable and able to safeguard taxpayer privacy as part of the expanded exchange of information provisions. Over 61 countries have signed onto the Multilateral Convention. When later questioned on this point by Senator Cardin, Mr. Stack assured the Committee that Treasury will not exchange information with a country until they can prove that they are reliable and able to keep all the exchanged information confidential.

During Mr. Stack's testimony, he outlined the importance of the tax treaty network, and explained the details of all of the pending tax treaties. He reiterated that the United States will not exchange information with a government that cannot guarantee confidentiality. Mr. Stack also said that before a country is permitted to become a signatory to the multilateral convention, a coordinating body, made up of members of the Convention countries, examines the laws and practices of the jurisdiction in order to be sure that it is able to enter into and fulfill its obligations under the multilateral convention.

The United States is a participant in the coordinating body. When asked by Senator Barrasso how the tax treaties are related to FATCA, Mr. Stack clarified the difference in the exchange of information provisions under the Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs) under FATCA and the exchange provisions included in the pending tax treaties.

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Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing Held on Tax Treaties

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Mr. Reinsch explained the importance of the tax treaties to the business community. He said that if U.S. businesses are going to maintain a competitive position around the world, treaty policy should prevent multiple or excessive levels of foreign tax on cross-border investments, particularly if competing companies already enjoy that advantage. Mr. Reinsch supported the mandatory arbitration provision included in the Swiss protocol and said that it would greatly facilitate the mutual agreement procedures in all competent authority cases.

Mr. Nolan agreed with Mr. Reinsch about the importance of the tax treaties to alleviate double taxation on companies and to help them become more competitive. He said that there are two significant benefits to the U.S. economy that derive from the tax treaties. First, trade and outbound investment from the United States itself — headquarters activities in the United States spurs greater job growth and also helps the suppliers grow while the headquarters companies grow in the United States. That means more federal, state and local revenues, in addition to the jobs that it creates, and it also just basically supports the economy. Mr. Nolan also said that the lower trade restrictions that occur under a tax treaty help with fundamental trade.

Mr. Nolan said that secondly, treaties provide for a great environment for inbound investment. Non-U.S. investors have a better environment for investing in terms of making sure that their capital is protected and that they have rules of the road that are safe. The final witness to testify was Ms. Nancy McLernon of OFII. Ms. McLernon said that OFII strongly supports the U.S. tax treaty network. These bilateral agreements provide a reliable tax environment for companies doing business in several jurisdictions... Tax treaties prevent double taxation and provide important information sharing between governments to ensure appropriate taxes are paid.

Next Steps

On April 1, the Committee held a business meeting to officially report out the tax treaties, and other items on their agenda. The treaties and protocols have been placed on the Executive Calendar of the Senate and are being hotlined for Senate floor consideration. The Rules require that tax treaties be reported out of the Senate with two-thirds voting in favor of them, but the Rules do not stipulate that there has to be a recorded vote. The tax treaties and protocols are not amendable on the Senate floor.

For more information, contact Catherine Schultz at cschultz@nftc.org.

Court: Disclosure of "Conflict Minerals" Violates Free Speech

A federal appeals court on April 14, struck down the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rule implementing Section 1502, the conflict minerals provision of the Dodd-Frank Act, requiring companies to disclose whether their products contain minerals from the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The court found that forcing companies to publicly report their products as not "conflict-free" violated their First Amendment protections against compelled speech. The NFTC had signed an amicus brief challenging the SEC rule. In a split decision, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals had upheld the rule, concluding that the SEC was following statutory language in requiring companies to determine whether any gold, tantalum, tin or tungsten in their products comes from the DRC or adjoining nations.

For more information, contact Richard Sawaya at rsawaya@nftc.org

13th Annual International Human Resource Management Forum - Houston

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The highest interest sessions were:

- Frontier Markets: Expectations and Realities
- Africa: Preparing for the Unexpected
- Best Practices in Global Mobility in the Oil and Gas Industry
- Developing Leaders for the Global Enterprise
- Protecting Business Travelers, Expatriates and Local Staff Against Health Risks in Africa and the Middle East
- Canada-U.S. Border Crossings: Issues and Answers

As 2014 is the 100th Anniversary of the NFTC, the participants celebrated the event with the staff of the NFTC.

NFTC Foundation Sets 2014 NYC IHR Forum—July 15-16

The NFTC Foundation will host its annual New York City IHR forum at the New York Athletic Club on July 15-16, 2014. The agenda is being developed at this time and will be posted to the NFTC website soon.

Other IHR Working Committee Meetings that are Coming Up

- May 1, 2014: Houston International Compensation & Benefits Management Committee
- June 10, 2014: New York City International Benefits Committee

For information about either committee, contact Bill Sheridan, Vice President of International Human Resources, at wsheridan@nftc.org.

South Africa Poses a Challenge to Investment Agreements

***"**You have unilaterally put an end to bilateral investment agreements. This is bad policy. You need investment. This is not the way to do it. We, the EU, are the biggest investors in South Africa. Our investment is going down."*

That was EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht in Johannesburg last summer reacting to the South African government's decision to allow their Bilateral Investment Treaties, especially those with Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg to expire. The government also announced that it would not negotiate any new BITs, but would instead enact domestic legislation that will treat domestic and foreign investors the same and will throw investment disputes into local courts, rejecting the principle of investor-state dispute settlement. De Gucht went on to say that FDI has fallen to just 1% of South Africa's GDP, much lower than in peer countries like Chile and Malaysia: "There is a complete contradiction between South Africa's aim of industrialization and this lack of inward investment," he concluded.

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South Africa Poses a Challenge to Investment Agreements

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What accounts for this reversal of policy in a country that had embraced the Washington Consensus in the 1990's as the path to higher economic growth rates and rapid job creation? What, if any, ramifications does South Africa's decision have beyond that country?

When the ANC won South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the party shelved most of its socialist doctrine. What it did not shelve was the conviction that the state had to play the leading role in transforming the apartheid society it inherited and the 2012 ANC policy conference reiterated the party's commitment to "strategic nationalization," especially in the mining sector. While the contradiction between this conviction and the Washington Consensus has led to several high-profile shifts in domestic economic policy, the country has consistently maintained an open international trade and investment policy. Until now.

The turning point may have been the 2007 claim by Italian and Luxembourg mining investors against South Africa's Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (affirmative action) laws for compensation under the South Africa's BITs with Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg. The foreign investors, who control 80% of South Africa's exports of granite, brought their claim to the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington which under the BITs provides for compensation of the full market value of the mineral rights. South African law only provides for "just and equitable" compensation. Hence two highly charged issues were joined: (1) South Africa's affirmative action laws that require that black partners share 25% of a foreign enterprise and that black managers be employed; and (2) South Africa's crucial mining sector plagued by frequent strikes and fatal police retaliation which has impaired production.

In responding to De Gucht's reaction, South African Minister of trade and Industry Rob Davies wrote that "evidence the world over has amply demonstrated that there is no correlation between investment treaties and FDI flows." Davies went on to say that the absence of a BIT between the US and China has not discouraged robust two-way investment and that the "old-style treaties concluded in the 1990's no longer meet the need of today's world. As a result, governments around the world have reviewed and adjusted their approach to investment treaties."

Arbitration, according to Davies, is "unpredictable ad impedes further government intervention." The investment protection bill Davies has introduced represents a shift from liberalization to extracting maximum domestic benefits from each foreign investment. The head of the German Chamber of Commerce in South Africa wrote that the bill gives "lip-service to protection, but allows the government to deal with issues as it deems expedient." It is also worth mentioning that BIT's are often essential to companies' ability to obtain insurance.

What, if any, are the ramifications of South Africa's action for others? Obviously it is too early to judge, but UNCTAD's current "Investment Policy Monitor" reports that "there is a slowdown in the conclusion of BITs" and an increase of less stringent IIA's (international investment agreements). Here in the U.S. Lori Wallach of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch calls international arbitration under BITs a usurpation of national sovereignty and an impediment to measures protecting public health and the environment.
South Africa's decision on BITs may well impede FDI and economic growth, but it is also likely to be appealing to other developing countries tempted by economic nationalism.

For more information contact Dan O'Flaherty at doflaherty@nftc.org.

Centennial Celebration News

The past few months have seen a seemingly non-stop series of Centennial-related events at NFTC. To wit:

On January 30, the NFTC was notified that it was selected to receive the 2014 Advancing International Trade Award by NASBITE International, an association of international trade educators. The Selection Committee commended the NFTC for its dedication to the advancement of global, rules-based trade for 100 years. The NFTC was honored at the annual NASBITE Awards Luncheon in Memphis, TN, on April 4, for its lasting contributions and positive impact on international trade.

On February 6, Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Michael Punke spoke at a members-only gathering in the NFTC conference room. After congratulating the NFTC on its Centennial, Ambassador Punke offered his candid observations and sometimes humorous observations about the recent WTO breakthrough in Bali, which culminated in the Trade Facilitation agreement. He also proffered some ideas on what will come next for the WTO. (The NFTC has also issued a paper on A Post-Bali Agenda for the WTO, authored by Vice President for Global Trade Issues Jake Colvin. It is available on the NFTC website or by email request at jcolvin@nftc.org)

Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker addressing the NFTC Board of Directors. With her are President Bill Reinsch and Chairman Alan Wolff.

At the February Board of Directors meeting, hosted by Google, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker stopped by to offer her congratulations to the NFTC for reaching the remarkable Centennial mark. She also took the opportunity to speak frankly with the Board about the need to continue pressing the trade agenda forward. The Centennial is occurring at a critical time for U.S. trade policy, with the TPP negotiations nearing endgame, TTIP talks ongoing, and the President having formally requested Trade Promotion Authority to get these agreements through the Congress. The critical work of the NFTC has never been more important than it is at this moment.

The Board then re-convened at the residence of His Excellency Michael Moore, the Ambassador of New Zealand, for the traditional embassy dinner. The Board heard from new U.S. Trade Representative Deputy Chief of Staff Behnaz Kibria about the Singapore round of TPP talks, from which she had just returned. Ms. Kibria also thanked the NFTC and its member companies for years of support of the work of the USTR.

WTO Director General Roberto Azevedo was honored at a private NFTC only luncheon on March 11 at the Tabard Inn in Washington. After congratulating President Bill Reinsch on the organization's Centennial, the Director General spoke about the historic role of the NFTC in creating today's rules-based world trading system, and spoke about the recent Trade Facilitation deal in that context. The Trade Facilitation agreement also gives the WTO momentum to pursue broader goals such as the ITA and TISA talks and new talks in trade in environmental good ("green goods"), while also maintaining its value as the forum of choice to resolve global trade disputes.

WTO Director General Robert Azevedo speaks to NFTC members at a special luncheon in honor of the NFTC Centennial

And on March 20, the NFTC convened an ambitious conference in London, “TTIP, Tax and Tech: Emerging Issues in Transatlantic Trade.” NFTC President Bill Reinsch, Vice President for International Tax Policy Catherine Schultz, and Vice President for Global Trade Issues Jake Colvin each moderated a panel in their area of expertise. Featured speakers included two Members of the UK Parliament, the head of the OECD BEPS project, Her Majesty’s Deputy Treasurer for Corporate Tax, ‘micro-multinational’ global entrepreneurs, representatives of the U.S. Chamber & the Confederation of British Industry, and other government, NGO and business speakers. Over 50 guests, largely from the UK business and embassy communities, attended the half day program. The event was hosted at Globe House by British American Tobacco.

NFTC President Bill Reinsch (center) with (from L-R) John Healey, MP (Labour) and Ben Wallace MP (Conservative), along with Peter Chase of U.S. Chamber and Simon Moore of CBI. Taken at the NFTC Centennial

Save the Dates!

- May 28, 2014 – The NFTC 100th Birthday Celebration at the National Archives building in Washington, DC
- July 9-10, 2014 – Board of Directors meeting in Baltimore, MD
- December 3, 2014 – The 100th World Trade Dinner.

Additional events and dates will be announced as they are confirmed. In particular, May is World Trade Month, so the NFTC will have a packed agenda. Watch for email updates!

Please contact NFTC Vice President for Strategy and Growth James Wilkinson at jwilkinson@nftc.org for more details and for ways you can chip in and join the fun!

SAVE THE DATE!

Wednesday, December 3, 2014
The Centennial NFTC World Trade Dinner

Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium
1301 Constitution Ave NW Washington, DC

For Sponsorship or event information
Please Contact James Wilkinson at jwilkinson@nftc.org or 202-464-2022

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National Foreign Trade Council
E-mail: nftcinformation@nftc.org
www.nftc.org

Washington DC Office
1625 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-887-0278
Fax: 202-452-8160

New York Office
60 East 42nd Street, Suite 920
New York, NY 10165
Phone: 212-399-7128
Fax: 212-399-7144

NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL

"SERVING AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSES SINCE 1914"

The National Foreign Trade Council is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC now serves hundreds of member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.

For membership opportunities, please contact us at nftcinformation@nftc.org or 202-887-0278.