



For Immediate Release
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**Hearing Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding The Future of U.S. Trade Policy**

A Chinese proverb says: "Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future."

We have with us today a wealth of past experience. We have before us four former U.S. Trade Representatives who together led this country's trade policy through the first days of the technological revolution to the global economy of today. We cannot forget their past contributions. And their experience is a sure guide to the future.

These former USTRs oversaw the negotiations of NAFTA and the Uruguay Round, which ultimately led to the creation of the World Trade Organization. They led key Asian countries, like China and Japan, to join the global trading system. And they continue to critique and contribute to America's trade policy debate.

We stand at a crossroads in trade policy. The past eight years have seen an explosion of free trade agreements and market liberalization. Tariffs have decreased. International trade in goods and services has increased. And global markets are more integrated than ever.

But this growth has not come without its costs. American workers have been displaced from their jobs. Environmental and labor standards have not kept pace with economic growth. America's current account deficit looms larger than ever. And trade enforcement has fallen from the top of this administration's priorities.

It falls to this Congress, and the next, to address these issues.

We must first ensure that America's workers are protected from the negative effects of trade agreements and globalization. We must push for robust Trade Adjustment Assistance that ensures that America's manufacturers, farmers, and service workers receive the help that they need.

We must foster America's competitiveness by ensuring maximum opportunities for our companies. To do this, we must ensure that our trading partners play by the rules, at home and abroad.

And we must also consider how best to provide American businesses with the ability to compete and grow.

The President's fast track authority expired on June 30, 2007, and has not been renewed. The next Congress will face many questions about fast track. Should we renew it? If so, when? And what lessons from the past should we incorporate into any new fast track legislation?

The next Congress will also have to address one of the largest U.S. current account deficits in our history. Economists have warned that this deficit may be unsustainable, and lead to dire economic consequences.

We must address the U.S. current account deficit comprehensively. Among other things, that means that we need to apply pressure on those countries that maintain misaligned currencies.

And we must face our social responsibilities. For more than 30 years, our country has provided trade preference programs to developing countries. These programs provide incentives for increased economic development in countries around the world. These programs help to lift many out of poverty. We must examine these programs to make sure that they are fulfilling their purpose.

The environment is also at the forefront of our social consciousness. The world is debating how to address climate change. America must lead that debate. We must address this pressing issue in a way that is responsible to our environment, our economy, and our international trade obligations.

So let us come together to discuss these important issues. Let us recall the experience and expertise that our four witnesses bring to the table today. And may learning from our past experience guide us to a stronger, more-competitive America in the years to come.

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