

## U.S. Trade Representative

### National News at the time the White House e-mail went missing

(\*\*\*\* = Dates specified by Waxman in January 17, 2008 letter to Fielding)

#### **February 11, 2004 – April 18, 2004:**

For these dates, CREW searched *The Washington Post* archives and Google News for articles relating to the U.S. Trade Representative.

#### **February 10, 2004:**

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick has set off on a world tour to revive global trade talks. This is a wise move, because it would be hard for Mr. Zoellick to face his friends at home after the Australian trade deal announced over the weekend. Even more than the Central American pact negotiated recently, the Australian accord is a triumph for the protectionist interests that went behind Mr. Zoellick's back to the White House and Congress [...] Mr. Zoellick calculated that flawed trade deals are better than none, so he went ahead with Australia. [...] The Bush administration will cave if you say "boo" to it. After the Central American pact promised the region a tiny crack of access to the U.S. sugar market, the lobby went into high gear to prevent a repeat with Australia. Now the lobby has won. The world's poor farmers who are waiting for a chance to export their way out of poverty will be the losers, as will shoppers in your local supermarket. (Editorial: This Is Free Trade? *Washington Post*, February 10, 2004)

#### **\*\*\*\*February 12, 2004:**

It was to a North Dakota radio station that Robert Zoellick, the U.S. trade representative, vowed that he would stand like Horatius at the bridge to block Australian sugar [...] But protectionism is unconservative, unseemly and unhealthy -- indeed, lethal [...] Protectionism is a variant of what conservatives disparage as "industrial policy" when nonconservatives do it. It is government supplanting the market as the picker of economic winners. Another name for industrial policy is lemon socialism -- survival of the unfit. (George F. Will, Sweet And Sour Subsidies, *Washington Post*, February 12, 2004).

#### **\*\*\*\*February 24, 2004:**

China agreed on Monday to certify as safe imported shipments of genetically modified soybeans, removing a crucial obstacle to trade in a commodity valued at \$4.8 billion last year, while cooling a high-profile spat with the United States. China's decision, announced without fanfare in a statement posted on the Web site of the Ministry of Agriculture, means that multinational agribusiness giants such as Cargill Inc. and Bunge Ltd. will soon be able to freely import soybeans without first having to obtain permits attesting to the safety of individual cargo loads. The United States is the largest source of China's imported soybeans, followed by Brazil and Argentina. More than 80 percent of

soybeans grown in the United States are genetically modified to resist herbicides, making it easier for farmers to control weeds. (Peter S. Goodman, China to Certify Safety Of Soybeans From U.S., *Washington Post*, February 24, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 3, 2004:**

The United States and Morocco concluded a free-trade agreement yesterday designed to remove tariff barriers and open markets to industries, farmers and consumers in both countries. The accord is similar to recent bilateral agreements between the United States and Australia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica. (Harry Dunphy, U.S., Morocco Sign Free-Trade Agreement; Latest Pact Lowering Tariffs Is Washington's Second With an Arab Nation, *Associated Press*, March 3, 2004)

**\*\*\*\*March 10, 2004:**

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick said yesterday that the United States soon may file its first global trade case against China and plans to aggressively pursue open markets in India as well. (Paul Blustein, U.S. Plans Steps To Open Markets In China, India; WTO Case Considered To Lower Trade Barriers, *Washington Post*, March 10, 2004)

**\*\*\*\*March 11, 2004:**

The U.S. trade deficit widened to a record \$43.1 billion in January, indicating that the trade gap will remain high during the presidential campaign. The January trade figure, reported by the Commerce Department yesterday, reflected a decline in exports partly attributable to a 40 percent drop in shipments of meat and poultry to foreign markets, many of which barred U.S. beef after the detection of mad cow disease in Washington state. Exports fell 1.2 percent, to \$89 billion, while imports dipped 0.5 percent, to \$132.1 billion [...] U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick argued that the most important factor driving the imbalance is the faster growth in the United States compared with that in many other major trading partners. That means Americans are buying foreign goods at a fast pace, compared with the sale of U.S. goods overseas. (Paul Blustein, Trade Gap Exceeds \$43 Billion, *Washington Post*, March 11, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 12, 2004:**

On a recent trip to India, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick warned officials that it would be folly to expect the United States to allow outsourcing to continue growing unless India can find a way to allow for "fair job creation on both sides." (Steven Pearlstein, Still Short Of the Offshoring Ideal, *Washington Post*, March 12, 2004)

President Bush's attack on "economic isolationism" is emerging as the new Republican battle cry in the clash over the trade issue, arousing ire from Democrats who said the term grossly mischaracterizes their concerns about free trade agreements. Dispute over the term flared yesterday at a congressional hearing, where U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick derided "economic isolationists" in testimony that echoed the president's

rhetoric in a speech Wednesday. A protest from Rep. Sander M. Levin (D-Mich.) did not stop Zoellick from using the phrase several more times, and at least one GOP free-trade lawmaker used it on TV, explaining later that it is more effective than accusing foes of "protectionism." The Republican rhetorical broadside is aimed at countering the political advantage that Democrats have seized by excoriating the White House over the loss of jobs to foreign competition. Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, has been hammering Bush on the issue, which polls have shown to be a major source of voter concern. Kerry routinely denounces "Benedict Arnold" chief executives who move jobs and headquarters overseas, and during the Democratic primaries Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) made trade the centerpiece of his campaign by highlighting his opposition to accords such as the North American Free Trade Agreement. (Paul Blustein, Trade Chief, Democrats Spar Over 'Isolationist' Label, *Washington Post*, March 12, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 13, 2004:**

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced a ruling by the World Trade Organization that Mexico was violating global trade rules by refusing to dismantle barriers to its telephone market. The ruling is expected to result in millions of dollars in savings for U.S. residents who make telephone calls to Mexico. The United States contended that Mexico's giant telephone company, Telefonos de Mexico, known as Telmex, was reaping improper profits by charging inflated connection charges for long-distance calls. U.S. companies, including AT&T, also complained that they were unable to use alternative channels for carrying their calls within Mexico. U.S. companies estimate the barriers have cost callers more than \$1 billion since 2000. (WTO Rules Against Mexico, *Washington Post*, March 13, 2004).

For months, the Bush administration has been fighting a lawsuit brought by a group of computer programmers whose jobs were outsourced abroad, arguing that they don't qualify for government benefits aimed at people coping with layoffs caused by imports. But now, in the furor over outsourcing, the administration is showing support for the program, called Trade Adjustment Assistance, that aids workers laid off from companies battered by foreign competition. President Bush has been talking up the program in speeches this week, and Cabinet officers have been touting the big expansion the program got in 2002 -- even though it was congressional Democrats who insisted on the expansion, over Republican objections. Moreover, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick hinted this week that the administration might back a bill to expand benefits further, to service workers such as engineers, architects and telephone call-center employees, whose job losses to India and other countries have become a major source of voter anxiety. (White House Warms Up to Worker Aid; Outsourcing Controversy Prompts a Policy Shift, *Washington Post*, March 13, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 16, 2004:**

The White House and the Dominican Republic agree to remove almost all trade restrictions. The deal would essentially add the Dominican Republic to CAFTA. Passage

in Congress was uncertain. (Nell Henderson, U.S. Dominicans in Trade Pact, *Washington Post*, March 16, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 17, 2004:**

AFL-CIO petitions the U.S. Trade Representative to pressure China to increase wages and improve working conditions. (Albert B. Crenshaw, AFL-CIO Goes After China on Labor, *Washington Post*, March 17, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 19, 2004:**

U.S. files the first ever WTO complaint against China. The complaint alleges that China is violating international trade rules. It is suggested that the move is part of a larger strategy to counter claims that the administration's free trade policies have cause a loss of American jobs. (Paul Blustein, U.S. Cites China in Complaint to WTO, *Washington Post*, March 19, 2004).

Under pressure to more aggressively address a growing trade imbalance and protect U.S. chip makers, the Bush administration Thursday filed the first World Trade Organization complaint against China. Pressure for action on China has also come from Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, who has attacked the Bush administration for what he calls a failure to protect American workers from unfair trade practices. (Evelyn Iritani, U.S. Accuses China of Hampering Trade, *The Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 2004).

The Bush administration filed the first World Trade Organization complaint against China's trade policies yesterday, amid election-year pressure to demonstrate to voters that the President is defending American jobs. (Ken Moritsugu, U.S. to File First WTO Case Against China, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 19, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 20, 2004:**

David Byrne, European commissioner for health and consumer protection, discusses lifting the ban on some French meat products with U.S. trade representative, Robert B. Zoellick. (Washington in Brief, *Washington Post*, March 20, 2004).

**\*\*\*\*March 29, 2004:**

AFL-CIO's workers rights [petition](#) is putting considerable political pressure on the Bush Administration. Also, the administration faces pressure over its chosen "Manufacturing Czar" Anthony F. Raimondo who had previously expanded his company's operation in China while cutting American jobs.

**\*\*\*\*April 15, 2004:**

U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade meetings are scheduled to begin the following week. It is the first time the meetings have been elevated to the senior level with three cabinet members, including U.S. trade representative Robert B. Zoellick will be meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi. The meeting is supposed to cover import and export by foreign firms as well as counterfeiting in China. (Paul Blustein, U.S. Pushes China Hard on Trade, *Washington Post*, April 15, 2004).