THE
NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

Forecast for U.S. Federal and International Chemical Regulatory Policy 2019: Hazardous Materials

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Thursday, January 10, 2019

G. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION

1. Predictions and Outlook for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration for 2019

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is charged with a vital, if often taken for granted, task: protecting the public from the hazards associated with the transportation in commerce of hazardous materials. While its operations may lack the high profile of some of its federal sister agencies, its mission is, literally, one of life and death. Lethal train derailments and explosions, fires aboard aircraft, and spills of toxic materials are all potential -- and real -- consequences if PHMSA fails to exercise its duty effectively.

PHMSA operates in a dynamic and challenging environment. In 2019, the scope and complexity of its mission will continue to grow, requiring it fundamentally to rethink how it will use data, information, and technology to achieve its safety goals.

PHMSA's mission is to protect people and the environment by advancing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to our daily lives. To do this, it establishes national policy, sets and enforces standards, educates, and conducts research to prevent incidents. It also prepares the public and first responders to reduce consequences if an incident does occur. In this context, PHMSA has updated its strategic framework to focus on risk reduction, and much of what it is anticipated to do in 2019 reflects this revamped strategy.

PHMSA oversees the safe movement of hazardous materials and energy-related products. The consistently safe delivery of these commodities supports the growth of American industry -- ensuring that packagers, shippers, and transporters can move these products to the consumers, homes and businesses that rely on them. PHMSA's safety programs advance industry safety systems, promote safety standards, encourage innovation and research, provide comprehensive safety inspections and, when necessary, initiate enforcement actions.

PHMSA is responsible for promoting the safe and reliable transportation of dangerous goods by air, water, highway, rail, and pipeline. The expansive U.S. pipeline network extends more than 2.7 million miles and moves more than 16 billion barrels of hazardous liquids and gases safely and without incident 99.9997 percent of the time; and, PHMSA's safety operations add less than one cent per barrel to achieve this unmatched safe delivery rate.

Surface, air, and vessel transportation of hazardous materials accounts for more than 2.7 billion tons of regulated hazardous products annually with a value of 3.1 trillion dollars. Despite the amount of activity and risk posed by hazardous materials, safe delivery occurs 99.9994 percent of the time. PHMSA's safety operations add about three cents per ton of material shipped to maintain this significant rate.

PHMSA works to improve the safety systems of the more than 40,000 companies involved in the commercial manufacture, packaging, and transportation of DOT-regulated hazardous commodities as well as the operators responsible for the nation's expansive 2.7 million mile network of liquid and gas pipelines.

(PHMSA's authorities extend to transportation of hazardous materials by pipeline, rail, air, and highway. This forecast does not address pipeline hazardous materials issues.)

New information and research will drive much of what PHMSA undertakes in 2019. Advances in technology, enhanced commerce, and a rapidly evolving global trade in hazardous materials must be matched by PHMSA if it is to satisfy its mandates. At this point, PHMSA appears to recognize these new challenges and is poised to maintain its highly honed edge on hazardous materials transportation.

1.1 FAST Act Implementation -- High Hazard Flammable Trains

In 2019, PHMSA is expected to continue to carry out the legislative requirements in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 (Pub. L. No. 114-94) that call for PHMSA to improve the safe movement of liquefied natural gas and crude oil transported by rail. On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the FAST Act into law. The new law requires PHMSA to undertake a number of regulatory and other actions to safeguard the transportation of flammable crude oil by rail and highway. Passage of the act was catalyzed by a number of incidents involving so-called “high hazard flammable trains.”

PHMSA is slated to promulgate a final rule pursuant to the FAST Act that will expand the applicability of comprehensive oil spill response plans based on thresholds of liquid petroleum that apply to an entire train. The rulemaking would also require railroads to share information about high-hazard flammable train operations with state and tribal emergency response commissions. The rule also will include a reference to an initial boiling point test for flammable liquids for better consistency with the American National Standards Institute and the American Petroleum Institute Recommended Practice 3000, “Classifying and Loading of Crude Oil into Rail Tank Cars.”

PHMSA is considering revising the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) to establish vapor pressure limits for unrefined petroleum-based products and potentially all Class 3 flammable liquid hazardous materials that would apply during the transportation of the products or materials by any mode. PHMSA was prompted to do this via a petition for rulemaking submitted by the Attorney General of the State of New York regarding vapor pressure standards for the transportation of crude oil. The petition requests that PHMSA implement a Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) limit less than 9.0 pounds per square inch (psi) for crude oil transported by rail. On January 18, 2017, PHMSA issued an (ANPRM) in response to the petition; after several extensions, comments were due by May 19, 2017. 82 Fed. Reg. 5499. PHMSA will use the comments submitted in response to this ANPRM to help assess and respond to the petition and to evaluate any other potential regulatory actions related to sampling and testing of crude oil and other Class 3 hazardous materials. PHMSA will also evaluate the potential safety benefits and costs of utilizing vapor pressure thresholds within the hazardous materials classification process for unrefined petroleum-based products and Class 3 hazardous materials.

1.2 Transportation of Lithium Batteries by Air

Lithium batteries are found in virtually every commercial aircraft that flies in the U.S. airspace. They are found in everything from laptops, cellphones, iPods, wheelchairs, and other devices. If not properly packaged and transported, they can -- and have -- caused fires on board commercial aircraft. PHMSA is thus developing a rule amending the HMRs applicable to the transport of lithium cells and batteries by aircraft. The rule is likely to contain three amendments:

- A ban on the transport of lithium ion cells and batteries as cargo on passenger aircraft;

- A requirement that lithium ion cells and batteries be shipped at not more than a 30 percent state of charge aboard cargo-only aircraft; and
- Limits on the use of alternative provisions for small lithium cell or battery shipments to one package per consignment or overpack.

PHMSA believes the rule is necessary to address an immediate safety hazard and harmonize the HMRs with emergency amendments to the 2015-2016 edition of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (ICAO Technical Instructions).

1.3 Conversion of Special Permits

PHMSA will continue to convert special permits into the text of the HMRs. Specifically, as mandated by Sections 33012(c) and (d) of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), PHMSA will amend the HMRs to adopt provisions contained in certain widely-used or long-standing special permits that have an established safety record. This rulemaking action is intended to provide wider access to the regulatory flexibility offered in special permits and eliminate the need for numerous renewal requests. The rulemaking action will also reduce paperwork burdens and facilitate commerce while maintaining an appropriate level of safety. PHMSA conducted an extensive analysis of active special permits, approvals, and related petitions, and those deemed suitable will be adopted into the HMR.

1.4 International Standards Harmonization

PHMSA is required by law to ensure that, to the extent practicable, regulations governing the transportation of hazardous materials in commerce are consistent with standards adopted by international authorities. Harmonization yields many benefits: it enhances safety, facilitates compliance, and improves the efficiency of the global transportation system by minimizing the regulatory burden on the public, thus promoting trade. After a thorough review of the provisions recently adopted by various international regulatory bodies, PHMSA has identified areas in the HMR in which harmonization with international regulations will provide an enhanced level of safety, an economic benefit, or in many instances both increased safety and economic benefits. As a result, PHMSA has proposed a rule (issued November 27, 2018) that amends the HMR, where appropriate, to maintain alignment with international standards and consequently facilitate the safe global trade of hazardous materials. 83 Fed. Reg. 60970. Proposals in this rulemaking action include, but are not limited to: non-testing alternative methods for classifying corrosive materials, a classification scheme and transport provisions for articles containing hazardous materials that do not already have a proper shipping name, provisions to recognize one-time movement approvals issued by Transport Canada, and the incorporation by reference of various international standards including the latest editions of the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Organization (IMDG) Code, the ICAO Technical Instructions, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) technical standards applicable to cylinders. Comments are due by **January 28, 2019**.

1.5 Research Gaps and Priorities

To its credit, PHMSA has given significant attention to identifying perceived research gaps and prioritizing projects for research, with an emphasis on risk identification and mitigation. Gaps identified by PHMSA include:

- Risk Analysis and Perception:
    - Hazards, Risks and Mitigation;
    - Data Development;
    - Modeling Techniques;
    - Systems Approaches;
    - Risk Communication and Perception; and
    - Hazmat Release Consequences.
- Emerging Materials and Technologies:
    - Batteries and Emerging Energy Products;
    - Automated and Connected Vehicles; and
    - Technologies for Safety and Decision Maker.
- Emergency Planning and Response:
    - Guidance Development;
    - Education and Training; and
    - Communication, Tracking and Detection.
- Materials and Equipment Testing:
    - Hazardous Material Characterization and Testing;
    - Package Lining and Corrosion Resistance; and
    - Monitoring and Inspection.

Consistent with its identification of these research gaps, PHMSA has identified over 30 prioritized research projects. These include:

- Development of an Overarching Structure for Assessing and Managing Risks through the Hazmat Transportation Supply Chain;
- Understanding Failure Rates of New and Reconditioned Hazmat Drums in Transportation;
- Understanding the Impact of Recycled Material Content on Failure Rates of Hazmat Containers;
- Understanding and Preparing for Changes in Lithium Battery Uses, Characteristics, and Commercial and Non-Commercial Transportation; and
- Testing Methods and Criteria for the Classification of a Material as a Corrosive Solid.

1.6 Conclusion and Summary

PHMSA can be expected to continue to promulgate rules in compliance with its statutory mandates but it also recognizes the need to shore up gaps and to keep pace with an accelerating array of products that are transported in commerce. New information and research will drive much of what PHMSA undertakes in 2019. Advances in technology, enhanced commerce, and a rapidly evolving global trade in hazardous materials must be matched by PHMSA if it is to satisfy its mandates. At this point, PHMSA appears to recognize these new challenges and is poised to maintain its highly honed edge on hazardous materials transportation.

H. TRADE

1. Introduction

B&C's and Acta's clients manufacture innovative and essential products that span all sectors of the economy and that are distributed across the globe. But the efficacy of these products means little if barriers to trade -- such as prohibitive tariffs, intellectual property (IP) theft, lack of a trade agreement and unfair or illegal trade practices -- block or restrict them from entering other nations and getting into the hands of those who need them. Our clients consequently have a substantial interest in anticipating and responding to the destabilizing developments on international trade that have taken the spotlight over the past year, and that loom large for 2019.

A bedrock platform of Donald Trump's Presidential campaign was his promise to take actions on trade that he believes will disclose unfair practices; he also promised to promote free, fair, and reciprocal trade and strongly enforce U.S. trade laws. When Mr. Trump accepted the Republican nomination for President in Cleveland in July 2016, he avowed that "[n]o longer will we enter into these massive deals, with many countries, that are thousands of pages long -- and which no one from our country even reads or understands. We are going to enforce all trade violations, including through the use of taxes and tariffs, against any country that cheats."

Mr. Trump promised to take several unilateral actions. He stated he would punish China and other "cheaters" with crippling tariffs. Calling the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "the worst deal ever," he vowed to dismantle it. Decrying multi-lateral trade agreements, Mr. Trump claimed that he would withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), cease negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), and focus instead on securing bilateral agreements.

President Trump threatened to take actions on specific products to protect American workers and industry, even if that meant imposing restrictions on our closest trading partners; and he promptly did so. On March 8, 2018, he issued two proclamations that imposed a 25 percent tariff on imported steel and a ten percent tariff on imported aluminum. The President claimed the tariffs were necessary for national security justifications, citing Section 232 of the Trade Act of 1974 (Trade Act) (Pub. L. No. 93-618). The tariffs impacted Canada, Mexico, the EU, and other close trading partners. The President eventually suspended the duties against Canada and Mexico, citing on-going NAFTA discussions. And DOC subsequently promulgated procedures for excluding products from the tariffs. But these exclusions only apply to individuals or organizations using steel or aluminum articles identified in the proclamations. Nonetheless, the bell in the ring had been clanged. It was clear that President Trump intended to follow through on his promises regarding trade.

Mr. Trump has made good on his promises, and more. Since taking office, the President has taken scores of actions on trade issues -- often unprecedented actions that at times unsettled global financial markets -- and 2019 promises to be equally as turbulent. The President will no doubt continue to advance his "America First" trade agenda, and that is a recipe for more uncertainty and angst for any company that trades outside the U.S.

Prognosticating on what specifically may occur in the next year is made even more difficult by the fact that the President and his staff often telegraph conflicting messages on trade. At the G20 Summit in December, however, President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping did reach an agreement of sorts on trade issues and agreed to begin 90 days of negotiations on trade issues. B&C will soon be releasing a podcast on trade issues as part of its "All Things Chemical™" series available on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, and Google Play Music. Please stay tuned!

2. Pillars of U.S. Trade Policy

President Trump has launched a new era in American trade policy. His agenda is driven by a determination to use the leverage available to the world's largest economy to obtain fairer treatment for American workers. This policy rests on the following five major pillars:

1. Trade Policy that Supports National Security Policy;
2. Strengthening the American Economy;
3. Negotiating Trade Deals that Work for All Americans;
4. Enforcing and Defending U.S. Trade Laws; and
5. Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System.

2.1 Trade Policy that Supports National Security Policy

Consistent with the National Security Strategy President Trump announced in December 2017, the President's trade policy recognizes that economic prosperity at home is necessary for American power and influence abroad. Free, fair, and reciprocal trade relations are a key component of the President's strategy to promote American prosperity. Therefore, the Trump Administration is working and will continue to work aggressively to address trade imbalances, promote fair and reciprocal trade relationships, enforce U.S. rights under existing trade agreements, and work with like-minded countries to defend our common prosperity and security against economic aggression. The President's Trade Policy Agenda states "[c]ountries that are committed to market-based outcomes and that are willing to provide the United States with reciprocal opportunities in their home markets will find a true friend and ally in the Trump Administration." In 2019, the U.S. will continue to take steps to protect its national interests against hostile policies imposed by China, Russia, or any other countries. The United States will respond to unfair economic competitors by using all available tools to discourage any country from undermining true fair market competition.

2.2 Strengthening the American Economy

The President's trade agenda seeks to build on the economic momentum provided by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed in December 2017 and the Administration's efforts to reduce regulatory burdens. The Trump Administration believes that its focus on fair and reciprocal trade, combined with the President's tax cuts and regulatory relief, will lead to more efficient markets and make it easier for American workers and companies to succeed.

2.3 Negotiating Trade Deals that Work for All Americans

The Trump Administration will seek an extension of Trade Promotion Authority until **2021** and aggressively use that authority to negotiate or revise trade agreements so they are fair and balanced and support American prosperity. The Trump Administration intends to reach other agreements designed to promote fair, balanced trade and support American prosperity. As part of this effort, the U.S. and the UK established a Trade and Investment Working Group to lay the groundwork for commercial continuity and prepare for a potential future trade agreement once the UK leaves the EU. The Administration will continue preparing for other potential bilateral agreements, including in the Indo-Pacific and African regions.

2.4 Enforcing and Defending U.S. Trade Laws

The Trump Administration is committed to using all tools available under U.S. law to combat unfair trade. For example, in January 2018, President Trump exercised his authority under Section 201 of the Trade Act to provide safeguard relief to U.S. manufacturers injured by imports of washing machines and solar panels. This was the first time Section 201 had been used to impose tariffs in 16 years. In 2017, the Trump Administration launched a self-initiated Section 301 investigation with an in-depth probe into Chinese practices related to forced technology transfer, unfair licensing, and IP policies and practices. More discussion on this investigation is below. The Trump Administration has successfully litigated a number of World Trade Organization (WTO) disputes, helping force countries to abandon unfair practices and preserving the U.S. right to enact fair laws.

2.5 Strengthening the Multilateral Trading System

President Trump is no fan of the WTO. He claims that the WTO is not operating as the contracting parties envisioned and, as a result, is undermining America's ability to act in its national interest. The Trump Administration will work with like-minded countries to address these concerns.

3. U.S. - China Trade Dispute: "The Entire World Is Worried."

Deem it a war, battle, skirmish, or whatever military confrontation moniker you choose, there is little doubt that President Trump is pursuing an aggressive and retaliatory assault on China for what the administration believes are unfair trade practices and an indefensible trade deficit with the second largest economy on the planet -- and China is punching back.

The President's ire towards China's trade practices are not likely to abate. He has stated that China is one of the chief violators of unfair trade practices. The U.S. and China are, and in 2019 likely will continue to be, engaged in a tit-for-tat trade and tariff confrontation as the two countries battle for superiority in Asia.

Although President Trump has stated that he is confident he can reach an agreement with China at the G20 Summit, consider this: for the first time in 29 years, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit concluded on November 18, 2018, with officials failing to issue a joint closing statement. The 21 countries at the summit represent 60 percent of the world economy. The day before the summit closed, Vice President Mike Pence and Chinese President Jinping criticized each other in speeches, adding to the tension and uncertainty over whether the U.S. and China can resolve their trade disputes. Press accounts paint the meeting in Papua New Guinea as acrimonious, highlighting widening divisions between China and the U.S. The holdup was that the U.S. and China could not reach common ground on language over trade. Draft versions of the communique showed the U.S. wanted strong language against unfair trade practices that it claims China practices. China wanted a reaffirmation of opposition to protectionism and unilateralism that it says are hallmarks of the U.S. trade strategy. The spat seems to have boiled down to one sentence in the draft joint closing statement: "[w]e agreed to fight protectionism including all unfair trade practices." China reportedly objected to that sentence, as it is accused by the U.S. as the main culprit of "protectionism" and "unfair trade practices." That disagreement is a small slice of the growing rivalry between the world's two biggest economies. Perhaps Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, who hosted the summit, summed it up best when at the end of the summit he told reporters: "[t]he entire world is worried."

President Trump's actions towards China began soon after he took office. In August 2017, he issued a memorandum directing the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to determine if China's policies regarding IP theft and forced technology requirements "may be harming American [IP] rights, innovation, or technology development," and thus warrant USTR action under Section 301 of the Trade Act. Following the memorandum, on August 18, 2017, the USTR initiated an investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act into China's acts, policies, and practices related to technology transfer, IP, and innovation. 82 Fed. Reg. 40213 (Aug. 24, 2017). Then, in January 2018, the USTR submitted to Congress its annual report on China's WTO compliance. The report states that "it seems clear that the United States erred in supporting China's entry into the WTO on terms that have proven to be ineffective in securing China's embrace of an open, market-orientated trade regime."

It was not until March 2018, however, that things really started heating up. On March 22, 2018, the USTR released its report. Among other things, it found that China: uses joint venture requirements, foreign investment restrictions, and administrative review and licensing processes to force or pressure technology transfers from American companies; uses discriminatory licensing processes to transfer technologies from U.S. companies to Chinese companies; directs and facilitates investments and acquisitions that generate large-scale technology transfer; and conducts and supports cyber intrusions into U.S. computer networks to gain access to valuable business information. Taken in sum, the USTR and an interagency team of subject matter experts and economists estimated that China's policies result in harm to the U.S. economy of at least $50 billion per year.

President Trump swiftly took action. In April, he proposed to impose a tariff of 25 percent on $50 billion worth of imported Chinese goods. He eventually culled this list in June down to $34 billion worth of goods. In July, however, Trump struck China again, imposing a 25 percent tariff on some $16 billion worth of Chinese imports; and in July he dropped the hammer -- setting a ten percent tariff on $200 billion worth of imported Chinese products. That tariff is slated to increase to 25 percent in January 2019, unless the U.S. and China can reach an agreement. In short, at this time virtually every item imported from China is subject to additional tariffs. China, of course, has retaliated and imposed its own tariffs on goods from the U.S.

Adding to the tensions, on November 20, 2018, the USTR updated its Section 301 report on China. The USTR found that the tariffs and other actions imposed by the U.S. have not deterred China's practices, and that China denies its practices are unfair or illegal. The USTR's findings are likely to inspire further action by the Trump Administration.

At the G20 summit, President Trump and President Jinping called a 90-day truce on raising tariffs and agreed to begin negotiations on trade. USTR Robert Lighthizer -- considered a trade hawk -- is leading the negotiations. The deadline for the negotiations is **March 1, 2019**, and Mr. Lighthizer has stated that is a "hard" deadline. He has also stated that the President wants China to implement trade practices that protect U.S. technology and IP and increase market access for American companies. "If that can be done, the President wants us to do it. If not, we'll have tariffs," he stated, specifying how the U.S. will increase tariffs on $200 billion worth of Chinese goods from ten percent to 25 percent if a deal hasn't been struck by **March 1, 2019**. Trump could also impose tariffs on $267 billion in additional Chinese goods.

It remains to be seen whether President Trump, author of "The Art of the Deal," can strike an accord with China on trade issues. Tensions between the two nations are high. What *is* certain is that the continued trade spat will upset global financial markets and supply chains and breed festering uncertainty for U.S. companies that trade with China.

4. Renegotiating NAFTA

Candidate Trump loved to rail against NAFTA and vowed that he would dismantle and renegotiate it in a manner that yields better returns for the U.S. against its North American neighbors. He did exactly that.

After he was sworn in in May 2017 as the USTR, Mr. Lighthizer said that the U.S. was going to renegotiate NAFTA. Three days after taking office, Mr. Lighthizer formally notified Congress, as required under the Trade Act, that the U.S. intended to renegotiate NAFTA. The purpose of the renegotiation would be to support higher-paying jobs in the U.S. and to grow the U.S. economy by improving U.S. opportunities to trade with Canada and Mexico. The notification stated that the renegotiation will address chapters in NAFTA that are "outdated and do not reflect modern standards." Specific trade agendas that the negotiation may address include digital trade, IP rights protection, regulatory practices, state-owned enterprises, services, customs procedures, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, small and medium-sized enterprises as well as labor and environmental standards.

Canada, however, was, at least in the eyes of the White House, slow to get on board with the negotiations. President Trump, thus, decided to move ahead and negotiate with Mexico. In August 2018, the U.S. and Mexico announced that they had reached "a preliminary agreement in principle" to update NAFTA. The swiftness with which the U.S. and Mexico were reaching agreement forced Canada to participate more directly in the negotiations.

The negotiations ended on September 30, 2018, when the U.S., Mexico, and Canada reached agreement on the revamped accord. Now dubbed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the agreement is more of a modification to NAFTA than a complete rewrite of it. According to Administration officials, USMCA will include new provisions on textiles that incentivize greater North American production in textiles and apparel trade, strengthen customs enforcement, and facilitate broader consultation and cooperation among the parties. More specifically, USMCA will promote greater use of Made-in-the-USA fibers, yarns, and fabrics.

Reviews from industry and others on the renegotiated trade pact garnered positive initial reviews. It is believed that the USMCA will include increased labor protections for workers, increased standards for duty-free auto shipments, increased access to the Canadian dairy market for U.S. farmers, and improvements to the dispute-resolution system. Stocks surged after the trade deal was announced.

Implementation of the USMCA is underway. The devil is in the details, however. Whether the revised agreement lives up to its promises is yet to be seen, but it appears to be a positive step in leveling the playing field for North American trade.

5. Abandoning Multi-Lateral Trade Agreements

President Trump wasted little time in following up on his vow to scuttle multi-lateral trade agreements. Just three days after taking office, on January 23, 2017, President Trump announced the withdrawal of the U.S. from the TPP Negotiations and Agreement. In making the announcement, he stated that it "is the policy of my Administration to represent the American people and their financial well-being in all negotations [SIC], particularly the American worker, and to create fair and economically beneficial trade deals that serve their interests." He further added that it is his intention to abandon multilateral trade deals and instead deal directly with individual countries on a one-on-one basis in negotiating future trade deals. Similarly, the U.S. abandoned the multi-year negotiations with the EU on the T-TIP accord.

In place of these multilateral agreements, the President has forged ahead with his intent to ink bilateral agreements. On October 16, 2018, Trump formally notified Congress that the U.S. has launched negotiations with the UK on a trade accord. His announcement has received immediate and high praise from many in Congress and the business community. The USTR has also begun trade negotiations with several other nations.