



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Keith Chu (202) 224-4515

March 31, 2022

**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing Examining the President's
2022 Trade Policy Agenda**
As Prepared for Delivery

The biggest trade and economic security stories in the world today are Russia and China.

Their governments are united in putting up barriers to American products and American values.

Since Putin launched his unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. and our allies have hit Russia, Putin and his circle of oligarchs with the most powerful economic sanctions in history. It's not just about yanking away super-yachts and private jets. Putin is now the head of a pariah state. In terms of trade, the Senate is currently in the process of formally designating Russia as a pariah state by revoking its Permanent Normal Trade Relations status.

The U.S. has proven to Russia that going down the abusive totalitarian road is a bad bet. The U.S. and our allies must prove the same to China.

China's government is a human-rights abusing, jobs- and tech-stealing behemoth at the head of an economic superpower. One of my top concerns about the Chinese government's economic model is censorship.

When the internet took off, American innovators were first out of the gate with big ideas. The Chinese government responded by using its Great Firewall to block those companies, and allowing Chinese firms to rip off their ideas instead of competing with them directly. Even worse, Chinese tech comes with Chinese censorship, and it even censors American people and American businesses.

The Chinese model of censorship is popping up all over the world. It's fracturing the internet. It's distorting reality for entire nations, as you see in Russia, where the people are being fed lies about what's going on in Ukraine.

The U.S. must stand up to that kind of censorship, and USTR has a big role in fighting for a free and open internet through smart digital trade policy.

You can also bet that the Chinese government will want to dominate the technologies that will dominate the rest of the 21st century, such as semiconductors, EV batteries and AI. It's also continuing its awful record of abusing human rights and trampling on workers.

Again, this is where USTR comes in. The U.S. must do everything it can to stand up to China, protect American workers and businesses and prevent a race to the bottom on basic rights.

As I said at the outset, the U.S. and our allies have proven with the sanctions on Russia that our collective economic power is anything but “soft.” A big reason why the U.S. was able to marshal such strength was because the Biden administration, USTR included, had worked hard to mend our relationships in Europe and elsewhere.

USTR racked up a lot of significant wins in the process that don’t always get lots of discussion. USTR finally brokered a deal in an aircraft trade dispute with the EU and the UK that had been unresolved for nearly two decades.

USTR and the Commerce Department also reached deals with the EU, the UK, and Japan on steel and aluminum trade — which will remove existing tariffs, bring prices down for Americans and fight carbon emissions.

Before those disputes were resolved, American firms had been hit in the crossfire with tariffs on everything from airplanes to cranberries to wine. EU tariffs on distilled spirits were a big danger to Oregon’s thriving craft beverage industry. Ambassador Tai’s work to negotiate deals has wiped away these tariff threats, ensuring our businesses can grow, create good-paying jobs, and export with confidence.

Just last week, USTR got Japan to agree to allow in more U.S. beef at lower tariff levels, which is huge news for our ranchers. And thanks to an agreement with the EU, American fishers are exporting live oysters, clams, and mussels to Europe for the first time in over a decade. There’s no question that resolving these issues has brought the U.S. and our traditional economic allies closer together.

Two weeks ago, this committee held a hearing on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, which is another opportunity to strengthen our economic ties and marginalize the Russia-China model.

It’s got a lot of promise for Oregon workers and businesses, who live at one of the gateways to the Pacific. A good agreement will bulldoze overseas barriers to Oregon products from Columbia Gorge pears to Wallowa beef. Reducing barriers means better market access for farmers and manufacturers, which is incredibly important to Oregon – where one in five jobs are trade jobs, and trade jobs often pay better.

It’s also an important opportunity to raise standards for labor rights, environmental protections and a free and open internet. And because sunlight is the best disinfectant, it’s a positive sign that USTR has committed to handling those discussions with transparency and close consultations. My view is, that’s key to getting the best possible deal for American workers.

I want to thank Ambassador Tai for joining the committee today. I’m looking forward to discussing these issues with her, and more.

###