

SPECIAL TOPICS ALERT

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Taiwan Business TOPICS magazine, published monthly, is the Chamber's flagship publication. It includes year-round business reporting and policy analysis in support of Chamber advocacy issues. TOPICS has become the definitive voice on the business climate in Taiwan to executives, government officials, the media and academics. The magazine enjoys wide distribution to prominent officials, elected representatives, and think tanks in the United States and Taiwan.

You are receiving this excerpt of the September 2014 issue of TOPICS as a special bulletin because we believe you may have a special interest in the selected contents. We hope you will find the materials useful and relevant.

Included in this special alert:

Special Report: *Maintaining Taiwan's Trade Relevance*



Maintaining Taiwan's Trade Relevance

AmCham co-organizes a conference to help foster Taiwan's participation in key regional trade groups.

BY DON SHAPIRO

As Taiwan readies itself to seek membership within the next few years in two emerging regional trade groups – the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) – what lessons can it learn from the experience of other countries around the region?

To help provide an answer, AmCham Taipei and the Taiwan WTO and RTA Center of the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (CIER) joined forces on August 28 to hold a one-day conference on “Preparing for TPP/RCEP Membership: Experience from Asia Pacific Economies.” The event, held in the CIER auditorium, was supported by the Bureau of Foreign Trade and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and attracted some 200 attendees, including government officials, businesspersons, scholars, and university students.

In opening remarks, CIER President Wu Chung-shu stressed the vital importance to Taiwan of gaining entrance into the two organizations, saying “the cost of exclusion would be unbearable for us,” given the Taiwan economy’s high dependence on international trade. Echoing that sentiment, Vice Minister of Economic Affairs Cho Shih-chao told the audience that to prevent Taiwan from falling victim to trade isolation, preparing for participation in these regional trade bodies is now “the priority task of our government.” He noted that under an action plan adopted early this year, the government has already completed an analysis of adjustments



AmCham Chairman Thomas Fann, head of the Ford Motor joint venture in Taiwan, reiterated the Chamber's support for Taiwan's entry into the TPP.

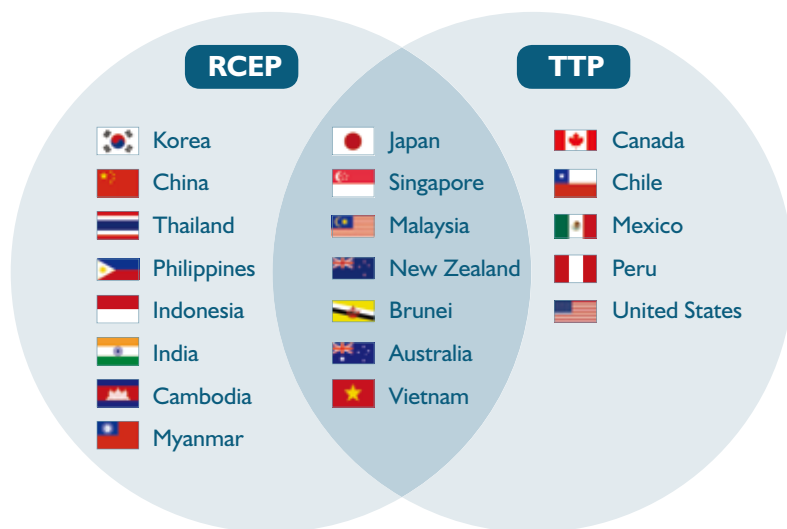
that will need to be made in policies and regulations to bring Taiwan in line with standard international practices. “Communicating with the public and industry to bring about a positive consensus” on the merits of joining these trade organizations “will be an integral part of the process,” he added.

On behalf of AmCham Taipei, Chairman Thomas Fann expressed the Chamber’s support for Taiwan’s involvement in all free-trade initiatives, but with particular interest in seeing Taiwan join the U.S.-led TPP. As a result, he said, AmCham was pleased to play a part in orga-

nizing the conference, using its contacts with other American Chambers around the region to bring in speakers from Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

In a presentation on Japan’s experience and strategies in joining the TPP negotiations, Bruce J. Ellsworth, vice chair of the Healthcare Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) and senior director of government affairs and policy for Johnson & Johnson, stressed the key role undertaken by ACCJ in helping pave the way for that development. Part of the effort was aimed at building support for TPP domestically within Japan. The chamber collaborated closely with the Keidanren, the leading Japanese business federation, and other major industry organizations to issue media statements and hold trade symposiums. For several years, TPP was also a main theme of the annual “Diet Doorknock” visits made by ACCJ to members of the Japanese parliament.

TAIWAN IS NOT YET IN EITHER CIRCLE



Recognizing that initially there was strong opposition within the U.S. Congress to bringing Japan into the TPP – but that many of the objections were based on misinformation – ACCJ also engaged in an active outreach in Washington, D.C., visiting members of Congress and senior U.S. officials. The Washington-based U.S.-Japan Business Council similarly spread the word on why the inclusion of Japan in the TPP would be in the best interests of the United States and its business community.

Listing “Lessons for Taiwan’s Preparation,” Ellsworth noted that just as ACCJ helped make the case for Japanese participation in TPP to members of the U.S. Congress, AmCham Taipei would be in a position to do the same for Taiwan. But he emphasized that while American chambers can be effective in Washington, it is incumbent on Taiwanese industry and political leaders to “take the lead in showing the benefits of TPP participation domestically.” All trade agreements inevitably disadvantage some sectors of the economy, but their voice should not override the greater good for the wider economy.

As one of the lessons for Taiwan’s reference, Ellsworth also cited the confidence-building measures that Japan employed to overcome suspicions in some quarters in the United States that TPP negotiations would be useless because of several longstanding, unresolved bilateral issues that had caused considerable acrimony. Even before it was assured of entry into the TPP negotiations, for example, Tokyo agreed to reduce restrictions on imports of U.S. beef and to substantially increase the import quota for automobiles. Further, Japan’s entrance into the negotiations was based on the understanding that “everything is on the negotiating table.” It was clear that any attempt by Japan to exclude certain sensitive issues from the agenda would lead to strong resistance in the U.S. government and Congress.

Perspectives from Korea

Korea is usually viewed as Taiwan’s chief rival in export markets, and one reason for the anxiety about Taiwan’s inability to enter into many bilateral or multilateral free-trade agreements (FTAs) is that

維持台灣的貿易地位

台北市美國商會共同舉辦研討會，協助推動台灣參與重要區域性貿易組織

撰文 / 沙蕩

在 台灣準備爭取在未來幾年加入兩個正在成形的區域性貿易組織——跨太平洋夥伴協定（TPP）和區域全面經濟夥伴協定（RCEP）的當下，區域內其他國家的經驗有何可供借鏡之處？

為了找尋答案，台北市美國商會和中華經濟研究院WTO及RTA中心在8月28日共同舉辦一天的研討會，主題為「前進TPP/RCEP：亞太各國參與經濟整合經驗之借鏡」。會議在中華經濟研究院蔣碩傑國際會議廳舉行，經濟部國際貿易局和外交部為指導機關，有大約200人與會，包括政府官員、企業界人士、學者與大學學生。

中華經濟研究院院長吳中書在開幕致詞時，強調台灣必須加入這兩個組織，並說台灣經濟高度仰賴國際貿易，「若被排除在外，後果將不是我們所能承擔」。經濟部次長卓士昭呼應這個說法，指出避免貿易孤立的嚴重後果、做好參與這些區域貿易組織的準備，目前是「我國政府的優先要務」。他說，政府已經根據今年初通過的行動方案，彙整完成要使台灣政策與法規符合國際規範所必須進行的調整。他並說，針對加入這些貿易組織的好處「與民眾和產業界溝通以形成積極共識，將會是這個過程不可少的一部分」。

台北市美國商會會長范旻表示，商會支持台灣參與任何貿易自由化的努力，尤其希望台灣加入美國主導的TPP。他說台北市美國商會因此很高興共同主辦這次研討會，並運用與區域內各國美國商會的關係，邀請日本、韓國、新加坡、馬來西亞和菲律賓的貴賓與會致詞。

擔任日本美國商會（ACCJ）醫療委員會副主席的嬌生集團政府事務暨政策資深主任艾斯沃茲，在會中介紹日本參與TPP談判的經驗與策略。他強調ACCJ扮演為日本參與TPP談判鋪路的關鍵角色。ACCJ所做的努力包括建立日本國內對參與TPP的支持度，例如與日本主要工商團體「經團連」及其他主要企業組織密切合作，發表媒體聲明，並舉辦貿易研討會。而且有好幾年，TPP是ACCJ對日本國會議員進行年度「國會敲門」拜訪時的重要議題。

ACCJ體認美國國會內部有反對日本加入

TPP的強大聲浪，而且許多反對的理由出於錯誤的資訊因此ACCJ也在華府積極活動，拜訪國會議員與資深官員。總部設在華府的美日商業協會，也同樣努力說明將日本納入TPP符合美國與美國企業界的最佳利益。

艾斯沃茲根據日本的經驗，為台灣準備參與TPP談判提供若干心得。他指出，就如同ACCJ向美國國會議員爭取支持日本加入TPP，台北市美國商會可以為台灣做同樣的事。但他強調，雖然美國商會可以在華府發揮效力，台灣的企業界與政壇領袖必須「帶頭向國人說明參與TPP的好處」。貿易協定必然會衝擊到經濟的某些產業，但他們的聲音不應蓋過整體經濟所能得到的龐大利益。

美國部分人士認為，與日本進行TPP談判會白費功夫，因為美日之間有許多長期懸而未決的問題，兩國在這方面對立嚴重。艾斯沃茲提到，日本經驗可供台灣借鏡的一點，在於日方採取若干建立信心的措施，以化解這類疑慮。比方說，日本在確定可以加入TPP談判之前，便同意減少美國牛肉進口的限制，並大幅提高美國汽車進口配額。此外，日本加入TPP談判時有個諒解，那就是「任何議題都可以協商」。日本很清楚，如果它試圖把若干敏感議題排除在議程之外，美國行政部門與國會都會強力反對。

韓國觀點

韓國通常被視為台灣在外銷市場的主要競爭對手。台灣對於未能簽署許多雙邊或多邊自由貿易協定（FTA）具有焦慮感，原因之一就是韓國在這方面已相當成功，而且在逐漸成為「區域FTA樞紐」。韓國已經與美國、歐洲聯盟及東南亞國家協會已簽署FTA，跟中國簽署FTA的談判也在進行。韓國雖然不是最早開始談判TPP的12個國家之一，但似乎確定可以加入下一回合談判。台灣參與第二回合談判的可能性相當高，但是否實現還很難說（其中很大部分是政治因素使然）。

在會中介紹韓國FTA策略的是艾咪·傑克森。她是美國前任貿易談判代表，目前擔任韓國美國商會會長。她說，韓國在與外國成功的簽署多項FTA其關鍵因素包括國內民眾普遍支持（韓國民眾眼見三星、現代等企業在全球市場的表現，因此瞭解外貿的價值）、政府最高階層堅定推動貿易自由化，以及政府主動因應FTA造成的負面衝擊。政府投入數十、數百億美元採取直接補貼、重新訓練等措施，並推動計畫協助特定行業提高競爭力，例如推動發展釀酒業，以幫助農民面對從智利進口食用葡萄的低價競爭。

跟日本參與TPP的情況一樣，傑克森說，美國樂意與韓國簽署FTA因為韓國願意接受「高品質」的協定--也就是任何議題都可以上談判桌，至少在初期是如此。此外，韓國也接受



AmCham Taipei Vice Chairman Scott Meikle, the Micron representative in Taiwan, stressed how TPP membership could help diversify Taiwan's trade and investment to avoid over-concentration on any market.

Korea has been so successful in that regard that it is establishing itself as what is being referred to as a “regional FTA hub.” It has concluded bilateral FTAs with the United States, European Union, and ASEAN, and its FTA negotiations with China are currently in progress. Although Korea was not among the original 12 negotiating parties in the TPP, it seems assured of a place in the next round. For Taiwan, on the other hand, inclusion in the second round remains a distinct possibility but is hardly assured, in large part for political reasons.

Introducing Korea's FTA strategy at the conference was Amy Jackson, a former U.S. trade negotiator who is now president of AmCham Korea. As key factors in Korea's FTA successes, she identified the generally strong support from the Korean public (which understood the value of foreign trade by seeing how well Korean companies like Samsung and Hyundai were performing in world markets), the heavy commitment to trade liberalization from the highest levels of government, and the proactive way in which the concerns of domestic constituencies negatively affected by FTAs were addressed. Billions of dollars were spent on measures such as direct subsidies, retraining programs, and projects to help certain groups raise their competitiveness – for example, promoting development of a wine industry to benefit grape farmers who were being undersold by imports of table grapes from Chile.

As with Japan and the TPP, Jackson said that the United States was encouraged to pursue an FTA with Korea by Seoul's willingness to accept a “high-quality” agreement in which all issues would be on the table, at least initially, and by Korea's acceptance of the need for confidence-building measures to “clear the underbrush” of sticky issues that might otherwise bog down the negotiations.

Jackson mentioned that during the negotiation process, there was often more tension between the executive branch of the Korean government and the National Assembly than between the Korean and U.S. governments. At that time, Korea had no equivalent to the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) that the U.S. Congress usually grants the President in a process that allows the legislators to set certain guidelines and engage in consultations with the executive branch to influence the final shape of the negotiated agreement. She said that such legislation has since been passed, and is very helpful in clarifying the interaction between the two branches of government on trade matters. In Taiwan, similar legislation is being considered in the aftermath of controversy over the way in which the cross-strait trade in

services agreement was negotiated.

The representative from AmCham Malaysia, Stuart Dean of General Electric, reported that because of its high export dependence, Malaysia is considered to be one of the two countries (Vietnam is the other) that would benefit the most from TPP membership. Nevertheless, with both the opposition party and one faction of the ruling party raising objections to TPP participation, political factors make it uncertain whether the parliament would ratify the agreement once negotiations are concluded.

Steven R. Okun of the private equity firm of KKR, a former chairman of AmCham Singapore, explained the distinction between a more conventional trade agreement such as RCEP, which basically covers tariff reductions, and the TPP, which bills itself as a “gold standard, 21st-century free trade agreement.” As such, TPP deals not only with at-the-border issues such as tariffs and customs procedures, but also across-the-border issues like the free flow of data, and behind-the-border issues such as the transparency and consistency of regulatory procedures, as well as intellectual property protection, labor and environmental conditions, and other matters.

Representing AmCham Taipei, Vice Chairman Scott Meikle, who heads the Micron joint venture in Taiwan, emphasized how “entry into TPP would facilitate more balanced trade” for Taiwan, which currently relies on China/Hong Kong for 39.6% of its exports and 18% of its imports. In terms of Taiwan’s readiness to join TPP, Meikle noted the significant progress the government has made since the beginning of this year in resolving some longstanding regulatory issues. Although he said much remains to be done to bring regulatory practices in line with international norms, AmCham’s annual Business Climate Survey shows that most members are confident that Taiwan is capable of meeting the high standards required for TPP membership.

In the final session of the conference, moderated by Minister Without Portfolio John Deng, students in the audience were given an opportunity to share their views on TPP/RCEP with the panel of speakers. A common theme was the expression of mixed feelings: recognition of TPP/RCEP’s importance for the nation, coupled with sympathy and concern for the farmers and lesser-skilled workers who might be disadvantaged by increased competition from abroad. Members of a panel responded that trade adjustment assistance measures such as Korea instituted would cushion the blow.

What could also have been mentioned is that the government’s ability to afford social-welfare expenditures depends on tax revenue, which in turn is a function of the level of economic prosperity. A Taiwan fully integrated into the regional and global economy is much more likely to enjoy such prosperity than one that is insulated and increasingly uncompetitive. ■

Key Lessons for Taiwan for TPP Entry

- Everything must be on the negotiating table
- Seek Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) with the United States
- Establish buy-in from the public, industry groups, other stakeholders
- Build strong lines of communication with the national legislature
- Devise effective assistance measures for disadvantaged sectors
- Take advantage of support from the American Chamber

有必要採取建立信心的措施，願意「清理戰場」，並先排除可能使FTA談判陷入泥淖的棘手問題。

傑克森提到，在談判過程中，韓國行政部門與國會之間的緊張，往往比韓美兩國政府之間的緊張還要嚴重。當時韓國不像美國國會給予總統貿易促進授權（TPA），同時讓議員可以訂定若干規範，並與行政部門進行諮商以引導最終協議的內容。她說，後來韓國訂定了類似授權法律，對於釐清行政與立法部門在貿易方面的互動關係有很大幫助。在台灣，兩岸服務貿易協議談判的方式引發爭議之後，各方也在考慮制定類似法律。

馬來西亞美國商會代表奇異公司的狄恩說明，馬來西亞由於高度仰賴出口，被認為是兩個最能因為成為TPP會員而獲利的國家之一（另一個是越南）。但馬來西亞在野黨與部份執政黨反對加入TPP，一旦談判結束，國會是否批准協定已因政治因素而蒙上不確定的陰影。

新加坡美國商會前任會長、私人資金公司KKR集團的歐肯對RCEP等較傳統的自由貿易協定與TPP之間的差異做說明；前者基本上只管降低關稅，TPP則自詡為「黃金標準，是21世紀的自由貿易協定」。TPP內容不僅涵蓋關稅、通關程序等跨國界議題，還規範超越國界的議題如資訊的自由流通、法規程序的透明度與一貫性，以及智慧財產權的保護、勞動條件與環保等議題。

代表台北市美國商會提出報告的，是商會副會長、華亞科技股份有限公司總經理梅國勳。他強調，「加入TPP將使台灣對外貿易更加平衡」。台灣目前出口有39.6%是以中國／香港為市場，而18%的進口總值來自中國大陸與香港。至於台灣加入TPP的準備工作，梅國勳說，自今年初以來，政府在解決法規面若干存在以久的問題方面已有顯著進展。他說，台灣還需要做許多努力，才能使法規面的做法符合國際標準，但台北市美國商會年度《商業景氣調查》顯示，商會的多數會員相信，台灣將會達到成為TPP會員必須做到的標準。

會議最後時段，在政務委員鄧振中的主持下，現場的學生有機會向台上的講員表達對TPP與RCEP的看法。學生發言的一個共通之處，在於傳達錯綜複雜的感覺：一方面體認加入TPP/RCEP對國家的重要性，一方面同情因來自海外的競爭增強而可能陷入困境的農民和技能較弱的工人。講員回覆說，類似韓國採取的轉型輔導措施，將可減緩貿易自由化的衝擊。

另一項可以回覆這類質疑的說明是，政府的社會福利支出要靠稅收，而稅收多寡要看經濟繁榮的程度。台灣若能完全融入區域與全球經濟，享有高度繁榮的機會會遠高於因孤立而競爭力逐漸下滑的情況。 ■