

Trade Talk: Week in Review (12-18 September 2016)- Jasta Veto; Burma Sanction Lift; Aung San Suu Kyi

Article By:

Stacy A. Swanson

JASTA – Veto Imminent. Congress formally submitted the *Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act* (JASTA; S. 2040), to President Obama last Monday. The President has until this Friday to veto the measure, as he has vowed to do. While it remains unclear whether Congress has the necessary votes – two-thirds in both chambers – to override a veto, Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Senator Charles Schumer (D-New York) have expressed confidence a veto override vote would be successful. The White House continues to argue JASTA may create unintended consequences on the global norm of sovereign immunity that currently protects the U.S. service members from being sued in foreign courts.

Burma – U.S. Removes Restrictions. After a bilateral meeting at the White House, President Obama and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi issued a [joint statement](#):

Both leaders remarked on the tremendous change in Myanmar over the past five years, during which time Myanmar moved from a military government through a period of opening, held free and fair elections in November 2015, and inaugurated a new, democratically elected government in March 2016.”

President Obama cited the recent progress when saying the United States will (1) restore Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade benefits to Myanmar; (2) terminate the National Emergency with respect to Myanmar; and (3) revoke the Executive Order-based framework of the Burma sanctions program. The two leaders also announced a U.S.-Myanmar Partnership.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-California) also met with Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, observing at the conclusion of the meeting:

While this new administration brings hope to Burma, I remain concerned over the grave mistreatment of Burma’s Rohingya, a minority that continues to be among the most persecuted people in the world. As Chairman, I remain committed to efforts to protect this tormented minority.”

Iran – House Committee Advances a New Bill. On 14 September, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed an amended version of the *Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act* (H.R. 5931). The legislation, introduced by Chairman Ed Royce (R-California), would prohibit future cash payments from the United States to Iran.

TPP – Hatch Confirms Verbal Assurance. President Obama convened a bipartisan group of business leaders, mayors, governors, national security leaders and military leaders last Friday to discuss the TPP agreement and to reaffirm his commitment to pushing forward on a congressional vote yet this year on the deal. The President [argued](#):

[I]f you're frustrated about rules of trade that disadvantage America, if you're frustrated about jobs being shipped overseas and other countries selling goods into our country freely when we can't sell our stuff into other countries freely, then you want to get this thing [TPP deal] passed. You want to get this thing done."

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) said last week that he has received verbal assurance from the Obama Administration that 12 years of market exclusivity for biologics will be included in the implementing bill for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). He also said that he wants to see those assurances in writing. Regarding possible congressional action in the lame-duck session of Congress, Senator Hatch said:

Oh, I don't know that we can do this in the lame-duck session. We have to see."

On 13 September, House Ways & Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) told Inside U.S. Trade that the Obama Administration and his Committee expect to start working on the implementing bill "soon."

© Copyright 2025 Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP

National Law Review, Volume VI, Number 266

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/trade-talk-week-review-12-18-september-2016-jasta-vetoe-burma-sanction-lift-aung-sun>