



## **Look West: The Evolution of U.S. Trade Policy Toward Asia**

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U.S. trade policy toward Asia has undergone an important evolution over the last 50 years, reflecting not only changes in its vision of engaging Asia but also in the general American approach to trade negotiations. Put succinctly, in the late 1980s, the U.S. turned away from its former deep commitment to multilateral trade negotiations and began to pursue a strategy of “competitive liberalization.” This shift has been marketed as an innovative approach to trade negotiations, and includes the pursuit of bilateral and minilateral arrangements as well as sectorally-based market opening. These have been followed at the turn of the millennium by the active pursuit of bilateral trade agreements with countries such as Chile, Morocco, Singapore, Australia, and South Korea. How can we categorize the patterns of U.S. trade arrangements over time? What are the driving forces behind the evolution of U.S. trade policy towards Asia? What are the implications, both domestically and internationally, of this changing U.S. trade strategy? And finally, what is the likely direction of future U.S. trade policy?