

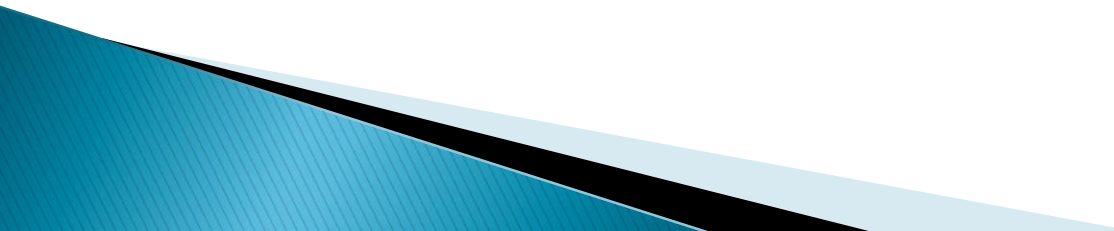
# Mnuchin Says Trump 'Willing' to Negotiate U.S. Return to TPP

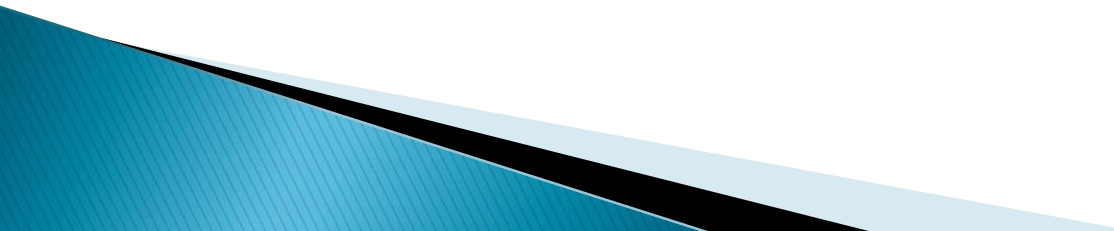
By Isabel Reynolds

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- ▶ U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Tuesday he had "begun to have very high-level conversations" on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and rejoining the regional trade pact is an option for President Donald Trump.
  - ▶ Trump repeatedly attacked the TPP deal on the campaign trail and pulled the U.S. out of it soon after he took over early last year.
  - ▶ However, last month he expressed openness to rejoining if the terms were improved.
  - ▶ Mnuchin told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington that this was significant.
  - ▶ "He's willing to negotiate," Mnuchin said. "Whether we do multilaterals or we consider going back into TPP, again that's something that's on the table."
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- ▶ Japan has spearheaded a drive to keep the pact alive among the remaining 11 members, and the resulting agreement is set to be signed on March 8.
  - ▶ Mnuchin said the U.S. would focus on bilateral deals first before reviewing its stance on the TPP.
  - ▶ "It's not a priority at the moment, but it is something the president will consider," he added.
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- ▶ Japan has repeatedly said it's **not interested in renegotiation**, and any such request would probably **not be welcomed** by **other nations**.
  - ▶ The **U.S. should rejoin the treaty as it is**, President Michelle Bachelet of **Chile** told the Nikkei newspaper in an **interview** this week.
  - ▶ **Bachelet will host the signing ceremony** for the treaty in March.
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- ▶ Still, Japan's former TPP Minister Akira Amari said in an interview Tuesday that it **might be feasible to add new clauses on topics not currently covered** if U.S. concerns cannot be addressed outside the TPP framework.
- ▶ He warned that by spurning the agreement, **the U.S. risks allowing China to make global rules on trade and investment.**
- ▶ "China is trying **very hard to get its own rules recognized as the standard,**" Amari said.
- ▶ China's rules are "a bit different from what Japan, the U.S. and Europe see as fair," he added. **"I don't think the U.S. can accept China's local rules becoming the global standard."**

- ▶ Meanwhile, a **lawmaker in Thailand** said the military government is **debating whether to join the pact**, whose **current members** account for about **13 percent of the global economy**.
  - ▶ Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and the U.K. have also **expressed interest in joining**.
  - ▶ Current members include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
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