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USA, Peru conclude FTA

12 December 2005

The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) has announced that The United States and Peru have concluded work on a bilateral free-trade agreement (FTA).

According to the statement the agreement "will eliminate tariffs and other barriers to goods and services" and thus expand trade between the United States and Peru.

A spokesperson added, "We weren't necessarily anticipating" being able to close a free-trade agreement with Peru "this quickly," the official said, but "negotiations became very intense last night" when Peruvian negotiators made it clear that they wanted to move ahead, so "we decided it would be a good idea for both sides to lock in a deal."

The official described the pact as "a very strong agreement" for both countries. "There's a very strong agricultural benefits package" that "covers a wide array of products," offering US exporters duty-free access to the Peruvian market "immediately, with other tariffs phased out over 18 years," the official said.

In addition, the agreement contains "a very strong textiles/apparel package," the official said.

Bayer receives "Low Carbon Leaders Award"

12 December 2005

German specialty chemical company Bayer AG has received the "Low Carbon Leaders Award" at the international Climate Summit recently held in Montreal.

Bayer was recognised for its achievements over the last 10 years in the field of climate protection. An international jury of experts made up of representatives from politics, non-governmental organisations and industry, appointed by climate protection organisation The Climate Group, voted Bayer "best in class". It was the only German company to receive this status, which is awarded to the top five companies. In the global climate protection ranking Bayer was rated third out of a total of 500 companies.

Bayer received the award in recognition of its role in the reduction of emissions, as a result of which the group has already exceeded both national and international targets. While the Kyoto Protocol and the German Bundestag stipulate a 25% reduction in greenhouse gases in Germany by 2005 and 50% by 2020 compared with 1990, Bayer has succeeded in lowering emissions worldwide by more than 60% since the beginning of the 1990s.

Members of US Congress oppose EU proposal on textiles

12 December 2005

Twenty four members of the US House of Representatives have sent a letter to President Bush urging the United States to oppose the European Union-led initiative to grant Least Developed Countries (LDC's) duty-free and quota-free access to the US market.

"The E.U.-led initiative must be opposed. According to UN data, China (including Hong Kong) supplies 60% of the fabric needs for Bangladesh and Cambodia, the largest LDC exporters. With duty-free status, Chinese penetration of the US market would increase dramatically as US apparel imports would shift away from Western Hemispheric producers that use US-made components to producers in Bangladesh and Cambodia that would be using Chinese-made components. Such a result would certainly cause massive job losses in the United States and Latin America," said Cass Johnson, president of the National Council of Textile Organisations (NCTO). He also went on to note that textile and apparel trade associations in the AGOA/CAFTA/NAFTA/ANDEAN regions were all on record as opposing the LDC proposal.

Craig Sullivan retires from Levi Strauss

12 December 2005

Levi Strauss & Co. has announced that Craig Sullivan, former chairman and chief executive officer of The Clorox Company, is to retire from its board of directors, effective January 1, 2006. Mr. Sullivan has served on the board since 1998.

"Levi Strauss & Co. has made great progress the past several years in its business transformation," said Mr. Sullivan. "I feel that this is a good point to step off the board."

Mr Sullivan served on the Audit and Human Resources Committees during his seven years on the board of directors.

US Olympic team to use new sports detergent

12 December 2005

The US Olympic Team is using a new, sports-specific laundry detergent called "Win" that is said to be the world's first oxidised formula specifically designed to eliminate the embedded sweat and odours found in performance athletic apparel.

For years, serious athletes have been using high-performance micofibre apparel for its moisture management and body heat mitigation. Unfortunately, these products retain bacteria attracted to the sweat trapped in the same microfibres that provide the performance benefits. The result is a musty odour that traditional detergents have not been able to remove.

"Win's super oxygenated system directly targets the bacteria oxidising the offensive odours and stains associated with performance products that have become popular among Olympic calibre athletes and weekend warriors alike," said Jeff Crow, president of Win Products Inc.

BASF increases capacity for high-quality yellow pigments

12 December 2005

BASF has increased its production capacity for quinophthalone pigments at its Ludwigshafen site in Germany to 1,400 metric tons per annum. The company said it is registering growing worldwide demand for these high-grade yellow pigments, which are marketed under the brand name Paliotol. The investment will ensure that BASF continues to provide delivery reliability while maintaining the quality standard of its Paliotol pigments.

BASF is the only manufacturer of this pigment group (Pigment Yellow 138). Paliotol pigments are used in diverse areas, ranging from coatings, through to the coloration of polymer fibres, and films and injection mouldings.

Rohm and Haas holds groundbreaking ceremony at manufacturing complex in China

13 December 2005

Rohm and Haas held a groundbreaking ceremony on December 12 for its new manufacturing facility within the Foshan Sanshui Industrial Park in Guangdong, China. Nearly 100 guests attended the ceremony, including officials from the Foshan Municipal Government, Foshan Sanshui Industrial Park, and senior executives and employees of Rohm and Haas.

This groundbreaking ceremony once again demonstrates our ongoing commitment to invest in China and to expand our presence in the Asia-Pacific market overall," said Sam Shoemaker, vice president of Rohm and Haas and director of the Asia-Pacific Region for the company.

The new manufacturing complex covers 100,000 square metres and an initial investment of $15 million has been made in the plant. The first phase of this specialty materials site will be completed in mid-2006. When completed, the Sanshui site will become the manufacturing base for the company's chemical production operations in Guangdong province, providing products and services for a variety of market sectors.

Rohm and Haas announces restructuring initiatives in Europe

13 December 2005

Specialty chemicals company Rohm and Haas Company has announced restructuring initiatives to improve the efficiency of its manufacturing network in Europe across several chemical businesses. The initiatives involve the closing or partial shutdown of manufacturing facilities in the United Kingdom and Germany, and the elimination of approximately 400 positions from the company's global workforce.

As a result of the restructurings, which will be completed within 12 to 18 months, the company expects total pre-tax charges for the fourth quarter 2005 to be approximately $65 million. The cost savings initiatives are expected to yield pre-tax savings of approximately $35 million annually.

The company also updated its fourth quarter 2005 guidance, noting that stronger demand in higher margin businesses is contributing improved earnings over the previous year.

Dow elects new board member

13 December 2005

Specialty chemical company, the Dow Chemical Company has elected Geoffrey Merzei, executive vice president and chief financial officer (CFO), to the board of directors, effective immediately. Mr. Merszei will serve on the Finance Committee.

He first joined Dow in 1977 as a credit manager and progressed through various roles in the finance organisation, becoming vice president and treasurer in 1996. In 2001, he moved to Alcan Inc. and served four years as executive vice president and CFO. Mr. Merszei returned to Dow as executive vice president in July 2005, and became CFO in October. He also serves on the Dow Corning Corporation board of directors.

Dow provides chemical, plastic and agricultural products and services to customers in 175 countries.

Oeko-Tex Standard 100 information event held

13 December 2005

Around 25 representatives from prominent textile manufacturers and commercial organisations were given an informative insight into the international testing and certification system of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 on November 15 in New York.

During the meeting, as an introduction to the topic of human ecology and product security, author Patricia Aburdene introduced her new book Megatrends 2010". Aburdene used the term value-driven consumer" to cover the segment of the population which feels passionately about the environment. Ms Aburdene estimates that there are around 63 million of these value-driven or conscious consumers in the USA. She also regards them as a major target group for products tested and certified for harmful substances according to the Oeko-Tex Standard 100. Ms Aburdene predicts that there will be a development in the USA over the next few years similar to that experienced in Europe at the close of the 20th century, where ecological awareness and a healthy lifestyle has become a matter of importance for a broad section of the population, having originally been the concern of a relatively small group.

Raimar Freitag, general secretary of the International Oeko-Tex Association, went on to underline this thesis using the constantly increasing number of Oeko-Tex certificates and companies involved in the system. Since 1992, around 50,000 certificates have been issued worldwide to approximately 6,500 companies in 68 countries, with the majority of certificates being given in Europe and Asia. Over the coming years, a far-reaching information campaign aims to ensure that the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 also becomes increasingly established amongst American companies, whose imports of preliminary products and end products from Asia currently amount to around 70 %.

BASF appoints new head of Styrenics Division

13 December 2005

As of December 1, 2005, Hans W. Reiners took over responsibility for BASF's Styrenics Operating Division. He has succeeded Dr. Fred Baumgartner, who will be heading the Inorganics Operating Division as of January 1, 2006.

Following his early work as product manager in the divisions of textile dyes and fibre intermediates at BASF in Ludwigshafen, Germany, Mr Reiners spent two years at the BASF Corporation in Parsippany, New Jersey, in the United States. Upon his return, he was assistant to a member of the Board of BASF Aktiengesellschaft until 1995. From 1995 to 1998, he headed the Agricultural Products for Southern Europe" business unit, working out of Barcelona, Spain. This was followed by three years as head of Global Marketing for Agricultural Products. In this capacity, he was responsible for the integration of American Cyanamid into BASF after this company was acquired in 2000. Since 2001, he has headed the Agricultural Products Division of the BASF Group, at first out of Mount Olive, New Jersey, in the United States, and then out of Limburgerhof in Germany.

Textronics introduces heart sensing sports bra

13 December 2005

US developer of high technology fabrics and textile systems Textronics, is set to release its first consumer product made specifically for women - a heart sensing sports bra, NuMetrex. The advanced NuMetrex bra features electronic sensing technology integrated into the fabric, which is said to offer a new level of comfort to women wishing to monitor their heart rate while exercising.

Designed to work with the Polar WearLink transmitter that snaps directly into a special compartment in the bra, NuMetrex eliminates the need for a separate heart rate monitoring chest strap and the discomfort that can go with it.

The sensors in the fabric pick up the wearer's heartbeat and relay it to the WearLink transmitter in the front of the bra. The transmitter captures the heart rate information and sends it to a heart rate monitoring watch, which displays it instantaneously.

"The NuMetrex heart sensing bra is the introductory garment in a collection of clothing we're developing which integrates technology to monitor your body," said Stacey Burr, Chief Executive of Textronics. "We plan to continue using our technology to create new garment styles and monitoring functionalities that enable health and well being."

The bra uses an advanced seamless construction for second skin comfort and is made with quick drying nylon and Lycra.

Textronics is a developer and producer of electro-textiles or "e-textiles," which are fabric systems that can conduct, warm, illuminate or sense. The company, located in Wilmington, Delaware, is a spin-off from INVISTA S.a.r.l., formerly DuPont Textiles and Interiors.

Cutter & Buck's sales fall

13 December 2005

Sportswear brand Cutter & Buck Inc. has announced a fall in sales for its second quarter ended October 31, 2005. Sales declined 5.3% year-over-year, which were driven by decreases in the company's corporate and golf business units. The decline was partially offset by sales increases in its specialty retail and consumer direct business units.

Golf sales were down 26.9% for the quarter compared

with the prior year. A portion of the decrease was attributed to the Ryder Cup tournament held last year, which had boosted the previous year's results. Excluding the Ryder Cup tournament, golf sales were down approximately 21%.

Cutter & Buck designs and markets upscale sportswear under the Cutter & Buck brand. The company sells its products primarily to golf and specialty retailers, corporations and international distributors and licensees. It also sells directly to end consumers through catalogue and internet channels.

Berghaus appoints international business director

14 December 2005

Leading outdoor clothing and equipment manufacturer, Berghaus, has appointed Pascal Perriguad as international business director.

Pascal, formally of Lowe Alpine, will join Berghaus at the end of January 2006. Based in Paris, he will be responsible for all Berghaus' international business, including coordinating and growing existing European business as well as expanding the brand into Eastern European countries such as Poland, Russia, Asia etc.

Commenting on his appointment Lewis Grundy, Berghaus brand president, said: "It is an exciting time here at Berghaus and we are really pleased to be welcoming Pascal on board. He has a true passion for the outdoors and with his wealth of experience I have no doubt he will take our international growth from strength to strength."

Born near Chamonix, Pascal is a keen outdoor enthusiast with a love for the mountains and a passion for skiing.

Lanxess opens new process control for chloroprene rubber

14 December 2005

German specialty chemicals company Lanxess opened a new central control building for production of chloroprene rubber (CR) in Dormagen, Germany on December 13. The implementation of this state-of-the-art process control system is aimed at further advancing product quality and will allow the combination of different process areas.

”By 2008 we aim to reduce fixed costs significantly and, at the same time, increase production volumes. With this new control building we shall be in an even better position to meet the needs of our customers effectively,” saod Ingo Fischer, head of Global Product Management for CR at Lanxess' Technical Rubber Products Business Unit. Dormagen houses the world's largest CR unit with a direct link between chloroprene monomer and polychloroprene.

Polychloroprene is used in a large number of applications in the field of technical rubber goods including diving and surfing suits. It is also used in adhesive raw materials and latex applications.

Hemptown Clothing to supply brands for soy and bamboo garments

14 December 2005

Canada's Hemptown Clothing Inc. has announced that it is supplying alternative textiles to US brands Serum Versus Venom (SVSV) and Triple Five Soul for their newest fashion lines. The brands will use bamboo and soy in their cutting-edge street-inspired apparel.

Hemptown president Jason Finnis said, "Our partnership with SVSV will promote alternative organic fabrics to a mainstream fashion customer.” He added, "SVSV is an ideal partner and our two companies will work together to explore innovative ways of taking hemp, bamboo, soy, and our soon to be released Crailar fibre into high fashion and street-inspired brands."

Crailar is an enzyme process, developed by Hemptown and the Canadian federal science organisation NRC, which transforms industrial hemp into a soft, white fibre.

Kenpo integrates ElekTex in iPod jacket

14 December 2005

Apparel manufacturer Kenpo Inc. has released its new Jacket for iPod in retail stores, which incorporates Eleksen's Elektex technology.

Designed to keep wearers completely in control of their iPod without fumbling with zippers, gloves or pockets, the coat utilises Eleksen's patented smart fabric touchpad technology that transforms sleeves into a 5-button electronic control panel.

"After deciding to converge technology with fashion, we began to search for a cutting-edge designer that could provide the most innovative, ready-to-integrate smart fabric solution," said Joel Bernstein, vice president of Kenpo, Inc. "Once meeting with Eleksen and seeing first-hand the amazing potential of the company's core technology, it was clear. We knew ElekTex would allow us to produce a one-of-a-kind jacket, combining iPod controls with our fashion-forward styles. We are delighted that this integration has helped move our brand into major American retailers."

ElekTex is a five-layer laminate of electrically conductive materials that transforms fabric into an electronic touchpad. The technology replaces the hard touch pads, flexi-circuits and polymer switches that have limited the growth of the wearable electronics market. It is also lightweight, flexible, durable and washable.

Taiwan looks to bamboo to boost textile sector

14 December 2005

Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) has unveiled new textile products made of bamboo charcoal which are set to transform the country's image from a producer of low cost textiles, to a centre of technical expertise and manufacture.

The new textiles are the result of two years of research and development, carried out by the MOEA in conjunction with the Taiwan Textile Research Institute (TTRI) and several private companies. Textiles containing bamboo charcoal that anti-odour, heat retention, and wicking properties, they are even said to be able to block electromagnetic radiation.

Universal Fiber Systems to expand facility

14 December 2005

US producer of fibres and yarns for Universal Fiber Systems, is to invest $8 million to expand its Prisma Fibers facility in Washington County, USA. The project will create 82 new jobs and save 12 current jobs.

Founded in 1969, Universal Fiber Systems produces solution-dyed fibres for the industrial fibre and textile industries. The company was the first to introduce solution-dyed nylon to the world.

Indian Minister of Commerce calls for Doha talks to address trade inequalities

15 December 2005

Making a strong pitch for development, Mr. Kamal Nath, Minister of Commerce and Industry, has said that the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations should not perpetuate the inequalities of global trade.

In his address at the Plenary Session of the 6th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Hong Kong, he said, The ambition of developed countries cannot and must not trample on the aspirations of four-fifths of humanity. In the name of completion, if the content of this round only perpetuates the inequities of global trade, then it will be no round. To redeem the pledge we made at Doha, let us resolve to make this a round for those who need it. Let us make this a round that truly reflects the development dimension in its most beneficial and most effective sense".

He said that the Doha mandate was to correct the development deficit" left by the Uruguay Round and pointed out that negotiations in Hong Kong will have failed if they do not contribute towards creating a rule-based, world order, which not only makes trade free, but also make trade fair.

On industrial tariffs or non-agricultural market access (NAMA), Mr. Nath reiterated that market access was not about tariffs alone, as non-tariff barriers such as abuse of both anti-dumping and technical standards hindered market access for developing countries. If we are to pursue the so-called 'real' market access in the NAMA negotiations, the boot is surely on the other foot…. It is no use having zero duty levels of aeroplanes, while maintaining a 30% duty on leather handbags!" he said while flagging trade barriers by India's traditional industries as textiles, clothing, leather products, footwear and a range of other medium technology products, involving livelihood of hundreds of millions of industrial workers of small and medium enterprises in developing countries.

Interlad launches new tan-through fabric for outerwear

15 December 2005

Dutch manufacturer of tan-through fabrics, Interlad BV, has recently expanded its Sunselect line with a new tan-through fabric for the outerwear market.

The fabric, which is a cotton/polyester blend, is said to offer a better hand and higher weight. It is easy to work with, has low shrinkage values, and offers excellent comfort. It also offers proven skin protection, whilst allowing the wearer to build up a longer lasting suntan.

SunSelect is a patented fabric that filters out most of the dangerous UV-B rays, but selectively transmits the tanning UV-A rays through clothing to the skin.

Gerber Technology enters alliance with ecVision

15 December 2005

Developer and manufacturer of integrated software and hardware automation systems for manufacturers and retailers in the sewn products and flexible materials industries Gerber Technology has entered into a strategic alliance with ecVision, a provider of global sourcing and collaboration applications. It is envisaged that the partnership will enable the development and marketing of integrated solutions designed for the fashion industry.

We are pleased to announce this alliance with ecVision to bring their award-winning sourcing and collaboration framework together with our own feature-rich technology solutions to meet the specific needs of the fashion industry," said John Hancock, president, Gerber Technology. Partnering with ecVision further gives us the opportunity to diversify and extend our offering and continues our commitment to provide innovative, customer-centric solutions."

Established in 1998, ecVision maintains global headquarters in Iselin, New Jersey, with Asia-Pacific offices in Hong Kong, as well as a network of resellers in 15 countries.

Alpargatas creates 1,600 jobs

15 December 2005

As a result of its expansion, Brazilian footwear manufacturer Alpargatas plans to recruit 1,600 new employees in the city of Campina Grande, Paraíba, Brazil. Construction work at the 12,500 m2 extension of the facility is already underway and production should begin in September 2006.

The new facility will further increase production at the plant which currently manufactures 130,000 pairs per month. The Campina Grande factory is the only facility that produces Havaianas, the famous Brazilian flip-flops which are currently sold in 140,000 shops in Brazil and abroad.

ispo Group to holds outdoor sports order show in China

15 December 2005

As a result of the seasonal market conditions within the international sports industry, the ispo Group will hold its first Outdoor Sports Order Show China from August 20-23, 2006 in Hangzhou as a supplement to ispo china in March. This has been organised at the request of the industry, which requires a platform in China for its summer collections and year-round sports products in order to be able to inform retailers about product innovations for the summer season.

The show is designed to create a common platform, saving companies the money and time involved in organising individual order events for the summer collections and products in all regions.

Bike Athletic produces 350 millionth jock strap

15 December 2005

Bike Athletic has announced the production of its 350 millionth jock strap. The jock strap was taken off the assembly line on November 28 and framed. It was then flown to Bike's headquarters in Atlanta.

The Bike Web Company, now Bike Athletic, a division of Russell Corporation, invented the jock strap in 1874. Designed to provide support for bicycle jockeys riding in the cobblestone streets of Boston, the athletic supporter quickly became known as the "Bike jockey strap." Eventually the name was shortened to "jock strap."

To coincide with the production of its 350 millionth jock strap, Bike Athletic recently announced its plans to release a jock boxer and jock brief in the coming months.

Levi Strauss names new senior VP

15 December 2005

Levi Strauss & Co. has appointed Hilary Krane as senior vice president and general counsel. She will join the company in January, 2006 and report to Philip A. Marineau, chief executive officer.

Ms Krane has been assistant general counsel at Price Waterhouse Coopers, LLP since 1996 and was made a partner in 2000. She started at Price Waterhouse as a litigation attorney in 1994. In her most recent role, she advised the company's leadership on legal matters and strategic initiatives. She also provided counsel to the firm and its partners with respect to client business on a broad range of legal issues including corporate governance, regulatory matters, Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, international commercial transactions and risk management.

Prior to joining PwC, Ms Krane spent four years as a litigation associate at the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, where she focused on commercial litigation, and one year as a law clerk for United States District Judge Milton I. Shadur.

China's footwear exports rise 18%

16 December 2005

According to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce in the first eight months of 2005 China exported 4.68 pairs of footwear, worth $12.07 billion.

This equates to a 18.2% rise in terms of volume a 26.3% increase in value. The average export price, per pair, also increased by 6.6% to $ 2.58.

In the eight-month period China exported 2.65 billion pairs of plastic and rubber shoes worth $ 4.59 billion, up 18% in volume and 22.1% in value compared with the same period in 2004. 920 million pairs of leather shoes were exported worth $5.32 billion, a rise of 20.7% in volume and 29.3% in terms of value.

The US, EU, Japan and Hong Kong remained the key importers of Chinese-made.

The EU became the second largest importing region importing 690 million pairs of shoes worth $2.16 billion, a 16.9% increase in terms of volume and 45% in value compared with the first eight months of 2004. According to the Ministry of Commerce, China's shoe exports to the EU accounted for 17.9% of its total footwear exports.

The China Leather Industry Association (CLIA) also remarked that the export of leather shoes to the EU increased significantly. In the first eight months 130 million pairs of leather shoes were exported to the EU worth $830 million, an increase of 86.4% in quantity and 89.9% in value. During the same period China also exported footwear accessories worth $400 million.

DAK Americas increases prices for polyester staple fibre

16 December 2005

Effective January 1, 2006 shipments, DAK Americas LLC will increase polyester staple fibre prices by 4 cpp for all products sold to carpet, home furnishings, apparel, industrial, and fibre-fill markets.

The company also announced that it will drop all surcharges for polyester staple charged as a result of hurricane damage on the US Gulf Coast. It stated that during the hurricane surcharge period, global costs of raw materials and energy increased as the North American region recovered from the supply chain disruption.

DAK Americas is a wholly owned subsidiary of Alpek S.A. de C., petrochemicals and synthetic fibres business group of Mexico's Alfa S.A. de C.V. It is comprised of three business units Resins (PET), Fibres (Polyester Staple) and Monomers (TPA- ingredients).

BASI choose The North Face apparel

16 December 2005

For the third year running, the British Association of Snowsports Instructors (BASI) has put its confidence in The North Face. All eighty five of the association's ski, telemark and snowboard instructors will wear technical snowsports jackets and pants from The North Face this season.

The 2005/06 uniform chosen by BASI's ski and telemark instructors is the Freethinker jacket and pant. The BASI Snowboarding instructors will wear the Sedition Soft Shell Jacket and Helicon Cargo Pant.

Keith Byrne, marketing manager for The North Face commented," The North Face is delighted to be associated with a professional organisation such as BASI in this way. These jackets and pants are the most technologically advanced in our range and we are thrilled that BASI continue to put their confidence in our products".

OutDoor goes to Asia

16 December 2005

On August 23-26, 2006, one month after the OutDoor 2006 European retail trade fair in Friedrichshafen, the first Asia Outdoor fair will be held in the Chinese city of Nanjing, 2006.

The Chinese outdoor market is currently growing by about 40% a year and, by 2010, experts predict growth rates of no less than 25%. The industry is also benefiting from the political tailwind as outdoor sports are being encouraged as part of the Chinese government's health programme.

For us, Asia Outdoor is an outstanding opportunity to open the door to the Asiatic region for our own exhibitors," explained Rolf Mohne, CEO of Messe Friedrichshafen. According to organizers, in view of the fact that no comparable trade fair for the industry has ever taken place in countries such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam or the eastern part of Russia, they are expecting a huge amount of interest from the entire Asiatic region. In addition, European outdoor manufacturers are also participating in the Chinese boom. More than half of all European outfitters are currently having at least one of their products manufactured in China. According to OutDoor project manager, Stefan Reisinger, Asia Outdoor is the logical consequence in order to implement a trade fair concept that has proven successful in Europe and America in one of the most attractive growth markets of the future".

Counterfeit Lacoste goods seized in Puerto Rico

16 December 2005

Lacoste USA has announced the seizure of more than $1 million worth of counterfeit Lacoste merchandise in raids conducted as part of a sweep of retail and wholesale businesses across Puerto Rico. The surprise raids netted counterfeit dress shirts, knit polo shirts, sweatsuits, hats and jeans, as well as other counterfeit Lacoste merchandise. As a result of this latest crackdown lawsuits have been filed against 27 defendants.

The raids, in 19 locations in Carolina, Ponce, Bayamon, and other cities were conducted with the assistance of the US Marshals Service in Puerto Rico. Lacoste was granted a restraining order and injunction from the US District Court for Puerto Rico, authorising the company to seize the counterfeit fashion items.

Co-chairman of the US Textile Caucus calls for action on textiles

16 December 2005

US Representative John Spratt, co-chairman of the Congressional Textile Caucus, has issued a statement in response to the Commerce Department's report that the US trade deficit has set a new monthly record of $68.9 billion.

"The Commerce Department reported today that the trade deficit jumped 4.4% in October, setting a new monthly record of $68.9 billion. Last year, our current account deficit hit an all-time high, $666 billion, and that record will clearly be exceeded by this year's deficit," he stated.

"These figures are cause for concern and a call to action. The Bush Administration has invoked a special

safeguard agreement with China to impose quotas on certain textile/apparel imports, but the quotas do not apply across the board, and they mainly slow down the growing volume of imports. In the meanwhile, 647,000 men and women still work in textiles and apparel in the United States; and their jobs are at risk if imports keep rising.

"Already this year, 31 textile and apparel plants in the United States have closed because they could not compete, including 12 in South Carolina. Stalwarts of the industry, like Springs and Celanese, are shutting plants and cutting back. Whole companies, like Fieldcrest-Cannon, have disappeared.

"If the Bush Administration wants to level the playing field and protect American jobs, it has stronger remedies at its disposal. One is to stop China from undervaluing its currency, and making its exports cheaper and its imports more costly. I have introduced a bill with Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC) that directs the Secretary of the Treasury to raise tariffs on Chinese imports to 27.5% if, after a 180-day warning period, China does not float its currency and allow the market to set its value," he said.