

CONNECT Article that appeared in the February, 2009 American Shipper

Peter Friedmann, a Washington attorney who is counsel to the Coalition of New England Companies for Trade, noted, "Most people in international trade recall that as a candidate Bill Clinton opposed NAFTA; as president he pushed NAFTA through. The history is that Republican or Democrat, once someone is in the White House they see trade is critical to the vitality of the country.

"The real question is whether going forward there will be any new trade agreements negotiated, and whether the U.S. will be a force for trade expansion in the Doha round. Those things are very much up in the air," he said. "But I would say there is less concern about eliminating current trade agreements which relate to textiles and apparel, such as the end of quotas on Chinese apparel, such as the Andean Pact, CBI, NAFTA, CAFTA - those will remain in place.

"At the same time the demand by the U.S. consumer, and thus by companies serving the U.S. consumer for more sourcing options is rather diminished right now," he said. "Total import volume of textiles and apparels are not expected to go up dramatically in the near future. There is less pressure for trade expansion now than there would be in a booming economy with strong consumer demand."