

U.S. union files new trade case against China

By [Doug Palmer](#)

Reuters

September 23, 2009

PITTSBURGH - The United Steelworkers union, fresh from persuading President [Barack Obama](#) to restrict tire imports from China, filed a new case Wednesday asking for duties on coated paper from both China and Indonesia.

The action came just one day after Chinese President Hu Jintao complained to Obama about the tires decision in a meeting on the sidelines of a United Nations summit in New York.

Obama will host Hu and other world leaders at the [Group of 20](#) summit Thursday and Friday in Pittsburgh to discuss how to put the fragile global economy on a path to more sustainable growth.

The steelworkers union, which represents workers in a number of industries, sees itself in a battle against what it believes are unfair foreign trade practices that have led to the loss of millions of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

They are joined in their latest trade case by paper manufacturers NewPage Corp of Miamisburg, Ohio; Appleton Coated LLC of Kimberly, Wisconsin; and Sappi Fine Paper North America of Boston, Massachusetts, which together employ about 6,000 union workers at paper mills in nine states.

"Neither the companies nor the union will tolerate being obliterated without asking our government to investigate and enforce the rules of fair trade," Steelworkers President Leo Gerard said in a statement.

Unlike the steelworkers' petition in the tires case, this complaint will not land on Obama's desk.

Instead, the U.S. International Trade Commission, a U.S. federal agency, will have the final word on whether anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties will be imposed after an investigation by the U.S. Commerce Department.

The petitioners estimate imports of coated paper increased 40 percent in the first six months of 2009, compared with the same period in 2008. Imports from China and Indonesia now supply nearly 30 percent of the U.S. market, they said.

The product is used in high-quality writing, printing and other applications. The cases against China and Indonesia are expected to take about a year to complete, with a preliminary ITC determination by mid-November.

Obama imposed a 35 percent tariff on China tires under a provision of U.S. trade law, known as Section 421, that allows the United States to temporarily restrict imports from China in response to a market-disrupting surge.

China had agreed to the measure as part of the price it paid to join the World Trade Organization in 2001. But Washington had never used the measure against Beijing, and Obama's decision is expected to lead a flurry of new requests.

During the UN meeting with Obama, Hu pressed complaints over the tire duties, but stressed a conciliatory theme that the two countries could keep trade friction under control, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported in a summary issued on its website (www.mfa.gov.cn) Wednesday.

"The special safeguard measures the United States has taken against Chinese-made tires exported to the U.S. suits neither countries' interests, and similar cases should not recur," the report cited Hu as saying.

(Additional reporting by Christopher Buckley; Editing by Leslie Adler)