

Expert says US likely to renegotiate terms if it rejoins CPTPP

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The United States will not accept the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership as it is and will try to renegotiate the terms of the trade pact if it decides to rejoin, an international trade expert told a forum in Seoul on Thursday.

Simon Lester, associate director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Washington-based CATO Institute, said traditional supporters of the Democratic Party in the US are “generally opposed to trade liberalization,” during a forum jointly held by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry and law firm Shin & Kim

“It is difficult to presume that the Biden administration will go against them and actively pursue rejoining the CPTPP,” Lester said.

He also added the Biden administration will not try to rejoin the CPTPP in the short run, but if it does in the future, “drastic changes” to the existing provisions would be expected.

In the case of the US not rejoining, South Korea should make its own decision based on benefits the trade pact can bring, he added.

Adviser Park Kyoung-jin from Shin & Kim said a US accession to the CPTPP is important., especially for the Electronic Commerce Chapter of the CPTPP.

“If the KOR-US FTA (Korea-US free trade agreement) only set forth the principles of recognizing the importance of free flow of information, CPTPP is composed of much more diverse contents such as privacy protection, prohibition of localization of computing facilities and cybersecurity,” she said.