



## John M. Weekes

Senior Business Advisor

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Ottawa

### EDUCATION

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University of Toronto, BA (Hons., Political Science and Economics)

John Weekes helps clients understand how trade negotiations and agreements can impact their business interests and advises on what they can do to advance and defend their interests.

John Weekes joined Bennett Jones LLP as a senior business advisor in the Ottawa office in 2010.

He is an expert in international trade policy, trade agreements, and the settlement of trade disputes. He provides clients with an insider's perspective on how governments approach such matters, including the negotiation, implementation and management of trade agreements and trade relations. With his extensive experience he assists businesses and governments to develop strategies to advance and protect their interests. He enjoys opportunities to think outside the box and elaborate innovative solutions to the challenges faced by clients.

Mr. Weekes participates regularly in conferences and TV interviews on the challenges facing the trading system and related political issues and contributes articles to newspapers and magazines.

Mr. Weekes is a member of the Advisory Council to the International Trade and Competition Unit of the London based Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). The unit has been established to present independent nonpartisan advice on the challenges and opportunities the UK faces as it negotiates its departure from the EU and seeks to establish new trade relationships with other partners. Members of the Advisory Board act in an advisory capacity to the IEA and serve in their individual capacity. The IEA is a UK free-market think-tank, founded in 1955.

In June 2016 Mr. Weekes was appointed to the Board of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute an organization that facilitates the development of approaches to address key challenges faced by the Canadian agri-food industry.

Mr. Weekes is a member of the Management Board of the Advisory Centre on WTO Law in Geneva, an intergovernmental agreement designed to help developing countries with legal challenges associated with WTO membership.

From 1971 until 1999 Mr. Weekes worked in the Canadian government on the development of trade policy, participating in negotiations and working to ensure their successful implementation. During these years he assisted ministers in successive governments advising on the formulation of the government's approach to managing trade relations and on the negotiation of trade agreements. In Ottawa he served in jobs ranging from desk officer, to chief negotiator for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and senior assistant deputy minister, and abroad from first secretary, to ambassador to GATT, and subsequently ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Mr. Weekes regularly advised Canadian ministers at international meetings. He also represented Canada in trade negotiations and at various international trade meetings. He was Canada's ambassador to the WTO from 1995 to 1999 and chair of the WTO General Council in 1998. From 1991 to 1994 he served as Canada's chief negotiator for NAFTA, including for the side agreements on environmental and labour co-operation. He was ambassador to GATT during the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and served as chair of the GATT Council in 1989 and chair of the Contracting Parties to GATT in 1990. In the 1970s, he participated in the Tokyo Round of GATT negotiations.

As NAFTA chief negotiator, he played a key role in managing the negotiating process inside the Canadian government including in determining the best way to structure Canada's negotiating effort and the composition and organization of the negotiating team. After the implementation of NAFTA and the creation of the WTO he played a lead role in advising on how to restructure the trade policy functions inside Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to take account of the changed landscape of trade agreements and ensure that Canada derived full benefit from these new agreements.

Mr. Weekes chaired the Working Party on the Accession of Saudi Arabia to the WTO from 1996 until 2002.

In 1999 Mr Weekes accepted an offer from APCO Worldwide, a Washington-based international public affairs and communications consultancy, to become the chair of APCO's Global Trade Practice and to open its Geneva office.

In 2003 he joined the American law firm Sidley Austin as a senior international trade policy advisor based in the firm's Geneva office. In these positions he provided advice to many clients including large American companies on how to advance their interests in the WTO's Doha Round negotiations. He also advised clients on the protection of intellectual property rights before various international organizations in Geneva.

From 2008 until 2015 Mr. Weekes was a director of the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency and for several years chaired the Board's Market Access Committee.

Mr. Weekes also serves in an advisory capacity to the Washington-based Cordell Hull Institute.

John participates actively in masters swimming as a member of the Ottawa club Technosport. He competes in provincial and national competitions and participated in the 15th FINA World Masters Championships in Montreal in 2014.