

**Program: "Today's Close-up" on TPP**

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8:00

In September, 2011, Prime Minister Noda and President Obama held a summit meeting. According to the officials, President Obama has changed his approach completely and strongly pushed Prime Minister Noda for his definite answer to the issue of participation in the TPP.

8:24

President Obama mentioned,

Prime Minister Noda mentioned about the promotion of free-trade with Europe, China and Korea in his policy speech. President Obama expects him to discuss deeply and focus more energy on the issue on participation of the TPP as well.

8:43

The Obama administration publicly states its commitment to doubling the exportation in five years. Having the presidential election near at hand, President Obama aims to vitalize the economic by taking Japan, which has big economies, into a free-trade zone.

9:11

The Former General Counsel at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Warren Maruyama mentioned,

"The countries with which the US is negotiating are ones that it already has free trade agreements with, for the most part. So there's very little excitement among American farmers or the big American companies. Japan would bring in a huge new market, and a huge new participant, and huge new opportunities to expand American exports."

9:37

The reason why the US rushes to the conclusion of the TPP including Japan is the existence of China, which has recently expanded its influence in Asian countries rapidly.

9:50

The US strengthens cooperation with Asian countries including Japan. According to the experts, this action by the US virtually aims at warning against China.

10:03

And in the last 3 – 5 years, the United States has grown increasingly nervous about China's efforts to expand its military and its economic influence in the Asia-Pacific region. I believe many US officials see TPP as an opportunity to lock in the US-Japan strategic alliance, and also to build an Asia-Pacific counter to Chinese influence.

10:34

On other hand, in Japan, there are many members of the Diet who oppose the participation in the TPP.

10:46

Democratic former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Yamada Masahiko said,

“In order to protect our national character of Japan, we as an independent country need to say no to the US. We must not obey every whimsy of the US anymore.”

11:02

One of the reasons why these people are against the participation in the TPP is FTA between the US and Korea. In the progress of this agreement, South Korea accepted relaxation of regulations on the import of US beef and also agreed with the system that the US requires South Korea for reconsideration of the price of medical devices and drugs. Can Japan protect national interests with the participation in the TPP? Prime Minister Noda is called into question his political decision.

11:46