BEA
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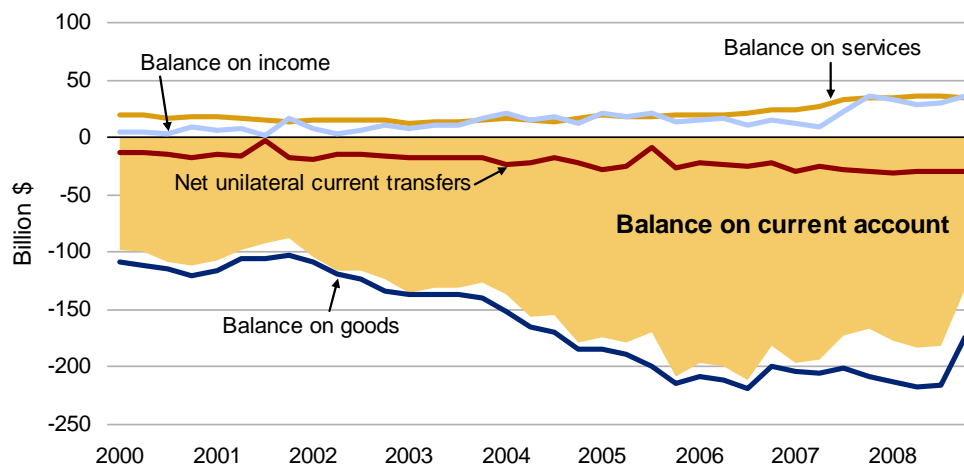U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

U.S. CURRENT-ACCOUNT DEFICIT
DECREASES IN FOURTH QUARTER 2008
Preliminary estimates of U.S. international transactions

The U.S. current-account deficit, the broadest measure of U.S. international trade in goods and services, receipts and payments of income, and net unilateral current transfers (such as gifts) decreased to $132.8 billion (preliminary) in the fourth quarter of 2008 from $181.3 billion (revised) in the third quarter. As a share of U.S. GDP, the deficit decreased to 3.7 percent from 5.0 percent. The previously published estimate of the current-account deficit for the third quarter was $174.1 billion.

Current-Account Balance and Its Components
[Seasonally adjusted]

- The deficit on international trade in goods decreased to $174.1 billion from $216.3 billion, as goods imports decreased more than goods exports.

- The surplus on international trade in services decreased to $33.7 billion from $35.4 billion, as services receipts decreased more than services payments.

- The surplus on income increased to $36.5 billion from $29.6 billion, as income payments decreased more than income receipts.

- Net unilateral current transfers to foreign residents were $28.9 billion, down from $30.0 billion.

Net financial inflows were $76.8 billion in the fourth quarter, down from $147.3 billion in the third.

- U.S.-owned assets abroad decreased $84.4 billion in the fourth quarter after they had decreased $28.1 billion in the third.

- Foreign-owned assets in the United States decreased $7.6 billion in the fourth quarter after they had increased $123.3 billion in the third.

BEA data—including GDP, personal income, the balance of payments, foreign direct investment, the input-output accounts, and economic data for states, local areas, and industries—are available on the BEA Web site: www.bea.gov. E-mail alerts are also available.

NOTE: The next release of U.S. international transactions will be on June 17, 2009.

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