

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	)	
	)	Criminal No. 02-193
v.	)	
	)	Filed: 04-01-02
NIPPON ELECTRODE COMPANY, LTD.,	)	
	)	Violation: 15 U.S.C. § 1
Defendant.	)	
	)	

**INFORMATION**

The United States of America, acting through its attorneys, charges:

**I**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFENSE**

1. Nippon Electrode Company, Ltd., (hereinafter "NDK"), is made a defendant on the charge stated below.
  
2. Beginning at least as early as February 1996 and continuing until at least December 1997, the exact dates being unknown to the United States, the defendant and co-conspirators entered into and participated in a combination and conspiracy to suppress and eliminate competition by fixing the price of carbon cathode block sold in the United States and elsewhere. The combination and conspiracy engaged in by the defendant and co-conspirators was in unreasonable restraint of interstate and foreign trade and commerce in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act (15 U.S.C. § 1).

3. The charged combination and conspiracy consisted of a continuing agreement, understanding, and concert of action among the defendant and co-conspirators, the substantial terms of which were to agree to fix and maintain prices and to coordinate pricing for the sale of carbon cathode block in the United States and elsewhere.

4. For the purpose of forming and carrying out the charged combination and conspiracy, the defendant and co-conspirators did those things that they combined and conspired to do, including, among other things:

- (a) participating in meetings and conversations in Asia and Europe to discuss the prices of carbon cathode block sold in the United States and elsewhere;
- (b) agreeing, during those meetings and conversations, to charge prices at certain levels and otherwise to increase and maintain prices of carbon cathode block sold in the United States and elsewhere; and
- (c) exchanging sales and customer information for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing adherence to the terms of the above-described agreement.

## II

### **BACKGROUND**

5. Carbon cathode block is a carbon product with great strength and resistance to heat and chemical reaction. Because of its superior conductivity properties, it is commonly used in aluminum smelters or pots in the production of primary aluminum.

6. The defendant's sales of carbon cathode block in the United States are estimated at approximately \$2.1 million during the term of the conspiracy charged.

## III

### **DEFENDANT AND CO-CONSPIRATORS**

7. During the period covered by this Information, NDK was a corporation organized and existing under the laws of Japan with its principal place of business in Tokyo, Japan. During the relevant period, NDK was engaged in the manufacture and sale of carbon cathode block to customers in the United States and elsewhere.

8. Various corporations and individuals not made defendants herein participated as co-conspirators in the offense charged herein and performed acts and made statements in furtherance thereof.

9. Wherever in this Information reference is made to any act, deed, or transaction of a corporation, the allegation means that the corporation engaged in the act, deed, or transaction by or through its officers, directors, agents, employees or representatives while they were actively engaged in the management, direction,

control, or transaction of its business or affairs.

#### **IV**

#### **TRADE AND COMMERCE**

10. During the period covered by this Information, the defendant and co-conspirators sold a substantial quantity of carbon cathode block in a continuous and uninterrupted flow of interstate and foreign trade and commerce to customers located in states or countries other than the states or countries in which the carbon cathode block was produced.

11. During the period covered by this Information, the activities of the defendant and co-conspirators that are the subject of this Information were within the flow of, and substantially affected, interstate and foreign trade and commerce.

#### **V**

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

12. The combination and conspiracy charged in this Information was carried out, in part, in the United States within the five years preceding the filing of this Information.

ALL IN VIOLATION OF TITLE 15, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1.

Dated:

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CHARLES A. JAMES  
Assistant Attorney General

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ROBERT E. CONNOLLY  
Chief, Philadelphia Office

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JAMES M. GRIFFIN  
Deputy Assistant Attorney General

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