



U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 2006

Contact: Susan Mora
Fratelli Group
202/822-9491

Business Coalition Praises Launch of Middle East Economic Partnership Caucus

Washington, D.C. – The U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition applauded the launch of the Middle East Economic Partnership Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, and commended the caucus co-chairs: Representatives Ben Chandler (D-KY), Phil English (R-PA), Darrell Issa (R-CA), William Jefferson (D-LA), Gregory Meeks (D-NY), and Paul Ryan (R-WI).

“We are very pleased that a bipartisan group of Representatives recognize the importance of moving the Middle East trade agenda forward. Increasing U.S. economic ties throughout the Middle East is important not only for economic growth, but it will forge stronger alliances that will benefit U.S. foreign policy goals as well,” said Bill Reinsch, President of the National Foreign Trade Council.

As its first order of business, the U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition urged the new Caucus to push for quick Congressional approval of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. The Oman FTA expands opportunities for U.S. exports of goods and services and provides investment opportunities in both countries. The Oman FTA will also strengthen an increasingly important bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Oman and represents a significant step toward achieving the goal of a U.S.- Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013.

“MEFTA is a bold and ambitious initiative that could help transform U.S. standing in the Middle East. We expect the Middle East Economic Partnership Caucus to be a strong advocate for a broad range of economic reforms and partnerships across the region and look forward to working with them in the months and years to come,” said Peter Tichansky, President of the Business Council for International Understanding.

###

The U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition, managed jointly by the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) and the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), is made up of over 110 U.S. companies and associations supporting trade expansion and economic development in the Middle East. The Coalition’s US-Oman FTA Task Force, is working for a high quality Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Oman.

The National Foreign Trade Council (www.nftc.org) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based world economy. Founded in 1914 by a group of American companies that supported an open world trading system, the NFTC now serves hundreds of member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.

The Business Council for International Understanding (www.bciu.org), a U.S. business association founded in 1959 at White House initiative, is dedicated to promoting dialogue and action between the business and government communities for the purpose of expanding international commerce.