



U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 14, 2005

Contact: Susan Mora
202/822-9491

U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition Urges Congress to Act Swiftly on U.S.-Bahrain FTA

Stresses Importance of Agreement in Comprehensive Middle East Strategy

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition has sent a letter to each Member of Congress encouraging rapid action on the U.S.-Bahrain FTA. This agreement will promote economic reforms and economic opportunities in the region and is a key step in achieving the goal of a U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013.

“The U.S.-Bahrain FTA is of significant importance to both U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. It creates momentum behind our efforts to encourage market-oriented economic reforms and demonstrates the benefits of trade liberalization in the Middle East. It also supports our two nations’ cooperation on the war on terrorism,” said William A. Reinsch, President of the National Foreign Trade Council.

Bahrain is a major non-NATO ally of the United States, is the headquarters for the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, and has been a strong supporter in the global war on terrorism and the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under the terms of the agreement, all American consumer and industrial products will immediately become duty-free. Similarly, 98% of U.S. agricultural tariff lines will be immediately eliminated with the remaining 2% phased out over 10 years.

“The U.S.-Bahrain FTA will open a growing market for U.S. service industries. It also establishes a high standard on regulatory transparency and on the non-discriminatory treatment of digital products. Additionally, the agreement has very strong intellectual property right protections,” said Peter Tichansky, President of the Business Council for International Understanding.

In addition to the U.S.-Bahrain FTA, the United States Trade Representative is currently negotiating agreements with Oman and the United Arab Emirates. In the Middle East, Free Trade Agreements already exist between the United States and Israel, Jordan and Morocco.

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 National Foreign Trade Council 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 (BCIU), a U.S. business association founded in 1955 at White House initiative, is dedicated to promoting dialogue and action between the business and government communities for the purpose of expanding international commerce.

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