



U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition



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U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition Testifies Before Senate Finance's Subcommittee on International Trade *Coalition Urges a Timely Vote*

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Coalition today testified before the International Trade Subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee on the importance of quickly approving and effectively implementing the Free Trade Agreement the U.S. has negotiated with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Asked about the hearing, National Foreign Trade Council President, Bill Reinsch stressed the need for quick Congressional approval of the Agreement, stating, “Congressional approval is the final step in making this economically and strategically important agreement a reality and there is no room for delay.” Reinsch added, “The negotiations on this FTA were concluded more than a year ago and it was ratified by the Bahrainis this summer. I’m pleased that both the House and Senate seem to recognize the critical role this FTA can play in advancing our economic development and trade integration goals in this region.”

Bahrain, 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.

In addition to the 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.

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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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