

**U.S.-Bahrain
Free Trade Agreement
Coalition**



Co-Chairs

Lionel Johnson
Citigroup, Inc.

William Rice
Alcoa

Secretariat

**Business Council for
International
Understanding**
1133 15th Street, N.W.
Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. 202-775-6074
www.bciu.org

**National Foreign
Trade Council**
1625 K Street, N.W.,
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel. 202-887-0278
www.nftc.org

**National U.S.-Arab
Chamber of Commerce**
1023 15th Street, N.W.
4th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. 202-289-5920
www.nusacc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 27, 2004

Contact: Eric Thomas
Fratelli Group for NFTC
202-822-9491

**U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition Commends Completion of
U.S.-Bahrain FTA**

Washington, DC – The U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Coalition roundly praised officials from both nations for today’s successful conclusion of the U.S.-Bahrain FTA negotiations.

“The U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition is very pleased with the conclusion of the FTA negotiations, well ahead of schedule,” said William Rice of Alcoa and the U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition. “The progress made by the officials from both countries over the course of negotiations will set an example for future FTA talks, as both sides worked diligently to keep the negotiations on track and to make the agreement one of the most meaningful to date.

“This agreement with longtime U.S. ally Bahrain will open many doors to the entire Middle East region, increase economic opportunity in both countries, eliminate key trade barriers, and set a new standard for future high-level trade agreements throughout the region.”

“In particular, the Coalition is impressed with the market access provisions of this agreement. The FTA will provide immediate duty-free access to 100% of bilateral trade in non-textiles industrial goods, 100% of Bahrain’s agricultural exports, 98% of U.S. agricultural exports, and includes an innovative annex on financial services,” said Lionel C. Johnson of Citigroup, Inc. and the U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition. “While we look forward to closely reviewing the final text, all indications are that this agreement raises the bar for future meaningful FTA agreements. High quality sections on services and intellectual property rights (IPR) are characteristic of this agreement, and both the text and Bahrain’s actions in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations and technical barriers to trade (TBT) will serve as an excellent example of a science-based regime for the rest of the Gulf region.”

U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition officials applauded Ambassador Robert B. Zoellick, Bahraini Minister of Finance and National Economy Abdulla Hassan Saif, and the entire U.S. and Bahrain negotiating teams for

concluding the agreement in a timely manner; officials also commended the efforts of the bi-partisan Congressional Bahrain Caucus, led by U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) and U.S. Rep. Jim Turner (D-TX), for championing the U.S.-Bahrain FTA negotiations.

“The leadership of government officials on both sides clearly shows that there is political will to produce significant trade agreements that will closely bind countries and benefit both their peoples. This FTA cements the U.S. relationship with Bahrain, which will lead to better and more beneficial agreements in the future,” Johnson continued.

On May 21, 2003, the U.S. and Bahraini governments officially announced negotiations on the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. The U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition, organized through a secretariat comprised of the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), and the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC), consists of nearly 60 companies, associations and organizations which support the negotiation and urge approval by Congress of this agreement with our long standing ally in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain.

Bahrain has been a steadfast ally to the United States historically, and recently on the war on terrorism, and was designated by President Bush as a major non-NATO ally in October 2001. The U.S.-Bahrain FTA, and the broader Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) initiative, builds upon these long standing ties by ensuring closer economic and commercial relations, as well as a brighter economic future for those that share a desire for peace and greater prosperity.

“We urge Congress to take up consider and pass the U.S.-Bahrain FTA this year,” Rice stated. “Doing so will send a strong and positive signal of America’s commitment to increased economic opportunity and closer commercial ties to Bahrain and the region as a whole.”

The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), 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.

The National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC serves its several hundred member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) is a leading business association dedicated to promoting, supporting and strengthening American and Arab commercial relations. For over 35 years NUSACC continues to represent the private sectors of the US and the Arab world through its network of affiliations with chambers of commerce and industry throughout the Middle East North Africa region and its offices in New York, Houston, Los Angeles and Washington, DC.