

PRESIDENT'S EXPORT COUNCIL

Department of Commerce  
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Washington, DC

Tuesday,  
April 8, 2008

The meeting was convened, pursuant to notice,  
at 10:04 a.m., MR. J.W. MARRIOTT, JR., Chairman,  
presiding.

APPEARANCES:

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

THE HONORABLE CARLOS M. GUTIERREZ  
Secretary of Commerce

THE HONORABLE ELAINE CHAO  
Secretary of Labor

THE HONORABLE JAMES LAMBRIGHT  
Chairman and President  
Export-Import Bank of the United States

THE HONORABLE STEVEN PRESTON  
Small Business Administrator

THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER A. PADILLA  
Under Secretary for International Trade

THE HONORABLE JOHN K. VERONEAU  
Deputy U.S. Trade Representative

STEPHEN A. EDSON  
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for Visa Services

L. FRANCIS CISSNA  
Deputy Director of Homeland Security  
for Immigration Policy

CRAIG BURTON  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
Health and Human Services for Legislation

THE HONORABLE DANIEL SULLIVAN  
Assistant Secretary of State for Economic,  
Energy and Business Affairs

PRIVATE SECTOR

MR. J.W. MARRIOTT, JR.  
Chairman and CEO  
Marriott International, Inc.  
Chairman, President's Export Council

MS. BETTY MANETTA  
President and CEO  
Argent Associates, Inc.

MR. WARREN R. STALEY  
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MS. CECILIA OCHOA LEVINE  
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MR. MICHAEL L. ESKEW  
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MR. PRAKASH PURAM  
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MR. TIMOTHY P. SMUCKER  
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President and CEO  
Westinghouse Electric Company

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

THE HONORABLE PHIL ENGLISH  
U.S. Representative from the  
3rd District of Pennsylvania

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P R O C E E D I N G S  
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

By Chairman J.W. Marriott, Jr.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Good morning, and welcome to the spring meeting of the President's Export Council. I'd like to officially call the meeting to order.

At our last meeting in December we approved the letter of recommendation on bilateral investment treaties with Brazil, Russia, India, and China. We had a lot of discussion on the issue with Ambassador Schwab, and I was pleased that the President wrote us to indicate he found the letter helpful.

As we move forward in today's meeting we will discuss the following issues:

- 1) The importance of services negotiation in the Doha Round
- 2) Non-immigrant visa reform
- 3) High-skilled labor information technology and import safety
- 4) Facilitating exports for small and medium enterprises

As you know, Secretary Gutierrez is the business voice for government, and I'm very pleased to

have him join us today. We'll turn the time over to you, Mr. Secretary.

REMARKS

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez,  
Secretary of Commerce

SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: Thank you, Chairman Marriott. I'd like to welcome all of the President's Export Council members and thank you again for your service.

A very special welcome to Congressman English, who is with us today. Thank you for being here and for your interest in this topic. Also, I would like to welcome my colleague, Secretary Chao, Secretary of Labor, who has also joined this meeting. Welcome to everyone who has joined us today.

I'd like to start out and just talk very briefly about the economy, because I know that as we move forward, that is very much a foundation in people's minds in terms of export activities as we move forward.

We know that growth slowed in the fourth quarter 0.6 percent. We have had three consecutive months of job losses. Losing one job is bad enough, but we had 76,000 in January, 76,000 in February, 80,000 in March. So, that obviously is of great concern to the President. Our unemployment,



remarkably, is still 5.1 percent, which is below the average of each of the last three decades.

So in spite of that, we are concerned. We don't like to see job losses. The good news is that the President had the foresight to see softening of the economy in late last year, and that's where he decided to take forward the stimulus package. That was approved by Congress early in the year, and checks will start arriving in May and June. We're talking about almost 130 million households that will be getting stimulus checks, in some cases \$600, up to \$1,200; \$300 per child. So we are talking about a significant amount of money that will be put into consumers' hands to stimulate the economy. We know that 70 percent of our economy is consumer spending.

Part of the stimulus package is also an incentive for businesses to bring forward capital investment, and they'll get a very important tax break for that. So in the event that some businesses have capital investment to expand capacity, to increase productivity, they'll have an incentive to bring that forward, get it done this year, and take the tax incentive. That will also stimulate the economy, consumer spending and business investment.

Also, in the back half of the year we will

have the benefits of the reduction in interest rates that the Federal Reserve has announced, and that will take time to actually impact the cost of money, but by the time we get to the end of the year, it should have already happened. So most economists will say that the first quarter will be our most difficult quarter. Some say the first half will be our most difficult half.

But I would say that most agree that the second half of the year will be a lot better than the first half of the year, so the stimulus package is designed to get us through this correction. We know that housing inventories are still higher than we'd like to see them, so they have to work their way down.

The stimulus package, of course, is designed to get us through that period.

The part of our economy that is the bright spot--and I'm sure that will please the members of the President's Export Council because the part of our economy today that is very strong is exports--exports, today, represent a larger proportion of our economy than ever before in our history. Twelve percent of our economy is directly attributable to exports, \$1.6 trillion in 2007. That was a growth of about 12.5 percent.

We have had four consecutive years of growth

above 10 percent. January of this year we started out with a 16.5 percent growth versus January of 2007. So, this is a time to push exports hard. Exports can actually help us offset the impact on GDP that we will see, and continue to see, from residential construction. So, a very good time for exports.

We have, as you know, since the President took office, have implemented 11 free trade agreements. We now have 14. Fourteen sounds like a lot, but if you look at the European Union, it's negotiating very hard and I believe they will be into the 20s when they finish their current negotiations. China is negotiating free trade agreements. Chile has over 50.

So the whole world is getting out, trying to get advantages for their businesses. We cannot stop at 14.

Stopping in this environment, where the world is moving ahead very aggressively, is essentially standing still.

Our trade deficit has narrowed by 6.6 percent.

Again, that is just the growth of exports exceeding the growth of imports. We have said before that our strategy to deal with the trade deficit is to grow exports, focus on exports, focus on opening markets for our exporters.

Now, yesterday the President announced that he

will be signing the letter to transmit the legislation to Congress for the approval of the Columbia Free Trade Agreement. It is hard to exaggerate just how important the Colombia FTA is to our country, to our hemisphere.

If you look at it from an economic standpoint, it is very straightforward.

Since 1992, Congress has given preference to Colombian exporters that come into our country, so they come in duty-free. So Colombian exports have already entered our country duty-free since 1992. That is not anything we should be debating because that's already happened. In fact, just recently Congress extended those preferences in a voice vote, so we have already opened our market to Colombia. In fact, we did so starting in 1992. The big question is, why not approve the agreement which will give our businesses, our farmers, our exporters the same duty-free access to Colombia? That is really the economic rationale here. It's very straightforward.

In addition to that, there is a significant national security rationale for this trade agreement. Back in 1999, under President Clinton and President Pastrana, we agreed to partner with Colombia to do something we called Plan Colombia. It was designed to enable the Government of Colombia to get control of

their country. Back at that time there was significant discussion about Colombia being on the verge of becoming a failed state.

Plan Colombia was everything from helicopters, to intelligence cooperation, to social programs. We have invested up to \$6 billion since that time. President Bush has continued what President Clinton started. I can say that it has worked. Colombia has been one of the most impressive turn-around stories I have ever seen. We have been down to Colombia for about 10 different CODELS. We've taken 10 different CODELs to Colombia, members of Congress. About 60 members of Congress have been there.

Every time we go, we go to Medellin. Ten years ago, Medellin was the crime capital of the world. Today, we walk around Medellin. There are families and children playing on the street. It is one of the most incredible things I have ever seen. That is due to the leadership of President Uribe and the help that we have contributed through Plan Colombia.

But every single indicator you look at, paramilitaries have turned in their weapons and they have reincorporated into civil society through a demobilization program. The economy is growing. The poverty rate is down by 12 or 13 points. Homicides are

down, kidnappings are down. And we're talking down 40, 50, 60 percent. There was some talk about union violence. Union violence is down at a greater pace than violence in the country as a whole, so everything has improved.

What the free trade agreement will do is help Colombia continue to grow their economy and continue to strengthen their country. We know that for security to take place, prosperity has to accompany security. We've seen that in many countries around the world. So for Colombia to continue to make inroads against drug cartels, against terrorist organizations, they need to have a growing economy. The FTA will help them continue to grow their economy.

The flip side of that is that since Congress approved the FTA with Peru, since we have an FTA with Central America, we have an FTA with the Dominican Republic, we have an FTA with Chile, we have an FTA with Mexico, if Colombia is left out, they will be put at a disadvantage. So not only will we not be helping Colombia, but one of the estimates is that they will lose up to 400,000 jobs. So, what a shame that, after \$6 billion and after all the effort and pain and advances and progress that Colombia has made, that we as their number-one ally would deny them the

opportunity to continue to strengthen their economy, their security, and their country. So, a lot at stake.

The last thing I will say is, from the standpoint of geopolitics, this is also very important.

Colombia is an ally. Colombia is a friend. Colombia has been a close friend for a long time, the only Latin American country to send troops to Korea in the 1950s.

We know that Colombia is being undermined by its neighbors. There is a great deal of pressure from its neighbors. There has been a considerable amount of discussion recently about the FARC organization, which is this terrorist organization getting a little bit too much support from Colombia's neighbors.

In fact, one of the neighbors suggested that the FARC really was not a terrorist organization, that they were actually a revolutionary insurgent group, which I think is an incredible insult to the number of Colombian families who have lost family members to murders and kidnappings. So, there is a lot at stake here. If we do not approve this agreement, our friends will be very confused and those who are not our friends will be very happy. So, there is an awful lot at stake here.

We want to work, as we have been working, with Congress in a bipartisan way. On May 10, we signed a

bipartisan agreement to include labor and environmental provisions into our trade agreements. That was the beginning of a very strong bipartisan era for trade. This agreement continues that era. But again, we believe it's important that we do this in a bipartisan way and that we send a message to our allies and to the whole world that this is a bipartisan effort on behalf of the U.S. Government, the executive branch, and the Congress.

So, we're looking forward to working with Congress and we're looking forward to doing it together. We believe that part of what we need to do is to strengthen our trade adjustment assistance for displaced workers who have been displaced by trade. So, it's something we look forward to working with Congress on and we look forward to taking this to a vote. Colombia deserves a vote and we believe that if members simply vote their conscience, that we will have the necessary votes to pass the free trade agreement with Colombia.

So, I thank all of you for your involvement in exports at a time when exports are the shining spot of our economy, and we have an opportunity to continue to strengthen exports and to grow our economy and to make a contribution, a meaningful contribution to our



economy at a time when we need that through exports. So, thank you to the President's Export Council for your leadership and for your involvement.

Chairman Marriott, I'll turn it back to you.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Appreciate that very much.

We are also fortunate today to be joined by Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao.

Madam Secretary, would you like to say a few words?

REMARKS

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor

SECRETARY CHAO: I'll just follow up after Secretary Gutierrez. Administrator Steve Preston and I were with Secretary Gutierrez in Colombia and really, speaking for myself, I really echo what the Secretary has said about the progress in Colombia. In fact, we were there the weekend when the number-two person in FARC was killed, and I was a little bit uncertain about the reaction from the Colombian people.

That night we went out for dinner at an open-air plaza and we heard just streams of cars go by, citizens, waving the Colombian flag, and we thought somehow a football game or a soccer rally had won, but in fact they were jubilant that the President Uribe was able to take such decisive action to secure the country's security. So, it was a tremendous outpouring of citizen support for the President.

I'll say a couple things about TAA because I think you might be interested in that. The Colombia Free Trade Agreement is coming up. The President just sent it to the Hill yesterday. The administration is really committed to working with Congress on crafting a

TAA, trade adjustment assistance, bill that will be bipartisan and that we can sign.

Currently, however, there are several flaws in the TAA program as it is currently designed. I wanted to go over with you what they are because I think they will be key to the discussions. TAA is currently an all-or-nothing program where participants lose access to benefits by choosing to return to work. So if they return to work they get nothing, so the incentive is not right. Training options are limited. We all know that there is a skills gap within our country. We need to emphasize job training, worker training. The process of applying for training is lengthy and bureaucratic, and the training options are very limited.

Also, training and other services cannot be provided until after the worker is laid off, even when the layoff is announced well in advance. There are also no wrap-around services, such as career counseling, career assessment, or job placement assistance. These are services that we routinely provide and we're very good at.

The administration believes that any reauthorization of the TAA program should reflect the following:

- 1) That workers have increased choices to combine employment within training and earn while they learn.
- 2) Training options should be flexible and easy to access.
- 3) Services should be available prior to layoff in order to reduce the length of time that workers are unemployed.
- 4) Integration with the currently existing publicly funded workforce investment system, which you all fund to the tune of about \$6.5 billion, should be improved to ensure that workers have access to the full range of services available through the one-stop career centers.

So rather than set up a duplicative, huge program, we would like to see greater integration of TAA with the workforce investment system.

Let me also speak about one other topic, and that's the unemployment numbers that Carlos talked about that were released last Friday, as you know. The unemployment rate ticked up about three-tenths of one percent to 5.1 percent, as you all know. But let's keep in mind, the unemployment rate in the decade of

the 1990s, which was supposedly such an era of great prosperity and robust economic activity, was 5.7 percent.

The average unemployment rate, in all the times that the unemployment rate has been recorded, is 5.5 percent. The average hours worked increased, interestingly enough, and also the average hourly wages have increased. We also collect a survey called JOLTS. This shows the vitality within our economy, in our workforce. We found that the numbers reflect not so much layoffs, but in fact that there is a slower rate of job creation.

Our workforce grows at about a million workers a year, and the labor participation rate actually increased to 66 percent. So, more people are entering the workforce and we are absorbing them with creation of new jobs. It's just that the creation of new jobs is not occurring as quickly as it did in the last three quarters. So, I thought that that would be something that members would be interested in hearing about.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Under Secretary for International Trade Chris Padilla is also with us today. Chris, would you like

to comment?

REMARKS ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The Honorable Christopher A. Padilla,  
Under Secretary for International Trade

SECRETARY PADILLA: Yes. I'd just make a couple of comments, Mr. Chairman, if I might, to continue on the theme of Colombia that Secretary Gutierrez and Secretary Chao have both spoken about.

Just to take it down to a slightly more micro level for U.S. exporters, it's been a little more than 500 days since the Colombia Free Trade Agreement was signed by the United States and Colombia. The Commerce Department has done a calculation that in those 500 days, U.S. exporters have paid approximately \$1.1 billion in tariffs and taxes to Colombia in order to get their products into that market. Those are tariffs and taxes that would be eliminated if this trade agreement were to pass.

In the same 500 days, Colombian products have come into our market and 92 percent of them have paid not a single penny of tariffs or taxes. I thought I might share with the members something I use as I travel around the country. To try to illustrate this, I have a grocery bag of products. My favorite coffee

in the world is Colombian coffee. We probably had Colombian coffee this morning. It comes into the United States, it pays zero tariff, and it has paid zero tariff for 16 years, as Secretary Gutierrez said.

But this bottle of Pepsi, made in the United States and exported to Colombia, pays a 20 percent tariff when it is sold in that country. So, zero percent for their product, 20 percent for ours.

My wife likes cut flowers. We import a lot of cut flowers from Colombia. Almost 25 percent of all cut flowers sold in the United States come from Colombia from the flower farms around Medellin that Secretaries Chao and Gutierrez visited. But the fertilizer made in the United States that we export to Colombia to grow these flowers pays a 15 percent tariff.

One other example, if I may. Carrots. We import a lot of carrots and other vegetables from Colombia. They come into the U.S. and onto your dinner table, and they pay zero tariffs. But a tractor imported to a Colombian carrot farmer to grow these carrots pays a 10 to 15 percent tariff. It works out to about \$200,000 in taxes for one tractor.

So here we have all of the Colombian products,

the coffee, the flowers, the carrots, the bananas. They pay nothing. And all of the U.S.-made products, made, by the way, in many cases, U.S. union labor, pay tariffs and taxes. Even the paper bag pays 15 percent if it's sold to a Colombian grocery store.

So the good news is, we have a great coupon in our shopping bag that would eliminate all the taxes on our products, and it's called the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. (Laughter) (Applause) So with that highly academic econometric presentation, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: We always enjoy show-and-tell, so thank you very much, Chris.

Today, the first issue we're going to discuss is the importance of services negotiations in the Doha Round. We are pleased to have Ambassador John Veroneau with us this morning--he's a Deputy U.S. Trade Representative--to update us on the status of the Doha Round and the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Ambassador?



REMARKS ON DONA ROUND NEGOTIATIONS

The Honorable John K. Veroneau,  
Deputy U.S. Trade Representative

AMBASSADOR VERONEAU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary. Chris, always a nice presentation. I wish I had a Doha bag that I could pull out for this room. (Laughter) But before I launch into an update on the Doha negotiations, the common theme in the opposition we're seeing to the Colombia trade agreement and some of the headwinds we're facing in the Doha negotiations, is there is still this disconnect between the economic realities and the policy saliency of open markets and open trade and the politics of it.

I'm originally from Maine, and I think for the average person in Maine, when they think of international trade, they still think of a shoe factory closing in the 1970s. That is a reality, a political reality, that I think everyone in this room, as stakeholders and supporters of a global system, we all need to do, frankly, a better job of educating the public. This is true in Europe, and frankly on every continent.

We need to bring the level of understanding and appreciation up of the benefits of the global economy so that every time we try to bring a trade agreement to the Congress that it is so overwhelmingly to the benefit of American workers, it is not a knock-down, drag-out fight. It just shouldn't be. In other areas of public policy there are big political gaps between policy positions.

Let's take education, for example. There is a fundamental disagreement among policymakers about school choice and vouchers. We don't need to argue that here today, but reasonable minds disagree about that. That policy disagreement is reflected in the politics.

With trade, it is very, very hard to find serious players and serious students of trade who disagree on the policy, yet the politics of it couldn't be more diverse at times, to the point where we're having to fight to get our Congress--with all due respect, Congressman English--to vote on an agreement that will provide the proverbial level playing field. So I would encourage all of us as stakeholders and believers to do more and do whatever we can do improve the political environment in which trade and global economic policy is considered.

Doha is facing some of these same headwinds and political adversities. When the Round was launched, Ambassador Zoellick at the time, in 2001, obviously with the strong leadership and urging of President Bush, said we really need to get this global negotiation under way. These bilateral trade agreements are very important. Once Colombia and Panama are in place, there will be a Free Trade Zone that will extend from the tip of Alaska to the southernmost tip of Chile. That is not an insignificant achievement.

But clearly, the WTO negotiations provide an opportunity for the biggest bang for the buck. It's been tough sledding, as everyone in this room knows, because at the end of the day there are many members of the WTO who simply don't want to cut their tariffs. That's sort of the main event in a global trade negotiation, is cutting tariffs.

For the longest time, I think a lot of our WTO members were hiding behind the question, would the U.S. be willing to make commitments to reduce farm subsidies. That answer has been provided. President Bush has made clear that he is prepared to make difficult choices on agricultural, but it requires others to step forward to cut tariffs. The average

tariff on U.S. goods is less than 4 percent, yet the tariffs we face in advanced, developing countries that are our growing markets are three, four, five times that, on average.

The least-developed countries are not being asked to do anything in this round. I don't think it's the best economic policy for those countries. Seventy percent of tariffs paid by least-developed countries are paid to other least-developed countries. So from my perspective, the smart countries are reducing their tariffs unilaterally because it's best for their competitiveness. But as a negotiation, they're not being asked to cut tariffs because that was the political imperative that was reached earlier in this negotiation.

But the advanced developing countries, the Brazils, the Argentinas, the South Africas, the Indias, Malaysia, Indonesia, they need to step up and cut tariffs because that's the bargain of these trade routes, these WTO negotiations.

We are at a very critical point over the next eight weeks. The President has made clear he wants to reach an agreement this calendar year, and believes we can. And we can. We've made a lot of progress in the past six months in Geneva and in capitals, but we're at

the point now where the number of outstanding issues are being whittled down to a manageable number so that ministers can actually make decisions.

Our hope is that ministers will be able to meet very soon, this spring, to reach an agreement that we can credibly say will open new markets by cutting tariffs. It is important. To achieve that, we need to have a breakthrough that facilitates what are called modalities, which are basically a road map for cutting tariffs on agricultural, on goods, and on services. I know that there's a particular focus of the Council here on services. President Bush has made very clear that services are a high priority. They represent an incredible opportunity for us globally and those need to be part of the agreement.

So the next four to eight weeks are critical. Watch this space, because hopefully, with Ambassador Schwab, Secretary Gutierrez, Secretary Chao, and others' help, we can make this a reality. It's been a long process, but we're at a point now where hopefully we can have a breakthrough.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you very much.

Our Subcommittee on Services has developed a letter of recommendation regarding the importance of

services negotiations in the Doha Round, and I'd like to ask Mike Eskew, Chairman of the Services Subcommittee, to present the letter.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SERVICES REPORT

Presentation of Proposed Letter on the  
Importance of Services Negotiations in Doha  
Mr. Michael L. Eskew, Subcommittee Chairman

MR. ESKEW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr.  
Secretary.

The Subcommittee on Services is pleased to  
present the proposed letter on the importance of  
services negotiations in the Doha Round that the  
Ambassador just spoke about. I'm just going to  
summarize the key points of that letter.

The WTO General Agreements on Trade and  
Services, GATS, entered into force in 1995. At that  
time it was a landmark achievement, however, now it is  
over 13 years old and in need of an upgrade.

The Doha negotiations offer a tremendous  
opportunity not only to capture the legal and  
commercial realities of today's global marketplace, but  
to provide new energy and the economic reforms that we  
have witnessed over the past decade. It is important  
that we capitalize on this opportunity.

The President's Export Council recognizes that

certain WTO members have sought to relegate the services component of the Doha Round to a secondary or a tertiary position in those negotiations behind the negotiations of agricultural and the Non-Agricultural Market Access, NAMA. We commend the administration for opposing those efforts.

The administration has consistently sought a high level of -- in the service negotiations. We are confident that if the administration continues this approach, the United States can lead negotiations to a successful conclusion that can be supported by all sectors of the economy. The successful and ambitious outcome on services could bring enormous benefit to the U.S. economy and help provide the needed stimulus.

The services sector accounts for a vast majority of U.S. private sector employment and U.S. private sector GDP. Significant liberalization in global service markets will further expand opportunities for U.S. service suppliers and help us to capture an area where we have significantly competitive advantage.

In addition, as explained in our letter today, logistics distribution, telecommunications, and financial services, among others, provide the necessary infrastructure for trade in agricultural and



manufactured goods. Expanded service commitments would thereby amplify the economic benefits of any market opening achieved through these trade negotiations.

In light of these considerations, the PEC today calls for the administration to ensure its services remain one of the three major market access objectives on the Round, on par with agricultural and NAMA. We understand the challenges facing the administration in the Doha negotiations and we look forward to working with our trade negotiators to help achieve those important objectives.

That summarizes our letter, Mr. Secretary.

DISCUSSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES  
NEGOTIATIONS IN DOHA

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Mike. Copies of the letters are in your binders, posted online, and available outside the room for the public.

Are there any comments or questions?

CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH: I'd like to just very briefly comment that, as co-chairman of the Congressional Services Caucus, I find this letter to be particularly useful, coming at the time that it does. I think it's very important that we reemphasize the importance of services now.

I realize that generally in my advocacy within Congress I've been an advocate of manufacturing interests, as tend to cluster in my district. But I find that every district is a services district. Our economy is going to grow based on whether we continue to have access and can expand access for services into different parts of the growing world economy. So, I would like to thank the subcommittee for, I think, a very solid effort. I think this letter may be the most important thing that we have an opportunity to vote on

this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you very much.

Any other comments, questions?

SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: I just want to back up what the Congressman said. Services are 70 percent of our economy, but about 30 percent of our exports, so there is a significant opportunity to increase that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you.

Any other comments, questions?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Any objections?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: If not, I propose the letter be transmitted to Secretary Gutierrez for submission to the President. The letter is approved.

The next letter we'll discuss is the issue of non-immigrant visas for high-skilled workers. We're pleased to have Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services Tony Edson and Deputy Director of Homeland Security for Immigration Policy Francis Cissna here to discuss non-immigrant visa reform.

Tony?

REMARKS ON NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

Mr. Stephen A. Edson,  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services

MR. EDSON: Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here this morning, briefly and quickly, I think, on some of the issues that I know you all have followed for the past several years.

To lay a baseline on non-immigrant visas across the board, not just in the high-skilled categories, last year we passed and set a new record in total volume of non-immigrant visas, both issued and applications received, around the world. We're on track at a slightly lower growth rate to set a new record this current year.

Growth rates in some countries, some of the countries obviously that we have the closest, the most expansive trade relationships with, are the highest. 2007 and 2006 growth in India was 58 percent in our world, 80 percent in Bombay alone, 27 percent in Brazil, and 11 percent in China.

So it definitely seems to us that growing interest in traveling to the United States, interest in

tourism in the United States, and in business with the United States, as reflected in visa numbers, which are not a perfectly good measure of that demand, that it's on the upward trend.

We set a goal that we publicly shared with the community last year of trying to keep our NIV appointment wait times down below 30 days at every post around the world. We still maintain that goal. I'm not prepared to report to you that we've made tremendous progress in the last year. For a number of reasons, the combination of the huge passport demand last year--and the exchange rate loss is, I think, primary among them--we are still working on it.

I can tell you that the vast majority of our 200 posts have appointment wait times of less than 30 days, and I expect that we'll be able to keep it that way. The problem is that the appointment wait times are highest in these places where the volumes are highest and where the business interests are highest in getting these people to the United States.

We began, about three weeks ago in Mexico, an experiment, a pilot with a program using contractor-run facilities for off-site data collection that we're excited about as a way to leverage our facilities and make up for some of the constraints we have in physical

plant. We began in that same pilot with the use of a fully online application process that we hope to roll out in the summer.

That gets us information prior to the applicant appearing at our window before they show up for the appointment, and hopefully then a much higher percentage of the work can be done before the applicant shows up for an appointment. Some of those delays you've heard about, you worry about, will in fact no longer occur because they will have been buried in the opaque, the invisible part, prior to the applicant actually being interviewed.

We have made some progress on appointment waits, appointment systems, trying to come up with a model that's consistent and universal that is nonetheless flexible enough to allow us to continue to expedite American business interest cases, students traveling to American schools, and the other categories--medical emergencies, the other categories of travelers that we really care about.

We've also been working very closely with our colleagues in DHS on VWP expansion efforts, which is that piece that makes our non-immigrant visa numbers not a completely accurate indicator of business involvement with a country abroad.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Tony.  
Francis, your remarks

REMARKS ON NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

Mr. L. Francis Cissna,  
Deputy Director of Homeland Security  
for Immigration Policy

MR. CISSNA: There's a lot going on at DHS-- and I'll try to be as quick as Tony was--in non-immigrant visa reform. I think one of the most important regulations that we came up with in a long time is on this subject.

Just today, we're publishing in the *Federal Register* a regulation that will extend the amount of time that foreign students have to work in the United States after their studies finish. We are extending this benefit to STEM students, students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. I know that's an important subject for this body.

We are proposing to extend the amount of time that STEM students can remain in the States working after their studies end from 12 months up to 29 months.

This, we feel, is a very important regulation and it falls under one of the 26 immigration initiatives that the administration announced last August after the

failure of the comprehensive immigration reform undertaking.

We are also going to be publishing a regulation soon that will extend the amount of time that professional workers with so-called NAFTA, or TN, visas can stay in this country. As you may know, under NAFTA, certain professional workers can get visas to come here from Canada and Mexico and they can stay for up to one year. We're proposing to extend that period of time to three years. We are also working on a number of regulations that will streamline and reduce some of the abuse or problems in the H-1B program.

For example, a couple of weeks ago we published a regulation that prohibited employers from filing multiple petitions to kind of game the lottery, because as you may know there aren't enough H-1Bs to meet demand, so a lot of unscrupulous employers are filing multiple petitions. We've now prohibited that by regulation.

We also have a number of other regulations we're working on that will address other large problems with the H-1B program, but those are still in development right now.

High-skilled visas are not the only things we're working on. We're also keenly aware of the



shortage of non-high-skilled workers in this country, in particular in the H-2B program, which is a visa program for seasonal and temporary workers outside of agricultural. The top employers that use the H-2B visas are in hospitality and tourism, construction, and landscaping.

We are working on a regulation--this was also announced last August--that would eliminate a lot of the problems in that program that we see. We are hoping to get that out as soon as possible. Finally, we also published, on February 13, a regulation that proposes far-reaching reforms of the agricultural worker program, the H-2A program.

Our partners at Department of Labor have also published a regulation at the same time. These regulations were proposed, as I say, in February. The comment period ends in a couple of weeks. We feel that those regulations will, in time, attract a great many more employers to the H-2A program and offer improvements to a much-needed legal avenue for employment to these types of workers.

So, lots of things going on at DHS, and more to come.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Good. Thank you. We're glad to hear it. Thrilled.

The Council Subcommittee on Trade Promotion and Negotiations now has a recommendation on the subject. I'd like to call Prakash Puram, member of the Subcommittee on Services, to present the Council's letter.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE PROMOTION AND NEGOTIATIONS

Presentation of Proposed Letter on Non-Immigrant Visas

Mr. Prakash Puram, Subcommittee Member

MR. PURAM: Chairman Marriott, Secretary Gutierrez, Secretary Chao, Deputy Assistant Secretary Edson, and Council members, thank you for the opportunity to present the Trade Promotion and Negotiations Subcommittee's letter on immigrant reform.

In our proposed letter, the subcommittee highlights concerns about U.S. immigration policies that serve to discourage the participation of qualified essential talent in our economy. Let me just quote a brief sentence from an article here. It's from the latest *Forbes* magazine. It's called "America --".

"A quarter of a century ago, most leading economists, whether liberal or conservative, predicted that American economic growth would fall behind Japan and Germany by the year 2007. They typically assumed that Japan's Gross Domestic Product would be roughly \$5 trillion by now, with Germany at around \$4 trillion, and the U.S. lagging at about \$3.5 trillion.

Predictions for Japan and Germany were

reasonably accurate, but in America we are to \$13 trillion. America's surprising economic growth has been traced back to just 1,000 key innovators, entrepreneurs, dream-makers, mentors, and creative geniuses"--think about that, 1,000--"60 percent of whom are foreign-born persons who are educated here in America in graduate schools.

This meant that the U.S. had a unique edge in terms of talent and the environment that was necessary for growth. The revolutions of technology in electronics, space technology, satellite communications, personal computing, internet, information technology, and -- were all American revolutions. The U.S. innovated while others imitated.

Finally, given that 3 in 5 of the American 1,000 key superstars and dream-makers were born in other nations, we must incentives the continued migration of the world's best minds to America. Here, we face escalating competition from Australia, England, and other countries for bringing the new Holy Grail of leadership."

Now let me get back to the letter here. So in the proposed letter we highlight some concerns about U.S. immigration policies that serve to discourage participation of qualified and essential -- in our

economy. The United States faces significant worker shortages, particularly among highly trained individuals in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, the so-called STEM group. Access to that group of professionals will have a profound effect on U.S. economic competitiveness in the 21st century.

The letter focuses on specific immigration policies that we believe are necessary to attract and maintain highly trained individuals. First, we'd recommend that foreign nationals who are in graduate-level science, technology, engineering, or mathematics degrees from U.S. universities be immediately eligible for permanent residency, and these individuals should be exempt from the numerical limit on green cards issued.

Craig Barrett of Intel had a very simple suggestion, in our research we did in writing this letter. He said, when a graduate student in a STEM category picks up his diploma and passes the stage and goes past the provost director and dean and picks up his diploma, the Labor Department or INS should be in line to grab that certificate and staple a green card and give it back to the individual. He said it's as simple as that. Surely it's not as simple as that, as

Tony Edson said.

Second, employment-based immigrant visas, H-1B and EB, employment based category, should be significantly increased by as much as three times the current level to meet market demands. We believe in every single year, on day one, the H-1B visa quota has been entirely occupied, some 65,000 people in the quota or numbers in the quota have been used up almost instantly in the first 24 hours. That says the labor demand must be 3, 4, maybe 30 times.

Third, the visa program should be modernize to remove the unpredictability of duration limits for H-1B visas. That is Francis' point here. The concept of dual intent should be extended to these categories. I assume everybody understands we're doing it and it means at this time, if you have to get a visa in a U.S. embassy, you have to prove beyond doubt that you will return to your home country. That is going against the grain of what we want to accomplish in these STEM students. We want them to stay.

Finally, additional well-trained resources should be devoted to eliminate visa paperwork backlogs and to reduce adjudication times to speed the processing of legitimate immigration petitions. The entire department that administers visas single-

handedly is probably the most profitable revenue-producing agency in the Federal Government, and it is important to extend the concept of customer service to these visa applicants who really are very disappointed with how they are treated at our embassies. And that is not berating the embassies. The embassies are down to allocating less than 30 seconds for an interview in India or China. You're lucky if you get 30 seconds. So they actually celebrate and say, you got 30 seconds, it must be your lucky day.

The PEC applauds the administration for its efforts to promote comprehensive immigration reform. Given the serious shortages facing the workforce, now is not the time to place artificial restrictions on international talent. Instead, we should do all we can to employ a visa strategy that will promote the United States as a destination for the world's brightest people.

Thank you for your attention, and I submit the subcommittee's letter for discussion and adoption. Just like Chris' show-and-tell, my family of immigrants are here. That's my show-and-tell. (Laughter)  
(Applause)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Prakash.

DISCUSSION ON NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Are there any comments or questions from the floor?

CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if I might have an opportunity to offer additional views on this letter in writing. I need not detain us. Particularly, I have little to add to Mr. Puram's excellent presentation, but I would ask that my letter and my views be made part of the record.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Fine. Thank you.

(The letter appears in the appendix.)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Any other questions or comments?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Any objections to the letter?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: If not, the letter is approved and we will pass that on to the President through Secretary Gutierrez.

The next topic for discussion is food and import safety, something we've all heard a lot about



lately. We're pleased to have Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Legislation Craig Burton with us to discuss the issue of information technology and import safety.

REMARKS ON FOOD AND PRODUCT IMPORT SAFETY

Mr. Craig Burton, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of Health and Human Services for Legislation

MR. BURTON: Thank you. I'm Craig Burton. I actually wear two hats at HHS. The first is as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation, the second is as Executive Director of the Import Safety Working Group, which Secretary Leavitt was appointed to head up last year.

As folks know, we've been dealing with the issues of import safety a lot recently. I think as we have looked at these issues, as Secretary Leavitt has looked at these issues, we've really seen this not as a reflection of a regulatory system that is broken or a system that is unsafe, but more of a natural consequence of an evolving global marketplace where you've seen these issues ripening over years and you see the system coming under more and more stress and new strains every year.

We've seen that just in the volume of imports where, in the United States, this year we're going to import more than \$2 trillion worth of goods, and some

estimates show that number tripling over the next 10 years.

So over the last years, as everyone knows, we have really seen a lot of product safety problems. Last year was in many ways the year of the product recall. That's been from toys to spinach, and most recently to cantaloupe. So as folks know, the President wisely pulled together a number of agencies, 12 cabinet departments, as well as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and asked Secretary Leavitt to head this group up to determine what the Federal response ought to be here.

We moved forward in two ways. First, by establishing teams within each agency that went deep into this issue within their own agencies, identifying what practices occurred, what changes were needed, what resources existed, what additional resource needs were, what statutory authority existed, what new legislation might be needed.

The second piece of this was to fan out across the country. We and other cabinet departments sent a number of folks across the country. Secretary Leavitt, in particular, visited everything from seaports, to border crossings, to freight hubs and distribution facilities, to drug wholesalers, food processors. We

really, through that process and working through the interagency process, attempted to get a good sense of what the system as a whole was and where there was a need for response.

The recommendations that we came up with fell into a number of categories, but I'll just summarize them. One, there was a theme that underlay the whole report, the key role that the private sector can play here and that industry can play--I'll come back to that in a minute--through work on standards and certification and accreditation.

But some other major recommendations were for greater transparency, increased Federal presence overseas, stronger remedies where needed, and interoperable systems. But as we looked at this it really even came down to two basic themes. One, was that we simply cannot inspect our way to product safety. To try to inspect everything through FDA and DHS would bring the system to a crawl.

Second, is that the system is generally working now but is not adequate for the future. So there's a need to change here. There's a need to begin to roll the borders back and make certain that safety is built into products at every step of the way. It seems to me that, as we look at this, as Congress and

the administration and the private sector deals with this, they're going to be faced with a choice of whether you take steps that leverage information and efforts that are already taking place, begin to push the borders out and bring in more information, more transparency in the Federal Government, or whether you take steps that are based on more Federal inspections, oversight, regulations that could simply have the effect of creating slow-downs in how imports work.

And as I said, from our standpoint--and I think one of the major recommendations of the report-- is that there is a key role for the private sector to play here. As the Secretary has traveled over the last six months, we've seen a lot of examples of how that is working. Most notably, we saw an example in India where the Secretary visited a spice plant run by McCormick ABP as one of the major spice producers internationally.

While he was there, he noticed large burlap bags of red chile peppers, and each of those bags had a yellow cloth message, a tag, sewn into it. We asked what it was. What we were told, was that all of the farmers were required to put their names on the tags, along with information about who picked it, where it was picked, and when it was picked. Just basic

information that would allow the company to do a trace-back. Now, this had been put into place because McCormick's customers asked for it, asked for more information on traceability.

Now, a lot of folks know that in India these are small subsistence, one- and two-acre farmers with very robust political participation. These are requirements that the government of India could never have placed upon their farmers because of the political ramifications, yet the market and the industry was able to do so, was able to impose this requirement and make it a condition of doing business. The farmers had a choice of either complying or doing business elsewhere, and most of them adapted and are moving forward quite well.

So the principle that we have seen here is that, in many ways, markets, not mandates, can help drive improvements in innovation. So as we have thought about this and as HHS specifically has begun to implement the action plan for import safety and as other agencies are looking at this, it seems to us that the task for HHS and for others is not always to get different systems of government to change or to shift their focus, but to work with the private sector to find common goals, international standards, and

interoperable systems to bridge those differences so that if a person is producing spice in India they know that they're producing and it's to standards that will be acceptable in the United States or in the European Union.

Now, I think folks know that this work on standards, certification and accreditation is difficulty. It's messy work. But the collaboration is already taking place in the private sector and what we need to do is encourage that. That's a major recommendation of the action. The way you do that is by being transparent within industry and with the Federal Government. That transparency can lend to trust, which can lend to speed.

In the global marketplace, we know that speed is life and that, on the other side, anything that slows down the flow of goods, such as more unnecessary inspections, more barriers at the border, only harm the economy without substantively increasing product safety.

So as we have seen this, the issue is transparent, interoperable systems both within the government and across in working with industry. Specifically at HHS, we have begun to move forward in a lot of areas. We have established a number of

positions to place Food & Drug Administration personnel in China over the next two years.

It is the Secretary's intention to move forward and do the same in India and other countries. We're moving forward and implementing the Food & Drug Memorandum of Agreement with the Chinese government, and we're working extensively with the private sector on how we can build on the efforts they have under way in developing standards and certification bodies. So, we look forward to continuing to work with folks, including this group, and we appreciate the chance to come and talk to everyone.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Craig, very much.

The Council's Subcommittee on Technology and Competitiveness has a letter now with recommendations regarding information technology and food and product import safety. Betty Manetta is Chairman of the subcommittee and she'll present her letter.

Betty?



SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

Presentation of Proposed Letter on Information  
Technology and Food Product Import Safety

Ms. Betty Manetta, Subcommittee Chair

MS. MANETTA: Thank you, Chairman Marriott,  
Secretary Gutierrez, Deputy Secretary Burton. Thank  
you very much.

We have a letter under Tab 5 that kind of  
highlights. First of all, we want to thank the Agency  
and the organizations for quickly coming together and  
putting together these interagency organizations that  
will look at standards, that will look at several other  
factors. And you're absolutely right,  
interoperability, standards, data, all those things are  
what this subcommittee is focusing on, and that is  
technology. Without technology we can't quickly move  
forward and be able to address to the public any major  
recalls.

So in Tab 5 is our letter. One of the members  
of our subcommittee, Mr. Smucker, is very well aware of  
the need for speed in retail. So when you do have a  
recall, it's very important to understand the

information that we have and the speed with which we get that out to the public, because the public is going to be the key focus on that.

So I'd like to turn it over very quickly to Mr. Smucker to kind of highlight the key tenets of this letter. It's brief, but I think it will hit home to some of the key components that you addressed earlier in your comments. Thank you.

MR. SMUCKER: Thank you, Betty. Actually, what you've said, and also, Craig, what you said, I think it covered it pretty thoroughly. But let me just focus again on the importance of the interagency work, the public and private partnership--this is clearly what this is all about--and underscore how important it is to use current technology that is currently robust in technology like ISO standards, ISO IEE, the GS1, EPC Global.

He, in recall, and I think as we all know, is providing the right information at the right time to the right people, then allowing all the partners involved, including government and the private sector, to make the proper decisions. The transparency is what this letter is about. I applaud the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services for taking on this initiative.

Thank you.

MS. MANETTA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Betty.

DISCUSSION ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND IMPORT SAFETY

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Are there any comments, questions, for Betty or Tim?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Any objections to the letter?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Hearing none, the letter is approved and we'll pass it on to Secretary Gutierrez to pass on to the President.

Finally, the Subcommittee on Technology and Competitiveness has another letter recommending small and medium enterprises, or SMEs.

Betty, will you present that?

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

Presentation of Proposed Letter on

Small and Medium Enterprises

Ms. Betty Manetta, Subcommittee Chair

MS. MANETTA: Thank you, sir. Unfortunately, SBA Administrator Steven Preston had to leave, but at the last PEC committee meeting he highlighted the key factors and the importance of small- and medium-sized enterprises in this country and the SMEs that are the global engine for the future.

Our letter, found in Section 6 -- and I think today we heard a lot about leveling the playing field.

It kind of resonates with all of us. Honorable Chris Padilla made a great analogy, bringing it really home about the need for us to really look at the way we do business because it's not a level playing field. As a small- to medium-sized business myself, it's hard to compete in a global environment when I have to pay duties and a counterpart in another country does not.

Hence, the letter really is highlighting some of the key things. I'll quickly run through them. There are four key components to this letter. Number

one, which we have discussed at length today, is the continued use of comprehensive trade agreements. We need to continue to really push on the trade agreements that we were talking about earlier today because that's one of the ways in which we're going to level the playing field for the small- and medium-sized enterprises in our country.

The second, is to encourage big businesses to use the SME as they go globally. Many companies have been doing that all along and doing a great job of it.

UPS is one of them that has continued to use their SMEs locally to help push and move forward in the global environment. Mr. Smucker, as well. The Smuckers Company has been doing that quite a bit. So again, encouraging large businesses to use SMEs as we go global.

Number three, improving communication in U.S. Government programs. Talking earlier today with SBA Administrator Steven Preston, he's been going around the country, again, promulgating SBA, the types of agencies, the types of programs that are available to the small- and medium-sized businesses. So it's important to continue the communication. Again, agencies like SBA, MBDA, and others are a good source of information.

Lastly, promoting global recognition in the use of standards. As we talked earlier today, international rules, RFID technologies, ISO standards, all the different standard bodies and regulations are a way that will help level the playing field.

So, the letter, again, focuses on these four components. Again, I'm sorry that Steven wasn't here to articulate how critical this is for our economy going forward.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you very much.

DISCUSSION ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Does anybody have any questions or discussions or comments? Yes, Cecilia?

MS. LEVINE: Yes, Chairman. As the newly-elected chairman for the Border District Export Council, we would like to pledge our commitment to promoting trade, especially along the border where there's a lot of small- and medium-sized businesses that depend a lot on trade with Mexico. We would like to thank the Department of Commerce, especially the Regional Office that has supported this initiative. Hopefully they'll be opening an office in the summer in Augusta, Texas, which is very much needed. I thank the Commerce Department.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you, Cecilia.

Carlos, do you have something?

SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: I just want to thank everybody for their time and their service.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Wrong Carlos.

SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: Sorry. Carlos, sorry.

MR. ITURREGUI: Thank you, Betty, for your leadership on this. It is important to note, for



example, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce a few years ago did the faces of trade and the growth of SMEs in the export arena. I think what some people are finding to be difficult is that all these great programs are not under one "teller" window, if you will. The Department of Commerce has great trade assistance centers throughout the U.S., and maybe with the chairman of the Ex-Im Bank and others they can figure out how to put trade affairs under one umbrella so that SMEs can access all these great tools that they have for expanding trade.

Congratulations, madam -- border go to --

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Are there other comments or questions?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Any objections to the letter?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: If not, the letter is approved and we'll pass it on to the President through Secretary Gutierrez.

ADJOURN

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you all for all of your hard work, to the staff, and subcommittee chairs. I'd open the floor for any final discussion or comments on anything anyone would like to bring up.

Secretary, do you have some final words you'd like to say?

SECRETARY GUTIERREZ: Just, I want to thank everyone again for your service and your commitment to exports. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Thank you very much.

MS. MANETTA: Chairman Marriott?

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Yes?

MS. MANETTA: Just a last final comment. What we were discussing earlier today, we'd like to request the ability for us to submit another letter prior to September regarding biofuels and the importance on exports.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: Okay. That's fine.

MS. MANETTA: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN MARRIOTT: It's been a good meeting. I think our next meeting will be a conference call in

June, and we'll let you know as soon as we can. We thank everyone for being here, and Woody Sutton for all your hard work in getting the staff and all the work they've done to prepare for this meeting. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 11:13 a.m. the meeting was adjourned.)

## Appendix

## Congressman Phil English

Additional views with respect to the President's Export Council's letter to the President regarding immigration reform

It is appropriate for the PEC to recognize difficulties facing U.S. employers in their efforts to recruit highly trained individuals in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. However, we should be very careful about how we frame our recommendations and public statements regarding this situation.

The council should be unambiguous in making clear that temporary increased allocations of H-1B visas is no substitute for fundamental reform of our education system. Americans have a right to expect future employment opportunities in the STEM fields will be available to their sons and daughters. Our recommendations and statements should reflect our recognition of that expectation.

Finally, our recommendations and statements regarding H1-B visas should leave no doubt that these visas must be restricted to only those individuals with truly unique technical skills and/or advanced scientific degrees. Individuals with skill sets readily available in the U.S. should be excluded from the H-1B visa program in order to make more visas available for those with more specialized training as well as to reassure our own citizens the H1-B program is not being used as a means of holding down wages of domestic technical workers.

## C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing proceedings of a meeting of the President's Export Council, United States Department of Commerce, held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008, were transcribed as herein appears, and this is the original transcript thereof.

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LISA DENNIS

Certified Verbatim Reporter

