

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2002

Mr. Hisham Fawzi  
Excel Holdings  
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Suite 201-C  
Leesburg, Virginia 20175

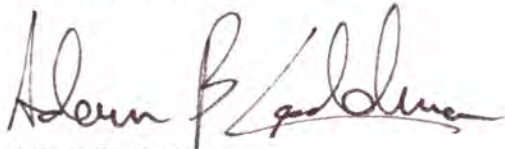
Dear Hisham,

It was great to see your family and you at President Bush's speech at the State Department. The President was so glad that you could join him there, and thought that you might appreciate the enclosed photos.

I have also enclosed a copy of the President's speech from that day.

I hope that this letter finds your family and you well.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam B. Goldman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Adam" being the most prominent.

Adam B. Goldman  
Office of Public Liaison

Enclosures (3)

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Remarks by the President on Trade Promotion Authority  
The Department of State  
Benjamin Franklin Room

1:15 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I'm glad I caught you before you packed your bags. (Laughter.) This morning, I sent the Secretary on a very important mission, a mission of peace. And there's no doubt I sent a great man to go accomplish that mission. I'm proud of your service to our country, Colin, and thank you for inviting us to this beautiful hall.

I want to thank you all for coming, as well. I appreciate so very much the opportunity to talk about the values and interests of America, and the fact that open trade is in our nation's interest, and open trade helps us all adhere to values that we share -- common values. Values that call for respect of human rights and values that believe in the worth of each individual, and values that hold democracy and freedom dear.

I believe strongly in trade. I believe not only is trade in my nation's interests, I think trade is in the interest of those nations who struggle with poverty, that desire a route out of poverty. As Colin mentioned, I was in Monterrey, Mexico recently, we were in Monterrey, Mexico.

I said there in Monterrey that this country of ours will provide aid, we're pleased to do so and proud to do so. But direct aid is small in comparison to the benefits of trade. And that not only would we provide direct aid, but in return we expect our friends to adopt the habits that will encourage stability and peace and human rights. And there's nothing better to encourage those habits than trade.

And trade is important for American workers, too. Lost in the debate on trade here at home is the fact that many people are able to find better jobs as the result of an active trade policy in the United States.

And so we're here to talk about a way to make sure that our nation trades and our nation works with other countries in the world to trade. In order for that to do so, the United States Senate must pass trade promotion authority. I need that authority.

Every day we go by without the authority is another day we are missing opportunities to help our economy, to help our workers, to help our country, to relate to our friends around the world. If the Senate acts to give me trade promotion authority -- and I expect them to do so -- I will use it to expand commerce and work for higher-paying jobs for American workers.

And so today, I urge the Senate leadership to lead, to act, and to get this bill to my desk.

I want to thank Secretary Don Evans, who's the Secretary of Commerce, for being here. He's my close friend. We spent a lot of quality time in Midland, Texas, together. He's now representing the commercial interests of our country. And I'm proud of the job he does. And I want to thank John Walters for being here, as well. John is in charge of making sure that the United States drug policy not only is clear, but works. And that drug policy says we'll work with our neighbors to interdict drugs. But in order for a drug policy to be effective, all of us in this country must make it clear to our young that drugs destroy their hopes and opportunities.

I want to thank members of the diplomatic corps who are here. Particularly, I want to thank the Prime Minister of Peru. Bienvenidos. It's nice to see you again, sir, and thank you for coming.

I have spent a lot of time with members of the ambassadorial corps. I'm a better person for it. I see many friendly faces here. I want to thank you all for coming to support this initiative.

See, I hope -- I wish members of the United States Senate were here to see the members of the diplomatic corps who showed up for this. They're here because they understand the importance of trade. They're here because they understand the benefits of trade to their own people.

I also want to thank the U.S. exporters who are here, America's business leaders and people who understand the benefits of opening up markets. I know that many of you have worked hard to help advance trade around the world, and for that we're grateful. And we've done a lot last year, we really have. As Colin mentioned, we helped launch a new global -- a round of global trade negotiations in Doha. We helped bring China and Taiwan into the World Trade Organization. And that's good, that's important to recognize and to welcome both countries, both the Republic of Taiwan, and of course China, into the World Trade Organization. It's positive, it's a positive development for our country.

We've worked hard to have a free trade agreement with Jordan, and bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. We reinvigorated trade negotiations of the free trade area of the Americas in Quebec City, as Colin pointed out. I thought those were very constructive discussions we had with your leaders. It was my chance to -- my first chance to meet them. And it was -- an interesting thing about that meeting, by the way, is that every country in our hemisphere was represented, except one. We welcomed every country into the meeting, that had democratically-elected leadership. One notable absence, I might add: Cuba, they don't democratically elect their leader.

And the first, most important thing we discussed, besides preserving democracy in our hemisphere, was trade -- how to encourage more free trade. And that was a positive development.

We're also in negotiations now with Chile and Singapore on free trade agreements, and so we're now making good progress. But we've got to continue the momentum. I need the support of Congress on two urgent matters: trade promotion authority and the Andean trade preference act. Both are awaiting action in the Senate. Both sit waiting for the Senate to act. And both are essential to the economy of the United States.

The Trade Promotion Authority, sometimes members of Congress and I think people don't pay much attention to the issue, don't really understand how it works. The Trade Promotion Authority gives the executive branch the right to negotiate trade agreements. But Congress has the final authority to approve the agreements. It's not by granting me TPA that all of a sudden they dealt themselves out of the mix; quite the contrary. They passed it, they dealt themselves into the mix. They have a chance to ratify, up or down, a treaty.

But the good thing about TPA is it allows me to negotiate, or my administration negotiate, and then Congress gets to vote on the terms, up or down. And that's important for the nations represented in this world. It gives them confidence to negotiate a treaty with the United States without it being fine-tuned by numerous experts on the Hill, on what is right or wrong about trade.

It's important to have a platform for trade; and TPA provides that. Five presidents before me, Republicans and Democrats, have had this advantage in trade negotiations -- five of them. For two decades, trade promotion authority was a bipartisan commitment. It wasn't a political issue. It was a commitment, because it represented our national interest in expanding foreign markets. Those years saw many successes, and during the '90s, about one-quarter of our economic growth came as a result of exports. Our two major trade agreements, NAFTA and the Uruguay Round, have improved the average standard of living for Americans.

As importantly, NAFTA improved the average standard of living for Mexico and Canada. You see, the best policy for the United States is to hope our own neighborhood is prosperous. A prosperous and vibrant Mexico is good for the United States. You want your neighbors to do well. You want your neighborhood to be peaceful and prosperous, and NAFTA helped do that.

The other thing that's interesting about trade, is people think about trade and they think, well, trade is only good for big companies, only the multinational companies benefit from trade. I don't believe that's true. I know that since the role of governments to create an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish and realize his or her dreams, that trade opens up opportunities for the entrepreneur. And here's one example.

Excel Holdings is a company based in Leesburg, Virginia. We've got the owner here, which I'm about to name him here pretty quick. And I can see his wife and two -- and son and daughter, I might add. Their job -- let me just say, last year, they signed a \$35 million contract with a Mexican distributor. Excel's product serves an important purpose, as it can produce up to 5,000 gallons of purified drinking water each day.

Today, Excel maintains distributors in 13 countries. The owner, a fellow who came to the United States from Egypt, Hisham Fawzi, he's with us. Hisham, thank you for coming. Here's a guy who had a dream, he wanted to build and own his own company. That's an important part of the American experience, owning your own business, coming up with a good idea and working hard to see to it that the good idea works.

His idea, obviously, included markets around the world. In order for his business to succeed, he needed trade in more markets. There are thousands of entrepreneurs in America who benefit

nations through trade, and develop substitute products -- products that can be substituted for the quick buck in narcotics.

I hope Congress understands that. I hope Congress understands that the Andean trade preference act is a crucial part of making sure that our hemisphere is democratic and free and stable and secure. The United States Senate needs to affirm America's trade leadership, and bring both measures I've talked about today -- the trade promotion authority, and the Andean trade preference act -- to the floor by April 22nd.

Now, I've talked to enough members of the Senate, as have my staff, to know that there's enough Republicans and Democrats to pass both bills. And therefore the time of delay is over. On April 22nd I'd like to see the debate, and get them passed. These bills are good for America, these bills are good for our friends. The time of delay must end.

And by approving these measures, and other measures such as the generalized system of preferences, and an enhanced African trade bill, we will stand squarely with our friends in the world, recognizing that when we work together and when we trade together, the whole world can be more prosperous. We've got to seize the moment.

As you know, we fight off incredible terror. And we will. You don't have to worry about this administration. We're determined, and we're going to win against terror. And we've also got to fight off poverty and despair and hopelessness. And one way to do that is to encourage trade.

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come and share my thoughts. May God bless not only America, but all the nations of the world. (Applause.)

END 1:39 P.M. EST

And if you're concerned about helping people help themselves, we've got to trade with the developing world. And the facts are fantastic. The trade with the African nations as a result of AGOA has been \$1 billion worth of new commerce. It's the beginning of what we all hope is a prosperity, a boom in prosperity in parts of the world that have not been prosperous.

Oh, there's a lot of talk I hear about labor and environmental agreements. A prosperous nation is one more likely to take care of its workers. And a prosperous nation is one more likely, much more likely, to be able to afford the technology necessary to protect the environment.

And then, of course, trade creates the habits of freedom. If you welcome trade into your country, it creates the notion of freedom. It gives people, consumers, the opportunity to demand product, which is part of a free society. It creates an entrepreneurial class, which is a part of a free society.

And the habits of freedom begin to create the expectations of democracy and demands for better democratic institutions. Societies that open to commerce across their borders are more open to democracy within their borders. And for those of us who care about values and believe in values -- not just American values, but universal values that promote human dignity -- trade is a good way to do that.

It's a heck of a lot easier to promote human dignity and human rights through trade than it is through lectures. And it's very important for us to always remember that a -- as I mentioned earlier, a prosperous neighborhood, a democratic neighborhood and a peaceful neighborhood is in our nation's interests.

As a matter of fact, in all due respect to nations from around the world, the best foreign policy starts with making sure your own neighborhood is prosperous and safe and sound. And I -- as Colin mentioned, we have just come back -- or a while ago came back from a meeting with our friends in Central America and our friends in the Andean nations. And we had very constructive dialogue, but let me tell you what I heard.

I heard fine, democratically-elected leaders who are troubled by the fact that the United States Congress cannot yet respond to their simple desire to trade, their desire to expand and extend the Andean trade preference act.

It is important for these nations -- and all you've got to do is ask the Prime Minister or the ambassadors from the four countries with whom I met -- ask them the facts. That's what I ask the Senate to do. What does the Andean trade preference act mean to nations that protect and defend democracy and, at the same time, fight off narco-traffickers? Trade in this instance not only is important for their economies, it is important for their security. It is important that these nations be given market access so they can develop products other than coca, that the workers in their countries are not prone to need to work in the narcotics industry.

If we're serious about dealing with narcotics, not only will we work to reduce demand, as John Walters is going to do, but we've got to work in a constructive way, in a real way, with the Andean nations. And that means not only to work on interdiction, but it means helping these

from trade. Trade is not just good for mega-corporate America. Trade is very good for farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs, like our guest here today. I want to thank you for coming and thank you for working hard to realize the American Dream. And good luck in your business. (Applause.)

In eight years since the TPA, the trade promotion authority, expired, we have missed a lot of opportunity in America. And it's cost -- and when you miss opportunity, it tends to affect the average worker in our country.

More than 150 regional free trade and customs agreements exist throughout the world; the European Union is party to 31 of them; Mexico is party to 10; the world's largest economy is party to three. While we've been marking time, our competitors have been working, and they've been signing agreements. While we have been delaying, they've been trading.

Listen, I don't fault our trading partners for making progress. As a matter of fact, I would expect our trading partners to work hard to make progress. But what we need to do is to engage in competition ourselves. You see, when Americans

-- when there's a level playing field, we can compete. We're good at it. Fearful people build walls around America. Confident people make sure there are no walls.

And I am confident. I'm confident in America products, I'm confident in American entrepreneurs, I'm confident in the American worker, I'm confident in the American know-how, I'm confident in America's farmers, I'm confident in America's ranchers. And we need to be a trading nation. (Applause.)

And I'll submit agreements to Congress, when I have this authority, that will be in our nation's best interests. And we'll work hard to make sure we have good trade agreements that benefit both America and our trading partners. And if Congress doesn't like it, they can turn it down. But I need the authority. It's in our country's interest that I have the authority.

And it's also in our interest to bring confidence to countries around the world, to realize we're serious about it when we speak -- countries in our own neighborhood. I mean, trade promotion authority will help us establish the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. And that's going to be in our country's interests, in our neighborhood's interests to do that as well.

The other thing that's important about trade for our country to understand is that people who trade with America benefit. Trade is just not a one-way street. It is a positive relationship. It's important for Americans to understand that by trade, we help people and we help poor people, and we help people get lifted out of poverty.

Listen, we're a compassionate nation. There are a lot of people in our country who deeply care about Africa and countries in Africa, who deeply care about South America and Central America. These are countries that are fine countries, work hard, but they're poor countries.