



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
February 20, 2004

Presidential Letter

Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate
February 20, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002 (the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intent to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua (hereinafter "Central America").

This agreement will create new opportunities for Americas workers, farmers, businesses, and consumers by eliminating barriers in trade with Central America. Our Central American partners have made dramatic progress in transitioning from countries wracked by civil war to peaceful, democratic societies. This agreement will write a new page of our history with Central America -- one that depicts sustained engagement in support of democracy, peaceful regional integration, economic opportunity, and hope. This agreement is part of a broader strategy that my Administration is pursuing to expand economic opportunities and to promote economic growth and prosperity. We are also moving forward with negotiations to integrate the Dominican Republic in our FTA with Central America.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the United States- Central America FTA. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to develop appropriate legislation to approve and implement an historic free trade agreement with Central America.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

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