Order Code RL32638

CRS Report for Congress
Received through the CRS Web

Middle East Free Trade Area: Progress Report

Updated February 8, 2005

Mary Jane Bolle
Specialist in International Trade
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

Middle East Free Trade Area: Progress Report

Summary

On May 9, 2003, the Bush Administration proposed the establishment of a U.S. Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) within a decade (by about 2013). This proposal came a year and a half after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The MEFTA was billed as part of a plan to fight terrorism — in this case, by supporting the growth of Middle East prosperity and democracy — through trade. On June 23, 2003 the Bush Administration described a six-step process for Middle East entities to become part of that MEFTA: (1) joining the World Trade Organization; (2) possibly participating in the Generalized System of Preferences; successively entering into (3) trade investment framework agreements (TIFAs), (4) bilateral investment treaties (BITs), and (5) free trade agreements (FTA) with the United States; and (6) participating in trade capacity building.

The MEFTA would cover 20 entities in what many refer to as the Middle East/North Africa — 16 in the Middle East: Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, the Gaza Strip/West Bank, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen; and four in North Africa: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Although U.S.-Middle East trade is small (4-5% of total U.S. trade), oil and gas are key imports, accounting for roughly one-tenth of all oil and gas consumed in the United States each year. Textiles and apparel are the second most important imports from these entities. The most important U.S. exports to these entities are machinery and transportation equipment.

The Bush Administration's initiative aims to help diversify and improve the economies of the Middle East, provide jobs for the rapidly growing population, stimulate U.S. exports, and help Middle East countries make economic reforms — values echoed by *The 9-11 Commission Report* as part of a comprehensive strategy to countering terrorism.

Since the Bush Administration first announced its trade initiative, it has made substantial progress in working with MEFTA entities to develop TIFAs, BITs, and FTAs and progress along the steps outlined above. Since the beginning of 2003: TIFAS have been completed with five countries: Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, bringing the total to 11. Other TIFA partners are Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. BITs have been completed with one country, Jordan, bringing the total to five. Other BIT partners are Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Finally, bilateral free trade agreements have been implemented with Jordan, Israel, and Morocco. A signed FTA with Bahrain awaits consideration by Congress, which would raise the FTA total to four. In addition, on November 15, 2004, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced the Administration's intent to negotiate FTAs with the United Arab Emirates and Oman, as the 5th and 6th countries to have FTAs with the United States out of the 20 in MEFTA. This report will be updated.

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Middle East Free Trade Area: Progress Report

Introduction

After the terrorist attacks against the New York World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, a U.S. objective became, in the words of U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick, to fight terrorism by "spreading the message of prosperity and democracy throughout the world."[1] One way the Bush Administration chose to spread that message was through a proposed Middle East Free Trade Agreement (MEFTA).

The MEFTA Initiative was proposed by President Bush on May 9, 2003, and was slated for completion within a decade (i.e., by around 2013). More detail on the Bush Administration's plan was revealed on June 23, 2003 at the World Economic Forum in Jordan, when U.S. Trade Representative Zoellick spoke on the conceptual details. USTR Zoellick outlined six-steps for Middle East entities wishing to enter into a free trade agreement with the United States.

The purpose of this report is to describe MEFTA in terms of: (1) its impetus, (2) its major elements; (3) background trade data, (4) details; and (5) arguments for each.

At the back of this report are five tables. **Table 1** outlines the basic elements of MEFTA. **Table 2** tracks the steps each entity has taken toward a free trade agreement with the United States: WTO membership, eligibility for the Generalized System of Preferences, and achievement of three types of agreements — trade investment framework agreements, bilateral investment treaties, and free trade agreements. **Tables 3 and 4** list for each entity, U.S. import and export totals and shares of key commodities traded. **Table 5** shows the current value and share of world and U.S. foreign direct investment, respectively, in various entities.

Impetus for the Initiative

MEFTA captured an idea that was already being debated in Washington — using trade as a tool to fight terrorism. For example, in February 2003, a report by policy analyst Edward Gresser argued that the Muslim world had been the "blank spot" on the U.S. trade agenda, a fact that risked "undermining rather than supporting the war on terrorism." Gresser pointed to an economic crisis affecting almost all of the western Muslim states, which have "seen their share of world trade and

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[1] "A Man of Many Missions." *Business Week*. March 31, 2003, p. 94-95.

investment collapse since 1980," resulting in "stagnant growth, [and] falling income," with social consequences of "unemployment, political tension, and rising appeal for religious extremists."[2]

Gresser argued that, "A strategic initiative for the Muslim[3] world could end — or at least ease — the tilt." Gresser called for an initiative "analogous to the programs now available for Central America, the Andean Nations, and Africa" in order to possibly spark "growth and creation, and so reduce the attraction of radicalism and religious fundamentalism."

Another article written by policy analyst Brink Lindsey of the CATO Institute argued for two concepts. The first was an additional shorter-term program to include "temporary duty-free, quota-free access to the U.S. market for exports of selected Muslim countries." The shorter term program, he declared, would give tangible, dramatic proof of U.S. commitment to the region, thereby providing an impetus for the longer, arduous process of negotiating free trade agreements. The second concept Lindsey called for was the expansion of the definition of "Middle East" beyond the traditional geographic area to include other countries with "geopolitical significance."[4]

More recently, *The 9-11 Commission Report* affirmed these ideas. It included a recommendation which reads, "A comprehensive U.S. strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance prospects for their children's future."[5]

Major Elements

The Bush Administration's MEFTA plan, in aiming to support economic development, job creation, and political, and humanitarian changes, reflects elements of the two articles referred to above:

- **Primary Focus.** The primary focus of the Bush Administration's plan would be on the long-term establishment of a Middle East Free Trade Area by around 2013.

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[2] Gresser, Edward. *Blank Spot on the Map: How Trade Policy is Working Against the War on Terror*. Public Policy Institute. February 2003. Unemployment in the Middle East in 1999 averaged roughly 25%. Source: The Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran and Turkey. *Economic Trends in the MENA Region*, 2002.

[3] All but two of the entities that would be covered by the initiatives (Israel and Cyprus) are at least two-thirds Muslim.

[4] Lindsey, Brink. *The Trade Front: Combating Terrorism with Open Markets*. CATO Institute. August 5, 2003.

[5] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *The 9-11 Commission Report*, released on August 29, 2004.

- **Short-Run Trade Preference Program.** The Bush Administration's short-run trade preference component would be to continue the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) currently available to some Middle East countries. The Bush Administration is also considering offering sub-regional groups within the Middle East some eligibility to export goods to the United States tariff free or at reduced tariffs.

- **Long-Term Plan.** The Bush Administration's long-term plan would be for eligible countries to: (1) join the World Trade Organization and then sequentially enter into (2) trade investment framework agreements (TIFAs), (3) bilateral investment treaties (BITs), and (4) free trade agreements (FTAs) with the United States. Once a country has entered into an FTA with the United States, other neighboring countries could achieve some FTA tariff benefits by "cooperatively producing" (with two or more countries contributing to the same product) with that country.

- **Definition of "Middle East."** The Bush Administration's plan uses the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative definition of "Middle East" and includes countries traditionally identified as in the Middle East or North Africa.[6] (See **Figure 1**.)

- **Eligibility Requirements** The Bush Administration's plan specifies very few eligibility requirements for countries wishing to join the MEFTA.

Figure 1. Entities Included in the Bush Administration's Definition of "Middle East / North Africa"

Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (K. Yancey 10/4/04)

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[6] Iran, Libya, and Syria are countries the United States has considered as state sponsors of terrorism. *Inside U.S. Trade*. May 30, 2003; and Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. *Transcript of Background Press Conference Call to Discuss Proposed Mideast Free Trade Area Announced by President Bush*, May 9, 2003.

Some Key Indicators of U.S. Economic Ties to the Middle East

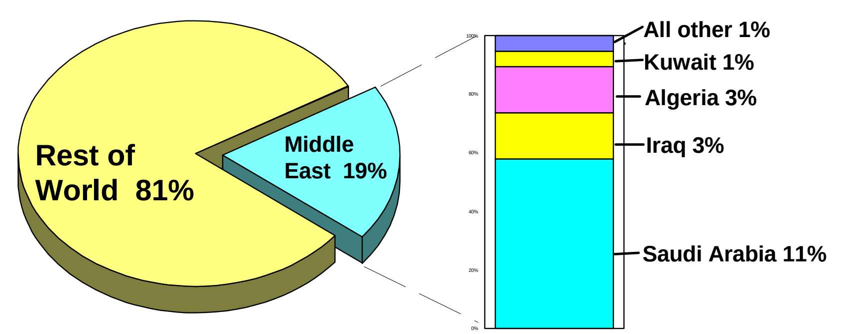
U.S. trade with the Middle East is small. U.S. trade with the 20 Middle East entities covered in this report accounted for less than 4% of all U.S. exports and less than 5% of all U.S. imports in 2003. An important U.S. economic interest in the Middle East, however, is oil and gas.

U.S. Imports

More than 56% of all oil and gas *consumed* in the United States each year is imported: 10% is imported from the Middle East, 46 % is imported from other countries, and 44% is produced domestically.

Figure 2 below looks at just the *imported* oil and gas and shows where it comes from. Of all imported oil and gas, close to one-fifth (19%) comes from Middle East countries. Of that, nearly half (11%) comes from Saudi Arabia, and the following countries contribute lesser amounts: Iraq (3%), Algeria (3%), Kuwait (1%), and all others (1%). (See **Figure 2** below.)[7]

Figure 2. Sources of Total U.S. Oil and Gas Imports, 2003

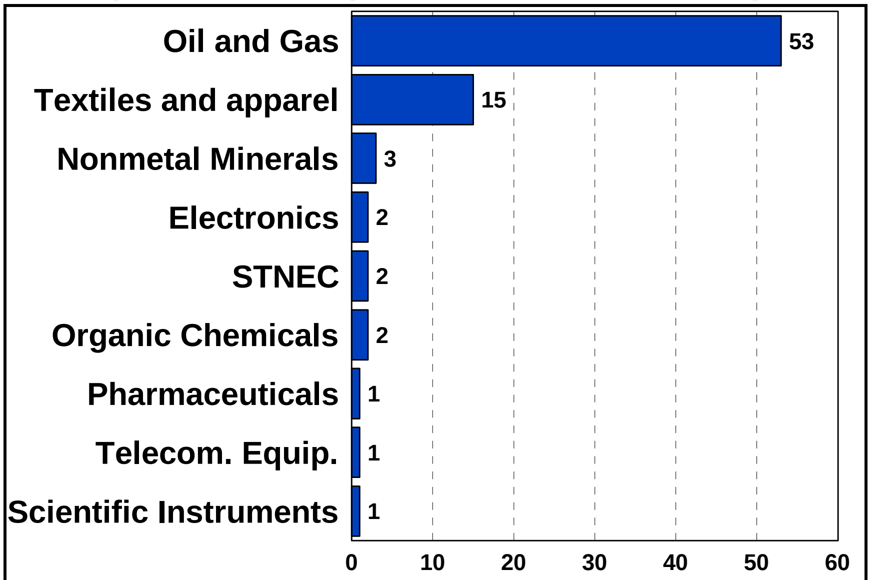


Data Source: USITC Dataweb

Imports of oil and gas from the Middle East constitute a little more than half (53%) of *total* U.S. imports from that region. (See **Figure 3**.) After gas and oil, the next most important imports from Middle East countries are textiles and apparel, which together account for another 15% of U.S. imports from the Middle East. Other key import categories are diverse — nonmetallic minerals (3%), electronics (2%), organic chemicals (2%), pharmaceuticals (1%), telecommunications equipment (1%), and scientific instruments (1%).

[7] U.S. Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy. *Monthly Energy Review*, February, 2004.

Figure 3. Key U.S. Imports from the Middle East, 2003 (as a % of all imports from the Middle East)



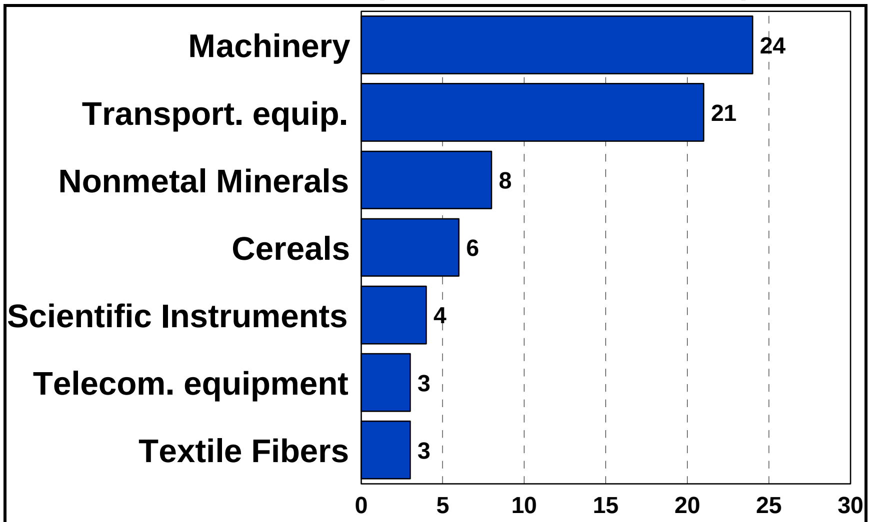
Data source: USITC Dataweb; STNEC: military items returned to U.S.

U.S. Exports

U.S. *exports* to Middle East countries are also heavily concentrated in two industries: machinery and transportation equipment.[8] One quarter (24%) of U.S. exports to Middle East countries is machinery of various types: general industrial machinery, machinery specialized for particular industries, power generating machinery, electrical machinery, and office machinery. An additional one-fifth (21%) of U.S. exports to Middle East countries is transportation equipment including various types of road vehicles. Other key exports include nonmetallic minerals (8%), cereals (6%), scientific instruments (4%), telecommunications equipment (3%) and textile fibers (3%). (See **Figure 4**.)

[8] The Middle East, in general, has high barriers to trade. While the "weighted mean tariffs" (the mean tariffs after the proportion of goods imported for each category is factored in) of some countries are under 10%, they average more than 20% for many other countries, including Egypt (21%), Algeria (22%), Morocco (32%), and Tunisia (31%) Source: The World Bank. *World Development Indicators '03*, p. 327.

Figure 4. Top U.S. Exports to the Middle East, 2003 (as a % of all U.S. Exports to the Middle East)



Data source: USITC Dataweb

Appendix Tables 3 and 4 detail U.S. imports from and exports to each of the 20 Middle East entities covered by this report. Those tables include, for each country: (a) the total value of U.S. imports or exports, (b) the main items imported or exported, and (c) the percent of total imports/exports represented by each key commodity.

U.S. Investment

U.S. investment in the Middle East is limited. The stock of U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) in Middle East countries in 2002 totaled $17.1 billion, or 1.1% of total U.S. FDI. However, U.S. FDI represents nearly one-quarter of world FDI in the Middle East. (See **Table 5** for world and U.S. FDI totals in the various entities.) Half of the U.S. total is in two key sectors: mining 26% (primarily oil and gas), and manufacturing (25%). The remaining 49% of U.S. foreign direct investment in the Middle East is distributed throughout the service sector — especially the information sector (13%), and professional, scientific and technical services (7%).[9] In addition, Americans may have considerable portfolio investment in Israel including Israeli bonds.

Recent Growth in Trade With MEFTA Entities

Between the end of 2002 and the end of 2003 (most recent data available), U.S. exports to Middle East/North African countries declined by 1% while U.S. imports from these entities increased 24%. The greatest growth in imports was in petroleum and natural gas. Petroleum imports increased 38% while natural gas imports

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[9] Data source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Economics and Statistics Administration. U.S. Department of Commerce. *Survey of Current Business*, September, 2003, p. 121.

increased 118%. Other major sectors which showed increases in imports include apparel (9%), textiles (8%), and medicinal and pharmaceutical products (32%).

Details of the MEFTA Program

MEFTA can be examined in terms of four basic components: (a) trade preferences, (b) steps or activities leading toward free trade agreements, (c) requirements for country eligibility, and (d) time lines for each initiative. An overview chart outlining these components is included as **Table 1.**

Trade Preference Components

In the short run, the Bush Administration would continue the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) which includes duty-free entry to the U.S. market for at least 3,500 products from 140 developing countries. The following Middle East countries are currently eligible for GSP benefits: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Remaining countries covered by this report are not eligible for GSP benefits. Of those not eligible, some are no longer considered "developing."[10] Others do not meet the Bush Administration's eligibility requirements. GSP limits country participation on the basis of: (a) per-capita income, and (b) participation in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). It also limits product preferences on the basis of import sensitivity.[11]

Steps or Activities Leading Toward Free Trade Agreements[12]

The Bush Administration's proposed program consists of six steps which each country may take, culminating in a free trade agreement with the United States. The second step, GSP participation, was discussed above as the trade preference component. **Table 1** lists each country included in the USTR definition of Middle East / North Africa, and for each country indicates which steps it has already fulfilled. The other five steps are:

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[10] For example, Bahrain is scheduled to "graduate" from the GSP program on January 1, 2006.

[11] Only nine out of the 20 entities covered by the two Middle East Trade Initiatives are already eligible for GSP (as indicated in **Table 2.**) GSP provisions [U.S. Trade Act of 1974 as amended (19U.S.C. 2461)] specifically exclude from tariff preferences certain textiles and apparel (the second most important export category from these Middle East entities), watches, footwear, handbags, luggage, flat goods (e.g. wallets and briefcases), work gloves, and other leather wearing apparel, steel, glass, and electronics. As a result, for the 20 Middle East entities covered by this report, imports under GSP represent only a fraction (2% for 2003) of all imports from these entities.

[12] These steps are taken from Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). *Trade Facts*, June 23, 2003. Additional explanatory material is taken from Office of the USTR. *Transcript of Background Press Conference Call to Discuss Proposed Mideast Free Trade Area Announced by President Bush*, May 9, 2003 (hereafter referred to as "Transcript of May 9, 2003.") This transcript specifies that the USTR official holding the press briefing be identified only as a "senior administration official."

First. World Trade Organization (WTO) membership to promote integration into the world trading system. Nine Middle East entities are not yet members of the WTO: the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, Algeria, and Libya.

Second. The continuation of GSP, discussed above.

Third. Trade and investment framework agreements (TIFAs) to establish a framework for expanding trade and for resolving outstanding disputes. Eight Middle East entities do not have TIFAs with the United States: Cyprus, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Syria, and Libya,

Fourth. Bilateral investment treaties (BITs) oblige governments to treat foreign investors fairly and to offer them legal protections equal to those afforded domestic investors. BITs make the business climate more attractive to U.S. companies. The following 14 Middle East entities do not have BITs with the United States: Cyprus, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Algeria, and Libya.

Fifth. Free trade agreements (FTAs), typically to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade across all sectors. Currently three countries in the Middle East — Israel, Jordan, and Morocco — have congressionally-approved free trade agreements with the United States. In addition, the United States completed negotiations on a free trade agreement with Bahrain on September 14, 2004; it awaits consideration by Congress.

The Bush Administration is considering including "cumulation clauses" which would afford sub-regional groups within the Middle East some eligibility to export goods to the United States tariff-free or at reduced tariffs. Stipulations would likely require that (1) those goods be produced in concert with a neighboring country which already has a free trade agreement, and that (2) the exported products meet rules of origin requirements.[13] Under the Bush Administration's initiative, now that the FTA is implemented with Morocco, and once it is implemented with Bahrain (should Congress approve the FTA with Bahrain), for example, other North African countries might be able to "dock" with and co-produce with Morocco; and other Gulf countries could "dock" with and co-produce with Bahrain. So, for example, to qualify for tariff benefits under a U.S.-Bahrain FTA, products could be jointly produced by Bahrain and Qatar or Oman or the United Arab Emirates, or a combination of the named countries.[14] The program whereby Jordan, Egypt, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank

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[13] U.S. Department of State. *Middle East Trade Initiative*. Office of the USTR, February 27, 2003.

[14] Office of the USTR. *Transcript of Joint Press Conference: Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Jordanian Foreign Minister Marqan Muasher, Robert B. Zoellick, U.S. Trade Representative, Jordanian Minister of Trade Salah Bashir, Movenpick Hotel, Dead Sea*, June 23, 2003.

were authorized gain tariff relief by co-producing with Israel under the U.S.-Israel free trade agreement is an example of this concept.[15]

In addition, on September 8, 2004, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick reportedly said that the Bush Administration is considering initiating free trade agreement negotiations with the United Arab Emirates and Oman. The 9/11 Commission study endorsed "economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities" in the Middle East. [16]

Sixth. The final step in the Bush Administration's plan is trade-capacity building to help countries realize more fully the benefits of open markets (e.g., build the "legal entrepreneurial infrastructure.") The Middle East Partnership Initiative would help allocate structural adjustment funding to partner countries to help ease the burden of free trade's impact on local industries. The initiative would also be aimed at increasing educational opportunities, strengthening civil society and rule of law, and supporting small business.[17] The Middle East Partnership Initiative would help target more than $1 billion of annual funding from various Government agencies and spur partnerships with private organizations and businesses that support trade and development. For 2003, funding for U.S. Trade Capacity Building totaled $752 million, of which $174 million, or 23% went to Middle East countries.[18]

Requirements for Eligibility

The Bush Administration's plan is open to: a) those "peaceful" countries that seek an increased trade relationship with the United States and b) "all those countries that are prepared to participate in economic reform and liberalization." Eligible countries must among other things: (1) "be prepared to participate in economic reform and liberalization," and (2) not participate in a primary, secondary, or tertiary boycott of Israel.[19]

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[15] Under this legislation, goods wholly produced by the Gaza Strip or the West Bank could also enter the United States duty-free under the terms of the U.S.-Israel free trade agreement.

[16] This speech is not listed on the USTR Website. However, it is referenced in the Bureau of National Affairs, *International Trade Reporter,* September 16, 2004.

[17] CRS Report RS21457, *The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview,* by Jeremy M. Sharp.

[18] U.S. Agency for International Development. *U.S. Contributions to Trade Capacity Building,* September, 2003, p. 2.

[19] Office of the USTR. *Transcript of May 9, 2003;* and *Global Trade and the Middle East: Reawakening a Vibrant Past, Robert B. Zoellick, USTR, Remarks at the World Economic Forum, Dead Sea, Jordan,* June 23, 2003. The primary boycott of Israel banned all trade relationships with Israeli companies; the secondary boycott prohibited any entity in the League of Arab States* from doing business with other firms that contribute to Israel's military or economic development; the tertiary boycott was the injunction on Arab countries from doing business with foreign companies that had been blacklisted because of their ties with Israel. Source: "U.S. Government to Enforce Laws in Face of Arab League Threat to Israeli Trade," *Global Business Magazine*. Oct 10, 2002.

* The 22 members of the League of Arab States are Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan,

(continued...)

Time Line

The Bush Administration aims for a Middle East Free Trade Area within 10 years (by about 2013).

Progress So Far

According to the Bush Administration, each of the steps listed above would aim to address political, economic, and humanitarian objectives in order to help Middle East countries to become "sustainable trading partners."[20] The hope is that each of the successive steps involved in negotiating TIFAs, BITs, and FTAs might help induce internal changes in the laws and regulations of the various countries.

Since the MEFTA program was announced in 2003, the United States has negotiated new TIFAS with five countries (Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). (See **Table 2**.) Thus, more than half the MEFTA entities (11) now have TIFAs with the United States. Other countries with which it already has TIFAS are Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Since the MEFTA program was announced, a BIT between the United States and Jordan has been fully approved. As a result, the United States currently has BITs with one-quarter (5) out of 20 of the MEFTA entities. Other countries with which the United States already had BITS were Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Since the MEFTA program was announced, the United States has completed bilateral trade agreements with two countries: Bahrain and Morocco. The President signed implementing legislation for the Morocco FTA in August, 2004, P.L. 108-302. The U.S.-Bahrain FTA is awaiting consideration by Congress of implementing legislation. Thus, currently one-fifth (4) of the MEFTA entities have signed trade agreements with the United States; one of those awaits consideration by Congress. Other countries with which the United States already had trade agreements were Israel and Jordan. In addition, on November 15, 2004, USTR Zoellick announced the Administration's intent to negotiate FTAs with the UAE and Oman.

Conclusion

The MEFTA would aim to help stimulate greater economic development in the Middle East. Shorter term goals from these stimuli would be: (a) for the region to grow enough to begin absorbing some of the unemployment (which averages around

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[19] (...continued)
Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Palestine, Somalia, and Sudan.

[20] Transcript of Background Press Conference Call to Discuss Proposed Mideast Free Trade Area Announced by President Bush, May 9, 2003.

22%)[21] — arguably the region's most pressing economic problem; and (b) for the region to begin attracting more foreign investment to help diversify output beyond oil and gas, textiles and apparel, and a few other commodities. As the shorter term stretches into the longer term, goals would be for the Middle East to develop alternative economic resources and industries that could help ease and even reverse its declining share of world economic growth and investment, its unemployment, and perhaps some of the conditions in the Middle East that support terrorism.

[21] Galal, Ahmed and Bernard Hoekman, editors. *Arab Economic Integration: Between Hope and Reality*. Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, *2003*. p. 29. (The data were based on The World Bank. *World Development Indicators '01* CD-ROM. This unemployment estimate is slightly smaller than that included in **footnote 2**. This different estimate is included here to show a range of estimates on a subject: (a) that is difficult to quantify, (b) that suffers from statistical problems, and (c) whose numbers may vary from year to year and may also depend on the countries included in the various estimates.)

Table 1. Brief Summary of the MEFTA Initiative

MEFTA Entities	**Middle East:** Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Gaza Strip/West Bank, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen **North Africa:** Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia,
Efforts Toward a Middle East Free Trade Agreement or Area	Steps for each entity:* 1. World Trade Organization Membership; 2. GSP; 3. Trade Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA); 4. Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT); 5. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to which other eligible countries may "dock"; and 6. Trade capacity building (through various U.S. assistance efforts.)
Time line of the initiative	Aim for MEFTA "within 10 years" (i.e., by 2013.)
Requirements for eligibility	The Bush Administration has indicated that the entities need: • to be "peaceful"; • to be prepared to undertake economic reform and liberalization; • to not participate in a primary, secondary, or tertiary boycott of Israel.

* See **Table 2** for the status of various entities.

Table 2. Entities Covered by the MEFTA: Progress toward a Bilateral Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.

	Steps Toward an FTA with the United States				
MEFTA Entity[a]	**WTO Membership and year of joining**	**GSP Eligibility**	**TIFA with the U.S. and Year TIFA was signed**	**BIT with the U.S. and year BIT was signed**	**Bilateral Trade Agreement with the U.S.**
Middle East					
Bahrain	✚1995	✚[a]	✚ 2002	✚2001	✚2004 (awaiting congressional approval)
Cyprus	✚1995				
Egypt	✚1995	✚	✚1999	✚1992	See table note c
Gaza Strip and West Bank					See table note c
Iran					
Iraq					
Israel	✚1995		—	—	✚1985
Jordan	✚2000	✚	✚[b]	✚2003	✚2001
Kuwait	✚1995		✚2004		
Lebanon		✚			
Oman	✚2000	✚	✚ 2004		under negotiation
Qatar	✚1996				
Saudi Arabia			✚2003		
Syria					
United Arab Emirates	✚1996		✚2004		under negotiation
Yemen		✚	✚2004		
North Africa					
Algeria		✚	✚2001		
Libya					
Morocco	✚1995	✚	✚[b]	✚1991	✚2004
Tunisia	✚1995	✚	✚2002	✚1993	

Source of data on WTO membership and agreements: World Trade Organization and USTR.

a. According to the USTR office, Bahrain is scheduled to "graduate" from the GSP program January 1, 2006.

b. The USTR *2004 Trade Policy Agenda and 2003 Annual Report*, p. 143 indicates that these TIFAS are in existence, but the USTR website listing of TIFAS does not specify the dates.

c. Goods are eligible for free trade benefits with the United States under a1996 amendment to the United States-Israel Free Trade Area Implementation Act of 1985, P.L. 104-234. Goods must co-produced with Israel, Jordan, or Egypt in a qualifying industrial zone meeting rules of origin requirements, or may be wholly produced in the Gaza Strip or West Bank.

Table 3. Top U.S. Imports (and % of total that they represent) from 20 Middle East Entities, 2003

Entity	Value of U.S. Imports ($million)	Main U.S. imports and % of all U.S. imports from these entities that they represent	
Saudi Arabia	18,047	petroleum (96%), chemicals (3%)	= 99%
Israel	11,823	apparel (86%), misc. mfg.(8%) STNC* (4%)	= 98%
Iraq	4,574	petroleum (100%)	= 100%
Algeria	4,753	petroleum (86%), natural gas (13%)	= 99%
Kuwait	2,276	petroleum (93 %) , STNC* (2%), apparel (2%)	= 97%
United Arab Emirates	1,102	apparel (23%), petroleum (21%), STNC* (13%)	= 63%
Egypt	1,096	apparel (34%), petroleum (15%), textiles (13%)	= 62%
Oman	695	petroleum (57%), apparel (19%), STNC* (10)	= 86%
Jordan	670	apparel (86%), misc. (8%), STNC*(4%)	= 98%
Bahrain	378	apparel (43%), STNC* (22%), non-ferrous metals (10%)	= 75%
Morocco	369	electronics (23%),apparel (20%), fertilizer (18%), petrol. (15%)**	= 61%
Qatar	331	apparel (26%), gas (18%), fertilizer (17%)	= 61%
Syria	258	petroleum (77%), apparel (12%), misc. mfg. (4%)	= 93%
Iran	161	textiles (80%), Misc. mfg. (12%), fish (5%)	= 92%
Tunisia	96	apparel (34%),petroleum (24%), iron & steel (9%)	= 67%
Lebanon	88	misc manufacturing (22%), tobacco (22), furniture (12%)	= 56%
Yemen	66	petroleum (90%), coffee, tea (7%)	= 97%
Cyprus	24	STNC* (42%), apparel (14%),dairy (6%)	= 62%
Libya	0		
Gaza Strip/the West Bank	0		
TOTAL	48,650		

Source: U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) Dataweb, based on the Standard Industrial Trade Classification (SITC).

Note: No data are available for the West Bank/Gaza Strip, or Libya.

* "STNC" refers to "special transactions not classified" According to the Department of Commerce, these exports are typically military items that are returned to the United States.

** petroleum is not counted in the top three exports.

Table 4. Top U.S. Exports (and % of total that they represent) from 20 Middle East Entities (2003)

Entity	Value of U.S. exports ($million)	Main U.S. Exports and % of all U.S. exports to these entities that they represent	
Israel	6,878	nonmetals (30%), transport equip (11%), electronics (8%)	= 49%
Saudi Arabia	4,596	machinery (28%), transport equip. (25%)	= 53%
United Arab Emirates	3,510	transport equip. (30%), machinery (29%)	= 59%
Egypt	2,660	cereals (29%), transport equip. (14%), machinery (16%)	= 59%
Kuwait	1,509	transport equip. (38%), machinery (21%), telecom. equip. (4%)	= 44%
Bahrain	509	transport vehicles (55%), machinery (11%)	= 66%
Jordan	492	transport equip. (32%), cereals (9%), telecom. equip. (7%)	= 48%
Algeria	487	cereals (29%), machinery (26%), animal food (8%)	= 63%
Morocco	465	Transport equip. (28%), cereals & seeds (28%), machinery (7%)	= 63%
Qatar	408	Machinery (50%), transport. equip. (17%), scientific inst. (7%)	= 74%
Cyprus	327	transport equip. (74%), cereals (3%), tobacco (3%)	= 80%
Iraq	316	machinery (57%), food (25%)	= 82%
Oman	323	machinery (34%),Transport. equip (29%)	= 63%
Lebanon	314	transport equip. (14%), tobacco (13%), cereal % seeds (15%)	= 42%
Syria	214	cereals (32%), machinery (22%), tobacco (7%)	= 61%
Yemen	195	cereals (36%), machinery (35%)	= 71%
Tunisia	171	cereals (24%), veg. oils (19%), transport. equip. (6%)	= 49%
Iran	99	oil seeds (44%), tobacco (34%), pharmaceuticals (6%)	= 84%
Gaza Strip / the West Bank	0		
Libya	0	cereals (92%), electronics (6%)	= 98%
TOTAL	23,474		

Source: USITC Dataweb, based on the Standard Industrial Trade Classification (SITC).
Note: No data are available for the West Bank/Gaza Strip, or Libya.

Table 5. Foreign Direct Investment in Middle East Entities: Stock of Investment by the World, 2000 and by the United States, 2002

($ Millions)

Entity	Stock of World Foreign Direct Investment, 2000		Stock of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment, 2002	
	Value in $ millions	% of world total	Value in $ millions	% of U.S. total
World	6,314,271	100	1,520,965	100
Total Middle East	96,700	1.38	17,113	1.11
Algeria	1,407	0.02		
Bahrain	5,908	0.09		
Egypt	19,005	0.30	2,959	0.19
Iran	2,115	0.02		
Israel	NA		5,207	0.34
Jordan	1,771	0.02		
Kuwait	527	0.01		
Lebanon	998	0.02		
Morocco	5,848	0.02		
Oman	2,517	0.01		
Qatar	1,987	0.03		
Saudi Arabia	28,845	0.46	3,687	0.24
Syria	1,338	0.02		
Tunisia	11,566	0.18		
United Arab Emirates	2,645	0.04	1,398	0.09
Yemen	888	0.01		
Other Middle East (non-identified)			3,862	0.25

NA: Not available

Source: For World: Economic Research Forum. *Economic Trends in the MENA Region, 2002* p. 52; for the United States: *Survey of Current Business*, September, 2003, p. 121.