

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Antigua Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 16, 2005.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, With Annexes

May 16, 2005

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, with Annexes (the “WCPF Convention”), which was adopted at Honolulu on September 5, 2000, by the Multilateral High Level Conference on the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The United States signed the Convention on that date. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Secretary of State with respect to the WCPF Convention.

The WCPF Convention sets forth legal obligations and establishes cooperative mechanisms that are needed in order to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks (such as tuna, swordfish, and marlin) that range across extensive areas of the high seas as well as through waters under the fisheries jurisdiction of numerous coastal States. These constitute resources of worldwide importance, with the fisheries for tuna in the Western and Central Pacific being the largest and most valuable in the world. Implementation of the WCPF Convention will offer the opportunity to conserve and manage these resources responsibly before they become subject to the pressures of overfishing and over-

capacity that are so evident elsewhere in the world’s oceans.

The WCPF Convention builds upon the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The WCPF Convention gives effect to the provisions of these two instruments, which recognize cooperation to conserve highly migratory fish stocks as essential, and require those with direct interests in them—coastal States with authority to manage fishing in waters under their jurisdiction and nations whose vessels fish for these stocks—to engage in such cooperation through regional fishery management organizations.

The WCPF Convention balances in an equitable fashion the interests of coastal States, notably the island States that comprise the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), in protecting important fishery resources off their shores, and the interests of distant water fishing States, notably Asian fishing nations and entities (Japan, Republic of Korea, China, and Taiwan), whose fishing vessels range far from their own shores.

The United States, which played an instrumental role in achieving this balance, has direct and important interests in the WCPF Convention and its early and effective implementation. The United States is both a major distant water fishing nation (with the fourth-largest catch in the region) and an important coastal State with significant Exclusive Economic Zone waters in the region (including the waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands).

United States fishing concerns, including the U.S. tuna industry, U.S. conservation organizations, and U.S. consumers, as well as those residents of Hawaii and the U.S. Flag Pacific island areas of Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, all have a crucial stake in the health of the oceans and their resources as promoted by the WCPF Convention.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the WCPF

Convention and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 16, 2005.

**Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony
for Robert J. Portman as United
States Trade Representative**

May 17, 2005

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm pleased to congratulate a distinguished public servant, Rob Portman, on becoming our new United States Trade Representative.

It's an honor to be with Rob's dad as well as Jane and Jed and Will and Sally. Glad you all are here. It's always great when our Trade Representative has teenagers in the house. [Laughter] It helps him become a skilled negotiator. [Laughter] I appreciate the other members of the Portman family who have joined us.

I thank members of my Cabinet who are here. Josh Bolten, thank you for coming. I appreciate Peter Allgeier, who is the Deputy U.S. Trade Minister. Peter, good to see you, sir.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who came, David Camp from Michigan, Paul Ryan from Wisconsin—and Janna. I appreciate—I'm not through yet—[laughter]—

Audience member. I'm sorry, sir. [Laughter]

The President. —and Melissa Hart. Rick Lazio, former Member, thank you for coming.

I want to thank the Ambassadors who are here, diplomatic corps, *embajadores de Central America*, as well as other ambassadors—welcome.

Ambassador Portman will be carrying on the superb work done by Bob Zoellick. Under Ambassador Zoellick's outstanding leadership, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office has worked with Congress to pass trade promotion authority. We've completed free trade agreements with 12 nations on 5 continents. And those agreements will open a combined market of 124 million consumers for America's farmers, small businesses, and manufacturers. I want to thank all the men

and women at the USTR for the good work they have done.

Ambassador Portman is the right man to carry on this important work. He has a great record as a champion of free and fair trade. In his early days as an attorney, he specialized in international trade law. Throughout his time in Congress, he built a reputation as a steadfast proponent of the power of open markets to spread hope and prosperity around the world. As an Ohioan, Rob knows how much American farmers and workers depend on our export markets and how the expansion of agreements around the world can contribute to our economy here at home.

To advance our trade agenda, we have three priorities in the months ahead. Our first trade priority is to pass the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, known as CAFTA. That is an important priority of this administration, and it should be an important priority of the United States Congress. Last week, I met with the six Presidents from the nations. We all share an interest in prosperity for our people and peace in the region, and CAFTA gives us an historic opportunity to advance these common goals.

The agreement does four key things: It will level the playing field for American farmers and businesses; it will help our economy; it will make the region more competitive with Asia; and it will strengthen democracy in our backyard. At the moment, about 80 percent of imports from the region already enter the United States duty-free. Our market is open to the goods from CAFTA nations. CAFTA will open the region's markets of 44 million consumers to our goods and our services and our crops. CAFTA will also lower barriers in key segments like textiles. This would put CAFTA countries and America in a better position to compete with low-cost producers in Asia.

As it opens the Western Hemisphere markets, CAFTA will also bring the stability and security that can only come from freedom. Today, a part of the world that was once characterized by unrest and dictatorship now sees its future in free elections and free trade, and we must not take these gains for granted. These are small nations, but they are making big and brave commitments, and America