



CHAIRMAN
Representative Todd Tiahrt



Free Trade Must Be Fair Trade **Airbus Tanker Contract is a Prime Example of Unfair Trade Practices**

Dear Colleague:

March 11, 2008

Free trade is crucial to our economic growth – but only if it is fair. We are suffering from a trade imbalance – and that is due in no small part to our own government’s inaction. In an attempt to help increase the global economy, especially that of our allies, we granted special waivers to NATO countries and other nations. Unfortunately, these waivers are now used to gain advantage over American competitors. Combined with subsidies from their own nations – legal and illegal – foreign companies can often bid for contracts at a lower price than American companies.

The Air Force’s decision to award their Tanker contract to a French company rather than an American company highlights the problem with unfair trade that our employers face every day. There are steps we can take to make sure that American businesses get a fair deal in the world market. In reviewing our trade agreements we should make sure our exports are treated the same as every one else. This includes equalizing tax rates, ensuring balanced tariffs, and preventing currency manipulation. Protecting American exports should be foremost in any trade agreements Congress reviews and any trade policy we consider. The ultimate goal should be to put American businesses and American workers at the top of the global supply chain.

The US government should stand up for American employers at the WTO and with individual governments to make sure that our companies have a level playing field on which to compete. We need to target the subsidies and waivers that give foreign investors an edge on their American competitors.

It is time for Congress to stand up and do something about this. I encourage my colleagues concerned about our economic and national security to pressure the Pentagon to examine this decision to determine why it is in our best interest to create French jobs. Our government needs to stop making it harder for Americans to compete. If we can’t protect American defense jobs, how can we trust that other jobs will be protected?

We should have an American tanker built by an American company with American workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Todd Tiahrt'.

Todd Tiahrt
Member of Congress