



November 16, 1993

To Members of Congress

During the last twenty-five years, the five of us often had occasion to differ with each other. On the issue of the North American Free Trade Agreement, however, we are united in our belief that its approval is crucial for our nation.

Like you, we have all experienced the loneliness of making difficult decisions that were unpopular but which we believed were in the best interests of our nation. An intense and vocal minority have been effective in making known their opposition to NAFTA. We ask you not to confuse their noise with public opinion and not to confuse the insecurity of the moment with the long-term interests of our country.

We acknowledge that there can be honest differences of opinion about the short-range impact on specific industries. However, there is no doubt that from a long-term perspective, NAFTA will be extremely beneficial to the workers, employers, and strategic interests of America.

NAFTA represents a turning point for America. If you vote against it, the role of the United States as a world leader will be severely damaged, and the prosperity of the United States and the international economy will be endangered.

We all went into public life to do the right thing. The right thing for America is to approve NAFTA. When you look back on your career, this will be one of the decisions that you will remember, and the question you will want to ask of yourself - and the question historians will ask of your career - is whether at this crucial moment you stood together with the President in trying to maintain and advance U.S. leadership in the world, or whether you voted for protectionism and isolationism.

You are fortunate to be in the Congress at this moment. Your decision will be historic, and if you vote to approve the agreement, you will be proud of that decision. Like our courageous forefathers who signed our nation's declaration of independence, you have the opportunity to sign your name on the right side of America's history.

Sincerely,

Paul Nitze
Herold R. Ford
Jimmy Carter
Ronald Reagan
Ge Bush