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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

March 9, 1981

Dear Friend:

I have reintroduced my bill, S. 432, to establish an International Antitrust Task Force. For many years, I have been troubled by widespread complaints that our antitrust laws have straightjacketed U.S. firms in international trade, and I think it is time we took a long, hard look at the effect these laws have had on our deteriorating trade position in the international marketplace.

In December, the President's Export Council submitted its final report. It concluded that we could do a great deal to improve our export effort, particularly by removing self-imposed disincentives to exports. The Council recommended that we make a concerted effort to facilitate U.S. exports and overseas operations by freeing U.S. firms from unnecessary antitrust constraints. To help accomplish this goal, the Council specifically recommended the enactment of S. 432.

The International Antitrust Task Force would provide a forum to examine the whole gamut of issues raised by the extraterritorial application of our antitrust laws, including how they interface with the laws of other nations, and what we might do to promote the doctrine of competition worldwide. Extensive hearings were held on this proposal last year before the Governmental Affairs Committee, and we attracted 18 cosponsors. The bill was reported out of Committee unanimously and passed the Senate by voice vote. Unfortunately, the press of business in the final days of the 96th Congress prevented the House from acting on the measure, despite the support it had from the National Association of Manufacturers, the President's Export Council, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and many other organizations.

If export promotion is to become a top national priority--which it must--we need a team effort, with the federal government removing unwarranted barriers and substituting creative incentives to exports. Like Churchill in another context, U.S. business executives have asked Congress to give them the tools; they will finish the job. An International Antitrust Task Force is one of the tools they need.

I have enclosed a copy of the bill and the floor statement which accompanied its introduction for your review. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for improving its provisions.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.
United States Senator