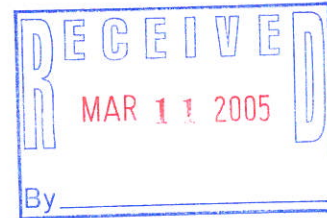




THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230



March 8, 2005

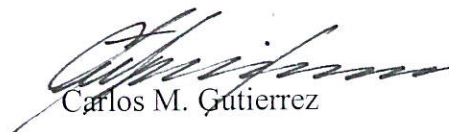
Mr. John W. Limbert
President
American Foreign Service Association
2101 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Limbert:

Thank you for your letter congratulating me on my appointment as Secretary of Commerce. I assure you that I fully support the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, and I recognize the American Foreign Service Association's role in representing all Foreign Service personnel.

This year marks the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service's 25th anniversary, and I am committed to maintaining its well-deserved reputation as the U.S. Government's premier trade promotion agency. I know that the Foreign Service Officers make up the core of this fine organization, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that their personnel needs are addressed.

Sincerely,


Carlos M. Gutierrez