



For Immediate Release
December 17, 2003

Contact: Eric H. Smith
(202) 833-4198

**THE U.S. COPYRIGHT INDUSTRIES APPLAUD THE CONCLUSION
of a U.S.-CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (CAFTA)
with EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS and NICARAGUA**

The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), comprised of six trade associations and their over 1,300 companies representing the U.S. copyright industries, applauded U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and his able team of negotiators for reaching final agreement today on a Free Trade Agreement with four Central America countries – El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. IIPA congratulates these nations for agreeing to a strong copyright and enforcement text that should enable them to further develop their own local copyright-based industries and better attract e-commerce investment. Negotiations with Costa Rica, the fifth country involved with the CAFTA talks, will continue in January 2004.

Eric H. Smith, IIPA President, said, “Ambassador Zoellick and his negotiators deserve praise for recognizing the importance that achieving such high standards will mean to the U.S. economy, to jobs and to the future of global e-commerce when these standards are adopted hopefully throughout this entire region. These four countries recognize that their economies will increasingly depend on the creativity of its citizens, as supported by comprehensive copyright protections, as new markets develop to promote the digital transmission of copyright material globally. By securing high levels of obligations on copyright protection and enforcement, the United States has signaled that it seeks the widest dissemination of copyright-based enabling technologies and entertainment products among our neighbors as well as around the world.”

“IIPA looks forward to reviewing the final CAFTA text when it is made public,” Smith added. “We are committed to ensuring that the copyright and enforcement provisions in FTAs have the strongest levels of protection possible.”

* * *

The IIPA is a private-sector coalition formed in 1984 to represent the U.S. copyright-based industries in bilateral and multilateral efforts to improve international protection of copyrighted materials. IIPA’s six member associations represent over 1,300 U.S. companies producing and distributing materials protected by copyright laws throughout the world – all types of computer software including business applications software and entertainment software (such as videogame CDs and cartridges, personal computer CD-ROMs and multimedia products); theatrical films, television programs, home videos and digital representations of audiovisual works; music, records, CDs, and audiocassettes; and textbooks, tradebooks, reference and professional publications and journals (in both electronic and print media).