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## **US Entry Requirements Will Harm UK/US Business** ***BritishAmerican Business Survey Reveals Continuing Business Concerns***

**London / Washington DC, 24 May 2005:** BritishAmerican Business is actively seeking a further extension of the 26 October 2005 deadline, requiring travellers to the USA under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to carry biometric passports, through discussions with government decision-makers and influencers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Chairman of BritishAmerican Business Inc (BABI), Ian Stopps, has written to US Congressman Sensenbrenner, Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, and Arlen Specter, Chairman of Senate Judiciary, outlining members' concerns. BritishAmerican Business's professional staff has been covering the issue in meetings in Washington DC, over the past week. BABi made representations on this issue last year, seeking a two-year extension of the October 2004 deadline. It was extended by only one year to 26 October 2005.

These renewed representations are based on a recent survey of BABi's members, which was also extended to members of the broader British-American Business Council network. The survey shows that executives on both sides of the Atlantic remain concerned about the business implications of the new deadline.

Over three-quarters of survey respondents reported that the introduction of the biometric passport requirement would make the conduct of transatlantic business difficult. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents based in the UK and 64% of US-based respondents, felt that UK/US business, in particular, would be affected. More than half the UK respondents (55%) said they would be less likely to use UK and other VWP nationals for business travel to the US if it proved difficult to obtain entry visas.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Transatlantic Business Survey 2005**

BABi, in association with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), conducted its *Transatlantic Business Survey 2005* in April/May 2005, about transatlantic trade and the UK/US business relationship, <http://www.thesurveyshop.co.uk/online/>

### **About US Entry Requirements**

From 26 June 2005, all those travelling to the US under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which includes all UK nationals, will need to ensure that they have machine-readable passports; otherwise entry to the US will not be permitted. All passports issued on or after 26 October 2005 will need to contain biometric information: otherwise travellers will not qualify under the VWP and will therefore need to apply for a US visa at a US Embassy or Consulate.

### **BABi Action**

In 2004, BABi urged the US Government to delay, for a two-year period, their requirement for biometric technology in new passports. The US Government deferred the requirement for 12 months. Our 2004 letter can be found at: <http://www.babinc.org/news/babinews.html>

### **About BritishAmerican Business**

BritishAmerican Business Inc of New York and London (BABi) incorporates the British-American Chamber of Commerce (New York/London) and the American Chamber of Commerce (UK), which merged in September 2000. The British-American Business Council (BABC) is the largest transatlantic business network, with more than 30 chapters and 3,500 member companies throughout the US and UK.