Key Takeaways

US Business Climate & Employment Expectations Slump

CFOs indicate growing concern over a deteriorating U.S. business climate for international companies. OFII’s Business Climate Index has fallen 28 points since the post-tax reform high reached in the spring of 2018. Today, nearly half (47 percent) of OFII CFOs believe the U.S. business climate is “getting worse” when compared to six months ago. That is translating into lower employment expectations, with just over a quarter of CFOs (27%) indicating that their company will likely increase its U.S. employment level in the next six months.

Trade Tensions, Skills Gap, Protectionism & Infrastructure of Greatest Concern

CFOs indicate seven policy factors that could hamper their U.S. business operations within the next two years:

- U.S. Withdrawal from NAFTA
- U.S. Workforce Skills Gap
- Sustained Tariffs on Chinese Exports/Imports
- New Cross-Border M&A Review Policies (e.g., CFIUS)
- Deteriorating U.S. Infrastructure System
- Potential Tariffs on Auto Imports (Sec. 232)
- Unilateral Action on Digital Tax Policy

US Remains an Exports Platform for International Companies

Despite continued concern over the Administration’s trade policies, the vast majority (88 percent) of CFOs at exporting companies indicate their company will continue exporting at current or higher levels over the next two years. In fact, 45 percent expect the level will increase over that period.