

The common sense of the American people has to come into this situation. Millionaires want to be billionaires. Billionaires want to be multi-billionaires. It is greed totally out of control and greed that is going to be self-destructive. They are going to destroy themselves as well as the whole American economy.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, human rights is not just an international issue, something we should be concerned about happening in other countries. Human rights is a domestic issue, too. If someone does not have a job, if someone does not have decent wages, if someone cannot have decent benefits to protect their family's health, if people cannot get a good education, if they do not have rights on the job, their human rights are undermined. That is why these trade issues, GATT, NAFTA, most favored nation, all have relevancy to this country, because it is about our human economic rights in America.

We need to be, and it is good that we are, Congressmen and Congresswomen, standing up for the American people and for their economic rights and insisting that the human economic rights of the people in this country need to be protected, and we do that every time we raise questions, as we are doing this evening.

Mr. SANDERS. In terms of human rights what I get a kick out of is not so many years ago we were told that China was a Communist authoritarian society where people did not have any rights, where people did not have religious freedom. Unless I am not hearing what is going on, not only have things not changed, they have gotten worse.

The State Department last year announced that the situation in China in terms of human rights is worse. With over 1 billion people, they said there are no dissenters. In all of China, nobody, not one person, according to the State Department, is out on the street able to dissent against their authoritarian country.

But what has changed in America? What changed in America is corporate America has said, gee, maybe that is not such a bad place to do business. Hey, why were we attacking these people? No unions, no freedom to stand up and fight back? Sounds like a good place to do business.

So where 20 years ago we were told how terrible Red China is, suddenly these same corporations are now spending millions of dollars to convince us that it is really a very fine place and it is a wonderful place to do business. What better place can you have? You pay people 20 cents an hour. If they stand up and fight back they are fired, put in jail. You have slave labor over there in the prisons. What a good place to do business. Let us continue MFN with China, say our corporate friends.

Fortunately, some of us do not agree with that.

Mr. BONIOR. I thank my colleague. I think that is a good summation to end with tonight. I thank the Speaker for

his patience with us this evening, and his indulgence in the last minute or so. I thank all of my colleagues for coming this evening and sharing their thoughts. We look forward to continuing this debate.

REPORT ON H.R. 1757, FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 1998-1999, AND H.R. 1758, EUROPEAN SECURITY ACT OF 1997

Mr. DIAZ-BALART (during special order of the gentleman from New York, Mr. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 195-115) on the bill (H.R. 1757) to consolidate international affairs agencies, to authorize appropriations for the Department of State and related agencies for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 and for other purposes, and for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1758) to ensure that the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] proceeds in a manner consistent with the United States interests, to strengthen relations between the United States and Russia, to preserve the prerogatives of the Congress with respect to certain arms control agreements, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DESTROYING ORGANIZED LABOR AND MAKING WORKERS POWERLESS IN THIS COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. GIBBONS]. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] IS RECOGNIZED FOR 60 MINUTES.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it clear that my colleagues are welcome to stay. The issue I am about to discuss is quite relevant and related to the previous issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where, as I said before, there is a drive on to drive the workers' wages down to the lowest levels, and the process of globalization is being used to do that, where corporate powers are moving the jobs and their manufacturing processes to the areas that have the lowest wages, and there is a continual search that goes on and on perpetually for the lowest wages.

At the same time, we have a situation in our borders here in America where every effort is being made to destroy organized labor, to take away the power of the workers to speak for themselves and to drive the work force here down to lower levels at the same time you are taking away their jobs and forcing them to bargain for lower wages because of the globalization.

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We have with the welfare, so called, reform. It was not welfare reform. It was welfare liquidation. We destroyed the entitlement, for that has been in the law for 65 years, that was not re-

formed. That is elimination, liquidation.

We gave to the States certain powers, and we give them money, but the right for a poor person to expect his government to help to keep him alive is gone. The welfare reform was driven by a call to put people to work. Work was a necessity in order for human dignity to be encouraged. Work was desirable and work was available. We insisted that the work was available in spite of the fact that we had high unemployment in all of those areas where you had a large welfare case load, large numbers of people are on welfare in the areas where you have the biggest unemployment problems.

So now we have a situation where we have pushed and are pushing people off the welfare rolls. We are insisting that there are jobs, and as we mobilize to put more and more people to work, what is happening is that we have created a situation where people are being forced to work for less than the minimum wage. And when accusations are made that this is a movement toward slavery, people are upset. They say how dare you use the word slavery.

Let us stop for a moment and consider the fact that on the plantation everybody had a job. There was no unemployment on the plantation. You might have great varieties in terms of fringe benefits in terms of housing provided or decent food, but everybody had a job. You can have a situation where everybody has a job, and you can take away the dignity of people through the job but not paying them a decent wage, you can drive down the wages to the point where we have a new class of people, what you might call urban serfs or suburban peasants.

Mr. Speaker, they are in a situation where they are locked into accepting whatever is given them, but it has nothing to do with the relationship with what they need and what the standard of living is in our particular society. So we are driving down wages now by introducing into the labor market a new class of people, putting them in jobs and paying them less than even the minimum wage which is totally inadequate.

We have had previous discussions about how inadequate the minimum wage is. It is going to go up to 5.15 an hour, it is now at 4.75. If you look at what it takes to maintain a family, you can make the minimum wage and work every eligible hour during the year, and still you are in poverty according to our own standards.

So I want to open the discussion in terms of the new threat, the additional threat in addition to most-favored-nation status for people for countries like China in addition to NAFTA and in addition to GATT. We now have a drive on within our own society to finish the job and it is not unrelated, what is happening to welfare recipients and workfare and the movement to try to force people to work for less than the minimum wage is not unrelated to the