And it does not hold governments accountable for the mistreatment of their workers and the abuse of their environment.

I know that the people who support the proposal say that section 2 allocates worker rights and environmental protection to the World Trade Organization. But, Mr. Speaker, time and time again, the World Trade Organization has refused to take on these issues.

In fact, in order to achieve enforceable standards for workers and the environment, 131 countries would have to reach a consensus and we all know that is never going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen that NAFTA has been a terrible failure and we know many of the reasons why. I hope that the administration will give history its due and learn from their mistakes instead of repeating them.

Instead, we should learn from failures of NAFTA and work to build a new plan for negotiating trade agreements.

□ 1400

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RELATING TO FAST TRACK LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to continue with the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] along the same lines. Even though this may sound a little bureaucratic, it is important.

If we look at the proposed legislation, it says it will ensure that trade and environmental protection are mutually supportive, and it in fact even serves to limit consideration of the environment to foreign government policies and practices regarding the environment that are directly related to trade. It limits the ability of the United States to deal with environmental issues by requiring that negotiations take place through the World Trade Organization.

My point is that if we look at the language of what is being proposed, not only does it not adequately protect the environment and guarantee that the environment is addressed directly in these subsequent agreements that are negotiated, but it may even limit the ability to do that. So it does not in any way satisfy our concerns.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman has read that correctly. This fast track authority that has been submitted by the administration, I contend, is weaker on the environment and weaker on labor standards than the one that was negotiated under NAFTA 4 years ago.

I think these issues on the environment the gentleman talked about need to be in the core agreement, with enforceable standards, like we enforce capital and as we enforce intellectual property. It falls far, far short of what is necessary. That is why major environmental groups throughout this country are opposing this fast track, because they see it as opening the flood gates and continuing the environmental degradation that we have seen.

Mr. PALLONE. What I have been doing over the last couple of days, Mr. Chairman, is I have put together a letter that I am trying, and some Members have already signed and I am trying to get more Members to sign, to the President basically saying this: That it is critical for the fast track to require that environmental concerns be directly addressed in negotiated agreements, rather than allowing environmental protection to be negotiated separately in unenforceable side agreements that do not adequately protect the environment.

To that end, trade agreements negotiated under fast track should also be negotiated to include enforcement mechanisms that should hold governments to set environmental protection. I am not saying even with that that fast track is acceptable, but I believe very strongly that if we were able to get these kinds of inclusions in there, at least we would have a little better protection and know that something would be done on the environment other than negotiating additional side agreements that really have had no impact.

One of the things I keep saying over and over again is we have to look at NAFTA as the example. I know a lot of people say, well, in voting or in reviewing fast track legislation, we should not look back at NAFTA. To me that makes no sense. NAFTA is the example that we have of what may result as a result of fast track. If the environment did not work with that, why should we believe it is going to work again?

Mr. BONIOR. If the gentleman will continue to yield, I found it quite interesting that when the President came before our caucus in this very building a couple of weeks ago, he mentioned on at least on two occasions, maybe three, when he was talking to us, he said off the cuff, and I could see his aides wincing in the background, and he said, ''Well, if you were not for NAFTA, you probably will not want to be for fast track.''

There was a reason that people will not be for fast track; because NAFTA has been, as we have said, it has been deficient in all of these areas. That is why on our side of the aisle there may be upward of 20 Members who voted for NAFTA who will be voting against fast track because it has not delivered. That is why the President has mentioned on several occasions, and I think maybe not inadvertently, but I think he would not do it again if he had to, that if Members voted against NAFTA they would probably vote against fast track.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate that. If I could just say one last thing, that is that the reason I feel so strongly about this is not only because I think it is important to have better environmental standards in the other countries, but also because if we do not, if we just allow these free trade agreements to go forward without these kinds of environmental safeguards, then what happens is ultimately our own environmental standards are threatened, because it becomes very easy for those countries to lure plants and companies, manufacturing, down to, say, Mexico.

Mr. BONIOR. That is exactly what happened to the furniture industry in southern California. It has gone over the border into Mexico because they do not have to comply with environmental laws and rules. I visited an acid factory in Tijuana, an acid field that was supposed to recycle batteries, and it was a field probably the size of this room, filled with acid. And right across the street, not more than 10 yards away, was the largest dairy farm in that state, huge. And of course, the obvious problems occurred. The children who were drinking the milk from those cows were suffering and having serious health problems. It boggles the mind to think that we are not only allowing this to occur, but we have done nothing at all to correct it in this new legislation. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

INQUIRIES TO THE ADMINISTRATION REGARDING CONGRESSIONAL TRAVEL TO LIBYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, Libya is a rogue nation that openly supports, promotes, and inspires terrorist activities around the world. None of us could ever forget Libya's involvement in the 1985 terrorist attacks in Rome and Vienna airports that killed 20 men, women, and children, including five Americans. Nor can we forget Libya's responsibility for the 1986 bombing in Berlin that killed two United States servicemen. And of course, we will never, ever forget Libya's dastardly involvement in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 which resulted in killing 270 men, women, and children, including 189 Americans.

Because of these and other acts of terrorism, Mr. Speaker, Libya has been sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council, and United States law imposes serious limitations on the ability of our citizens to travel to Libya or to spend money there.

The State Department has reported that one of our colleagues, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] recently traveled to Libya without official authorization or approval. Against that background, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] has prepared a privileged resolution that would direct the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to undertake an immediate and thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding the travel of

the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] to Libya.

In that matter, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] has expressed the concerns of all Members about any Member of Congress traveling to Libya. In an effort to be helpful, and in my capacity as chairman of the Committee on International Relations and in the exercise of our committee's oversight responsibilities, I will inquire of the administration what laws and regulations, if any, would apply to travel by any Congressman to Libya, and whether any of those laws or regulations may have been violated.

I will be undertaking a review of this matter. I assure the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] that I will promptly share with him the response of the administration to our inquiries.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS].

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, on September 18, I wrote the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] and told him how important I thought it was that he give a public explanation for his trip to Libya. When I received no response to that letter, I noticed 2 days ago my intention to file a privileged resolution. That resolution I read in full to this body two nights ago.

It is very important that our body know the facts and circumstances surrounding this visit. It was, as the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] noted, to an outlaw nation, a nation which is presently, not sometime in the past, but is presently engaged in terrorist activity in several countries.

I have again called on the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] today to make a public explanation. I welcome the assurances of the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the committee will be looking into these facts.

What I intend to do at this time is not to go forward with my resolution, but I will note that if the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] does not make a full and complete explanation of his trip, as I have outlined in the resolution, that in the interests of this body and its integrity, and because the American people have a right to an explanation, I will renotice my resolution next week or the week after.

I again call on the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD], and I know other Members of the body share my opinion, that he make a full and complete explanation of his trip to Libya.

It is my understanding that the Committee on International Relations, and it was from earlier conversations, that they are going to do an investigation into this trip which I hope will include talking to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] and asking the gentleman from Alabama for an explanation of his trip. I will be looking forward to that.

I believe that it is a much better forum, if it is done before the Committee on International Relations, it is done in a public hearing, and this is something that we will just have to follow day by day. But the American people deserve and I think demand an explanation. It is against the law for anyone to travel to Libya. It is against the law for a United States Congressman to travel to Libya. The laws apply to everyone, including U.S. Congressmen.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

ON A RESPECTFUL APPROACH TO INQUIRY INTO MEMBER'S TRAVEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor because I wanted to make sure that any attempts to try and answer for the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] or to describe what he may or may not have done be characterized in a way that would not indict him without his having an opportunity to deal with this issue. He is not here.

As chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, I pay special attention, of course, to those members of the Caucus. I wish that they always be represented in the right way, and whenever there appears to be a problem unfolding, I want to make sure that we do everything that we can to see to it that they are handled with respect.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked with the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] about this, and I am convinced that he simply, in the interests of his constituents in the State of Alabama, is simply attempting to have some questions answered that have been raised by people in Alabama. I respect that.

I do wish, however, that this issue not become something that is debated on the floor while in fact there is a complaint now pending in the Ethics Committee. Normally, if there is a complaint, it would be handled in the body that is constructed to handle these kinds of concerns. It is a little bit unusual to talk about some protracted debate either in committee or on the floor.

I would hope that something happens between now and next week that would cause this to be not only deposited as it is in the Ethics Committee, but discussed there. I suppose we could end up discussing these kinds of concerns ad nauseam.

As I reviewed, kind of, the record over a period of time about travel, I guess there have been some questions from time to time about travel to Cuba, even at one point to Vietnam and other places, where I think we have some restrictions or sanctions, but it has not occupied the committee or the House. If there is a complaint filed, it is taken up there.

So let me just say that I rise today on behalf of the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD], to say that certainly he has not had the opportunity to have his say; that he has responded to some inquiries that have been made in an unofficial way, I think, by the State Department. The State Department has made it clear they are not investigating him. They simply have almost a perfunctory duty to raise some questions about travel to certain areas where there may be some restrictions.

As far as we know, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] has done nothing wrong. He is not in violation of anything. Even when sometimes it appears that there is travel to restricted places, there are ways and waivers which allow for travel if they do not violate certain things, like the use of passports, money transactions.

□ 1415

So based on what I know, I am convinced that the gentleman from Alabama's actions are honorable and that he has not in any way violated any laws or the responsibilities and trust that are placed in him by virtue of his being a Member of Congress.

So I wanted to be here today to say that I respect the gentleman's concern. I do think that there is some continued discussion that can take place about how to proceed with this, and with that I would happily be involved with the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] next week to see how we can move this in a fashion that we can all feel good about.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. WATERS. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I respect what the gentlewoman said, and I agree with what she has said in part. I would say that there are many questions because we simply do not know, we have not had an explanation. And until we have an explanation, it is hard for us to make final judgment, and that is basically what I have asked for.

Ms. WATERS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, not that I am the legal adviser on this, but if I were to advise him, now that a complaint has been filed with the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, I would confine my explanations to the body that is taking a look at the issue, should they decide to do that, and I would wait to see how they were going to handle it, rather than trying to come to the floor and present a defense when he has not really been charged with anything, or to provide an explanation that may complicate proceedings that may be underway or may get underway.

So I wish that we would not take his lack of a response to the gentleman's request as an unwillingness to discuss it; but rather, now, I think he is put in a position where he has to make some decisions about what is the appropriate response and in what manner that will be done.

GREAT FUTURE FOR OUR NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New