No matter how thankful we may be for our freedoms, we must not be lulled into complacency about the situation faced by so many Christians and others persecuted for their religious practices and convictions. As a nation that has become powerful in large part because we jealously guard our individual freedoms, we have a responsibility to project the ideals of freedom around the globe. The responsibility belongs to individuals and advocacy groups, to businesses and to churches, but it also belongs to this our Government.

While we have taken steps to recognize all religious persecution as a serious problem and to monitor its prevalence, we need to take the next step and develop clear-cut, specific responses to persecution once it is identified. The solution may not be readily apparent but the crisis demands our full attention.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SANFORD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SANFORD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

FAST TRACK

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, as we stand on the eve of the debate on fast track that is the giving of a major part of our constitutional power to the President and the Vice President and his negotiating team to negotiate trade arrangements with other nations, I think it is important for us to look at what the Founding Fathers said about the unfettered use of so-called free trade. In short, Mr. Speaker, they were not for it.

I want to start with James Madison. James Madison said it should never be forgotten that the great object of the Convention was to provide by a new Constitution a remedy for the defects of the existing one and that among these defects was out of a power to regulate foreign commerce, that in all nations this regulating power embraced the protection of domestic manufacturers by duties and restrictions on imports. That means that James Madison believed that it was important for a nation, particularly the United States, to have the right to regulate goods coming into the United States and to establish tariffs so that American companies and American workers would not be hurt. Thomas Jefferson, who was a free trader before 1812, after he became a President became a pragmatist, and he said, ''The prohibiting duties we lay on all articles of foreign manufacture which prudence requires us to establish at home, with a patriotic determination to use no foreign articles which can be made within ourselves without regard to difference in price, secure us against a relapse into foreign dependency.''

Thomas Jefferson realized that we could become dependent on foreign products. And what would he say today to look at this $3 billion balance of trade deficit that we have each week that we have to either borrow or sell capital goods to pay for, this massive foreign debt that we have accumulated as a function of our trade deficit?

Daniel Webster said, ''My object is and has been with the protective policy, the true policy of the United States that the labor of the country is properly provided for. I am looking not for such a law as will benefit capitalists, they can take care of themselves, but for a law that will induce capitalists to invest their capital in such a way as to occupy and employ American labor.'' That meant that Daniel Webster wanted to have tariffs and regulate trade so that American companies would invest in the United States instead of moving to Guadalajara or moving to other places that are offshore and using other workers from other countries to make goods that then would be sold back into the United States.

And our own Abraham Lincoln, the founder of my party, the Republican Party, said in the platform, ''We commend that policy of national exchanges which secures to the working man liberal wages, to agriculture remunerative prices, to mechanics and manufacturers an adequate reward for their skill, labor and enterprise and to the Nation commercial prosperity and independence.''

And that other great Republican who, with Abraham Lincoln, is on Mount Rushmore, Teddy Roosevelt, said in 1911, ''I can put my position on the tariff in a nutshell. I believe in such measure of protection as will equalize the cost of production here and abroad, that is, will equalize the cost of labor here and abroad. I believe in such supervision of the workings of the law as to make it certain that protection is given to the man we are most anxious to protect, the laboring man.''

Mr. Speaker, I am a Republican, I am a capitalist, I think I have got a 13 percent AFL–CIO rating, but I understand that it is important for Americans to make good wages. We have driven wages down, and the record of NAFTA, the trade agreement that we allowed President Clinton to make with Mexico and Canada, has been disastrous for us. We had a $3 billion trade surplus over Mexico when we negotiated NAFTA. Today we have got a $19 billion annual loss. Today we have a $20 billion annual loss with Canada. That same bright team that President Clinton has sent forth through the world to negotiate trade treaties has given us this year with China a $52 billion trade loss.

This team is a losing team, Mr. Speaker, and the idea that this Congress is going to give away the constitutional duty that was given to us by the Founding Fathers to a losing team which will negotiate us down the drain to the point where we have American industry having to move offshore to compete with the other industries that are employing people at $2.38 an hour, $1.50 an hour, $1.75 an hour to displace Americans, the Americans who carry our flag in wartime, the Americans that pay our taxes, the Americans that pay our wages, that idea is not consistent with the classic idea of being a good Republican.

We should defeat this fast track, Mr. Speaker. We should keep that duty, that obligation to regulate trade within this House of Representatives where as Alexander Hamilton said, the people govern.

FAST TRACK AUTHORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time tonight initially talking about the fast track legislation which we are likely to be voting on either tomorrow or Sunday. I am very much opposed to the fast track legislation for a number of reasons, and I wanted to use part of the hour tonight to outline some of those reasons and begin with a local situation in Monmouth County, which is one of the two counties that I represent in the State of New Jersey, because I think it illustrates the types of problems that I have with fast track by reference to NAFTA. Many of those who are opposed to fast track and who will be voting against fast track legislation, if it comes up over this weekend, are doing so because of the experience with NAFTA.

I want to comment on why Congress really should resist the pressure being put on us to grant the fast track authority, to expand NAFTA and essentially put even more Americans out of work. If I could give an example from central New Jersey, from Monmouth County, my home county, of how these trade agreements can affect the jobs and the lives of highly skilled American workers. On September 9, most of the 240 people who work at the Allied Signal plant in Eatontown, NJ, in Monmouth County were informed of the decision to close what is a defense technology manufacturing plant. They were told that the plant would be phased out in 1998, with a complete shutdown expected by March 1999. The company told the Allied Signal workers in Monmouth County, NJ, that in the short run, the jobs would be going to Tucson, AZ. But I believe, and I know that everyone at the plant believes, that the jobs ultimately will be moved to Mexico. The reason is squarely because of NAFTA.