

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. Jefferson) for yielding me this time, and I strongly associate myself with the comments of my colleague, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Bereuter).

I too rise in opposition to this resolution and support President Clinton's decision to waive Jackson-Vanik requirements for the next year. This would absolutely be the worst thing we could do at this point, undercutting the outstanding work that Ambassador Peterson and our team has done in terms of continued progress in immigration, in terms of continued accounting and cooperation in dealing with prisoners of war and missing in action. It would also undercut the progress that has been represented by the successful conclusion of the bilateral trade agreement, a critical, critical milepost.

This debate is absolutely not about some hypothetical huge potential trade deficit with Vietnam. The amount of trade involved is minuscule at this point and is not going to be, under the wildest circumstances, anything significant in the foreseeable future.

It is absolutely not about closing United States' factories and shipping this process overseas. The goods that have been identified here as the primary products for Vietnam are not things that the United States is specializing in right now. Most of those products are already manufactured overseas and simply shifting suppliers.

And it is categorically not about slave labor. That is absolute nonsense and referenced by someone who clearly has never seen the activity that is going on now in Vietnam factories. I am informed by our embassy in Vietnam that there have been dozens of strikes already this year. And if we talk to the men and women who have done work in Vietnam, we see that even in this area progress is being achieved.

Mr. Speaker, this House is poised to make some very significant accomplishments in foreign policy; a historic realignment of our policy with China. Last week's vote sent signals about being real about our relationship with Cuba and reversing some absolutely ineffectual activities in the past. We are now on the verge of doing the same with Vietnam. I strongly urge rejection of this resolution and keeping us moving in this direction.