gives manufacturers, competitors, retailers and shareholders a right to hold violators accountable. The bill prohibits Federal Government agencies from buying goods made with prison or sweatshop labor.

We cannot afford to continue to turn a blind eye to these abuses. Sweatshop imports are a moral crime. They violate the values of our families, of our faith and of the history of this country. They are a moral crime against the working men and women, and, I am afraid, working children of the developing nations.

Sweatshop imports are economic suicide for our country. As we import sweatshop goods, we export American jobs, we weaken the bargaining position of U.S. workers fighting for wages with which they can actually support their families.

The heart of America's economy has always been a vigorous middle-income consumer class. Henry Ford knew that. That is why he paid his workers a wage that would allow them to buy the cars that they made, to share the wealth they create, to buy the cars that they made.

By driving U.S. wages down, we weaken the American consumer market, we undercut our greatest economic power, and we lose jobs in so many of our communities. And when we lose jobs in places like Marion, Ohio, and Zanesville, Ohio, we hurt our communities, we hurt our families, we lay off police officers, we cut back on the fire department, our classrooms get larger as teachers get laid off. It hurts our communities, and it is wrong for our country.

I ask my fellow Members of the House to please support the legislation that I mentioned tonight, the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AGREEING TO TALK TO IRAN UNCONDITIONALLY

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim my 5 minutes at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by recent news that the administration has offered to put an end to our 26-year-old policy of refusing to speak with the Iranians. While this is a positive move, I am still concerned about the preconditions set by the administration before it will agree to begin talks.

Unfortunately, the main U.S. precondition is that the Iranians abandon their uranium enrichment program. But this is exactly what the negotiations are meant to discuss. How can a meaningful dialogue take place when one side demands that the other side abandon its position before the talks begin?

Is this offer designed to fail so as to clear the way for military action while being able to claim that diplomacy was attempted? If the administration wishes to avoid this perception, it would be wiser to abandon preconditions and simply agree to talk to Iran.

By demanding that Iran give up its uranium enrichment program, the United States is unilaterally changing the terms of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. We must remember that Iran has never been found in violation of the Nonproliferation Treaty. U.N. inspectors have been in Iran for years, and International Atomic Energy Agency Director ElBaradei has repeatedly reported that he can find no indication of diversion of source or special nuclear material to a military purpose.

As a signatory of the Nonproliferation Treaty, Iran has, according to the treaty, the ''inalienable right to the development, research and production of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.''

□ 1845

Yet, the United States is demanding that Iran give up that right even though, after years of monitoring, Iran has never been found to have diverted nuclear material from peaceful to military use.

As my colleagues are well aware, I am strongly opposed to the United Nations and our participation in that organization. Every Congress I introduce a bill to get us out of the U.N., but I also recognize problems with our demanding to have it both ways. On one hand, we pretend to abide by the U.N. and international laws, such as when Congress cited the U.N. on numerous occasions in its resolution authorizing the President to initiate war against Iraq. On the other hand, we feel free to completely ignore the terms of treaties, and even unilaterally demand a change in the terms of the treaties without hesitation. This leads to an increasing perception around the world that we are no longer an honest broker, that we are not to be trusted. Is this the message we want to send at this critical time?

So some may argue that it does not matter whether the U.S. operates under double standards. We are the lone superpower, and we can do as we wish, they argue. But this is a problem of the rule of law. Are we a Nation that respects the rule of law? What example does it set for the rest of the world, including rising powers like China and Russia, when we change the rules of the game whenever we see it? Won't this come back to haunt us?

We need to remember that decisionmaking power under Iran's Government is not entirely concentrated in the President. We are all familiar with the inflammatory rhetoric of President Ahmadinejad, but there are others, government bodies in Iran, that are more moderate and eager for dialogue. We have already spent hundreds of billions of dollars on a war in the Middle East. We cannot afford to continue on the path of conflict over dialogue and peaceful resolution. Unnecessarily threatening Iran is not in the interest of the United States and is not in the interest of world peace.

I am worried about pre-conditions that may well be designed to ensure that the talks fail before they start. Let us remember how high the stakes are and urge the administration to choose dialogue over military conflict.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ AND THE PATH TO WAR

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, stop the presses; we found Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Or at least that is what some Members of Congress would have the American public believe. They stake this claim on an unclassified portion of an intelligence report that addressed the finding of 500 weapons shells of old, inert chemical agents from the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. The shells had been buried deep within the ground near the Iranian border and forgotten by Iraqi soldiers.

Yesterday, intelligence officials made clear that these deactivated shells were not the so-called weapons of mass destruction that the Bush administration used as the basis for going to war in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, a few weapons shells from a two-decade-old war does not a weapons of mass destruction program make.

No matter how you slice it, no matter how you package the story, Saddam Hussein simply didn't have a weapons of mass destruction program in Iraq; yet, there are those who would stop at nothing to prove they existed. It is as if finding the weapons of mass destruction would somehow validate an unjust and unnecessary war that has been mismanaged from the day it was first shamefully conceived.

Mr. Speaker, do a few weapons shells from a two-decade-old war justify the 2,511 American soldiers who have been killed in Iraq? Do they justify the more than 18,000 soldiers who have been wounded forever? How about the countless others who have been traumatized