

December 6, 2001

Statement Opposing Unconstitutional "Trade Promotion Authority"

Mr. Speaker, we are asked today to grant the President so-called trade promotion authority, authority that has nothing to do with free trade. Proponents of this legislation claim to support free trade, but really they support government-managed trade that serves certain interests at the expense of others. True free trade occurs only in the *absence* of interference by government, that's why it's called "free"- it's free of government taxes, quotas, or embargoes. The term "free-trade agreement" is an oxymoron. We don't need government agreements to have free trade; but we do need to get the federal government out of the way and unleash the tremendous energy of the American economy.

Our founders understood the folly of trade agreements between nations; that is why they expressly granted the authority to regulate trade to Congress alone, separating it from the treaty-making power given to the President and Senate. This legislation clearly represents an unconstitutional delegation of congressional authority to the President. Simply put, the Constitution does not permit international trade agreements. Neither Congress nor the President can set trade policies in concert with foreign governments or international bodies.

The loss of national sovereignty inherent in government-managed trade cannot be overstated. If you don't like GATT, NAFTA, and the WTO, get ready for even more globalist intervention in our domestic affairs. As we enter into new international agreements, be prepared to have our labor, environmental, and tax laws increasingly dictated or at least influenced by international bodies. We've already seen this with our foreign sales corporation tax laws, which we changed solely to comply with a WTO ruling. Rest assured that TPA will accelerate the trend toward global government, with our Constitution fading into history.

Congress can promote true free trade without violating the Constitution. We can lift the trade embargo against Cuba, end Jackson-Vanik restrictions on Kazakhstan, and repeal sanctions on

Iran. These markets should be opened to American exporters, especially farmers. We can reduce our tariffs unilaterally- taxing American consumers hardly punishes foreign governments. We can unilaterally end the subsidies that international agreements purportedly seek to reduce. We can simply repeal protectionist barriers to trade, so-called NTB's, that stifle economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, we are not promoting free trade today, but we are undermining our sovereignty and the constitutional separation of powers. We are avoiding the responsibilities with which our constituents have entrusted us. Remember, congressional authority we give up today will not be restored when less popular Presidents take office in the future. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to vote NO on TPA.