



TALKING POINTS:

“THREADBARE EXCUSES: The Textile Industry’s Campaign to Preserve Import Restraints” by Dan Ikenson, Trade Policy Analysis no. 25, October 15, 2003 (<http://www.freetrade.org/pubs/pas/tpa-025es.html>)

In a co-authored op-ed placed in the *Charlotte Observer* in April 2002, then-Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Senator Ernest Hollings (D-SC) intoned, “Never has there been a more crucial time than now for us to stand up against the reckless destruction of the textile and apparel industry.” Democratic North Carolina Senator and presidential hopeful John Edwards has charged that the industry is “clearly being destroyed by trade.”

Such hand-wringing is not new to the textile industry. Its use of alarmist rhetoric is well documented:

In 1948: “[S]ix more months....would bring an almost complete collapse of the textile industry here.” [David E. Hand, President, John Hand & Sons, *New York Times*, March 9, 1948]

In 1955: “[T]he textile industry....faces losing odds in its struggle to keep mills running.” [A.K. Winget, President, American Cotton Manufacturers Institute, *New York Times*, September 10, 1955]

In 1961: “[T]he collapse which the industry had been predicting to our Government for several years arrived with a bang.” [Robert T. Stevens, President, J.P. Stevens & Co, testimony before the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Feb 6-7, 1961]

In 1961: “[U]nless immediate relief is provided, the domestic textile industry will be destroyed by foreign textile imports.” [J.M. Cheatham, President, American Cotton Manufacturers Institute, testimony before the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Feb 6-7, 1961]

In 1970: “We are going out of business, and fast. The Mills bill [a textile quota bill] is the only thing that is going to save us....” [Congressman L. Mendel Rivers, S.C., hearings before the Ways and Means committee, 91st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1970]

In 1985: “If we do not act now to curb imports, in five years our entire industry....will simply cease to exist.” [John Gregg, President, Man-Made Fiber Producers Association, March 19, 1985]

In 1985: “Well, this is the last gasp of the industry.” [Congressman Ed Jenkins, Ga., sponsor of the Textile Quota Bill (HR 1562), remarks prior to the House vote on Oct. 10, 1985]

In 1990: “If the current trend continues...at the turn of the century the U.S. textile industry will go the way of the dinosaurs—and extinct species.” [Senator Ernest Hollings, S.C., remarks during Senate floor debate on the Textile Quota bill (HR 4328), July 12, 1990]