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Written by [Dr Madsen Pirie](#) [2] | Tuesday 12 February 2008



It's difficult for satirists to keep ahead of a reality that verges ever closer to madness. Tim Worstall [has a field day](#) [3] over at the Globalisation Institute site. Frederic Bastiat wrote a legendary spoof about candle-makers demanding protection from unfair competition by the sun.

We are suffering from the ruinous competition of a rival who apparently works under conditions so far superior to our own for the production of light that he is flooding the domestic market with it at an incredibly low price; for the moment he appears, our sales cease, all the consumers turn to him.

Ah yes, history taught to economics students. But wait. EU candle-makers are asking for protection not from the sun, but from that other low cost source, China. EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson is expected to pursue a complaint against Chinese candles, and Hilary Clinton, never one to be left out of the wrong side of everything, has lauded the US Dept of Commerce in its action against the low price competitors:

Syracuse has a proud history of candle production but attempts by importers to undercut our producers have put that tradition at risk. I am pleased that the Department of Commerce heeded our call to take action against these unfair practices and recognized the importance of this decision to local producers.

The 'unfair' practices are, of course, producing and selling candles cheaper than other people can. Ah, globalization. We buy candles from those who can produce them most efficiently, and use the money saved to do other stuff instead. That is, once we have dealt with the Mandelsons and Clintons still swimming in the glue of mercantilist economics.

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