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"Dave Johnson is a fantastic grandfather of the blogosphere."

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National Association of Manufacturers Blasts ... American Manufacturing?

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This post originally appeared at [Campaign for America's Future \(CAF\)](#) at their [Blog for OurFuture](#) as part of the [Making It In America](#) project. I am a Fellow with CAF.

Last week Harold Meyerson wrote a great column in the *Washington Post*, [Just One Word: Factories](#), promoting American manufacturing. Meyerson wrote,

"Since 1987, manufacturing as a share of our gross domestic product has declined 30 percent. Once the world's leading net exporter, we have become the world's leading net importer. In 2007, we exported \$1.2 trillion worth of goods and services but imported \$1.8 trillion. If there were a debtor's prison for nations, we'd all be in the clink.

[. . .] What makes the decline of American manufacturing particularly galling is that we're not falling behind because we're inefficient: American factories are among the most productive on the planet, as McCormack notes. But alone among the world's industrial powers, we have left the task of enticing manufacturers not to the federal government but to state and local governments, which try to attract factories and research facilities with tax abatements and public investments that are dwarfed by the efforts of national governments in other lands. ... It's not just that the United States uniquely lacks an industrial policy. It's that the United States uniquely has an anti-industrial policy."

This sounds good to me. If we are going to restore American economic power we need to promote American manufacturing.

So who comes out to blast Meyerson for his column promoting American manufacturing? Was it the European Manufacturers Association? Was it the China Manufacturers Association? Was it the Korean Manufactures Association? No, it was America's own National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). Yes, the *American* NAM, not the European, Chinese, Japanese or Korean NAM, but the *American* NAM. They say American manufacturing is in fine shape and doesn't need any help from the government to keep it strong.

WTF?

Why is the NAM blasting Meyerson for writing a column promoting American manufacturing? A clue might be the source of the anti-American-manufacturing information they use. They quote Daniel J. Ikenson of the Cato Institute. Cato is an anti-government "libertarian" think tank that supports "free trade" and is against any kind of regulation of business, including any restrictions on imports. This could be because Cato *receives* a great deal of financial support from non-manufacturing interests including commodities and securities traders, tobacco companies, communications companies, software companies and oil

companies. They also receive support from non-American manufacturing interests, including the Korea International Trade Association.

What I want to know is: Why is America's National Association of Manufacturers echoing the Cato Institute's views against American manufacturing? Has this organization lost its way? Does the NAM membership know about this?

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