

# The TPP and TTIP Trade Agreements: “A Dystopian Future in which Corporations Rather Than Elected Governments Call the Shots”

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*The Obama-proposed international-trade deals, if passed into law, will lead to [“a dystopian future in which corporations and not democratically elected governments call the shots,”](#) says Alfred De Zayas, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order.*

These two mammoth trade-pacts, one (TTIP) for Atlantic nations, and the other (TPP) for Pacific nations excluding China (since Obama is against China), would transfer regulations of corporations to corporations themselves, and away from democratically elected governments. Regulation of working conditions and of the environment, as well as of product-safety including toxic foods and poisonous air and other consumer issues, would be placed into the hands of panels whose members will be appointed by large international corporations. Their decisions will remove the power of democratically elected governments to control these things. “Red tape” that’s imposed by elected national governments would be eliminated — replaced by the international mega-corporate version.

De Zayas was quoted in Britain’s *Guardian* on May 4th as saying also that, [“The bottom line is that these agreements must be revised, modified or terminated,”](#) because they would vastly harm publics everywhere, even though they would enormously benefit the top executives of corporations by giving them control as a sort of corporate-imposed world government, answerable to the people who control those corporations.

Obama is pushing for international cartels to replace important functions of today’s national governments, and De Zayas is saying that, “We don’t want an international order akin to post-democracy or post-law.”

De Zayas told the *Guardian* that the panels that are proposed to be at the very center of these trade-pacts

“constitute an attempt to escape the jurisdiction of national courts and bypass the obligation of all states to ensure that all legal cases are tried before independent tribunals that are public, transparent, accountable and appealable.”

[That is, in fact, the motivation behind these deals.](#) Costs get transferred from corporations onto consumers, workers, and the environment, while profits are increased for the corporation’s investors, and CEO pay will soar. In fact, [the EU’s own study of the economic](#)

[impact of the TTIP with America](#), calculated

“economic gains as a whole for the EU (€119 billion a year) and US (€95 billion a year). This translates to an extra €545 in disposable income each year for a family of 4 in the EU, on average, and €655 per family in the US. ... Income gains are a result of increased trade. EU exports to the US would go up by 28%, equivalent to an additional €187 billion worth of exports of EU goods and services. Overall, total exports would increase 6% in the EU and 8% in the US.”

According to the analysis, no one would lose anything. For example, tariffs would be reduced but income taxes and other taxes that the public pays wouldn't be increased in order to make up for that loss of income to the state from reduced tariffs. Not at all. Instead: “As much as 80% of the total potential gains come from cutting costs imposed by bureaucracy and regulations, as well as from liberalising trade in services and public procurement.”

In other words: government regulations of product-safety and the environment and workers' rights are a terrible waste, which would be eliminated and handled more efficiently by letting international corporations themselves handle those things, according to the EU's study. And “liberalising trade in services and public procurement” would cut “red tape” that has prevented government officials who are the purchasers in “public procurement” from getting high-paid corporate directorships, etc. under the existing regulatory structures in democratic nations where the public, the voters, can hold their own government accountable for such corruption. If these functions become the domain of the international corporations themselves, then existing regulations and the government employees who enforce them can be eliminated. Accountability, in other words, is such a waste, for the inside investors in large corporations. They don't need it; they fight against it. They are fighting against it. They don't even want accountability to their own outside investors, who might want them removed from corporate management.

The EU simply doesn't mention the downsides. And they also don't mention that, [“Obama's TTIP Trade Deal w. Europe Would Be Disastrous for Europe, Says the First Independent Study.”](#) That study wasn't paid for by the EU, so they just ignore it. (They even ignore that it found that America's international corporations would benefit even more from the deal than would Europe's international corporations, which is the exact opposite result than the EU's own study calculated. President Obama performs brilliantly for America's billionaires, even though most of them are Republicans.) The economist who did that study wasn't paid by anybody to do it. Occasionally, a study like that is performed by an economist. However, paid-for studies get far more publicity, because the findings are then heavily promoted by the sponsoring organization — after all, it's propaganda.

On 23 January 2015, Britain's *Financial Times* bannered, [“Davos 2015: Businesses rally support for transatlantic trade deal.”](#) Attendees there would pop the champagne corks if these deals pass.

David Korten at *YES!* magazine, headlined on 15 April 2015, [“A Trade Rule that Makes It Illegal to Favor Local Business? Newest Leak Shows TPP Would Do That And More.”](#) He stated, in common language, a recently-leaked (from wikileaks) chapter of the TPP, the treaty's Investment chapter. Key provisions of it are:

Favoring local ownership is prohibited. ...

Corporations must be paid to stop polluting. [Yes: Obama demands that corporations possess an actual right to pollute! It's in the contract!! Ignore his mere rhetoric.] ...

Three [corporate] lawyers will decide who's right in secret tribunals. ...

Speculative money must remain free [of governmental regulation] ...

Corporate interests come before national ones. ...

Then, there's a sixth basic provision: to *"prohibit governments from requiring that a foreign investor be under any obligation to serve the host country's people or national interest."*

And that's just one chapter of the proposed document. No wonder, then, why the billionaires at Davos are eager for Obama to ram this secret treaty through Congress. (Their people were in on the drafting of this proposed treaty, so Davosians didn't need Julian Assange's organization for them to know what the treaty contains. Only we do. And so now we understand why Obama wants to imprison or execute Assange.)

In the United States, congressional Republicans are almost unanimously in support of Obama's trade-deals, but most congressional Democrats are opposed to these deals. President Obama doesn't even enforce the workers' rights provisions in the existing NAFTA and other existing trade-deals. [Murders of labor union officials are prohibited under NAFTA but the Obama Administration ignores them.](#) On April 22nd, Huffington Post bannered, ["AFL-CIO's Trumka: USTR Told Us Murder Isn't A Violation Under U.S. Trade Deals"](#) and quoted an AFL-CIO official,

"The question is whether USTR [Obama's U.S. Trade Representative, the same man who is negotiating both the TPP and the TTIP] considers murder to be a violation of the labor chapter. That is the question,' she said. 'The point is that USTR has informed us that labor-related violence does not constitute an actionable violation of the labor provisions [of NAFTA]'."

Obama relies almost entirely upon congressional Republicans for support of his proposed trade-deals, and of his existing trade-policies (such as non-enforcement of NAFTA). The only real question is whether congressional Democrats will be able to block his deals. When American voters in 2014 elected Republicans to majorities in both houses, the result was to ease the way for passage of Obama's proposed international-trade deals. Harry Reid controlled the Senate and [blocked them](#), but he was now replaced by the Republican Mitch McConnell, who is trying to win Senate approval for the TTIP. Reid, now as the Minority Leader, is still doing the best he can to block that; he just doesn't have the power he did when he was Majority Leader.

Within the general American public, however, there seems to be more support for the TTIP among Democrats than among Republicans. On 9 April 2014, Pew Research Center issued a poll that was sponsored by the pro-deal Bertelsmann Foundation, headlined ["Support in Principle for U.S.-EU Trade Pact,"](#) and the poll's key question was:

"Q3 As you may know, the U.S. and the EU are negotiating a free trade

agreement called the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP. Do you think this trade agreement will be a good thing for our country or a bad thing?"

In the United States, 53% of respondents marked "Good thing," 20% marked "Bad thing," and 14% marked "Haven't heard enough." (Most of the others marked "Don't know.") [Whereas 53% of all respondents said "Good thing," 60% of Democratic respondents did, but only 44% of Republican ones did.](#) That's a 16% difference — substantial. Thus, apparently, at least as of a year ago, when a member of the public heard "TTIP," the person mainly thought that it came from Obama (which it does), and that Obama is a Democrat (which he isn't, except in rhetoric, but members of Congress are different; they know that he's not, even if the public don't); and, so, Republican voters were far less supportive of TTIP than were Democratic voters.

The general public judged the deal by the nominal party of the person who initiated and is negotiating it. This is why, whereas in Congress, Republicans almost unanimously want TTIP to pass, and most Democrats want it to fail, the situation among the voting public is in the exact opposite direction: overwhelmingly favorable to the deal among Democrats, but only slightly favorable to the deal among Republicans. On the other hand, all Republican U.S. Presidential candidates support Obama's trade-deals in principle and they only want him to speed up his getting other nations' leaders to sign onto to them — as if he even has the power to do that.

If the TTIP and the TPP pass and become law, then historians will almost certainly remember Obama far more for those international trade-deals than for Obamacare or anything else, because of the enormous global political change they will bring. And Obama will then probably be generally regarded as the worst President in U.S. history, because he will then have done more to bring back dictatorship as the global norm and ended democracy, than any other nation's leader, in all of history, ever did.

The evidence strongly supports Alfred De Zayas's statement, that these trade-deals would produce "a dystopian future in which corporations and not democratically elected governments call the shots." His statement was alarming, but not at all alarmist.

De Zayas is the chief UN official responsible for "reporting" on proposed international-trade treaties. As the likelihood of Obama's proposed treaties passing has increased, he has become increasingly vocal about what their implications would be, for the UN's founding vision of gradual evolution toward a democratic world-government — something comprehensive like what is now being suddenly rammed through, but democratic instead of fascist, and thus more the opposite of Obama's vision instead of similar to it. On April 23rd, Reuters headlined, ["U.N. expert says secret trade deals threaten human rights,"](#) and De Zayas spoke in far more measured terms, not nearly so direct. He said:

"I am concerned about the secrecy surrounding negotiations for trade treaties, which have excluded key stakeholder groups from the process, including labour unions, environmental protection groups, food-safety movements and health professionals"

*Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S](#)*

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