

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP): A Corporate Coup d'Etat - Handcuffs Governments, Gives New Powers to Corporations

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The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade deal from hell. It's a stealth corporate coup d'etat.

It's a giveaway to banksters. It's a global neoliberal ripoff. It's a business empowering Trojan horse. It's a freedom and ecosystem destroying nightmare.

The [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) (EFF) calls it "a secretive, multi-national trade agreement that threatens to extend restrictive intellectual property (IP) laws across the globe and rewrite international rules on its enforcement."

More on TPP below. New York Times editors support it. Two decades ago, they endorsed NAFTA.

On January 1, 1994, its destructive life began. It's anti-labor, anti-environment, anti-consumer and anti-democratic.

Corporate giants love it. Why not? They wrote it. Hundreds of pages of one-size-fits-all rules benefit them.

They override domestic laws. A race to the bottom followed. NAFTA was a disastrous experiment. In November 1993, New York editors headlined "[The 'Great Debate' Over NAFTA](#)," saying:

"The laboriously constructed agreement to phase out trade barriers among the US, Mexico and Canada, which this page has strongly supported, is likely to have a positive, though small, impact on US living standards and provide a modest boost to the Mexican economy."

"Some American jobs would be lost to cheaper Mexican labor, other jobs would be gained because American exports would increase as Mexico's high tariffs gradually disappeared."

"Economics aside, Nafta's defeat would suggest that the US had abandoned its historical commitment to free trade and would thus discourage other Latin and South American countries that have moved toward more market-oriented economies in the expectation of freer world trade."

So-called "free trade" is one-sided. It isn't fair. NAFTA proponents promised tens of

thousands of newly created US jobs.

Ordinary farmers would export their way to wealth. Mexican living standards would rise. Economic opportunities would reduce regional immigration to America.

NAFTA's promises never materialized. Reality proved polar opposite hype. A decade later, about a million US jobs were lost.

America's Mexican trade deficit alone cost around 700,000 jobs by 2010.

Official government data show nearly five million US manufacturing disappeared since 1994.

NAFTA alone wasn't responsible. It reflected broken promises, lost futures, and other trade deals from hell to follow. TPP stands out. It's NAFTA on steroids.

Since 2008, multiple negotiating rounds were held. They continue secretly. Twelve nations are involved.

They include America, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. Others are invited to join.

At issue is agreeing on unrestricted trade in goods, services, rules of origin, trade remedies, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers, government procurement and competition policies, and intellectual property (IP).

It's about eliminating fundamental freedoms. It's circumventing sovereign independent rights. Corporate power brokers want unchallenged control.

They want global rules and standards rewritten. They want supranational powers. They want them overriding national sovereignty. They want investor rights prioritized over public ones.

They already rule the world. Imagine giving them more power. Imagine no way to stop them.

Imagine a duplicitous president. Obama's in lockstep with their wish list. He intends giving them everything they want.

[Public Citizen](#) is independent. It's our voice. Its work entails "ensur(ing) that all citizens are represented in the halls of power."

Its Global Trade Watch (GTW) monitors TPP [developments](#). It calls it "a stealthy policy being pressed by corporate America. (It's) a dream of the 1%." It'll:

- "offshore millions of American jobs,
- free the banksters from oversight,
- ban Buy America policies needed to create green (and many other) jobs (as well as) rebuild out economy,
- decrease access to medicine,

- flood the US with unsafe food and products,
- and empower corporations to attack our environment and health safeguards.”

Hyped benefits are fake. Reality is polar opposite what corporate shysters claim. Everything accruing from TPP benefits them. It does so by undermining what matters most to ordinary people.

Lori Wallach heads GTW. Ben Beachy is research director. Last June, they headlined their New York Times op-ed [“Obama’s Covert Trade Deal.”](#)

He’s committed to open government, he claims. His policies reflect otherwise. He’s negotiating TPP secretly.

It’s “the most significant international commercial agreement since the” World Trade Organization’s 1995 creation, said Wallach and Beachy.

Congress has exclusive “terms of trade” authority. Obama systematically refuses repeated congressional requests to release the entire draft agreement being negotiated.

He “denied requests from members to attend (sessions) as observers.” He “revers(ed) past practice” snubbing them.

He “rejected demands by outside groups” to release the draft text. George Bush never went that far.

Obama’s “wall of secrecy” had one exception. About “600 trade ‘advisors,’ dominated by representatives of big business,” got access to what Congress was denied.

TPP overrides American laws. It requires changing them. Otherwise trade sanctions on US exports can be imposed.

Wall Street loves TPP. It prohibits banning risky financial products. It lets banksters operate any way they want without oversight.

Congress has final say. Both houses will vote on TPP. Ahead of doing so, they’ll have access to its full text.

Why later? Why not now? Why not earlier? Why not without enough time for discussion and public debate?

Members won’t get enough time to examine TPP carefully. Maintaining secrecy as long as possible prevents public debate.

Obama wants TPP fast-tracked. He wants it approved by yearend. Until March, Ron Kirk was Obama’s trade representative.

He was remarkably candid. He said revealing TPP’s text would raise enormous opposition. Doing so might make adopting it impossible.

According to Wallach and Beachy:

“Whatever one thinks about ‘free trade,’ (TPP secrecy) represents a huge assault on the principles and practice of democratic governance.”

“That is untenable in the age of transparency, especially coming from an administration that is otherwise so quick to trumpet its commitment to open government.”

On October 30, a newly formed Friends of TPP caucus was formed. Four House co-chairmen head it. They include Reps. David Reichert (R. WA), Charles Boustany (R. LA), Ron Kind (D. WI) and Gregory Meeks (D. NY).

They sound like earlier NAFTA supporters. They claim TPP is important for US jobs, exports and economic growth. They lied saying so.

Wallach commented separately. TPP is hugely hugely destructive, she said. It’s more than about trade. It’s a “corporate Trojan horse.” It has 29 chapters. Only five relate to trade.

The others “either handcuff our domestic governments, limit food safety, environmental standards, financial regulation, energy and climate policy, or establish new powers for corporations.”

They promote offshoring jobs to low-wage countries. They ban Buy America. Corporations can do whatever they please. Instead of investing domestically, they can use “our tax dollars” to operate abroad.

They can exploit national resources freely. They’ll have “rights for min(ed) (commodities), oil, gas” and others “without approval.”

TPP includes all sorts of “worrisome issues relating to Internet freedom.”

It provides a back door to earlier failed legislation. It resurrects SOPA, PIPA, ACTA and CISPA provisions. It tramples on fundamental freedoms and national sovereignty.

“Think about all the things that would be really hard to get into effect as a corporation in public, a lot of them rejected here and in the other 11 countries, and that is what’s bundled in to the TPP,” said Wallach.

“And every country would be required to change its laws domestically to meet these rules.”

“The binding provision is each country shall ensure the conformity of domestic laws, regulations and procedures.”

Negotiations are secret. Nothing is discussed publicly. Details leaked out. TPP includes hugely unpopular policies. It forces them on member countries.

It overrides domestic laws protecting people and ecosystems. It’s predatory capitalism at its worst writ large. Obama fully supports it. Lawmakers hadn’t seen it until last year.

They got access to a single chapter. Examining it is severely restricted. Their office is denied a copy. They alone can read it. Their staff is denied permission.

They can’t take detailed notes. They can’t publicly discuss what’s in it. Technical language makes it hard to understand what they read.

Congressional approval is likely. Lobby pressure is intense. “Everything is bought and sold,” said Wallach. “Honor is no exception.”

The reason there’s no deal so far “is because a lot of other countries are standing up to the worst of US corporate demands,” Wallach explained.

For how long remains to be seen. If TPP is adopted, public interest no longer will matter. The worst of all possible worlds will replace it. Corporate rights will supersede human ones. A global race to the bottom will intensify.

Signatory countries will be legally bound to support loss of personal freedoms. Sovereign laws won’t protect against poisoned food, water and air.

Ecosystems will be destroyed. Millions more jobs will shift from developed to under or less developed nations.

Corporate power will grow more exponentially. Fundamental human and civil rights may erode altogether. Not according to Times editors.

On November 5, they headlined “[A Pacific Trade Deal.](#)”

A dozen nations want a deal by yearend, they said. They want it to “help all of our economies and strengthen relations between the United States and several important Asian allies.”

It bears repeating. TPP is a trade deal from hell. It’s a stealth corporate coup d’etat. It’s a freedom and ecosystem destroying nightmare. Times editors didn’t explain.

They lied to readers. They betrayed them. They repeated their 1993 duplicity. Millions affected understand best.

An October 8 White House [press release](#) lied. It called TPP “a comprehensive, next-generation model for addressing both new and traditional trade and investment issues, supporting the creation and retention of jobs and promoting economic development in our countries.”

“The deepest and broadest possible liberalization of trade and investment will ensure the greatest benefits for countries’ large and small manufacturers, service providers, farmers, and ranchers, as well as workers, innovators, investors, and consumers.”

Times editors endorsed what they haven’t read. TPP provisions remain secret. Leaked information alone is known.

Times editors willingly accept Obama misinformation as fact. Twenty years ago, they got NAFTA wrong. Here they go again.

They’re mindless about secret negotiations. Public concerns don’t matter. Corporate interests alone count.

Subverting national sovereignty is OK. So is empowering transnational giants without oversight. They’ll be able sue countries for potentially undermining future profits.

Times editors support the worst of corporate excess. Doing so shows which side they’re on.

Fundamental freedoms aren't important. Corporate rights drive The Times' agenda. Its editors explained nothing about fast-track authority.

Max Baucus (D. MT) chairs the Senate Finance Committee. He supports fast-tracking. Doing so hands congressional authority to Obama.

Proper hearings are restricted. Debate is limited. Amendments can't be introduced. The Senate can't filibuster. Congress can only vote up or down.

It can happen virtually out of sight and mind. It can happen with scant media coverage. It can happen with none at all. It can become law with practically no public awareness.

Imagine corporate America getting coup d'etat authority with hardly anyone knowing what happened. Imagine the consequences if it does. Imagine today's America becoming worse than ever.

Times editors stressed how Obama wants TPP to be "an example for the rest of the world to follow."

Imagine one more than ever unfit to live in. Imagine a president promising change to believe in promoting it.

Imagine Times editors endorsing what demands condemnation. Imagine not explaining what readers most need to know.

Imagine substituting misinformation for truth and full disclosure. Imagine all the news they call fit to print not fit to read.

A Final Comment

On November 13, [Public Citizen](#) headlined "Leaked Documents Reveal Obama Administration Push for Internet Freedom Limits, Terms That Raise Drug Prices in Closed-Door Trade Talks."

"US Demands in Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement Text, Published Today by WikiLeaks, Contradict Obama Policy and Public Opinion at Home and Abroad."

TPP's leaked text reveals Obama demands limiting Internet freedom. He wants restricted access to lifesaving medicines.

He wants all TPP signatory countries bound the the same deplorable rules.

He lied claiming TPP reduces health care costs. It has nothing to do with advancing online freedom as he promised. It's polar opposite on both counts.

According to Public Citizen:

"It is clear from the text obtained by WikiLeaks that the US government is isolated and has lost this debate."

"Our partners don't want to trade away their people's health. Americans don't want these measures either."

Obama's in the pocket of Big Pharma. He's a Wall Street tool. He represents other corporate interests. He spurns popular ones. He lies claiming otherwise. He repeatedly avoids truth and full disclosure.

He lied about Obamacare. It's an abomination. It's a scam. It's a scheme to enrich insurers and other healthcare giants.

TPP is a global scam. It's an assault on fundamental freedoms.

Reports indicate around half the House members strongly oppose it. Others lean that way. According to Lori Wallach:

"This could be the end of TPP."

"All these other countries are like, 'Wait, you have no trade authority and nothing you've promised us means anything. Why would we give you our best deal?' Why would you be making concessions to the emperor who has no clothes?"

It bears repeating. TPP is a trade bill from hell. It's a stealth corporate coup d'etat. Killing it is essential.

The alternative is losing fundamental freedoms. It's destroying national sovereignty. It's making healthcare less affordable. It's undermining what ordinary people value most.

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