Congress Promotes Foreign Jobs

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Release: January 21, 2014

Congress is about to consider a massive attack on the U.S. Constitution, on the constitutional powers of Congress and the 50 states, and on U.S. sovereignty. This attack is marketed to the public as "free trade," but it is really a devious plan to make us kowtow to international tribunals under the pretense of "harmonizing" our laws with global trade.

This plan was hatched and worked out in secret, and even members of Congress were denied access to the negotiations and documents. Barack Obama was obviously lying when he boasted that his is "the most transparent administration in history."

The formal titles of this upcoming travesty are the two trade treaties called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). They are cozily wrapped in a Richard Nixon-era procedure known as Fast Track, which authorizes the U.S. President to make foreign deals in secret, and then demand that Congress take a quick vote approving many thousands of pages without debate or amendment.

This peculiar procedure is not only undemocratic, it is un-American. Ask your Member of Congress, why would you give Barack Obama any more dictatorial power than he already has manifested by his illegal changes to our welfare, immigration and Obamacare laws?

The trade negotiations were developed under military-style secrecy. If Congressmen want to see TPP's 30,000-word intellectual-property chapter called Article QQ, they can do so only by entering the inner sanctum without pen, pencil or paper, according to Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY).

Understanding what the treaties do is made difficult by their lengthy and immensely complicated wording. The text is crammed with figures and details that make no sense to anyone who lacks specialized knowledge.

Most Americans believe that the poor job market, especially for young people, is our biggest current problem, and congressional action to promote faster economic growth should be Congress's number-one priority. But all evidence and past experience

conclusively prove that free trade treaties create jobs in foreign countries, not in the United States.

In the words of the old saying, Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice shame on me. It is shame on every Congressman who votes for another phony free trade treaty, and it's bordering on insanity to give Barack Obama any more executive power after he has so flagrantly misused what he has.

While Obama has publicly urged corporations to do "insourcing," his Administration sent taxpayers' money to the Philippines to train foreign workers to speak English so they can take jobs in U.S. call centers. The U.S. Agency for International Development financed a program called the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) to train 23,000 people in the Philippines to fill U.S. jobs, and 500,000 call-center jobs have been outsourced to foreigners since 2007.

One of the most devious parts of these trade pacts is that they will force the U.S. and other participating countries to "harmonize" food safety standards. That means we and others will be required to use the lowest common denominator standards of all the dozen participating governments.

This could require us to import seafood, beef and chicken products that don't meet basic U.S. food-safety standards. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would be powerless to shut down imports of unsafe feed or food ingredients and, if it tries, multinational corporations can sue the U.S. government for loss of profits.

Vietnam government officials are excited about the recent visit of Walmart's vice president, Ignacio Lopez, who was looking to buy low-priced goods including processed farm produce. With a minimum wage of an estimated 28 cents an hour, Vietnam is in a position to sell food and apparel rather cheaply.

The trade agreements specify that the Federal Government is required to use all possible means, such as preempting legislation, lawsuits, and cutting off federal funds, in order to force the states to comply with TPP rules made by non-Americans. Ambassador John Bolton has warned us to beware of the danger of losing our sovereignty in a web of international agreements and organizations.

Bill Clinton promised that NAFTA would produce "more exports and more jobs for the United States," but instead we now suffer a $60 to $70 billion annual trade deficit

with Mexico. Similar phony sales talks about free trade with China resulted in a 2013 trade deficit of $316 billion, and our goods deficit with South Korea has risen to over $17 billion.

Free trade continues to mean foreigners get jobs, investment and prosperity, while we are the losers. One can only hope that the conservative Republicans who fell for those false promises have learned their lesson.

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