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TIPP: Advancing American Imperialism

By Paul Craig Roberts
May 4, 2016

Greenpeace has done that part of the world whose representatives are so corrupt or so stupid as to sign on to the Trans-Pacific and Trans-Atlantic “partnerships” a great service. Greenpeace secured and leaked the secret TTIP documents that Washington and global corporations are pushing on Europe. The official documents prove that my description of these “partnerships” when they first appeared in the news is totally correct.

These so-called “free trade agreements” are not trade agreements. The purpose of the “partnerships,” which were drafted by global corporations, is to make corporations immune to the laws of sovereign countries in which they do business. Any country’s sovereign law whether social, environmental, food safety, labor protections—any law or regulation—that impacts a corporation’s profits is labeled a “restraint on trade.” The “partnerships” permit corporations to file a suit that overturns the law or regulation and also awards the corporation damages paid by the taxpayers of the country that tried to protect its environment or the safety of its food and workers.

The law suit is not heard in the courts of the country or in any court. It is heard in a corporate tribunal in which corporations serve as judge, jury, and prosecutor.

In other words, the “partnerships” give global corporations the power to overturn democratic outcomes. Allegedly, Europe consists of democracies. Democracies pass laws protecting the environment and the safety of food and labor, but these laws democratically enacted reduce

profits. Anything less than a sweatshop, with starvation wages, no environmental protection, no safety legislation for food or worker, can be overturned at will by global corporations under the terms of the “partnerships.”

Only a traitor, a well paid one, could sign such a pact.

In my opinion, corporate taxation can also be overturned as it obviously reduces profits.

The Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific “partnerships” have been conducted in secrecy. The reason is obvious. Had people known how they were being sold out, there would have been a firestorm of protest. The corporate shells and their propagandists in the financial media could deny my revelations, because I had no official documents to release.

The “partnership” agreements are treaties. Under the US Constitution, treaties are the prerogative of Congress, not the prerogative of an executive branch appointed Trade Representative who represents not the people but the corporations seeking the advantage. To avoid the US Constitution, the agreements are defined as non-treaties. You see how the groundwork for corruption is established.

The way it works is that the appointed US Trade Representative “negotiates” with appointed trade representatives of other countries. Any resistance to the deal is overcome with bribes and intimidation. All of the negotiation is conducted in secrecy. When the trade representatives sign on to the deal, it is presented to the legislatures of the countries. The legislators are told that they must approve the pact and not endanger all the hard work that has gone on for so long and that is in everybody’s interest as attested to by all of the bribed and coerced trade representatives.

These “trade pacts” originate in the US, because American global corporations and the American mega-banks are the largest players in the world economy, and the agreements that the corporations walk through the process give the American companies economic hegemony over the countries that sign the agreements. The Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific “partnerships” are tools of US financial imperialism.

Today (May 3, 2016) I debated on Press TV Sean O’Grady, the financial editor of the UK newspaper the *Independent*. It is extraordinary that O’Grady took a line totally opposite to that of his newspaper. I suggested to him that perhaps he should read his own newspaper.

Yesterday an article in the *Independent* reported that the leaked “documents show that US corporations will be granted unprecedented powers over any new public health or safety regulations to be introduced in future. If any European government does dare to bring in laws to raise social or environmental standards, TTIP will grant US investors the right to sue for loss of profits in their own corporate court system that is unavailable to domestic firms, governments or anyone else. For all those who said that we were scaremongering and that the EU would never allow this to happen, we were right and you were wrong.”

As I understand it, the situation is worse than the article describes. TTIP applies to laws already on the books, such as France’s laws against GMO seeds and food products.

The *Independent* article continues:

“Today’s shock leak of the text of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) marks the beginning of the end for the hated EU-US trade deal, and a key moment in the Brexit debate. The unelected negotiators have kept the talks going until now by means of a fanatical level of secrecy, with threats of criminal prosecution for anyone divulging the treaty’s contents.

“Now, for the first time, the people of Europe can see for themselves what the European Commission has been doing under cover of darkness – and it is not pretty. The leaked TTIP documents, published by Greenpeace this morning, run to 248 pages and cover 13 of the 17 chapters where the final agreement has begun to take shape. The texts include highly controversial subjects such as EU food safety standards, already known to be at risk from TTIP, as well as details of specific threats such as the US plan to end Europe’s ban on genetically modified foods.

“The leaked texts also reveal how the European Commission is preparing to open up the European economy to unfair competition from giant US corporations, despite acknowledging the disastrous consequences this will bring to European producers, who have to meet far higher standards than pertain in the USA.

“According to official statistics, at least one million jobs will be lost as a direct result of TTIP – and twice that many if the full deal is allowed to go through. Yet we can now see that EU negotiators are preparing to trade away whole sectors of our economies in TTIP, with no care for the human consequences.

“The European Commission slapped a 30-year ban on public access to the TTIP negotiating texts at the beginning of the talks in 2013, in the full knowledge that they would not be able to survive the outcry if people were given sight of the deal. In response, campaigners called for a ‘Dracula strategy’ against the agreement: expose the vampire to sunlight and it will die. Today the door has been flung open and the first rays of sunlight shone on TTIP. The EU negotiators will never be able to crawl back into the shadows again.

“For those of us in the thick of the EU referendum debate, the contempt shown by the TTIP negotiators to the people of Europe is the most potent reminder of the democratic deficit at the heart of the EU institutions.”

You can read the *Independent* article [here](#).

The revelations are disconcerting for the British and European peoples. For example, the *Independent* reports that TTIP could cause the privatization of the National Health Service and the UK Parliament would be powerless to stop it.

In our debate Sean O’Grady performed as a shill, a propagandist for the corporate interests behind TTIP. He said that it was a free trade agreement that benefitted everyone just as NAFTA

and other such agreements have proved to be the case. Tell that to all the displaced American workers.

He said that it was unfortunate that the secrecy had possibly hurt the agreement's prospects and that it would have been better if the pact's provisions had been known as they were negotiated. That way, he said, the agreement would not be threatened by the shock effect of the leaked documents.

O'Grady also claimed that no one has thus far agreed to the pact despite the fact that the representatives have agreed to the pact. Perhaps what he means is that legislatures have not given their approval.

The headline on the *Independent* article thinks the leak will prevent approval: "After the leaks showing what it stands for, this could really be the end for TTIP." If so, O'Grady regards it as a great loss. For the global corporations, of course, not for the peoples it would exploit.

The Greenpeace revelations should deep-six the pact, but I am uncertain. French president Hollande says, provisionally, that France will not sign the pact as it is. In other words, give us some fuzzy language to make it look like we got it fixed.

The EU's chief negotiator, Ignacio Garcia Bercero, a likely recipient of a large bribe, rushed to the defense of TTIP by declaring Greenpeace to be "flatly wrong." Bercero's statement makes no sense. Greenpeace released the official documents. No one denies that the leaked documents are legitimate. So apparently Bercero's position is that the official documents are wrong. He sounds like a guy working hard for his money.

Bercero, went on to say, according to the BBC, that "it is not correct to say the US is pushing for lowering of the level of protection in the EU." This is an amazing lie ! Those who are trying to put a good face on the leak themselves admit that this is precisely what the US is trying to do. They claim that the Europeans haven't yet given in.

It is disingenuous for Bercero or O'Grady or anyone to pretend that TTIP has not been from the very beginning about establishing global corporate hegemony over the governments of democratic countries. I pointed this out when the corporations first made their move. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific "partnerships" are about giving global capitalism immunity from the laws of sovereign countries.

EU Trade Commissioner Cecilla Malmstroem is, according to the BBC, "steering the TTIP talks." Malmstroem, another likely recipient of a large bribe, says: "I am simply not in the business of lowering standards." <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36185746>

Her statement is misleading. She is not in the business of lowering standards. She is in the business of making it possible for global capitalism to overthrow all standards, high and low.

From my encounter today with Sean O'Grady, a person whose integrity I no longer respect, I expect the corporate bought-and-paid-for Western financial press and governments to close ranks

and discredit the leaked documents as some kind of Greenpeace “conspiracy theory.” Even in my presence, a former Assistant Secretary of the US Treasury and *Wall Street Journal* editor, O’Grady had no compunction about misrepresenting to my face the agreement as a good one harmed only by secrecy. If it hadn’t been secret, said O’Grady, it would have been OK.

All of the blather about free trade and tariff reduction is mere cover for the only purpose of TTIP, which is to establish American economic imperialism over the peoples whose governments sold them out for money.