US WESTWARD IMPERIALISM, PACIFIC OCEAN, EAST ASIA, AFRICA OMNI NEWSLETTER #7.
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2013/03/colonial-pacific-world-war-ii.html

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:


My blog:
It's the War Department

http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

WHO TELLS THE STORY?
“. . .the dominant interpretation of the past often enjoys its status not because of its superior historical accuracy but because of its proponents’ social power.” Karl Jacoby, Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History (p. 276).

THE CHINA THREAT
“Percentage of Americans who say China ‘can’t be trusted: 68.’ (“Harper’s Index” January 2013). Where do you think that fear came from? US encirclement of China would not happen without the majority of people first having been persuaded by the warriors to believe China was an enemy, just as with Vietnam and the “Axis of Evil.” Who’s next? --Dick

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Public Citizen: Stop Trans-Pacific Partnership: Contact Your Congressman
Garate: Resistance to US Military Bases in S. Korea
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GOOGLE Search Results, VITCHEK, MISSILE DEFENSE TEST SITE, MARSHALL ISLANDS/KWAJALEIN MISSILE RANGE

1. Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site - Wikipedia, the...
en.wikipedia.org/.../Ronald_Reagan_Ballistic_Missile_Defense_Test_Site
The Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site, commonly referred to as the Reagan Test Site (formerly Kwajalein Missile Range), is a missile test range ...

www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/mh.htm
The U.S. maintains a strong military presence on Kwajalein, and from here controls a missile testing range. The clear-blue waters surrounding the Marshall ...

3. KWAJEX HOW TO GET BY ON KWAJALEIN - Espo
www.espo.nasa.gov/kwajex/kwajex.life.html

4. American Fiction – Kwajalein Missile Range, Captain Yossarian And ...
apracticalpolicy.org/.../american-fiction-kwajalein-missile-range-captain-....
Oct 13, 2007 - American Fiction – Kwajalein Missile Range, Captain Yossarian And Robert Jordan ... camera and began snapping photos of the enormous bay which serves as a missile range for the US star wars program. .... Aloha Vitchek,..

5. Andre Vltchek - World Press Review
worldpress.org/freelancers/index.cfm/hurl/page.../id=73
Marshall Islands: Kwajalein Missile Range · Southeast Asia: Resisting the Nokia E90 · Jakarta Votes While Holding its Nose · A Military Coup and the Culture of ...

6. East Asia & the Pacific - MERLN - National Defense University
merln.ndu.edu › ... › Regional Policy Overviews:... Okinawa, Transient Nuclear Aircraft Carrier Berth, Air and Missile Defense Task Force ...... Use of Kwajalein Atoll for Missile Programs
Nuclear disarmament and human rights are linked in "Day of Two Suns," a cri de coeur intended to raise the reader's consciousness about the plight of the island people living near the American missile testing area in the Pacific Ocean. An even larger aim of this impassioned book is to **stop nuclear testing altogether by shutting down the Kwajalein Missile Range** (a nonnuclear test site) and thereby help to reduce the momentum of the nuclear arms race. Considering the easing of the cold war, the great hopes for change in Eastern Europe and accelerating discussions about disarmament, the notions expressed in "Day of Two Suns" for making these Pacific islands more pacific do not seem too far-fetched.

The sail-in protests against military installations in the Marshall Islands are described here - often in the voices of the islanders trying to return to their endangered homes - by Jane Dibblin, a writer for the New Statesman in London and former deputy editor of the Journal of European Nuclear Disarmament. **Her book centers on the inhabitants of two atolls in the Marshalls** - Rongelap, evacuated because of radiation from postwar nuclear tests, and Mejato, where most of the people now live and dream of returning to Rongelap when it is considered safe from radiation and missile testing.
The United States conducted nuclear tests after World War II on Enewetak and Bikini atolls. There have been no nuclear explosions above ground since 1963, but radioactivity remains and almost immeasurable damage has been done to the health of the islanders. An agreement provides for settlement of all claims arising out of the nuclear tests on both atolls. Although the Marshall Islands is now a sovereign republic rather than a trusteeship, a subsidiary agreement allows the United States continued use of Kwajalein Missile Range. Intercontinental ballistic missiles are launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California - without nuclear weapons - and splash down in the forbidden Kwajalein test area.

Ms. Dibblin writes that a review of Department of Energy data revealed that people still living on Rongelap had depressed white-blood-cell counts and high levels of plutonium in their urine. The Energy Department field report said it was safe for adults but not children to return to the southern islands of the atoll; the northern islands were too "hot" and food could not be harvested there. "Amazed at the idea that they should return without their children," the author notes, "the people of Rongelap stayed on Mejato."

Although the tone of "Day of Two Suns" is hortatory and some of its language is shrill - "four extra islands have now been turned into pin cushions for incoming missiles for the expanded 'Star Wars' program" - the basic facts in the book check out against recent scientific reports. A similar alarm was sounded in another book, "Micronesia: Trust Betrayed," by Donald F. McHenry (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1975), that remains the most informative on the subject of the use of these islands for military purposes. Mr. McHenry, who wrote his book after serving for 10 years as officer in charge of Dependent Area Affairs for the State Department, questioned the justification for controlling the lives and destinies of the people of Micronesia.

COLD WAR II: Occupying Pacific and E. Asia to Surround China
“Ring around China”
By JOHN REED, FOREIGN POLICY  From Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (July 31, 2013; 4B).
“The United States Air Force will dramatically expand its military presence across the Pacific this year, sending jets to Thailand, India, Singapore and Australia, according to the service’s top general in the region.” The general is Herbert “Hawk” Carlisle, chief of U.S. Air Force operations in the Pacific. Carlisle gives a straightforward statement of US transfer of military power from the Middle East to the Pacific and E. Asia to ring China “just as the West did to the Soviet Union back in the Cold War.” --Dick

EDITORIAL, THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Failure to Intercept

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Published: July 24, 2013 [also appeared in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette 7-29-13 --Dick]

After 30 years of research and an estimated $250 billion investment, the Pentagon’s defense program against intercontinental ballistic missiles from adversaries like Iran and North Korea had another failed test this month. The advanced missile interceptor launched on July 5 from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California failed to hit its target over the Pacific Ocean, the third consecutive dud. The military has tested the ground-based midcourse defense system 16 times; only eight were successful, the last in 2008.

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One might expect the record to be near perfect since the tests are rigged, conducted in what the program’s director, Vice Admiral James Syring of the Navy, calls a “controlled, scripted environment.” The Pentagon is doing a review to determine the cause of the latest failure. But whatever the cause, it is apparent that the program’s weaknesses go beyond this case.

Two studies — one by the National Academy of Sciences released in September and another by a task force of the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board in 2011 — have expressed doubts about whether the technology to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles can ever be truly reliable and whether the program is worth the cost. Some experts describe its technical core as shattered.
Senator Richard Durbin, a Democrat of Illinois, raised a lot of the right questions when Vice Admiral Syring testified on last Wednesday before the Senate appropriations subcommittee on defense. Mr. Durbin noted that the system’s track record “has not improved over time” and wondered how the Pentagon could be confident defenses will work when tests are conducted against intermediate range missiles but not the longest range and fastest missile, the intercontinental ballistic missile, which could reach the United States.

Predictably, many Congressional Republicans blame the problems on President Obama and budget cuts supported by the Democrats. But experts say design flaws crept into the program during the George W. Bush administration and the problems were compounded by a rush to deploy the system before tests were run. Along with the Pentagon, many Republicans are now pushing for more missile defense tests as well as the development of 14 more ground-based interceptors (for a total of 44 at sites in California and Alaska) for an additional cost of $1 billion. Some lawmakers also want a new missile defense site on the East Coast that could run as high as $3.6 billion.

The North Korean and Iranian missile programs are a threat that the United States must guard against. But it doesn’t make sense to keep throwing money at a flawed system without correcting the problems first.

Meet The New York Times’s Editorial Board »

A version of this editorial appeared in print on July 25, 2013, on page A26 of the New York edition with the headline: A Failure to Intercept.

Commentary by Dick Bennett: Let’s ask a few questions. When does a military program fail? That depends upon its purpose. Is the program really to defend “against intercontinental ballistic missiles from adversaries like Iran and North Korea”? Neither countries have missiles capable of reaching the US, and their missiles are clearly for their own defense against our certain, devastating nuclear missile capability (theTrident submarines off shore of NK and Iran, the long-range missiles from a dozen bases). Clearly? They are two of President Bush’s “Axis of Evil.” The third, Iraq, devoid of missile defenses or retaliation, was long ago invaded, occupied, and its country ruined. Also, Iran has no nuclear weapons.

So what is Vandenberg AFB doing? What are the motives of the generals and executive branch officials in rocket practice westward over the Pacific? They intend to threaten and intimidate the remaining evil nations? That has failed; NK continues to build and test successfully bombs and missiles understandably in defense. Or do US officials and generals seek to threaten the US itself, as in Orwell’s Oceania, firing off missiles toward Asia, performing joint exercises with S. Korea, ringing China, all in the name of “defense”?

Do they think it would never occur to the public to ask, given the massive destruction the US possesses, why are we really firing the missiles and expanding the bases? What internal, military-corporate/congressional-executive Complex pressures keep such an expensive, failed program active? Undoubtedly the US populace is frightened. Safety,
security tremble the nation. The US National Security State now extends everywhere to protect us. Each of its thousand bases are an extension of the US, which the Pentagon/White House/Wall Street/Congressional brain is prepared in a moment to defend. Build another base immediately threatened by the trembling enemy. The whole world trembling.

Even comedians see the rich vein of absurdity. Not only the national Academy of Sciences but the pentagon’s Defense Science Board doubt whether the missiles lobbed westward into the Pacific will ever work, but the billons continue to flow, and the missiles continue toward Asia. It doesn’t matter whether they work or not. The enemies are shown who has will, who is dominant. It’s like the scene in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, in which a European warship is lobbing shells into the jungle. And it’s a fine jobs program: putative enemies offer no end of demand.

And an equally rich opportunity for congressional ambitions: the Republicans drum for more weapons and blame President Obama for the failures, who blame the preceding Republicans for design flaws, and both keep the war profiteers joyful.

Keep focus on the threat to US. Keep the public under tight rein without appearing to do so. Guard must be everywhere against every enemy threatening every base and household, and the New York Times/Arkansas Democrat-Gazette demands indignantly that the flawed anti-ballistic missile, built and deployed by both Parties, be repaired and then sent westward into the Pacific.

But North Korea, Iran, and Russia and China, well understand that an effective intercontinental anti-ballistic missile is a first-strike weapon, that a country possessing such a weapon can attack with impunity. So they protest and curse and desperately seek security against the US National Security State.

VANDENBERG AFB PROTEST CASE TO SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court will hear the government’s case against longtime Catholic Worker activist, Dennis Apel. Apel was convicted of violating ban and bar orders, an appeals court overturned them, and the government is trying to have them reinstated. See background article from Santa Barbara Independent, vandenbergwitness.org. See Desert Voices, Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience for updates.

3 ON TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Stopping the Trans-Pacific Partnership: Global Revolt Against Corporate Domination

Wednesday, 10 July 2013 09:20 By Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese, Truthout | News Analysis
We are in the midst of an epic battle between the people of the world and transnational corporations. Wealthy governments and corporations are merging in a global system in which private corporations have absolute power over your life. This is a battle the people can win and when we do it will show that we can defeat corporate power on issue after issue.

The 1999 battle in Seattle to stop the World Trade Organization (WTO) from granting increased power to transnational corporations and the negative consequences of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) created broad public awareness about the ways that ‘free trade’ hurts people and the planet. As a result, in the past few decades, the WTO has effectively been unable to move forward with its neoliberal economic agenda. And the United States was forced to move to smaller country-by-country trade agreements, many of which were stopped by public pressure.

The Obama administration is currently mired in an ambitious project to accomplish both the continuation of the WTO’s agenda and a restructuring of NAFTA in ways that place corporate property rights over protection of people and the environment. Using the friendly term, ‘partnership,’ the administration is negotiating a sweeping free trade agreement, the Trans-
Pacific Partnership (TPP), which could potentially involve the entire Pacific Rim as well as a sister agreement with European nations. This is being done largely in secret and in a way that subverts the democratic process.

Former US Trade Representative Ron Kirk, who now has a lucrative job in the private sector advising transnational corporations for the law firm Gibson Dunn, said that if people knew what was in the TPP, there would be no way to get it signed into law. As he told one interviewer, if the text were made public negotiators would be walking away from the negotiations because they would be very unpopular.

The new US Trade Representative, Obama’s classmate Michael Froman who worked at CitiGroup, and the more than 600 corporate advisers involved in writing the TPP, have direct access to the text of the treaty, but members of Congress have only limited access and the public and media are excluded. Recent calls for transparency by members of Congress have been denied, so the extent of what we know comes from leaks.

We do know that the TPP is less about trade and more about entrenching corporate property rights. It will establish a judicial system that gives corporations greater power than sovereign nations and bypasses the democratic process. The TPP will affect the global economy so that corporations control all aspects of our lives from wages, food safety, the price of medications and our rights to clean water and air to Internet freedom and more.

The breadth of this corporate power grab may also be its downfall because it is an opportunity for solidarity. A broad coalition of organizations from the entire North American continent in solidarity with groups in other Pacific Rim nations are working together to demand transparency and a democratic process for the TPP. These groups are calling for an end to the failed model of free trade and for a new type of trade that honors the rights of people and the planet.

**Corporate Property Rights and Profits Come First**

Protests in Seattle in 1999 were successful in stopping the WTO meetings being held there. The next set of meetings took place in Doha, Qatar, a place of highly restricted access, in 2001. The Doha Round still has not concluded because the member nations have not been able to come to a consensus, particularly because of the unwillingness of the US to give up agricultural subsidies.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership and it’s sister, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP, known as “TAFTA”), are the Obama administration’s response to the failure of the WTO. These two treaties will aim to not only give multinational corporations all
of the deregulation and legal rights they sought through the WTO, but are intended to go even further. With the inclusion of Canada and Mexico, the Obama administration will live up to its promise to renegotiate NAFTA, but not in the way that he alluded to during his 2008 presidential campaign.

In 2008, candidate Obama said on multiple occasions that one of the first things he would do as president would be to ‘fix’ NAFTA so that there was greater protection of worker rights and the environment and so that corporations would not be able to undermine laws that are in the public’s interest. Perhaps his true intentions were mistakenly revealed by a senior economic adviser to the campaign, Austan Goolsbee, who informed the Canadian government that Obama’s rhetoric on NAFTA should be understood as “more about political positioning than a clear articulation of policy plans.”

After his inauguration, Obama dropped any action on trade including negotiation of the TPP which had started under President Bush. Then he announced in late 2009 that the US would participate in trade talks with Pacific Rim countries. Since then, there have been 17 rounds of negotiations, and the 18th is scheduled for this month in Malaysia. Reports from negotiators are that the Obama administration is pushing hardest for an agreement that would strengthen corporations and increase their profits even if it meant the people suffered.

The general tone of the TPP negotiations is typical of the US approach to other nations when it comes to the economy. The US dominates the agenda, with allies when needed, and bullies smaller nations into accepting provisions that will harm their population. Civil society groups are invited to the rounds of talks, but in reality, they do not have influence over what is included. “Stakeholder” briefings, where civil society groups can ask questions of the trade representatives, are a lesson in evasive non-answers. Mostly, the inclusion of civil society is to give the appearance of an open process. How can stakeholders participate when the contents are secret, except for leaked sections?

As an example of harmful policies, through leaked text it is known that the TPP gives pharmaceutical and medical device corporations the ability to ‘evergreen’ their patents and prevents governments from negotiating fair prices. This keeps the price of medications and other necessary health goods high and prevents generics. Similar provisions in other free trade agreements raised the cost of medications by 20 percent or more resulting in a negative impact on public health. These provisions will make life-saving medications unaffordable and increase disease and death, particularly in poorer countries, all so that corporations can make unreasonable profits. They will also undermine top public health systems in Japan and Australia.
Another example is the investor rights provision which will allow ‘foreign’ investors to sue a nation if their laws interfere with trade, allowing corporations to sue in trade tribunals for loss of “expected profits.” This means a corporation will be able to sue a nation if a labor, environmental or consumer protection law decreases the profits the corporation planned on making. The trade tribunal will be staffed by judges who are mainly corporate lawyers on temporary leave from their corporate jobs. Essentially the United States will be giving up its national sovereignty to foreign investors, as will other countries.

Will this legal right be abused? It already is. Kristen Beifus of the Washington Fair Trade Coalition tells us that a corporation, Lone Pine Resources which is incorporated in Delaware, is suing the Canadian government for $250 million. It passed itself off as an American corporation in order to sue, but it is headquartered in Calgary and does all of its business in Canada. Lone Pine Resources is suing because it spent money to set up a fracking operation in Quebec, but then a fracking moratorium was passed.

Richard McIntyre, who serves as the US Trade Representative for the Green Shadow Cabinet, states that agreements such as the TPP are not really about trade at all. They are designed to protect the property rights of foreign investors in a way that works outside of the traditional legal system. Corporations can make claims against governments in a way that bypasses the democratic process. In effect, this will give a corporation the power to force a country, particularly smaller countries, to change its laws. Countries will learn that they cannot pass laws in the public interest without expensive litigation.

Suppose a country has an environmental or labor protection law in place. Under the TPP, a corporation will be able to sue that country for loss of expected profits if the law means it must do things like pay higher wages, comply with work safety provisions clean up toxics in the environment or handle its waste safely. The country will then face a choice of paying millions of dollars or changing its law. Poor countries, such as Vietnam, will not really have a choice because they cannot afford to pay an expensive fine.

McIntyre concludes that the current free trade process is really a debate about property rights and corporations having more rights than people. Although there are labor and environmental standards in free trade agreements, McIntyre calls these a “hollow victory” because they are very vague and there is no way to enforce them.

We Can Stop the Trans-Pacific Partnership

We can stop the TPP. There is enough experience with corporate trade agreements that we now know they can be stopped. The keys are: letting people know what is in them because
their contents are unpopular; and second, getting people active to express their disapproval so the agreement becomes so unpopular no elected official wants to be tied to it.

In the past, when trade agreements were under negotiation, they were discussed in the mass media and the text of the agreements was public. The Office of the US Trade Representative published the text of agreements on their website, even as the treaty was being negotiated.

Now that many people have caught on to the fact that free trade agreements have negative consequences, transparency has ended. The current text of the TPP is only available to the trade representatives and the 600 corporate advisers who are involved in writing it. They have real-time access to the text on their computers. Members of Congress must apply to see the text and when they are granted access, it is at the ‘read and retain’ level only, and they are sworn to secrecy. This means they can view it in a private room but cannot bring staff with them or take notes or photos of the text. And the media has been almost completely silent on the TPP. Stories are just starting to be printed because now that more people know about the TPP, the media loses its credibility if it doesn’t report on it.

There have been requests for more transparency. Civil society groups wrote letters to the trade representatives, people signed petitions and members of Congress have called for more access to the text. However, it was leaked that a Memorandum of Understanding was written into the TPP which “commits the countries not to declassify documents related to the negotiations for ‘Four years from entry into force of the TPP agreement or, if no agreement enters into force, four years from the close of the negotiations.’”

Senator Elizabeth Warren wrote the candidate for US Trade Representative, Michael Froman, asking for public transparency of the text. That request has not been granted. After 8 months of negotiations and tremendous public pressure, Representative Alan Grayson was permitted to view some of the TPP documents. His comment: “The TPP is nicknamed ‘NAFTA on steroids.’ Now that I’ve read it, I can see why. I can’t tell you what’s in the agreement, because the U.S. Trade Representative calls it classified. But I can tell you two things about it. 1) There is no national security purpose in keeping this text secret. 2) This agreement hands the sovereignty of our country over to corporate interests. 3) What they can’t afford to tell the American public is that [the rest of this sentence is classified].”

Why so secret? Public awareness and pressure have prevented the completion of at least 14 trade agreements over the past decades. The keys to stopping these agreements have been public awareness and protest. As Beifus says, “We haven’t passed a trade agreement in Congress because when people get in the streets, it becomes politically unsavory.”

Beifus is an organizer of a cross-border coalition of advocacy groups from Canada, the US and
Mexico who are working together to create that politically unsavory environment for the TPP. They co-wrote a *tri-national statement of unity* and are calling for public access to the text and a democratic process in Washington. The cross-border group also works with advocates in other Pacific Rim countries in order to build solidarity.

The TPP offers a real opportunity for solidarity not just between countries that will be affected, but also between groups that are working for a *broad variety of issues*: food safety, health care, internet freedom, worker rights, the environment and more. Coalitions of groups that support fair trade rather than free trade exist in the US and are expanding.

We are involved in a campaign, organized through PopularResistance.org in cooperation with groups that have been focused on trade for years, called FlushtheTPP.org. The goals of FlushtheTPP.org are to help people see that our concerns are united by the TPP and that we can stop the TPP by working together. FlushtheTPP.org is an action-oriented website that provides the tool people need to organize actions locally. (Sign up on FlushtheTPP.org to get involved.)

Actions are designed with two initial goals: To bring greater awareness to the public about the TPP and to prevent Congress from granting the White House “Fast Track” (a.k.a. Trade Promotion Authority). In July, we kicked off #TPPTuesdays for solidarity visibility actions – holding signs or other creative ways to get attention and passing out literature about the TPP. In August and through the autumn, people will be encouraged to focus on members of Congress and Fast Track.

Fast Track was first passed under President Nixon in the 1970’s. It gives the president the ability to negotiate and sign trade agreements, and Congress can then vote on the treaty after it has been signed. This subverts the Constitution as under the Commerce Clause, Congress has the power “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations.” Fast Track prevents the democratic process which includes the checks and balances of public hearings, expert testimony and amendments. Retiring Senator Baucus, who consistently represents big business interests, has made it his personal mission to deliver Fast Track to President Obama.

Negotiations of the TPP were expected to wind down this fall; however, because of conflicts between the countries involved and with Japan planning to join the talks at the July round in Malaysia, the process may extend into the spring. This gives us more time to educate, organize and mobilize people, but there is still a sense of urgency. If Congress grants the White House Fast Track, then the deal will be much harder to stop.

It will be interesting to see what happens when Japan signs on. The new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, ran on a platform opposing the TPP, but quickly shifted gears after his election.
He announced his decision to join the talks in March, despite widespread opposition. Thousands of people now show up to protest the TPP in Japan. Abe claims that he will negotiate in Japan’s interests, but that will conflict with provisions that have already been negotiated.

One of the keys to successfully stopping corporate trade agreements is for people to broaden the fissures between countries by highlighting why the agreement will be bad for their country. Protesters outside of negotiations, in the media and on the web highlighting how sections of these agreements will hurt their people make overcoming fissures between countries difficult.

**Ushering in a New Era of Fair Trade**

If the TPP, and its sister TTIP, are prevented from going forward as intended, this could bring in a new era of fair trade that respects the rights of people and the planet. Free trade agreements have been proven to be flawed models for trade because in addition to accelerating the downward trends in worker rights and environmental protection, they also increase the US’ trade deficit.

The [2012 trade data](#) reveal that for countries with which the US has a trade agreement, the trade deficit increased by 440 percent. At the same time, the trade deficit decreased slightly for countries with which the US does not have a trade agreement. And the US already has trade agreements that cover [90 percent of the GDP](#) of the countries involved in the TPP.

These numbers alone should tell us that the TPP is not really about trade. It is actually a back door for corporations to get laws passed that are in their favor and that could not pass Congress under a democratic process. McIntyre refers to ‘Free Trade” as ‘De-regulated International Commerce.’ Most of the trade in these trade agreements is happening through global corporate supply chains that go wherever the resources and labor are the cheapest.

Not only does de-regulated trade harm the environment by allowing corporations to settle where environmental laws are the most lax and making new laws difficult to pass, but it leads to hundreds of thousands of jobs leaving the US. The TPP is often referred to as ‘NAFTA on steroids.’ It is estimated that close to [700,000 jobs](#) were lost from the US due to NAFTA alone. The TPP will make it easier for transnational corporations to re-locate where labor is the cheapest, which drives down wages and working conditions for everyone. Free trade agreements escalate wealth inequality worldwide.

One group of workers at a [paper mill in the Northwest](#) whose jobs were sent overseas visited the new paper mill and found that not only had they lost their jobs, but all of their hard-won
concessions for worker rights and environmental safety were also lost in the transfer.

This is why there is an opportunity for global solidarity to stop this flawed model of trade. Important questions that must be answered going forward are why corporations are given rights that people don’t have and why corporations are not held liable for the harmful effects of mines and factories in their global supply chains. It is time to put a pause on trade agreements that further the free trade model until these and other issues are sorted out.

Fair trade coalitions are calling for sensible trade processes that are grounded in transparency and democracy. This means that all groups affected by the agreement must be involved in the negotiations in a fair and equitable way. And fair trade means that the rights of people and the planet come first, before corporate profits with people empowered to enforce those requirements.

One step in this direction is a bill introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown called “The 21st Century Trade and Market Access Act.” This act contains binding requirements for trade deals to protect food safety, the environment and workers as well as mechanisms to enforce these requirements. Nobel economist Joseph Stiglitz recently wrote that trade deals should follow three principles:

1. They should be symmetrical so that requirements are applied to all parties involved.
2. National interests should have higher priority than commercial interests.
3. The negotiations should be transparent.

Stiglitz warns us though that “the US is committed to a lack of transparency.”

Other steps are being taken at the local level to encourage fair trade. These include raising community awareness about the importance of fair trade, increasing local access to fair trade items and passing resolutions to affect government procurement policies.

All of these steps are important. We believe that a high priority step right now is to join together in solidarity to stop the TPP, and after we win that, to stop the TTIP. Negotiations of the TTIP are just beginning this month with the first round in Washington, DC. The TTIP is already in a precarious position because of the revelation that the US has been spying on the EU.

Visit FlushtheTPP.org. Take the pledge. Start planning events in your community to expose the TPP. Important dates to keep in mind are the 18th round of negotiations starting on July 15 (a great time to hold solidarity actions) and the 19th round of negotiations which is
expected this September somewhere in North America. We will work to mobilize a large presence at that round. Sign up to receive FlushtheTPP.org email action updates and pledge to join the campaign.

This is a campaign that we can win that will place us firmly on the path to a fair trade future; and a victory on which we can build the global revolt against corporate power. Join this historic turning point in the effort to end the rule of money and transfer power to the people.

You can hear the interview with Richard McIntyre and Kristen Beifus on “Taking Corporate Power Out of Our Trade Agreements” on Clearing the FOG.

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MARGARET FLOWERS AND KEVIN ZEESE
Kevin Zeese JD and Margaret Flowers MD co-host ClearingtheFOGRadio.org on We Act Radio 1480 AM Washington, DC and on Economic Democracy Media, co-direct It’s Our Economy and are organizers of the Occupation of Washington, DC. Their twitter accounts are @KBZeese and @MFlowers8.

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"The less a statesman amounts to, the more he loves the flag." -- Kin Hubbard
Both Bush & Obama have kept negotiations secret about this nuclearized NAFTA.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is not about free trade. It's a corporate coup d'etat--against us!

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• The people get wise to deals like NAFTA

Do Something!

In 2002, it was reported that British Prime Minister Tony Blair had told a friend an amusing tale about our man George W. Bush. It seems that the two of them and French President Jacques
Chirac had gotten into an economics discussion, after which George supposedly confided to Tony that he was decidedly unimpressed with Jacques' views: "The problem with the French," Bush scoffed, "is that they don't have a word for 'entrepreneur.'"

W's head has always been a no-fly-zone for factual reality. However, what would boggle his mind even more than the fact that we Americans filched that word from the French, is the reality that government is not quite the entrepreneur-devouring ogre (Mon dieu! George, another French word!) that Bush's cartoonish dogma paints it to be. Actually, government-at-its-best can be an entrepreneur's buddy. One surprising place to see this buddyship at work is in one of the most mundane of government offices: Procurement (i.e., the Department of Buying Stuff).

Where does your mayor, school board, governor, or any other "public shopper" go to purchase fixtures, food, furniture, ferns, and whatnot? Where I live, various agencies have Buy Austin, Buy Texas, Buy American, Buy Green, Buy Sweatshop-Free, and other targeted policies that apply our tax dollars to our values. This sensible idea has swept across the country, most likely including where you live, and these agency purchases add up to a big financial boost for start-ups, independents, women-owned, and other homegrown enterprises. Rather than buying everything from Walmart or China (excuse the redundancy there)--thus shipping truckloads and boatloads of cash out of our communities--plow that public money back into the home turf for grassroots economic growth and the flowering of local jobs.

Stop making sense

My administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. ----President Obama, January 26, 2009 Memo to Executive
Imagine the uproar if President Obama and Congress tried to pass a bill to outlaw such "preferential procurement" policies, summarily cancelling our democratic right to decide where to make public purchases. I’d get pretty PO’d, wouldn’t you? And what if they also proposed that foreign corporations in Brunei, New Zealand, Vietnam, and other nations must be given the right to make the sale on any and all products purchased with our tax dollars? That’d set my hair on fire!

The American people would never stand for this brazen affront to our sovereignty, so I can assure you that Obama and Congress will definitely NOT be proposing any such thing. Not directly, that is.

Instead, their hope is to tiptoe it around us. The nullification of our people’s right to direct expenditures of our own tax dollars is but one of the horror stories being quietly packed into a political-and-economic bombshell benignly labeled TPP --the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

This thing is a supersized and nuclearized NAFTA, the 1994 trade scam rammed through Congress by Bill Clinton, Wall Street’s Robert Rubin, and the entire corporate establishment. They promised that the "glories of globalization" would shower prosperity across our land. They lied. Corporations got the gold. We got the shaft--thousands of factories closed, millions of middle-class jobs went south, and the economies of hundreds of towns and cities (including Detroit) were hollowed out. (Most Mexicans got the NAFTA shafta, too. US grain traders like ADM dumped corn into Mexico, wiping out millions of peasant farmers’ livelihoods, and thousands of local businesses were crushed when Walmart invaded with its Chinese-made wares.)

Twenty years later, the corporate gang that stuck us with NAFTA is back, hoping to fool us with an even more destructive multinational deal. (This calls for another immortal quote from George W: "Fool me once, shame on--shame on you. Fool me--you can’t get fooled again." Well, you know what he meant).

This time we really must pay attention, because TPP is not just another trade deal. First, it is massive and open-ended. It would hitch us immediately to 11 Pacific Rim nations (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam), and its door would remain wide open to lure China, Indonesia, Russia, and other nations to come in. Second, note that many of those countries already have trade agreements with the US. Hence, **THIS AMAZING FACT:** *TPP is a "trade deal" that mostly does not deal with trade.* In fact, of the 29 chapters in this document, only five cover traditional trade matters!

The other two dozen chapters amount to a devilish "partnership" for corporate protectionism. They create sweeping new "rights" and escape hatches to protect multinational corporations from accountability to our governments... and to us. Here are a few of TPP’s provisos that would make our daily lives riskier, poorer, and less free:

**Food safety.** Any of our government’s food safety regulations (on pesticide levels, bacterial contamination, fecal exposure, toxic additives, GMOs, non-edible fillers, etc.) that are stricter than
"international standards," as most are, could be ruled as "illegal trade barriers." Then our government would have to revise our consumer protections to comply with the weaker global standards. Also, our government could no longer ban meat imports that don't meet our safe-to-eat laws, as long as the exporting nation simply claims that its inspection system is "equivalent" to ours. In addition, food labeling laws we rely on (organic, country-of-origin, animal-welfare approved, GMO-free, etc.) would also be subject to challenge as trade barriers.

**Fracking.** Our Department of Energy would lose its authority to regulate exports of natural gas to any TPP nation. This would create an explosion of the destructive fracking process across our land, for both foreign and US corporations could export fracked gas from America to member nations without any DOE review of the environmental and economic impacts on local communities--or on our national interests. It also means that most of the gas produced by this violently polluting process will not go to us, but to foreign users, which will raise our consumer prices and cut manufacturing growth.

**Jobs.** US corporations would get special foreign-investor protections to limit the cost and risk of relocating their factories to low-wage nations that sign onto this agreement. For example, an American corporation thinking about moving a factory would know it is guaranteed a sweetheart deal if it exports to a TPP nation like Vietnam. The corporation could skirt Vietnam's laws and demand compensation at an international tribunal for any government policy or action (such as a hike in the minimum wage) that undermined its "expected" profits. These guarantees would be strong incentives for corporate chieftains to export even more of our middle-class jobs.

**Drug prices.** Big Pharma would be given more years of monopoly pricing on each of their patents and be empowered to block distribution of cheaper generic drugs. Besides artificially keeping everyone's prices high, this would be a death sentence to many people suffering from cancer, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other treatable diseases in impoverished lands. The deal would also restrict the rights of our government to negotiate with drug giants to get lower consumer prices with bulk purchases, as Medicare and Medicaid do in the US.

**Banksters.** Wall Street and the financial giants in other TPP countries would make out like bandits: The deal explicitly prohibits transaction taxes (such as the proposed Robin Hood Tax here) that would shut down super-rich speculators who have repeatedly triggered financial crises and economic crashes around the world; it restricts "firewall" reforms that separate consumer banking from risky investment banking (thus prohibiting Congress from reinstituting the much needed Glass-Steagall firewall in our country); it could roll back reforms that governments adopted to fix the extreme bank-deregulation regimen that caused Wall Street's 2007 crash; and it provides a backdoor escape from national rules that would limit the size of "too-big-to-fail" behemoths. These extreme provisions would be enforceable by the banks themselves--TPP empowers them to force governments either to repeal reform laws or to compensate banks with taxpayer money for "losses" they say are caused by reforms.

**Internet freedom.** Thanks to public rebellion, corporations hoping to lock up and monopolize the internet failed in Congress last year to pass their repressive "Stop Online Piracy Act."
However, they've slipped SOPA's most pernicious provisions into TPP. Corporate-created content, for example, would be given copyright protection for a stunning 120 years! The deal would also transform internet service providers into a private, Big Brother police force, empowered to monitor our "user activity," arbitrarily take down our content, and cut off our access to the internet. To top that off, consumers could be assessed mandatory fines for non-commercial, small-scale copying--like sending your mom a recipe you got off of a paid site.

**Public services.** TPP rules would limit how governments regulate such public services as utilities, transportation, and education, including restricting policies meant to ensure broad or universal access to those essential needs. One especially insidious rule says that member countries must open their service sectors to private competitors, which would allow the corporate provider to cherry pick the profitable customers and sink the public service. Also, corporations from any TPP nation must be allowed to bid on contracts to provide public services in the US on the same terms as American corporations.

**A corporatocracy**

Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's superb research and activist group, Global Trade Watch, correctly calls the Trans-Pacific Partnership "a corporate coup d'etat." Indeed, nations that join must conform their laws and rules to TPP’s strictures, effectively supplanting US sovereignty and cancelling our people's right to be self-governing. Worse, it creates virtually permanent corporate rule over us--there's no expiration date on the agreement, and no provision in it can be altered unless all countries agree. Thus, even if Americans voted in an election to make changes, any other TPP country could overrule us by not agreeing.

Well, you might think, we'll still have our courts to redress corporate misuse of TPP's provisions. Uh... no. One of the deal’s chapters creates a monstrous monkey wrench called the "Investor-State Dispute Resolution" system. In this private, supra-legal "court," corporations are empowered to sue TPP governments over environmental, health, consumer, zoning, or any other public policies that the corporations claim are either undermining their TPP "rights" or diminishing--get this--their "expected future profits."

This elevates thousands of private, profit-seeking entities to the legal status of sovereign nations. Under the investor-state system, a smaller version of which was included in NAFTA and other free-trade schemes, the deck is stacked for corporate interests. Cases are decided behind closed doors by three-person international tribunals of private attorneys who often have a glaring corporate bias. The same lawyers who represent corporations in these cases routinely switch over in other cases to serve as "judges." Holy revolving door!

These "tribunalists" are not accountable to any electorate, and their decisions are final--there's no appeal to a real court. If a corporation wins a case, taxpayers of the government being sued lose, for they must pony up cash to compensate the corporation for its "loss" of profit.

At present, even before the elephantine TPP is imposed on us, corporations are demanding a total of nearly $14 billion just in cases brought under free trade arrangements that include the US.
Among the current corporate giants suing governments in investor-state tribunals are (1) Philip Morris (Altria), attacking Australia’s and Uruguay’s cigarette labeling policies; (2) Chevron, trying to avoid its liability for the gross toxic contamination of people and nature in the Ecuadorian Amazon; (3) Eli Lilly, demanding that Canada rewrite its patent law to give its drugs extended monopoly protection; and (4) several European investment firms, assaulting Egypt’s minimum wage law.

**Shhhhh!**

Why isn't this a screaming, bold-type, take-to-the-streets, call-out-the-dogs, roll-out-the-guillotine news story and political issue? Because the corporate and political powers (apologies again for redundancy) definitely don't want us to kick up a fuss that could squirrel their little surprise, so they've thrown a suffocating blanket of secrecy over the whole process.

TPP negotiations were initiated back in 2008 by none other than President Can't-Be-Fooled-Again. (Okay, one more Bushism: "I think--tide turning. See, as I remember--I was raised in the desert, but tides kind of--it's easy to see a tide turn.") The incurious mass media, however, didn't see the story then and have since devoted zero investigative energy to it. They've accepted the official cover story that the deal is just another yawner of a trade agreement, so pay no mind--even as 17 rounds of closed-door negotiations have zipped under their radar.

Obama--who pledged in 2008 to avoid sneaky, NAFTA-style, corporate sell-outs--promptly surrendered to the global schemers once in office. Team Obama goosed up the TPP negotiating process and has gone to extremes to make it more furtive than Bush did. In 2010, all nations involved even signed a formal pledge to keep details of their deliberations from the public--and to keep documents related to the deal under cover until four years after the process is completed.

**WARNING--BUCKLE UP BEFORE READING THIS:** Last year, Obama’s top trade rep, Ron Kirk, declared that locking out the people is necessary, because the deal’s details would outrage Americans and spook Congress from rubber stamping it. In short, to win public approval of TPP, the Obamacans say they must keep it hidden from the public.

Where, you might ask, is Congress? In the dark.

Even though the Constitution says Congress has exclusive authority "to regulate commerce with foreign nations," the White House has repeatedly rejected pretty-please requests by lawmakers merely to attend negotiations as observers, and congressional leaders have not been allowed to review, much less have any meaningful input on, the draft texts of TPP's 29 chapters. (Update: In June, our progressive friend, Rep. Alan Grayson, who has been a tenacious critic of the shady process, was finally granted a peek at the full draft--though not allowed to take a copy. "It's easy to understand why [it's] been kept secret," Grayson says, confirming that "It puts corporate interests ahead of American interests.")

**The corporate team**

There are, however, 600 or so "outsiders" who've been welcomed inside to help write TPP. They
are handpicked members of the 16 Industry Trade Advisory Committees--practically all of them corporate executives. From AT&T to Zippo Manufacturing, and from the Koch boys’ empire to Walmart’s billionaires, corporate powers are cheek to jowl with the government negotiators to make sure the final document serves their very special interests.

In addition, Obama has now named one of their own to replace Kirk: Michael Froman, an Obama classmate in law school and a protege of Robert Rubin in the Clinton administration. Post-Clinton, Froman traipsed along with Rubin to Citigroup, which made him a Wall Street multi-millionaire. From there, he went back to Obama in 2004 as a senate campaign advisor and money-bagger (including introducing the rising political star to Rubin). Now he's been brought in to wire all these connections to the TPP sovereignty bomb.

Will the new trade representative finally apply Obama's 2009 pledge of "transparency, public participation, and collaboration" to these momentous negotiations? Sen. Elizabeth Warren asked Froman this very question in June, offering three specific suggestions for shining a little of democracy's beneficial light on the process. "Mr. Froman's response was clear," Sen. Warren later reported: "No, no, no."

Obama & Co. can shut us out of the room, but they can’t consummate the deal there. While he wants to wrap up formal negotiations by October, he then has to get Congress’s okay. This means imploring the same members he's been stiffing to sign America’s name (i.e., yours and mine) to the document.

How will he get them to do that? As Clinton and Bush did in previous free trade hustles, he'll try to use a rush-rush legislative procedure called "fast track," while TPP’s boosters simultaneously envelop the public debate in a disorienting fog of corporate PR.

The White House and its corporate allies will also mount a heavy-handed lobbying campaign to shove their package into law. Yet, even with all of the above, by no means is passage assured--or likely.

Start with fast track. The very term suggests a railroad job, which is apt, for it's a little-used, anti-democratic maneuver to choo-choo a bill right over Congress. Under this procedure, Obama is allowed to sign TPP before Congress votes. Then he writes an "implementing bill" to make US laws conform to the hundreds of pages of TPP dictates. That's what he sends to Congress, where no amendments will be allowed and debate will be strictly limited.

The idea is to force members to swallow the whole deal in one, hurried, up-or-down vote. However, Congress first has to authorize the White House's use of the fast track ploy--and that’s very iffy. Republican leaders have shown they’re unwilling to give anything to Obama. Meanwhile, congressional Democrats are not likely to grease the skids for this stinker of a deal.

The people's team

But the fundamental problem for the deal’s boosters is not procedure, it's content: TPP stinks. If Americans get a whiff of it, they'll gag. Yes, corporations will put a ton of money behind TPP’s
passage, but even they might not have enough PR perfume to make Congress hug it.

There is also a broad, well-organized, knowledgeable, and politically experienced coalition of grassroots groups already at work to prevent this perversion of America's fundamental governing principles. Still, many pundits will tell us that it's impossible to stop them, because the public can't understand these complex deals.

Baloney. First, this one is not at all complex; it's a plain old power grab by the world's moneyed elites, and people today have no interest in giving more money and power to the world's 1-percenters. Second, populist forces now opposing TPP have won many of these brawls in the past, including:

Stopping Clinton's demand for fast track authority in 1998.

Sidetracking the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1998.

Derailing an expansion of the World Trade Organization in 1999 and again in 2010.

Defeating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (a 14-nation expansion of NAFTA) in 1999.

Halting such multi-nation trade deals as AFTA (Andean countries) and NAFTA-style deals with APEC (an earlier attempt at the TPP with 18 Pacific Rim Countries), SACU (Southern Africa), Malaysia, and Thailand.

My message: We can do this. We The People can protect our democratic rights from this latest threat of corporate usurpation. The only way the Powers That Be can win is to keep the public in the dark about what TPP is. So now is the time for Loudowners to sound the alarm, spread the news about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (start by sharing this article with your social networks!), and shine the light of day on their power play before it gets to Congress.

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