



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 20, 2014

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TISA, Yet Another Secret “Trade” Threat

“TALKING TISA — The eighth round of Trade in Services Agreement negotiations kicked off Sunday in Geneva, with negotiators planning to delve into market access offers and rules on financial services, telecommunications, domestic regulation and transparency, the EU has announced.”

That opening sentence in a three-sentence blog item by Adam Behsudi at Politico.com on September 22 was virtually the only public notice announcing the latest round of secret negotiations for the hugely important Trade in Services Agreement (TISA). The four-day TISA event took place September 22-25 at the Geneva, Switzerland, headquarters of the World Trade Organization. It was held in secret, behind closed doors, of course, the same as with the ongoing talks for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).



There was no outcry from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, or Fox News about all the secrecy and the right of the public to know what’s going on. In fact, not even a mention that the TISA Geneva round was underway! No surprise there: We saw the same establishment media blackout in June, when WikiLeaks released the secret draft text of the TISA Financial Services Annex. Aside from the very substantive issues being negotiated (which we’ll get to in a moment), there was the very explosive revelation that the drafters intend for the text of the agreement to *remain secret for five years after the proposed TISA rules take effect!*

The very first page of the draft text states: “Declassify on: Five years from entry into force of the TISA agreement or, if no agreement enters into force, five years from the close of the negotiations.”

Moreover, it states: “This document must be protected from unauthorized disclosure.... It must be stored in a locked or secured building, room, or container.” Members of the U.S. Congress are not allowed to see the secret text; it will be presented to them, finally, in a high-pressure, no-debate vote, following a massive lobbying effort by the usual crony corporatists from the financial, insurance, and information technology sectors.

Incredibly (but as should be expected), the participants in and promoters of the TISA insist that they are all for transparency, openness, and due process. The U.S. Trade Representative’s website on TISA declares: “TISA will support the development of strong, transparent, and effective regulatory policies, which are so important to enabling international commerce.”



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The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which regularly betrays the interests of its hundreds of thousands of small and medium Main Street business members to push the one-world agenda of Wall Street, straight-facedly claims that TISA will advance the principles of “increased transparency and public participation.”

The Coalition of Services Industries (CSI), a high-powered business lobby, echoes the Chamber’s assertions, stating that TISA will address major trade barriers such as “lack of transparency and need for due process of law.” But, of course, in order to achieve “transparency” we’ll have to accept non-transparency (i.e., absolute secrecy) and lack of due process — for a period of time. CSI’s members include such heavyweights as 21st Century Fox, Aflac, AT&T, FedEx, Google, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Prudential, UPS, Verizon, and Walmart, as well as too-big-to-fail bailout kings such as AIG, Citigroup, and JPMorgan Chase. Exactly the type of folks known for transparency and business ethics, right?

The TISA negotiations are no small matter; they encompass an immense chunk of our economy and have the potential to eviscerate many of our constitutional checks and balances, as well as launch a new tidal wave of job outsourcing. The U.S. Trade Representative’s office says that services “account for three-quarters of U.S. GDP and 4 out of 5 jobs in the United States.” The targeted sectors include banking and financial services, legal services, accounting, insurance, engineering, software design, teaching, real estate, tourism, consulting, energy distribution, transportation, telecommunications, courier and postal services, and a great deal more.

Under our U.S. constitutional system, the national government in Washington, D.C., is restricted to the exercise of specific, delegated powers having to do primarily with national defense, diplomacy, postal service, etc. The individual states reserved to themselves the vast majority of powers concerning criminal and civil law, commercial relations, contracts, business regulation, professional standards and licensing, etc. Each of our 50 states enacts its own laws and regulations governing these matters. TISA would strip those powers from state and local governments and transfer them to regional tribunals and the WTO.

Have your senators, congressman, governor, and state legislators registered opposition to this assault on our national sovereignty, states’ rights, and service jobs?



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