



Correction Please!

Aiding China With the TPP

Item: *Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported on February 4, 2016, that with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the United States is seeking to counter China's "challenge to its supremacy." Painting a glowing picture of TPP, the article — entitled "Biggest ever trade deal signed as US seeks to counter China" — said:*

The biggest trade deal in history was signed Thursday, yoking 12 Pacific rim countries in a US-led initiative aimed at wresting influence from booming China. The ambitious Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) aims to slash tariffs and trade barriers for an enormous 40 percent of the global economy — but pointedly does not include Beijing.

President Obama is quoted in the article as saying, "TPP allows America — and not countries like China — to write the rules of the road in the 21st century," in an obvious attempt to draw a battle line for economic dominance with China on one side and the U.S. on the other.

After asserting, "The deal — whose birth was fraught by domestic opposition in the US and in other key players, such as Japan — is a key plank of Obama's so-called 'pivot' to Asia, as he seeks to counter the rising power of China," the AFP article goes on to say:

Along with a rebalancing of the US military machine towards the western Pacific, the TPP is recognition of the growing might of China, which has come to dominate the region, threatening American influence. Supporters of the deal say harnessing the power of free trade in such a dynamic part of the world is vital if the US is to fend off China's challenge to its supremacy.

Reporting that "trade ministers from 12 participating countries — Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam — signed the pact in Auckland early Thursday," the article remarks that "Beijing was muted in its reaction to the deal, saying its officials were studying the 6,000-page document.

Correction: So, the American voter is told, the United States must counter China's "challenge to its supremacy," must wrest "influence from booming China," and must "counter the rising power of China" and "the growing might of China, which has come to dominate the region, threatening American influence." To do all of that countering and wresting, the United States must sign on to and ratify the TPP. But it is supposed to accomplish much more than that. It is also supposed to create more jobs and prosperity for Americans, despite the fact that previous trade deals such as NAFTA were supposed to accomplish the same thing but resulted instead in the export of American jobs.

It's a limited time offer, wrapped up in a high-pressure sales pitch. "This offer won't last ladies and gentlemen, so you'd better act now!" But, will the TPP really allow the United States to counter China's dominance and regain its place in the economic struggle? Not even close.

China may yet join the TPP, President Obama's bluff and bluster notwithstanding. According to an October 10, 2014 article in the *Diplomat*, "In May 2013, China's Commerce Ministry indicated that it was looking more seriously at the possibility of China joining the TPP." So, while the American voter is told that the TPP will exclude China and allow the United States to place a check on China's economic dominance, the reality is that China is considering joining the TPP.



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The TPP is *indeed* “the biggest trade deal in history,” but rather than excluding China, the TPP is the very blueprint to further empower China. This “biggest trade deal in history” is not the final product, but is instead a building block toward an even bigger trade agreement that will include China, as well as Russia. That agreement — the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) — will dwarf the TPP in the same way that recent agreements such as the TPP have dwarfed NAFTA.

As The New American pointed out in an online article in August 2013, the book *Understanding the Trans-Pacific Partnership* makes this clear. Chapter 1 includes the following admissions:

Over time, the TPP is expected to evolve into a major integration arrangement covering most of the members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

The TPP is regarded as an interim arrangement or stepping stone toward a broader, regionwide Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), possibly within a decade, as envisaged by APEC leaders in Bogor [Indonesia] in November 1994 and reaffirmed more recently by them in their meeting in Honolulu in November 2011. TPP negotiators are not only thinking about new countries joining the ongoing talks but also planning and constructing the trade pact with a view toward future linkages with other APEC members, including and especially China.

Chapter 6 further drives the point home: “The current TPP architects envision building an eventual FTAAP on the comprehensive foundations of the TPP accord, with other APEC countries joining the pact in coming years.”

And it should be emphasized that the plans to include China and expand the TPP into the FTAAP were not recent developments as of 2013.

The White House website included an official APEC press release, dated November 13, 2010, which said:

Based on the results of this work, we have agreed that now is the time for APEC to translate FTAAP from an aspirational to a more concrete vision. To that end, we instruct APEC to take concrete steps toward realization of an FTAAP, which is a major instrument to further APEC’s Regional Economic Integration (REI) agenda.

Also important to note is that those plans have not changed. The Chinese Communist Party newspaper *Study Times* ran an op-ed piece in October 2015 advocating for China’s eventual membership in the TPP. Far from disagreeing with the objectives and goals of the TPP, the *Study Times* article makes it clear that the TPP and Communist China are in lock step. “The rules of the TPP and the direction of China’s reforms and opening up are in line,” the article said, adding, “China is currently working with the US to discuss bilateral investment agreements in order to access the ‘national treatment before admission + Negative List’ mode as the basis for negotiations, in line with TPP requirements.”

Perhaps the most revealing admission in the *Study Times* article is the fact that China, rather than planning to sit out the TPP, is merely biding time until everything is in place before joining: “China should keep paying close attention and at an appropriate time, in accordance with progress on domestic reform, join the TPP, while limiting the costs associated to the greatest degree.”

So as President Obama and the mainstream media hold Chinese economic dominance up as the reason for the United States to ratify the TPP, and China plays coy about the agreement, the reality is that the TPP and its soon-to-be replacement, the FTAAP, are designed to do greater harm to both the American



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economy and sovereignty while benefiting China at our expense.

There is hope, though. Even with the signing of the agreement by representatives of all countries involved, the TPP still faces ratification. If it fails in the United States, it is essentially dead in the water. No wonder the powers that be are pushing so hard. Concerned Americans need to demand that their senators and congressmen vote against ratification.

— C. Mitchell Shaw



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