



GOP Leaders Plot Pseudo-Free-Trade Schemes With Obama

By Alex Newman

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With much of Obama's Democrat political base seeking to block misnamed "free-trade" agreements at the moment, the White House is plotting with congressional Republicans and Big Business interests to advance the controversial [national sovereignty-crushing agenda disguised as a "trade" deal](#). According to media reports, establishment Republicans are scheming to pass "fast-track authority" for Obama's secretly negotiated schemes as soon as the newly empowered GOP takes control of the Senate and further boosts its majority in the House. However, despite strong support from the globalist crony-capitalist wing of the GOP, the administration is expected to face serious difficulties ramming through the agenda.

The two major "free trade" deals currently being negotiated by governments and Big Business behind closed doors are the [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) (TPP) and the [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (TTIP). The TPP would create a supranational structure binding together a dozen governments and dictatorships along the Pacific, including the brutal communist regime ruling Vietnam. The TTIP, meanwhile, represents [an effort to "harmonize"](#) the laws and regulations of the United States with the never-ending stream of radical decrees imposed by unelected bureaucrats within the controversial European Union. Both deals threaten the sovereignty, prosperity, and liberty of the American people, critics say.

Despite growing grassroots opposition among conservatives and despite being sent to Washington by voters with a mandate to rein in the administration, GOP leadership in both houses of Congress is apparently more than willing to support the Obama administration's pseudo-free trade plots. Incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), for example, has already pledged to support the scheme, and promised that foisting the TPP on America would be one of his top priorities for 2015. Numerous media reports also said Senate Republicans plan to introduce Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation to grant the Obama administration "fast-track authority" as soon as the new Congress takes the reins next month.

In essence, the TPA measure being plotted by establishment Republicans and Obama would largely surrender Congress' constitutional responsibility over foreign trade to the White House. After the administration finalizes its secret and deeply controversial agreements with foreign powers and dictators, the American people's elected representatives would only have a chance to offer an up or down vote on the full deal — with no possibility of amending or changing the

“trade” regime negotiated by the White House. That is why activists from across the political spectrum are rallying to stop the TPA plan in Congress, which would make it much harder for Obama to impose the controversial “trade” regimes on America.

While much of the opposition to Obama’s internationalist scheming comes from Big Labor and Big Green “environmental” lobbyists, on the right, opposition is also surging. Broad swaths of the Tea Party movement oppose the deals, as do the Eagle Forum and The John Birch Society, for example. All oppose granting Obama even more powers via TPA, too. One anti-“free trade” campaign on the right has even started using the term “ObamaTrade” to evoke feelings among outraged voters of Obama’s disastrous healthcare takeover, often ridiculed as “ObamaCare.”

Despite establishment efforts to paint conservative attacks on the “free trade” schemes as opposition to legitimate free trade, the overwhelming majority of the opposition to Obama’s “trade” agenda on the right has nothing to do with trade. Instead, concerns include corporatism and crony-capitalism, subversion of U.S. sovereignty, free-speech concerns relating to Internet regulation, allowing international bodies and foreign governments to dictate American policy, and much more. The out-of-control EU [began as the innocent-sounding “European Free Trade Agreement,” yet it now dominates](#) policymaking in its formerly sovereign member states. Fears over further self-imposed economic malaise are also growing.

Real free trade, of course, which the vast majority of the conservative and libertarian movements fully support, does not require thousands of pages of regulations negotiated with foreign governments and tyrants in secret. That is why leading free-market thinkers have described pseudo-free trade schemes such as NAFTA as “managed trade” — something entirely different from notions of real free trade unencumbered by oppressive government intervention, interference, regulations, and large-scale wealth extraction through huge taxes and tariffs.

Even among Republicans in Congress, there are rumblings of opposition to granting Obama what essentially amounts to a blank check to surrender U.S. sovereignty and prosperity under the guise of “trade.” Earlier this month, a coalition of 19 Republican representatives sent a letter to House Speaker John Boehner urging him not to even bring fast-track authority up for a vote. “The American people have spoken loud and clear: they want a new direction for our country,” the lawmakers wrote. “The habitual abuses of power by this president have eroded the faith of the American people, who no longer trust his judgment or leadership.”

Ironically, however, while GOP leaders elected to stop Obama bend over backwards to support his “free trade” machinations after funding most of his lawless decrees through September of next year, it is self-styled “progressive” Democrats in Congress that are currently mustering most of the opposition to the TPP and Obama’s managed trade scheming. In a [recent letter](#) to Obama’s trade representative, Michael Froman, three Democrat senators, led by far-left radical Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), blasted the trade schemes from multiple angles.

“We are concerned that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) could make it harder for Congress and regulatory agencies to prevent future financial crises,” complained the trio of leftist senators. “With millions of families still struggling to recover from the last financial crisis and the Great

Recession that followed, we cannot afford a trade deal that undermines the government's ability to protect the American economy.”

Especially concerning, they said, is a provision in the TPP purporting to allow foreign corporations to sue American authorities — local, state, and federal — in an “international tribunal” that would have the power to overrule U.S. laws and regulations and force taxpayers to fork over wealth. Dubbed “investor-state dispute settlement,” the plot has sparked outrage all across the political spectrum for various reasons.

More than a few conservatives, constitutionalists, and libertarians, for example, have warned about the implications to U.S. sovereignty and self-government. Indeed, while the TPP provision is even more extreme than NAFTA’s “international tribunals,” foreign companies and unelected bodies constituted under pseudo-“trade” regimes can and do already overrule the Constitution and the American people’s elected representatives under the guise of “trade.” Even the pro-TPP Cato Institute described the ISDS provision as “an unnecessary, unreasonable, and unwise provision to include in trade agreements.”

Meanwhile, “progressives” worry that the system would allow foreign businesses to undermine the ability of Congress and regulatory agencies to protect the public. In their letter to Froman, the three Democrat senators warned that the ISDS scheme “would expose a broad array of critical American financial regulations to challenge by many additional foreign companies.” It also “permits foreign companies to bypass American courts and challenge U.S. government policies before a panel that sits outside any domestic legal system,” the lawmakers said.

Perhaps even more alarming, though, is that the scheme could end up costing large sums for struggling U.S. taxpayers, who would have no recourse if “international tribunals” ruled against them. Warren’s letter even cited an example of such scheming, pointing to a 2006 “panel” decision that ordered taxpayers to pay a foreign company \$236 million because the government did not bail out a private bank in which that company held a stake. The letter also said the TPP “tribunal” scheme could “expose American taxpayers to billions of dollars in losses.”

Before becoming president, Obama himself would probably have agreed with Warren’s concerns. In fact, many Obama supporters view the president’s push for the new managed trade deals as a betrayal. During his 2008 campaign, for example, Obama blasted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), even vowing to renegotiate it using the threat of a unilateral opt out. Instead, once he took office, he opposed congressional efforts to kill NAFTA and did not lift a finger to amend it. And now, he is openly going against his party and his base to ensure that the latest establishment-backed “trade” schemes are imposed on the American people whether they want it or not.

Some lawmakers have pointed that out. “I’m hoping he remembers that campaign and being in Ohio and speaking directly to folks who lost their job because of a trade agreement he was campaigning to renegotiate at that point,” Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), who also opposes the TPP, was quoted as saying by the *Washington Post*. Other Democrat lawmakers are also reportedly working to slow down or even stop the Obama administration on the issue, though, like establishment Republicans, Obama appears oblivious to the concerns of the American people.

As establishment Republicans and the Obama White House team up to ram their managed trade schemes down the throats of the American people, alliances between political forces traditionally opposed to each other are also gaining steam. However, conservative leaders have warned Americans not to rely on “progressive” opposition to help stop the “free trade agenda.” If Big Labor and Big Green get the concessions and regulations they are pushing for, they cannot be relied upon to maintain their opposition to the TPP or the TTIP.

Instead, Americans from across the political spectrum should unite in demanding that Congress reject Obama’s “trade” machinations — starting with a refusal to grant the White House any fast-track authority. Rather than handing even more authority to Obama, lawmakers must focus on what voters sent them to Washington, D.C., to do: Stop Obama and defund the last six years’ worth of lawless decrees and edicts while working to restore the U.S. Constitution.