

# LibertyNation

## Trans-Pacific Partnership Moving Forward Without U.S.

Andrew Moran

November 15, 2017

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was one of the most contentious trade agreements during the actions was to scrap the TPP, which many thought would close the book on the disastrous trade arrangement. Of course, that hasn't happened. In fact, it's now taking a step forward toward full adoption.

In a statement to Politico, the Chilean government confirmed that trade officials from 11 TPP members have agreed to implement the “core elements” of the arrangement without the U.S. The report notes that 20 provisions of the deal related to issues like telecommunications and medical devices have been suspended, but many key details of the plan remain scarce. Despite being championed as the “gold standard” of trade agreements by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, many conservatives, libertarians, and liberals took exception to the TPP. And rightfully so. Like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the TPP consists of cronyism, statism, and even more managed trade.

That still hasn't hindered Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and several others from moving forward with it.

### 11 COUNTRIES AGREE ON CPTPP

In January, President Trump abandoned the TPP, but other leaders are doubling down on the trade pact now known as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

On Saturday, trade ministers from Canada and ten other countries announced that they had reached a deal to move ahead with the CPTPP. Some compromises were made, but the “core elements” that maintain “the high standards, overall balance, and integrity of the TPP” will stay intact:

**Ministers agree that the CPTPP maintains the high standards, overall balance, and integrity of the TPP while ensuring the commercial and other interests of all participants and preserving our inherent right to regulate, including the flexibility of the parties to set legislative and regulatory priorities. Ministers also affirm the right of each party to preserve, develop and implement its cultural policies. Ministers consider that the CPTPP reflects the desire of the parties to implement the TPP outcomes among themselves.”**

Tran Tuan Anh, Vietnam's minister of industry and trade, noted that further negotiations will be required to work out the technicalities and to put together appropriate text. The deal also needs to be translated into English and other languages before it can be signed and ratified.

The 11 members joining the CPTPP are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

When President Trump ditched the TPP, he argued that he much prefers country-to-country trade and will not allow larger organizations take advantage of the U.S any longer.

Speaking at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit over the weekend, Trump reiterated his campaign pledge that won him 60 million voters, "I am always going to put America first."

### **TPP IS A FRIGHTENING PROSPECT**

When the TPP was first drafted between Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore in 2005, no one could prognosticate that it would blossom into one of the worst trade deals in modern history. President Trump may have made plenty of questionable decisions since being sworn in, but walking away from the TPP was not one of them.

Once the TPP talks started to include several other nations, it metastasized into a surreptitious treaty. The American public didn't know much about it, other than former President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton praising the deal.

It wasn't until Julian Assange and WikiLeaks got a hold of 2,000 pages that we started to learn about the iniquitous intricacies of the TPP. The public finally got to see what the special interests, attorneys, and politicians were doing in their secret, hush-hush meetings and talks. In the end, everyone realized that the TPP wasn't about free and fair trade, but rather about lawfare – it even restricts trade in many regards, according to the Cato Institute.

Just five of the 29 chapters were related to trade. The remaining 24 pertained to global big government, Internet regulations, corporate controls, and a takeover by the special interests. It benefits corporations, unions and politicians – and those who want to limit China's power in the region.

Let's take a gander at all three parties.

For unions, it makes it difficult for non-union labor to compete against unionized labor by amplifying the power of unions in all of the participating nations. American and Canadian unions were upset over the TPP, but primarily because it does not proffer union membership enough protection.

For corporations, if a government decides to build a hospital in the close proximity of a private hospital, then the proprietor of the private hospital can sue taxpayers because of expected loss in

future profits. Also, U.S. businesses would be prohibited from filing a lawsuit against the state; only multi-national corporation (MNCs) would be afforded this luxury.

For politicians, they can curtail any and all Internet freedoms, a prospect they have salivated over for so many years. As per the TPP, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) would be legally required to monitor and police your Internet activities, and they would be given the authority to censor content and limit access to user-generated content.

Once you factor in the TPP to the myriad of other international trade agreements – NAFTA, CAFTA, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – we are one step closer to global governance. What makes matters worse is that the TPP is forever. Like a cult, you cannot escape.

Upon release of the documents, Assange told Democracy Now:

**And so, that is erecting and embedding new, ultramodern neoliberal structure in U.S. law and in the laws of the other countries that are participating, and is putting it in a treaty form. And by putting it in a treaty form, that means—with 14 countries involved, means it's very, very hard to overturn. So if there's a desire, democratic desire, in the United States to go down a different path—for example, to introduce more public transport—then you can't easily change the TPP treaty, because you have to go back and get the agreement of the other nations involved.**

Terrifying.

## **AGREEMENTS FOR REAL FREE TRADE?**

When politicians declare support for a trade agreement in the name of expanding trade, then you will know far in advance that the policy often accomplishes the opposite. This is because so-called free trade agreements are never free; they are managed to accelerate the power of the state and give the edge to certain groups over others.

These are merely agreements that only prove fruitful for politicians, cronysts, special interests, and the elite. If an authentic free trade policy was proposed, then it is expected that it would be aggressively fought against by these same entities.

What the U.S., U.K., China, Canada, and Mexico have are government-managed trade deals. Locating free trade mechanisms inside of a trade deal is about as rare as Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) saying something intelligent.

Trade deals are utterly unnecessary to achieving the aim of international trade. As legendary economist Murray Rothbard opined, “Genuine free trade doesn't require a treaty.”

President Trump is establishing antiquated protectionist and mercantilist measures that are the antithesis of free trade. This is the wrong direction to take. That said, canceling the TPP will go

down as one of his most significant victories, and we should tip our hat to him. Now let's hope he decentralizes trade.