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Proclamation of 'World Trade Week' Tops President's Trade Policy Achievement List

May 17, 2010 - 3:52 pm

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Dan IkensonBio | Email

Dan Ikenson is associate director of the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.



Dear President Obama:

Just when I was ready to concede that U.S. trade policy is hopelessly adrift in a sea of incoherence, bouncing around randomly in the swirling cross currents of laughably dissonant policy objectives, while U.S. businesses and workers suffer the consequences of Washington's unfettered allegiance to anachronistic and ruinous trade policy group think, you've given me pause by taking the decisive step, on Friday, to [decree](#) World Trade Week. You wrote:

I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 16 through May 22, 2010, as World Trade Week. I encourage all Americans to observe this week with events, trade shows, and educational programs that celebrate the benefits of trade to our Nation, American workers, and the Global economy.

Mr. President, I applaud your efforts and recognize that decision must not have come easily. There were probably late-night discussions with your staff, contemplative 2am walks through the Rose Garden, and perhaps some sleepless nights. To even imply that trade may be beneficial to Americans—this close to November, no less—was an act of profound political courage.

Well, Mr. President, thank you for the encouragement. I will do my part to fulfill your vision of World Trade Week, which is actually something [my colleagues and I have been doing for many years](#)—often with citation to the data collected and published by your numerous administrative departments and agencies. I guess one might say that World Trade Week is a 24/7 proposition over here at the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.

So, rather than reinvent the wheel and since we specialize in "increasing public awareness about the benefits of free trade and the costs of protectionism," perhaps you can ask the White House webmaster to post a link to our [educational materials about trade](#), including [these recommendations](#) for policymakers, on www.whitehouse.gov.

If you're as committed as we are, Mr. President, to correcting the long-festering myths about trade and helping Americans discern the truth from the heaps of misleading rhetoric and lies they hear so frequently ([here's a blueprint](#) for that course), we just might be able to right the trade policy ship.

Sincerely,

Dan Ikenson

Cross-posted at [Cato@Liberty](#)

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