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USMCA: A TPP Redux?

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Heralded as a
“big win” for

President Trump, the newly negotiated NAFTA replacement, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), appears to have all the earmarks of Obama-era trade agreements, with former Obama officials seeing stark similarities.



“Throughout the campaign I promised to renegotiate NAFTA, and today we have kept that promise,” Trump said from the Rose Garden on October 1, 2018, as he spoke about the “incredible new U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement called USMCA.”

Unbeknownst to most of Trump’s base and strongest supporters is that much of the USMCA’s text is virtually identical to that of President Obama’s Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — a “free trade” agreement negotiated among 12 Pacific Rim nations (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam) and at the time representing 40 percent of the world’s GDP.

During the 2016 presidential elections, Trump staunchly opposed TPP, making it the centerpiece of his belief in “Americanism, not globalism.” Yet now, much in the same manner that NAFTA was a beachhead for globalism, the USMCA does not disappoint globalists.

It’s important to remember that Trump did not personally negotiate the USMCA, nor did he pen any portions of the document. Trump’s lead NAFTA/USMCA negotiator was U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer, who’s been a longtime member of the globalist, one-world-government-building Council on Foreign Relations, and who previously applauded the Obama administration’s TPP agreement. In addition to Lighthizer, another of Trump’s negotiators was his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who has had business ties with the Deep State, including Goldman Sachs and George Soros.

In addition to Lighthizer and Kushner, many of the negotiators working within both the State Department and USTR office are career diplomats and employees, having also worked in the Obama administration.

According to the online Huffington Post, “At least half of the men and women standing behind Trump during his Rose Garden ceremony praising the new deal were the same career service staff who negotiated nearly identical provisions in TPP, which Trump had railed against.”

Trevor Kincaid, the USTR spokesman for the Obama administration, told the Post that it's the same USTR team that worked under Obama. "Ironically, he called them horrible negotiators when running for office," Kincaid said, later adding, "It's really the same with a new name. It's basically the '22 Jump Street' of trade deals."

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"New" NAFTA or Copycat TPP?

Appearing on CNBC's *Squawk Box*, former U.S. Ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman praised the USMCA. "It's obviously welcome news. This is welcome news for North America; it's welcome news for the markets obviously this morning," Heyman said.

Heyman — a Democrat, former Goldman Sachs vice president, and board member for the pro-one-world-government Chicago Council on Global Affairs — was appointed U.S. ambassador to Canada by President Obama in 2013. Upon his Senate confirmation in 2014, Heyman served in that capacity for the duration of Obama's term.

The night the text of USMCA was released on the USTR website, Heyman reviewed various portions and chapters of the agreement, only to discover that they were identical to those in the TPP. Ironically, Trump has repeatedly lambasted the TPP as the worst trade deal ever negotiated. "[From] some of the reads I got over night, two-thirds of this agreement is essentially going back to TPP," Heyman explained. "All they did was take so much of the language of TPP and implement it here, as it pertains to Canada."

Speaking on the same program, Fordham Law Professor Matthew Gold elaborated how Trump's "big win" in regard to the USMCA/NAFTA renegotiations with Canada comes directly from the TPP. "He got a large number of small updates most of which were in the TPP agreement, which he pulled out of. He got us back to a small increased access in the Canadian dairy market, almost all of which was in the TPP," Gold said.

The TPP was rejected because the ends didn't justify the means; in the case of the USMCA, they are being celebrated.

And Gold should know the details of the TPP. He served in the Obama administration as a leading figure on North American affairs and was involved in the TPP negotiations, according to his bio:

Professor Gold previously held an appointment within the Executive Office of the President as the Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for North America, in which he was the United States' lead negotiator and policy advisor focused on North American trade. In that capacity, he was a trade advisor to the President for the North American Leaders Summit, and ... was a

participant in the talks that brought Canada and Mexico into the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations.

A side-by-side comparison of the USMCA and the TPP shows extensive overlap. Virtually all of the problems inherent in the TPP are likewise contained in the USMCA, such as the erosion of national sovereignty, submission to a new global governance authority, the unrestricted movement of foreign nationals, workers' rights to collective bargaining, and regional measures to combat climate change.

For example, just how the TPP's Chapter 27 — entitled "Administrative and Institutional Provisions" — establishes and outlines the functions for a TPP Commission, USMCA's Chapter 30 — likewise entitled "Administrative and Institutional Provisions" — also establishes a "Free Trade Commission," with extensively broad powers. Like the TPP Commission, the USMCA's Free Trade Commission can also "consider proposals to amend or modify" the agreement.

The USMCA Free Trade Commission, again like the TPP Commission, would be comprised of ministerial or senior-level officials from all three governments. And it would likewise oversee and direct a vast bureaucracy of subordinate committees (each related to a particular chapter of the USMCA), which the commission could merge or dissolve "in order to improve the functioning" of the agreement. The Committee on Competitiveness, or the North American Competitiveness Committee as it is also called, established in Chapter 26 of the USMCA, is intended for "promoting further economic integration among [all three countries]."

The USMCA also establishes a brand-new Environment Committee — subordinate to the Free Trade Commission — in order to achieve the United Nations Agenda 21 objective of "sustainable development." In virtually the exact same wording as the TPP's Article 20.13 on "Trade and Biodiversity," the USMCA's Article 24.15 on "Trade and Biodiversity" states: "The Parties recognize the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as the ecosystem services it provides, and their key role in achieving sustainable development."

Identical wording from the TPP is found all throughout the USMCA agreement. In fact, according to *Roll Call*, USTR Lighthizer admittedly said that the USMCA is "built on" many aspects of the TPP.

USMCA: Basis for a New TPP?

Instead of calling it the USMCA, the new agreement could have easily been called the "TPP group of three" (TPP-3), with the United States, Mexico, and Canada as the three. In fact, Jared Bernstein, former Vice President Joe Biden's top economic advisor, told the Huffington Post, "It's not the slightest bit credible to argue that NAFTA or TPP were massive disasters but that USMCA is perfection."

Following the release of the USMCA, Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, tweeted his praise for the agreement and told about his aspirations for it: that it would be the basis for future U.S. participation in the TPP. "The USMCA looks to be the trade pact formerly known as NAFTA plus 10-20%. Hope it becomes a precedent for TPP. I suggest the US-Pacific

Trade Agreement (USPTA),” Haass said on Twitter, adding, “What matters is that the US joins it; doing so would bolster our strategic position vis-a-vis China and our economy.”

The next day, Haass again took to Twitter, where he reiterated his renewed hope of the United States rejoining TPP. Haass tweeted:

USMCA is NAFTA plus TPP plus a few tweaks. Whatever ... if @realDonaldTrump and the Congress are now prepared to embrace a pro-trade agenda, it is all to the good. Ideally, US participation in TPP by another name would be next; failing that, a US-Japan FTA would be second best.

The only major differences between the TPP and the USMCA are its geographic scope and accession chapter. Unlike the TPP, which allowed for the accession of new member countries — requiring only the approval of the TPP Commission, rather than the governments of each country deciding — the USMCA does not appear to include a provision for adding new members to the agreement.

However, considering how much of its text is taken straight out of the TPP and how both Mexico and Canada are TPP members, the USMCA may serve as the basis for the United States rejoining the TPP or, at the very least, as a potential backdoor for U.S. entry into the Pacific Rim agreement that Trump withdrew from.

Backdoor Entry to TPP

Moving beyond NAFTA and the USMCA, on October 16, 2018, Lighthizer notified Congress of the Trump administration’s intent to negotiate three new trade agreements, with Japan, the European Union, and the United Kingdom. Lighthizer also wants to negotiate new bilateral free-trade agreements with Colombia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and additional countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Both Japan and Vietnam are also in the TPP (renamed the CPTPP, for Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), with Japan having ratified it on July 6, 2018. The United States already has a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with Vietnam. According to BusinessDictionary.com, TIFA is a “trade pact between countries that seeks to develop the necessary structures or frameworks, such as committees and trade councils, that will move the trading countries closer to a free trade agreement.”

At present, the United States has “free trade agreements” with the following CPTPP signatory countries: Australia, Canada (NAFTA), Chile, Mexico (NAFTA), Peru, and Singapore. And the United States has TIFAs with the following CPTPP signatory countries: Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Vietnam. This accounts for all 11 CPTPP countries.

The United States also has a trade promotion agreement with Colombia, which reportedly “tops a list of Latin American deals the Trump administration plans to reopen,” according to *Inside Trade*. On October 2, 2017, Lighthizer said that once the “NAFTA problem” is resolved, the United States would be able to shift its focus to modernizing its trade agreements with countries in Central and South America, such as Colombia.

The path through the back door to entering the TPP is clear: Globalists on Trump's trade team will create new trade pacts that have the same features as the TPP — agreements with countries that are already in the TPP — and, assuming Trump is earnest about being against globalism, deceive Trump as to the contents of the agreements, letting Trump sell the pacts to his followers. The end result is our participation in the TPP in everything but name.

As of November 1, 2018, the following six countries have deposited their instrument of ratification for the CPTPP: Mexico, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. As the sixth country, Australia's ratification on October 31, 2018, "triggers the 60-day countdown to entry into force of the Agreement and the first round of tariff cuts," according to New Zealand Trade Minister David Parker.

The globalist web widens from there. Colombia formally requested to join the CPTPP. In August 2018, South Korea, with whom the United States also has a free trade agreement (KORUS, the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement), announced its decision to join the CPTPP. On July 19, 2018, negotiators from the 11 CPTPP countries agreed to start accession talks for new members in 2019, when the agreement is scheduled to go into effect.

Despite President Trump's executive action to pull out of the TPP, his trade representative Robert Lighthizer appears to be rebuilding U.S. participation in the TPP piecemeal.

Lighthizer and his team of Obama-era negotiators and career diplomats within the USTR office and State Department are making it easy for a future president, who belongs to the Deep State, to officially and seamlessly rejoin the United States back into the greater Pacific Rim TPP trade order, and further subsume American sovereignty in the process.

Let us take globalist CFR President Richard Haass at his word when he describes the USMCA as NAFTA plus the TPP, with an additional 10 to 20 percent, and let's stay out of it.



Photo: Getty Images Plus

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