

In summary; I would like to speak at the senate inquiry re the TPP. It is un Australian and dangerous. Thankyou for your involvement!

Dr Liz Elliott

The TPP is part of a designed series of corporate friendly treaties that offer nothing for our survival, little for trade and less than nothing for our national sovereignty. Crafted in secret, these deals are treasonous. They threaten our PBS, our water tables, our legal system, our internet. No politician in Australia should support the TPP!!

Sir Edward Goldsmith wrote in 1999, “Ironically, even the worshippers of free trade have produced little evidence that it is any value to humanity as a whole. World trade has increased by eleven times since 1950, yet during this period there has been an unprecedented increase in poverty, unemployment, social disintegration and environmental destruction”*. It has got worse since. It is the maths of disadvantage. Trade, say the globalization advocates, will solve every problem. So mighty container ships and cargo planes criss cross the globe, spewing Bunker C oil byproducts as they go.* This makes some merchant a few cents per kilo commission. Debt forces Third World countries to convert food lands to export crop plantations, using so much fertilizer their waters are acidified. All to make the debt charts slightly less ugly. Unregulated factories in Taiwan bilge heavy metals into rice paddies, while Taiwanese people increasingly die of cancer. Thai prawn farms destroy fish nurseries.

Some trade, especially regionally is reasonable. Not every country can mine rare earths or manufacture some medicines, or grow tropical fruit. It may seem efficient, as Adam Smith said, to trade Nicaraguan bananas for German gadgets, but his trade theories never included hypermobile capital, nor forced trade treaties.* This capital demands “regulation relief”, but least protections for workers and environment. Whole countries are designated specialists in a few products, so monotonous and unstable.

Much of this intensive monocrop production displaces small organic family farms. Fossil fuel dependent agriculture, with lots of plastic packaging, is unsustainable. As noted in the agriculture chapter, corporate style agriculture is 100 units of energy input for one out, whereas that small family farmer may have put in one unit for 10 out. How can anyone support industrial agriculture? Because on paper, with no loss column for health or environment, the money looks better. Valuing everything in money terms is a root cause of foolishness. Converting natural capital into wasteland is not really profit, except for a very few.

These crazed policies are driven by the terror of national elites of being left behind. A small group in each country decide that they will benefit as middlemen and credit receivers. They are told they can handle lots of foreign investment if they play the globalists’ game. They are told they must make their countries attractive to foreign investors especially banks. They go to glossy globalist conferences, and are dazzled by false accounting. Debt mounts, while populations lose education and health benefits. John Perkins “Confessions of an Economic Hitman” details the way third world leaders were wooed, lied to, then doublecrossed and even assassinated, by mainly US Banks.

If corporations had to pay the true cost of their activities, they would rarely bother with international trade. Full cost accounting would show where trade is really efficient. After you subtract the loss of climate, fresh water, forests, indigenous cultures, farming skills, soil, health and worker sanity, the balance sheets may show very little that is efficient in trade.

Supporters of “free trade” cite China and India as emerging from poverty via globalization, but these countries did not develop as globalized states, they had a mix of state support and private enterprise. Much trade is reciprocal; butter crisscrosses the globe, as do apples, potatoes and fish. A few merchants mark up a few dollars commission, a few banks may get their interest paid on time, but great watersheds and soil basins are being trashed.*The decision makers are often far from the affected areas, they do not see the results of increased trade. They are unaccountable. Corporations even organize structures to evade responsibility.

What drives this process along, apart from greed, is treaties. These international agreements are crafted in secret by trade lawyers, and made binding for the signatory countries. A series of treaties have driven

countries policies since the second World War, a sequence designed to advantage big corporations and big traders over small, sustainable farms and businesses. Designed, not natural!

TPP, TISA, TRIPS, NAFTA, EU, ECB, TAPP, GATT, GATS, WTO, IMF.... An alphabet soup of initials barely makes the press, too abstract.* Yet they override local laws and affect us all. Treaties started as tariff lowering exercises, but have become generalized to include services especially financial, seeking to label environmental and worker protections as “barriers to free trade”. It’s a play on words that directly undermines national, democratic nations’ sovereignty and replacing that with a homogenized world easy for Big Finance and Corporations to trade everywhere, irresponsibly and without limits.

After abolishing tariffs, countries are supposed to lay themselves open to free capital movements, which as Joseph Stiglitz, ex chief economist of the World Bank stated “capital liberalization, there was scant evidence for, and massive evidence against”. * Finance, created easily for some, sweeps into smaller countries and buy up valued assets. Often assets were state utilities, in water, electricity and trains, created from our parents’ hard work, which otherwise would keep prices low and support government revenue.

The treaties are sold as increasing trade which is promoted as virtuous, as earning needed currency for imports and paying banks off for loans. Yet years after Australia signed a trade pact with the USA, there is little evidence that we have gained much. Australia’s government is still eager to sign the TPP, a secret trade deal which protects patents and corporate plans to suck up our resources. Our pharmaceutical benefits scheme which helps most of us hugely, is threatened, as is our Barrier Reef by coal ports. Yet our business puppet government, staffed by people who land special jobs in corporate land when they retire from parliament is so eager to throw away fundamental parts of the Australian dream for...what?

The worst part of these treaties is the ISDS provisions which mean corporations with a plan to do business, can sue a government if it wants to set the terms, and this might have affected possible profits. * The law suits are to recompense corporations against all the lost projected maybe profits. These suits are adjudicated by a court of three compromised, working trade lawyers, not judges, not accountable and with no appeals or oversights, they are probably illegal. Trade lawyers will give little environmental consideration, no worker protection and usually dole out huge fines for transgressions against the corporate orthodoxy. Big penalties for projected trade transgressions, and little effective punishment for anti health or climate sins. This effectively transfers the laws of a country to a secret group of trade lawyers. Anti-democratic.

These treaties are against the sovereignty of nations.

TISA, the latest treaty, hopes to call imported labour ISS; “independent service suppliers”, virtual slaves who can be repatriated at the employer’s will. Their rights are minimal, and they can be deported for asking for any. Labour conditions in Australia are already undermined by huge numbers of imported non-unionized workers.

Another favoured creature of Trade Treaties is **patents**. Research and Development have been slashed and twisted by Big Business as costs, but they will eagerly corner the market on some university developed substance, add a few molecules and then “own” DNA, music, seeds, software, GMO’s, alternative power sources, drugs, insecticides. They then demand poor countries pay heavy prices for products they used to access for free. Agribusiness and pharmaceutical corporations are among the most profitable on Earth. They want longer patent exclusion periods so generic versions cannot be made for 12 or more years after rich countries have had them e.g. Antibiotics, HIV and cancer medicines. They undermine effective national health providers with their expensive drugs and fancy private hospitals, heavily subsidized by governments. Australian Pharmaceutical benefits are a case in point.

Even worse, the health of the planets biosphere is at risk. The great forests of the world are at risk, perhaps none will be left in 20 years; in Indonesia, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Brazil etc. The Great Siberian forests are also being trashed. With them biodiversity and rainfall. The fresh water reserves of the world are at risk. The sanity of workers in export zones like Nth Mexico, southern China, Sulawesi, Bangladesh is at risk, also the security of US jobs, Japanese manufacturing and English farming. These treaties deregulate corporations so they place our climate and oceans at risk. It’s a **race to the bottom**, with countries competing to prostitute themselves for export share.

Treaties can go

However, there is hope. The TPP has become an election issue in the USA and thousands of Third World economists have realized there is little in Free Trade that is free for the poor. Free Trade is free for corporations, and costly for our future. The WikiLeaks revelations about the corporate friendly nature of the TPP and the TTIP have shocked many people into realizing the cards are being stacked against them, the treaties are anti humanity. They are also about the US Strategic Military Alliance, a cross sectoral ambition

to have “full spectrum dominance”. “you are either for us or against us” is the crude US Military/ Industrial Complex cliché.

We can rescind the treaties, they are products of bad government and worse ideologies. They are crafted in secret, so not true contracts. Australian governments discuss them in cabinet, then present them fully finished for parliamentary ratification. Not democratic, not fully debated. Like debts incurred by dictators, they are secret deals made without the public understanding the consequences. Since there was not full disclosure, we can leave these non-contracts. All the treasonous trade lawyers can debate on secret desert islands together!

Will all countries revoke treaties simultaneously? Probably not! If an exporting country will not penalize its corporations for shoddy behaviour, then another importing country can put a tariff on the poorly produced stuff. There, that’s mentioned a modern taboo; **tariffs**. Yes, we can impose civilized limits on bad behaviour, while protecting fledgling industries. The UK, USA, China and every other industrialized nation on earth grew by tariffs. Now the WTO demands other countries abolish them.

After you subtract the loss of climate, fresh water, forests, indigenous cultures, farming skills, soil, health and worker time and sanity, the balance sheets may show very little that is worthwhile in long distance trade. Communities and local business will thrive when the false illegal supports for Big Corporations are removed.

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