



## **Citizens Trade Digest, February 8, 2006**

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#### **1) US-Peru Free Trade Agreement – Looks Like A Fight in 2006**

The Bush administration has given formal notice that it intends to bring the Peru Free Trade Agreement before Congress. We can stop this deal and avoid the crisis of another NAFTA/CAFTA! The time to contact your representative and spread the word is now! Please Take Action.

[http://www.democracyinaction.org/CTC/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=2232](http://www.democracyinaction.org/CTC/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=2232)

The negotiations for the agreement were completed January 4<sup>th</sup>; two days later President Bush gave Congress the required 90 day notice that he intends to sign the deal. This means that it potentially could go to Congress as early as April.

The Peru deal was originally meant to be part of a broader Andean Free Trade Agreement that would also include Colombia and Ecuador. However, negotiations between the US Trade Representative and those countries have thus far failed to produce an agreement. Agriculture remains a controversial road block, particularly issues of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and sensitive crops such as rice and poultry. Should a deal with either or both countries be completed, they could be rolled together with the Peru deal for Congressional consideration.

Similar to CAFTA, the Peru FTA contains no meaningful protections for core labor standards – even though Peru’s President offered to include them. It would cost jobs at home while lowering living standards in the region, potentially forcing many farmers to turn to coca cultivation. It would establish rules to curtail environmental protection; and would deny essential generic medicines to HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria patients.

**US-Peru Strike Free Trade Agreement: Administration Hopes to Include Colombia, Ecuador**  
[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/washpost\\_usperustrikefta\\_12082005.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/washpost_usperustrikefta_12082005.pdf)

**Peru Ends Trade Impasse with Agreement**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/ft\\_usperuendtradeimpassewithagreement\\_12072005.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/ft_usperuendtradeimpassewithagreement_12072005.pdf)

## **2) Trade Debate Shaping Costa Rican Elections**

Costa Rica remains the last country resisting US pressures to ratify the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA); however, the outcome of the presidential elections in Costa Rica will be a pivotal moment for the future of CAFTA.

CAFTA was expected to be implemented January 1, 2006; yet the reluctance of CAFTA countries to make significant changes to their domestic law re-enforces the widespread unpopularity of this agreement and continues to fuel anti-American sentiment in Central America. The Bush administration cranked CAFTA through the U.S. Congress by a one-vote margin thanks to under-the-table deals worth billions of tax payer money. “The bottom line, “according to Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch, “is that CAFTA is a means to impose, top-down, an array of policies designed to engorge the profits of large U.S. drug, construction, energy and other corporations; these are the same policies that are now being rejected by the majority in these countries within their own domestic democratic processes.” The delay of implementation in *each* CAFTA country speaks volumes to the fundamental failures of this agreement as well as the dirty politics it took to push it through.

The recount that began Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> for Costa Rica’s presidential election is another glaring sign of public opposition to CAFTA. The support for Otton Solis based on his anti-CAFTA platform has challenged what pre-election polls determined to be a sure win for pro-CAFTA Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias. Fair trade activists, labor unions, farmers, environmentalists, along with a host of NGO’s expressed determination to continue an aggressive fight against CAFTA regardless of which candidate takes office. Election results are expected to be announced in two weeks.

## **Trade Accord With US Splits Voters in Costa Rica**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/latimes\\_tradeaccordsplitscostaricaelection\\_02072006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/latimes_tradeaccordsplitscostaricaelection_02072006.pdf)

**Costa Rican Election May Give Support to CAFTA Foes in US**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/wsj\\_costaricanelection\\_02072006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/wsj_costaricanelection_02072006.pdf)

## **3) Davos: Another Empty Meeting**

Over 30 top officials met in a luxury ski resort in Davos, Switzerland on January 27-28 to conduct “informal meetings” in hopes of taking concrete steps toward meeting their April 30<sup>th</sup> deadline to finish WTO negotiations. Yet again, no real advances were made.

## **Officials Fail to Narrow Gap in Davos Talks**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/bloomberg\\_officialsfailtonarrowgapindavos\\_01282006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/bloomberg_officialsfailtonarrowgapindavos_01282006.pdf)

**The Party of Davos**

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060213/faux>

## **The Meaning of Hong Kong WTO**

<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/wto/3688.html>

### **4) US-Thai Free Trade Agreement Stalled**

After the 6<sup>th</sup> round of talks held in Chiang Mai, Thailand January 9-13, negotiators walked away questioning whether it will be possible to meet their spring 2006 deadline for concluding negotiations. No agreement has been reached on any chapters, and other sensitive issues like sugar have not yet been discussed. Throughout the week, aggressive protests ensued from outraged Thai farmers and HIV/AIDS activists, among others. No plans to continue talks have been announced.

### **Thousands Protest Against US-Thai Trade Talks**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters\\_thousandsprotestagainstusthaitradetalks\\_01092006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters_thousandsprotestagainstusthaitradetalks_01092006.pdf)

### **Medecins Sans Frontieres Calls on Thailand to Protect Access to Medicines**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/msf\\_pressreleasetoprotectthaiaccesstomedics\\_01112006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/msf_pressreleasetoprotectthaiaccesstomedics_01112006.pdf)

### **Thai Trade Negotiator With US Resigns**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/ap\\_thaitradenegotiatorresigns\\_01192006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/ap_thaitradenegotiatorresigns_01192006.pdf)

### **5) Middle East Free Trade Agreement Looms**

The administration charges toward their goal of establishing a free trade zone through the Middle East by 2013. Agreements with Bahrain and Oman were recently closed, and US Trade Representative Rob Portman has indicated that the United Arab Emirates will be next. The United States already has free trade agreements with Jordan, Israel, and Morocco. Oman is likely to come to Congress within the year.

### **Bahrain Pact Signed By Bush**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters\\_bahrainpactsignedbybush\\_01122006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters_bahrainpactsignedbybush_01122006.pdf)

### **US Signs Trade Pact with Oman, Keeps Egypt on Hold**

[http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters\\_ussignsomanfta\\_01192006.pdf](http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/reuters_ussignsomanfta_01192006.pdf)