

## **Obama and “free trade:” Eight items of note and one obvious conclusion**

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**One:** In his first State of the Union message in January, 2010, President Obama vowed to double U.S. exports over the next 5 years.

**Two:** A few weeks later on March 11 he inaugurated by Executive Order the **National Export Initiative (NEI)** The NEI is designed “to enhance and coordinate Federal efforts to facilitate the creation of jobs in the United States through the promotion of exports and to ensure the effective use of Federal resources in support of these goals...” The NEI will receive funding for export promotion and will make exporting US-made products a government wide objective.

**Three:** President Obama appointed Frank Sánchez to be the Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade. Mr. Sánchez ran the Obama election finance campaign among US Hispanics. He is familiar with Colombian affairs having visited there as an expert on “municipal security and safety issues.” Mr. Sánchez is in charge of the **International Trade Administration (ITA)**. One of his main responsibilities is to advance the goals of the **NEI**.

**Four:** The **ITA** is an agency with 2,500 employees in 78 countries. Its job: to promote U.S. companies and eliminate “trade barriers.”

**Five:** The ITA will receive \$80 million dollars in new funding in 2011, reaching a total budget of \$540 million dollars a year. These new funds will allow Under Secretary Sánchez to employ more than 300 new “trade experts” whose job will be to promote and expand US exports at all costs, including pursuing “free trade” treaties.

**Six:** In July the President of the United States announced a push to sign “free trade” treaties, South Korea being first in line. Obama put his announcement in the context of doubling American exports in the next five years. He connected it to a military theme by describing it as the United States coming to the defense of South Korea from military threats from North Korea.

**Seven:** In early August President Obama launched a major personal lobbying campaign to pass the Korea Free Trade Agreement: He addressed the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO on this issue; his Labor Secretary Hilda Solís did the same; and the White House arranged meetings between U.S. Trade

Representative Ron Kirk, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and Vice-President Biden with labor leaders to pursue their support for the Korean trade deal.

**Eight:** The Under Secretary of Commerce Mr. Sánchez is on record as saying:  
***“The President is completely committed to ratification of the Colombia FTA, as well as the Panama FTA and the South Korea FTA.”***

**Conclusion :** From this recent history of Obama’s words and deeds with regards to “free trade” we should expect an offensive, similar in scope and scale to the US military escalation under way around the world, to obtain passage of the Colombia FTA, starting probably right after the November mid-term elections. Let’s get ready to battle against passage of the Colombia FTA