

## Trade War, Anyone?

By Pete Clark

The Trump Department of Commerce is looking at protective tariffs for aluminum, steel, rubber bands and other items imported from Asia and other parts of the world. A company in Arkansas, which is the largest producer, if not the only manufacturer of rubber bands in the United States, has complained that they can't compete with foreign manufacturers, whose production are supported by government subsidies. The three countries targeted for tariffs on rubber bands are Sri Lanka, Thailand and China. The tariffs, if put in place, will run from 27% to 133%, depending on the country of origin. Guess who ultimately gets to pay this markup. As a favor to the carbon fuel industry, Trump has already increased the price of *Going Green* with solar panels by putting a tariff on imported solar panels and falsely claiming to be saving American jobs.

Rubber bands may seem to be insignificant items, but apply similar markups to a good portion of the things that are used throughout the day and the increased price of rubber bands becomes a harbinger of things to come. Protective tariffs have many ways of backfiring. Many states largely dependent on agriculture voted for Donald Trump. If the Chinese should decide to buy their billions of dollars' worth of soy beans somewhere else in reprisal for increased tariffs, many of those who worship the hate and greed promulgated by Donald Trump could face bankruptcy. The Chinese are already up in arms over what they believe to be the American dumping of cheap sorghum into their economy.

President Trump has also rattled the cages of farmers in other sectors of the agricultural industry with his attack on NAFTA. Dairy farmers, in the northern tier of Midwest States are dependent on Canada, just across the border, for the majority of their sales and profits. Mexico buys much of its wheat from the United States. American diplomats and negotiators are always looking out for our country's interests, but President Trump's constant harping about America First creates an impression that we will take advantage of everyone and give nothing in return. That attitude puts our potential trading partners on edge, reminding them of our history of Yankee Economic Imperialism.

President Trump's real target in his war on multinational trade agreements is the *Most Favored Nation Clause* in those treaties which allow small trading countries to be on a par with large trading countries, keeping tariffs down and avoiding trade wars. I must give President Trump credit for helping dumb down America. Even news reporters substitute his beloved word Deal for words of more than one syllable when it comes to negotiations or treaties concerning Foreign Trade Agreements, perhaps in an attempt to curry the favor of the Gilded Gutter Politician who is our President. Just as in the military, I am bound to salute the office, not the man in the office. You and I will be locked into paying higher prices for higher tariffs on imported goods and higher prices for domestically produced goods, guaranteeing higher profits for billionaires who contribute millions of dollars to Donald Trump and the Republican Party.