

New World Trade Organization chief Michael Moore: a danger to mankind

by Michael O. Billington

At the end of July, the World Trade Organization (WTO) announced that it had finally reached a compromise solution for the appointment of a new director general, after five months of acrimonious wrangling. The outgoing director, Renato Ruggiero, ended his term of office on April 30. The normal procedures called for the selection of a replacement by consensus of the 134 WTO member-nations by March 31. By the end of 1998, the choices had been narrowed down to New Zealand's Michael Moore, a former Trade Minister and (briefly) Prime Minister from New Zealand's Labour Party, and Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, the current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand. The March 31 deadline passed without having reached a consensus, however, and a series of new deadlines were set and similarly abandoned, as the contest turned into a fight pitting the majority of Asian and other developing sector nations, supporting Supachai, against the United States and most European Union (EU) nations, who backed Moore. Accusations of bribery, threats, and intimidation by both sides filled the world press for months, posing the fight as a power play by the United States against the Third World, and against Asia in particular.

Finally, a deal proposed by Australia's then-Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister Tim Fischer was accepted by both sides, calling for Moore and Supachai to each serve one three-year term, with Moore taking the first shift. While this may appear to be a fair solution, it is easily shown that Moore is a leading spokesman for the most dangerous and psychotic forces in the world today. Moore will be leading the WTO through the emerging global financial collapse as part of a policy faction intent on imposing de-industrialization and killer austerity measures worldwide, using the powers of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WTO, and related institutions that serve the bankrupt international financial cartels.

The WTO, which replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1995, was originally envisioned, by some of those who created the IMF in the 1940s, as a "world government" body with powers to impose trade and related policies over and above the sovereign rights of member nations. Opposition to such a breach of sovereignty pre-

vented the establishment of the WTO at that time, and the GATT was adopted in its stead. But in the wake of the Thatcherite speculative binge of the late 1980s and 1990s, known as "globalization," the nationalist resistance to the WTO was broken down. Over its early years, the institution took measures to increase its power to reduce or eliminate tariffs and other protectionist policies under the threat of sanctions, while attempting to link environmental and labor policies to trade issues, as a cover for undermining independent industrial development by member-nations.

With the emergence of the current financial crisis in 1997, there has been mounting opposition worldwide to the assault on national currencies by the hedge funds and other global speculators, and to the genocidal conditions imposed by the IMF in exchange for minimal debt relief. In response to this opposition, the British-American-Commonwealth (BAC) banking cartels have been increasingly concerned with keeping the international institutions like the IMF and the WTO firmly under their control. The British-inspired NATO war against Serbia, which ignored the United Nations and existing international law in order to impose their will by force on a sovereign member-nation, demonstrated the attempt to marginalize the UN, or force it to condone such criminal activity by the BAC cabal. In a similar if less overtly violent manner, when Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi appeared to be on course to take over as head of the WTO, the BAC operatives took frantic measures, determined to put in one of their own by any means necessary.

A 'process of disinformation'

Dr. Supachai himself told the press in May that he had been subjected to a "process of disinformation produced at the time when I was in the lead, and I thought . . . I was able to bring consensus around my candidacy." He reported that anonymous faxes had been distributed worldwide alleging that he had offered leading WTO positions to various countries in exchange for their votes. He referred to the fact that President Clinton had pledged that, although the United States was supporting Moore, it would not block a consensus in support of Dr. Supachai's candidacy. However, Dr. Supachai

concluded, "the only interpretation that we have is that the U.S. blocked my candidacy."

The *Australian Financial Review* reported in May that U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Ralph L. Boyce had been "alluding to possible trade favors [for Thailand] if Supachai did the decent thing," meaning, to step down in favor of Moore. Other sources reported that the United States had flown groups of African representatives to Geneva in order to win their votes. In the middle of June, Dr. Supachai declared that the campaign had become "a matter of principle. . . . I am fighting not to gain this position only, but to maintain the position of the WTO, which is becoming more important than my position. . . . In the beginning it seemed to be only the position that mattered, but now it seems to be a fight on the grounds of principle and a definite lack of transparency and consistency in the whole process."

Michael Moore and Al Gore

What are the policies of these respective candidates? Although the press coverage has seldom diverged from the official line that both candidates were eminently qualified and differed in policy only in degree rather than substance, the facts are otherwise.

Michael Moore was one of the principal actors in the transformation of New Zealand, once a nation with one of the highest standards of living in the world, into the dysfunctional wreck that it is today. He could well be characterized as an earlier version of today's Al Gore, openly professing radical environmentalism, rabid anti-industrial dogma, the elimination of the sovereign rights of nations in favor of one-world government, and the coercion of labor into "corporatist" structures to self-administer the de-industrialization of the nation.

As New Zealand's Minister of External Relations and Trade between 1984 and 1990, Moore played a leading role in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, spearheading the drive to eliminate any food self-sufficiency policies of sovereign nations, in the name of free trade. Oblivious to mounting hunger worldwide, Moore declared that the only agricultural problem was overproduction, and that "the world is awash with an oversupply of red meat." He considered his role in forcing through new rules against food self-sufficiency in GATT to be his "greatest moment in politics," and bragged that "the intellectual battle on agriculture is won. Nobody now talks of food security."

Moore authored a book in 1984 titled *The Added Value Economy*, which espouses similar New Age lunacies as Al Gore's infamous Unabomber-like diatribe, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. "We are in the post-industrial economy," Moore wrote. "During the industrial age, chief inputs were steel, energy, paper and sweat. In the post-industrial age—the information age—the chief inputs are ideas, knowledge, information, and intellectual property." He raved against the "primitive, pathetic attitude that the pro-

ductive sector must be supported." This is the man now leading the would-be international police-force on trade, which bodes ill for any developing nation which aspires to creating a modern industrial economy.

Moore also proudly trumpeted his hatred of the sovereign nation-state. "Governments are becoming less meaningful as a global economy develops," he asserted. Moore, who earlier served as an executive for the youth wing of the Socialist International, is also a member of the Parliamentarians for Global Action, an institution committed to transforming the United Nations into a world government.

It must be noted that in the 1990s, Moore's Labour Party went still further in the destruction of New Zealand. Beginning in 1994, his party portrayed itself as New Labour, which later served as a model for British Prime Minister Tony Blair's policies in England. The New Zealand economy was turned over to a team representing London's Mont Pelerin Society, subjecting the nation to vast deregulation, privatization, a currency float, and deadly cuts in health, education, law enforcement, and other social services. The result is an estimated 32% unemployment and partial unemployment, where it was once near zero, a several-weeks-long power failure in the nation's capital city of Auckland in February-March 1998 due to the incompetent privatized power industry, a notorious and deadly collapse in essential health care capacity, skyrocket-

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eting debt, and similar horror stories characterizing a failed nation. (See Allen Douglas, "Al Gore's New Zealand Model: 'Reinventing' Corruption, Genocide," *EIR*, Jan. 15, 1999; and for the full story, *EIR*, June 13, 1997, pp. 18-33.)

Dr. Supachai

Thailand's Dr. Supachai, in comparison with Moore, represents basic sanity and a deep concern for the unfolding human disaster resulting from the failure of the existing IMF-centered international financial system. Although as Deputy Prime Minister he has supported his government's agreements with the IMF, he has not been silent about the utter failure and destructiveness wrought by the IMF dictates upon Thailand and other nations. Long identified as the leading spokesman for a production-oriented faction within the Thai government (as opposed to a more IMF-friendly faction centered in the Ministry of Finance), Dr. Supachai took aim at the IMF in a speech at the Langkawi International Dialogue in late July, sponsored by the Malaysian government and keyed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad.

Dr. Supachai described the IMF-imposed conditions as the "direct opposite of what was needed," and added that the IMF's subsequent admission that it had made mistakes was "cold consolation." He described how the IMF's supposed "aid" had not only crippled economic activity, but contributed to social chaos and loss of life, especially in Indonesia. He ridiculed the orchestrated slanders of Asian governments: "In the West, when banks are rescued, it is a necessity, but in Asia, it is seen as corruption and cronyism," he said.

Most worrying to the BAC cabal is Dr. Supachai's public endorsement of neighboring Malaysia's historic decision on Sept. 1, 1998 to imposed selective capital controls and a fixed rate for its currency, the ringgit, a policy which has successfully demonstrated the efficacy of sovereign measures of defense against the crimes of the mega-speculators and the IMF. Beyond that, Dr. Supachai has added his voice to the call for new monetary institutions, representing the interests of all nations. "It is unthinkable to have financiers in New York control the destiny of our economies," he told the African and Asian leaders gathered at the Langkawi meeting. He has announced that he will renew a proposal for the establishment of a new Asian funding facility at the UNCTAD meeting scheduled for Bangkok in February 2000, saying that it is now clear that the IMF could not come up with the necessary solutions to the current crisis.

Dr. Supachai has also been outspoken in opposition to the effort, championed by Moore, to use the powers of enforcement vested in the WTO in regard to trade policy to infringe on national sovereignty regarding labor and environmental issues. A top official of Dr. Supachai's Ministry of Commerce announced in June that Thailand will reject proposals from several Western nations to raise labor issues at the upcoming WTO meeting in Seattle. Member-nations defeated a similar

effort in 1997, insisting that labor issues belong in the International Labor Organization (ILO), but the recent G-8 meeting of leading industrialized countries in Hungary revived the issue. The utter failure of the G-8 nations to even consider the necessary "new architecture" of the world financial system more than demonstrates the hypocrisy of those who profess concern over the conditions of labor in the developing nations.

The role of the WTO

The two most crucial issues confronting the WTO at this time, in the view of the BAC interests who control it, are those of preventing a nationalist backlash against the free trade looting of depression-wracked economies, and the question of China's admission into the WTO. On the first issue, it must be viewed as a warning that the same person who brokered the "compromise" which gave Moore the leadership of the WTO for the crucial years immediately ahead, Australia's recently resigned Deputy Prime Minister Fischer has also released a 45-page study calling for massive new cuts of 50% and more in agricultural, industrial, and service sector tariffs. His prediction of an increase in the world economy by more than \$400 billion per year by such measures is a transparent effort to boost the global speculative bubble at the expense of real production and international investment in such real production in the developing sector.

On the issue of China, the WTO has for years served as the main tool for the BAC effort to force China to relinquish its controls and protective policies, by insisting that China enter the WTO under the rules governing developed nations rather than the less stringent rules for developing nations. China has repeatedly shown that it would rather stay out of the WTO than subject itself to the measures which compromised its sovereignty. China's insistence on the right to sustain high rates of industrial and infrastructure development with a stable currency is crucial not only to China itself, but also to the hopes for recovery in the other nations of Asia.

The China issue also exemplifies the factional division within the Clinton administration. It appeared almost certain that President Clinton's commitment to building strong U.S. ties with China would lead to an agreement on China's WTO entry during Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to the United States in April. However, the anti-China policies of the Gore/Albright nexus within the administration managed to scuttle the deal, perhaps believing that China would back down and accept further concessions under the pressure of the high-publicity visit.

Dr. Supachai's close relationship with the Chinese leadership is certainly another reason for the heavy-handed measures taken to undermine his candidacy as WTO chief. With the BAC's Moore in charge, China, and all nations concerned with the general welfare of their citizens, must be all the more dedicated to replacing the entire IMF-WTO apparatus with the necessary new world monetary system proposed repeatedly by *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche.