

# AMERICAN ENGINEER<sup>TM</sup>

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## Trade Agreements—Panacea Or Loss Of National Sovereignty

In the fairly near future, the United States will have to decide on perhaps one of the most significant events of our lifetimes. The provisions of the Mexican free trade agreement will be before Congress for a vote under the fast track provisions approved by the House last year. Congress will only have the choice of approving or rejecting the proposal, they cannot amend it.

The Mexican agreement and the expanded GATT agreement will be largely based on the agreement between the United States and Canada passed four years ago. We do have indications of things to come under these agreements.

The following demands by foreign governments are all approximately one year old: Under the Canada agreement Canada has demanded in U.S. Federal Court that we accept their asbestos **CLAIMING OUR SAFETY STANDARDS ARE TOO HIGH** and that constitutes an impediment to free trade.

Canada notified the Senate Energy Committee that two proposed U.S. laws contained discriminatory provisions against Canadian products. If upheld, this would be in effect a line item veto of the laws of the United States by a foreign nation. This action would amount to the loss of U.S. sovereignty.

In a letter to a Member of Congress from Julius L. Katz, Deputy United States Trade Representative, dated April 9, 1991 we find the following information: "The Agreement on Government Procurement (the Code) is being renegotiated in conjunction with the Uruguay Round negotiations. The Code commits signatories (central governments) to provide national treatment in government procurement for products and suppliers of other signatory countries. In accordance with this general commitment and other terms of the Agreement, signatories eliminate any requirements which favor national suppliers or products over the suppliers or products of other signatories, such as "Buy American" requirements in the United States....." We would have to treat foreign companies the same as we would U.S. companies. This would extend to the state and city level as well as the federal level.

The letter goes on "In the renegotiations, the United States has pressed hard for expansion of Code disciplines to areas not currently covered, such as services, subcentral government purchasing entities....the United States has offered to eliminate 'Buy American' restrictions in the same areas to which we are seeking access under the Code." We have been told for years, we are to become a service economy yet our trade representatives are negotiating away the very services on which we are to rebuild our nation.

AEA views these agreements as issues affecting jobs; who will have the jobs and what kind of jobs will they be. No one questions the loss of tens or hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs to Mexico if this agreement is approved. The big winners will be the states bordering Mexico. The big losers will be the states with the most manufacturing. There will be a net gain of jobs for the United States we are told. However, these jobs will be in the service sector. Attorneys, accountants and transportation will be the winners.

The theory of comparative advantage states that a country produces only those goods which the individual country holds an advantage over other countries. Each country has unique advantages for making certain products and these are the products

produced. Mexico's labor rate for example is their relative comparative advantage.

With an advantage of about 15:1 in salaries paid over the United States, they should, according to the theory, do the labor intensive jobs such as manufacturing. Whether it is goods or services we can not compete with China and other countries when our hourly wage rates equal their monthly rates. We cannot lift the Mexican standard of living to our level; we must sink to their level!

Our national wealth is only created by the process of taking materials and adding value to those materials; In other words producing goods or manufacturing a product. Attorneys and accountants produce nothing in the manufacturing sense, therefore cannot create national wealth.

Engineering on the other hand is an integral part of the production effort and therefore creates a portion of the overall wealth of the nation. To send our manufacturing capability to any foreign country is to transfer that portion of our national wealth to the receiving nation. Engineering must follow the manufacturing as it is part of the process.

Find out how your senator and representatives view these agreements. Let them hear the other side of the story. Vote for those who share our views!

*Billy E. Reed, AEA President*

## Say It Ain't So

In information circulated in support of their portable pension efforts, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) describes themselves with the following statement:

"The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., is a TRANSNATIONAL professional/technical society whose membership includes more than 320,000 electrical, electronics and computer engineers in 130 countries worldwide." (Emphasis added.)

Webster's II, New Riverside University Dictionary defines "Trans" as "1. Across: on the other side: beyond" and "Transnational" as "Transcending national boundaries."

With many of our "transnational" corporations, one may reasonably modify Webster's definition of transnational to read "Transcending national boundaries with allegiance to none." We hope this is not the case with IEEE, but it is difficult to serve two masters; it must be impossible to serve 130.

Since baseball season is about to start at the time of this writing, it seems appropriate to remember the words of a "Shoeless" Joe Jackson fan after the world series in which Jackson was accused of being a part of throwing the series..."Say it ain't so Joe."

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# Technical Competence, Engineering Leadership, and Electric Power

*John A. Casazza, IEEE Life Fellow, Chairman of the Board,  
Casazza, Schultz, and Associates*

**F**or a number of years, I closely followed some of the work being done by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California [1]. This was an elite group of good minds from many professions and many different occupations, ranging from college professors to a former TV talk show host.

## **Societal Needs**

One of their assignments was to place themselves in the position of the founding fathers of our country and to write a constitution that would be equally good for the next 200 years. I became quite interested in their work and followed their successive drafts.

One key conclusion they reached was that our government structure had to be modified to recognize that our society had become a highly technical one. The founding fathers had written a constitution with great flexibility but with its roots in the agricultural economy and society of its times. Our constitution provides very little in the way of mechanisms for technical planning and the resolution of technical policy questions. They proposed that the new constitution include a fourth department to complement the existing legislative, executive, and judicial departments. This new department would be a planning department that would establish the necessary technical policies. While such a drastic change in our government is obviously not feasible, I think we need to recognize that they identified a key weakness in our system of government.

## **Anti-Engineering Biases**

Galileo was appointed to the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua, 400 years ago in Italy. Through his technical and scientific work, he concluded that the earth was round.

The authorities of his day deemed that this technical information was inappropriate to their objectives, and they forced him to recant.

This anti-technical bias is continuing in connection with the development of electric power policy. Those with the technical knowledge and expertise in these systems, their costs, and their economics are not only being ignored, but are being suppressed. Many in our government have a strong bias against engineers. They show their bias in almost everything they do. Sometimes the biases are flagrantly obvious. Sometimes they are subtle.

Most of my career has been spent developing electric power systems and policies. In the last 5 years, I have seen this anti-technical bias rise to the point where I felt action must be taken to correct it. While I have tried to take vigorous action when the opportunities were available to me, I realized that I was dealing with a long-term problem for which long term corrective action was needed.

At federal hearings in Washington, both legislative and regulatory, the government staff involved in making the selections of those to testify have shown distinct biases against engineers. They prefer groups that profess to represent the public interest but in truth represent a privileged class whose main goal is to perpetuate their own existence. The White House Selection Commission for selecting Congressional Fellows in 1990 had five lawyers and one engineer. The scarcity of engineering appointments to key government positions is astounding.

The selections made for key engineering advisory panels and boards in the Federal Government frequently have non-engineers as members. I can see the need for some cross-representation between the professions on advisory panels, and I do not object to having a lawyer or two or an economist or two on an engineering advisory board. I do ask for reciprocity. Why aren't engineers appointed to the various legal and economic advisory panels? Why aren't engineers sitting on the president's economic council? Why aren't engineers involved in reviewing nominations for the Supreme Court justices? Why do lawyers confine to lawyers alone procedural questions related to their profession, yet participate, and in many cases dominate, the decisions on technical questions?

TV, newspapers, and magazines distort stories and totally misrepresent technical reports. Some excellent examples are the reports that were given to the American public about the health effects of EMF fields as reported in the recent U.S.C. study. Editors adjust and change letters for publication to remove key technical material under the guise that the readers will not consider it important.

In 1989 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued an order [2] barring all engineers from making an evaluation of a trial of a new approach for the interchange of electric energy and use of electric transmission systems. These are areas in which engineers have worked for generations [3]. The FERC did this under the guise that the key issues were economic and the only ones who could work on economic issues were economists!

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*(This article reprinted from "IEEE Power Engineering Review,"  
March 1992, with permission of John A. Casazza.)*

### **Possible Corrective Steps**

Democracy will work and the national interest will be served only if we achieve the necessary technical input and technical participation in setting our national and local policies.

We need to work to change the present procedures. Engineers must take an aggressive stance and speak out against such biases, even at personal expense and risk. As stated in the United Kingdom by Sir Monty Finneston, past chairman of the Engineering Council and past chairman of British Steel, "People like ourselves who advance civilization and its future cannot isolate ourselves from what is made from our professional efforts." [4]

In a speech to the U.S. National Academy of Engineers, President Bush's former chief of staff, John Sununu, stated "it is now clear to virtually everyone that science and technology, engineering, are all very critical parts of developing policy and implementing policy at the national and international level ... I stress this because what I am concerned about is that as a profession, engineers have been negligent in one very significant aspect ... in their direct participation in the policy-making, policy-shaping, and policy-implementing process ... And yet the fact is that we have been reluctant to get in and mix it up with the lawyers and others in the process. We have not just the right to do so, we have the responsibility to do so. ... And so my plea is that as a profession we understand our obligation. That as a profession, we communicate the need for that kind of participation. And on top of that, to suggest to you that not to be involved is really to miss something that is fun, that is worth-while, satisfying, gratifying, and back to the original premise, something that is absolutely necessary." [5]

These statements provide an acknowledgement of the task. They do not provide the guts and

energy necessary to proceed as they suggest. This can only come from individuals with the motivation and integrity to stand up and speak for what is right for this country; not just for what is right for a particular company, or industry, or profession (including the engineering profession). We must support the few who are speaking out. The entire profession, including our universities and our professional societies, should give them full backing when they do so.

We must encourage many more engineers to recognize their responsibilities and to speak out. A recent example of the problem is provided by a recent IEEE publication. It had an article on ways to calculate the RMS value of a particular wave shape and an article on electric power policy. Six hundred and ninety-two letters to the editor were received on the RMS calculation article. None were received on the electric power policy article.

Our greatest problem is that engineers love their work. I once worked for a fine engineer who lived to build power plants, whether they were needed or not. Our universities

have produced a generation of engineers who are in love with computers! These fine minds must somehow be helped to see their societal responsibilities too.

My experience after 40 years of working with the IEEE is that it is very difficult to get engineers involved in anything outside of their narrow technical areas.

We must recognize that there is some justification for the biases against engineers. I have seen many biases during my life. I have even known one individual who felt all people with gray eyes couldn't be trusted. In most cases, I also believe some past justification can often be provided for the bias. Perhaps we engineers need to see why the biases exist against engineers. Here is a list of possible reasons:

- Their lack of knowledge of acceptable standards of behavior in business and government
- Their poor understanding of the workings of government (including the increased need to use their analytical capabilities, such as those involved in flow-charting, probability and statistical analysis, etc., in analyzing the operation of government)
- Their lack of ability to educate and influence the general public
- Their lack of a sense of responsibility, sufficient conviction, and a desire to speak out on issues of importance, even at personal sacrifice
- The narrowness of a typical engineering education.

We need to develop ways to get through to and influence the public, the government, and industry decision-makers with the needed technical information. We cannot do this with scholarly approaches. George Will, whom I greatly admire, has said that to get public attention, you must be willing to be sensational. You must learn not to back off from controversy. You must speak out loudly and clearly. We must recognize that the public uses its heart as well as its mind in forming opinions.

Engineers must develop significant communication skills. They must be able to express their ideas in writing, and orally. They must understand that there are different audiences for which different techniques must be used. Corporate executives, government officials, and the general public will not listen to boring intellectual treatises or review complex computer printouts. They don't have the time and often don't have the training. Engineers have to learn to get the story across quickly and effectively. Decision-makers want to know the answer, what alternatives you have considered, what assumptions you have made, and what the uncertainties are; and they want to know it quickly.

Engineering faculties need to provide better examples and leadership. In my contacts with universities and colleges, I have often seen a lack of professional responsibility.

Some of you are old enough to recall "Red" Blake when he was football coach at West Point. He developed a number of outstanding football teams. Admittedly, he had some fairly good players, but the key to his teaching was that you not only had to meet your responsibilities, but you also had to

### **Corrective Action**

- Work to change the present procedures
- Encourage more engineers to recognize their responsibilities and to speak out
- Recognize that there is some justification for the biases against engineers
- Develop ways to get through to and influence the public, the government, and industry decision-makers with the needed technical information
- Develop significant communication skills
- Strengthen engineering faculty role models and leadership
- Revise engineering curricula

help others meet theirs. After his players made a block, they would always keep looking for other opportunities to help, recover a fumble, make another block, or to make a tackle. This is what I mean by professional responsibilities. Winning organizations have this sense of professional responsibility.

Engineers need better training in the management of their activities. Whether they are going to be top executives or not, they have to understand what it takes to get things done. If our engineering schools want to help engineers learn how to manage, they could spend more time in improving the management of their own organizations.

Engineering curricula should be revised [6]. The engineer must be trained in philosophy, history, geography, and politics. I feel that engineering faculties need to have fewer specialists and more generalists, people who are broad-based and see the need for training individuals to meet our society's future technical needs. They need fewer PhDs and more with *real-world* experience. The excessive concentration over the past 20 years on the development of software skills and modeling techniques have set back the engineering profession considerably.

We also need to develop far more *system engineers* who can not only integrate technical systems but also societal systems, who recognize financial and environmental problems. I have participated in an international activity involving 17 nations on how to best influence public opinion in the electric power area [8]. I would like to read a checklist to you that was developed by Nelson DeFranco, an electrical engineer from Brazil, who is involved in electric power policy in South America for the World Bank. Here are the skills he thinks are needed by engineers.

- Be able to identify the decision makers and how they actually arrive at their decisions.
- Develop a set of alternatives, not concentrate on a rigid single recommendation.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to changing conditions or a different set of players.
- Recognize the importance of the various political motivations that are involved.
- Establish an effective information system so as to be able to assess quickly the impacts of revised plans on the need for financing and on the cost of electricity.
- Recognize that the funds required for the operation of the existing system and its expansion must be achievable, regardless of whether the system is publicly-owned or under privatization.
- Develop a full comprehension of the regulatory system and the role it plays as a substitute for market forces in a country. Part of this effort should include participation in discussions of the changes needed in regulating procedures.
- Involve engineers in the process of establishing tariffs in order to arrive at tariffs that will provide the proper signals to the consumers and provide the necessary funds for the functioning of the utility that will be established.
- Be able to stress not only short-term consequences but real, long-term consequences of alternative projects, tariff schedules etc.
- Recognize that attempts might be made to have the electric power system meet social objectives, particularly to help the poor. In these situations, the possibility for having direct government funding for these purposes should be encouraged.

### **Engineering, Leadership, and Electric Power**

As some of you know, I have a strong interest in electric power. I, and many others, have been deeply concerned

about many policies I have seen proposed for the United States [9, 10]. These policies are being proposed without analyses by individuals lacking an understanding of the technologies involved. They are based on the unreasoned application of political and economic philosophies to a very complex technical system. These individuals do not even know what questions need to be asked about the effects of these policies. They claim that those who raise vital questions "are raising a technical fog so dense that no mortal can penetrate it" [11].

I will not get into the details, but I will point out what is happening in the United Kingdom, where changes were made that are similar to some being proposed in the United States. Excess generating capacity is being installed. Costs of electricity have gone up 20 to 40 percent in 1 year [12]. Planning for future electric power requirements has become impossible. There are those in the United States who are trying to get us to follow the same policies. Recently I have seen judges, legislators, regulators, and utility executives make decisions and propose actions that completely ignore technical facts. The most disheartening part of this situation is they don't care to have technical and economic information that might sway them from their political course.

### **Request for Activism**

Some references are provided for further reading. Whatever your resulting views are, become an activist in helping the engineering profession fulfill its needed role. Become involved in the current debate on our future electric power policy. Help in the development of coordinated technical and institutional solutions. The future welfare of our country depends on it.

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## Reader's Voice

This column in the "American Engineer" is for readers to voice an opinion relevant to any issues that affect the professional life of an engineer. Articles or letters should be in good taste and not slanderous. Each submission should include the name, address, home and business phone of the writer. Except for short excerpts, we will include the writer's name, city and state (unless the writer requests anonymity). We reserve the right to edit each submission, as long as we don't change the gist of it. We assume that authors who send us material have accepted these conditions, unless they instruct us otherwise in writing.

From L.F. of CA: — "I was appalled by the article condemning the proposed ethics rule which was intended to limit the participation of federal employees in professional societies.

To begin with, a false impression is presented that a law, executive order, or regulation is required for a federal employee to serve as an officer of a professional society. In case you have any doubt, I refer to the following statement: "Imagine trying to get a law passed or an executive order or regulation written, so you could be an officer of ASME or IEEE." That requirement applies only to the use of government-paid time to administer a professional society's internal or business affairs. And the proposed regulation was quite generous in allowing the use of government-paid time for a professional society activity in which only a "small portion" of the time is devoted to the society's internal or business affairs.

Also stated, "Some professional societies would disappear without volunteer (unreimbursed) participants." However, that is beside the point, which is as follows, from the written testimony of Stephen D. Potts, Director of the Office of Government Ethics (presented to the House Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service, Subcommittee on Human Resources, Oct. 22, 1991): "An agency may not use or permit the use of appropriated funds for purposes other than for which they were intended. Very few agencies have the legal authority to allow funds to be used to support private organizations not specifically provided for by statute."

Mr. Potts noted that the Dept. of Justice, the Office of Personnel Management, and 23 other departments and agencies were given an opportunity to review the proposed regulations prior to publication and only one commented that the rules on professional associations were too restrictive. Apparently, one's views on the proposed regulations are highly dependent on whether or not one is trying to rip off the government (U.S. tax payer).

Furthermore, many of the poor-mouthing societies which protested the proposed rule have multimillion-dollar annual budgets and large paid staffs—often including registered lobbyists (this employment of lobbyists is alone sufficient reason for draconian restrictions on the participation of federal employees in those

societies). Some of the organizations that protested the proposed rule are not even professional societies but are trade associations consisting of corporate business members (e.g., the Aerospace Industries Association and the Electronic Industries Association).

Also, in case you didn't know, the professional societies are tyrannized by corporate business executives as well as college professors. Members of both groups are infinitely more likely than average workers to get paid leaves-of-absence to run the professional societies. I was hoping that the controversy over the proposed ethics rule would be expanded to cover the related issue of the unfairness of the current inequality of opportunity for participation in the professional societies.

On one point I agree with you: supervisors would probably have too much authority under the proposed ethics rule. Certainly, the opportunity to discriminate against or in favor of particular societies or federal employees is there. I feel that the rule should specify some procedure for appealing a supervisor's decision.

Also, the OGE tabled the proposed rule in December, not February. The OGE stated its intention to first concentrate on releasing the other ethics rules concerning federal employees and then later revise the professional-society rule and allow a new comment period. I spoke to the OGE a few days ago and was told that there was still no time schedule for the revised rule.

Richard Tax (AEA, V.P.), and Dick Lowrie (AACE) have indicated their support of the original version of the rule which prohibits federal employees from using official time "to administer the internal affairs of any professional organization...."

I am especially concerned that the "American Engineer" maintain the highest standards of accuracy, to stand in contrast to the garbage printed in so many of the publications out there."

From M.M. of PA to R. Tax: — "Thank you for the letter, information and fine words of encouragement. AEA is by far the best kept secret to date...let's keep getting the word out, a lot of people need to hear it."

Robert Bruce, AE Editor  
P.O. Box 4493, Great Neck, NY 11023

### Sample Copies Available

Members of the American Engineering Association are encouraged to submit names and addresses of friends and associates who they think would be interested in receiving a sample issue of the "American Engineer" newsletter.

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## Member Profile: Richard Plummer

Dick received his BSEE and MSEE from Drexel University and his MSCIS from University of Pennsylvania Moore School of Engineering. While working for Jerrold Electronics in the early 1960's he was the project leader responsible for designing and testing the world's first successful pay television system installed in Etobitoke (West Toronto), Canada. He also worked for IBM and RCA prior to joining Jerrold. He retired from GE as a Communication Systems Engineer with over twenty one years experience ranging from hardware to software.

A personal interest in fair employment practices resulted in Dick's IEEE involvement. He was Vice Chairman of the IEEE-USA Age Discrimination Committee in 1988 and 1989 and is Chairman of the newly-formed IEEE-USA Anti-Discrimination Committee (A-DC). He authored the current PACE "Guide on Age Discrimination" and is leading the A-DC effort to revise and update this publication to conform to recent changes to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). The new guide will cover all forms of employment discrimination.

The A-DC has lobbied Congressional Legislators strongly via personal contact with them and/or their staff and by a large Legislative alert letter campaign by their IEEE-USA constituents to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court Betts decision. This unpopular and unfair ruling removed employee benefits from the protection of the ADEA. The A-DC has also sent dozens of letters to employers and employment agencies urging them to discontinue discriminatory advertising designed to attract younger engineers while effectively screening out older more qualified engineers. The A-DC will ask the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate advertisers who continue to run discriminatory ads after having been notified. The EEOC concurs with the A-DC understanding of discriminatory employment ads.

Dick has counseled numerous engineers regarding alleged employment discrimination. For the past five years he has conducted a salary survey, performed the analysis, published and distributed the report for the Valley Forge Association of General Electric Engineers and Scientists.

Richard Plummer will lead AEA's anti-discrimination efforts. All AEA communications regarding discrimination issues should be sent directly to: Richard Plummer P.O. Box 326, Valley Forge, PA 19481 (215) 783-0894.

## Vote Your Pocketbook!

A recent *Washington Post* article indicated if Congress does not make any deeper cuts than those proposed by President Bush, it would mean as many as two million more jobs will be lost by 1996. Typically in the defense industry, every fifth or sixth job is an engineering job. According to the *Post*, except for a few suggestions from Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-

Ga) and a few others, "THERE ARE NO LONG TERM OR SHORT TERM PLANS FOR CONVERSION OF THESE JOBS, SKILLS OR RESOURCES TO DOMESTIC PURPOSES."

While AEA cannot support any candidate or party we can make the suggestion, in the strongest terms possible, that each of us contact our Representative and Senators and find out what their position is on those issues critical to the working engineer.

Discuss the major issues confronting our profession with your Senators and Representative. Issues such as overseas procurement of defense products while we layoff U.S. workers; self-employed status for contract engineers for the purposes of retirement and insurance; immigration laws which potentially increases the supply of foreign engineers by a factor of three at a time when unemployment in the profession is rampant; trade agreements which will further erode our industrial base and shift our technology to other nations; the National Science Foundation, supported by our tax dollars, perpetuating the myth of an engineering shortage to mention a few.

Back issues of the "American Engineer" should provide a reasonable background for discussion with your elected representatives. Whenever possible of course, you should base your comments on personal experience. For example, you could describe your efforts to find work if you are or have been unemployed.

While we are not ready at this time to suggest replacing all of our elected officials, we do urge you to vote the individual out if he or she is not receptive to your problems and point-of-view. Go to town meetings, work in someones' campaign, get involved, work against those not sympathetic to our cause. What we need is a hundred thousand engineering activists working the elections on our behalf.

It's time we came to understand no one is going to vote for our interests, we must do it ourselves. Make the issues of the engineer the top priority for determining who gets your vote. Study the issues, find out who is most closely aligned to our point of view then work for and vote for that individual regardless of party, whether male or female. In other words VOTE YOUR POCKETBOOK!

## Mother Of All Truckers

One of our members reports the *Kiplinger Washington Letter* recently offered its readers some insight into current industry hiring.

According to this member one of the hot areas was with trucking firms, who, having a difficult time finding drivers, were hiring out-of-work ACCOUNTANTS and ENGINEERS! Truck driving probably pays more than engineering anyhow.

And who said the service sector wouldn't provide good jobs for people with a good education? Just a little university re-training and a little on-the-job training (at a reduced salary of course) to familiarize yourself with the technical terms.....See, there's nothing to worry about.

10-4 GOOD BUDDY, BUY THAT RIG, PUT THE PEDAL TO THE METAL, AND KEEP THE RUBBER ON THE ROAD!

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