

Dear Friends,

The Free Trade Agreement with the US appears to be problematic at the very least. I was sent the comments below by Richard & Maria Maguire. The former is American by birth and the latter German, and they are longstanding Australian citizens, currently on 'sabbatical' travel overseas.

The AFTINET's (Tel. (02)9299.7833) concerns - and the Maguires' - all seem real ones to me. Their research is put together by Dr. Patricia Ranald and Louise Southalan of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, with funding support from Uniting Care NSW.ACT. AFTINET is a network of 85 organisations supporting fair trade consistent with human rights and the environment.

The Prime Minister's haste can be attributed to the fear that the 'window of opportunity' will quickly close. On the other hand the undue haste puts Australia at risk of taking a wrong decision. I think I lean myself to the side of caution! I also foresee the collapse of the US dollar relative to ours, and the risk then of our trade prospects being relatively grossly disadvantaged.

Cheers,           -- Ned Iceton