

## The Trump Trade Enigma

July 30, 2018

President Donald J. Trump, former “reality TV” star, often seems merely to skirt reality.

“Our trade deficit ballooned to \$817 billion,” President Trump exaggerated to the “men and women of U.S. Steel” last week.

“Think of that. We lost \$817 billion a year over the last number of years in trade,” he went on.

“In other words, if we didn’t trade, we’d save a hell of a lot of money.”

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But the president said this in Granite City, Illinois, in front of cameras, a live mic, and a cheering crowd.



And yet, as I wrote yesterday at Townhall, Donald Trump is now explicitly aiming at a worldwide free trade policy, negotiating to break down trade barriers and get rid of subsidies on . . . well, “non-automobile industrial goods.”

I’m almost afraid to ask him why not *all* industrial (and, for that matter, *agricultural*) products. Could one expect a coherent answer from someone who does not understand that an \$817 billion “trade deficit” means that we, the consumers of the United States of America, got stuff from each billion spent? Each *dollar*?

And yet, if he pulls off worldwide free trade agreements — for *whatever* reason — he may *almost* be worth the attention that Bussa Krishna, of the southern state of Telangana, India, gives him.

The man set up a shrine to worship Donald Trump.

I will never do the same. But I’d tip my hat to almost anyone who fosters trade, and the peace and progress trade brings to the world.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.