

Jury Is Still Out...But Not Looking Like a Great Verdict

by: David Sirota

Thu Dec 18, 2008 at 17:27

Well, there's some [more out on Ron Kirk](#), our new U.S. Trade Representative, and it looks pretty bad:

Many trade specialists figure that Mr. Obama, who views himself as an internationalist, will find a way to back trade liberalization.

By naming Mr. Kirk, Mr. Obama nodded to the free-trade wing of the Democratic Party, which is small but has important ties to business. As Dallas's first African-American mayor, between 1995 and 2001, Mr. Kirk promoted Dallas on trips overseas and extolled the benefits of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

In 2001, for instance, he championed plans to build a "Nafta Freeway" between the U.S. and Mexico to speed cross-border shipments. At the time, he called such a road a "true river of trade between our communities."

I [maintain](#) that the jury is still out on what kind of trade representative Kirk will be, and more broadly, what kind of trade policy we'll see from Obama. But clearly, the Kirk nomination - judged on his mixed, free-trade-leaning record - isn't a wonderful first sign.

[Close Window](#)