

Deep Integration and Corporate Rule

The first report of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) in 2005 described how decisions on Canada-U.S. integration would be made: “meetings” for business, “consultations” for stakeholders and “briefings” for Parliament. A public-private dialogue on the SPP from January 2006 talked about “marrying policy issues with business priorities,” and of building “a genuine constituency for North American integration.” A few months later, the Canadian, American and Mexican governments handed the private sector even more power by creating the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC).

Setting the agenda

The NACC is a group of 30 CEOs – 10 from each country – that has been asked to set the agenda for deep integration. “The priorities you identify will set the stage for our work going forward in the SPP,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez at the launch of the NACC in May 2006. In one closed-door meeting since then, NACC members agreed to “hold governments’ feet to the fire” in a number of “lagging priority areas.”

The usual suspects

All 10 Canadian appointees to the NACC are members of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), a powerful corporate lobby group and Canada’s most vocal proponent of a North American union. Four of the U.S. member corporations – Chevron, Ford, Lockheed

Martin and Wal-Mart – were on Global Exchange’s 2005 list of worst corporate evildoers. Their involvement begs the question of whose security and prosperity the NACC is looking out for.

Integration is not just economic

The corporate members of the NACC want Canadians to think that deep integration is a natural evolution of the North American economy. Yet they push for political concessions as a way to speed up the process. “We must enhance the interoperability of Canadian and United States armed forces on land, at sea and in the air including Canadian participation in a continental anti-ballistic missile system,” said a CCCE report. Deep integration will be total, not just economic.

No public access

The North American Competitiveness Council is bad for democracy. Without public access to the NACC, what guarantee is there that the CEOs won’t sell off our ability to govern for the sake of their own financial gain?

Keep reading this guide, for suggestions on what

you can do to stop deep integration and promote strong social programs and public services, independent foreign and trade policies and protection of Canada’s water, energy and natural resources.

