

# SPP: Do Not Resuscitate

North American leaders should abandon the Security and Prosperity Partnership when they meet in Guadalajara and commit to a new relationship that puts people and the environment before profits and militarization

“Starting my first year in office, I will convene annual meetings with Mr. Calderón and the prime minister of Canada. Unlike similar summits under President Bush, these will be conducted with a level of transparency that represents the close ties among our three countries. We will seek the active and open involvement of citizens, labor, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in setting the agenda and making progress.”

- Barack Obama, February 20, 2008, Dallas Morning News

There is no good reason why we should be kept in the dark about issues as important as the economic and social future of North America while large corporations are invited to help draft trilateral public policy behind closed doors. This was the unfortunate reality of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), a deal struck by Canada, the United States and Mexico in 2005 without public input or approval.

By most accounts the SPP was abandoned after the April 2008 North American leaders' summit in New Orleans, even if several working groups continue to meet. Many factors led to the SPP's demise, including public opposition in all three countries to its economic and security agendas. These would be more appropriately named the deregulation and militarization agendas for the extent to which policy harmonization meant reducing safety and environmental rules for businesses while increasing restrictions on mobility, free speech and other civil liberties for people. Even business groups that were granted privileged access to the SPP process through the North American Competitiveness Council now complain that the border keeps getting “thicker” with new security measures.

Elected representatives in North America still have not had a chance to debate or vote on the SPP's “deep integration” agenda. But U.S. President Barack Obama has promised a change in North American relations to make the dialogue more open and inclusive. It's a promise we need him and all North American leaders to keep when they meet for a fifth time in Guadalajara, Mexico from August 9-10.

Presidents Obama and Calderón, and Prime Minister Harper need to abandon the failed SPP model and push the reset button on North American relations. Cooperation amongst nations is important, but only if it is based on the principles of participatory democracy, economic and social justice, environmental sustainability, and respect for civil liberties and human rights. A North American dialogue absent these principles is destined to fail and will be vigorously opposed by civil society in all three countries.



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# Integrate This!

## The Council of Canadians' five demands for 2009 North American leaders' summit

Recognizing public opposition to economic and security policy harmonization with the United States, and to several of the Security and Prosperity Partnership's economic and security priorities for North America, the Council of Canadians calls on the Canadian government to:

1. Cease current political talks and government working group meetings aimed at deeper integration between Canada and the United States (and to a lesser extent Mexico), and do not resuscitate the SPP dialogue when North American leaders meet in Guadalajara, Mexico from August 9-10 for the fifth annual leaders' summit;
2. Disband and do not replace the North American Competitiveness Council. If business input on North American cooperation is sought, ensure equal participation and input from environmental, labour, civil society and human rights groups, and grant them equal access to annual summits and working group meetings;
3. Bring the SPP - or any successor agreement to come out of the Guadalajara meeting - to the House of Commons for a full debate and vote, and allow for continuous parliamentary oversight and input in North American relations;
4. Consult with Canadians in a meaningful and participatory way on North American relations;
5. Commit to renegotiate NAFTA as majorities in all three countries support, in order to strengthen environmental and labour protections, and remove the Chapter 11 clause that allows corporations to sue federal governments for damages when public policies, including environmental and health protection measures, interfere with profits.



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