

North American Leaders' Summit, Guadalajara, Mexico - August 9-10

Obama, Calderón, Harper: Abandon the SPP and Renegotiate NAFTA to Protect Jobs, the Environment and Civil Liberties

The fifth annual North American Leaders' Summit will take place August 9-10 in Guadalajara, Mexico. These high-profile meetings have traditionally been an opportunity for the leaders of Canada, Mexico and the United States, along with trade and security ministers, to discuss progress on the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). The SPP is a commitment from 2005 to continuously renegotiate NAFTA to merge economic, regulatory, security, health, environmental and foreign policies across borders. This was never debated or voted on in any of the three participating countries, and only the private sector has been solicited for input through a blue-chip North American Competitiveness Council (NACC).

What makes the Guadalajara summit different is that neither the SPP nor the NACC is guaranteed to survive it. Numerous business lobbies close to the North American dialogue claim the SPP died shortly after the 2008 summit in New Orleans. They and their supporters – including former Liberal deputy prime minister and new head of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives John Manley – now advocate closer bilateral integration between Canada and the U.S., leaving Mexico out of the picture. Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama has promised to “seek the active and open involvement of citizens, labor, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in setting the agenda and making progress.”

While President Obama's statement offers some hope, there is reason to expect he

and the other leaders will simply continue to renegotiate and deepen NAFTA, as they did under the SPP, while continuing to exclude those voices calling for real change to the North American relationship.

It's time to abandon the SPP completely for the following reasons:



1. The SPP is bad for the economy

At heart, the SPP was about deepening and fortifying the NAFTA relationship, which has increased corporate profits and concentrated wealth gains for the very top income earners. Data from the 2006 census shows that the median earnings of full-time Canadian workers increased about \$1 per week between 1980 and 2005, from \$41,348 to \$41,401. Meanwhile, the incomes of the richest Canadians increased by 16.4 per cent over the same period, while incomes of the poorest fell by 20.6 per cent. The Free Trade Agreement with

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the United States (1989) and NAFTA with Mexico (1994) obviously did not improve prosperity or secure North American jobs, which continue to disappear in the current market crash. This deep international recession is largely the result of hands-off market capitalism and won't be fixed by more of it in any form of "NAFTA-plus" agreement that puts corporate profits ahead of the interests of North Americans.

What we'd like to see:

During the Democratic leadership race in the U.S. both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama promised they would renegotiate NAFTA to better protect the environment and jobs, and remove the ability of corporations to sue governments over measures that get in the way of profits. This type of renegotiation has the support of majorities in all three NAFTA countries, as well as more than 100 members of U.S. Congress pushing a Trade Act that would reform how trade and investment agreements are negotiated. Prime Minister Harper and President Calderón should stop lobbying against NAFTA renegotiation and accept Obama's challenge to improve environmental and labour protections across the continent.

2. The SPP is bad for democracy

The SPP is the political manifestation of a corporate plan for economic and security integration that was never voted on in any country. Big business lobbies like the CCCE continue to be the only Canadian groups with any input into the North American dialogue. Their participation was formalized in May 2006 when Prime Minister Stephen Harper put 10 CCCE members on a permanent high-level advisory board called the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). This group was asked to "prioritize the priorities" and to "drive change," while civil society, labour, human rights and

environmental groups were completely shut out and the public remained in the dark about ongoing discussions and SPP working group activities.

What we'd like to see:

North American leaders should disband the NACC. If corporate input is sought in North American collaborative policy discussions, so should the views of civil society, labour, environmental, and human rights groups. Obama should stick to his promise to include these groups in future discussions, to incorporate their recommendations, and to give them equal access to annual summits as the corporate sector has traditionally enjoyed. Furthermore, all collaborative North American projects and priorities must be brought before the elected governments of all three countries for public debate and voting.

3. The SPP is bad for your health

In 2007, we learned that regulatory harmonization under the SPP's economic agenda had led to increases in pesticide residues on fruits and vegetables in Canada. In 2008, during the listeriosis outbreak, Canadians witnessed how reducing inspections at food processing plants and moving to U.S.-style industry self-regulation can increase the risk of deadly food contamination. In early 2009, we saw how "swine flu" (H1N1) originated in the factory of a Mexican subsidiary of a major U.S. pork producer profiting from weak environmental rules. NAFTA also made it easier to export pork back into the U.S. market, leading some to dub H1N1 the "NAFTA flu." Finally, we learned this summer that Health Canada, which has a stated policy of harmonization with the U.S. on nutritional health issues, failed to assess a new eight-trait genetically modified corn brand from Monsanto/Dow AgroSciences.

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Canada simply accepted the U.S. approval without doing any tests of its own.

What we'd like to see:

A policy of regulatory harmonization makes no sense when the result is lower standards set by industry. If Canada and the U.S. are to cooperate on food safety and environmental protection, it must be in the pursuit of higher standards. Furthermore, no obstacles should be put in the way of jurisdictions that want to go further than the federal government in protecting human health or the environment. Provinces, states, municipalities and other sub-national governments must retain the freedom to set higher standards where they have good reasons to do so – the pesticide bans in Quebec and Ontario are good examples of provincial decisions based on public health priorities.

4. The SPP is bad for the environment

The SPP expanded NAFTA's "free market" energy integration agenda, trumping environmental priorities and energy security, and has stalled serious action on climate change. The energy gold rush in the tar sands where more than half the bitumen produced is exported to the U.S., is having significant environmental and social impacts and does little to help either country shift to a low-carbon economy. Pipeline projects bringing Canadian crude oil to U.S. markets and natural gas to fuel the tar sands are moving forward despite mounting pressure to reverse course. Meanwhile, Canadian government officials have used trade-based threats to dissuade U.S. policy measures that would benefit the environment by reducing exports from the tar sands to U.S. markets.

What we'd like to see:

While binational collaboration on environmental

protection and climate change as proposed in a new Canada-U.S. "Clean Energy Dialogue" sounds promising, to really reduce our energy use, Canada should adopt an energy strategy based on the principles of energy security and ecological sustainability – not free market forces that encourage increased exports and dependence on dirty fuels. Canada should also seek to remove NAFTA's proportionality clause which guarantees exports of energy at current levels to the U.S. Furthermore, any North American consensus on climate action prior to the Copenhagen Climate Conference must conform to the principles of KyotoPlus, which would commit Canada to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2020.



5. The SPP is bad for civil liberties and human rights

Previous Canadian governments rejected the idea of a common security perimeter around North America – which was proposed by the U.S. government after 9/11 – because it would have reduced our control over immigration, refugee and other policies related to the movement of people. But security policy integration



CHALLENGING THE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH AMERICA



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under the SPP has had much of the same effect. Joint Canada-U.S. no-fly lists based on common risk assessments implausibly contain millions of names. Information sharing agreements are funneling massive amounts of personal data on Canadians to U.S. security agencies. Exclusive airport and border passage for "trusted travellers" is creating two classes of people. Joint policing initiatives mean that armed U.S. officers can operate and make arrests on Canadian soil. And increasingly those people with views the Canadian and U.S. governments do not agree with are being stopped at the Canada-U.S. border, or banned entirely.

What we'd like to see:

We categorically reject the idea of a "global war on terror," which normalizes invasive and unnecessary police tactics, including increased surveillance, racial profiling, arbitrary detention and the expansion of security zones where normal rules and civil rights can be suspended. North American leaders must recognize the primacy of human rights over draconian security. Canada would take a step in the right direction by immediately implementing all recommendations from the Arar Commission's final report, especially with regard to safeguards on information sharing with foreign governments where we lose control of how information is used. The Canadian government must also immediately reverse its decision to require travel visas for Mexicans entering Canada. The visa fails to recognize the legitimate human rights crisis in Mexico from the war between drug cartels and the Mexican military and police – itself a product of SPP military cooperation between Mexico and the U.S. Real security for the peoples of North America would treat everyone equally.

Take Action! Demand a Say in North America's Future

Canadians, Mexicans and Americans are once again being excluded from the North American dialogue. Cooperation across borders can be necessary and beneficial when it is in everyone's mutual interest, but the SPP has had a very narrow, corporate version of cooperation that put profits before people. The SPP has never been debated by Parliament and has expanded and supported an unsustainable export-oriented energy and trade model, while placing new barriers to the movement of people through heightened security measures.

Contact Prime Minister Stephen Harper today and let him know you oppose the SPP model of North American integration.

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