

AN AGENDA OF TEN **BIG, BAD** IDEAS TO DEFEAT

Canada's business elite is pushing a series of ideas that would move Canada closer and closer to the United States. These are big, bad ideas that need to be understood and defeated.

1. DEEP INTEGRATION

The C.D. Howe Institute calls deep integration a "Big Idea." They and other business lobby groups are seeking to have Canada abandon its former commitment to multilateralism and side with an increasingly unilateralist United States. The United States has adopted a "first strike" military policy: it attacks nations it sees as hostile to its interests and refuses to abide by United Nations Security Council decisions.

2. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE

Paul Martin has already signalled his support for George Bush's plan to build a national missile defence program, a plan that could start the militarization of space. For the Bush administration, Canada's participation in this program is crucial, in that any missiles fired at the U.S. would likely be attacked while flying over Canada. If Canada were to back this plan, we would be turning our back on our own proud history of opposition to the weaponization of space.

3. CANADIAN HOMELAND SECURITY

Paul Martin has already established a Canadian equivalent of the U.S. Homeland Security department. While Martin was in Jean Chrétien's Cabinet, the government enacted Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism law, which diminishes the rights accorded to Canadians under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Bill C-23, which sets up a data bank containing private information on the foreign air travel of all Canadians; and the Smart Border Accord, which co-ordinates Canadian and U.S. intelligence services and oversees the harmonization of visa, immigration and refugee policies.

4. CONTINENTAL RESOURCE SHARING PACT

This pact would further harmonize the Canadian and U.S. energy markets to the point that Canada would lose complete control over its oil, gas and electricity resources. The U.S. is aggressively seeking new supplies of cheap energy on this continent to reduce its dependence on "foreign" markets and to fuel the Bush war machine. Already Canada has replaced Saudi Arabia as the number one supplier of oil and gas to the U.S. In 2003, foreign shareholders controlled over half of Canada's oil and gas production, up from 31 per cent in 1999.



5. A COMMON MARKET

A 2003 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade memo obtained by activists, titled "Securing Growth: Beyond the Border Accord," calls for a common North American approach to standards, testing, qualifications, regulations, labelling, procurement and environmental protection. Among other rec-

ommendations, DFAIT officials suggest removing all remaining regulations on Canadian energy resources, adopting a "tested once" policy for pharmaceuticals and other consumer goods, facilitating special border crossing procedures for business people, and harmonizing the standards and training for transportation personnel such as truck drivers and pilots.

6. A CONTINENTAL WATER MARKET

A continental water market is a long-term goal of many on both sides of the border. The National Post's Terence Corcoran enthusiastically predicts that within 10 years there will be an OPEC of water and Canada will be exporting massive amounts of water to the United States. President Bush has said that he sees Canada's water resources as part of America's energy security. For Canadians, deep integration may mean that we lose sovereign control of our water supplies, just as we have lost control of our oil and gas.

7. FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

The federal government is aggressively promoting trade liberalization in telecommunications and cable, a policy that will have broad implications for all other forms of media in Canada. Currently, Canadian rules restrict foreign ownership to 46.7 per cent of a broadcasting or telecommunications company, but powerful forces are pressing to remove these restrictions. This would signal an end to Canadian control over its media because telecommunications companies in Canada are owners of cable, television networks and newspapers. One of Prime Minister Paul Martin's first acts in government was to shift the telecom portfolio from Industry to International

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT CANADIANS BECOME ACTIVE ON THESE ISSUES IN TIME FOR THE UPCOMING FEDERAL ELECTION.

HERE ARE THREE WAYS TO DO IT:

1. Demand full public participation in Prime Minister Paul Martin's review of Canada-U.S. policy.

Although Paul Martin has announced that he is going to have a full review of Canada-U.S. relations, he has not indicated that this review will be open to the public. What better way for Canadians to exercise their democratic rights than to demand public hearings, town hall meetings, or even a royal commission?

2. Make deep integration the main issue of the federal election.

Deep integration would remove the flexibility of the Canadian government to determine its own social, foreign, environmental, defence, economic and cultural policies. Citizens and civil society groups need to make deep integration an election issue.

3. Vote in the federal election.

In the last federal election, just over half of Canadians eligible to vote did so. Voter apathy and lack of trust in the politicians and the processes by which their policies are adopted is understandable, but it is essential that more people participate in the electoral process and work toward its transformation.

For a fuller analysis of the detrimental impact of the so-called "big idea" of deeper integration, and to see a range of better ideas and alternatives, read "The Canada We Want." A copy of "The Canada We Want" may be obtained by going to our web site, www.canadians.org.

Trade, a clear indication that telecommunications will be on the trade table.

8. PURSUING A U.S. GLOBAL TRADE AGENDA

At the World Trade Organization and in the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations, the Bush administration is seeking a major liberalization of services, agriculture and intellectual property rights. At the most recent World Trade Organization meetings in Doha and Cancun, Canada's Minister of International Trade (now Health Minister in Martin's government) and Canada's Ambassador to the WTO both played pivotal roles as "Friends of the Chair," pressing Third World countries to give up remaining levers of control over their economy and social policy.

9. ADOPTING U.S.-STYLE HEALTH CARE

The Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Fraser Institute, and the C.D. Howe Institute, all proponents of deep integration, are all on record as calling for a for-profit replacement to Medicare. Already, private spending on health care in Canada has increased by 96 per cent in the last decade. Our country is in danger of losing its health care exemption under NAFTA, which is only good as long as health care is delivered on a not-for-profit basis.

10. A CONTINENTAL AGRICULTURE MARKET

The U.S. is now challenging Canada's food supply management and marketing board

systems such as the Canadian Wheat Board, which has ensured the survival of a domestically controlled grain industry. Free trade has already almost totally integrated livestock production between Canada and the U.S. We now over-produce beef and pork (below the cost of production) in order to supply the American food processing industry with cheap meat. This results in independent family farmers being replaced by corporate agribusiness managers and underpaid farm workers.

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