

INTEGRATE THIS!

CHALLENGING THE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH AMERICA

A SPECIAL 12-PAGE SUPPLEMENT

Deep integration between Canada and the United States is not a theory or a fear – it is a reality. For several years now, government task forces and working groups have been quietly harmonizing Canada-U.S. programs and procedures, without any input from the Canadian public.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), agreed to by the leaders of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in 2005, is moving Canada quickly toward a continental resource pact, a North American security perimeter, and harmonized military and security policies. Working groups composed of bureaucrats and corporate leaders are quietly putting this “partnership” into action, and to date only industry “stakeholders” have been consulted.

At the Council of Canadians, we believe that citizens have a right to know about major government initiatives that could change the food we eat, the civil liberties we enjoy and the social programs we depend on. To date, very few elected officials have sounded the alarm about the SPP. And all of the secrecy surrounding the SPP’s implementation has left the public in the dark.



Pat Croizau

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Pat Croteau

FREE TRADE'S BIG LIE

NAFTA HAS FAILED TO CREATE QUALITY JOBS OR CLOSE THE INCOME GAP

by Jean-Yves LeFort

If you read any Canadian newspaper, you've been treated to the same refrain: NAFTA has been good for Canada. It has led to economic growth and jobs for Canadians. And given that it's been so wonderful for Canada, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) could only make things better, right?

What proponents of deep integration are not telling you is this: the notion that NAFTA has been good for average Canadians, Americans and Mexicans is a lie. The truth is that NAFTA has been responsible for growing poverty, the creation of a new underclass called the "working poor," and the concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer people.

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

When political and business leaders sold Canadians on the merits of NAFTA, they promised that trade would boom, our economy would grow, more jobs would be created and our standard of living would skyrocket. In Mexico, politicians promised that free trade would lift people out of poverty. Look closely at the numbers, however, and all these promises begin to ring hollow.

A September 2006 study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that Canadian exports to the U.S. peaked in 2000 and started falling in 2001 and 2002. They have since risen again, but only because of a commodities boom particularly related to the minerals, forestry and energy industries.

In other words, if it weren't for natural resources, especially oil, our exports to the U.S. would be falling steadily. Furthermore, a federal Industry Department study quoted by EPI reveals that 90 per cent of the export surge in the 1990s was a result of the low Canadian dollar.

THE REAL VALUE OF THE MINIMUM WAGE HAS DROPPED IN MEXICO BY 18 PER CENT.

In addition, Canada's share of the American import market has stayed the same throughout the NAFTA years. So those who claimed that NAFTA would give us a "privileged" and growing access to the American market have been proven wrong. Canada is rapidly losing ground to India and China, two countries that have not signed trade deals with the U.S.

EXPORTS DON'T EQUAL JOBS

NAFTA's proponents point out that Mexico has become the world's eighth largest exporter. This, they say, is proof that free trade has been good for the Mexican people. But researchers at the

CANADA-U.S. INTEGRATION: A TIMELINE

September 11, 2001

The Canada-U.S. border closes temporarily after terrorists attack the World Trade Center buildings in New York City.

September 25, 2001

Citing 9/11, Thomas d'Aquino, president of the Business Council on National Issues (now the Canadian Council of Chief Executives), says that Canada "should engage in more fundamental harmonization and integration" with the U.S. if we are going to keep the border open to trade.

November 26, 2001

Thomas d'Aquino and other unnamed "leaders" send a letter to Jean Chrétien and George W. Bush calling for a "smart border" between Canada and the U.S. that would "use technology to enhance both security and the flow of goods and people across the border."

December 12, 2001

Without legislative or public debate, Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge sign the Smart Border Declaration, a 30-point plan to harmonize security and anti-terrorism regulations in the two countries, including the creation of a common no-fly list and passenger surveillance system.

FREE TRADE ELIMINATES UNIONIZED, STEADY, WELL-PAID JOBS AND REPLACES THEM WITH TEMPORARY, NON-UNIONIZED AND LARGELY PART-TIME “MCJOBS.”

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University recently concluded that foreign investment was “largely disconnected from the domestic Mexican economy.”

In other words, large corporations are exploiting a cheap labour force for quick profit. The products of this labour immediately leave the country as exports. This accounts for the high trade numbers but it is not an accurate reflection of Mexico’s economic strength. The country as a whole does not benefit from technology transfers or new infrastructure.

A 2004 article in *The Economist* stated that NAFTA “champions” had oversold their case and that it was “never plausible” that NAFTA would be a net creator of jobs. The magazine went on to explain that free trade affects the pattern of jobs, not the total number of jobs created.

DISAPPEARING MIDDLE CLASS

In Canada, the middle class has taken the biggest hit. Wage growth has been almost flat since 1989 – it grew at a paltry rate of 0.63 per cent per year. NAFTA defenders point to the creation of “millions” of new jobs since

the agreement was implemented, but a 2004 study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) questions the quality and stability of those jobs. According to the CCPA, 560,000 jobs were created in 2002, but 40 per cent were part-time and 17 per cent represented self-employed persons.

The CCPA’s study reinforces an argument that the labour movement has been making for years: free trade eliminates unionized, steady, well-paid jobs and replaces them with temporary, non-unionized and largely part-time “McJobs.” And this has come at a time when Canada’s social programs have been devastated by cuts – especially since the mid-1990s. In 1989, the CCPA points out, 87 per cent of unemployed people in Canada qualified for unemployment insurance benefits, whereas by 2001 only 39 per cent qualified for coverage.

THE RICHEST 10 PER CENT OF CANADIAN FAMILIES HAVE AN AVERAGE INCOME 11 TIMES AS HIGH AS THE POOREST 10 PER CENT.

Canadians aren’t the only ones suffering. Despite a flood of investment in the manufacturing sector along the Mexican border with the U.S., the real value of the minimum wage has dropped in Mexico by 18 per cent. A 2003 study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace points out that while the manufacturing sector in

THE UNITED STATES’ LARGEST EMPLOYER IS NOW WAL-MART, WHICH PAYS ITS EMPLOYEES AN AVERAGE WAGE OF \$7.50 PER HOUR.

Mexico created 500,000 jobs between 1994 and 2000, the agricultural sector, where one-fifth of Mexicans still work, has lost 1.3 million jobs since 1994.

To add insult to injury, many of the manufacturing jobs are leaving Mexico for China, where wages are even lower. The most revealing indication of this trend is the skyrocketing numbers of Mexican immigrants to the United States. According to Mexico’s National Institute of Statistics, the flow of undocumented workers to the United States has ballooned from an estimated 200,000 a year in 1994 to more than 300,000 a year in 2004.

The irony is that the U.S. middle class has also been devastated by job losses in recent years. Between 2001 and 2003, 2.9 million manufacturing jobs were lost in the U.S. According to *Forbes Magazine*, the United States’ largest employer is now Wal-Mart, which pays its employees an average wage of \$7.50 per hour.

THE GROWING GAP

Here is the crux of the matter: If NAFTA has created so much wealth, why is poverty growing in all three countries?

April 2002

The C.D. Howe Institute releases a report by University of Toronto professor Wendy Dobson calling for “deeper integration” with the United States, including a North American customs union, a common market, a resource sharing pact and full participation in the U.S. “war on terror.”

June 28, 2002

John Manley and Tom Ridge announce progress on the Smart Border Declaration, including “stepped up intelligence cooperation” and “a common approach to screen international air passengers before they arrive in either country and identify those who warrant additional security scrutiny.”

September 26, 2002

Canadian citizen Maher Arar is detained at New York’s John F. Kennedy Airport and held for 12 days, then deported to Syria where he is imprisoned and tortured for a year. In 2006, a Canadian government commission into the affair blames the hasty sharing of faulty information between Canadian and U.S. security agencies.

January 2003

The CCCE launches its “North American Security and Prosperity Initiative,” calling on the governments of Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to further integrate their three economies through a “new deal.” The deal would include a “comprehensive resource

RATIONALE TIMELINE

Study after study reveals that the gap between rich and poor is growing both between countries and within countries. In the book *Living with Uncle: Canada-US Relations in an Age of Empire*, Bruce Campbell argues that after decades of declining inequality, the bottom 20 per cent of Canadian families saw their incomes fall by 7.6 per cent in the NAFTA era, while the top 20 per cent saw their incomes rise by 16.8 per cent.

A 2004 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada produced by Campaign 2000 reveals that nearly a third of Canadian children have lived in poverty for at least a year since 1996. According to the report, the richest 10 per cent of Canadian families have an average income 11 times as high as the poorest 10 per cent. The authors blame low-paying and insecure jobs for widening the disparity between rich and poor families. In other words, a “strong economy” has done nothing to close the gap.

The idea that free trade would make Mexico rich was the biggest fallacy of all. Under NAFTA, the number of Mexicans living in poverty has actually increased. According to a May 2001 World Bank study, Mexicans living in poverty represent 58.4 per cent of the population. That’s almost 8 per cent higher than in 1994.

The much-celebrated “NAFTA labour side agreement” – an after-the-fact peace offering that was supposed to

appease the U.S. labour movement – has proven too weak to enforce labour rights in Mexico. The mechanisms it created to defend workers have no enforcement powers so there has been little impact on the lives of the people the agreement was meant to defend. The *Wall Street Journal* put it eloquently in 1997, reporting that under the agreement “not a single worker was ever reinstated, not a single employer was ever sanctioned, and no union was ever recognized.”

The evidence makes it clear that under free trade, the losers are the Canadians, Mexicans and Americans who are struggling to contend with low wages and insecure working conditions – if they are lucky enough to find a job. NAFTA has made corporate investors very rich, so it’s no surprise that they are the ones pushing for deeper integration with the U.S. and Mexico through the Security and Prosperity Partnership. They are the only clear winners under the NAFTA model, so they want to make free trade irreversible and broaden its scope.

In 1994, Canadians took a leap of faith based on false promises. In 2007, we know better.

Jean-Yves LeFort is The Council of Canadians’ Trade Campaigner.



Rachel Rosen

WAY TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

CANADA-U.S. MILITARY AND SECURITY INTEGRATION ENDANGERS ALL CANADIANS

by Stuart Trew

If, as Maude Barlow said, Canada and the U.S. were “too close for comfort” under Liberal leadership, what are we to make of deep integration under a Conservative government? Perhaps not surprisingly, the pace has gone into hyperdrive. Stephen Harper has always been clear that he considers improving Canada-U.S. relations his main job and, that when it comes to military and security spending, no dollar figure is too large if it will somehow keep the U.S. border open to Canadian goods.

Since Barlow’s book *Too Close for Comfort* hit the stands in 2005, bureaucrats, business leaders and other face-

CANADA — U.S. INTEGRATION

security pact” covering agriculture, metal, minerals and energy; “sharing the burden of defence and security”; and “creating a new institutional framework” for North American integration.

October 15, 2004

The U.S. Council on Foreign Relations launches a tri-national “Independent Task Force on the Future of North America,” which is vice-chaired by CCCE President Thomas d’Aquino and co-chaired by John Manley.

March 14, 2005

The Independent Task Force on the Future of North America releases its final report, calling for the creation of a North American economic and security community by 2010. Among its key recommendations are the establishment of a continental security perimeter, a common external tariff, a common border

pass for all North Americans, a North American energy and natural resources strategy, and an annual meeting where North American leaders can discuss steps toward economic and security integration.

THE U.S. MILITARY COMMISSIONS ACT OF 2006 STRIPS ALL NON-U.S. CITIZENS, INCLUDING CANADIANS, OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL.

less “stakeholders” have been furiously implementing security initiatives within the scope of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), while our government paints the new policies as “made in Canada.”

Not only is Canadian independence at stake, but increasingly so are our human rights and civil liberties.

COSY RELATIONSHIP

In September 2006, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) released its 2006-07 report on plans and priorities, repeating over and over again that “greater collaboration with the United States” was strategic priority number one.

The plan is contentious, to say the least. It includes:

- Continuing to “support and encourage the United States in its indispensable role in promoting the Middle East peace process”;
- Balancing “American priorities with traditional Canadian foreign policy . . . in dealing with the security and reconstruction needs of Iraq and the challenge posed by Iran”; and
- Responding to U.S. concerns in Latin America and the Caribbean

“by identifying shared common interests and objectives, finding ways to pursue them in concert or independently as appropriate and by maintaining close communications on these issues.”

The military component of this new cosy relationship with America is outlined in an October 2006 report commissioned by the Council of Canadians called *Marching Orders: How Canada abandoned peacekeeping – and why the UN needs us now more than ever*. Author Steven Staples explains how the transformation of Canada’s military began under the previous Liberal government but has sped up under the Conservatives.

Military and government officials are working hard to convince Canadians that there is no longer a need for peacekeepers today, and that Canada is best served, in the words of our current ambassador to the U.S. Michael Wilson, as “an active contributor and partner in the war on terror, particularly with our activities in Afghanistan.”

More proof of this military move toward total Canada-U.S. alignment surfaced in a December 4, 2006 *National Post* article on Canada’s Defence Capability Plan for the next 20 years. The plan states “that the United States will remain our principal defence and security partner,” even if “no large-scale conventional military threat to Canada currently exists.” And there’s the rub. Despite a lack of any major threat, according to the *Post*,

our government plans on spending billions on new heavy military machinery in order to remain a key player in the U.S.-led “war on terror.”

SECRET MEETINGS

The DFAIT report on plans and priorities clearly shows that Canada is making significant changes to its foreign and military policy in order to secure its trading relationship with the United States. As previously reported in *Canadian Perspectives*, this is exactly the kind of trade-off the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) has been plugging for the past four years, despite clear public opposition. Even DFAIT acknowledges this. Based on a University of Ottawa study from October 2005, the report says, “83 per cent [of Canadians] said the Canadian government should pursue an independent foreign policy, even if this leads to problems with the United States.” But that doesn’t mean they’re going to listen.

In fact, secrecy is of the utmost importance to the federal government. From September 12 to 14, at Alberta’s Banff Springs Hotel, Canadian, U.S. and Mexican bureaucrats, military personnel and politicians attended a secret meeting to discuss the logistics of integration, outside of the media spotlight.

Defence Minister Gordon O’Connor was invited, former Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld sent a staff member, and Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day actually attended, but his office

RATIONALE TIMELINE

March 23, 2005

At a meeting in Waco, Texas, George W. Bush, Paul Martin and Vicente Fox issue a joint statement announcing the creation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. The tri-national agreement contains almost all of the recommendations on continental economic and security integration proposed by the Independent Task Force.

October 2005

The first North American Forum brings together U.S., Canadian and Mexican government and business representatives to discuss issues related to continental economic and social integration; it is held at a secret location in Sonoma, California. Invitees

include John Manley, Mexican ambassador to the U.S. Carlos de Icaza, Chevron CEO David O’Reilly, former head of the CIA James Woolsey, and a host of U.S. policy advisors to George W. Bush.

January 23, 2006

The Conservatives take office in Ottawa with a minority government as Prime Minister Stephen Harper promises to make Canada-U.S. relations a top priority despite polling data showing that the issue falls well below health care and the environment for the Canadian public.

told journalists he was under no obligation to divulge what he discussed because it was a “private meeting.” No matter how offensive that statement, it was later contradicted by U.S. Consul General John Nay, who referred to the North American Forum as a “sister organization” and “parallel structure to the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America.”

Day was again caught dodging public and media scrutiny this November by CBC correspondent Henry Champ, who reported that Canada and the United States had “agreed to a memorandum of understanding to allow the electronic exchange of ballistics information between the two countries and the assignment of a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) official to Toronto.” Champ wrote that “It was a surprise to learn of this news from the U.S. Department of Justice and not our own government. An even bigger surprise to be told by Day’s office that they had chosen not to inform the Canadian media.”

THEY KNOW WHO YOU ARE

This fall, Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon announced the impending establishment of a “made-in-Canada” no-fly list similar to the one already functioning in the U.S. And yet we know from the 2006 SPP “Report to Leaders” that “compatible [North American] advance passenger informa-



Rachel Rosen

DESPITE A LACK OF ANY MAJOR THREAT, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT PLANS ON SPENDING BILLIONS ON NEW HEAVY MILITARY MACHINERY IN ORDER TO REMAIN A KEY PLAYER IN THE U.S.-LED “WAR ON TERROR.”

tion systems” and “compatible criteria for the posting of lookouts of suspected terrorists and criminals” are priorities of the tri-national security integration agenda to be completed by June 2007. However “made in Canada” our list may be for the moment, it will ultimately be merged with the U.S. no-fly list. The U.S. has come under fire recently, when it was revealed that the list included peace activists, pre-schoolers and U.S. senator Ted Kennedy.

More disturbing were revelations in the final Arar Commission report

that the Canadian Border Security Agency is already collecting data on all Canadian travellers through a National Risk Assessment Centre (NRAC). Information about travelers is fed into a computer that determines the risk level. The same system has been “grading” U.S. travellers for the past three years, according to recent reports of U.S. Homeland Security techniques.

“Canada and the United States use the same risk-analysis system,” wrote Justice Dennis O’Connor in his report. And, “pursuant to a 2005 memorandum of understanding, NRAC automatically shares with the U.S. National Targeting Center [Advance Passenger Information] for air passengers arriving in or transiting through Canada for whom terrorism or serious crime-related lookouts have been issued.”

LEAVE YOUR RIGHTS AT HOME

The Security and Prosperity Partnership is pushing Canada even closer to the United States at a time when the U.S. is looking dangerously like a modern police state.

The U.S. Military Commissions Act of 2006 strips all non-U.S. citizens, including Canadians, of their constitutional right to a fair trial. It grants the U.S. president the authority to detain non-citizens indefinitely, without charge, and “to interpret the meaning and application of the Geneva Conventions” as they relate to torture. Worse, according to the American Civil

CANADA-U.S. INTEGRATION

March 31, 2006

At the second SPP summit in Cancun, Mexico, President Bush, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and then Mexican President Vicente Fox announce the creation of the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC).

This corporate working group is charged with directing the SPP process and includes at least 10 CEOs from each country, including representatives from Lockheed Martin, Wal-Mart, General Motors, Home Depot Canada, Canfor and Suncor.

August 15, 2006

The NACC meets in Washington, D.C., to hash out priority issues for the SPP. The business leaders decide that the U.S. members will deal with “regulatory convergence,” the Canadians will handle “border facilitation,” and the Mexican members will devise a plan for “energy integration.”

September 12-14, 2006

The North American Forum meets for the second time, in Banff, Alberta, this time to discuss “demographic and social dimensions of North American integration,” security cooperation, and a “North American energy strategy.” Once again,

Liberties Union, the Act “allows detainees to be sentenced to death based on testimony literally beaten out of witnesses [and] grants officials in the Bush Administration a retroactive ‘get out of jail free’ card for war crimes.”

Are these the kinds of policies Canadians want their own government to adopt? Certainly not. Unfortunately, security integration through the SPP gives us no choice but to adopt them.

Despite the clear dangers to Canadians of closer security and military ties with the United States, our government is forging ahead with its deep integration agenda, without public or parliamentary scrutiny. What are actually tri-national security initiatives are being sold at home as “made-in-Canada” solutions to terrorism.

Unless we challenge this agenda now, Canada will get swept up into the emerging U.S. security state, all for the sake of a trade agenda being pushed by a handful of Canada’s richest CEOs. Not only are Canada’s independent foreign and defence policies at risk, so are the civil liberties and human rights we fought very hard to establish.

For more information about the military integration with the U.S., visit www.canadians.org/peace.

Stuart Trew is a Communications Administrator for The Council of Canadians.

COURTING TILMA

U.S. INVESTORS EYE ALBERTA AND B.C.’S INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE AGREEMENT

Policy harmonization and investor rights are the goals of all free trade agreements. They were a main component of NAFTA and are acquiring new urgency within the

Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP). They are also at the heart of the Alberta-B.C. Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), which will go into effect on April 1, 2007.

TILMA creates a legally binding process by which corporations and individuals can challenge

- government programs and regulations if they “restrict or impair” investment;
- regulations in one province that are different from those in another;
- the establishment of new, stricter regulations;
- initiatives by one province with which the other province does not agree.

TILMA does not fully apply to existing local government policies until after a two-year transition period, but as soon as the agreement comes into force, new government initiatives will be challengeable by lawsuits if a company or private individual feels they restrict their trade

or investment. Since all local government regulations in some way restrict investment, everything will be up for grabs. Government “entities” covered by TILMA, and therefore vulnerable to private lawsuits, include regional, local, district or other forms of municipal government as well as school boards.

CHANGING THE RULES

So far, Alberta and B.C. are the only two signatories, but TILMA has a far wider fan club, with Ontario and Saskatchewan suggesting they are about to sign on, and certain U.S. states drooling at the possibility.

At the most recent meeting of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), a bi-national association of Canadian and American businesses with heavy involvement from the oil and gas sector, representatives from north-western U.S. states alongside B.C. and Alberta officials committed to explore the possibility of “expanding the TILMA concept throughout the PNWER region.”

The U.S. Trade Representative frequently complains about the Canadian Wheat Board and other agricultural policies. Entry to TILMA would give U.S. companies the legal means to dismantle or rewrite these policies, as well as any other provincial or municipal government rules they didn’t like.

Like these U.S. states, Industry Minister Maxime Bernier is clearly enamoured with TILMA. “The Alberta-B.C.

RATIONALE A TIMELINE

the meeting is kept secret, despite the involvement of high-ranking military officials, politicians and top bureaucrats – including Stockwell Day, who refuses to disclose the content of his speech to the media.

February 2007

SPP ministers, including Maxime Bernier, David Emerson, Stockwell Day, and their U.S. counterparts Michael Chertoff and Carlos Gutierrez, meet with the NACC to discuss the progress of the integration agenda.

March 30–April 1, 2007

Activists, academics, students and artists converge in Ottawa for Integrate This! Challenging the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, a teach-in sponsored by the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Canadian Labour Congress.

June 26–29, 2007

Stephen Harper, George W. Bush and Felipe Calderón likely to meet in Kananaskis, Alberta, for the planned third summit of the Security and Prosperity Partnership.

agreement is a very good one,” he told a Senate committee looking into inter-provincial trade barriers. “I hope that the other provinces will jump in. That will help us to improve the Agreement on [Internal] Trade at a federal level.” The AIT had been trying to create a national TILMA-like agreement since 1995, but had little success until B.C. and Alberta’s free trade pact rejuvenated the discussion.

Unfortunately, a larger, national legal framework for TILMA, with U.S. participation, would give U.S. companies the same rights as Canadians to sue local governments, formalizing a process of policy harmonization and deep integration that so far has no legal backing. Such an arrangement would require Canadian and U.S. regulations on everything, including health care and the environment, to be harmonized throughout the free-trade area, hastening a process of deep integration with the U.S. that Canadians have not had a chance to debate in public or in the House of Commons.

DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES

So why did Alberta and B.C. sign an agreement that radically shifts the balance of power in favour of corporate interests and that could ultimately legalize a process of deep integration with the U.S.? And why did they sign it without even consulting with the public or elected representatives first? These are questions that demand answers before TILMA goes into effect this April. The consequences to public health and the environment, and the danger that TILMA will lead us quickly toward economic integration with the United States, are severe. Let’s not let this agreement pass without a fight.

For more information about TILMA, including research, action tools and upcoming events, please visit our website at www.canadians.org.



Rachel Rosen

UNLIKELY BEDFELLOWS

RIGHT-WING U.S. GROUPS OPPOSE DEEP INTEGRATION – FOR THE WRONG REASONS

by Ariel Troster

At first glance, their analysis seems perfectly reasonable: “Government bureaucrats and business leaders are “harmonizing and integrating” our laws with Mexico and Canada on a broad range of issues such as e-commerce, transportation, environment, health, agriculture, financial services and national security, just to mention a few.” The statement is taken from a new website about the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP).

If you scroll down the page, you find out that the website is sponsored by the Minutemen, a U.S. group that mobilizes civilians (sometimes armed) to patrol the U.S. border. While the organization claims not to be a racist vigilante group, its supporters consistently refer to migrant workers as “illegal aliens,” and have expressed a desire to “lock down the border.”

In the U.S., several groups are fighting to have the SPP overturned – but for entirely the wrong reasons. They’ve even helped convince a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives to pass a motion calling on the U.S. to withdraw from the partnership. But their concerns aren’t with protecting the environment or ensuring better health and safety standards or even protecting citizens from wrongful arrest under the kind of U.S. security measures that led Maher

Arar to be incarcerated and tortured in Syria. They're about stopping Mexican immigrants and Canadian "socialism" from encroaching on their territory.

INNOCUOUS YET DANGEROUS

Other right-wing opponents of the SPP seem a little less extreme, but their ideas are no less dangerous. A group called Judicial Watch in the U.S. has been using freedom of information requests to access U.S. Department of Commerce documents relating to the SPP. These documents have been very helpful to us at the Council of Canadians, as they have given us a window into the secret proceedings of the SPP and the North American Competitiveness Council.

But like the Minutemen, the points made by Judicial Watch are not ours. The organization is rabidly anti-choice and anti-gay. They seem to have a particular obsession with Hillary Clinton, painting her as a radical Communist sympathizer.

Though Judicial Watch's tone is a little more measured than the Minutemen, the majority of the organization's litigation has focused on limiting or stopping immigration. Judicial Watch is now in court against the Los Angeles Police Department over a policy that prevents police officers from demanding to know an individual's immigration status when arresting them for unrelated offences.

Now, it would be one thing if these organizations existed in isolation. But they are starting to creep into Canada, and are actively seeking partnerships with organizations like the Council of Canadians. In December, an organization called Let Freedom Ring America contacted the Council, asking us to join them in their campaign to "close and secure our borders."

IN THE U.S., SEVERAL GROUPS ARE FIGHTING TO HAVE THE SPP OVERTURNED – BUT FOR ENTIRELY THE WRONG REASONS.

While we might share certain concerns with some of these right-wing groups, such as a lack of government accountability and transparency, our argument against continental integration stands in marked contrast to their views.

Take immigration, for example. At the Council, we are concerned that a harmonized refugee policy with the United States would mean that fewer people with legitimate claims would be able to immigrate from other countries.

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) has already observed a marked reduction in the number of refugee claims that have been accepted since the implementation of the Safe Third Country Agreement. The agreement, which came into force in December 2004, designates the U.S. as a "safe country" for refugee claimants arriving at Canada's border with the U.S. This means that, with only some exceptions, they are not allowed to claim refugee status in Canada – even if they were only intending to cross the border in an effort to make it to Canada.

Since 1989, Canada has received an average of 29,680 refugee claims per year. In 2005 – the first year that the Safe Third Country Agreement was in effect – only 19,735 people made refugee claims, and the drop at the land border was even more dramatic, according to the CCR, "with numbers only at 51 per cent of what they were in 2004." But this doesn't mean that there are fewer refugees fleeing persecution and seeking a better life in Canada. It means that by integrating our immigration policy with the U.S., Canada has effectively closed its doors to people who

would have otherwise qualified for asylum.

MIGRATION IS A SYMPTOM

Unlike such groups as Judicial Watch, the Council of Canadians sees the astounding influx of undocumented Mexican workers into the U.S. as a sign that free trade is failing the Mexican people. And we fear that further economic harmonization under the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America will only make it more difficult for Mexicans to earn a decent living and stay in their chosen communities with their families.

Progressive opponents of the SPP certainly don't want to "lock down" Canada's border with the United States. We want to avoid integrating Canada's policies with more questionable U.S. standards, and instead work with partners in the U.S. and Mexico to promote the highest possible quality of life for people all over North America – and this means championing fair trade, clean water and universal public health care.

Maude Barlow sums it up best in the last chapter of her book *Too Close for Comfort: Canada's Future within Fortress North America*: "this is not a call to put up borders around Canada. Nor is it an announcement of presumed moral superiority with respect to our neighbours. . . . Canada must decide if it is going to forge deeper economic, foreign policy, social, and resource ties with the world's superpower under its most aggressive government in modern history, or if it is going to stand with moderate countries and people around the world to form a counterweight."

Ariel Troster is the Publications Officer at The Council of Canadians, and the Editor of Canadian Perspectives.



“PEOPLE WOULD BE OUTRAGED”

AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM LOUDON FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE TRADE

Tom Loudon is the coordinator of the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART), an organization in the U.S. that brings together dozens of social justice and faith-based groups to challenge corporate trade agreements. Working with partners in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, ART was one of the early opponents of NAFTA and is now working to oppose the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP).

In a recent phone interview with *Canadian Perspectives*, Loudon talked about the government secrecy surrounding continental integration, and why people in North America should be skeptical about the SPP.

What are social justice advocates in the U.S. saying about the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America?

Obviously, for Canadians and Mexicans, there are things that should be totally frightening about handing over sover-

eignty [to the U.S.]. But the issues are the same in the U.S. – handing over governmental authority to transnational corporations. And it’s happening silently in a broad number of areas without any scrutiny whatsoever and very little access to information.

We learned from NAFTA, the FTAA and the Central American Free Trade Agreement that the more people become aware of things, the more resistance there is.

What is ART doing to challenge the SPP in the U.S.?

About a month ago, we filed an Access to Information request about the SPP. It’s hard to know what [the U.S. government] is willing to tell us. So far, it’s not encouraging. The issues that affect and impact all of our lives are being relegated to a few corporations and what it means for their bottom line. Legislative bodies have been excluded from these very crucial decisions about our future. A handful of legislators in each country get it, but there hasn’t been any significant resistance yet. If we were able to get our hands on more documentation, I know people would be outraged.

How is ART’s response to the SPP fundamentally different from the opinions of right-wing groups like the Minutemen and Judicial Watch?

I would say that we do share the horror at the level of corporate take-over, but we have severe differences when it comes to our analysis of immigration. From my reading of their perspective, immigrants are the enemy . . . but at ART, we believe migrant workers are largely the victims of the free trade agenda, because they are forced to migrate as an economic survival technique. What we see as a just alternative is a trade policy that would actually give people a reason to stay with their families and have a viable way of surviving.

SEE NO EVIL, REPORT NO EVIL

WHY THE MEDIA ISN’T TELLING YOU ABOUT DEEP INTEGRATION

by Meera Karunanathan

It has become the great North American non-issue.

At the end of 2006, the Canadian Press compiled a list of the year’s major news events. The March meeting in Cancun between Stephen Harper, Vicente Fox and George Bush, where the three leaders furthered the goals of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), did not make the cut.

When it comes to the SPP, the Canadian and American media seem to have adopted a “see no evil, report no evil” strategy.

EVERY MAJOR CANADIAN DAILY NEWSPAPER IS THE PROPERTY OF A PARENT OWNER WITH INTERESTS THAT EXTEND FAR BEYOND PUBLISHING.

As the media officer for the Council of Canadians, it’s my job to get journalists interested in social justice issues. I figured that the SPP had all the makings of a great news item. It’s full of what journalists refer to as “news values” – characteristics that would make a story newsworthy. After all, the SPP will have a significant impact on a large number of people. It involves prominent and powerful government and business leaders.

But the public is being left in the dark.

In March, it will be two years since the leaders of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico launched the Security and Prosperity Partnership in Waco, Texas. By now, if the media had done its job, the SPP would be a household name like NAFTA and the WTO. Yet most



Canadians remain blissfully unaware of this powerful new agreement.

So, you may ask, why has such a contentious issue drawn so little media attention? And what does this say about the state of the Canadian news industry?

MEDIA CONVERGENCE

According to Christopher Dornan, “by 2002, with only a handful of exceptions, every major Canadian daily newspaper was the property of a parent owner with interests that extend far beyond publishing.”

Daily newspapers in Canada are owned for the most part by large media conglomerates

that also own broadcasting and/or telecommunications outlets. CanWest, for example, owns dailies and television networks across the country. *The Globe and Mail*, Canada’s largest national daily, is owned by Bell Canada Enterprise, a corporation with both broadcast and telecommunication interests.

Large broadcast and telecommunications corporations in Canada like CanWest have been pushing for the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in order to attract U.S. investors and gain access to U.S. markets. The harmonization of broadcast and telecommunications regulation across North America would help serve this goal.

In fact, both Power Corporation of Canada (owner of *La Presse*) and Bell Canada Enterprise (owner of *The Globe and Mail* and CTV) sit on the North American Competitiveness Council, the business advisory body created at the Cancun leaders’ summit to counsel governments on the Security and Prosperity Partnership.

No wonder it’s so hard for groups like the Council of Canadians to get stories critical of the SPP published in the mainstream press. The Council’s opposition to deep integration directly challenges the big media corporations that are fighting for the deregulation of broadcast and telecommunications policies across the continent.

OVERSTRETCHED NEWSROOMS

But to be fair to the many journalists who are not majority shareholders in companies like CanWest or CTV Globemedia, there are more pragmatic reasons why the SPP does not get the attention it deserves.

The concentration of media has led to the downsizing of newsrooms across Canada.

In a study on how corporate concentration affects the newsroom, James McLean compared the newsgathering capacity of CKCK (CTV) television in Regina, Saskatchewan, in the late 1980s with that of 2004.

One significant change, he noted, was the drop in “enterprise reporting” – research-heavy stories initiated by journalists. According to McLean, the smaller newsroom structure with fewer resources allows for less in-depth investigative reports. The trend observed at the CKCK newsroom is a reflection of a change in newsroom culture across the country.

For an issue like deep integration, where most developments occur at secret meetings behind closed doors, there is very little opportunity for the issues to

Rachel Rosen

AS CANADA PREPARES TO HOST THE NEXT SUMMIT OF NORTH AMERICAN LEADERS, THE CANADIAN MEDIA WILL BE FORCED TO PAY CLOSER ATTENTION TO THE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP.

be summed up in a couple of sound bites. These stories require digging, and digging takes time – and money.

SECURITY CHILL

Still, a newspaper’s editorial slant can’t only be attributed to its owner’s business interests. Reporters and editors are just as affected by world events as anyone else. And since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, it seems that the media’s characterization of activists has changed in concert with the general public’s anxiety about security issues.

Media analyst Robert Hackett explains that the mainstream media’s concern

with objectivity, or presenting both sides of a controversial issue, does not extend to groups that are perceived as “deviant.” If the Council of Canadians received positive coverage during the NAFTA debate, for example, it was because the Council’s opposition to these agreements fit into the media’s notion of “legitimate controversy.”

In its rhetoric, the Security and Prosperity Partnership combines general security concerns with the trade agenda of large corporations. In describing the SPP’s purpose, the Canadian and U.S. governments make a point of reminding citizens of the so-called “terrorist threat.” In post-9/11 North America, it’s difficult to criticize an agreement that begins with the term “security.”

MAKING INROADS

At the Council of Canadians, we have made some major inroads into the

media. In 2006, at least 14 letters written by Council of Canadians staff members or chapter activists were published in newspapers across Canada. In addition, newspapers ran several opinion pieces written by Maude Barlow and other progressive Canadians criticizing the SPP.

As Canada prepares to host the next summit of NAFTA leaders, the Canadian media will be forced to pay closer attention to the Security and Prosperity Partnership. More importantly, the public deserves to know that major policy decisions are being made without their consultation.

Meera Karunanathan is The Council of Canadians’ Media Officer.

THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS’ DEMANDS

There is no good reason why Canadians should be kept in the dark about issues as important as the economic and social future of our country. Corporations certainly shouldn’t be drafting government policy behind closed doors. Most of our elected officials do not understand the extent of deep integration and have not had a chance to vote on the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. Big corporations are currently setting the parameters and timeline for Canada-U.S. integration without our approval. This must not continue, which is

why we demand the following of the Canadian government:

1. Cease all talks leading toward deeper integration between Canada and the United States, including the next Security and Prosperity Partnership summit planned to take place in Canada in 2007.
2. Disband the North American Competitiveness Council. Corporations such as Manulife Financial, Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Lockheed Martin should not be shaping economic policy for Canada and the United States and Mexico.
3. Bring the Security and Prosperity Partnership to the House of Commons for a full debate and vote. The Harper government has promised that “significant international treaties will be submitted for votes in Parliament.”

4. Disclose the complete listing of Security and Prosperity Partnership working groups, their contact persons and participating membership, make public their meeting dates and minutes, and require them to provide opportunities for public input.
5. Consult with Canadians in a meaningful and participatory way on Canada-U.S. relations. The majority of Canadians would prefer a “Sovereignty and Justice Partnership” with the United States, which protects Canada’s energy, water and public health care system, over a corporate-driven security and prosperity agenda.

– From *INTEGRATE THIS! A Citizen’s Guide to Fighting Deep Integration*. Visit www.canadians.org to download the full document.