

Eroding Democratic Freedoms: Building a New “North American Partnership” for the Future

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The globalist controlled Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) have called on the U.S. to work more closely with Canada and Mexico to build a new North American partnership for the future. The pivot to North America would focus on greater trilateral cooperation in areas such as energy, economic competitiveness, border management, law enforcement and continental perimeter security. Throughout the years, the incremental steps towards a North American Union have been used to further chip away at the sovereignty of all three NAFTA countries.

The CFR-sponsored [Independent Task Force on North America](#), co-chaired by retired General David Petraeus and former president of the World Bank Robert Zoellick, recently released their report, [North America: Time for a New Focus](#). The Task Force maintained that, “Now is the moment for the United States to break free from old foreign policy biases to recognize that a stronger, more dynamic, resilient continental base will increase U.S. power globally.” They explained that, “If the three North American countries deepen their integration and cooperation, they have the potential to again shape world affairs for generations to come.” The Task Force also described how, “Recent developments have created opportunities for the North American countries to build on past work and to advance their partnership to a new stage.” The move by Mexico to open up its energy sector to private investment, along with increased oil and natural gas production in Canada and the U.S. are some of the driving forces behind the renewed push for deeper North American integration.

The Task Force report highlighted the need to expand the North American energy relationship. This includes developing a regional energy strategy and strengthening continental energy infrastructure. The approval of Keystone XL pipeline, which would link Canada’s oil sands to U.S. Gulf Coast refineries was also at the top of Task Force to-do list. They acknowledged that, “delays have damaged U.S.-Canada relations and have the potential to slow, at the very least, greater North American energy integration.” As part of efforts to move beyond the dispute, both countries have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation](#) in areas such as research, regulation and trade. In an example of the importance that energy issues could play in the upcoming 2016 election, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, a possible candidate for the Republican presidential nomination gave a speech in September, where he detailed [North America’s Energy Opportunity](#). Not surprisingly, the majority of his policy ideas were in sync with the CFR’s Task Force recommendations.

The 2014 North American Leaders Summit also identified energy as a trilateral priority. In a [joint statement](#), the leaders announced that the energy ministers from all three countries will meet later this year, “to discuss opportunities to promote common strategies on energy

efficiency, infrastructure, innovation, renewable energy, unconventional energy sources, energy trade, and responsible resource development, including the development of relevant technical studies.” To help build on the trilateral energy meetings, the Task Force suggested, “the creation of a North American Energy Council to provide advice to federal policymakers and highlight issues that the three independent legislative branches could address.” The council’s responsibilities would include, “identifying improvements to the safety and security of cross-border energy infrastructure; areas for cooperation on environmental and safety standards; energy-efficient technologies and practices; and barriers to collaboration.” Although it has since been disbanded, the [North American Energy Working Group](#) has already laid some of the groundwork with regards to trilateral energy integration.

In order to further establish an overall continental agenda, the Task Force argued for the restructuring of the U.S. federal government by, “creating new North American offices within the National Security Council staff and U.S. State Department.” This includes, “designating a senior U.S. official as the North American ‘champion’ who will press for consistent policies across agencies and topics.” The Task Force also encouraged, “greater U.S. congressional engagement with the Mexican congress and Canadian parliament.” In addition, they proposed that, “the U.S. government support interactions and possible cooperation among governors, premiers, mayors, legislators, and other officials.” Throughout the report, the Task Force emphasized that, “The goal should be trilateral where possible, bilateral where necessary.” While they praised the progress that separate U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico initiatives have made, they also pointed out that the continued reliance on some of these bilateral efforts has in many ways, “inhibited the development of a broader vision of North America.”

When it comes to North American regulatory issues, they are currently being managed through two separate bilateral bodies, the [U.S.-Mexico High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Council](#)(HLRCC) and the [U.S.-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council](#) (RCC). As part of efforts to foster trilateral regulatory alignment, the Task Force recommended that, “each council identify particular regulatory topics that are candidates for mutual recognition or harmonization. The councils could also explore continental cooperation in creating new regulations. Canadian and Mexican observers should be able to attend the meetings of the other country and the United States.” In August, the U.S. and Canada released the [RCC Joint Forward Plan](#), which builds on the initial 2011 [Joint Action Plan](#). Not only does it deepen cooperation in new areas, but it sets the stage for regulatory departments and agencies in both countries to essentially become permanent bedfellows. The new regulatory plan also noted that, “As part of the 2014 North American Leaders Summit commitments, representatives from the Mexican Government will be invited to observe the government-to-government and stakeholder sessions.” This also applies to Canadian officials being able sit in on the HLRCC meetings. The NAFTA partners are taking steps to promote trilateral regulatory convergence.

As far as border security goes, North America operates within the confines of two bilateral frameworks, the [U.S.-Canada Beyond the Border](#) agreement, as well as the [U.S.-Mexico Twenty-First Century Border Management](#) initiative. The Task Force stressed that, “Bilateral security efforts can often make it easier to solve problems and develop border management models. However, by emphasizing the differences between the U.S.-Canadian and the U.S.-Mexican security relationships, rather than the commonalities, the United States forgoes advantages of a continental approach.” Instead, the Task Force favored, “working toward a

long-term goal of a unified security strategy for North America. This process could begin by expanding bilateral security programs to include Mexico. U.S.-Canadian programs could be incorporated into the U.S.-Mexico Twenty-First Century Border Management initiative.” At the [Third Annual Beyond the Border Executive Steering Committee](#), “An observer from the Mexican Foreign Ministry was present in line with the commitment of the North American Leaders’ Summit to have observers attend the respective meetings of the Mexico-U.S. 21st Century Border Meeting and the BTB Executive Steering Committee.” This is part of efforts to link the two bilateral border arrangements and to see if lessons can be applied from one initiative to the other.

With goal of better protecting North America from outside threats, the Task Force has called on the U.S. to, “shift from border-centric security toward a strategy of combining perimeter protection with security in depth through the use of intelligence, risk assessment, shared capabilities, and joint actions throughout the region.” The report went on to say, “To gain the full benefits of continental integration, the North American partners need to face common threats together. Terrorists, criminal and narcotics organizations, cyberattacks, and disease pose dangers to all three.” Some of these security issues are being addressed through the [Meeting of North American Defense Ministers](#), but the Task Force is pushing for more bilateral security initiatives to be expanded trilaterally. To advance shared continental perimeter security, they proposed that Mexico also be included, “in the [U.S.-Canada Shiprider program](#), which permits joint cross-border law enforcement operations in the maritime environment, and the [Integrated Border Enforcement Teams](#) (IBETs), which are U.S. and Canadian multiagency law enforcement groups that focus on cross-border criminal activity.” Many of the Task Force recommendations would further lay the foundation for a fully integrated North American security perimeter.

In a [letter](#) following the recent attacks in Canada, the co-chairs of the CFR Task Force, David Petraeus and Robert Zoellick offered their sympathy and support. They referred to themselves as North Americans and stated how, “The tragic events in Canada further underscore the importance of the partnership between our three countries.” During his visit to Canada, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry also expressed his condolences and pledged to further strengthen both countries security relationship in the fight against terrorism. At a [joint press conference](#) with Foreign Minister John Baird, Secretary Kerry pointed out that the U.S. and Canada would, “continue to intensify our law enforcement, border security and intelligence sharing.” Now might be the perfect opportunity for both countries to finally unveil the Next Generation pilot project, which was scheduled to be launched back in 2012. The joint policing initiative is a component of the [Beyond the Border Action Plan](#) and would allow teams of cross-designated officers to operate on both sides of the border in areas such as intelligence and criminal investigations. According to an [RCMP memo](#), it has been delayed due to a U.S. request that its agents be exempt from Canadian law, which has raised serious concerns regarding sovereignty and police accountability. The bilateral program is part of the process of further acclimating joint law enforcement operations in North America.

The Conservative government is using the recent attacks in Canada to further erode democratic freedoms. They have introduced new draconian anti-terrorism laws that would expand police surveillance powers. The door has also been opened for even deeper North American integration in the areas of border security, counter-terrorism and law enforcement, which could require further merging security and intelligence sharing practices with the Department of Homeland Security. An increased continental

approach to security could serve to bind North America into a single foreign policy entity.

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