

Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP): Security and prosperity for whom?

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Region: [Canada](#), [USA](#)

Global Research, March 17, 2008

the-peak.ca/ 17 March 2008

In March of 2005, the leaders of Canada (Paul Martin), the U.S. (George W. Bush), and Mexico (Vicente Fox) signed an agreement called the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP). The SPP is about securing prosperity for a rich elite, while taking what remaining power the people have, through democratic sovereign institutions, and placing that power in a few hands of unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats whose strings are pulled by global corporations and banks. However, in discussing the SPP, we must first go back a little further than 2005 to the origins from which it arose.

The same group that on their own website admits to being the predominant force in Canada behind NAFTA, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) — Canada’s most powerful interest group made up of the CEOs of the 150 largest corporations in Canada, many of which are subsidiaries of foreign, predominantly American, corporations — in January of 2003, issued a press release announcing the creation of their North American Security and Prosperity Initiative. In this, they proposed five main changes to be undertaken in the North American political-economic landscape: “Reinvent borders, maximize regulatory efficiencies, negotiate a comprehensive resource security pact, reinvigorate the North American defense alliance, and create a new institutional framework.”

Several months later, in November of the same year, the CCCE issued a short document titled, “Paul Martin urged to take the lead in forging a new vision for North American cooperation.” In this document, they stated that, “all of the CCCE’s 150 member CEOs are involved in this ambitious two-year initiative,” in which Thomas D’Aquino, president and CEO of the CCCE, “urged that Mr. Martin champion the idea of a yearly summit of the leaders of Canada, Mexico, and the United States in order to give common economic, social, and security issues the priority they deserve in a continental, hemispheric, and global context.”

Apparently, Martin was listening, because one of the signatories of this letter was none other than a vice chairman of the CCCE and then-CEO of Canfor Corporation, Canada’s largest softwood lumber producer, David L. Emerson. Emerson would go on to be Martin’s Minister of Industry.

When the CCCE’s two-year initiative ended, it formed a new task force, called the “Independent Task Force on the Future of North America” in conjunction with the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations and the U.S.’s most powerful think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), founded by the Rockefeller and Morgan families in 1921.

This task force released a statement on March 14, 2005 entitled, “Trinational call for a North

American economic and security community by 2010.” In the Trilateral Call, it was recommended that the North America nations create “a community defined by a common external tariff and an outer security perimeter,” and to “harmonize” the areas of energy, security, education, military, immigration, resources, and the economy.

Nine days after this recommendation was issued, Bush, Martin, and Fox signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), and in the joint statement explained it would, “implement common border security and bioprotection [enhanced surveillance] strategies, enhance critical infrastructure protection, implement a common approach to emergency response, implement improvements in aviation and maritime security, combat transnational threats, enhance intelligence partnerships, promote sectoral collaboration in energy, transportation, financial services, technology, and other areas to facilitate business, [and] reduce the costs of trade.” The SPP agreement oversees the creation of SPP “working groups” in each country, which have a mandate of overseeing “harmonization,” or “integration,” in over 300 policy areas.

Two months later, in May of 2005, the Independent Task Force on the Future of North America released a document titled, “Building a North American Community,” of which Canadian Task Force members included D’Aquino, Wendy Dobson, professor at University of Toronto and former president of the C.D. Howe Institute, Allan Gotlieb, (former Canadian Ambassador to the United States as well as being Chairman of the CCCE), and John Manley, former Liberal deputy prime minister.

The report’s recommendations included initiatives to establish “a common security perimeter by 2010, develop a North American Border Pass [North American ID card] with biometric identifiers, expand NORAD into a multi-service defense command,” share intelligence, develop Mexico’s energy resources, “harmonize” areas of energy, education, military, foreign policy, immigration, health, expand “temporary” migrant worker programs, and adopt a common external tariff.

In 2002, based in Montreal, the North American Forum on Integration (NAFI) was formed, which, according to their website, “aims to address the issues raised by North American integration as well as identify new ideas and strategies to reinforce the North American region,” and hold “NAFI organized conferences which brought together government and academic figures as well as business people.” The first conference was held in Montreal in 2003, the second in 2004 in Mexico, of which was stated on the organization’s website: “About 200 participants and conference speakers took part in the conference, [including] former Energy Minister, Mr. Felipe Calderon,” the current President of Mexico.

NAFI later organized a ‘mock’ North American Parliament, called the Triumvirate, which allows 100 Canadian, American, and Mexican university students “to better understand the North American dynamic” — the first of which took place in the Canadian Senate in May of 2005, hosted by the Triumvirate president and former ambassador Raymond Chrétien, the son of Jean Chrétien. Participating Canadian universities included Carleton, McGill, and yes, Simon Fraser University. The board of directors of NAFI includes Stephen Blank, a member of CFR and Robert Pastor, CFR member and co-chair of the Independent Task Force.

In January of 2006, the Council of the Americas and the North American Business Council issued a report titled, “Findings of the Public/Private Sector Dialogue on the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America,” which called for the establishment of a “North

American competitiveness council” to advise governments on the implementation of ‘deep integration.’ The Chairman of the Council of the Americas is former banker David Rockefeller, and top executives from J.P Morgan, Merck & Co., Chevron, McDonald’s, Shell, Citigroup, IBM, Ford, PepsiCo, Microsoft, GE, Pfizer, MetLife, Wal-Mart, Exxon Mobil, Credit Suisse, General Motors, Merrill Lynch, and individuals from the U.S. Department of State.

In March of 2006, a second SPP summit was held, this time with Bush, Fox, and newly elected Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The press release (which can be found at spp.gov, “Report to Leaders August 2006”) announced the formation of the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), which “provides a voice and a formal role for the private sector” whose job is to advise the SPP ministers in their respective governments. Current Canadian SPP ministers are Maxime Bernier (Foreign Affairs), Jim Prentice (Industry) and Stockwell Day (Public Safety, ha!).

The NACC is run out of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and with the Council of the Americas, and is made up of corporate leaders from each of the three countries. In Canada, these corporations include Manulife Financial, Power Corporation of Canada, Ganong Bros. Ltd, Suncor Energy, Canadian National, Linamar Corporation, Bell Canada Enterprises, Home Depot, and the Bank of Nova Scotia. U.S. companies include Campbell Soup, Chevron, Ford, FedEx, GE, GM, Lockheed Martin, Merck, Procter & Gamble, UPS, Wal-Mart, and Whirlpool.

On September 12 to 14, 2006, business and government representatives from the three North American countries met in secret, with no media coverage, at the Banff Springs Hotel and convened the North American Forum. Judicial Watch, a U.S. public watchdog group got declassified government documents through a Freedom of Information Act request and made the documents available on their website. These documents reveal the discussions and membership in the secret meetings. The Canadian co-chair of the meeting was former Alberta premier Peter Lougheed, and Canadian participants included Day, D’Aquino (also a member of the NACC), all NACC corporate representatives, and John Manley. In the released documents, under the forum discussion on “Border Infrastructure and Continental Prosperity,” chaired by John Manley, a startling quote was revealed: “While a vision is appealing, working on the infrastructure might yield more benefit and bring more people on board (‘evolution by stealth’).” What exactly are they evolving by stealth? Oh right, our country.

On the Canadian government’s SPP website, a list of priorities is provided which gives recommendations to be implemented by date, and then tracks their status. Under Aviation Security: “For aviation security purposes, each country has developed, is developing or may develop its own passenger assessment (no-fly) program for use on flights within, to or from that country to ensure that persons who pose a threat to aviation are monitored or denied boarding, within 24 months (June 2007).” On June 18, 2007, Canada instituted our very ‘own’ no-fly list.

On May 8, 2007, The Montreal Gazette reported that “Canada is set to raise its limits on pesticide residues on fruit and vegetables for hundreds of products. The move is part of an effort to harmonize Canadian pesticide rules with those of the United States, which allows higher residue levels for 40 per cent of the pesticides it regulates,” and that “Canadian regulators and their U.S. counterparts have been working to harmonize their pesticide regulations since 1996, as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Now the effort is being fast-tracked as an initiative under the Security and Prosperity Partnership.”

The Vancouver Province reported on January 22, 2008, that “B.C. is about to become the first province to use a high-tech driver’s license. For an extra fee, it will enable drivers to cross the border into the U.S. without a passport and still comply with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security concerns,” and that “the enhanced driver’s license or EDL has a radio-frequency identification chip that will broadcast a number linked to a computer database, allowing a border guard to assess data and flag security issues as drivers approach the booth.” Introduced by Gordon Campbell and Stockwell Day, this is the “biometric” card as recommended under the SPP — essentially, a North American ID card.

There is also much discussion of a common currency for North America, often called the “Amero,” much like the euro for the E.U. The Fraser Institute published a paper entitled, “The case for the Amero.” The C.D. Howe Institute followed that with the publication, “From fixing to monetary union: options for North American currency integration.” In May of 2007, as reported by The Globe and Mail, David Dodge, then-governor of the Bank of Canada, said, “North America could one day embrace a euro-style single currency.” The Globe reported in November of 2007 that Stephen Jarislowsky, board member of C.D. Howe, told a parliamentary committee, “Canada should replace its dollar with a North American currency, or peg it to the U.S. greenback.”

The SPP is not about “security” or “prosperity” (except for the very few over the many), but is rather about forming a North American Union. When Vicente Fox recently appeared on The Daily Show, Jon Stewart asked him about NAFTA, of which Fox stated, “NAFTA’s been good. As a matter of fact we should have a new vision, go further, integrating,” and Fox went on to discuss the “solidarity” of the European Union. When asked if he wanted a North American Union, and if it would include Canada, Fox said, “Long term, yes.” On May 16, 2002 Fox spoke at Club 21 in Madrid, and stated, “Eventually, our long-range objective is to establish with the United States, but also with Canada, our other regional partner, an ensemble of connections and institutions similar to those created by the European Union.”

Mussolini has been attributed as once saying, “Fascism should more properly be called corporatism because it is the merger of state and corporate power.” Gandhi once said, “A democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or party but only of democracy.” So are those behind the SPP listening to, Gandhi or Mussolini?

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