

# The End of Canada as a Sovereign Nation State? Canada, the US and the “Security Perimeter”

By [James Corbett](#)

Global Research, December 17, 2011

17 December 2011

Region: [Canada, USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)



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- by James Corbett, Paul Hellyer - 2011-12-17

When Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and US President Barack Obama announced the much-anticipated border agreement between the two countries at a press conference in Washington last week, those mainstream media outlets that bothered to cover the story at all compensated for the lack of details about what specifically is going to be accomplished by this accord by focusing on issues of no practical significance.

The Globe and Mail, for example, ran an entire article about how Harper and Obama’s personal “friendship” allegedly effected the deal, which was in reality and admittedly struck by bureaucrats in months of closed-door negotiations.

A variety of trade magazines and corporate websites released vague laudatory statements about the “streamlining” of the border.

But the story itself, which generated few headlines at all in the American media, was not about what specifically will change at the border so much as the border is increasingly being redefined as just one part of a broader security perimeter that in fact encompasses both the US and Canada.

The agreement in fact comprises two so-called “action plans,” one entitled Beyond The Border and the other the Regulatory Cooperation Council. The former plan focuses on border security with the explicit aim of creating a security perimeter that encompasses both countries. The latter is meant to harmonize regulations for business, facilitating cross-border trade.

The security agreement uses the threat of terrorism, crime and health securities to announce an increasing merger of the two countries’ border security, including an integrated entry-exit system that will involve full sharing of individuals’ biometric details between the two governments by 2014 and even the creation of integrated cross-border law enforcement teams with authority to collect intelligence and conduct criminal investigations on either side of the border.

The regulatory plan, meanwhile, aims to standardize agricultural regulations on such items as maximum pesticide residue limits as well as develop standards and regulations for

potential future products and industries like nanotechnology.

Although the plans detail certain steps that can be or are being taken, the majority of the information is about agreed-upon shared values and the possibility of cooperation.

In light of the relative paucity of detail about these “action plans,” media outlets chose to illustrate the general points of the agreement with seemingly random examples, such as this one about breakfast cereals.

Keen-eyed observers of this trivial example of the effects might have noted a striking similarity to the way that Prime Minister Harper tried to deflect criticism of the Security and Prosperity Partnership agreement that sought to merge the governments, security forces and regulatory framework of the US, Mexico and Canada, back in 2007 by talking about jellybean regulations.

On one level, reducing these agreements to regulations on cereals and jelly beans marginalizes the legitimate criticism and fears about the erosion of national sovereignty implicit in these talks. It also serves to keep the public disinterested in the issues by painting them as dry and unimportant talks about bureaucratic affairs.

What this similarity in rhetoric unwittingly reveals, however, is how this latest agreement is in fact nothing new, and can only be properly understood as the latest point in a continuing process of merging the bureaucratic, regulatory and military functions of Canada and the US that has in fact been taking place for a decade.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the two countries began work on reshaping the nature of the world’s longest undefended border. This resulted in the Canada-US Smart Border Declaration, an agreement signed in December 2001 that contained much of the same rhetoric as the recent agreement, including vows to coordinate security and law enforcement efforts in the name of facilitating the flow of people and goods between Canada and the States.

This led into the Security and Prosperity Partnership, a trilateral framework between the governments of the US, Canada and Mexico that began a process of regulatory integration. Formally launched in 2005, the SPP quickly caught the attention of the public on both sides of the border, and as freedom of information requests shed more light on the process, including the almost total domination of the partnership in closed-door meetings by big business, the SPP’s annual summit quickly became a flashpoint for political activism.

In the light of public scrutiny, the SPP was shelved in 2009, but many of its initiatives and recommendations continue on behind the scenes. SPP documents, for example, show how Canada’s controversial no-fly list was in fact part of a trilateral agreement, with the 2006 report to leaders in fact mandating the program’s June 2007 launch date.

Meanwhile, the military merger of Canada and the US has proceeded in its own series of mutual agreements, beginning with the creation of NORTHCOM, the United States Northern Command, in 2002, which charged the US military with the protection of the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Mexico and Canada.

In February of 2008, the Canadian and American militaries signed an agreement allowing troops of either country to cross the border and carry out operations in the other country in

the event of an emergency, such as civil unrest.

In 2010, the two countries signed the shiprider agreement, allowing the operation of specially designated vessels to patrol the shared waterways of the two countries by joint crew, consisting of both Canadian and American law enforcement. This agreement is cited in the new border proposal as an example of how cross-border policing can be implemented.

Now, with increasing “cooperation” between cross-border law enforcement, Canadians will be expected to allow American officials to pursue their investigations of suspected criminals on Canadian soil. And the process of harmonization means that Canada may even be expected to allow the use of drone surveillance, an idea presently being used by the US to patrol the Canadian border and even to pursue criminal investigations of American citizens far away from the border.

Although there are many individual aspects of this latest accord that are worrying, from the militarization of the border to the harmonization of regulatory frameworks to allow for the lowest common denominator in food standards and other areas, to the increasing sharing of information about citizens between the two countries, perhaps the most worrying aspect is the project itself. As many have warned, these seemingly bland border proposals, a story so dull that it has barely been covered at all by the American press, may in fact be used to slip in a North American Union through the gradual merging of the two countries’ bureaucratic systems.

The most insidious part of this process is that it is not subject to legislative oversight of any kind, and is taking place in behind-the-scenes discussions between high-level bureaucrats outside of the glare of public scrutiny, a point that is readily conceded by the proposals’ proponents.

Last week I had the chance to talk to Paul Hellyer, the former deputy Prime Minister of Canada, about this agreement, and whether the border security threat that the US is using to justify the process is in fact a ploy to obscure an underlying agenda, the drive to merge Canada and US in a de facto union.

Regardless of whether this particular agreement bears fruit for those seeking to bring the two countries into a closer union, or whether it is just another waypoint on the road of a much longer and more detailed process, the very real concerns about the erosion of national sovereignty implicit in this deal is one that those in power are eager to see avoided. So far, they are being aided in that quest by a media that chooses to avoid the hard questions about this series of agreements to the extent that they cover them at all.

As always, the power belongs in the hands of the people. Without significant pushback from the public, however, the momentum of these border agreements might be enough to make the North American Union an inevitability. Alternatively, the public can fight back by making this into a key political issue and informing others of the potential threat to the survival of both the US and Canada as sovereign nations.

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James Corbett is a Film Director and Producer based in Okayama, Japan. He started The Corbett Report ([www.corbettreport.com](http://www.corbettreport.com)) website in 2007 as an outlet for independent critical analysis of politics, society, history, and economics. It operates on the principle of open source intelligence and provides podcasts, interviews, articles and videos about breaking news and important issues from 9/11 Truth and false flag terror to the Big Brother police state, eugenics, geopolitics, the central banking fraud and more.

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