

The Integration of Canada into a U.S. Dominated North American Security Perimeter

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In the light of the attack in Ottawa on October 22, 2014, we republish this article from June 18, 2013. After the attack, US President Barack Obama [said](#) "it was important for Canada and the United States to be in sync when it came to dealing with terrorist activity."

Canada's prime minister recently addressed the CFR, a globalist think tank who have been a driving force behind the push towards deeper North American integration. The U.S. and Canada are now further advancing this agenda through the Beyond the Border agreement. Both countries are increasing bilateral border transportation and infrastructure coordination. This includes a common approach to border management, security and control. They are also integrating an information sharing system that would be used to track everyone crossing the U.S.-Canada border and entering or leaving the continent. Without much fanfare and seemingly little resistance, Canada is being assimilated into a U.S. dominated North American security perimeter.

In May, the Conservative government [highlighted](#) the benefits of the U.S.-Canada [Beyond the Border](#) action plan which was announced back in 2011. The deal, "focuses on addressing security threats at the earliest point possible and facilitating the lawful movement of people, goods, and services into Canada and the United States, and creates a long-term partnership to improve the management of our shared border." The goal is to further increase, "security, economic competitiveness and prosperity through numerous measures, including reducing border wait times and improving infrastructure at key crossings to speed up legitimate trade and travel." The [Beyond the Border Executive Steering Committee](#) recently met to discuss the objectives that have already been achieved and the work that still needs to be done. Another important facet of the economic and security perimeter agreement is the [Regulatory Cooperation Council](#) action plan. A [stakeholder dialogue session](#) is planned for June 20, which will review its implementation progress and will seek further input regarding the next stage of U.S.-Canada regulatory integration.

Last month, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released a joint report on the findings of [Phase I of the Entry/Exit Information System](#). The program included collecting and exchanging biographic information at four selected land border ports of entry. In a [news release](#), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Acting Commissioner Thomas Winkowski stated that, "The results of Phase I demonstrate the capacity of the United States and Canada to increase information sharing capabilities." He added, "This kind of cooperation epitomizes the Beyond the Border Action Plan." The next phase of the entry/exit initiative is set to begin at the end of this month. It will involve exchanging the biographic data collected from third-country nationals and permanent residents of Canada and the U. S. at all common ports of entry. Both countries

are further merging databases and are expanding surveillance and intelligence gathering operations. In 2014, they will also start sharing biometric information at the border. This will further advance the creation of a North America security perimeter where all travellers will be tracked and traced in real time.

As part of the commitment made under the Beyond the Border deal, both countries have announced the [Border Infrastructure Investment Plan](#) which was, “developed to establish a mutual understanding of recent, ongoing and potential border infrastructure investments. It outlines the approach that Canada and the United States will take to coordinate plans for physical infrastructure upgrades.” In June 2012, Canada reached an [agreement](#) with the State of Michigan to build a second bridge between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. This was followed by a presidential permit issued in April of this year that officially paved the way for construction of the project. A U.S. State Department [press release](#) explained that, “Consistent with the bilateral Beyond the Border Initiative, this permit contributes to ensuring that our border infrastructure supports increased competitiveness, job creation, and broad-based prosperity in the United States and Canada.” It went on to say that the new bridge, “will help to meet future capacity requirements in a critical travel corridor, promote cross-border trade and commerce, and advance our vital bilateral relationship with Canada.”

In March, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano and Canada’s Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews signed a memorandum of understanding which established a [truck cargo pre-inspection pilot project](#). The joint undertaking is another component of the Beyond the Border agreement and would shift inspections and clearances away from the actual border crossing. The first phase, “will test the concept of conducting U.S. CBP primary cargo inspection in Canada, and will be implemented at the Pacific Highway crossing between Surrey, British Columbia and Blaine, Washington.” The second phase, “will further test how pre-inspection could enhance border efficiency and reduce wait times to facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and will be implemented at the Peace Bridge crossing between Fort Erie, Ontario and Buffalo, New York.” The perimeter security deal is laying the foundation for a future U.S.-Canada binational organization that would jointly manage and control the border.

The CBSA is also testing additional technology at the [Morses Line, Quebec](#) and [Piney, Manitoba](#) ports of entry. Under the remote traveller pilot project, people entering either location after regular hours of service, “will be processed by a border services officer located at a remote processing centre through a two-way audio and one-way video kiosk. Cameras will be installed to provide the officer with the ability to see the traveller and the vehicle.” The program which could later be expanded to other areas, “is part of the [Small and Remote Ports of Entry Initiative](#), one of the deliverables under the Beyond the Border Action Plan.” [NAUNEWZ](#) pointed out that, “Although a lot of this technology is already installed and being utilized in limited ways at most of the main Canada-U.S. border crossing points, these smaller border crossings are ideal testing grounds for their ‘no borders’/NAU agenda.”

On May 16, Canadian [Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated](#) in question and answer session before the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The conversation centered around economic growth, foreign investment and the role of the G20 with regards to global governance. Other issues focused on Canada-U.S. relations. Harper lobbied for approval of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline which would carry oil from western Canada to the Texas gulf coast. He dismissed environmental issues associated with the project and argued that it would be a step towards North American energy independence. The Obama

administration is expected to make a final decision on the pipeline sometime this year. Harper also acknowledged the Beyond the Border and the Regulatory Cooperation Council action plans. He blamed sovereignty concerns and the continued negativity surrounding NAFTA as the main obstacles to even deeper continental integration. Prime Minister Harper used his audition in front of the CFR as an opportunity to demonstrate to the U.S. political and corporate elite that he is committed to defending the interests of big business and further pushing plans for a North American Union (NAU).

The Beyond the Border action plan is the most significant step forward in U.S.-Canada cooperation since NAFTA. It provides the framework for future North American integration. When fully implemented, the agreement can be expanded and updated. So far, the agenda has quietly slipped under the radar. By incrementally incorporating various pilot projects and excluding Mexico from the process, it has managed to avoid the controversy of past initiatives. The perimeter security deal is being sold as vital to improving the flow of trade and travel across the border. In order to appease U.S. fears, Canada has made numerous concessions with no guarantees that it will lessen border restrictions. As part of a North American security perimeter, Canada will always be at the mercy of any new U.S. security measures, regardless of the dangers they may pose to privacy and civil liberties.

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