

The Plan to Disappear Canada

'Deep integration' comes out of shadows

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If the machinations going on in this country regarding so-called “deep integration” were instead a communist conspiracy to take over the country (you will, of course, have to try hard to imagine this) the news media would be blaring the story.

Pundits would pontificate, editorialists would erupt, security forces would be unleashed.

Instead, a virtual conspiracy to make the country disappear through assimilation into the U.S. gets barely a mention.

But news of the scheme — formally called the [Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America \(SPP\)](#) — is finally breaking out of the secret chambers of the ruling elite and the federal government. This is both good news and bad. It’s good that ordinary citizens are finally getting a glimpse of the betrayal of their country. The news is bad because it reflects just how much of this scheme is already being implemented.

Given the meetings of CEOs and politicians to advance the scheme politically, as well as all that must go into its actual implementation, there is simply too much activity to keep secret.

Ten dots to connect

Here are 10 developments in the plan to disappear Canada.

1) Pesticides ‘harmonized.’ The most thoroughly reported story (though even this did not go much beyond the CanWest chain) was the revelation that Canada was about to “[harmonize](#)” its regulations, setting limits for pesticide residue on fruits and vegetables. In 40 per cent of the cases, the U.S. allows for higher levels. Richard Aucoin, chief registrar of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which sets Canada’s pesticide levels, said that Canada’s higher levels were a “trade irritant.”

The downgrading of health protection had been a NAFTA initiative, but is being “fast-tracked” as part of the Security and Prosperity Partnership. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Some 300 regulatory regimes are currently going through the same process.

2) Tory tirade. The next story that broke through the wall of media silence reported on the paranoid reaction of the Harper Conservatives to any criticism of the SPP. The occasion was hearings of the Commons International Trade Committee into the SPP, forced by the NDP.

Gordon Laxer, head of Alberta’s Parkland Institute, was testifying on the energy implications of the SPP, warning that eastern Canada could end up “freezing in the dark.” He had barely started when the chair of the committee, Conservative MP Leon Benoit, demanded that

Laxer halt his “irrelevant” testimony. The Committee members overruled Benoit — who promptly (and illegally) adjourned the meeting and stomped out. The NDP and Liberal members nonetheless continued without him.

3) Council of corporate power. The SPP initiative began in earnest back in 2002 with the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (formerly the BCNI), the most powerful corporate body in the country. It continues its leadership role, but does not promote the scheme just in its own name. It instead has helped create several supportive bodies that now help drive the agenda. Included in these are the [North American Competitive Council \(NACC\)](#), which includes CEOs of the largest North American corporations, and which institutionalizes the exclusively corporate nature of the agreement. The NACC is the only advisory group to the three NAFTA/SPP governments.

4) Secretive summit. The NACC at least is public. But much of what happens in building the elite consensus for deep integration is done in absolute secrecy or very privately, away from the prying eyes of the media. The most secretive of these was held last year from Sept. 12 to 14, in Banff Springs. As [The Tyee reported](#), the gathering was sponsored by something called the North American Forum* and it was attended by some of the most powerful members of the North American ruling elite.

Attendees, according to a leaked list that could not be confirmed, included Donald Rumsfeld, George Schultz (former U.S. Secretary of State), General Rick Hillier, Defence Minister Gordon O’Connor and Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day. The media was not informed of the meeting and it was first revealed by the weekly Banff Crag & Canyon.

Stockwell Day refused to even confirm he was there, but said that even if he was, it was a “private” meeting that he would not comment on. There is no better indication that these meetings, and the SPP itself, constitute a parallel governing structure — unaccountable to any democratic institution or the public.

5) ‘No fly’ coordination. Canada will have its own “no-fly” list just like our U.S. “partner.”

As the Council of Canadians pointed out: “The no-fly list is very much a Security and Prosperity Partnership initiative. ‘The SPP Report to Leaders, August 2006’ outlines [105 SPP initiatives](#). Initiative #93 states, ‘Develop, test, evaluate and implement a plan to establish comparable aviation passenger screening, and the screening of baggage and air cargo (for North America).’”

Canada’s privacy commissioner Jennifer Stoddart has raised a number of concerns about the plan including the fact that the list will be shared with the U.S., that “false positives” are a virtual certainty, and that there is no evidence put forward by the government that the list will improve airline security.

6) Bye, bye Canadian dollar? David Dodge, the head of the Bank of Canada, told a Chicago audience that a single currency for North America “is possible.” That would see a big chunk of Canadian sovereignty and the ability to guide the economy through monetary policy go out the window. It’s not the first time Dodge has mused about abandoning the Canadian dollar - or [deep integration](#).

7) Water and oil giveaways. The deep integrationists clearly see Canadian water as a North American resource, not a Canadian resource. At yet another very private meeting,

held in Calgary on April 27th under the auspices of yet another forum, it was made clear that water is on the table for [negotiation](#).

Discussion of bulk “water transfers” and diversions took place at a Calgary meeting of the North American Future 2025 Project (partly funded by the U.S. government). The meeting based its deliberations on the false notion that Canada has 20 per cent of the world’s fresh water. Actual available supply amounts to only around six per cent — about the same as has the U.S.

The water (and environment) meeting was preceded by another on April 26th talking about “North American” energy. The beneficiary of these discussions is pretty clear when you realize Canada has no national energy policy. We are the only energy exporting country in the world without a one.

Gordon Laxer told the Parliamentary committee: “The National Energy Board wrote me on April 12: ‘Unfortunately, the NEB has not undertaken any studies on security of supply.’” He was also told by the NEB that Canada does not maintain a 90 day energy reserve as other developed nations do. As Laxer points out, “Canada may be a net exporter, but it still imports 40 per cent of its oil — 850,000 barrels per day — to meet 90 per cent of Atlantic Canada’s and Quebec’s needs, and 40 per cent of Ontario’s.”

Canada exports 63 per cent of its oil production and 56 per cent of its natural gas, percentages that can [never decrease under NAFTA](#).

8) NAFTA Superhighway. State governments in the U.S. are becoming increasingly alarmed at the prospects of deep integration. Earlier this year, Idaho became the first state to pass a legislative resolution directing the U.S. Congress to drop out of the SPP, which is referred to as the North American Union amongst [U.S. opponents](#). Thirteen states in addition to Idaho are calling on Congress to abandon the SPP: Georgia, Arizona, Missouri, Illinois, Oregon, Montana, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington and Virginia.

Part of the opposition is focused on plans for a so-called NAFTA Superhighway: actually a corridor several hundred metres wide including rail lines, freeways and pipelines from Mexico to the Canadian border. There is a growing grass roots movement against the SPP in the U.S., but led by the right over the issue of compromising American sovereignty.

9) Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). While U.S. states, concerned about state rights under an unaccountable “North American Union,” are organizing against the scheme, Canadian provinces are either blithely unaware or knowingly complicit in the deal. More Canadians may be aware of TILMA — the investors’ rights agreement between B.C. and Alberta — than they are about the SPP, but in reality they are one and the same.

TILMA is major piece of the deep integration, deregulation imperative and fits hand in glove with the SPP. There is a similar, though more informal, process evolving in the Atlantic provinces, called “Atlantica.” And B.C. is now pushing the so-called Gateway Initiative, a kind of regional superhighway project that will see huge and environmentally disastrous expansion of ports, highways and pipelines to further supply the U.S.’s insatiable demand for resources and cheap Asian goods.

10) The next SPP summit. The third leaders summit on the SPP will take place this August 21-22nd in Montebello, Quebec, not far from Ottawa. By the time it does many more Canadian will be aware of it.

Part of the reason that news of the SPP/deep integration issue is finally seeing the light of day is that opposition is growing and groups fighting the SPP are having an impact. The Council of Canadians, the CLC and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives held an SPP teach-in in Ottawa last month and many civil society groups are now taking deep integration to their members. Demonstrations are planned for the summit. The NDP continues to press the government on SPP secrecy and the Green Party's Elizabeth May has said deep integration will be a focus of the party's election platform.

It is hard to think of any other issue in modern Canadian history, especially one that will literally determine whether the country survives or not, that has taken so long to get public attention. I first wrote about it September, 2002.

By the time the SPP summit has come and gone and the fall political season begins, deep integration, the most treacherous plan for the country yet devised by Bay Street, will be increasingly exposed.

And by the next election, we could see a repeat of the great "free trade" election of 1988. This time we have to win.

**Correction note: At 12:20 p.m. on June 4, we corrected [the name of the forum](#).*

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