

Will Canada Last? Not if we surrender our energy lifeblood to the US.

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✘ Harper: the big sellout?

What will it take persuade Canadians that if they do not act soon to reverse the course of their nation, there will be nothing left to save? I am talking, of course, about so-called “deep integration” and its official expression, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP).

The SPP, moving inexorably on many fronts, is nothing less than a blueprint for the gradual dismantling of one of the most successful nations of the twentieth century, and its piecemeal distribution to the decaying empire to the south. Yet there seems to be, even amongst those who have heard of it and believe it is a threat, a surreal acceptance of it. It’s like a meteor hurtling towards us: there’s nothing we can do so we might as well go shopping while we can.

What this country needs is a little outrage — stirred by something from the package of outrages, treasonous policies and breathtaking giveaways of our country that make up the plan to append Canada to the U.S. What will it be? The militarization of the country and an industrial policy of selling arms to the world? A foreign policy determined almost exclusively by the interests of big business, from peddling asbestos, to opposing bio-diversity, to forcing Europeans to accept GMO food? The mimicking of a paranoid United States and the adoption of its crusade against the Muslim world?

Each worthy of a good dollop of outrage. But some believe that unless you get to people where it actually has an impact on their daily lives, sustained outrage of the kind that influences elections, is too much to expect. I have never been convinced by this theory but accepting it for the sake of argument, perhaps the sell-out of our energy to the U.S. under NAFTA’s energy provisions would fill the bill.

Betrayed from above

No other policy, either standing alone or as part of a larger scheme, demonstrates the extent to which the economic and political elite of this country has betrayed us. Even in the age of corporate globalization in which the transnational corporation has become the dominant institution of our time, there is simply no other example of such duplicitous behaviour on the part of a national leadership. No other country in the world has or would consider voluntarily signing a treaty that guaranteed the other party an ever-increasing proportion of its energy resource.

The perverse beauty of what is tediously called the “proportionality clause” of NAFTA is that it’s virtually guaranteed to get worse. It would have been bad enough if we had agreed to sell half of our energy production to the U.S. But the NAFTA deal says we cannot ever decrease the actual proportion of gas and oil we sell to the U.S. So, each time the proportion of our oil and gas exports to the U.S. increases (virtually every year), we are presented with the new floor. And we no longer even maintain a strategic reserve — a 20-year supply that is ensured before any oil is exported.



There is no limit to this madness. Right now we export two thirds of our oil and 60 per cent of our gas to the U.S. Under NAFTA this means we can never reduce that proportion, even if our actual production dropped by half and we began freezing in the dark. In NAFTA there is no ceiling on what we can sell, just a floor. And each year that passes, the floor looks more like a ceiling. What makes it even worse, of course, is the new determination of the US to secure dependable supplies of oil and gas — and that means Canadian supplies.

Harper’s radicals

While the U.S. is preoccupied with its national interest and a secure energy supply, the federal government under both the Liberals and the Radicals (Harper’s party is anything but conservative) trades our natural energy security for America’s insecurity. We now import 49 percent of the oil we use, almost half of it from the same insecure sources from which the U.S. is trying to wean itself. Almost all of Eastern Canada is dependent on foreign oil.

The catastrophe of global climate change is upon us. Even if we started to seriously address it tomorrow it would take a generation to even begin to create a post-carbon economy. With secure supplies of oil and gas and careful government regulation of how quickly they are depleted, and who gets to purchase them, Canada’s future as an environmentally and economically sustainable country would be virtually guaranteed. But our Quisling elites, for all the talk of being an energy super power and the need to be internationally competitive, has been eagerly selling off our energy heritage for twenty years while the rest of us whistle in the dark.

Time is running out

A recent study by the Parkland Institute of Alberta and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) examined the NAFTA proportionality provisions to see if there was any policy flexibility at all in this bizarre agreement. The conclusion of “Over a Barrel: Exiting from NAFTA’s Proportionality Clause” is a resounding No.

The study looked at three policy areas that are increasingly critical to Canada’s future: conservation and the environment, using natural gas increasingly for value-added industries and substituting Canadian oil for the foreign oil we now import. The co-authors, Gord Laxer and John Dillon, conclude that we can do none of these things without violating NAFTA and triggering American use of the proportionality clause. The only possible solution involves either the abrogation of NAFTA or the renegotiation of the energy provisions, with the aim of taking back control.

This stunning situation begs the question: At what point does a nation cease to be viable? While there is a legitimate debate about the role energy security plays in the answer, there is no debate about the role of the economic and political elite. In a market economy, once

that elite has abandoned its commitment to the nation, it is just a matter of time. And time, like our oil and gas, is running out.

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