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To Conquer a Continent: Canada and the Re-Configuration of North America

by Carl Teichrib

Note: Although this report takes a decidedly Canadian stance, the lessons learned and the information presented fits within every country involved in regional economic, political, and military amalgamation. Also note the role of major policy groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Trilateral Commission.

"The acquisition of Canada this year…will be a mere matter of marching…"[1]
– Thomas Jefferson

Disbelief was the first emotion. Not because I didn't comprehend the message, but because of the brazen nature of the broadcast. After the evening news was over, I immediately placed phone calls to friends in the United States. Was it on *your* evening news? Did you see it?

The response was the same regardless of which state I called. No, there's nothing about this story here. Are you sure it exists?

While America appeared to have a news blackout in early 2005, flashed coast-to-coast across Canada was a report of monumental significance: a story that will impact every citizen of Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

The piece that caught my breath was the proclamation of an unveiling. The New York-based Council on Foreign Relations would be releasing a study on integrating the continent, a move that would take us well beyond NAFTA. For the observant, it was clear that all three nations would have to re-configure their priorities.

Released in early 2005, the CFR document titled *Building A North American Community* would eventually trigger a ground swell of criticism in the United States.[2] Over the next two years, a variety of watchdog and citizen organizations would voice concerns that continental harmonization would be an affront to national sovereignty, with a dozen or so states introducing bills of opposition. Adding fuel to this fire was the realization that other integration programs have been underway with little public knowledge or debate.

Articles to Watch for in Upcoming Issues of *Forcing Change*

► Utopian Politics: International Socialism and the Rise of Global Governance

► Fundamental Fears: Biblical Christianity as a Factor in Global Instability

► Toward a Single International Currency

► Education for the Future: UNESCO and Seven Complex Lessons

One such initiative, which coincided with the emergence of the CFR report, is the Security and Prosperity Partnership.[3] Known by its acronym as SPP, this federally generated tri-national pact surfaced during the March 2005 meeting between the leaders of the three NAFTA nations: Vicente Fox, George Bush, and Paul Martin.

Meant to tighten economic and security ties, SPP pushes the removal of barriers to energy and resource flows, and welcomes the creation of institutions to facilitate North American integration. Furthermore, SPP consultation meetings and its spin-off body, the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), are comprised of major representatives from federal agencies and key multinational corporate players. It's a merger of sorts, not just amongst nations, but also between federal authorities and multinational corporations – all bonding to achieve the quest of regional harmonization.

Recently, the *Corbett Report* obtained a Canadian government SPP document via the *Canadian Access to Information Act*.[4] It's an interesting item on a couple of counts: First, it's heavily blacked-out, even though the document is only two pages long and appears on the surface to be not much more than a brief overview of the February 2007, SPP meeting in Ottawa. Ironically, the document states that better communication of the SPP program was needed beyond "the officials and the business groups directly involved" and that the process was "largely unknown or misunderstood."

Secondly, the paper is suggestive regarding the role of business leaders in influencing policies through the North American Competitiveness Council, including the frustration that NACC players were feeling in not seeing the agenda move faster. According to the redacted document,

> "Exchanges following a formal presentation of the [NACC's] report uncovered frustration relating to the private sector's seeming inability to influence the pace of regulatory change 'from the bottom up.' Some NACC representatives felt that direct signals from ministers were required if work was to advance at a pace rapid enough to address challenges from more dynamic international competitors – particularly China. The subtext was clear: in the absence of ministerial endorsement, bureaucracies are unlikely to act on the more challenging recommendations. **[section blacked out]**
>
> The complex and far-reaching nature of the recommendations suggest that govern-

> ments will need ample time to review and consult internally – and trilaterally – but it seems clear that the NACC will be looking for an early commitment to moving forward quickly.”

After analyzing this statement, James Corbett of the Corbett Report writes, “This shockingly candid passage makes it clear that the business interests are actually in charge of the process, giving the politicians marching orders and demanding that these orders are followed, and followed quickly.”

The Council of the Americas, a think-tank that acts as the American co-Secretariat to the NACC (the other US Secretariat is the US Chamber of Commerce), gives us a handle on the role of corporate involvement in SPP planning.

> “Charged with providing recommendations on issues concerning North American competitiveness that can be addressed through the SPP trilaterally or bilaterally, the NACC would address issues of immediate importance and provide high-level, strategic, medium to long term advice.
>
> While the NACC was expected to develop recommendations focused primarily on issues to be addressed by governments, the NACC was also challenged to provide suggestions on how the private sector might itself be able to assist in promoting North America’s competitiveness as part of the solution.
>
> The NACC will meet annually with Ministers responsible for both Security and Prosperity and several times per year with senior government officials. The NACC will make recommendations to Leaders annually.”[5]

So which corporations are developing policy for the SPP process? There are over 200 companies and other entities that make up the NACC Advisory Committee. However, the national Executive Committees have a much smaller membership, and are composed of the following players,[6]

<u>United States of America:</u>

- Wal-Mart
- Chevron
- FedEx
- General Electric
- General Motors
- Lockheed Martin Corporation
- UPS
- Proctor and Gamble
- New York Life Insurance Company.
- Campbell Soup Company
- Ford Motor Company
- Kansas City Southern
- Merck & Company
- Mittal Steel
- Whirlpool Corporation.

<u>Canada:</u>

- Manulife Financial
- Power Corporation
- Suncor Energy
- Ganogn Bros. Limited
- Canadian National Railway (Bill Gates is the largest shareholder)

- Linamar
- Bell Canada Enterprises
- Canfor Corporation
- The Home Depot Canada
- The Bank of Nova Scotia

Mexico:

- Consejo Coordinador Empresarial
- Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios
- Confederación de Cámaras Industriales
- Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior
- Consejo Nacional Agropecuario
- Centro de Estudios Económicos del Sector Privado (the representative of CEESP is also Chairman of the Mexican side of Kimberly-Clark)
- Tubos de Acero de México
- Avicar de Occidente
- Finca Montegrande

This is an incredible marriage between major corporate interests and national governments, amounting to a "corpocracy" system of governance. But its only one part of the SPP arrangement.

Marching Orders for Hemispheric Security

On the other side of the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the "security" side, the issue appears to be primarily focused on border concerns – including biometrics and enhanced passports, ideas that have been floating for a number of years already.[7] However, there has been some deeper thinking.

Over the last five years, the US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) has published reports and papers examining hemispheric and North American integration options,[8] calling for "a comprehensive North American process."[9]

Explaining the interlocking nature of this "new paradigm…multinational whole-of-government and whole-of-alliance/coalition approach," one SSI contributor wrote,

> "The continuing challenge for Canada, the United States, and the other parts of the hemispheric and global communities, then, is to exploit the fact that contemporary security – at whatever level – is, at base, a holistic political-diplomatic, socio-economic, psychological-moral, and military-police effort."[10]

This "exploited" interaction certainly fits within the economic side of regional unification. One SSI document, *Building Regional Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere*, puts this linkage into perspective.

> "The United States shares with its hemispheric neighbors an increasingly and vitally important financial, commercial, and security/stability stake in the political and economic growth of the region. Any kind of political-economic-social-security deterioration in the area will profoundly degrade the health of the U.S. economy – and therefore, the concomitant power to act in the global security arena. The continuing U.S. responsibility to the region goes beyond the narrow purview of unilateral military training and equipping to broader multilateral strategy and leader development."[11]

The same report also gives a number of "advanced recommendations" in engaging operations in the Western Hemisphere, two of which were particularly noteworthy. Remember, these are *recommended* areas of activity, not necessarily for US policy makers (although they would have to come on board) or for foreign nationals in their respected countries, but for the US military's own involvement in developing regional security.

• "Help hemispheric governments to identify and correct key strategic political, economic, and social shortcomings."[12]

- "Help hemispheric governments to identify and implement appropriate military-police-civil actions that will lead to reestablishing central government control of the 'lawless' areas of a given country."[13]

Two implications become obvious: First, it's suggested that the US military meddle with foreign governments in order to secure its version of stability and good governance within the region. And secondly, the US military should involve itself in foreign national tensions, assisting the target government in controlling territorial opposition and unrest. Unfortunately, the US has a long and sordid history of doing just that within Latin America, primarily during the Cold War, leaving behind an unfavorable legacy of instability and brutal regimes in its wake.[14]

Other ideas for regional security from the SSI are found in its August 2002 document, *A 21st Century Security Architecture for the Americas*, which suggested the creation of a First Special Service Forces (FSSF) program – a security arrangement directly tied into the coming Free Trade Area of the Americas.[15]

Taking cues from World War II, when Canada and the US had a joint special operations group known as the First Special Service Force "Black Devils," the new FSSF would breakdown into two groups; FSSF(N), for "North" (Canada, the US, and Mexico), and FSSF(S), which would incorporate Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. These international units would then fall under the command of the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations regional agency for the Western Hemisphere, which has historically worked for integrating the Americas.[16] FSSF(N), on the other hand, would be lead by and operationally situated under the US military's Northern Command,[17] which at the time of this SSI report being released was nonexistent.

Building on the FSSF concept, the document noted that these new groups would have a dual set of responsibilities. The primary role would be to "serve on missions within the Western Hemisphere," while the secondary role would be to serve under the OAS/United Nations in peacekeeping missions.[18]

Scarcely two months after this SSI report was published, the US Department of Defense officially launched its new Northern Command (NorthCom), which was announced by Donald Rumsfeld in April 2002.[19]

The task for NorthCom is to provide "command and control of…homeland dense efforts and to coordinate defense support of civil authorities." More specifically to, "conduct operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories and interests within the assigned area of responsibility."[20] This area of responsibility "encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles."[21]

One news report stated, "For the first time, tanks, troops, planes and ships will report to a single headquarters to defend both the United States and the North American continent."[22] Another writer, a member of Canada's Royal Military College, observed that, "Although NorthCom is a uniquely American command, its presence will inescapably influence those foreign states included in its area of geographic responsibility."[23]

For Canadian nationals, the specter of American control of "foreign" territory under the guise of US national security is disconcerting, especially when the area in question happens to be your own.

Adding to this, weeks after NorthCom came online, US and Canadian leaders drafted a pact established the Bi-National Planning Group, which operated until 2006. The main focus of the Group was contingency planning in the event of threats to the US and Canada, and included bilateral military responses to natural disasters. Bi-national intelligence and information sharing too was a key recommendation in the Group's final report, as was joint training exercises.

One of the concept suggestions in the final report was the creation of a Continental Joint Interagency Task Force, which would "provide a truly integrated approach to continental defense and security through a deliberate melding of defense and security functions"[24] – in other words, a type of FSSF unit for Canada and the US. Moreover, on different occasions the final report made it clear that the process of joint protection was evolutionary in nature, a position that paves the way for deeper integration, and that the Security and Prosperity Partnership was linked to the Group's work.

When the Canadian public was notified of the Group's operation, Canadian Defence Minister John McCallum and Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham insisted that the Group's plan would be an enhancement to Canadian sovereignty. According to McCallum, "The planning group… (puts) Canada in a position to work with the United States on plans to defend North America, plans the United States would otherwise be developing without us."[25]

And there's the crux. Canada fears that if it does not participate in North American security planning, the US will simply do what it wants regardless of Canada's claim to sovereignty. Sadly, this twisted idea of sovereignty protection via amalgamation is one that is deeply rooted in the Canadian political/military psyche.

1n 1982, Canadian diplomat John W. Holmes expressed similar sentiments when discussing NORAD's (North American Aerospace Defence Command) control of continental air-space,

> "NORAD, which seems a step in the continentalization of North American defence, can be regarded from another angle as a means of preserving a Canadian role and an appropriate degree of sovereignty in a situation in which, if there were no rules, the Americans would simply take over the defence of the continent."[26]

Twenty years later, Richard Evraire, Chairman of the Conference of Defence Associations in Canada, while giving testimony on why defence spending needed to increase in light of US pressures, told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance,

> "If Canadians are not prepared to contribute in a meaningful way and in a viable way to the defence of Canada, and if a threat to our country is viewed by the United States as a threat to their territorial integrity, then the U.S. will surely defend their territory, as well as our own, in whatever way suits them."[27]

My country *does* need a more robust defence capability, and it should pursue upgrades and force rebuilding. This only makes sense as a sovereign nation. Moreover, this should be done, in part, to provide assistance towards friends and allies in the course of national emergencies and major conflicts – as Canada did so valiantly in World War I and II. All of this should be happening, however, for the sake of Canada as a strong and independent nation, not as the third leg in a new tri-nationally integrated security system.

Let's Take A Drive

Other North American/hemispheric projects are underway, including the creation of continent-spanning transportation and commerce corridors, such as the one being proposed by NASCO.

Known better by its acronym, the North America's SuperCorridor Coalition[28] is a trilateral lobbying and planning organization made up of provincial/state and local governments, along with major businesses such as Lockheed Martin.[29] The goal of NASCO is mammoth: it envisions a super corridor running from Winnipeg, Manitoba through to Kansas City, San Antonio, and on to Guadalajara and Manzanillo, Mexico, eating up an incredible amount of concrete, steel, and capital.

Unlike other roads, this system, if realized, would be a comprehensive energy and commerce jugular vein propelling tri-national interdependence in transportation, trade, and strategic resources. According to two papers released by NASCO, this entire system will be monitored by a sweeping architecture of high-tech sensors and tracking systems, all channelled into US Homeland Security.[30]

NASCO, as a lobbying player in North American linkages, has been the target of much criticism. Responding to this, the organization has released a short brief explaining that it "does not encourage the elimination of international borders." It also states that transportation corridors

already exist and that the aim of the group is to facilitate a more efficient system.[31]

Yes, transportation and trade routes are in place throughout the continent, and trade flow is an essential part of our national and regional economies. Hence, transportation efficiency is a positive goal.

What is troubling is the larger aspect of integration, which doesn't necessarily mean "the elimination of international borders." The concern lies in the historical model of the European Union: interweave the continent's major industrial infrastructure and essential lines of commerce until unification occurs as a matter of fact, irrespective of whether international borders are eliminated or not. This progressive drive towards a North American meshing of infrastructure and commerce, with its long-term political and economic sovereignty implications, is the actual point of contention critics have with NASCO; not when, where, or how a particular highway truck or railcar enters the pipe.

NASCO, however, isn't the only such project on the table – a point that demonstrates a grander continental game play. A host of other regional/trans-continental transport systems are being planned, including corridors for the coasts and others that will criss-cross the tri-national heartland.

One example that coincides with NASCO is Canamex, a project linking Mexico City to Edmonton, Alberta. The North American Forum on Integration (NAFI) gives us some detail on supporting partnerships behind the Canamex operation,

"Canamex is a planned four-lane highway extending from Mexico City to Edmonton, Alberta, in Canada. The project has recently received the support of a certain number of states and provinces including Arizona, Sonora and Alberta. The Canadian Government is providing financial support for the building of the North South Trade Corridor in Alberta, the Canadian section of Canamex. The U.S. Congress has designated the completion of Canamex as a high priority in the American road system. Canamex currently uses Highway I-15 in the United States. The external relations secretariat of Mexico has taken on the promotion of the project."[32]

But its more then just roads that are being upgraded for international harmonization; NAFI writes,

"The North American trade corridors are bi- or tri-national channels for which various cross-border interests have grouped together in order to develop or consolidate the infrastructures. The North American corridors are considered multimodal in the sense that they bring into play different modes of transport in succession.

The infrastructures may include roads, highways, transit routes, airports, pipelines, railways and train stations, river canal systems and port facilities, telecommunications networks and teleports."[33]

Hence, Kansas City is currently working on a major inland smart-port facility, connecting Mexican, US, and Canadian goods and services. Winnipeg is upgrading its international airport, with direct links to NASCO.[34] And other cities, provinces, and states are gearing up for the new surge of inter-continental movement, along with increased interest by major corporations to invest in port facilities, toll-roads, air-services, and rail lines.

Represented as a whole, this transport package is summed up as "intermodal," and was being reviewed as far back as October 1997, when the North American Intermodal Transportation Summit took place between the secretaries of transportation from the NAFTA partners.[35]

Although the end result of this meeting was a consensus that the three countries engage in "coordination rather than integration," a contextual undercurrent existed that demanded far more than just "cooperation" – an undercurrent that propels the idea of an integrated North America.

"In a world that is rapidly dividing into a number of regional trading blocs including the European Union, Japan and the Pacific Rim Countries, Mercosur, and NAFTA, transportation networks will play an increasingly important role, particularly in economic competitiveness. To meet the requirements of this new global economy, change in transportation systems is being forced, by becoming more intermodal and by incorporating new technologies….

…It is imperative that the evolution of an intermodal transportation system in North America position the economy of the continent so that it is capable of meeting the increasing competition from Europe and Asia."[36]

Simply put, as the other parts of the world regionalize in this new global environment, North America must do the same in order to compete. It's a shift, deliberate in nature, from nationalism to regionalism and from regionalism to globalization. [NOTE: For more on this topic, see the fully documented Forcing Change report, *The Globalization Strategy: America and Europe in the Crucible*].

In fact, the Intermodal Transportation Summit lamented that the NAFTA borders where still not porous enough, giving us a window into the thinking behind North American transport and cargo integration programs.

"Borders are still not seamless. We still await the intended benefits of NAFTA to enable free trade and transportation within North America. Without addressing some of the more obviously political issues, the fact remains that borders are not as seamless on international cargo as they were intended to be."[37]

Today, as North America integrates in a myriad of ways, the development of continental transportation corridors has to be viewed as one of the most basic and important pieces in this harmonization process. Indeed, such corridors, once complete, will act as the major arteries of regionalism, pushing and pumping the most important civilizing substance known to Man: money.

"Money Answers Everything"

The phrase "money answers everything" is Biblical.[38] Essentially, if you want to understand why something is happening, follow the cash. It's also been said that money makes the world go round, a truism regardless of who you are or what you do. And North American unification, at whatever levels it comes in at will be one of the most lucrative parties going, provided you're holding a ticket to get into the club.

Trans-national corridors are going to be massive money conduits, where the trade of goods and services will be nothing more than the constant creation and cycling of large sums of wealth, linking market places to market suppliers in unprecedented ways. The SPP program is all about economics, with the "Prosperity" side aimed solely at the issuance of wealth, and nicely dovetailing with the corridor component. SPP's "Security" arm too is monetarily driven in at least three different ways: the protection of economic interests (as mentioned earlier), the allocation of public funds assigned to new security budgets, and the economic benefits accrued to defence and military/police contractors. For major corporations and trans-national giants, continental integration – the ultimate "free trade" agreement – is like "dying and going to heaven," without the dying part.

Money, at this grand of scale, has another role that goes beyond the creation and movement of wealth: It becomes an agent of change, with national ramifications.

As A.W. Clausen, former President of the BankAmerica Corporation and the World Bank said in 1979, "The control of money and credit strikes at the very heart of national sovereignty."[39] And the year before, Trilateral Commission co-founder, Zbigniew Brzezinski, commented,

> "The national-state as a fundamental union of man's organized life has ceased to be the principal creative force; international banks and multinational corporations are acting and planning in terms that are far in advance of the political concepts of the nation-state."[40]

Indeed *they are* ahead of the political concepts, and have been for decades. Consider this timeline of banking and economic interests in regional unification:

1971 – As a result of major shifts in global economics, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston convened a meeting between American and Canadian bankers and economists. Andrew F. Brimmer, a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, suggested reforms to the international monetary system with Canada taking an active part. And economist Robert A. Mundell forwarded a currency union idea in opposition to the US dollar,

> "We must live with the fact that we're in a dollar-dominated world and try to make the

> dollar perform its *world money* functions better then it has thus far…However, if the United States cannot follow a stable monetary policy or will not exercise its power to constrain the spillover of its monetary system into the rest of the world an alternative money to the dollar would have to be created, based on a union of the currencies of the smaller countries." [italics in original]

Monetary parity between the US and Canada was also discussed, as was the US adjusting its regulations to fit the North American model better.[41]

1973 – C.M. van Vlierden, Executive Vice President of Bank of America, proclaims,

> "The route towards integration of the world economy has been proceeding through regionalization. The impulses which we understand as nationalism are being deflected by economic realities to conform to a concept of neighborhood solidarity and regional integration.
>
> Thus, while Canadian mistrust of U.S. domination is no less than it ever was, there is increasing emphasis on conscious development of economic and political relationships across the 49th parallel with the full understanding that the relationships are necessarily close."[42]

1979 – Economic analyst Jeremiah Novak proposed the creation of a North American Common Market that would overshadow the entire Western Hemisphere.

> "The development of a North American Common Market is primarily to create a zone of dynamic economic growth and stability in the Western Hemisphere through the concentration of economic incentives for member nations. Its goal is to reduce barriers to trade and investment within the North American area and to create common external barriers with Europe and Asia. The ultimate goal of the North American Common Market is to extend its common internal and external policies to all nations in the Western Hemisphere."[43]

Novak was also clear about the resulting sovereignty loss for participating nations outside of the United States. Linking Canada to the US and Mexico, Novak declared,

> "U.S. policy and diplomacy towards Canada must be hard and direct, giving major emphasis to persuasion. Canada must be invited into the federal structure of the United States and the central government of Canada must be ultimately eliminated. Further, Canada must be opened to immigration from Mexico and Central America, the U.S. and the Caribbean, and settled so that real development of Canada can take place."[44]

1984 – Richard N. Cooper, a member of the Trilateral Commission with a long involvement in banking and intelligence (his bio reads, in part: Chairman, National Intelligence Council, 1995-97; Chairman, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 1990-1992; Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, 1977-81, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Monetary Affairs, 1965-66), rocked a Federal Reserve meeting by laying out a global "monetary scheme for the year 2010,"

> "…a single currency is possible only if there is in effect a single monetary policy, and a single authority issuing the currency and directing the monetary policy. How can independent states accomplish that? They need to turn over the determination of monetary policy to a supernational body, but one which is responsible to the governments of the independent states collectively. There is some precedent for this in the origins of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, which blended

quite separate regions of the country and banks subject to divers state banking jurisdictions into a single system, paralleling the increasingly national financial market. Similarly, we will need a world monetary system that parallels the increasingly global financial market."[45]

So how did Cooper plan to arrive at this 2010 vision? Through two avenues: 1) policies that draw together cooperating nation's markets and exchange rates, as in between Canada and the United States; 2) through global free trade.

"It would be logical if free trade accompanied this single currency regime. That would also be consistent wit the collaborative political spirit that would be required to establish the single currency regime. Free trade would insure one market in goods as well as in financial instruments."[46]

Responding to Cooper, Lord Eric Roll, who headed England's largest investment bank, S.G. Warburg, re-emphasized that in order to make this scheme work there would have to be "a greater convergence and harmonization of economic policies at least between the major countries."[47]

1991 – Federal Reserve of Dallas issued a working paper examining the potential for a single North American currency.[48]

1993 – As a Trilateral Commission member, former Federal Reserve chairman, Paul Volcker, wrote in the 1993 Trilateral Commission annual report, "Increased interdependence is driving our countries toward convergence in areas once considered fully within the domestic purview."[49]

1998 – The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia published an article titled, "Has Globalization Created a Borderless World?" North American economic integration, and the role of borders, was discussed. It was noted that while globalization hasn't made national borders mute, it has done much to bring about integration in the North American zone.[50]

1999 – The Bank of Canada released a string of documents on the pros and cons of economic and monetary harmonization with its NAFTA partners. [51]

1999 – Trilateral Commission contributor, Takatoshi Ito, speaking at a Boston Federal Reserve conference, made this provocative statement,

"It is frequently said that Latin American countries may dollarize. The North and South Americas will become a dollar zone. The United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, and the central European countries may adopt the euro. Euroland may extend from Portugal to Russia, even to Africa. Such regional developments seem to have a positive probability."[52]

And at the same conference, the Chief Economist for the Inter-American Development Bank reported, "National currencies are a phenomenon of the twentieth century; supranational currencies are the solution for the future."[53]

1999 - Canada's Fraser Institute published a report openly proposing a single tri-national currency as a counterbalance to Europe's euro. This new North American dollar, it was suggested, should be called the "amero."[54]

2000 - July 2000, Mexican President Vicente Fox proposed a North American common market, incorporating a customs union, the free flow of goods and labour, and a continental monetary policy.[55]

2000 – US Treasury official, Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Edwin M. Truman, candidly suggested a "dramatic decline in the number of independent currencies in the world."[56] This comment, made before the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, was directly aimed at North America's financial structure.

2000 - The Atlanta Federal Reserve published an article in its *Economic Review* debating what final form a tri-national currency would take. This issue not only stated "that a single currency for NAFTA countries is possible," but also that "the idea of a single currency for NAFTA is on the table."[57]

2001 - The newly inaugurated US President, George Bush, pledged to foster hemispheric integration while attending the Quebec Summit of the Americas. Speaking at a press conference, President Bush boldly proclaimed,

> "…we have a choice to make. We can combine in a common market so we can compete in the long-term with the Far East and Europe, or we can go on our own. I submit, and I suspect the other leaders will echo with me – I hope they do, at least – that going on our own is not the right way to do so. Combining in a market in our own hemisphere makes sense. It's a logical extension of what's taken place through NAFTA."[58]

Indeed, creating a North American economic space appeared to be a serious topic in federal circles until late summer, 2001. Only days before the 9/11 terror attacks, Fox and Bush met in Washington to discuss Mexico's role as a US and continental partner, with migrant labour issues at the forefront.[59] September 11, obviously, changed Washington's focus to more distant shores.

Ironically, as 9/11 shifted the eyes of the US executive branch towards the Middle East, corporate elites embraced North American integration as a lesson learned. Keep in mind that our tri-national trade is staggering, with Canada and the US alone constituting the largest bi-national economic relationship on the planet.[60] To give a sense of this relationship: just the yearly trade passing through one US/Canadian border crossing, the Windsor/Detroit station, is more then the total annual US trade with Japan.[61]

September 11 threw this essential commerce into chaos. As approximately 50 million dollars (US) were lost per hour due solely to the Canadian/US border closures after the attack,[62] and with subsequent bottlenecks and slowdowns reverberating long afterwards, financial and business executives looked to continental harmonization as a way of avoiding similar loss scenarios.

In America, the US Chamber of Commerce jumped on the bandwagon, becoming an important supporter of the Security and Prosperity Partnership. This backing was evident when Thomas Donohue, the President and CEO of the US Chamber of Commerce, made these comments while speaking at a luncheon in Washington DC on June 16, 2006,

> "…for CEOs, North America is already a single market, and business decisions are no longer made with a Mexico strategy – or a Canada strategy – but, rather, with a North American strategy…I think it's pretty clear by now that it no longer makes sense to talk about US competitiveness and Mexican competitiveness – or, for that matter, about the competitiveness of Canada. We are all in this together – we, as North Americans."[63]

Canadian business elites hold to a similar view. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives, Canada's foremost club of top CEOs, launched the North American Security and Prosperity Initiative in January 2003. While downplaying the European model of unification, the CCCE did propose North American identification cards and the streamlining of cross-border financial regulations, including opening Canada's ownership restrictions and granting US companies access to acquiring even more businesses and resources north of the border. The CCCE also advised that Mexico, the US, and Canada establish new commissions that could coordinate integration, and that North American defence be tackled in a way that demonstrates a continental reality.[64]

Being sensitive to potential criticism that the CCCE was selling-out their country, the organization released a Q&A styled paper explaining that their ideas did not represent a merger, but merely a new partnership.[65] Sovereignty, the document implied, wasn't in jeopardy.

However, in a report presented to the CCCE by a partnering Canadian foreign policy institute, admittance was made that any time a country agrees to be bound by an international treaty, it automatically involves "the surrender of some degree of national sovereignty in exchange for larger purposes."[66]

The Canadian/US Free Trade Agreement of the late 1980s amply demonstrated this fact. Writing for the Saskatoon StarPhoenix in June, 2007, political commentators Bill Loewen and David Orchard reminded Canadians about the economic surrender that accompanied Free Trade treaty obligations.

> "More than 12,000 Canadian companies have been taken over since the 1989 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Since January 2006, foreign takeovers of some $156 billion have been consummated…There only are a handful of widely held Canadian companies now listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange – surely an abnormal situation for a sovereign nation."[67]

Sovereignty is not insignificant. Frank Stankard, chairman of Chase International Investment Corporation in 1970's, candidly remarked "One of the great signs of sovereignty in a country is its own currency and the handling of your own affairs."[68]

For the millions of citizens who place their trust in appointed political leaders, it is expected that the requirements and interests of their particular country will be upheld and safeguarded – including the ability of the nation to manage its own currency and economic affairs. Nevertheless, what the general public assumes and what international financial players deem important are not always the same. And when national elites work to permanently change the direction of a nation, the public's knowledge, input, and debate should be more than expected. In a democracy, anything less smacks of coercion.

Integration, as a Canadian, is especially troubling. Our place in North America as the energy breadbasket is a *strategic* position. Recognized for its outstanding resource base, Canada supplies America with almost 100% of its electricity imports and pipelined natural gas, and more petroleum then any other nation on earth – including Saudi Arabia.[69] Energy is not just another box-store consumer item like so many trinkets floating in the global marketplace; it's the lifeblood of a country.

Currently the energy flowing into and out of the US via Canada is remarkably efficient under the free market system.[70] Could this be made better? Certainly. Does this imply nationalization? Not at all: the last thing working free markets need is more controls imposed by bloated bureaucracies, including a possible North American management regime.

What Canada does need, however, is to develop a comprehensive energy strategy of its own, including the creation of an east-west grid instead of the current, almost exclusive north-south energy transfer system. Such a strategy would help Canadian's solidify and safeguard their energy requirements, while putting necessary exports into their proper context. Conversely, widely opening Canada's resources for sell-off into foreign hands, as the CCCE suggests, increases our vulnerability to international market shocks and ensures dependence on outside entities. In the end our sovereignty suffers.

But energy isn't the only area up for grabs in this continental re-alignment. The Center for Strategic and International Studies, one of the most influential policy groups in Washington, has quietly launched a program titled the North American Future 2025 Project.[71] Working in cooperation with the Conference Board of Canada, CSIS envisions the tri-national integration of agriculture, health services, transportation, and telecommunications. Banking and the financial world are fingered too, a move that surprises no one, as is Canadian fresh water access – a sore point for many north of the border.

Canada holds approximately 20% of the world's fresh water,[72] and this supply has been at the epicentre of a simmering bi-national struggle between US interests and Canadians. In fact, this tug-of-war goes back to the 1960s and the industrial giant Ralph M. Parsons Company (now the Parsons Corporation), which proposed the North American Water and Power Alliance and the diversion of Canadian river systems to the south.[73] Now, over forty years later, CSIS is advocating that the US and Mexico gain access to this supply, with suggestions of "water transfers" and the "artificial diversion of fresh water."

Obviously, as a country with some of the most to lose or gain in tri-national trade, one would think that Canadian voters would be seriously debating the pros and cons of a North American merger. But nothing of the sort has been evident. This despite the fact that in early 2002, Robert Pastor – a consultant to the US National Security Council and Vice Chair of the CFR task force on North American integration – gave testimony to the Canadian House of Commons, proposing a North American Parliamentary Group, a North American Development Fund, a North American customs union, and the implementation of a single monetary unit for the continent. Pastor also encouraged the Canadian government to help its citizens think as "North Americans," with the implication that nationalism must be replaced by a broader mindset.[74]

Robert Pastor also gave a similar presentation to the Toronto meeting of the Trilateral Commission (TC) in the fall of 2002.[75] After all, the Trilateral Commission was pursuing regionalism as a stepping-stone to globalization ten years before,[76] has an historical link into the European Union,[77] and has had a considerable number of their members vocalizing economic and monetary integration (see the timeline above). Other Trilateral connections exist, including crossovers between the TC, the CFR Task Force, and CSIS.

One example is Wendy Dobson, a CFR Task Force member who along with Pastor discussed the North American union at the Toronto Trilateral meeting.[78] Other Trilateral/CFR Task Force members include Allan Gotlieb, Carlos Heredia, Luis Rubio, and Carla A. Hills. Not only is Hills a member of the CFR North American group and the Trilateral Commission, she's also the co-chair of the CSIS Advisory Board.[79] Incidentally, one of the co-founders of the Trilateral Commission, Zbigniew Brzezinski, is a Counsellor at CSIS, which has been publishing the *North American Integration Monitor* since 2002.

If all of this seems like a cozy little club, that's because it is a cozy little club. In fact, the CFR report *Building A North American Community* suggests the establishment of "private bodies that would meet regularly or annually to buttress North American relationships, along the lines of the Bilderberg…conferences."[80]

The Bilderberg conferences are renowned for their private, elite settings. So too, North American unification events are intentionally locked behind secured doors, such as the closed North American Forum at Banff, Alberta in 2006,[81] and the multiple CSIS roundtables that started in Washington DC and ended on April 27, 2007 in Calgary, Alberta.[82] By the way, in the fall of 2007, CSIS will be distributing their final North American Future 2025 report to all three governments in a bid to advance integration.

Through all of this, Canadian politicians have been strangely silent, with the exception of the National Democratic Party. Ironically, while the NDP opposes a North American Union, it's a staunch supporter of global governance as espoused by the Socialist International, the largest body of socialist leaders on the planet, and one that the NDP holds a full membership in.[83]

All of this makes you wonder: what exactly is Canada? The answer, I'm afraid, is nothing more than an economic "state" in the new globalization arrangement. Incidentally, this definition can be applied to almost every country on the globe, including Mexico and the United States of America. After all, it's economics at an integrated global level, with elevated global players.

A Personal Approach

But what does the average Canadian citizen think? Besides the fact that most are wholly unaware, a CFR poll shows Canadians support deeper integration.[84] However, as someone living on the Canadian prairies, I've been conducting my own poll of sorts: I've been asking friends and neighbours where they stand on this issue. Granted, this may not be the most scientific method, but it did elicit interesting responses.

One friend who's a grain buyer sees a US-Canadian amalgamation as inevitable, and remarked that we're owned by American-led multinationals already. Farmers had mixed opinions, but the majority believed they would simply be pawns in a game of high finances and government dictates; views that are not groundless.

Another friend looks forward to a union, hoping Canadian socialism dies in the process, but is equally fearful that the outcome will be something worse. Others have been horrified by the thought of a blended continent, and had hoped that the present Canadian Conservative government wouldn't be bent so easily by big dollar politics.

No matter whom I discussed this with, pro or con, all seemed leery. Few believed that a merger would deliver on the altruistic promises of "Security and Prosperity," especially without shredding national independence. Little institutional trust

exists, at least in the rural areas of the Great Plains.

Ironically, I'm a "NAFTA product." My great-grandparents on both sides immigrated and emigrated back-and-forth between all three counties, and for some of my kin this was done multiple times, switching nations as they bought and sold land and farms. But bureaucracy was minimal then, and governments and communities welcomed anyone willing to work and add to the progress of society. Now bureaucracy is strangling, with governments overburdened by hefty entitlement programs, massive debt loads, and a bewildering maze of regulations.

A different breed, however, stalks today's North American landscape. As it stands, continental unification is being driven by trilateral elites tightly bound to the world of banking and multinational corporations, and by government leaders who typically flirt between a life of public administration and privileged financial and corporate boardrooms. It's a landscape of intertwined big power and money interests.

This raises some serious questions. Will another layer of management, this time at a regional level, fix our institutional deficiencies? Or will it add more bureaucracy and less accountability? And who stands to win or lose in this game of integration; the trilateral movers of North America, the sovereignty of each individual nation, or the common citizen blissfully unaware of the coming continental shift?

Let me guess where you're placing your amero-dollar bets. FC

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Endnotes:

[1] *See Amateurs,To Arms!: A Military History of the War of 1812,* by John R. Elting, published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1991. For the Jefferson quote, see page 21.

[2] Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on the Future of North America, *Building a North American Community* (CFR, 2005).

[3] The official United States SPP web page is www.spp.gov, while the official Canadian SPP web page is located here, www.spp-psp.gc.ca/menu-en.aspx. Sites critical of the SPP process, among many, include Stop the NAU (http://stopthenau.org/) and the Canadian Action Party (www.canadianactionparty.ca).

[4] This SPP document and the *Corbett Report* on the paper can be accessed via www.corbettreport.com/articles/20070709_spp_meeting_minutes.htm.

[5] See, the Council of the Americas history statements on the SPP at www.americas-society.org/coa/NACC/indexNACC.html.

[6] This Membership list was provided by the Council of the Americas.

[7] For one US document on the issue of border security, see *Technology Assessment: Using Biometrics for Border Security* (GAO, November 2002, GAO-03-174).

[8] For three reports that discuss integrating security options, see *Building Regional Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Issues and Recommendations* (October 2003), *A 21st Century Security Architecture for the Americas: Multilateral Cooperation, Liberal Peace, and Soft Power* (August 2002), and *The Mexican Armed Forces in Transition* (January 2006).

[9] *Defense, Development, and Diplomacy (3D): Canadian and U.S. Military Perspectives* (US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute Colloquium Brief, n.d), p.1.

[10] Ibid, p.3.

[11] *Building Regional Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Issues and Recommendations* (US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, October 2003), p.23.

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[13] Ibid., p.27.

[14] The list of countries this has occurred in is staggering. Nicaragua in the late 1920s and the 1980s are only one example. For a sobering look at US military/covert operations that have incurred instability in hemispheric nations, see William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Black Rose Books, 1998). For another angle on US foreign involvement in Latin America, see *Powderburns: Cocaine, Contras and the Drug War* by former DEA agent, Celerino Castillo (Mosaic Press, 1994). After being posted in Guatemala by the US Drug Enforcement Administration, Castillo wrote, "The United States wanted stability in Guatemala, and backed every right-wing regime that came down the power alley, looking the other way as they crushed any opposition and wiped out tens of thousands of their people off the face of the earth." (p.106).

This is a sad indictment, especially when coupled with leftist governments and their terror networks that committed atrocities throughout the region, such as the work of the Sandinista's in Nicaragua. In other words, the citizenry "got it" from both sides, except that the "right side" committed acts of brutality under the umbrella of US support, while the "left side" did so under Cuban/Russian/Marxist influence.

[15] *A 21st Century Security Architecture for the Americas: Multilateral Cooperation, Liberal Peace, and Soft Power* (US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, August 2002). For the FTAA component, see pages viii and 7-8.

[16] See the Charter of the Organization of American States. For its UN affiliation, see Article 1. For its involvement in regional integration, including the creation of a Latin American common market, see Article 41 and 42.

[17] *A 21st Century Security Architecture for the Americas: Multilateral Cooperation, Liberal Peace, and Soft Power* (US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, August 2002), p.34.

[18] Ibid., p.35.

[19] "US to create North American command zone," CBC News, April 17, 2002. www.cbc.ca/stories/2002/04/17/northcom020417.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] "US to create North American command zone," CBC News, April 17, 2002. www.cbc.ca/stories/2002/04/17/northcom020417.

[23] Philippe Lagasse, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal*, Spring 2003, 15.

[24] Bi-national Planning Group, *The Final Report on Canada and the United States (CANUS) Enhanced Military Cooperation*, March 13, 2006. See page 40 regarding the Joint Interagency Task Force concept.

[25] "Pact would allow US troops into Canada during emergency," CBC News, December 10, 2002. www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2002/12/09/forces_pact021209.html.

[26] Quoted in Philippe Lagasse's article, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal*, Spring 2003, 16.

[27] 37th Parliament, 2nd Session, Standing Committee on Finance, Evidence Contents, Tuesday, October 29, 2002.

[28] The NASCO website is www.nascocorridor.com. Another organization directly attached to NASCO is NAIPN, the North American Inland Ports Network.

[29] For a recent update on which corporations and government entities are involved in NASCO, see their June 2007 conference report, *Moving North America Forward.*

[30] *See, Information Integration Center for Supply Chain Security*, a white paper released by the LDS Corporation/Lockheed Martin, and *INTERCHANGE*: *A Homeland Security Initiative for the North American International Trade Corridor*, submitted to the US Department of Homeland Security, Office of International Affairs, by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the States of Texas and Iowa Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation, the cities of Des Moines and San Antonio, the North American International Trade Corridor Partnership (NAITCP), and the North American Superhighway Coalition (NASCO).

[31] See the NASCO letter titled, *Who we are, what we stand for, and why the fervent devotion to transport efficiency*. This paper can be found on the organization's website.

[32] "North American Trade Corridors," North American Forum on Integration, www.fina-nafi.org/eng/integ/corridors.asp.
[33] Ibid.
[34] The Winnipeg Airport Authority is listed as a major NASCO member, as is the Manitoba Provincial government and the City of Winnipeg.
[35] See, *Proceedings of the North American Intermodal Transportation Summit, Intermodal Transportation Institute*, October 16-17, 1997.
[36] *Proceedings of the North American Intermodal Transportation Summit*, pp.10-11.
[37] Ibid., p.33.
[38] Ecclesiastes 10:19.
[39] From an interview between Michael Loyd Chadwick and A.W. Clausen; as published in the 1981 *Freemen Digest* issue on International Banking, p.21.
[40] As quoted in the 1981 *Freemen Digest* issue on International Banking, p.21.
[41] For each of these various idea developments, read the Fed document, *Canadian-United States Financial Relationships*, Proceedings of a Conference held in September 1971, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.
[42] C.M. van Vlierden, in a speech given to the International Institute of Synthetic Rubber Producers, San Francisco, May 18, 1973. Reprinted in the 1981 International Banking issue of the *Freemen Digest*, p.59.
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[44] Ibid., p.50.
[45] Richard N. Cooper, "Is There a Need for Reform?" Federal Reserve Bank of Boston conference, *The International Monetary System: Forty Years After Bretton Woods* (Fed. Res. Bank of Boston, 1984), pp.30-31.
[46] Ibid., p.30.
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[52] Takatoshi Ito, discussing exchange rate options; *Rethinking the International Monetary System*, (Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, July 1999), p.130.
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[56] Treasury Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Edwin M. Truman, Remarks at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, October 12, 2000. Speech can be accessed through the US Treasury Department website. For the complete speech, go to www.treas.gov/press/releases/ls950.htm.
[57] Michael Chriszt (Director, Latin America Research Group, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta), "Perspectives on a Potential North American Monetary Union," Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, *Economic Review*, Fourth Quarter, 2000, pp.29-38.
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84 The CFR discovered, through opinion polls conducted in all three countries, that the populations would join a North American entity as long as the culture of each country wasn't threatened, and that the standard of living would increase. For more on this, see the transcript records for the Atlanta, GA section of the CFR's *America's Response to Terrorism* research project. The title of this CFR/Atlanta transcript is, *The Future of North American Integration in the Wake of the Terrorist Attack*s, October 17, 2001.

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