



BATTEN IN BRUSSELS

IS A NORTH AMERICAN UNION BEING BUILT?

"If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck."

In February I attended a conference in the USA where financial backers and policy makers of the Republican Party met to exchange policy ideas. One of the issues that exercised the minds of some of those present was the proposed plan for a 'North American Union'. Surely the Land of the Free does not plan political and economic integration for the North American continent similar to our own European Union? These are the elements of the story I was told.

As part of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) a North American super-highway is planned by means of an operation called the North American Super Corridor Coalition (NASCO). The plan is to build a super-highway from Mexico through the USA to Canada, 1,200 feet wide with five lanes going north and five lanes going south, three lanes for cars and two lanes for trucks, with a 200 foot utility corridor for railways, and oil, gas and communications lines. Over 584,000 acres of privately owned land will be taken over by means of 'Eminent Domain'. The estimated cost of the 4,000 mile long network is \$184 billion. Ostensibly the purpose is to facilitate the flow of traffic across borders.

The project began on 23rd March 2005 after a summit attended by President Bush, Mexican President Vicente Fox, and the then Prime Minister of Canada, Paul Martin. The leaders announced the signing of an agreement to create 'common policies for various economic and security areas among the three nations'. The agreement authorised twenty trilateral 'working groups' to establish the 'Security and Prosperity Partnership' (SPP), so that the three member states can avowedly create 'free-trade and security within the North American continent'. The twenty working groups have over the last two years produced memorandums of understanding and trilateral declarations of agreement on issues such as: food and agriculture, energy, transport, environment, communications, technology, financial services (including loan and foreign aid policy) and much more. This is

where it all starts to sound familiar, but the words 'North American Union' have not so far been used.

Now enter the Council for Foreign Relations. Many of the working groups of the SPP appear to be driving forward specific objectives as defined by a CFR task force report of May 2005. The report presented a blueprint for expanding the SPP agreement to bring about a politically integrated USA, Canada and Mexico. The report entitled 'Building a North American Community' contains a five-year plan for implementing a 'North American economic and security community'. A member of the CFR taskforce, Dr. Robert Pastor, wrote a book in 2001 entitled 'Towards a North American Commission'. In 2002 Dr. Pastor reportedly addressed the Trilateral Commission and called for the establishment of a North American Investment Fund that would supplement World Bank funds intended to develop Mexico economically, something also contained in the CFR report, and something the SPP is now officially trying to establish. President Bush's administration has denied any connection between Dr. Pastor's book and the CFR report but they carry almost identical language and Dr. Pastor has represented the USA in SPP meetings.

Anyone with even a passing acquaintance of the European Union and its history will begin to recognise a pattern. Free Trade Areas are sold to the people as a means of increasing trade and prosperity. Thinkers then develop plans for the economic and political integration of nation states. Politicians deny that they are implementing any such plans, when in fact appearing to do precisely that, while nevertheless contending that they are merely taking measures to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and services.

The road to political and economic integration is paved with a many small incremental and surreptitious steps. The SPP and President Bush's administration deny that there are any plans for a common North American currency, but in

April 2006 the SPP announced that the Financial Services Working Group will focus on "enhancing processes for addressing banking, securities and insurance services", and that the "US financial regulatory agencies will play a critical role in the SPP". Those familiar with the dense bureaucratic language of the European Union will read a phrase such as the SPP's, "reduce the cost of trade, combat counterfeiting and facilitate trade", and rearrange these words into the well-known phrase or saying: Single Currency.

Is it just paranoia, or is there a real plan to integrate the USA, Canada and Mexico economically and politically? Would US citizens ever allow their fiercely guarded Constitution to be overturned and replaced with a supranational political body taking precedence? Well, also envisaged by the CFR task force are a North American Court, North American Inter-Parliamentary Group, North American Executive Commission, North American Military Defence Command, North American Customs Office, and a North American Development Bank: all depressingly similar concepts to opponents of the EU. The Mexican economist Miguel Pickard has written that President Bush is "vigorously pushing the idea of North American Union", and that the schedule calls for a customs union, then a common market, then monetary and economic union, and finally the adoption of a single currency. I think it was a US politician, whose name escapes me, who said, "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck".

The facts used in this article were provided by the American Policy Center.

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