

Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America: SuperCorridors Linking Mexico, the U.S. and Canada

Fact Sheet #2 2/08

What is the SPP?

- In 2005, the SPP was created without debate in Congress or public scrutiny when President Bush met with President Fox of Mexico and Prime Minister Martin of Canada in Waco, Texas where they shook hands on the deal.
- The SPP vision of prosperity is production of “endless more” - sweat-shop produced goods from Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere carried by super-cargo ships docking at SuperPorts and moved inland along privatized transportation corridors to inland “dry” ports.

How does it operate?

- The SPP is being implemented by three “security” and ten “prosperity” cross-border working groups composed of corporate leaders and government officials from the three countries.
- Transportation and Movement of Goods are 2 of the 10 “prosperity” working groups.
- Once a year the heads of the three countries and the working groups meet to advance the SPP.

Have you been invited?

The next SPP meetings will be in New Orleans, April 21-22. Have you been invited? Or, will you be kept at a safe distance by high cyclone fences as when the SPP met in Montebello Quebec in August 2007?

North American SuperCorridors and SuperPorts

The SPP Working Group on Transportation, whose membership includes the US-Department of Transportation (DOT), is tasked with creating SuperCorridors for cars, trucks, trains, and pipelines that will link to coastal mega-ports and inland dry ports for distribution of goods throughout North America. On the SPP public site they say:

“Transportation Working Group...will improve the safety and efficiency of North America's transportation system by expanding market access, facilitating multimodal corridors, reducing congestion, and alleviating bottlenecks at the border that inhibit growth and threaten our quality of life”

The U.S. DOT uses exactly the same language on their website. How the multimodal corridors will improve “safety and efficiency” is not explained. Whose safety? What kind of efficiency? The model they are expected to follow, given the implementation in Texas, is to form private-public “partnerships” to combine private capital with federal and state funds and subsidies that will grow corporate profits and lead to a privatized North American transport network under corporate and military control.

The land grab for this transportation-distribution system is immense. The Trans-Texas Corridor system alone is estimated to require almost 600,000 acres of valuable farmland. As envisioned, each SuperCorridor route will ideally include:

- six auto lanes and four truck lanes
- two freight railway lines
- high-speed commuter railways
- infrastructure for utilities - water lines, oil and gas pipelines, and transmission lines for electricity, broadband and other telecommunication services

As Congress and states approve funding for state transportation projects, pieces of the SuperCorridors network are falling into place without the whole picture revealed to the public. Meanwhile, the private sector can proceed with buying up valuable land for projects all long corridor routes.

The Alliance for Democracy calls for public hearings to be held around the country on the impacts of the SPP and the SuperCorridors on local communities and the environment.

What are the corridor routes?

There are at least six north-south SuperCorridor routes in various stages of planning, funding and construction (see map p. 3). This vast network of north-south SuperCorridors will connect with current or upgraded east-west interstate highways. Inland "Dry Ports (white dots on map) are huge warehouse and distribution centers which will be linked to SuperPorts on the East and West Coasts.

1. I-95 Corridor planned to streamline transport along the congested East Coast from northern Maine to Florida www.i95coalition.org

2. Continental One International Trade and Travel Corridor planned from Toronto across western NY, PA, through Roanoke, VA, which is proposed as an Inland Port, and on to Miami. This will link the inland area west of the I-95 Corridor to major East Coast air and marine ports www.continental1.org

3. Trans-Texas and International Trade Corridor. NASCO - North America's Super Corridor Coalition, Inc., was created in 1994, right after NAFTA was signed, to develop the world's first international, integrated and secure multi-modal corridor system. NASCO uses the term "SuperCorridor" to make clear it is more than just a highway coalition. Presently, NASCO is working on the Trans-Texas Corridor, just one leg of the International Trade Corridor to incorporate US highways I-35 in Texas, with I-29, I-80 and I-94 to connect Mexico through Texas north to Canada www.nascocorridor.com

For the Texas portion, the Texas DOT will oversee planning, construction and on-going maintenance, while private vendors will be responsible for much of the daily operations and collect the toll revenues.

4. Great Plains International Trade Corridor planned from Laredo TX to Denver CO to Rapid City SD to Canada. It is being promoted by the Ports-to-Plains Coalition www.portstoplains.com

5. Canamex Highway planned to run from Nogales, AZ through Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Butte MT, to Edmonton, Canada www.canamex.org

6. West Coast Corridor planned to run along I-5 from San Diego, CA to Vancouver, British Columbia www.bettertransport.info/cascadia/WCCCoverview.pdf

Opponents of the Trans-Texas Corridor have raised critical concerns, including:

- Use of eminent domain to acquire vast acreage of farm land for the corridor
- Privatization of the corridor with toll income going to the Spanish Cintra Corporation, one of the world's largest multinational highway construction and management corporations
- Environmental impacts including air and water contamination; habitat ecosystem fragmentation
- State transportation spending not based on local priorities

Texas opponents organized and got a 2-year moratorium passed by the state legislature in 2007 only to have it overturned by the governor's veto.

Other Concerns of National Significance requiring full public debate:

- Impact of the SuperCorridors/SuperPorts on global warming
- Impact on the environment of an economy based on "endless more" imported goods
- Loss of local authority over the routing of the corridors through communities
- Ability of Mexican and Canadian corporations to use NAFTA to challenge laws based on "regulatory taking of future profits" and of all foreign corporations to use the WTO agreements to leverage their power against the rights of people, their communities and nature.

For more on the SPP including action alerts, other flyers, poster, power point presentations and articles go to www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/html/eng/2378-AA.shtml

