



Your Independent Journal from the Heartland

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Exposing the Security and Prosperity Partnership What Corporate Takeover Means for Heartland

By Ruth Caplan and Nancy Price

In our 4/1/08 TPP article, “The Stealth, Profit and Power Corporate Take-Over,” we emphasized how the Bush administration made an “end run” around Congress and the public to advance the emerging corporatocracy—government of, for and by the corporate elite—by creating the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). In effect, when President Bush, President Fox of Mexico and Prime Minister Martin of Canada met on March 23, 2005, and the Three Amigos shook hands on the deal, they were approving a silent corporate coup d’état in each country.

This “deal” created the SPP bureaucracy of tri-national security and prosperity working groups whose members include military and other government officials, alongside corporate and finance executives. The goal is to implement their collective vision already spelled out in influential position papers such as “Building a North American Community” released in March 2005 by the Task Force on the Future of America and “The North American Future Project” by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released in 2007.

The North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), a key SPP group created in 2006, is made up of 30 senior private-sector representatives from Canada, Mexico and the US. In February 2007, they submitted 51 recommendations for SPP implementation through 2010.

What do they want to achieve?

NAFTA was a significant stage in the corporate take-over sold to us on the benefits of “free trade.” The SPP, sometimes called NAFTA-plus, is more than a trade agreement—it creates a hidden, undemocratic parallel governing structure of corporate, financial and government elites making decisions that impact our lives, shape the economy and transform the political order with devastating consequences for the environment and our civil liberties.

SPP proponents want to:

- Create a fully integrated North American economic region to be competitive with emerging economic regions such as China and India;
- Build a vast transport, warehousing and distribution system to promote the free flow of goods from low-wage countries like China into all reaches of the North American market;

- Increase the global competitiveness of remaining US manufacturers and service providers;
- “Harmonize” environmental and labor regulations to minimize labor and environmental compliance costs;
- Profit from extraction of natural resources throughout North America;
- Ensure that energy and other natural resources for manufacturing and construction flow to the US, enriching the elites of all three countries, while delaying the impact of resource depletion on the US standard of living;
- Ensure that water shortages do not constrain growth in the Southwest and other regions with increasing water deficits, without having to constrain use of water by agribusiness, mining, and manufacturing;
- Implement police and military surveillance and security systems

Because the efficient and secure movement of goods and natural resources is key to the SPP vision of prosperity, the Working Group on Transportation is one of ten Prosperity Working Groups. Its membership includes the US Department of Transportation (DOT), which is tasked with creating the new transport network of north-south SuperCorridors linking proliferating coastal and inland SuperPorts. These north-south corridors will in turn link to the existing and improved east-west Interstate highway system.

Driving profits through the heartland

There are at least six north-south SuperCorridor routes in various stages of planning, funding and construction and the following three go right through the US heartland:

- The Trans-Texas and International Trade Corridor was created in 1994, right after NAFTA was signed, to develop the world’s first international, integrated and secure multi-modal corridor system. Promoted by NASCO—North America’s SuperCorridor Coalition, Inc.—this corridor is the furthest advanced. Linking Mexico with Canada, the US segment begins in Texas with the I-35 Trans-Texas Corridor to be linked with I-29, I-80 and I-94 passing through San Antonio, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Wichita, Kansas City, Omaha, Fargo and branching to the east also through Des Moines and Duluth. NASCO uses the term “SuperCorridor” to make clear it is more than just a highway coalition (www.nascocorridor.com).
- The Great Plains International Trade Corridor is planned from Laredo, Texas to Denver, Colo., to Rapid City, S.D., to Canada. It is being promoted by the Ports-to-Plains Coalition (www.portstoplains.com).

The Canamex Highway planned to run from Nogales, Ariz., through Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Nev., Salt Lake City, Utah, Butte, Mont., to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (www.canamex.org).

Based on the Trans-Texas Corridor plan, each SuperCorridor route could 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. How much of this could be realized for all corridors remains to be seen.

Kansas City SmartPort

The Kansas City SmartPort and other Inland SuperPorts are key centers along the Corridors for warehousing, redistribution and manufacturing. The Kansas City SmartPort is planned as “the transportation and logistic center of North America” with two north-south Corridors (routes 35 to Des Moines and 29 to Omaha) intersecting east-west Interstate 70, and with transcontinental rail and air transport lines converging. It will have more Foreign Trade Zone space than any other city totaling 10,000 acres over an 18 county area.

Who stands to benefit?

There are two sets of corporate interests—those like retail big-box stores and distribution centers, which will locate along the corridors to profit from selling the “endless more” of imported cheap goods, and those that will profit from extraction and transportation of natural resources like fossil fuels and minerals to the highest bidder. The potential for commercial export of water by the likes of T. Boone Pickens falls into the second category. These corporations are conveniently part of corridor groups like NASCO and SPP working groups so they can buy up land for access to natural resources, speculation and development along the corridors before the public and local communities are aware and can organize and advocate for an alternative vision.

Enterprise and Free Trade Zones located or planned along the proposed SuperCorridors and at SuperPorts give these corporations the added advantage of tax relief, incentives and credits. They also benefit when government uses eminent domain to acquire vast acreage of productive land for the Corridors and Ports, or when public land, such as a military base in Texas, is converted to private use for an Inland Port.

The People lose out when:

- Corridors are routed around or through their communities.
- Their tax dollars are used to improve and build the transport infrastructure and public highways are turned into private toll roads.
- Environmental and land-use regulations are lowered or do not apply in Enterprise and Free Trade Zones.

The “endless more” of imported goods and exported natural resources moving across oceans and along SuperCorridors increase global warming.

Mexican and Canadian corporations use NAFTA to challenge laws based on “regulatory taking of future profits” and leverage their power against the rights of people, communities and nature.

What does this mean for America’s heartland?

Already NAFTA has taken its toll on the heartland with the impacts of intensified industrialized farming such as CAFOs and agribusiness corn production for Mexico. The SPP will accelerate the transformation of the heartland. Imagine the market for water-thirsty corn-based ethanol with easy access to SuperPorts for global export. As the Ogallala aquifer is further devastated, imagine the pressure on Canada to export its water along these convenient corridors. Imagine the increased export of coal and coal-based methane from Montana and Wyoming as China’s need

for coal continues to escalate in order to produce the “endless more” that will be imported on SuperCargo ships via the SuperPorts and SuperCorridors.

Imagine how construction of this transport network creates a huge demand for gravel, cement, asphalt, steel, wood and energy for manufacture and transport to construction sites that contribute to air pollution and global warming.

And, imagine how this transport network will carve up the productive agricultural heartland, disrupt ecosystems and impact wildlife!

Beyond these specific impacts with their dire implications for accelerated global warming, there is the loss of local autonomy and food security and the further advance of the emerging corporatocracy.

Citizens of the heartland and other progressive populists must speak up now.

Join with the Alliance for Democracy in calling for an end to this corporate coup d'état. Call for Congressional hearings in the heartland on the impacts of the SPP and the SuperCorridors on local communities, the environment, food security, and our freedom. Tell your members of Congress you don't want privatized SuperCorridors gobbling up valuable farmland and exporting profits. For more on the SPP and SuperCorridors visit www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org/SPP.

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Three Amigos to Meet at NAFTA-Plus Summit

President Bush, Prime Minister Harper of Canada and President Calderon of Mexico will meet April 21-22 in New Orleans in the 4th Summit of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), along with government officials and corporate and financial executives (but not organized labor), to advance the SPP agenda.

The public is being shut out of the official meetings, but a “People's Summit” will link the post-Katrina Gulf Coast struggle for justice to the fight for the survival of communities in Mexico, Canada and across the US in the face of the SPP and NAFTA. The goal is to build collective knowledge and action to transform the SPP and NAFTA, which serve the corporatocracy, and assert the right of people to determine their future.

Reports will be posted at www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org/SPP.