

If Not War, Then Security

By Nancy Price

We all know how words and phrases can hide the real issue and shift the focus of debate, particularly when it comes to political ideology, policy, and actions.

Take, for example, depleted uranium (DU). As Pat Birnie makes clear in her article in this issue, there is nothing “depleted” about this byproduct of the nuclear energy industry. Depleted uranium is reprocessed for use in new weapons, adding to the profits of the war-machine industry.

Or, take the word *surge*, recently coined to describe increasing troop levels, or the description that the United States is “creating democracy” in Iraq, rather than fighting for oil and influence in the Middle East.

Another example, introduced here, uses references to security to avoid debate about war and terrorism, or disarmament and peace. And, *prosperity* is a term used to avoid debate about free trade and the neoliberal corporate trade agenda that trumps national and local sovereignty and harms people and nature.

SECURITY VS. WAR: PROSPERITY VS. FREE TRADE

With this in mind, note that with little fanfare, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) was signed in Waco, Texas, on March 23, 2005, by the three leaders of North America — President Bush, Mexico’s President Fox, and Canada’s Prime Minister Martin. This signing was followed by a secret meeting in September 2006 at Banff Springs Hotel in Canada where a group of high-ranking past and present government officials from Canada, the United States, and Mexico met with representatives of corporate business and industry, the military, academic and financial institutions, and think-tank allies to strategize on this new “North American Union,” a new layer of cooperation and agreement on top of the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1994.

Security is needed in the face of the emerging new world order of growing inequality. Prosperity for the privileged few is dependent on military and police strength. Therefore, these leaders plan to fully integrate Canada, the United States, and Mexico in a comprehensive and mutual strategy to secure North America from external threats.

This is necessitated in general by the growing independence and unpredictability of Venezuela, a major

exporter of oil to the United States, coupled with the rise of “indigenous” national governments in Central and South America, turmoil in the Middle East and Central Asia, and the growing political and economic power of China and India. These factors make creation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership imperative to sustaining America’s empire.

More specifically, the United States needs this partnership to counterbalance the emerging independence and power of the European Union, on which we have

depended for mutual cooperation since WW II. Today, the EU competes directly with the United States economically through various free trade agreements. The World Trade Organization and NATO are increasingly less responsive to the United States’ call to arms. As all nations compete for dwindling natural resources — especially precious metals and minerals needed in the electronic-industrial age — prosperity will result from creating an integrated North America with border regions extending across the entire northern Canadian-U.S. and U.S.-Mexican borders. The outer boundaries of this zone would be northern-most Canada and Alaska and southern-most Mexico.

Supercorridors and superports will be constructed to link these new cross-border security and prosperity regions. Plans call for the heartland of all three countries to be bisected by a vast multilane highway system, with six lanes for cars and four lanes for trucks. This would be paralleled by railroad lines and utility pipelines to export oil, natural gas, and water from production sites to manufacturing and distribution centers. These border regions would have benign-sounding names, such as “Atlantica” for northeastern Canada, New England, and northern New York.

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Ellen Barfield arrested at Alliant Tech Systems



Ellen Barfield, WILPF Board member and co-chair of the DISARM! committee, was among more than seventy people

arrested at Alliant Tech Systems in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in October 2006. Alliant is on WILPF's list of the Dirty Dozen weapons manufacturers. The



action was part of events that took place nationwide during Keep Space for Peace week.

➤ IF NOT WAR

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Water could be piped or delivered by tanker truck from water-rich territories of Canada, the northern United States, and jungles of southern Mexico to water-starved regions of central and southern United States, and central and northern Mexico. This could relieve, for example, drought conditions for agriculture, needs of water-hungry industries, and extreme conditions of water deprivation for such population centers as Mexico City.

Once bulk water crosses national boundaries by tanker truck or pipeline, it falls under the mandates of NAFTA. Attempts to curtail or halt its delivery because conditions change at the source could trigger a NAFTA trade dispute.

The Atlantica supercorridor would run from a superport in Nova Scotia down through Maine and across New Hampshire and upstate New York. It is typical in geographic scope of all other cross-border regions. The Trans-Texas Corridor is furthest along in planning, the toll road to be built and owned by a Spanish corporation, with government subsidies.

View and read a related PowerPoint presentation, Threats to Our Water: NAFTA, SPP, Super-Corridors, Atlantica . . . No Way! It's available at www.sierra-club.ca/national/postings/water-threats/nafta.pdf.

There is a movement to stop the Security and Prosperity Partnership in its tracks: in Eastern Canada it is "Atlantica, No Way;" and in Texas, it is "Corridor Watch" against the Trans-Texas Corridor.

Such integration would extend through Central America if Plan Puebla Panama is enacted. It is a multi-billion dollar development plan in progress to link the nine southern states of Mexico (Puebla and points south) with all of Central America, with a proposed new canal in Nicaragua to create a colossal free trade zone. If plans to hire Mexican truck drivers at cheap wages come to fruition, supertankers and thousands upon thousands of trucks will move goods for the U.S. consumer. After all, as George Bush, Sr., said at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, "We in the U.S. have a right to our life style." Such a plan, which uses non-renewable energy for transportation and generates many tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, will certainly affect the American lifestyle as we know it through global warming.

Now it is easier to understand the Zapatistas' struggle, beginning just after the signing of NAFTA in 1994, to protect their Lacandón jungle resources in southern Mexico from corporate profiteering and destruction. The protests by a broad spectrum of the Mexican people about the conservative victory in the presidential election in fall 2006 take on a new meaning.

What will it take for the people of the United States, once they learn more about this project, to mobilize on a scale similar to the Zapatistas to stop the military/industrial complex from robbing us of our last vestiges of a democracy and plundering our common natural resources?

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