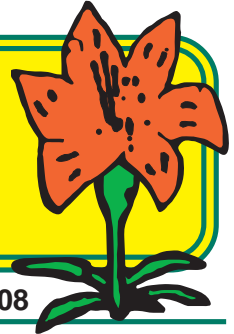


Seniors' Voice



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Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty. Power is ever stealing from the many to the few.

NAFTA's Legacy: The Worst Agreement We Ever Signed

MURRAY DOBBIN — March 5, 2008 at 7:10 PM EST

In the aftermath of Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's threats to "renegotiate" NAFTA — or pull out — the usual suspects have been activated to tell the world how wonderful the deal has been for Canada and the United States.

There is no doubt that the sector that devised the scheme in the first place and sold it to politicians have benefited greatly from this investors' rights agreement and its predecessor. The continent's largest corporations have greatly reduced regulatory impediments to their profits, radically lowered labour costs, gutted Canada's sovereign capacity to pass new environmental legislation and, in terms of investment restrictions, virtually erased the borders.

All of those corporate benefits, however, have been extremely bad for other aspects of Canada and for ordinary Canadians.

But first, let's dispose of a myth about free trade — the notion that it was responsible for massive increases in trade between the U.S. and Canada. According to an Industry Canada study, 91 per cent of the increase in trade in the 1990s was due to the cheap Canadian dollar and the sustained economic boom in the U.S. Now that our dollar is at par or higher, our manufacturing exports are plummeting.

But even if NAFTA were responsible for increased trade, Canadian workers have paid a huge price. Throughout the 1990s, federal governments

trumpeted the need to be "competitive" under NAFTA as an excuse to implement some of the most Draconian rollbacks of Canadian social programs ever undertaken. In the name of "labour flexibility," Paul Martin implemented drastic changes to EI eligibility, and repealed the Canada Assistance Plan, freeing the provinces to gut their welfare programs. His extreme low-inflation policy deliberately kept unemployment at high levels (8 per cent to 9 per cent) for most of the 1990s.

That meant that, throughout the decade, workers' real wages actually declined. They still have not caught up to 1981 levels. And the highly paid 220,000 industrial jobs lost as a result of NAFTA are gone forever, replaced by lower-paid jobs.

NAFTA was supposed to unleash a flood of foreign investment — boosting our industrial capacity and productivity. Instead, since the first trade agreement was signed, more than 95 per cent of direct foreign investment has been used to buy up Canadian companies. Head offices and research and development money has headed south, and Canada has seen a steady decline in manufactured goods as a percentage of its GDP for the past 10 years.

Our productivity has fallen behind that of the U.S. in virtually every year since the FTA came into effect in 1989.

The environment has also suffered almost continuously since the deals were signed — and

"The price that good people pay, for their indifference to public affairs, is to be ruled by evil men." — Plato

this is according to the Commission for Environmental Co-operation, the NAFTA agency responsible for monitoring the impact of the new regime. The North American Mosaic: The State of the Environment Report, released in 2001, declared that “North Americans are faced with the paradox that many activities on which the North American economy is based impoverish the environment on which our well-being ultimately depends.”

It might also have mentioned that Canada has not passed a major new environmental protection law since NAFTA came into effect — at least not successfully. In two instances where it did try, NAFTA’s investment chapter forced it to back off. In the Ethyl Corp. case, Canada tried to ban a gasoline additive, MMT, that damaged cars’ catalytic converters (not to mention our health). The company sued under NAFTA and Canada withdrew the law. The resulting chill effect means we have no idea how many proposed new laws have been killed in their cribs.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says Canada is an energy “superpower.” But next up is our water. The U.S. is already officially into its supply problems and it will, over the next 20 years, become a catastrophic crisis, outpacing even their predicted energy crisis.

NAFTA defines water as a good — meaning that, as soon as any provincial government signs a contract to export bulk water to the U.S. (by river diversion or tanker), nothing can stop further exports.

All of this, and for what? Allegedly, it was for guaranteed, predictable access to the U.S. market. But, of course, as the softwood lumber saga proved, there is no such thing. When its history is written, NAFTA could rightly be described as the worst agreement ever signed by a Canadian government. ■

Murray Dobbin, a Vancouver writer, is a columnist for the online magazine The Tye.

Editorial Note:

Clayton Yeutter, chief U.S. trade negotiator, just after the Canada/ U.S. Free Trade Agreement was signed on October 3, 1987 said, “We have just signed a stunning new trade pact with Canada. The Canadians don’t know what they have signed. In Twenty years, they will be sucked into the U.S. economy.”

Seniors’ Voice

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Rule by fear or rule by law?

By Lewis Seiler, Dan Hamburg

“The power of the Executive to cast a man into prison without formulating any charge known to the law, and particularly to deny him the judgment of his peers, is in the highest degree odious and is the foundation of all totalitarian government whether Nazi or Communist.”

— Winston Churchill, Nov. 21, 1943

Since 9/11, and seemingly without the notice of most Americans, the federal government has assumed the authority to institute martial law, arrest a wide swath of dissidents (citizen and noncitizen alike), and detain people without legal or constitutional recourse in the event of “an Emergency influx of immigrants in the U.S., or to support the rapid development of new programs.”

Beginning in 1999, the government has entered into a series of single-bid contracts with Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) to build detention camps at undisclosed locations within the United States.

The government has also contracted with several companies to build thousands of railcars, some reportedly equipped with shackles, ostensibly to transport detainees.

According to diplomat and author Peter Dale Scott, the KBR contract is part of a Homeland Security plan titled ENDGAME, which sets as its goal the removal of “all removable aliens” and “potential terrorists.”

Fraud-busters such as Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, have complained about these contracts, saying that more taxpayer dollars should not go to taxpayer-gouging Halliburton. But the real question is: What kind of “new programs” require the construction and refurbishment of detention facilities in nearly every state of the union with the capacity to house perhaps millions of people?

Sect. 1042 of the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), “Use of the Armed

Forces in Major Public Emergencies,” gives the executive the power to invoke martial law. For the first time in more than a century, the president is now authorized to use the military in response to “a natural disaster, a disease outbreak, a terrorist attack or any other condition in which the President determines that domestic violence has occurred to the extent that state officials cannot maintain public order.”

The Military Commissions Act of 2006, rammed through Congress just before the 2006 midterm elections, allows for the indefinite imprisonment of anyone who donates money to a charity that turns up on a list of “terrorist” organizations, or who speaks out against the government’s policies. The law calls for secret trials for citizens and noncitizens alike.

Also in 2007, the White House quietly issued **National Security Presidential Directive 51 (NSPD-51)**, to ensure “continuity of government” in the event of what the document vaguely calls a “catastrophic emergency.” Should the president determine that such an emergency has occurred, he and he alone is empowered to do whatever he deems necessary to ensure “continuity of government.” This could include everything from cancelling elections to suspending the Constitution to launching a nuclear attack. Congress has yet to hold a single hearing on NSPD-51.

U.S. Rep. Jane Harman, D-Venice (Los Angeles County) has come up with a new way to expand the domestic “war on terror.” Her **Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 (HR1955)**, which passed the House by the lopsided vote of 404-

6, would set up a commission to “examine and report upon the facts and causes” of so-called violent radicalism and extremist ideology, then make legislative recommendations on combatting it.

According to commentary in the Baltimore Sun, Rep. Harman and her colleagues from both sides of the aisle believe the country faces a native brand of terrorism, and needs a commission with sweeping investigative power to combat it.

A clue as to where Harman’s commission might be aiming is the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, a law that labels those who “engage in sit-ins, civil disobedience, trespass, or any other crime in the name of animal rights” as terrorists. Other groups in the crosshairs could be anti-abortion protesters, anti-tax agitators, immigration activists, environmentalists, peace demonstrators, Second Amendment rights

supporters ... the list goes on and on. According to author Naomi Wolf, the National Counterterrorism Center holds the names of roughly 775,000 “terror suspects” with the number increasing by 20,000 per month.

What could the government be contemplating that leads it to make contingency plans to detain without recourse millions of its own citizens?

The Constitution does not allow the executive to have unchecked power under any circumstances. The people must not allow the president to use the war on terrorism to rule by fear instead of by law. ■

Lewis Seiler is the president of Voice of the Environment, Inc. Dan Hamburg, a former congressman, is executive director. San Francisco Chronicle February 4, 2008

Quotation from Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

“First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. Then they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.”

The best way to make sure that our rights are respected is to make sure that the rights of others are respected.

Fight the causes of terrorism, not the symptoms.

Hands Off Serbia: No New U.S. Colony in Kosovo !!!

A Giant U.S. Military Base and Total Domination Is the Reality - NOT Independence. Serbian Demonstrators Show Resistance to U.S. Colonial-Style Land Seizure. — Sent: Friday, February 22, 2008 10:42 AM

The demonstration of over 500,000 people in Belgrade and the attack on the U.S. Embassy show the depth of outrage and anger over the seizure of the Serbian province of Kosovo. In the past three days two Kosovo border posts were destroyed, one by fire the other in an explosion,

along with ten McDonald’s outlets and several Western banks and other hated targets.

The Western media had overwhelming applauded the U.S. destruction in 1999 and it now has a responsibility to explain the reason

for the mass anger of millions of people. The outrage is because the province of Kosovo is not actually being granted “independence.” Millions of people see this week’s recognition of Kosovo “independence” as an effort to legitimize a direct U.S. colony and to permanently secure a giant U.S. military base in the region.

Regarding the hypocritical condemnation by Washington that angry demonstrators had targeted the U.S. Embassy, it should be remembered that when the U.S. bombed Serbia for 78 days in 1999, U.S. bombs destroyed the Chinese Embassy. Nineteen other diplomatic and consular missions were damaged in the U.S. bombing, along with 480 schools and 33 hospitals, heating plants, sewage plants, bridges, communications, the electric grid and other civilian targets.

The “declaration of independence” by Kosovo, a province of Serbia, and its immediate recognition as a state by the U.S., Germany, Britain and France, is a fraud. Three things should be understood about the events this week.

First, Kosovo is not gaining independence or even minimal self-government. Kosovo will be run by an appointed High Representative and bodies appointed by the U.S., European Union and NATO. An old-style colonial viceroy and imperialist administrators will have control over all aspects of foreign and domestic policy. Washington has merely consolidated its direct control of a totally dependent colony in the heart of the Balkans.

Second, Washington’s immediate recognition of Kosovo confirms once again that the U.S. government will break any and every treaty or international agreement it has ever signed, including agreements it drafted and imposed by force and violence on others.

The recognition of Kosovo is in direct violation of such law-specifically U.N. Security Council

Resolution 1244, by which the leaders of Yugoslavia were forced to sign to end the 78 days of NATO bombing of their country in 1999. Even this imposed agreement affirmed the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity” of Serbia, a republic of Yugoslavia.

Thirdly, U.S. imperialist domination does not benefit the occupied people. Kosovo after nine years of direct NATO military occupation has a staggering 60 percent unemployment rate. It has become a center of the international drug trade and of prostitution rings in Europe.

The once humming mines, mills, smelters, refining centers and railroads of this small resource-rich industrial area all sit silent. The resources of Kosovo under NATO occupation were forcibly privatized and sold to giant Western multinational corporations. Now almost the only employment is working for the U.S./NATO army of occupation or U.N. agencies.

The only major construction in Kosovo is of Camp Bondsteel, the largest U.S. base built in Europe in a generation. Halliburton, of course, got the contract. The U.S. base guards the strategic oil and transportation lines of the entire region.

Over 250,000 Serbian, Romani and other nationalities have been driven out of this Serbian province since it came under U.S./NATO control. Almost a quarter of the Albanian population has been forced to leave in order to find work.

The plan under which Kosovo’s “independence” is recognized by the U.S, Germany, France and Britain not only violates U.N. resolutions but it consolidates a total colonial structure. It is similar to the absolute power held by L. Paul Bremer in the first two years of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The documents setting out the new government for Kosovo are available at: unosek.org/unosek/en/statusproposal.html

Selfishness, greed, and lust for power, are the enemies of a civilized society.

A summary is available on the U.S. State Department's Web site at: state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/100058.htm

An International Civilian Representative (ICR) will be appointed by U.S. and E.U. officials to oversee Kosovo. This appointed official can overrule any measures, annul any laws and remove anyone from office in Kosovo. The ICR will have full and final control over the departments of Customs, Taxation, Treasury and Banking.

The E.U. will establish a European Security and Defence Policy Mission (ESDP) and NATO will establish an International Military Presence. Both these appointed bodies will have control over foreign policy, security, police, judiciary, all courts and prisons. They are guaranteed immediate and complete access to any activity, proceeding or document in Kosovo. These bodies and the ICR will have final say over what crimes can be prosecuted and against whom; they can reverse or annul any decision made. The largest prison in Kosovo is at the U.S. base, Camp Bondsteel, where prisoners are held without charges, judicial overview or representation.

The recognition of Kosovo's "independence" is just the latest step in a U.S. war of re-conquest of this strategic region. But as yesterday's massive demonstration shows this reckless and illegal maneuver may unleash a whirlwind of opposition and resistance.

U.S. Hands Off Serbia! U.S./NATO out of the Balkans! No to a new U.S. colony in Kosovo!

Sent by: The International Action Centre
February 22, 2008

The International Action Center sent a delegation to Serbia during the US/NATO bombing in 1999 and has published several books on the crisis in the Balkans, including *Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia*, *NATO in the Balkans: Voices of Opposition*, and *The Defense Speaks for History and the Future* - all available from Leftbooks.com.

John Smith.....

Looks for a Good Paying Job

1. He had set his alarm clock (made in Japan) for 6 am
2. While coffeepot (made in China) perks – he shaves electric razor (made in Hong Kong)
3. He puts on a dress shirt (made in Sir Lanka)
4. Designer jeans (made in Singapore)
5. Tennis shoes (made in Korea)
6. He sat down at his calculator (made in Mexico)
7. He set his watch (made in Taiwan)
8. Using his radio (made in India)
9. He got in his car (made in Germany)
10. Filled with gasoline (from Saudi Arabia)
11. He continued his search for a good paying American Job – no luck
12. John decided – relax, put on sandals (made in Brazil)
13. He poured a glass of wine (made in France)
14. He turned on his TV (made in Indonesia)
15. He wondered why no good paying jobs in America?

When Caregivers Forget to Take Care

“I’ll try to hold my breath ... just until we get through this next transition” ... “If I just push a little further, I can rest later” — but later never comes. If you provide care for a friend or family member, these strategies sound all too familiar.

Unfortunately caregivers are less likely than noncaregivers to get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise, stay in bed when sick or keep up with their own medical appointments.

If you are one of the generous individuals giving of your time, money and energy to care for an

older relative, but find yourself pushing your needle past empty on a regular basis, consider the effects of your priorities. When caregivers neglect their own needs, the result is often two people in need of help, rather than just the one initial care recipient. If your motivation is to provide the very best care, remember that keeping yourself physically and emotionally strong is a responsible and loving choice. You are the conduit of care — keep the lines in good shape.

5 Ways Self-Care Promotes Better Care of Others

If you are a caregiver:

1. Care recipients often reflect the stress of their caregivers. Organize routine respite into your schedule. This will help you feel balanced and reduce stress overall rather than waiting until you are overwhelmed, and creating a crisis for you and the person you are caring for.
2. Time you spend in meditation or prayer at your place of worship will help you remember why you have made the commitment to provide care, how much of the result is out of your control. Your job is to be the best possible companion on the journey.
3. Exercise helps protect you from injury, especially when the care recipient needs physical help such as assistance transferring to and from a wheelchair.
4. Prepare a list of things that need doing. This makes it easier to delegate when someone offers help. By letting others help, you are providing a web of support rather than a single lifeline.
5. Joining a support group to vent feelings can also connect you to information and resources about your care recipient's condition. This kind of information helps you anticipate certain needs and ask better questions of medical professionals.

You are the resource for care for your care recipient, they would be lost without you. Putting yourself first is the most unselfish act you could perform for your care recipient. If you are a Caregiver, be sure to take care, of **you!** ■

Submitted compliments of Dar Ruecker, Certified Senior Advisor, Conexus Credit Union, 780-1868.

Seniors' Chat

New Seniors' Drug Plan

Hello, my name is Don McMorris and I'm Saskatchewan's new Minister of Health. Included in my portfolio is responsibility for seniors' issues. I am excited about the challenges this portfolio brings, and I look forward to developing an important relationship with the seniors of our province. I believe my responsibility for seniors is a good fit with my other responsibilities as Minister of Health – there is a strong overlap of many issues of concern to seniors.



Hon. Don McMorris

Bearing this in mind, I am very pleased to tell you about the **Seniors' Drug Plan** – it recognizes the vital contribution that seniors have made to our province and is an important part of our new government's commitment to seniors and their well-being.

Under the new Seniors' Drug Plan, eligible seniors 65 years and older – with an individual annual net income of less than \$64,044 – will pay only \$15 per prescription for drugs listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary and those approved under Exception Drug Status.

However, **you must apply** to receive your coverage starting July 1, 2008. The existing seniors' drug plan coverage will remain in place until June 30 only.

All Saskatchewan seniors eligible for coverage starting July 1 received an application form and informational brochure in the mail in February. If you have not yet completed your application,

please do so as soon as possible to ensure that your Seniors' Drug Plan coverage is not interrupted as of July 1.

If you have questions about the Seniors' Drug Plan, contact the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch toll-free at **1-800-667-7581** or in **Regina at 787-3317**.

If you have any ideas or concerns about issues relating to seniors, please feel free to write to me at Room 302, Legislative Building, 2405 Legislative Drive, Regina, S4S 0B3, or phone my office at (306) 787-7345. I welcome your comments and look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don McMorris". The signature is stylized and cursive.

The Honourable Don McMorris
Minister of Health



Government of
Saskatchewan