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NORTH AMERICAN UNION "CONSPIRACY" EXPOSED

By Cliff Kincaid
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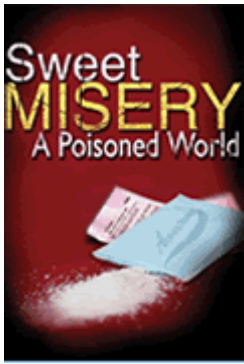
A top Democratic Party foreign policy specialist said on Friday that a "very small group" of conservatives is unfairly accusing him of being at the center of a "vast conspiracy" to implement the idea of a "North American Union" by "stealth." He called the charges "absurd."

But Robert Pastor, a former official of the Carter Administration and director of the Center for North American Studies at American University (CNAS), made the remarks at an all-day February 16 conference devoted to the development of a North American legal system. The holding of the conference was itself evidence that a comprehensive process is underway to merge the economies, and perhaps the social and political systems, of the three countries.

Pastor said that he favors a "North American Community," not a formal union of the three countries, and several speakers at the conference ridiculed the idea of protecting America's borders and suggested that American citizenship was an outmoded concept.

Wearing a lapel pin featuring the flags of the U.S., Canada and Mexico, Pastor told AIM that he favors a \$200-billion North American Investment Fund to pull Mexico out of poverty and a national biometric

The Council's honorary chairman is David Rockefeller and its board members come from such major corporations as Merck, PepsiCo, McDonald's, Ford, Citibank, IBM, Wal-Mart, Exxon Mobil, GE (which owns NBC News and MSNBC) and Time Warner (which owns CNN and Time Inc.).

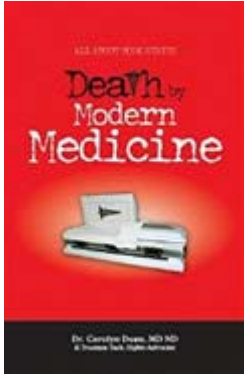
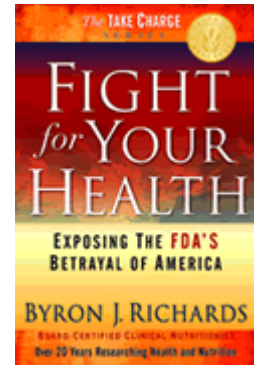


identity card for the purpose of controlling the movement of people in and out of the U.S.

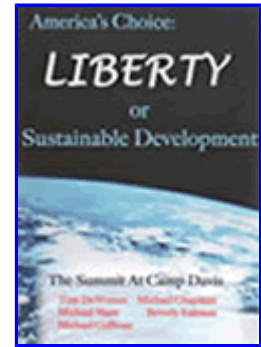
So the "conspiracy" is now very much out in the open, if only the media would pay some attention to it.

Media Cover-Up

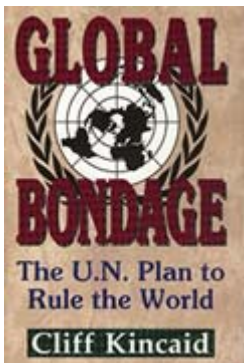
Accuracy in Media attended the conference in order to produce this report and shed light on a process that is being conducted largely beyond the scrutiny of the public or the Congress.



AIM has previously documented that Pastor's campaign for a North American Community has received precious little attention from the major media, except for the notable case of CNN's Lou Dobbs, who has called it "utterly mad." In fact, a survey of news coverage discloses that several high-profile mentions of the concept of a North American economic, social or political entity have come from Pastor himself, such as a Newsweek International article that he wrote.



The conference, conducted in cooperation with the American Society of International Law, an organization affiliated with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, was held at the American University Washington College of Law. A large number of speakers came from American University.



Overruling the U.S. Supreme Court

Academic literature distributed in advance to conference participants about a common legal framework for the U.S., Canada and Mexico included proposals for a North American Court of Justice (with the authority to overrule a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court), a North American Trade Tribunal, a North American Court of Justice, and a Charter of Fundamental Human Rights for North America, also dubbed the North American Social Charter.

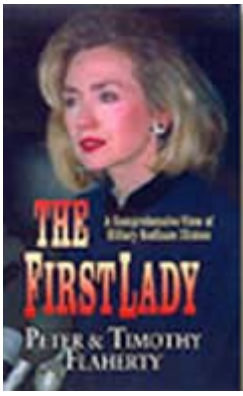


Under the latter concept, according to Laura Spitz of the University of Colorado Law School, North Americans might be able to enjoy "new rights" essential to "human flourishing" such as gay marriage. She argues in one paper that U.S. economic integration with Canada will make it nearly impossible for the United States not to recognize same-sex marriage so long as it is lawful in Canada.



Pastor himself talked about new institutions, such as a "permanent tribunal" on trade issues, but emphasized that such ideas "take time" and have to "take root." He advised conference participants to "think about the horizon," in terms of what is possible, over the course of 5, 10 or even 20 years from now.





Conservative concerns about Pastor's agenda were not assuaged by conference literature disclosing that the CNAS is sponsoring an event in May in which students participate in a model "North American Parliament." The concept suggests creation of a regional body to supersede the U.S. Government itself.

Such talk does indeed raise the specter of a North American Union similar to the currently functioning European Union, a political and economic entity of 27 European states that includes a European Parliament and a European Court of Justice. The EU has been charged with usurping the sovereignty of member states and moving European nations in a left-wing direction on matters such as acceptance of abortion and gay rights and abolition of the death penalty.

Indeed, the academic literature distributed to conference participants alluded to how the three countries of North America are "polarized" on "sensitive" cultural issues such as the death penalty, abortion and gay marriage and that it might take a long time to "harmonize" their legal systems on such matters.

While Pastor, a foreign policy advisor to each of the Democratic presidential candidates since 1976, tried to dismiss talk of a North American Union, he did emphasize in his remarks to the conference that North America is "more than a geographical entity" and is in fact a "community." His 2001 book, *Toward a North American Community*, begins by emphasizing his status as a resident of North America, rather than just a U.S. citizen, and outlines a vision of the three countries taking their relationship "to a new level."

Rather than use the phrase "union," he described the creation of an "emerging entity called North America" growing out of the fact that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), passed in 1993, had brought about a "remarkable degree of economic integration" among the three countries. One panel was devoted to analyzing how NAFTA could be expanded into the areas of intellectual property and taxation and regulations.

Attacking Conservatives

One speaker, Stephen Zamora of the University of Houston Law School, denounced the idea of a wall separating Mexico and the U.S., in order to control illegal immigration, asking, "What does citizenship mean anymore?" He expressed pleasant surprise when a Mexican in the audience said she had dual citizenship in Mexico and the U.S. Later, he said he was just as concerned about people living in Mexico as people living in the U.S.

Another speaker, Tom Farer, Dean of the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver, made a point of saying that his representative in Congress, Tom Tancredo (R-Col.), a staunch advocate of U.S. border security, was a backward thinker. Tancredo could be seen "dragging his knuckles along the ground," Farer said, trying to crack a joke.

No Border Control

Pastor acknowledged that the U.S. Government doesn't want to enforce its immigration laws. He said, however, that the solution is not a fence, except in some isolated high-crime areas along the border, and it's not to punish companies for hiring illegal aliens, since identity documents can be too easily forged. He said the solution is a national biometric and fraud-proof identification card that identifies national origin and legal status.

Another part of his solution, a \$200-billion North American Investment Fund, is for the purpose of narrowing the income disparity between Mexico, on the one hand, and the U.S. and Canada, on the other. "You need a lot of money to do it and do it effectively," he said. He said Mexico would be required to put up half of the money, with the U.S. contributing 40 percent and Canada 10 percent. It would be done over 10 years.

The fund, he said, would focus on economic development in the southern and middle parts of Mexico, which haven't been touched to any significant degree by NAFTA. This, he indicated, would go a long way toward stemming illegal immigration to the U.S.

So the failures of NAFTA are now being used not to repeal the measure but to expand it and increase foreign aid to Mexico.

Pastor said Senator John Cornyn, known as a conservative Republican, had introduced his North American Investment Fund as a bill in Congress but had backed away from it under conservative fire.

The Nature of NAFTA

An important moment in the conference occurred when Alan Tarr, director of the Center for State Constitutional Studies at Rutgers University, was challenged about glossing over President Clinton's submission of NAFTA as an agreement, requiring only a majority of votes in both Houses of Congress for passage, and not a treaty, requiring a two-thirds vote in favor in the Senate. NAFTA passed by votes of 234-200 in the House and 61-38 in the Senate. Tarr said he had not intended to be uncritical of what Clinton did. Pastor quickly interjected that there was nothing improper in submitting NAFTA as an agreement rather than a treaty.

But Clinton's move was seen at the time as an effort to bypass constitutional processes, and the United Steelworkers challenged NAFTA's constitutionality in court. The case reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 2001, after lower courts had thrown the case out, saying it was a political matter between the president and Congress. The Bush Administration sided with Clinton and the Supreme Court declined to get involved.

The history of NAFTA is one reason why so many conservatives are concerned that a North American Community could be transformed into a North American Union that runs roughshod over U.S. constitutional processes and guarantees.

One of the main concerns of conservatives, who have formed a "Coalition to Block the North American Union," has been the lack of congressional interest and oversight. They are backing a bill introduced by Rep. Virgil Goode (R-Va.) to put Congress on record against a North American Union.

The Secretive SPP

Another major concern is that the Bush Administration has facilitated the creation of this new North American "entity" through an initiative known as the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), based on a memorandum signed by President Bush and the leaders of Canada and Mexico in March 2005. It is described as "a trilateral effort to increase security and enhance prosperity among the United States, Canada and Mexico through greater cooperation and information sharing," but its "working groups" have been operating in secret and many of the members are not even known.

Judicial Watch, a conservative public-interest law firm, had to go through the Freedom of Information Act to obtain documents naming the members of some of the mysterious working groups.

Officially, on the U.S. side, the SPP is coordinated by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, and Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez.

The Clinton Connection

Pastor's luncheon speaker, Eric Farnsworth, the Vice-President of the Council of the Americas, provided some valuable insight into this process. Saying NAFTA is "no longer enough," he described the SPP as designed to help North America meet the economic challenges posed by such countries as China and India.

Farnsworth said that the Council of the Americas, which advises the SPP, would shortly issue 300 recommendations designed to improve business conditions in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. He was

unclear as to whether the U.S. Government would try to implement these initiatives on its own, through the administrative or regulatory process, or whether they would be submitted to Congress for approval.

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One of the key board members is Thomas F. McLarty III, President of Kissinger McLarty Associates, who served as Clinton's White House counselor and chief of staff during the time that NAFTA was signed and passed by Congress. McLarty, who also functioned as Special Envoy to the Americas under Clinton, is an adviser to the Carlyle Group, focusing on "buyout investment opportunities in Mexico."

Farnsworth mentioned the possible creation of a "super-national Supreme Court" governing business and trade issues in North America, but was ambiguous about whether it would ever come to pass.

A self-described Democrat who served as policy director in the Clinton White House Office of the Special Envoy for the Americas from 1995-98, he also said that he was optimistic that Bush would strike a deal with the new Democratic-controlled Congress on immigration. He said Bush was "at odds with his own party" on immigration and that legislation to create a so-called "guest worker" program could pass now that Republicans have lost control of Congress.

The Panama Canal Giveaway

For his part, Pastor, a friendly and engaging fellow who talks about his ideas at length with critics, has a history that goes far beyond deep personal involvement in the Democratic Party.

Pastor is associated by conservatives with President Jimmy Carter's treaty, opposed by then-presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, which transferred control of the Panama Canal away from the U.S. to the Panamanian government. Pastor was National Security Advisor for Latin America under Carter. His nomination as U.S. Ambassador to Panama was withdrawn in 1995 after conservative Senator Jesse Helms, then-chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, threatened to block a vote on his nomination. Helms accused Pastor of aiding radical forces and undermining U.S. interests in the region.

The founding director of the Latin American and Caribbean Program of the [Jimmy] Carter Center, Pastor became Vice President of International Affairs and Professor of International Relations at American University on September 1, 2002, when he created

his Center for North American Studies. Pastor also served as vice chair of a Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on the Future of North America, which issued a report in May 2005. Lately, Pastor's Center for North American Studies has received funding from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to address "regulatory convergence" issues.



A sour note about the prospect of further integration with Mexico was provided at the conference by Alberto Szekely, a career ambassador and advisor to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said that the rule of law simply does not exist in Mexico and that corruption permeates governmental institutions. He said reforms under the presidency of Vicente Fox went nowhere and that Mexico is one of the most corrupt countries in the world today.

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Ironically, however, he said that the development of a North American legal system might in some way assist in cleaning up the Mexican legal system.

Pastor, an optimist about the prospect of developing the North American Community, told me that he didn't think the situation in Mexico was as bleak as Szekely made it out to be. He continues to be a proponent of "continental thinking."

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Cliff Kincaid, a veteran journalist and media critic, Cliff concentrated in journalism and communications at the University of Toledo, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

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Cliff has appeared on Hannity & Colmes, The O'Reilly Factor, Crossfire and has been published in the Washington Post, Washington Times, Chronicles, Human Events and Insight.

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