

Government selling out

Sovereignty put in danger as the government moves towards North American unionization



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author of the column

Why is it that the Canadian government is enforcing American border and legal policies? Is our government forfeiting our sovereignty in exchange for American ideologies regarding war and censorship? Recent examples highlight the unconstitutionality of policies that are just the tip of the iceberg of a union between the USA, Mexico and Canada known as the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP).

THE AMERICAN WAR ON DRUGS IS A WAR ON THE ENVIRONMENT, A WAR ON SOCIAL RIGHTS, A WAR ON FREEDOM AND A WAR ON COMMON SENSE, BUT IT CARRIES ON BLINDLY AND WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS.

Three times in the past four months, while trying to enter Canada to attend anti-SPP and anti-war rallies, Jim Wright (a former US state department official and now an anti-war activist) has been held by border officials or denied entrance into Canada. The most recent incident occurred even though he had been invited to speak by members of parliament. She was denied entrance to Canada because her name came up on an FBI database (National Criminal Information Center), though she has only ever been arrested for non-violent protest. Two years before this, three Ca-

nadian activists were arrested in Halifax by the RCMP at the request of the American Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). These three now face extradition to the US and life imprisonment in its overstuffed prison system.

One of the three could also face the death penalty. In Canada, no legal action was taken against two of the activists and fines totaling \$5000 were given to the other. Not one of them has a criminal record. The Americans considered one of these individuals, Marc Scott Emery, to be one of the most wanted drug kingpins in the world - responsible for 1.1 million pounds of marijuana (eighty-two thousand kilograms) worth over three billion dollars. The Americans consider one need to equal one kilogram.

Canada considered him harmless and accepted over half a million in income taxes from 1995-2005 with "marijuana seed vendor" listed as his occupation. Emery's profits were used to fund the anti-prohibition movement in Canada and the US.

Every time Emery was featured in a positive light in American popular media, such as in stories by CNN, the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and two features on 60 minutes, the DEA had Canadian authorities raid his shops and arrest him. Charges were dropped, fines were paid (if any fines were laid) and Emery went back to selling seeds. After his July 29, 2005 arrest, the head of the DEA, Karen Tandy, released a memo indicating that the



FREEDOM - Protesters at the Security and Prosperity Partnership Summit in Montebello, Quebec.

arrest "is a significant blow not only to the marijuana trafficking trade in the US and Canada, but also to the marijuana legalization movement." The DEA wanted Emery for his political activity and his "propaganda" magazine, *Canadian Culture*. Emery's extradition hearing is scheduled to begin on January 21, 2008. If he is extradited, we will have proof that our government is promoting a US policy that we don't officially endorse to (yet, at least). We will be handing over Canadians to die in the US for actions that we do not even consider to be crimes here.

Michelle Salony, one of Emery's co-accused, is a medical marijuana advocate and uses the plants to manage her late-stage Crohn's disease. In American jails, she will be forced to use dangerous and ineffective pharmaceuticals. The other accused, Greg Williams, could quite possibly die of

old age in prison, giving the term "life sentence" extra gravity. These people may lose their lives in the US while in Canada they operated in a legal grey zone and were allowed to continue with tacit approval of authorities and the government. In Canada, we can sell paraphernalia with which to consume marijuana as well as books about it without fear of prosecution. We can legally grow hemp crops for nutrition, building supplies and textiles. We can pay taxes on the profits made from selling seeds.

If we can do all of these things legally, how can Canadians face possible extradition to the US and life imprisonment there for making through Canada Post, any of these items to America? Our government is trying to bring the war on drugs to Canada, along with prohibitionist American policies.

For the sake of Canadian sovereignty, I hope that our courts and our government will resist lowest common denominator harmonization with American policies, which have not worked since their introduction and have led to, according to the FBI, over 17 million marijuana-related arrests since 1965. Just this year, they may make one million arrests.

The American war on drugs is a war on the environment, a war on social rights, a war on freedom and a war on blindly and with disastrous results. By importing the US war on drugs to Canada, Stephen Harper is continuing the Lewinsky-style action with Bush. Unfortunately, the only stain will be on Canadian sovereignty regarding policy and policing.

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