

NALS 2017

Blueprint for an agenda

I. Unfinished Business:

The Joint Declaration by the leaders of the three North American countries in Toluca in 2014 reveals unfinished business in its goal to make “21st Century North America.....the Most Competitive and Dynamic Region in the World” and to set “new global standards for trade, education, sustainable growth, and innovation.” Reference to “new global standards” indicates the region’s interest in engagement with the world and that North American global engagement, perhaps even more than commitments to trusted traveller programs and transportation plans, - which focus on the region’s competitiveness agenda - goes to the heart of what North America could and should do and be in the global context. The guiding principle here is clearly North American competitiveness.

II. A fundamental proposition regarding democratic legitimacy:

The combined efforts of the triumvirate of the US, a global hegemonic power, Canada, a highly

networked middle power, and Mexico a large dynamic and relatively youthful developing country, working together on major global challenges facing humanity today –in particular climate, health, and food security – should send a powerful message to the world about the legitimacy necessary for any approach to global issues. Initiatives generated by our North American triumvirate will have strong moral and political legitimacy in a global context, having been decided in three democratic countries taking into account the needs of their own populations.

III. Agenda items:

An agenda for NALS 2017 should see:

1. The termination of all Canadian visa requirements on Mexicans;
2. The conclusion of negotiations regarding the details of a Trusted Traveller Program;
3. Further details on a trilateral climate accord in line with the 2015 Paris declaration, an accord suitable for potential further expansion into the Hemisphere;
4. Programs for energy partnerships and innovation that deal with both traditional and renewable forms of energy;
5. An innovation agenda with that brings together accelerators, research councils and communities

of corporate interests from all three countries to tackle the global threats posed by environment/climate, health, and food supply.

IV. Work from the proposition that climate is a fundamental priority for foreign policy

As threats posed by health and food supply tend to circle back to climate, climate becomes central to our foreign policy with respect to North America, and beyond.

V. Innovation

Connect innovation imperative to global challenge themes: climate, energy, health, and food security.

Innovation is a preoccupation in all three North American countries so it must be an important theme at NALS 2017, and should therefore be a guiding principle for the meeting agenda.

Innovation links to research and education:
There has been much talk over the years of expansion of student exchanges in all three countries. Canada has an “international education strategy” and Mexico is part of it, but not a large part. Rather than belabour the dearth of student exchanges involving Mexico

and Canada, we should turn the focus to research partnerships and joint initiatives by national research councils for both sciences and humanities.

VI. Trilateralize high-level bilateral initiatives

The three countries should push to trilateralize the High Level groups that the US and Mexico have formed to discuss both economic and educational issues. The US-Mexico High-level Economic Dialogue, and the “FOBESII” -

U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research: Connecting Tomorrow's Leaders Today meet every year and Canada would likely be very welcome to join the FOBESII, yet it has not yet done so. This should prompt a discussion among the three countries.

VII. Trilateralize efforts on health

-Canada and Mexico are working together on initiatives to combat the Zika virus that has been plaguing many countries in the Americas.in recent years.

- The fight against the SARS /H1N1 virus was an example of very strong Canadian-Mexican cooperation and collaboration.

- Monterrey- Manitoba joint research initiative on blood cholesterol in the 1980s is another health collaboration example that is also relevant to food security

VIII. Trilateral Climate/Energy initiatives

This is an issue area that is well-established and should serve as a model for other types of cooperation:

- At a two-day meeting in Winnipeg earlier this year, the North American energy ministers signed a memorandum of understanding that established a number of working groups. Specifically, these groups deal with low-carbon electricity; clean energy technologies; energy efficiency; carbon capture, use and storage; climate change adaptation; and emissions reductions from the oil and gas sector.

Food Security

Growing Food and Justice for All Initiative

- again Manitoba and Monterrey, barley research initiative
refer to Canada Among Nations volume *Canada and Mexico: Unfinished Business*

To effectively establish a foreign policy profile that brings it “back” to the world stage Canada should link that theme with the need to confront global challenges that face not only North America, but also the Americas region, and the entire world. In Paris, we certainly started out strongly in that regard.

IX. Common Challenges around free trade agreements

As TPP has been so contentious in the three countries it would make sense to discuss the creation of some kind of joint commission on trade agreement challenges. A commission that makes use both of policy networks in all three countries and digital diplomacy.