

GroupThink ReSpun: On US Police Forces Operating in Canada

by GroupThink ReSpun - Tuesday, May 29, 2012

<https://politicsrespun.org/2012/05/groupthink-respun-on-us-police-forces-operating-in-canada/>

We have decided that "GroupThink ReSpun" will be the name of the process whereby various of the Politics, Re-Spun crew collaborate on editorializing about a current event. Enjoy the poetry of the term!

So apparently, the RCMP wants to ease into allowing US agents to operate freely in Canada:

<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/canada-politics/rcmp-ease-canadians-idea-u-agents-canada-201905380.html>

1. Do you want to be American? Discuss.

Amputating one of my limbs with a nail clipper and then sewing it to my forehead sounds more appealing, really. I don't make a very good American. Clinging to my sacred socialist cows and such. - Tia

First of all, this question makes me want to sing "I am not American" by the Arrogant Worms. I, too, wonder how two entire continents can lose their identity to one constituent. Secondly, no. I do not want to be an American. I find it distressing that being Canadian increasingly means being saddled with failed American political policies, ten years out of date. – Anna

Despite parts of my idealistic self liking their historical rhetoric about democracy, freedom and such, their inability to implement it and all that current and historical imperialism demonstrate that actually joining that club is not a good thing. - Stephen

2. The FTA and NAFTA were the beginnings of an economic love-in with the USA. Is developing closer ties to the USA handcuffing ourselves to a drowning man or a good move for Canadians?

Albatross. Neck. Millstone. Neck. - Tia

Let's be honest. American hegemony essentially died with the Iraq war (v2.0) and the American economy isn't exactly winning all the monies, either. I'd like to see Canada develop greater distance from the U.S., but since Harper seems hell-bent of carrying out his creepy, Buffalo Bill-style inhabitation of Bush's political skin, I don't see that happening. Come on. You know he has a Bush costume he puts on when he wants to feel pretty. – Anna

I've always felt free trade was always a great policy to pursue when your nation already is strong, so you would get an unfair advantage over weaker nations who are trying protectionism to improve their standard of living, you your nation had done. The global economic system is founded upon exacerbating inequality. Solutions lie in post-neoliberal trade, like fair trade and ecologically sustainable economic activity. So the FTA and NAFTA are not good in that sense. Plus America is in monstrous economic

decline and has been for a generation, so increasing ties with them is a problem. - Stephen

3. Most Canadians don't like NAFTA [<http://canadians.org/blog/?p=15196>], so would this kind of security cooperation be welcome to Canadians?

I would like to believe that most Canadians inherently enjoy being citizens of a sovereign nation with its own boundaries & with rules and legislation more or less untainted by the interests of an outside nation. The idea of the US government being able to operate autonomously with any sort of gravity within our borders is frightening at best. - Tia

Honestly, this is like trying to get your kid over his dislike of baths by sticking him in the washing machine. - Anna

Security cooperation, even for a weekend, is a crisis in sovereignty. Why don't we develop security cooperation agreements with Russia or some place? Simple, we don't want to develop critical dependence with a country like that. Sure, the USA is physically close [and imperialistic, and threatening, and has lots of guns and a desire for resources under our part of the melting Arctic], but is that any reason to give them a house key? - Stephen

4. Should Canadians be worried about our sovereignty, privacy and civil liberties with American policing agencies operating here freely?

In a word? YES. - Tia

Of course we should. We've seen the sterling work American agencies have done of respecting their own citizens' liberties. - Anna

Yes, easily. However, I will add that even if we were to stop or reverse any security harmonization with anyone, federal and provincial governments in Canada are already doing a great job of undermining our privacy and civil liberties:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/24/opinion/our-not-so-friendly-northern-neighbor.html>. - Stephen

5. Why won't Stephen Harper defend our sovereignty instead of engaging in more perimeter/continental security schemes?

Puppet. Strings. Dennis Lee said it best in a poem that appeared in his book "The Difficulty of Living on Other Planets."

"When I went up to Ottawa,
I met man who sang tra la.
What did you do with the country today?
I gave it away, to the USA!" - Tia

Because he's not interested in Canada, he's interested in power. And money. Which is another way of saying "power". - Anna

His economic agenda for a very long time was for more economic integration with the USA. This kind of integration leads to more strangleholds on neoliberal policies, like in the EU, which makes it harder for us to domestically fight for progressive economics. The same works for security and rights. The Conservative government has open contempt for democracy, so partnering with the USA on security and punitive policing accomplishes the same goal as his economic agenda. - Stephen

6. How contemptuous or condescending is it for the RCMP to want to ease Canadians into the notion of accepting American police forces operating here?

It was kind of them to buy some Vaseline before they decided to ram an unwanted, crooked foreign object up our asses without permission. - Tia

My knee jerk reaction is to say "very". But upon reflection, the contemptuous thing is allowing American forces to operate in Canada at all. Metaphorically taking the country out to dinner and using lube before attempting to violate us is just common sense. Otherwise, there would be violent uprising in the street, or at least a sternly worded online petition. - Anna

In the old days, authorities wouldn't come right out and say that we're stupid and need to be managed. But now the level of contempt that our governments and security organizations have for civil rights is so blatant that they're fine just saying nonsense like that. We should all be banging pots and pans in the streets. - Stephen

7. We have been harmonizing our regulatory and border security systems with the USA at a faster pace since 911. We generally go with their weaker standards. How will this initiative weaken Canada's identity?

If you keep siphoning off booze from your father's stash, and replacing it with water, eventually you'll have nothing but water. So goes our identity. The more you dilute our legal system and security with that of the USA, we become more and more diluted and less Canadian. - Tia

It galls me that we're constantly sold this narrative that our standards are weak, and that Canada is practically a nursery school for terrorists, and that our Polite Canadian Standards will DOOM US ALL. I would like to make the radical proposition that instead of assimilating, we try cooperating. Like, actually cooperating, for realsies. It's an idea so crazy it just might work. - Anna

When a large company "merges" with a smaller one, it's not an equal deal. There are two different parties with a unique, often deeply tilted balance of power. However much anyone talks about equality in the new relationship, the larger body will define more of it. So harmonizing with the USA on pesticide issues [we raced to the bottom and adopted their weak standards] or on trade or on security means our larger neighbour will dictate more than there are equal discussions. And given the Conservative government's contempt for democracy, embracing the Americans in the security arena means adopting their more fascist elements. - Stephen