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Sped-up NAFTA renegotiation, using TPP blueprint, draws condemnation across borders

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The second round of NAFTA talks begin on Friday in Mexico City and negotiators are being pressured by government leaders and corporations to reach completion quickly, with language inserted from the failed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). In the meantime, President Trump's threat to withdraw the U.S. from NAFTA only creates unnecessary confrontation.

"President Trump's threat to withdraw from NAFTA is a reckless and damaging negotiating tactic designed to accelerate the talks, not achieve real reform that improves the lives of people in all three countries," said Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Senior Policy Analyst, Steve Suppan. "Trump's Wall Street and corporate backers want the conclusion of NAFTA re-negotiations before the 2018 elections. Thus far, NAFTA 2.0 is based mostly on the TPP text that Trump's well-publicized withdrawal from the TPP appeared to repudiate. Pay attention to what Trump's Wall Street and corporate backers demand, since the proposed NAFTA texts from the U.S. negotiators will be secret unless they are leaked."

Despite Trump's rhetoric, Mexicans are just as fed up with the renegotiation. "**Accelerated NAFTA negotiations imposed mainly by Trump are, on the part of Mexico, a surrender**" is the message [issued by 70 Mexican labor, farm, environment, and human rights groups in a unified Declaration](#) when over 10,000 people marched in Mexico City, two weeks ago, to protest the opening of the NAFTA talks. "Mexican negotiators are so fixated on keeping NAFTA and completing its modernization before entering fully into the [Mexican 2018] electoral cycle that they are willing to give in to any demand of the US government and transnational corporations." [IATP has translated this document into English.](#)

Instead, the Mexican groups call for an entirely different approach, a "Complementarity and Cooperation Agreement in North America" to benefit the peoples of the three countries. Noting that trade and investment in Mexico will continue under other rules, including those of the World Trade Organization, the signatories to the Declaration state, "If the US government does not accept this negotiating framework, we should not be afraid if NAFTA ends. It is better to have no agreement than a worse agreement."

Civil society organizations from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada issued similar proposals at [a trilateral strategy meeting](#) in May in Mexico City. Karen Hansen Kuhn, IATP's Director of

International Strategies, who attended that meeting, said “We’ve all been stating clearly what needs to happen. We need a transparent process and rules that advance sustainable local food systems and enhance rural economies. We don’t need another TPP in disguise.”

As an ongoing tool for understanding NAFTA, IATP has released a primer paper, “[NAFTA Renegotiation: What's at stake for food, farmers and the land?](#)” as well as collecting 25 years’ worth of research in a NAFTA portal accessible at www.iatp.org/collection/nafta-portal.

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Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C. and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy connects the dots of global justice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.