



“Three Amigos” Summit Accomplishes Nothing

The so-called “Three Amigos” summit among the executive leaders of the United States, Canada, and Mexico in Guadalajara last weekend ended August 10 with nothing being accomplished more than a three-day photo-op and press releases containing vague platitudes.



Officially, the North American Summit was supposed to tackle issues like H1N1 Swine Flu virus, immigration, trade issues, and drug gangs in Mexico. But the press releases, joint statements, and press conferences at the end of the summit revealed that no new agreement had been reached on any issue.

One example of the meaninglessness of the summit is the [proclamation](#) that “North American trade is a vital component of our economic well-being and we pledge to abide by our international responsibilities and avoid protectionist measures.” The first half of that statement is obvious foolishness; without any trade in North America, there wouldn’t even be an economy — let alone “economic well-being.” But the second half of the proclamation did nothing to assuage Mexican concerns about the ban on Mexican trucking in the United States or the Canadian objection to “Buy American” provisions in the “stimulus” law. In the end, all the “Three Amigos” could do was to adopt a statement of general platitudes at the conclusion of the summit.

In reality, there was nothing Obama could do about either trade item; Congress is charged with making all the laws under the U.S. Constitution. And Obama is not especially inclined to wage a major campaign on any of these issues until his current agenda has gone through Congress.

Take immigration reform for an example. “With respect to immigration reform,” Obama [said](#) in a press conference at the conclusion of the summit, “I continue to believe that is also in the long-term interests of the United States. We have a broken immigration system. Nobody denies it.” But that doesn’t mean Obama intends to do anything about immigration. Just about the next words out of his mouth was talk about the top of his legislative agenda. “Now, I’ve got a lot on my plate, and it’s very important for us to sequence these big initiatives in a way where they don’t all just crash at the same time. And what we’ve said is in the fall when we come back, we’re going to complete health care reform. We still have to act on energy legislation that has passed the House, but the Senate, I’m sure, is going to have its own ideas about how it wants to approach it. We still have financial regulatory reform that has to get done because we don’t want a situation in which irresponsible actions in the global financial markets can precipitate another crisis. That’s a pretty big stack of bills.”

Yeah, that’s a stack of three bills. And Congress typically passes about 100 pieces of legislation per year. So from now on when Obama says immigration reform is a “long term” issue he’d like pursued, think “for the next guy who’s president.”

Even in Guadalajara, Obama couldn’t resist talking about his plan to increase the costs of healthcare for



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 11, 2009

all Americans. "I suspect that once we get into the fall and people look at the actual legislation that's being proposed," Obama [told](#) the Guadalajara audience of newspaper reporters, "that more sensible and reasoned arguments will emerge, and we're going to get this passed."

But, of course, the irrefutable truth that the Obama plan is actually more expensive than the current system is precisely why Americans have become so widely opposed to Obama's healthcare package. The possible death knell of Obama's healthcare package was a report by the independent Congressional Budget Office, which [concluded](#) that passage of the Senate version "would result in a net increase in federal deficits of about \$1.0 trillion for fiscal years 2010 through 2019." The CBO concluded the primary [House version of the legislation](#) would increase the deficit by \$239 billion, substantially less, but it would also contain a huge \$583 billion tax increase.

AP Images: Stephen Harper, Felipe Calderon and Barack Obama



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