

# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®

## Party of three: The U.S.-Canada-Mexico meet-up is all smiles

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President Barack Obama met Wednesday in Ottawa with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto for the annual North American Leaders' Summit, a gathering focused on energy and environmental questions this year.

Talks also inevitably included the threat to global stability occasioned by Britain's vote last week to leave the European Union and Tuesday's lethal terrorist attack at Istanbul's main airport. The general spirit of calm understanding among the three leaders contrasted sharply with the bitterness on the European continent and within Britain, where both the ruling Conservative Party and opposition Labour Party are in full-bore post-Brexit tumult.

Canada, Mexico and the U.S. agreed to reduce the escape of oil and gas-generated methane by 45 percent by 2025. They also pledged that half of their energy would be generated from clean sources and to phase out government fossil fuel subsidies by 2025.

U.S. cooperation with its two neighbors will come under attack as the presidential campaign enters its final months. Issues will include immigration, border security from terrorists and the impact of trade — particularly under the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement. No matter who wins in November, the long-term effect of NAFTA on U.S. jobs and wages will have to be confronted by our government.

It was important that the leaders meet for a personal exchange of views in advance of what may be an ugly volley of charges and insults looming. Likely Republican candidate Donald Trump's statements about building a wall along the Mexican border and obliging Mexico to pay for it put the thought of a future tripartite Canada-Mexico-U.S. summit into the trainwreck category.

Whatever happens next, it is important to remember, particularly in comparison with developments in Europe during the past century and recent days, what prevails along these borders. The 5,525 mile U.S.-Canadian border is profoundly peaceful and quiet; the 1,989-mile U.S.-Mexican border is marked by immigration tensions at various points but is not a source of hostility between the nations. Americans should not overlook the \$162 billion in U.S. exports that went to those two countries during the first four months of 2016.

If that isn't enough, there is every reason to believe that Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Pena Nieto will be ready to work out better arrangements for Americans in the future, if we don't burn our bridges.