

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

**Letter to President Trump on NAFTA by former SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM  
Commanders**

Dear Mr. President:

We join you and all Americans in supporting a secure and economically vibrant United States. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) directly supports these goals. As you negotiate to update NAFTA, we encourage you, as former Commanders of U.S. NORTHERN Command and U.S. SOUTHERN Command, to strengthen U.S. commitment to the agreement itself.

Effective pursuit of U.S. security and economic interests depends on partnership with those nations that share our borders, Canada and Mexico. While contributing to economic growth, NAFTA has also established a framework of trust among all three parties, leading to close cooperation to address a range of pressing concerns including drug trafficking, terrorism, cyber security, organized crime, and migration. These issues are regional, with criminal and terrorist networks operating beyond the borders of any one country; they require regional responses.

Without NAFTA, cooperation with our North American neighbors will be less likely, weakening our ability to confront security challenges. And in a broader sense, recommitting to NAFTA would reassure Canada and Mexico and also our allies globally that they can continue to depend on U.S. commitments, particularly as China becomes increasingly assertive.

Economically, NAFTA was designed to increase trade and investment among its three parties; promote North American economic competitiveness; and support a vision of open market democracy for Mexico providing that nation with a clear path toward political and economic development. It has succeeded.

U.S. trade in goods and services with Canada and Mexico increased from \$307 billion in 1993 to well over \$1 *trillion* by 2017, under a rules-based framework of predictability. More than 40 U.S. states now count either Canada or Mexico as their top export destination. Withdrawing from NAFTA would reduce U.S. competitiveness and depress U.S. growth, costing Americans jobs in the real economy.

Even so, Mr. President, NAFTA is far more than a trade agreement – it is a core aspect of our national security. We respectfully ask you to update and strengthen the agreement on a mutually-beneficial basis, while ensuring it remains a part of the U.S. strategic arsenal for many years to come.

Sincerely,

General Bantz J. Craddock  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (2004-2006)

General Douglas M. Fraser  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (2009-2012)

Admiral William E. Gortney  
Commander, NORTHCOM (2014-2016)

General James T. Hill  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (2002-2004)

Admiral Timothy J. Keating  
Commander, NORTHCOM (2004-2007)

General Barry R. McCaffrey  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (1994-1996)

General Victor E. Renuart  
Commander, NORTHCOM (2007-2010)

Admiral James G. Stavridis  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (2006-2009)

General Charles E. Wilhelm  
Commander, SOUTHCOM (1997-2000)

Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr.  
Commander, NORTHCOM (2010-2011)