

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation Co-Chairs' Meeting

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Washington, D.C., United States of America

April 16, 2007

Report

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WASHINGTON, D.C. 16 APRIL 2007

On April 16, 2007, Senator Jerry Grafstein and Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chairs of the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, travelled to Washington, D.C. to meet with the newly appointed co-chairs of the U.S. Section of the Group, Senator Amy Klobuchar (D) and Representative Jim Oberstar (D), both from Minnesota.

Representative Oberstar has attended the annual meeting of the Group for a number of years. Since Senator Klobuchar is newly elected to both the U.S. Senate and the role of co-chair of the Group, however, Senator Grafstein, Mr. Merrifield and Representative Oberstar provided her with information on the Group and its activities.

During the meeting, a variety of topics related to the bilateral relationship and the upcoming annual meeting of the Group, to be held in Windsor in May 2007, were discussed.

It was determined that appropriate topics for the opening plenary session of the annual meeting will be:

- progress regarding the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and efforts that are still needed (particularly since cross-border business and tourism continue to be affected);
- other issues related to the shared border (including border protection, border capacity, and the removal of Canada's exemption from certain Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service inspection fees);
- North American issues respecting climate change;
- the political situation in both countries; and
- progress made on resolutions emerging from the 47th Annual Meeting.

The Canadian and American co-chairs also agreed on the agenda for each of the three committee sessions, which occur concurrently. At the annual meeting this year, these sessions will continue to focus on bilateral cooperation in three areas: trade and economic issues (Committee One); defence, environmental and democratization issues (Committee Two); and trans-border issues (Committee Three).

Committee One delegates will discuss such issues as:

- bilateral trade irritants and their resolution (including agriculture, softwood lumber and steel);
- rules-based trade (including multilateral trade and investment agreements as well as their negotiation); and

- North American economic prosperity (including job losses in both countries, cross-border economic regions, capital market issues, and copyright and intellectual property protection).

A range of defence-related and environmental issues will be discussed in Committee Two, including:

- UN reform, NORAD, NATO, nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq;
- the quality of life in developing countries (including democratization, human rights, prosperity and human trafficking); and
- climate change (including the Kyoto Protocol and the G-8 Group of countries).

Delegates in Committee Three will discuss such trans-border issues as:

- air and water quality (including the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway as well as, more specifically, a bi-national authority for the Seaway, legislative measures related to water, and water levels in the Great Lakes);
- safer streets (including cross-border small-arms smuggling, youth at risk, and pharmaceutical and such illicit drugs as crystal methamphetamine); and
- energy (including oil, gas, liquefied natural gas, electricity and nuclear power).

Discussions also occurred about the appropriate mechanism for reporting the outcomes of the plenary and committee sessions as well as the process that might be followed in respect of these outcomes following the annual meeting.

Finally, potential visits by U.S. legislators and their staff to Ottawa and the Alberta oil sands, as well as perhaps to other Canadian cities, were mentioned. Also identified were possible trips to Washington by Canadian legislators to speak with their American counterparts about key bilateral issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jerry Grafstein, Q.C.,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Co-Chairs' Meeting
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	April 16, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Jerry Grafstein, Q.C., Senator, Co- Chair
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair
STAFF	Daniel Charbonneau, Executive Secretary June Dewetering, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,099.54
ACCOMMODATION	\$976.40
HOSPITALITY	\$515.66
PER DIEMS	\$228.75
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ Ø
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$ Ø
TOTAL	\$4,820.35