

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the
Canada–United States–Mexico Trilateral
Inter-Parliamentary Group Meeting**

Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Washington, D.C., United States of America
1–2 December 2014**

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 1–2 December 2014, Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., House of Commons Co-Chair of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation to the inaugural trilateral meeting of federal legislators from Canada, the United States and Mexico. The delegation also included three of the Canadian Section’s Vice-Chairs – the Honourable Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P., Senator Michael L. MacDonald and Senator Wilfred Moore, Q.C. – and Mr. Phil McColeman, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Mrs. Miriam Burke, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor to the Canadian Section.

THE EVENT

This meeting represented the first occasion on which federal legislators from the three North American countries – Canada, the United States and Mexico – met to discuss issues of common concern. The meeting followed the 52nd U.S.–Mexico Interparliamentary Group meeting held on 1 December 2014 in Washington, D.C. In some sense, it was also an extension of the annual meeting of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group that was held in June 2014 and the XXth Canada–Mexico Inter-Parliamentary Group meeting that was held in November 2014; both of these meetings occurred in Ottawa, Canada.

ACTIVITIES AND DELEGATION OBJECTIVES AT THE EVENT

Delegates discussed three topic areas: border infrastructure and trade, as well as North American competitiveness; security; and North American energy. At the end of the trilateral meeting, the Canadian delegation met with Ambassador Gary Doer, Canada’s Ambassador to the United States.

Meetings with their federal counterparts from other countries enable members of the Canadian Section to share information about – and gain support on – critical issues. More generally, members of the Canadian Section believe that meetings with their counterparts are an invaluable opportunity to share Canadian views about issues of common concern, and they intend to undertake such meetings in the future as the need arises.

Since the Canadian Section’s meetings with federal counterparts are designed to be “off the record,” the discussion below summarizes the general nature of the issues that were raised by Canadian, American and Mexican legislators.

BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRADE, AND NORTH AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS

Comments by Canadian Delegates

- This year is the 20th anniversary of the *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA), which has led to growth and investment in the three NAFTA countries.
- NAFTA's goal was to enhance competitiveness, and that goal has been achieved; that said, NAFTA's success has been limited by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, at which point security took on paramount importance.
- The economies of the NAFTA countries have become increasingly integrated, and companies in the three countries produce things together that are exported to the rest of the world; integrated supply chains are important, as are adequate infrastructure and modern border crossings that facilitate trade.
- The NAFTA countries form a trading bloc that competes with the rest of the world in the global trading environment; North America is positioned to be the most competitive shared economic "space" in the world.
- The recommendations contained in the report entitled *North America: Time for a New Focus* deserve consideration as a path forward for North America, and may represent a new strategic vision for the region.
- The North American Leaders' Summits and the diplomats that each NAFTA country has in the other two countries are important elements of the trilateral relationship, and are mechanisms for progress on shared goals.
- If the objective is to enhance North American competitiveness, the phrase "Buy American" in U.S. legislation should be replaced with "Buy North American."
- Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Canada and the United States worked together on border and other issues through the Smart Border Action Plan; now, the two countries are working together in the context of the Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives.
- This historic inaugural meeting of federal legislators from the NAFTA countries is a valuable tool for achieving and sustaining future trilateral successes.
- Legislators in the NAFTA countries need to establish relationships among themselves as they act on behalf of their constituents and countries; moreover, inter-parliamentary groups are an important forum within which to discuss issues.

Comments by U.S. Delegates

- Trilateral unification must occur and the three North American countries – the United States, Canada and Mexico – must work together as a team to compete globally on behalf of a combined population of 470 million individuals.
- If the North American countries work together, anything and everything is possible.
- To renew North America's economic strength and be competitive as a trading bloc, border crossings must be streamlined, consistent regulations must exist, needed investments must be made, legislative relationships must be established and nurtured, and the three countries' economic, cultural and other linkages must be optimized.
- In certain respects, the North American countries deal with the same issues but approach them from different perspectives.
- The border that the United States shares with Mexico is long, and is costly to maintain.

Comments by Mexican Delegates

- The Mexico–U.S.–Canada relationship is now deeper and more substantial than it was before NAFTA was signed 20 years ago, and the relationship involves economic, social, cultural and other dimensions.
- The North American countries have the same values, as well as economic and geographic linkages; they can do great things together.
- The three countries need to build the North America that they want; as well, they should be ready – collectively – to face the rest of the world, including China, which is rising as a global force.
- The NAFTA countries need to identify the issues that are limiting the agreement's accomplishments, make any changes that are needed to enhance success, and identify actions that can be taken trilaterally.
- This inaugural meeting among federal legislators from the three North American countries, particularly members from the three inter-parliamentary groups, is historic; parliamentary diplomacy efforts such as these are important for identifying ways in which relationships, actions, etc. need to change.

SECURITY

Comments by Canadian Delegates

- Security issues should be resolved before a country's border is reached.
- Canadians feel that the Canada–U.S. border is very secure.
- The United States' northern border is different than its southern border; the focus of the former is commerce, while the focus of the latter is people.
- Canada is a desirable place in which to live, and – as a great many people wish to emigrate to the country – immigration backlogs are significant; changes to Canada's immigration policies are occurring, with – for example – new categories being added to meet economic needs and address labour market shortages.
- Canada is concerned about the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and is part of the air combat mission.
- Like other countries, Canada is experiencing the radicalization of domestic residents.
- Canada's federal Parliament is considering and/or has enacted legislation in relation to terrorism, the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Communications Security Establishment, etc.; there is some ability to seize passports under certain circumstances.
- Countries need to protect each other against terrorism; in that context, countries may undertake joint assessments, share their understanding of existing and emerging threats, and cooperate in such efforts as integrated border enforcement teams.

Comments by U.S. Delegates

- In the United States, some are concerned about people leaving the United States to be foreign fighters and then returning to the United States.
- ISIS is becoming sophisticated in its radicalization efforts.
- Radicalization is occurring in Canada, which is giving rise to some concerns in the United States.
- Canada should examine its privacy laws with a view to allowing more sharing of information, as the United States could help Canada.
- As perhaps 90% of problems can be avoided when intelligence is shared, countries need to communicate information amongst themselves and then take appropriate actions; countries can do better, and they do better when they act together.
- It is important to keep threats outside of North America, and countries should know who is within their borders.
- Some Americans are concerned about threats to the United States arising from both Canada and Mexico, the latter perhaps relating to drug cartels.

- In 2000, there were 1.6 million apprehensions along the U.S.–Mexico border; in 2014, there were 480,000 apprehensions.
- Significant amounts of funds are allocated to securing the U.S.–Mexico border.
- The three North American countries need to work together in protecting citizens, as effectiveness is enhanced through cooperative efforts.
- The United States should help countries to keep and protect their children, and efforts should be directed to uniting children with their families.
- The U.S. Congress needs to address immigration reform; when amnesty is mentioned, the result is increased flows of individuals across the U.S.–Mexico border.
- Cyber-threats are real, and are arising from such countries as China, Iran and Russia.

Comments by Mexican Delegates

- People are entering Mexico illegally.
- Mexico believes that immigration is a human right, and efforts should be directed to decriminalizing undocumented immigration.
- Being undocumented should be viewed as an administrative infraction, and not a crime; decriminalization does not imply legality, but rather that violation does not give rise to criminal charges.
- Immigration should be addressed from a humane standpoint, with a focus on reunification; as people are looking for better opportunities, they should be treated as human beings and not as criminals who deserve a jail sentence.
- Mexico has deported more – and accepted more – undocumented Central Americans than has the United States.
- Mexico has the equivalent of Canada's population living in the United States, and many of these individuals have the required documentation.
- Mexico has some of the world's strictest visa requirements, and protecting its northern neighbour is in Mexico's self-interest; there is a need to ensure that there are no terrorist attacks in or near the United States.
- The security challenges in the three NAFTA countries are very different; Canada has liberal immigration policies, the United States has made many global enemies and Mexico has governance issues.
- Trusted traveller programs should be harmonized across the NAFTA countries.

NORTH AMERICAN ENERGY

Comments by Canadian Delegates

- There are myriad sources of energy throughout North America, and energy independence from the Middle East is an important goal.
- Energy costs affect competitiveness, and new technologies regarding energy need to be developed.
- The environmental impacts of energy development must be considered; Canada is making improvements in this regard and recognizes that some environmentalists protest any non-renewable form of energy.
- An energy mix that includes both renewable and non-renewable sources is needed.
- At present, many pipelines cross the Canada–U.S. border; in that context, Keystone XL is a “cause célèbre.”

Comments by U.S. Delegates

- The energy markets in the three NAFTA countries should be integrated; as well, a North American energy alliance and energy security policy with the goal of energy independence from the Middle East should be developed, as countries in the Middle East do not always have the United States’ best interests at heart.
- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC, should be replaced by the North American Petroleum Exporting Countries, or NAPEC.
- Canada is the United States’ largest and best trading partner, and the United States can trust Canada and Mexico, both of which have certain natural resources in abundance; Canada is the principal source of U.S. energy imports.
- There are five “energy pillars” to consider: modern infrastructure; use of all energy resources; reduction in red tape; efficiency; and improved security and diplomacy regarding energy.
- Modern pipelines are the cleanest and safest way to transport oil, and the Keystone XL pipeline proposal presents a unique opportunity; the choice really is “oil for North America” or “oil for Asia,” and U.S. jobs are created when Canadian oil is transported to the United States.
- Mexico’s recent energy reforms will increase foreign investment.
- Environmentalists play a role in energy-related decisions in the United States.

Comments by Mexican Delegates

- Among the NAFTA countries, cooperation on energy issues is key and – as noted in *North America: Time for a New Focus* – a trilateral energy framework is needed; at present, there is a lack of tripartite energy-related institutions, and Mexico can learn from Canada and the United States.
- Cooperation on energy and regional integration in North America will give rise to economic, geopolitical and environmental benefits for all three countries.
- In North America, energy-related regulations should be standardized and simplified, and energy-related infrastructure and efficient transportation networks are needed.
- There have been structural reforms in Mexico, including in relation to energy, with the goal of enhanced economic growth; the energy reforms involve new institutions and regulations designed to increase efficiency, and will enable private-sector involvement in Mexico's energy sector.
- There is a great deal of Canadian investment in Mexico's energy sector.
- In Mexico, oil revenues are responsible for one third of government spending.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Janis G. Johnson,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada–United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Gord Brown, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada–United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Canada–United States–Mexico Trilateral Inter-Parliamentary Group Meeting
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	1–2 December 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator The Hon. Wilfred Moore, Q.C., Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Gord Brown, M.P. Mr. Phil McColeman, M.P. The Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P.
STAFF	Mrs. Miriam Burke, Association Secretary Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 9,650.97
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 3,656.45
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 787.75
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$14,095.17