

Canada - United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group  
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire  
Canada - États-Unis  
Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the Republican National Convention**

**Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group**

**Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States of America  
August 31<sup>st</sup> – September 4, 2008**

# Report

From 31 August to 4 September 2008, Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation to the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Honourable John McKay, P.C., M.P., Senator Bert Brown and Mr. Gord Brown, M.P. were also part of the delegation.

While at the Republican National Convention, Senator Brown and Mr. Gord Brown participated in the International Visitors Program, while Mr. Merrifield and Mr. McKay were hosted by the South Carolina delegation. All delegates were able to attend a panel discussion on the future of US foreign assistance (effective development and national security) hosted by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Members of the delegation also spoke with Governor Mark Sanford (South Carolina) and Lieutenant Governor André Bauer (South Carolina), US Senators Mike Crapo, George Voinovich, Lindsey Graham and Jim DeMint, and US Representatives Cliff Stearns, Joe Wilson, Dennis Rehberg and Phil Gingrey.

At the convention, members of the Canadian Section of the Canada-US Inter-Parliamentary Group spoke with the Governors, US Senators and US members of the US House of Representatives, as well as with others, about the importance of the bilateral trade and tourism relationship, the consequences of inefficiencies at the shared Canada-US border and a variety of energy issues.

More generally, the interaction with Governors, state legislators and federal counterparts enables members of the IPG to achieve better the aim of finding points of convergence in respective policies, initiating dialogue on points of divergence, encouraging exchanges of information and promoting better understanding on shared issues of concern. Moreover, the meetings provide the members of the IPG with an important means to provide input to, and gather information about, state- and federal-level issues that affect Canada.

This report summarizes selected speeches that were made at the convention as well as selected presentations made in the context of a discussion regarding US foreign assistance hosted by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and of the International Visitors Program.

## REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

**Whit Ayres**, *Ayres, McHenry & Associates, Inc.*

- the "elements" are not favourable for Republicans in the 2008 election; many Americans are upset with the economy, their country and the direction in which things are headed
- the Republican Party lost control of the US Senate and the US House of Representatives in 2006 because of the independent vote; although Republicans were disgruntled, they came out to vote in the same proportion and continued to support the Republican Party to the same extent as in previous years

- despite the many instances when President George W. Bush and Senator John McCain have disagreed, a "third term of Bush" is a rather obvious Democratic refrain
- at this point and in this environment, Senator Barack Obama should have a lead of at least 12 points; the fact that he does not sends a message
- the Republican Party nominated the one guy who could win this year, while the Democratic Party nominated the one guy who could lose this year
- while Americans may have voted for Senator Hillary Clinton, there is no way that they will vote for Senator Obama, who they feel is not really an American and does not "bleed red, white and blue"
- Governor Sarah Palin was a great choice as the Republican Vice Presidential nominee, despite her relative lack of experience, and she and Senator McCain will have good chemistry together; she is a young, female version of Senator McCain, and her level of experience is equal to that of the Democratic Presidential nominee
- while the Republican ticket has a real shot at winning the election, it will be an uphill battle, in part because of the current environment
- at 18%, the Congressional approval rating is below that of President Bush
- Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado, Iowa and perhaps Virginia are likely to be the battleground states
- Republicans are likely to win additional seats in the US House of Representatives and hope to have 44-46 seats in the US Senate, where relatively far more Republicans are up for election

**Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, *United States Department of Commerce***

- the Presidential election campaign is the biggest recruitment campaign for the biggest Executive job, and the biggest office, in the world
- Senator John McCain has always put his country first; he is an incredible leader and an incredible American, with accomplishments that come across loud and clear
- the Republican ticket is the ticket of reform and real change
- in his 26 years in the US Congress, Senator McCain has never supported or requested even one earmark; in contrast, in his short tenure in the US Senate, Senator Barack Obama has requested or supported about \$1 billion in earmarks
- the approval rating for the US Congress is relatively low, and the American people are not entirely convinced that Congress is acting in the interests of the people
- like Senator McCain, Governor Sarah Palin is a maverick, and has the conviction to stand up against special interests as well as to reduce wasteful spending

**Dan Coats**, *Former United States Senator and Former Member of the US House of Representatives*

- Senator John McCain's commitment to a lifetime of service is "the real thing"
- Senator McCain is a decisive leader

**Rudy Giuliani**, *Former Mayor of New York City*

- Senator John McCain's entire life has been about preparing him to be the US President and to take that 3 a.m. phone call; he has always inspired people, put his country first and "done the right thing"
- President George W. Bush's leadership has kept the United States safe; he has the strength and the character to deal with issues, no matter how difficult they may be
- the Presidential campaign is a test, and Senator McCain has the ability to lead, regardless of what happens in, and is done to, the United States
- the differences between the Republican Presidential nominee and the Democratic Presidential nominee are vast
- Senator McCain is an extraordinary man and a great American; throughout his life, he has proven that he can "deliver"
- the first day that Governor Sarah Palin was the Mayor of Wasilla, she had more Executive experience than the entire Democratic ticket
- Senator McCain and Governor Palin will shake up Washington, D.C.
- Governor Palin has an approval rating of 80%; she has taken on corruption, including in the Republican party, and she stands up for what is right
- during the campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination, I said that if I was not running for President, I would vote for Senator McCain; I am not running for President, and I am voting for Senator McCain
- the 2008 Presidential election is the most important election of our lifetime, and we had better get it right; the American people recognize that this election represents a turning point
- in voting for President, you are voting to hire someone to do a job related to your safety and that of your family; should you choose:
  - someone who has dedicated his life to service and has passed every test, who is a true American hero, and who has loved America as we all do but who has sacrificed as few do; or
  - someone who is a gifted man with an Ivy League education, who has worked as a community organizer, who is a "celebrity" Senator with little

legislation that he has sponsored, who has never run a city or a state or a military unit or a business, and who has never had to lead people in a crisis

- in the 2008 election, the choice is between style and substance
- tough times require strong leadership, and now is not the time for on-the-job training
- change is not a destination, just as hope is not a strategy
- when the Democratic party gave up on Iraq, it gave up on America
- Senator McCain can face the enemy and win

**Buddy Roemer, *Former Governor of Louisiana***

- Governor Sarah Palin fills the need to have someone on the ticket who has actually done something; this reality stands in contrast to the Democratic ticket, where neither man has started a company, created a job or run an agency
- in the past, at "times of difference, " "leaders of difference" have been in power
- at the end of the day, America often picks the best person as President
- it is not Senator John McCain's war record, record of honour or integrity in policies that are key, but rather that he sees America as it ought to be
- Senator McCain has picked a running mate – Governor Palin – who has lived her life for reform; she is the only person on the Republican or Democratic ticket with Administration experience

**Fred Thompson, *Former United States Senator***

- the United States needs a President who will stand on principle, and who will take Washington by the scruff of its neck and give it a good shake
- Senator John McCain has a history of putting his country first; he will do what is right for the country

**Senator Joe Lieberman, *United States Senate***

- all of us are part of a larger American family, and Americans face very big and very real problems on a daily basis
- the US' founding fathers foresaw the danger of senseless partisanship, and Washington as it currently exists would be President Washington's worst nightmare
- for Senator John McCain, his country matters more than his political party; being an American "trumps" being a Democrat or a Republican

- Senator McCain is the best choice to bring the US together and to lead the country forward; "putting the country first" will be the code that he carries with him into the White House
- there is a need to change the culture of Washington, and to break through the gridlock and partisanship in order to work together and get things done
- God made only one John McCain, and he is his own man; he has taken on corrupt lobbyists, worked to resolve immigration issues, etc.
- while Senator Barack Obama is a gifted and eloquent young man, eloquence is no substitute for having a record
- during his time in the US Senate, Senator Obama has not reached across party lines in order to get anything done
- Governor Sarah Palin is a reformer who has taken on special interest groups and power brokers, and has reached across party lines to get things done
- we are in tough times at home, and in dangerous times in the world; what is needed is national unity, rather than party unity, particularly since the nation is at war
- while Democrats and Independents may be unsure about voting for Senator McCain, these are not ordinary times and Senator McCain is no ordinary candidate
- Senator McCain is a restless reformer who will clean up government and get things working again for the benefit of all Americans

#### **T. Boone Pickens, *BP Capital Management***

- there are increasing concerns about the continued and growing dependence on foreign oil; these concerns exist for a variety of reasons, including security
- the United States has been "captured" by foreign oil, and this situation must stop; we must do something "big" in order to reduce the dependence on foreign oil
- in 1970, the United States imported 24% of the crude oil it used; this figure is now 67.5%, and is expected to grow to 75%-80% by 2018 unless changes occur
- if the United States does not solve its energy problem, in ten years the country will not have the funds it needs for health care, education or other spending priorities
- the US needs a diverse energy supply; while additional drilling is part of the solution, the United States cannot drill its way out of the problem
- while it is acceptable to import oil from such friends as Canada, the US should not import oil from unstable countries
- "clean coal, " like "clean diesel, " is an oxymoron

- if the US does not have a plan, it is implicitly "for" foreign oil

**Senator Jim DeMint, *United States Senate***

- Republicans have "paid the price" for out-of-control spending
- Senator John McCain's selection of Governor Sarah Palin as his Vice Presidential running mate sends the right signals, and shows that he is ready to take on Washington
- Governor Palin is a woman of grit and proven leadership abilities; she will keep Senator McCain "on the right track"
- Governor Palin is a symbol of reform of the Republican Party
- Washington, D.C. is broken, and is holding America back from being all that it can be
- government is intruding into all aspects of the lives of Americans; more limited government and the enforcement of justice must occur, and free enterprise must be permitted "to work"
- each year, the US pays billions of dollars for foreign oil; those dollars should be retained in the United States for economic development, etc.
- oil and gas will continue to be needed as alternative fuels are being developed

**Senator Norm Coleman, *United States Senate***

- the "main thing" is jobs for Americans, and jobs are the "main thing" for Senator John McCain
- there are a variety of ways to create jobs, including:
  - make government more efficient, since taxes kill jobs and there is a need to keep taxes low
  - increase the energy supply to facilitate independence from foreign oil
  - reform health care and education, since every American deserves health care and every child deserves a quality education
- some problems are too big for one party to solve; genuine change that leads to genuine results is needed, and it does not matter who gets the credit as long as Americans win

**Meg Whitman, *Former President and Chief Executive Officer of eBay***

- we are at a critical moment in our nation's history

- Republicans understand that success does not come from the size of government, but rather from:
  - the character of American citizens
  - the strength of American communities
  - the nobility and truth of American ideals
- President McCain will put his country first in all of his decisions, and he is more prepared to lead than is any other person in the United States
- Senator John McCain and Governor Sarah Palin are the real agents of change in this campaign
- in the first 100 days, a McCain Administration would put the United States on the path to energy independence, which must be viewed as our generation's moon shot
- a McCain Administration would reduce business and personal taxes in the first 100 days
- governments should not spend more than they collect in revenues
- there is no challenge that cannot be overcome with individual freedom; individuals – not governments – create prosperity

**Carly Fiorina, *Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Fiorina Enterprises***

- these are times of consequence, and our choices have never mattered more; this is an historic election with two clear choices
- while many talk about the need to "change Washington," Senator John McCain has the knowledge, guts and – in Governor Sarah Palin – the partner to get it done
- Senator McCain understands the cost of war in a deeply personal way; he will try to bring American troops home with dignity and with honour
- since Senator McCain has character, wisdom, courage and resolve, choosing him as President is the choice we must make for our communities, our nation and the next generation

**Mitt Romney, *Former Governor of Massachusetts***

- the sun is about to begin to rise and shine from Arizona and Alaska rather than from the east and the eastern elite; it is time for the party of big ideas rather than the party of big brother as well as timid and empty gestures
- there is a need to change from a liberal Washington to a conservative Washington; the prescription for every American who wants change in Washington is to throw out the liberals and support the Republican ticket



- America is strong because of the hard work, ingenuity and entrepreneurship of the American people
- opportunity lets "hope" become "reality"
- the right course at this time involves reducing spending, decreasing taxes and taking a "weedwacker" to excess regulation
- the US must explore the full range of energy options
- Republicans believe that there is good and evil in the world; they also prefer straight talk to politically correct talk
- a McCain Administration would make the US what it has always been: the hope of the earth

**Mike Huckabee, *Former Governor of Arkansas***

- the President of the United States should be a person of character and stubborn integrity
- elections are about the American people, and many Americans want something to change as they seek freedom, security and opportunities to prosper
- most Americans want less government; a government that can do everything for us can take everything from us
- Senator John McCain is relatively more experienced, prepared and tested
- Senator McCain has always put his country first; for Senator McCain, the focus is not about what he will receive but, instead, about what he has already given

**Governor Linda Lingle, *Governor of Hawaii***

- the fact that Governor Sarah Palin eloped is evidence of her fiscal discipline; she is a social conservative and a fiscal hawk who adheres to free market principles
- Governor Palin has a great personal story and is a genuine, authentic and great person
- leadership comes naturally to Governor Palin, and people gravitate to her
- neither Senator Barack Obama nor Senator Joe Biden has been the chief executive officer of a city or a state, or has managed a multibillion dollar budget
- Senator John McCain will always do the right thing for the American people
- Senator McCain selected an outsider and a proven reformer to help him reform Washington which is broken; Senator McCain's choice of Governor Palin as his running mate is bold, historic and courageous

**Governor Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska and Republican Vice Presidential Nominee**

- one year ago, Senator John McCain was "counted out, " but people overlooked his resolve and his "sheer guts", he has a history of winning tough fights, as well as a record of achievement and reform
- there is a time for politics and a time for leadership, and a time for campaigning and a time for putting the country first
- children with special needs inspire special love
- this is America, and every woman can walk through every doorway of opportunity
- Senator McCain is the same man wherever he goes and with whomever is listening
- America cannot leave itself at the mercy of foreign suppliers of energy; Americans need American energy brought to them using American ingenuity produced by American workers, and the fact that drilling will not solve all of America's energy challenges is no excuse for doing nothing at all
- the stakes for our nation cannot be higher
- there is a difference between those who use their career to promote change and those who use change to promote their career
- Senator McCain does not look for fights, but nor is he afraid of them
- the American Presidency is not supposed to be a journey of personal discovery
- there is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for Americans in places where winning means survival and failure means death: Senator McCain
- it is important to inspire with deeds, rather than with merely words

**Michael Steele, Chairman of GOPAC**

- Governor Sarah Palin has had more scrutiny in five days than Senator Barack Obama has had in 18 months
- Governor Palin does not give a speech, but rather has a conversation; she will not be trifled with and she is not a pushover
- times are changing; Republicans in Republican districts are losing seats to Democrats who have been "gussied up" to look like Republicans
- if you really want to put your country first, then efforts must be made to re-establish the Republican brand

**Senator John Ensign, United States Senate**

- with the Contract with America in the 1990s, freedom and opportunity became the foci
- no one knows what freedom really is until you have to fight and sacrifice for it; Senator John McCain knows what it means to be free
- the 2008 election is one of the most important national elections in generations

**Governor Jon Huntsman Jr., *Governor of Utah***

- the Republican party is united and excited about a McCain-Palin Presidency
- this is a time to focus on the needs of our families and the struggles of our country

**Governor Tim Pawlenty, *Governor of Minnesota***

- a key question is how we recognize someone's character and his or her fitness to serve; Senator John McCain's whole life is a testimony to his courage, integrity and fitness to serve
- throughout his life, Senator McCain has put his country first
- Senator McCain is committed to doing what it takes to ensure that American troops come home with honour and in victory

**Bill Frist, *Former United States Senator and Republican Majority Leader***

- "health" is a currency for peace, and Mrs. Cindy McCain is a compassionate ambassador for peace
- when people lose hope, the vacuum is filled with desperation, which can lead to violence and terrorism
- you do not go to war with someone who has changed the life of your child

**Cindy McCain, *Spouse of Senator John McCain***

- at times, it seemed as though Senator John McCain was the fifth person in a four-person race, but he prevailed
- Governor Sarah Palin is a remarkable Vice Presidential running mate for Senator McCain because she is a maverick, a "go-getter" and a "straight talker;" since no one can get the job done alone, it is good to have a running mate like Governor Palin
- the American people are resilient; despite challenges, we are still alive with hope
- the United States was born amidst a battle for freedom; with freedom comes responsibility

- key questions include: what do others think of us, and what would our forebears and future generations think of us?
- life is not just about us; it is about nurturing the next generation
- Senator McCain is known for his straight talk of the plain truth; he is a man that has been tested, and has served in Washington without becoming a Washington insider

**Senator John McCain, *United States Senate and Republican Presidential Nominee***

- in my life, no great success has come without a fight
- we are all meant to use our opportunities to make things good for our country
- although there are big differences between the Republican and Democratic Presidential-Vice Presidential tickets, there is much more that unites than divides, since both people on both tickets are Americans
- all people are created equal and with inalienable rights
- a McCain Administration would make the country work for the American people again, and would put the country back on the road to prosperity and peace
- these are tough times for many Americans, and government should stand by your side rather than in your way
- Governor Sarah Palin is the right partner to help in shaking up Washington; among other attributes, she has Executive experience, a record of accomplishments and a history of standing up for what is right
- the "do nothing, " "me first, country second" crowd should beware: change is coming
- as President, I would work for you – the American people – rather than for myself, my party or special interests
- I would rather lose the election than see my country lose a war
- it matters less that you can fight; it is what you fight for that is the real test
- the party of Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan is going to get back to basics
- everyone has something to contribute and has the right to be what he or she can be
- a McCain Administration would open markets, reduce taxes and lower government spending
- governments should not make choices for you, but rather should work to make sure that you have more choices available to you

- Americans are ambitious by nature
- the prospect of a better world remains within our reach
- a McCain Administration will work to establish the conditions for stable and enduring peace
- there is a need to change the way in which government does almost everything
- the constant partisan rancour that prevents the solving of problems is a symptom rather than a cause
- you should not reject good ideas just because you are not the one who came up with them; the best ideas should be used regardless of their source, and appropriate credit should be given
- I was blessed by misfortune, since I served in the company of heroes and was able to witness courageous acts
- nothing brings greater happiness in life than to serve a cause greater than yourself
- with hard work, strong faith and a little courage, everything is always within reach

## **HUBERT H. HUMPHREY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS: US FOREIGN ASSISTANCE – EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Raymond Offenheiser, *Oxfam America***

- Oxfam is part of the recently developed Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, and has on-the-ground experience
- the needs of users and the United States are not being met with the current system of US foreign aid; the system is broken, incoherent, dysfunctional and in need of a serious overhaul
- reforms are needed in such areas as:
  - a national development strategy – the US has a national security strategy but lacks a national development strategy
  - the aid structure – the structure should be rationalized, since there are now more than 20 departments delivering US foreign assistance
  - legislation – mixed legislative messages exist, aid provisions may be inconsistent with US trade goals and foreign assistance legislation – which is 2,500 pages long plus appendices – dates from 1961
  - resources, authorities and mandates – resources to aid agencies should be increased, and authorities and mandates should be clarified

- the US foreign assistance system should be reformed and more funds should then be allocated to it in order to do more to eradicate poverty, which is a "fixable" condition
- nine out of ten Americans think it is important that other countries have a favourable opinion of the United States
- there is momentum in Washington, D.C. to "fix" the foreign aid system

**Jim Kolbe, *German Marshall Fund of the United States***

- although there is a critical need to reform the US' foreign aid system, reform does not seem to be a priority for the Presidential candidates
- at present, the relationship between the Executive Branch and the US Congress is broken and dysfunctional
- in the context of reauthorization of the Foreign Assistance Act, there is a need for a streamlined act that meets current needs and challenges
- foreign assistance that is more "untied" and less "earmarked" is needed; as well, there is a need to change the "architecture" in order to make the whole system work better
- key questions are: what is the relationship between development and security? can you have one without the other?

### **Ambassador Andrew Natsios, *Georgetown University***

- foreign assistance should be considered from a field-based requirements, rather than DC-centric, perspective
- it is important to have:
  - a clearly held sense of mission and set of tasks
  - a sense of autonomy
  - a business model that can get work done in the environment it is in
- there is a need to recentralize functions both in Washington, D.C. and in the field
- a portion of the foreign aid program should be purely developmental
- success is increased when are locally owned and controlled foreign aid projects
- implementation has always been, and continues to be, the biggest failure of foreign aid, both public and private

### **Representative John Boozman, *United States House of Representatives***

- in order for changes to the US foreign aid system to occur, Presidential leadership, as well as leadership in the US Senate and House of Representatives, are needed
- foreign aid's biggest challenge is the lack of a constituency for it; there is very little advocacy on this issue
- in some cases, the loss of US manufacturing jobs is linked to foreign aid

### **Vin Weber, *Clark and Weinstock***

- what is happening in China – which has opened up economically but not politically – is challenging our fundamental and historic thinking about whether democracy is a prerequisite for economic development
- the failure of new democracies to experience the economic development that is needed almost always leads to "backsliding" regarding democracy
- democracy must be central to US foreign policy, but it must go hand in glove with economic development

## **Ambassador Michael Wilson, *Government of Canada***

- in the context of Canada's role in Afghanistan reconstruction, effective development assistance is an important policy tool
- there has been a shift in the way in which Canada provides development assistance in Afghanistan
- Canada has six priorities in respect of Afghanistan:
  - build the capacity of the Afghan National Army and Police, and support complementary efforts regarding justice and corrections
  - provide jobs, education and essential services
  - provide humanitarian assistance to those in need
  - enhance the management and security of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border
  - build Afghan institutions central to Kandahar priorities and support democratic processes
  - support Afghan-led reconciliation efforts in respect of weakening the insurgency and fostering a sustainable peace
- Canada's three "signature development projects" are:
  - developing and rehabilitating basic services, including irrigation
  - building, expanding and repairing schools
  - expanding support for polio immunization
- it is not possible to have effective development without security, and it is not possible to have security without being able to show long-lasting benefits to the presence of troops in Afghanistan

## **INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM**

### **Representative Adam Putnam, *United States House of Representatives***

- the election will be driven by issues related to the economy and energy, and these issues will override concerns related to the war on terror and immigration
- the electorate is looking for practical solutions, and energy is a target issue by which Republicans will demonstrate to Americans that they have a plan for the future
- Senator John McCain's choice of Governor Sarah Palin as the Republican Vice Presidential nominee sends a signal that Senator McCain is open to the opinion of Alaska – drill, baby, drill – regarding oil; his choice is also an acknowledgement that the election campaign is shaped by the energy issue



- Senator McCain will be "at the table" looking for a solution to the climate change issue; discussions about climate change and trade will likely be merged, since measures to implement climate change would have to include an economic debate
- both the Democrats and the Republicans are vigorously chasing the Hispanic vote
- traditionally, the African American community has been firmly Democratic
- the Asian American community will represent a crucial swing vote in the election
- the election is shaping up to be very candidate-centric
- three of the four nominees on the Democratic and Republican tickets currently hold seats in the US Senate

**JoAnne Davidson, Co-Chair of the Republican National Committee**

- for women, the major issue in the election is the economy
- women represent a wide margin of independent voters, with 51% of women being unmarried
- among women voters, there is a firm sense that Senator Hillary Clinton was not treated fairly as a candidate
- health care is a major issue for women; a number of women are coping with the health issues of their immediate family as well as those of aging parents
- energy is becoming a dominating force for women as they seek to manage family budgets that are being affected by rising energy costs; they are seeking solutions that would lead to the development of a longer-term perspective on the need for reduced dependency on foreign oil
- the town-hall campaign style used by Senator McCain is appealing to women, since it demonstrates an effective outreach to voters as well as a more personal style of reaching out to the electorate
- at 80%, Governor Sarah Palin has one of the highest approval ratings among governors; she has proven herself to be a formidable expert on energy, a proven reformer and a fighter against corruption
- Governor Palin brings a breath of fresh air to the Republican ticket and the race for the Presidency as a whole; her nomination acceptance speech will be a pivotal moment in the race for the White House

**Meetings of the Canada- United States Inter-Parliamentary Group with the International Democratic Union**

**Minneapolis – St. Paul, Minnesota**

**September 2, 2008**

**Meeting with Representative Adam Putnam, *Member of Congress Florida***

- Rep. Putnam began by stating that the upcoming election in the United States will be driven by issues related to the economy and energy. These are issues he believes, that will override concerns related to the war on terror and immigration. The electorate are very much looking for practical solutions, with energy being the target issue by which the Republicans will demonstrate to Americans they have a plan for the future. In this regard, the choice of Sarah Palin as McCain's running mate sends a signal that McCain is open to the Alaska opinion regarding oil, – drill baby, drill –, and an acknowledgement that the campaign is shaped by the energy issue.
- Rep. Putnam also discussed the issue of climate change and stated that McCain will be very much at the table looking for a solution. He suggested that discussions related to climate change and trade will be likely merged, representing a natural evolution to these talks, as the measure to implement climate change would have to include an economic debate.
- Both the Democrats and Republicans are now vigorously chasing the Hispanic vote. He went on to state that traditionally the African American community has been firmly democratic and the Asian American community will represent a crucial swing vote in the upcoming election.
- Finally, he stated that the election is shaping up to be very candidate centric, and noted that 3 out of the 4 nominees presently hold seats in the Senate.

**Woman in the 2008 Political Campaign**

**JoAnne Davidson, *Co-Chair, Republican National Committee***

- JoAnne Davidson stated that the major issue for women in the 2008 election is the economy. They represent a wide margin of independent voters, with 51% of women in the States unmarried. Moreover, there is a firm sense amongst women voters that Hilary Clinton was not treated fairly as a candidate.
- Health care also is a major issue, as women cope with not only their own family health issues, but with those of their aging parents as well.
- Energy also is a dominating force, as women seek to manage their weekly or monthly family budgets in the wake of rising energy costs. They seek solutions to developing a longer term perspective on the need for a lesser dependency on foreign oil. Security is also an issue that is important to this constituency.
- Ms. Davidson acknowledged that the town hall campaign style of Senator McCain is appealing to women, as it demonstrates an effective outreach to voters, and exudes a more personal style of reaching out to the electorate.

- With respect to the Vice-Presidential nominee, Sarah Palin has one of the top approval ratings of the governors at 80%. She has proven herself to be a formidable expert on energy, a proven reformer, and an anti-corruption fighter. She brings a breath of fresh air to the Republican ticket and the race as a whole. Her nomination acceptance speech will be a pivotal moment in the race for the White House.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jerahmiel Grafstein, Senator  
Co-Chair  
Canada-United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Dean Del Mastro, M.P.  
Acting Co-Chair  
Canada-United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Republican National Convention
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States of America
<b>DATES</b>	August 31 <sup>st</sup> – September 4, 2008
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Bert Brown, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair Hon. John McKay, P.C., M.P. Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Vice-Chair
STAFF	Ms. Elizabeth Kingston Executive Secretary Ms. June Dewetering, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$11,806.45</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$7,718.02</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$Ø</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$2,320.42</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$Ø</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$131.05</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,975.94</b>