



Government
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Policy Research
Initiative

Projet de recherche
sur les politiques

The Emergence of Cross-Border Regions Between Canada and the United States

Roundtables Synthesis Report

May 2006

Roundtable Series:
Montréal, Winnipeg,
Vancouver, Waterloo,
Sackville, and Ottawa

PRI Project
North American Linkages

Canada

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About This Report

The PRI contributes to the Government of Canada's medium-term policy planning by conducting cross-cutting research projects, and by harnessing knowledge and expertise from within the federal government and from universities and research organizations. However, conclusions and proposals contained in PRI reports do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada or participating departments and agencies.

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Acronyms

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AINER	Atlantica: the International Northeast Economic Region
CEDQ	Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
CIGI	Centre for International Governance Innovation
CUSIPG	Canada-US Inter-Parliamentary Group
FCCQ	La Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
IBET	Integrated Border Enforcement Team
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NEG-ECP	[Conference of] New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers
PNWER	Pacific NorthWest Economic Region
PRI	Policy Research Initiative
SPP	Security and Prosperity Partnership
WEDC	Western Economic Diversification Canada
WHTI	Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

Introduction

The Policy Research Initiative is conducting a research project on the emergence of cross-border regions between Canada and the United States. To date, several research papers have been completed and integrated into *The Emergence of Cross-Border Regions: Interim Report*. In addition, a *Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions: An Analysis* and numerous executive interviews were conducted to examine the challenges, opportunities, and policy implications associated with cross-border regions. These research findings were presented and discussed in a series of roundtables held in Montréal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Waterloo, Sackville, and Ottawa between November 2005 and March 2006. Almost 200 Canadian and American experts drawn from business associations, cross-border regional organizations, public policy think tanks and research institutions, academia and all levels of government participated in the roundtables.

Each of the one-day roundtable events was divided into three sessions. First, the PRI research findings from the *Interim Report*, *Leader Survey* and executive interviews were presented and discussed. Then, to understand better how cross-border regions operate, various local projects, agreements, and regional initiatives were examined including their lessons learned. Finally, possible and potential public policy implications and considerations were discussed in the context of what the existence of cross-border regions suggests for the Government of Canada.¹

Overall, the roundtables generated lively discussion, and while many different perspectives were brought forth, there was often substantial agreement on major issues.

“The research and the roundtable deliberations provide further evidence that cross-border regions are a key feature of North American integration.”

Jean-Pierre Voyer, Executive Director,
Policy Research Initiative

Research Findings

Each roundtable began with PRI presentations on the dynamics of Canada-US cross-border regions using two main sources of evidence. First, the key findings from the PRI *Interim Report* were presented, with the main results highlighted in Exhibit 1. Although cross-border relationships can take different forms across the country, they are entrenched in the fabric of Canada-US relations – a significant mass of cross-border relations exists in all border areas of Canada. Four major cross-border regions were identified: the West, the Prairies-Great Plains, the Great Lakes-Heartland, and the East which in turn could be further divided into the two overlapping sub-regions of Quebec-Northern New England, and Atlantic-New England. On the other side of the country, Alberta and Montana have commonalities with both the West and the Prairies-Great Plains, and so are included in each, but could in fact be thought of as a separate sub-region perhaps called Rocky Mountain.

Exhibit 1 - The Emergence of Cross-Border Regions: Interim Report

- Canada-US trade agreements opened a new era in the way the two countries interact with one another with cross-border regional linkages playing an instrumental role in the process of North American integration.
 - A key objective of the project was to substantiate the significance, scope, and nature of these cross-border regional relationships. For research purposes, a cross-border region is defined as a group of provinces and states that straddle the border and exhibit a certain level of economic and organizational linkage as well as socio-cultural similarities.
1. *The Economy*
 - It was found that Canada-US economic activities are stronger and more involved in border areas.
 - For example, provincial trade flows are often greater with neighbouring and nearby states. Basic economic structures are also more similar and economic performance more interdependent.
 - Key industrial activities and clusters frequently cut across the border.
 2. *Cross-Border Regional Organizations*
 - There are a large number of cross-border regional organizations along the border: general and single purpose intergovernmental organizations, business associations, and inter-city and civil organizations.
 - Cross-border regional organizations are usually involved exclusively in provincial or shared jurisdictions, and often act as facilitators. They are key players in the regional management of Canada-US relations.
 3. *Socio-Cultural Values*
 - Similar values, beliefs and ideology facilitate the sense of belonging to a cross-border region.
 - Socio-cultural values are often more similar within cross-border regions than between different regions of each nation.
 4. *Key Findings*
 - Cross-border linkages may not be equally strong in all dimensions but they are nevertheless significant across all regions.
 - A few fairly distinct cross-border groupings of provinces and states appear to exist: the West, the Prairies-Great Plains, the Great Lakes-Heartland, and the East. One can argue that both the West and the Prairies-Great Plains share Alberta and Montana, which in turn could be considered as a separate sub-region (Rocky Mountain). The East could be also divided into the two overlapping sub-regions of Quebec-Northern New England, and Atlantic-New England.
 - The existence of cross-border regions requires new ways of thinking about policies and policy development that incorporate a regional lens and that recognize the greater level of cooperation and coordination that occurs at the regional level between Canada and the United States. The potential benefits are many – for example, more effective management of regional, bi-national issues. In this regard, cross-border regional organizations provide a useful mechanism for the increased and proactive participation of regional stakeholders in Canada-US issues.

Second, the *Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions* and executive interviews were used to investigate further the cross-border linkages identified in the *PRI Interim Report*, and to more fully explore the nature of cross-border regional relations, especially as they present opportunities and challenges for Canada. The survey was conducted in

partnership with EKOS Research. The general findings from the survey and executive interviews are outlined in Exhibit 2.

While most roundtable participants recognized the PRI work as a major step forward, many provided comments and suggestions for further analysis and research. These comments focused on a number of themes that the PRI will investigate further: e.g., the industrial process of supply chains, the role of trade corridors in cross-border regions, the “border effect” within cross-border regions, a fuller examination of federal activities in cross-border regions, and the lessons learned from cross-border regions in Europe and along the US-Mexico border. For more detailed discussions of the proposed research issues, see Appendix I.

Furthermore, cross-border leaders discussed factors that promoted successful cross-border initiatives.

- To be successful, cross-border initiatives must demonstrate ongoing tangible benefits, abetted by early, clear successes.
- Ongoing tangible results are best ensured if cross-border initiatives are the recipients of non-partisan political support, and if they involve ongoing and frequent interactions that engage both the private and public sectors.
- Regular face-to-face meetings build trust and long-term relationships, and in turn guarantee the continuity of projects.
- A strong relationship between the private and public sectors ensures there is sufficient and timely support for those working on the front line for the initiative.
- Several participants drew attention to the fact that the private sector has the key role in the promotion of cross-border initiatives.

“I’ll make sure cross-border regions are on the federal radar screen ...”

**Bill Casey, Member of Parliament, Cumberland Colchester
Musquodoboit Valley, Keynote Address (Sackville Roundtable)**

Exhibit 2 – Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions and Executive Interviews

This was the first time a survey and interviews of such magnitude were conducted on the topic of Canada-US cross-border regions. More than 110 leaders from Canada and the United States who represented organizations in both the private and public sectors, and from every major cross-border region, responded to the mail-in survey. The results provide new information and details about all types of stakeholders involved in cross-border relationships, and contributes to a better understanding of the nature and scope of cross-border linkages.

- In particular, the results of the survey highlight how cross-border regional stakeholders often share common characteristics. Consequently, stakeholders frequently have more in common with others within their cross-border region, north-south, than they do east-west with stakeholders in other regions.
- The results also suggest that in the foreseeable future, regional networks and linkages, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, energy and economic linkages, will continue to expand.

The *Leader Survey* and executive interviews provide insight into the opportunities and challenges facing the Government of Canada when it comes to cross-border regions.

- Opportunities clearly outnumber challenges – survey respondents and interviewed experts identified a number of benefits for Canada, ranging from stronger networks for the bi-national discussion and resolution of cross-border regional issues, more influence in national capitals, and the ability to pragmatically deal with cross-border regional issues.
- Respondents acknowledged the significant role played by provincial and state governments in cross-border regional relationships, but the role of the Government of Canada was also recognized as integral to successfully addressing many barriers to cross-border regional cooperation.
- Respondents suggested that the Government of Canada can facilitate and encourage future benefits from cross-border regional relations through activities such as the provision of better information and support to cross-border regional stakeholders. In turn, cross-border regional organizations provide valuable services to the provinces and states that make up the cross-border regions, and these services complement those provided by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada should therefore support and encourage the work of cross-border regional organizations.

Key Characteristics of Cross-Border Regions

The roundtable discussions provided ample examples of how the nature of cross-border relationships in individual regions could be uniquely different, yet in many ways similar. Across Canada, cross-border regional relationships were found to be significant and pervasive, but they did not always take the same form or have the same nature in all regions.

Exhibit 3 outlines the unique combination of economic, institutional and socio-cultural linkages that characterized individual major cross-border regions.

Exhibit 3 – Characteristics of Cross-Border Regions

West

- Sense of remoteness from the governments of Canada and the United States;
- Strong cross-border institutions with engaged private sector;
- Importance of environmental issues;
- Innovative approaches (e.g., the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) piloted security projects such as the Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET) and NEXUS Plus that were later implemented along the entire border); and
- Strong sense of regional identity (e.g., surveys suggest that residents from the Pacific Northwest may have more in common with each other than with other residents of their own countries).

Prairies-Great Plains

- Covers a broad geographical expanse that is physically removed from major North American markets;
- Provinces and states, their private sectors and other stakeholders tend to practise forms of collaboration that require a fair amount of self-reliance;
- Collaborative and cooperative activities are based on ongoing, informal, pragmatic and often low-cost engagements involving high-level private and government officials in the area;
- Relationships sustained by a growing consciousness of shared interest, and the belief that the future can be positive and mutually beneficial if the cross-border partners are cooperative; and
- There is a strong focus on trade corridors and transportation.

Great Lakes-Heartland

- Maturity of economic linkages;
- No overarching cross-border organization to provide leadership from regional stakeholders;
- But strong emphasis on single-purpose organizations (e.g., the Great Lakes Commission);
- Interregional market competition (e.g., manufacturing);
- Common challenges requiring closer cooperation (e.g., environmental issues, crime, contraband, pandemics and health issues); and
- Lack of regional identity, but strong sense of belonging to a North American community.

East

Quebec-Northern New England

- Mature (e.g., transportation) and emerging (e.g., nanotechnology) economic linkages;
- Importance of Quebec-New York corridor that is evolving into a binational region;
- More emphasis on bilateral linkages (e.g., Memoranda of Understanding);
- Multi-level/multi-agency nature of networks; and
- Limited sense of regional identity.

Atlantic-New England

- Economic prosperity is a key goal;
- Importance of history and geography;
- Strong stakeholder engagement, driven by different public and private networks;
- Need for enhanced infrastructure;
- Importance of personal relationships; and
- Strong sense of regional identity.

Common Opportunities and Challenges

There was considerable agreement among the participants attending the various roundtables when it came to identifying important benefits of cross-border regional relationships and the major challenges to their further development.

What Are Some Tangible Benefits?

○ *Development of Efficient Networks*

At the top of the list are the myriad of practical and functional networks that have sprung up between sub-national governments, business groups and non-government organizations along the 49th parallel, especially since the FTA and NAFTA. However, individual regions differ in the unique combinations of informal and institutional structures that often reflect the interests, concerns and capabilities of their cross-border regional stakeholders.

- In the West, formal networks are more prevalent as a result of a legal framework provided by the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER). Provincial and state governments are asked to identify designees to participate in working groups co-chaired by members of the private and public sectors in a wide range of cross-border projects. Recent examples include the bi-national energy planning initiative, the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and various security projects.
- “...cross-border organizations are networks of networks...”*
Susan E. Clarke,
University of Colorado at Boulder
- In the Prairies-Great Plains, the networks are mostly informal, project-driven, but highly functional, quietly getting the job done. The “appropriate” level of engagement is based on the issue at hand, and individuals on either side of the border may initiate personal contact directly or through a cross-border organization to ensure project success. The networks often involve cost-effective and low-cost engagements that do not require an overarching institutional structure such as in PNWER. Individual provinces and states may work together to pool their influence on shared interests. Greg Dandewich, Economic Development Director of Destination Winnipeg, pointed out that solid informal networks are needed for successful cross-border relationships, and a lack of an overarching institutional structure does not imply a lack of effective, informal networks.
 - In the Great Lakes-Heartland, cross-border linkages often occur on a bilateral basis between political actors. Multilateral meetings with US governors also occur at the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the Midwestern Legislative Conference, and the Council of State Governments.
 - In the East’s *Quebec-Northern New England* sub-region, the networks are described as multi-level/multi-agency. A good example is the Border Crossing Committee, which is composed of trucking association representatives, Canadian Border Services, United States Customs and Border Protection, exporters, brokers, economic development corporations, and la Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ).²

- In the East's *Atlantic-New England* sub-region, cross-border collaborations are supported by both strong informal networks defined by interpersonal relationships and public and private organizations (e.g., The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP), and *Atlantica: The International Northeast Economic Region* (AINER)).

"...the sub-national networks are a key component of the Canada-US environmental relationship."

Debora Van Nijnatten,
Wilfrid Laurier University

- *Achieving Pragmatic Policy Solutions to Real Problems*

The roundtable discussions underscored that the real strength of Canada-US relations lies at the sub-national level since cross-border regional organizations are often essential in the resolution of many bi-national challenges.

- A number of participants at the roundtables argued that cross-border regional organizations are effective in coordinating a number of regional issues that have ramifications across the border (e.g., emergency management, pandemic flu preparation, animal tracking technology, etc.).

"Cross-border regions create a mechanism to deal with issues at hand, realistically and pragmatically."

Todd Schwartz, U.S. Consul in Winnipeg

- Regional cross-border organizations associated with PNWER in the West provided an opportunity for detecting early frictions and finding a resolution to the dispute in the Milk River conflict between Alberta and Montana.³
- The Government of Manitoba and the state Government of Minnesota have joined together to advocate and mutually oppose North Dakota's controversial Devil's Lake outlet.

- *Promoting Cross-Border Regional Competitiveness*

Globalization is impacting all geographic regions and all industry segments of both Canada and the United States. To better meet these challenges, stakeholders in provinces and states are recognizing that cross-border collaborations are becoming increasingly important to their future and the future prosperity of individual provinces and states. As industrial and economic activities increasingly transcend regional borders, cooperation, coordination and collaboration are more and more required to create stronger, more efficient cross-border regional economies. Robert Noble, Deputy Consul General of Canada in New York and a former Trade Commissioner, felt that in many industrial sectors, market approaches within cross-border regions are often not cohesive and coherent enough. Noble argued that a more cohesive cross-border approach in specific economic activities and sectors could ensure competitiveness in third markets. The

Honourable (Senator) Jeremiah Grafstein, Co-Chair of the Canada–US Inter-Parliamentary Group, went a step further by suggesting that cross-border regions represent a new economic model that can best meet the challenges of a competitive global marketplace.

- *Strengthening Lobbying Influence and Effectiveness*

As noted by Allan Gotlieb, a former Canadian Ambassador to the United States, “a good domestic United States ally is worth a hundred protest notes to the State Department.”⁴ Correspondingly, many participants at various roundtables agreed with the idea of using cross-border regional organizations and forums to help identify US interest groups with pro-Canadian views.

Other participants thought that it is critical that the provinces do not place all of their resources in meetings between premiers and governors. Former Quebec Delegate General François Lebrun added that the best allies for the Canadian government in the United States are multinational corporations that operate in both Canada and the United States.

“We’re moving back to the natural lines that existed before confederation.”
Brian Dick, Vice-President, ACOA

“Cross-border organizations can be very effective lobbying groups in both Ottawa and Washington.”

Raymond Chrétien, Former Ambassador of Canada to the United States;
Member of the Board of Directors of the Governors’ Committee for the Quebec-New York Corridor

- *Voicing Regional Concerns in National Capitals*

Cross-border relationships can provide an effective channel to move forward in specific issues of a regional nature that may not have the same level of interest required at the national level. An example of this is the recent joint letter signed by Premier Charest of Quebec and Governor Pataki of New York State to Prime Minister Martin and President Bush petitioning for increased infrastructure funding. Manitoba and North Dakota also made submissions in Washington to express concern about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Bi-national coalitions provide greater reach, additional access and legitimacy to concerns.

- *Further Democratizing Canada-US Relations*

Participants at various roundtables expressed the view that cross-border regional organizations can provide forums in which regional stakeholders can participate in meaningful two-way dialogues on important Canada-US issues:

- In such forums, regional organizations, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders have the opportunity they would not otherwise have to express views and provide input into bi-national policy considerations;

- As well, in such forums, stakeholders can frequently engage in more candid and constructive discussions than would be possible when one national agency is required to make a formal policy pronouncement.
- *Providing Regional Forums as a Virtual Infrastructure for the “NAFTA Process”*

NAFTA is sometimes inappropriately thought of as an “end” when it should be seen as a “process” contributing to more beneficial interactions between North American partners. Similarly, cross-border regional organizations such as PNWER provide forums for building and enhancing Canada-US relationships and discussing issues on a regional basis. They also provide a mechanism for sub-national regional governments to find ways to coordinate policy and pursue common interests. In this vein, a number of participants stated the view that cross-border regional organizations can provide the virtual infrastructure for international intergovernmental policy coordination without the need for governments on the either side of the border to either reorganize or add agencies.

- *Providing Support to Activities That Complement Federal Actions*

Perhaps because cross-border regional organizations are often actively involved in addressing issues that fall under provincial or state jurisdictions, at least partially, participants at all of the roundtables felt that the role played by cross-border regional organizations is supportive and complementary to federal actions. Similarly, in the *Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions*, 84 percent agreed that cross-border regional organizations complement rather than compete with federal government activities.

What Are Key Challenges?

Many participants took up the question of key obstacles to the development of further cross-border regional linkages. A consensus emerged on the seriousness of a number of challenges.

- *Maintaining an Open Border*

A most frequently raised concern was the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which will require citizens of Canada, Mexico, and the United States to have a passport or another accepted secure document that establishes the traveller’s identity and nationality in order to enter or re-enter

the United States. Jim Phillips, President and CEO of the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance,

“WHTI is going to be disastrous if done wrong, but if it is done right it could be beneficial to trade.”

Jim Phillips, President and CEO of the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance

cautioned how imperative it is that the new initiative be handled correctly, and in a manner which actually promotes the seamless movement of goods across North America.⁵ According to Garry Douglas, CEO of the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce, Canada should move to a shared perimeter concept, because in the absence of such a strategy, there may be further fortification at the United States border.

- *Developing More Effective Border Management*

Neal Belitski, Vice President and General Manager of the Detroit and Canada Tunnel Corporation, stated that transportation operations and program planning need to be more integrated on a regional basis. This includes stronger emphasis being given to traffic

management to and from the border by taking into account the multiple facets of the border, such as the crossings, government and private sector involvement,

“...firms like IBM and GE, whose products may cross the border several times at different stages of production, may decide to locate exclusively to the United States if the border becomes too thick”.

François Lebrun, Former Quebec Delegate General in Boston

and the community. David Sprynczynatyk, of the North Dakota Department of Transportation, and Allan Robison, President and CEO of Reimer Express Lines, similarly underscored the importance of an efficient transportation network for the vitality and prosperity of a region.

Participants in various roundtables observed that effective border management does not only affect Canada’s trading relationship with the United States, but it also has important ramifications for international trading relationships, such as the West region’s relationship with the Asia Pacific. For instance, improved transportation infrastructure and secure and efficient border services are vital to ensure the effectiveness of the Pacific Gateway Strategy, which was announced by the Government of Canada in October 2005 and reiterated in the federal budget in May 2006.⁶

- *Improving Transportation Infrastructure*

In all roundtables, the transportation infrastructure between Canada and the United States was clearly identified as a serious barrier to cross-border regional linkages. A number of participants argued that the need to improve the infrastructure of all transportation corridors in all modes of ground transportation is vital to the health of cross-border regions. For example, rail service between Atlantic Canada and New England is severely fragmented and is not conducive to the development of further economic cross-border linkages. Michael Ircha, Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of New Brunswick, suggested that the Canadian and US governments should better coordinate their multimodal transportation analyses so that North American transportation networks are developed more efficiently. Numerous speakers emphasized that Canadian investment in transportation infrastructure along the border is lagging behind that of the United States.

“... the importance of transportation infrastructure will grow in the future since it is a key element in the service-based economy and in manufacturing sectors with just-in-time industrial production processes.”

Robert Noble, Deputy Consul General of Canada

- *Reducing Regulatory Differences*

In most roundtables, regulatory issues were highlighted as another key concern. Timothy Woodcock, Attorney for Eaton Peabody, outlined how inconsistent regulatory policies have huge implications on the growing just-in-time delivery mechanisms between Canada and the United States since logistical efficiency (e.g., shipment size) cannot be maximized due to bi-national regulatory differences. Graham Starmer, President of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, suggested that a mechanism should be developed whereby Canadian interests and positions would be provided to US regulators when regulations are being developed to prevent unnecessary Canada-US differences and unintended consequences for Canada.

- *Increasing Interdependence of Issues and Jurisdictions*

Jurisdictions are increasingly intertwined horizontally in a number of sectors and vertically among the federal, provincial and local levels. For example, transportation is now linked strongly to security. Yet, transportation is in large part a provincial or state jurisdiction, while security is under federal jurisdiction. For many roundtable participants, these jurisdictional differences are confusing and can lead to inefficient and ineffective policies with respect to bi-national cooperation.

- *Dealing Effectively with Quite Different Federal Arrangements*

Finally, different federal arrangements in Canada and the United States were identified as one more challenge to improving cross-border collaborations. François Lebrun, former Quebec Delegate General in Boston, noted that imbalances exist between state and provincial governments in the importance and priority shown to cross-border relations. For example, he suggested that the Premier of Quebec gives much more importance to the Conference of NEG-ECP than do some state governors (e.g., many send representatives rather than attending themselves), and governors do not have the same importance in the United States as do provincial premiers in Canada.

Considerations for Public Policies

Possible Roles for the Government of Canada

A number of Government of Canada departments are already involved in issues related to cross-border regions on a day-to-day basis. These include Canada Border Services Agency, Transport Canada (regional offices), National Defence, and Parks Canada.

“The subject of cross-border regions and their significance and interaction is the key to our bilateral relationship.”

Leonard Hill, U.S. Consul General in Halifax

Many participants at the roundtables believed that certain other Government of Canada activities also play a crucial role in facilitating cross-border collaborations.

- *Promoting the Competitiveness and Prosperity of Cross-Border Regions*

As put forward in the PRI *Interim Report*, North American producers will face increasingly more intense international competition in a growing number of important economic sectors (e.g., automotive, commodities, aircraft, pharmaceuticals, and steel).

“Cross-border regions are a new economic nucleus...”

The Honourable (Senator) Jeremiah S. Grafstein

As different North American regions, cross-border or otherwise, become specialized in specific economic activities and sectors, the Government of Canada needs to examine the possibility of establishing new economic policy frameworks and governance institutions to capture this new reality. For example, the notion of Canada and the United States cooperating in the development of cross-border “global production platforms” was strongly supported in all roundtables.

“CBRs can play an integral role in the future success of Canada and the United States in addressing the increased competitive pressures from emerging countries.”

Drew Fagan, Director General, Foreign Affairs Canada

- *Taking Advantage of the “Transformational Diplomatic” Role Played by Cross-Border Stakeholders*

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings coming out of the roundtables related to the role that cross-border regional stakeholders can play in Canada-US relations.

Transformational diplomacy is a benefit to the Government of Canada insofar as it promotes healthy relations among provinces and states along the border. If cross-border regional stakeholders can advance regional issues, this frees up the Government of Canada to focus on more global issues. In addition, cross-border regions and their organizations can make substantial contributions to Canada-US relations by providing policy solutions to real problems, helping to resolve bi-national disputes, and giving a voice to cross-border regional concerns in Washington and Ottawa.

“Regional leaders played a strong role in the (Government of Canada) advocacy campaign (on softwood lumber) in the US.”

Jeffrey Parker, Canadian Consul General to Seattle

The Government of Canada can support the development of transformational diplomacy by encouraging cross-border players and interest groups to network and meet, in a way that is rooted in partnership.

- *Making Policy Considerations More Responsive to the Cross-Border Regional Reality*

Feedback from cross-border regional organizations and networks will also provide the Government of Canada with a better understanding of the issues and problems, including those that can best be solved at the regional level.

A pragmatic regional perspective on national issues would also permit local impacts to be better identified and considered in the national policy process.

“It can only be in everyone’s interests that Washington and Ottawa integrate a regional dimension into their national decision-making process.”

John D. Dickson, Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Ottawa

- *Recognizing the Importance of Cross-Border Activities to Regional Development*

Cross-border economic linkages were identified by many participants as becoming progressively more important to the prosperity of individual provinces and states in their respective cross-border regions. There is increased pressure on local and regional economies to transform in a way to better meet the challenges of more intense international competition and the worldwide proliferation of supply chains.

Many industries at the border are becoming intertwined. Therefore, it is important that cross-border provinces and states recognize the importance of pursuing opportunities and common challenges on a regional basis, and to have a coordinated cross-border approach. The Government of Canada, through its regional agencies, can help identify where, in a cross-border regional context, synergies and clusters are developing, in support of new economic development models involving provinces working with their US neighbours in building supply chains.

Possible Government of Canada Actions

Participants at the roundtables also recommended a number of Government of Canada actions to fulfill the key national policy roles outlined above.

- *Recognize the Importance of Cross-Border Regional Relationships*

As a first priority, a large number of participants expressed the need for the Government of Canada to publicly recognize the important role played by cross-border regional organizations in a number of policy fields. A show of support could be done informally in a number of ways, including via public speeches, consultations, official meetings.

- *Facilitate the Sharing of Best Practices*

Participants also pointed out that the Government of Canada could provide a valuable service to stakeholders engaged in cross-border regional relationships by conducting and coordinating further research for their benefit.

Matt Morrison, Executive Director of PNWER, suggested developing a public-private Canada-US academy devoted to the study of bi-national policy options.

“... a light coordinating role of sub-national activities could be conducted by the Government of Canada with the objective of developing a briefing capacity on Canada-US regional issues.”

**Raymond Chrétien, Former Ambassador of Canada to the United States,
Member of the Board of Directors of the Governors Committee for the
Quebec-New York Corridor**

A federal “Cross-Border Issue Desk” could be also created in each region to provide a much needed go-to point on regional issues pertaining to the border. Such a dedicated post would provide a useful resource to existing functional positions that deal in part with cross-border issues, and could provide a catalyst around which to develop appropriate and timely responses.

A large number of participants suggested that the Government of Canada could both facilitate and encourage the mobilization of sub-national actors in cross-border regions through annual meetings or roundtables so that information and best practices can be exchanged. These forums could also be used to discuss emerging border issues.

- *Provide More Support to Cross-Border Region Stakeholders*

Dale Botting, President and CEO of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, reported that the Government of Canada’s “Enhanced Representation Initiative” has been of great assistance to the Prairie-Great Plains region, where the small size of many provinces and states hinders their ability to establish a formal presence in neighbouring border jurisdictions. Similarly, Canadian consulate initiatives and services have benefited smaller regional players and enterprises. Such endeavours should be continued and even expanded.

Some participants suggested that the Government of Canada look into promoting additional support to engagements that address cross-border issues; that would involve bringing in speakers, presentations and journalists. Other recommendations from the roundtables included executive exchanges between the Government of Canada and cross-border regional organizations which could benefit both the Government of Canada and the sponsoring organizations. In all roundtables, participants suggested that the Government of Canada could offer more direct funding to cross-border regional organizations.⁷

“...working together works – we must encourage more cross-border collaborations...”

**The Honourable John van Dongen, Minister, State for Intergovernmental Relations, British Columbia and PNWER
Vice President-Canada**

o *Including Cross-Border Regional Stakeholders in Important Initiatives*

The Pacific Gateway Strategy was mentioned as an initiative that would benefit from the engagement of cross-border regional organizations. The benefits of the Pacific Gateway reach beyond British Columbia, and can have advantages for other provinces and their cross-border states. Given the multi-sector nature of cross-border regional organizations, and their interest in transportation infrastructure, cross-border organizations could fulfill a vital role on the Canada's Pacific Gateway Council.

A number of participants suggested that cross-border regional organizations should be able to contribute more fully to existing initiatives such as the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). The SPP opened the door to sub-national involvement in regulations and standards, and proposed greater cooperation on health issues such as avian and pandemic influenza. The SPP also recently announced the creation of a North America Competitiveness Council to consider bi-national issues to improve competitiveness.

"... a bottom-up process is required in the SPP."
John D. Dickson, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa

Cross-border regional organizations have a key role to play in these areas, and especially in ensuring that important competitiveness issues are addressed as they relate to the borderland areas.

In the view of many roundtable participants, the SPP may provide the political push needed to kick-start further cross-border collaborations. Cross-border regional organizations could also sponsor forums that bring together leaders from the private sector and government, thereby helping to facilitate the engagement of the private sector. One of the key objectives of the SPP's North American Competitiveness Council is to promote the private sector's role in promoting North American competitiveness.

It is worth noting that Deputy Consul General of Canada Robert Noble felt that the relationship between the private sector and

"The private sector builds relationships that cannot be made at the political level."
Brian Lee Crowley, President, Atlantic Institute for Market Studies

the federal government is not as well established in Canada as in the United States, and suggested that the Canadian government should develop strong and high-level relationships with the private sector.

o *Identifying Federal Champions*

A number of participants at the roundtables highlighted the importance of federal champions when it comes to incorporating key activities of cross-border regions into the policy process of the Government of Canada. To this end, participants further suggested some ways in which the mandates of four key groups of federal champions could be augmented:

- Regional Development Agencies⁸ – to further support cooperative activities to generate cross-border regional economic development and prosperity;

- Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada – to take advantage of tangible benefits that cross-border regional relationships and linkages can bring to Canada-US relations;
- Industry Canada – to ensure the competitiveness of Canada-US cross-border regional industries in global markets; and
- Federal Regional Councils – to add pragmatic cross-border regional perspectives on national issues. They could include within their portfolio the interaction with cross-border regions as a form of “virtual government” on a regional basis that crosses national boundaries. This would create greater horizontality and facilitate better awareness of regional policy matters which may have implications for several departments of the Government of Canada.

What Are the Challenges Ahead?

Participants at the roundtables also identified a number of underlying challenges that hindered the Government of Canada’s appreciation of cross-border regions. In particular, participants stated that cross-border regions:

- Have their own identity and uniqueness, which adds complexity to the policy-making process should the Government of Canada try to take cross-border regional specificities into account;

“None of us are a model, we’re all examples.”
Garry Douglas, Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce

- Remain fuzzy entities – for example, different configurations of provinces and states could be construed as a cross-border region depending on the interest and dimensions considered.
- Are a “bottom-up phenomenon” that has developed largely without the involvement of the Government of Canada. Often they reflect largely informal networks that lack permanent institutional structure and are difficult to identify; and
- Are a recent phenomenon of enquiry in North America, unlike in Europe. Much as the FTA and NAFTA were codifications of the economic reality at the end of the last century, cross-border regions and cross-border relationships are part of a new socio-economic reality with which the governments of Canada and the United States will again have to catch up.

“...Cross-border regions in Europe have been used as a tool of integration for more than 50 years...”

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, University of Victoria

Way Forward

Further analytical work is planned that reflects some of the recommendations of the roundtable participants, which are mentioned in Appendix I. The PRI will continue its work on economic indicators, the further analysis of trade corridors, and will review the Europe and US-Mexico experiences with cross-border regions.

The PRI also intends to more fully explore the results from the *Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions* and executive interviews through three thematic papers addressing infrastructure, environmental cooperation, and the strategic use of cross-border regions in Canada-US relations.

By Fall 2006, the PRI will prepare a final report that will draw on the findings from the recent and ongoing analytical work, and that will reflect the input from all of the roundtables held across the country. It will include a practical policy framework to guide the role of the Government of Canada.

“Clearly, cross-border regions are becoming “the” essential unit of analysis to better understand Canada’s growing linkages with the US – they comprise the necessary focal point to understanding the dynamic nature of Canada-US linkages, and the promise and challenges associated with greater integration.” **André Downs, Senior Project Director, Policy Research Initiative**

Notes

1 Reports, papers and roundtable presentations are available from the PRI web site at <www.policyresearch.gc.ca>.

2 A number of accomplishments were realized through these cross-border partnerships including: the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the FCCQ successfully convinced the US Federal Government to invest US\$100 million in the Champlain *Port of Excellence* modernization project. Quebec and New York developed an alliance with a third party in France in nanotechnology. Montréal International and the FCCQ were the architects of this agreement linking together NanoQuebec, Albany Nanotech, and CEA-Léti (Grenoble, France). Quebec and New York signed an agreement to develop and promote the Lake Champlain/Richelieu River corridor.

3 Matt Morrison, Executive Director of PNWER, 2006.

4 Allan Gotlieb, “I’ll be with you in a minute, Mr. Ambassador: The Education of a Canadian Diplomat in Washington,” 1991.

5 Estimates by the Conference Board suggest declining profits of \$200 million between 2006 and 2008 for the tourism industry alone. Potential significant losses would be concentrated in, but not limited to manufacturing, autos, natural resources, post-secondary institutions, and research and innovation.

6 The initiative is designed to strengthen Canada’s position in international commerce by improving Canada’s transportation capacity to and from the west coast.

7 For example, in 2005, PNWER received the following funding: provinces and states: \$238,000, the US Federal Government: \$265,000, the private sector: \$400,000 and the Government of Canada: \$10,000.

8 Namely ACOA, CEDQ, and WEDC.

Appendix I – Suggestions for Additional Research

The Importance of Trade Corridors and Infrastructure

- A number of roundtable and leader survey participants, and interviewed executives, felt that transportation infrastructure is an important dimension of the Canada-US relationship that should be incorporated into the PRI definition of cross-border regions. Some argued that this dimension might be a condition of success of cross-border regions.

The Role of Supply Chains

- Cross-border clusters comprise an important component of North American supply chains, and more research is necessary to explore how Canada and the United States might better cooperate in the joint development of high-value economic activities and cross-border “global production platforms.” For example, Robert Noble commented that many companies have research and development facilities in Montréal and corporate offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts to be close to the Boston-based venture capital community. Another example is the aerospace industry in Quebec, which is becoming similar to the automobile cluster in Ontario in the way that components of products are crossing the border several times before the final product reaches the consumer. Stephen Blank of Pace University suggested that case studies of larger firms would be helpful in examining how this process operates between business partners within cross-border regions.

What is Happening to the Border Effect?

- The literature suggests that the “border effect” is a measure of the resistance to trade created by the presence of the border. The border effect has declined substantially under the FTA and NAFTA, but remains significant. It was suggested to measure the border effect among cross-border regions in order to test the hypothesis that cross-border regions would have a smaller border effect. The existence of a border effect can generally be interpreted in two ways. First, a persistent border effect suggests that Canada can generate further trade and economic gains by reducing the remaining resistance to Canada-US bilateral trade. At the same time, the border effect can be viewed as a shield that provides Canada with some policy discretion.

Cross-Border Regions in Europe and Along the US-Mexico Border

- It was suggested that examining cross-border regions in Europe and along the US-Mexico border could help create a better understanding of the phenomenon in the Canada and US context. For instance, the European experience could provide a useful comparison concerning various drivers that facilitate the development of cross-border regions, and the roles of governments in their development.

Activities of the Government of Canada in Cross-Border Regions

- Developing an inventory of Government of Canada activities in all cross-border regions was considered an essential prerequisite to determining additional future undertakings by the Government of Canada. For example, Albert Juneau, a consultant for la Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, highlighted how the Government of Canada plays a “strategically important” role in Quebec’s cross-border relationships – albeit one that he notes is perhaps “peripheral to the federal government’s core activities.”

Improving Available Data on Cross-Border Relationships

- As is usually the case in research, the availability of data is a paramount concern. Analysis of trade flows and trade networks can only be developed as far as the data will allow. A few participants at the roundtables highlighted that there is an increasing need for research on cross-border trade flows at a more local level (e.g., only a few case studies of corporate supply chains and micro-economic analysis are available). Other participants mentioned the statistical problems in tracking the final destination of merchandise trade, since exports are frequently transformed before they reach the hands of the consumer.

Appendix II – Agenda Used For Regional Roundtables

* The Ottawa Roundtable had a modified agenda. For more information, please go to the following link:
<http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=rp_nal_ev>

Objectives

- Present the results of the PRI study and confirm the emergence of cross-border regions.
- Obtain participants' point of view on the emergence of cross-border regions and their impact on the Government of Canada's policies.

First Session – Findings of the PRI Study

The purpose of this session is to present two key elements of the PRI study of cross-border regional relationships: 1) the interim research report and 2) the study and interviews of leaders of the four cross-border regions identified during this study: the West, Prairies-Great Plains, Great Lakes-Heartland, and East regions.

- Conclusions of the PRI *Interim Report on the Emergence of Cross-Border Regions*
- Presentation of the results from the *Leader Survey on Canada-US Cross-Border Regions* and Executive Interviews
- Expert commentaries
- Discussion

Second Session – Regional Initiatives and Findings

The purpose of this session is to highlight the various projects, agreements, and initiatives implemented between cross-border regions and to discuss their lessons learned in order to better understand how the cross-border regions operate.

- Two regional presentations
- Expert commentaries
- Discussion

Lunch and Keynote Speaker

Third Session – Implications and Roles for the Government of Canada

The objective of this session is to discuss the implications of cross-border regions and the potential public policy considerations that they may entail for the Government of Canada.

Three issues are debated:

- 1) What is the future of cross-border links in your cross-border regions?
- 2) What challenges must be addressed in order to foster an enhancement of these links?
- 3) What policy tools must be promoted by the Government of Canada?

- Panel
- Discussion
- Closing remarks

Appendix III – Participants

Montréal, Quebec – November 23, 2005

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

Johanne Bécard

Acting Vice-President
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Françoise Bertrand

CEO, Fédération des chambres de commerce du
Québec

Stephen Blank

Director, Center for International Business
Development
Lubin School of Business, Pace University

Christian Boucher

Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Charles Bourgeois

Vice President, Information Technology
Montréal International

Renaud Caron

Vice-President, CGI Group; former senior public
servant with the Government of Quebec and the
Government of Canada

Raymond Chrétien

Former Ambassador of Canada to the United
States, Member of the Board of Directors of the
Governors' Committee for the Québec – New
York Corridor and Strategic Adviser at the law
firm Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP

Garry Douglas

CEO, Plattsburgh – North Country Chamber of
Commerce

André Downs

Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

Gilbert Gagné

Director, Research Group on Continental
Integration
Université du Québec à Montréal; and Professor,
Department of Political Studies, Bishop's
University

Albert Juneau

Consultant for the Québec – New York Corridor
Fédération des chambres de commerce du
Québec

François Lebrun

Former Quebec Delegate General in Boston
Consultant, Groupe Hébert

Robert Noble

Deputy Consul General of Canada, New York

Marc-Urbain Proulx

Directeur, Département du développement
régional
Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Jean-Pierre Voyer

Executive Director
Policy Research Initiative

Discussants

Susanne Benoit

Président-directeur général
Longueuil Développement Économique

Marie-Andrée Katia Bertrand

Regional Director
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Larissa Blavatska

Consul and Head
Canadian Consulate General, New York

Jean Caron

Economic Advisor
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Alana Cattapan

Public Policy Forum

Blaise Champagne

Director General
National Research Council Canada

Francine Émond

Director, Western Québec Field Unit
Parks Canada

Marc Gagnon

Director General
St. Laurence Economic Development Council

Marie-Chantal Girard

Director
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions, Ville de Québec

Marie-Thérèse Guérin

Research and Development Manager
Tourism Montréal

Jeff Heynen

Analyst
Privy Council Office

Claire Jacques

Canada Border Services Agency – Montérégie

Dominic Jean

Advisor
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Sylvie Lacroix

Directeur général
Conseil économique du Haut-Richelieu

Isabelle Lamy

Analyste de politiques
Fédération des chambre de commerce du Québec

Jean-Michel Laurin

Vice-Président
Manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec

Michel Lavoie

Commissariat aux relations internationales

Sophie Leduc

Empire State Development

Jules Léger

Senior Analyst
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Alain Lumbroso

Economist
Transport Canada

Susan Matton

Vice-President
Plattsburgh – North Country Chamber of
Commerce

Michel Merleau

Director General
Ville de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

Claude Métras

President
Cross Border Forum

Denyse Nepveu

Director
Canadian Pacific Railway

Yves Poisson

Director, Special Projects
Public Policy Forum

Gilles Provost

Senior Economic Advisor
Canada Economic Development for Quebec
Regions

Gary Sawchuk

Senior Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

Gerald Shaye

Director
New York State Department of Economic
Development

Bryan Smith

Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

Susan Snow-Cotter

Director
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone
Management

Walter Steeves

Chief Executive Officer
Eastern Border Transportation Coalition

Debora Van Nijnatten

Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Winnipeg, Manitoba – February 14, 2006

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

Dale Botting

President and CEO
Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership

Christian Boucher

Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Tom Carter

Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and
Adaptation
University of Winnipeg

Greg Dandewich

Economic Development Director, Destination
Winnipeg
Board Member, Northern Great Plains Inc.

Bob Dolyniuk

General Manager
Manitoba Trucking Association

André Downs

Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

Ilene Grossman

Assistant Director
Council of State Governments, Midwest
Legislative Conference

Marilyn Kapitany

Assistant Deputy Minister (Manitoba)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Allan N. Robison

President and CEO
Reimer Express Lines Ltd

Annitta Stenning

Chief Administrative Officer
City of Winnipeg

Todd Schwartz

U.S. Consul
U.S. Consulate in Winnipeg

David Sprynczynatyk

Director
North Dakota Department of Transportation

Debora Van Nijnatten

Associate Professor, Department of Political
Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Jean-Pierre Voyer

Executive Director
Policy Research Initiative

Daniel Watson

Assistant Deputy Minister (Saskatchewan)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Discussants

John Alho

Associate Vice-President (External) and Director
of Government Relations
University of Manitoba

David Angus

President
Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Barry Brickman

President
North West International Ltd.

James Carr

President and CEO
Business Council of Manitoba

Suzanne Cormie

Senior Trade Commissioner
International Trade Canada

Brent DePape

Senior Policy Analyst, Policy, Planning, and
External Relations (Manitoba)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Luci Grechen

Director, Canada – U.S. and International
Relations
Manitoba Intergovernmental Relations and Trade

Tim Hibbard

Director, Policy, Planning, and External
Relations (Manitoba)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Clare Kirkland

Director of Strategic Development
Regina Regional Economic Development
Authority

Paul Larson

Director, Transport Institute
Asper School of Business
University of Manitoba

Osman Rahman

Trade Economist, Trade Policy Branch
Trade and International Relations
Government of Saskatchewan

Bill Ratcliffe

Senior Manager, United States and Trade
Operations
Manitoba Trade and Investment
Government of Manitoba

Barry Rempel

President and Chief Executive Officer
Winnipeg Airports Authority

Rick Savone

Deputy Consul General and Senior Trade
Commissioner
Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis

Gary Sawchuk

Senior Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

Peggy Schmeiser

Manager, Policy, Planning and External
Relations (Saskatchewan)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Marvin Schneider

Executive Director, U.S. Relations
International and Intergovernmental Relations
Government of Alberta

Michael Shumsky

Regional Director, Coordination and Policy
Advice
Transport Canada

John Spacek

Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Regulation
Divisions
Transportation and Government Services
Government of Manitoba

Robert Stalker

Manager, Policy, Planning and External
Relations (Manitoba)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Graham Starmer

President
Manitoba Chambers of Commerce

Mike Styre

Regional Director General
Canada Border Services

Vancouver, British Columbia – February 16, 2006

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

Bruce Agnew
Director
Cascadia Centre for Regional Development

Don Alper
Director
Center for Canadian-American Studies and the
Border Policy Research Institute
Western Washington University

K. David Andersson
President
Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council

Christian Boucher
Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly
Assistant Professor, School of Public
Administration
University of Victoria

Don Dalik
Member of Private Sector Council of PNWER
Partner of Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP

John S. Dickson
Deputy Chief of Mission
U.S. Embassy, Ottawa

André Downs
Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

Hon. Jim Kenyon
Yukon Minister of Economic Development
PNWER Vice President, Canada

Ardath Paxton Mann
Assistant Deputy Minister (British Columbia)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Matt Morrison
Executive Director
Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Jeffrey Parker
Consul General
Consulate General of Canada in Seattle

Hon. John van Dongen
British Columbia Minister of State for
Intergovernmental Relations
PNWER Vice President, Canada

Jean-Pierre Voyer
Executive Director
Policy Research Initiative

Vinita Watson
Senior Fellow
Canada School of Public Service

Discussants

Heather Ardiel
Acting Director, Pacific Highway District
Canada Border Services Agency

Frank Blasetti
Assistant Deputy Minister
BC Transport
Government of British Columbia

Barry Brickman
President
North West International Ltd.

Hazel Cail
Manager, Intergovernmental
Relations, International Trade Operations
Alberta Economic Development
Government of Alberta

Dennis Chang
U.S. State Department

Susan E. Clarke
Professor, Director – Faculty
Department of Political Science
University of Colorado at Boulder

Wayne Clifford
Assistant Deputy Minister
International Relations
International and Intergovernmental Relations
Government of Alberta

Hugh Conroy
Project Manager
Whatcom Council of Governments

Allen Domaas
President and CEO
Fraser River Port Authority

Noemi Gal-Or
Director, Institute for Transborder Studies
Professor, Department of Political Science
Kwantlen University College

David Grace
Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Policy Division
Ministry of Environment
Government of British Columbia

Jane Humberstone
Coordinator, Intergovernmental Relations,
International Trade Operations
Alberta Economic Development
Alberta Government

Sudha Kshatriya
Trade Commissioner
International Trade Canada

Lewis Lukens
Consul General
United States Consulate in Vancouver

Marissa Maurer
U.S. State Department

Rolf Mirus
Acting Vice-Provost and Associate Vice President
(International)
Western Centre for Economic Research
University of Alberta

Michelle Neilly
Director General, Operations (British Columbia)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Sukumar Periwal
Director, International Relations
Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat
Government of British Columbia

Brian Reimer
Senior Business Officer,
Strategic Policy, Planning and Environmental
Analysis (British Columbia)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Michael Treleaven
Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Canadian
Studies Consortium
Gonzaga University

Debora Van Nijnatten
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Garret Wasny
Senior Business Officer
Entrepreneurship and International Business
(British Columbia)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Yuen Pau Woo
President and Co-CEO
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

David Woynorowski
Director, Policy, Planning, and External Relations
(Alberta)
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Waterloo, Ontario – February 28, 2006

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

Neal Belitsky

Vice President and General Manager
Detroit and Canada Tunnel Corporation

Christian Boucher

Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Tom Courchene

Jarislowsky-Deutsch Professor of Economic and
Financial Policy
Queen's University

Dennis DesRosiers

President
DesRosiers Automotive Consultants Inc

André Downs

Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

John English

Executive Director
Centre for International Governance Innovation

Paul Heinbecker

Distinguished Fellow, CIGI and Former
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Canada to the United Nations

Jessica LeCroy

U.S. Consul General in Toronto

James Milway

Executive Director
Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity

David Naftzger

Executive Director
Council of Great Lakes Governors

Bob Seguin

Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Government of Ontario

Daniel Schwanen

Chief Operating Officer and Director of Research,
Centre for International Governance Innovation

John D. Tennant

Chief Executive Officer
Canada's Technology Triangle Inc.; Former
Consul General of Canada in Detroit

Debora Van Nijnatten

Associate Professor, Department of Political
Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Jean-Pierre Voyer

Executive Director
Policy Research Initiative

Discussants

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

Assistant Professor
School of Public Administration
University of Victoria

Kathryn Bryk Friedman

Deputy Director
Institute for Local Governance and Regional
Growth, University of Buffalo

Terry Cowl

Economic Advisor, North America Bureau
Foreign Affairs Canada

Raymond R. Datt

President
Automotive Industries Association of Canada

Karen E. Vigmostad

Director
International Joint Commission

John Whalley

Distinguished Fellow, Centre for International
Governance Innovation; and
William G. Davis Chair in International Trade,
University of Western Ontario

Sackville, New Brunswick – March 3, 2006

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

J. Nick Bayne

President and CEO
Maine and Maritimes Corp.

Christian Boucher

Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Douglas Brown

Assistant Professor, Department of Political
Science
St. Francis Xavier University

Bill Casey

Member of Parliament (Cumberland-Colchester-
Musquodoboit), Nova Scotia

David Chaundy

Senior Economist
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council

Sean Cooper

Regional Executive Director
Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce

Jonathan Daniels

President and CEO, Eastern Maine Development
Corporation

Brian Dick

Vice-President, Policy Programs
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

André Downs

Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

Leonard Hill

United States Consul General in Halifax

Stephen J. Hornsby

Director
Canadian-American Center

Michael C. Ircha

Professor of Civil Engineering
University of New Brunswick

Robin F. Neill

Adjunct Professor of Economics
University of Prince Edward Island

Debora Van Nijnatten

Associate Professor, Department of Political
Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Timothy C. Woodcock

Attorney
Eaton Peabody

Discussants

Neal W. Allen

Executive Director
Greater Portland Council of Governments

Daniel Boljkovac

A/Regional Transportation Analyst
Transport Canada

Linda Boudreau

Atlantic Policy Research Administrator
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Annie Boudreau-Tibbo

Policy Analyst
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Daniel Bourgeois

Executive Director
Canadian Institute for Research on Public Policy
and Public Administration

Chris Bryant

Executive Director
Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development
Government of Nova Scotia

Kevin Bulmer

Senior Investment Officer
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Richard Cormier

Senior Policy Analyst
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Dale Crory

Economic/Political Specialist
U.S. Consulate General in Halifax

Susanne Derrah

Policy Analyst
Strategic Development and Intergovernmental
Relations

Peter Doig

Director of Intergovernmental Relations
Emera Inc.

Raymond Dufour

Coordinator
Atlantic Institute of Logistics and Transportation

Philippe Dupuis

Chair, Team Canada Atlantic
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

James Frost

Executive Director
Halifax Gateway Council

Gerry Gallant

Executive Director
Atlantic Canada Airports Association

Stephen Kymlicka

Researcher
Atlantic Institute for Market Studies

Nicole P. LeBlanc

Manager – Atlantic Policy Research Initiative
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Alistair MacDonald

Senior Vice-President
CGI Atlantic

Lynn MacKay

Senior Policy Advisor
New Brunswick Intergovernmental and
International Relations
Government of New Brunswick

Anne McInerney

Senior Communications Officer
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Fred Morley

Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist
Greater Halifax Partnership

Paul O’Driscoll

Chair
Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce

Douglas J. Robertson

Director, Innovation Policy and Research Projects
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

David Slade

Director General, Policy
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Bryan Smith

Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

Captain Alwyn G. Soppitt

President and CEO
Saint John Port Authority

Walter W. Steeves

Chair
Eastern Border Transportation Coalition

Maxine Westhead

OAP Project Leader, Bay of Fundy/Gulf of Maine
Oceans and Coastal Management Division
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Ottawa, Ontario – March 6-7, 2006

Speakers, Panelists, and Commentators

Brian Lee Crowley

President
Atlantic Institute for Market Studies

Greg Dandewich

Economic Development Director, Destination
Winnipeg
Board Member, Northern Great Plains Inc.

Garry Douglas

CEO
Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce
Quebec/New York Corridor

André Downs

Senior Project Director
Policy Research Initiative

Drew Fagan

Director General
Foreign Affairs Canada

Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein

Senator, Canada

Matt Morrison

Executive Director
Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

James Phillips

President and CEO
Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance

Larry Swanson

Director
Center for the Rocky Mountain West

Bill Testa

Vice President and Director of Regional Programs
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Jean-Pierre Voyer

Executive Director
Policy Research Initiative

Patrick Whalen

President, PJW Consulting
International Business Development Manager,
Speed Transportation

Discussants

Christian Boucher

Senior Advisor
Policy Research Initiative

Douglas Challborn

Deputy Director
Foreign Affairs Canada

Richard Cormier

Senior Policy Analyst
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Terry Cowl

Economic Advisor
Foreign Affairs Canada

Harold Deck

Senior Policy Analyst
Western Economic Diversification Canada

June M. Dewetering

Economist
Library of Parliament

Margaret DeHaan

Senior Analyst
Infrastructure Canada

Jeff Heynen

Analyst
Privy Council Office

Serge Pelletier

Association Secretary
Senate of Canada

Yves Poisson

Director, Special Projects
Public Policy Forum

Gary Sawchuk

Senior Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

Bryan Smith

Policy Research Officer
Policy Research Initiative

John Stewart

Economist
U.S. Embassy

Debora Van Nijnatten

Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Wilfrid Laurier University

Vinita Watson

Senior Fellow
Canadian School of Public Service