



Remarks By John McCain On The Relationship Between The United States And Canada

June 20, 2008

ARLINGTON, VA -- U.S. Senator John McCain will deliver the following remarks as prepared for delivery to the Economic Club of Toronto in Ottawa, Canada, today at 1:00 p.m. EDT:

Thank you all very much. I appreciate the warm welcome to Ottawa, and the hospitality of the Economic Club of Toronto. The reputation of the Economic Club as a place for serious discussion of policy is well known in America, and I am honored by your invitation. There aren't any electoral votes to be won up here in the middle of a presidential election. But there are many shared interests that require our attention today, and many Canadians here I am proud to call friends.

If you've been following the presidential election, you've probably noticed that Canada comes up for discussion quite a bit these days. And this is as it should be -- because no other nation shares so many ties with the United States. And today the strength of that partnership is more vital than ever. The economic community we have founded, together with our alliance and the values we hold in common, have served our people for decades, and served us well. It will fall to the next president to strengthen these ties still further, adding to the security and prosperity of all of North America.

We in the United States are very lucky, in a way that's easy to take for granted. We are surrounded by two great oceans, and by two nations we count as friends. Think of the fate of other nations, and how much of their histories have been shaped by hostile neighbors. Generation after generation, they live in fear, resentment, and competition harmful to the interests of all. Lost in rivalry and distrust are the advantages of regional friendship and stability. What a blessing it is for the United States to have in Canada a neighbor we fear only on ice rinks and baseball diamonds.

The best American statesmen have always understood that Canada is not some adjunct to America. We are firm and fast friends. We are allies, partners in success and adversity alike, and a great deal depends on preserving that unity.

Trade is just a part of what unites us, but a very important part. Last year alone, we exchanged some 560 billion dollars in goods, and Canada is the leading export market for 36 of the 50 United States. This country stands as America's leading overall export market, and America is Canada's leading agricultural market. With 60 percent of all direct foreign investment in Canada originating in the United States -- some 289 billion dollars in 2007 -- our economies draw strength from one another.

A prosperous Canada means a more dynamic and resilient American economy. There are areas where the United States can learn a great deal from your experience. Beginning in 1995, Canada did the hard work to put its fiscal house in order. You reduced spending and brought the budget from deficit to surplus. However, unlike your free-spending neighbor to the south, Canada continued to run budget surpluses even while cutting its corporate and personal tax rates. Lower taxes and spending restraint is a philosophy we should import from Canada.

Our common interests extend to other pursuits as well. The future of our environment, the flows of our energy, and the security of nations -- all of these are aided by the close relations forged by our predecessors in Ottawa and Washington. And if I have anything to say about it after January of next year, America is going to expand these ties of friendship and cooperation between our two nations.

At the forefront of our minds, in these years since the Millennium Plot and the events of 9/11, is the security of our citizens. Our governments have made real progress in keeping our borders closed to terrorists and open to trade. Yet this will remain an ongoing challenge and a key issue for the next American administration. Tens of millions of people and vehicles cross the Canadian-American border every year. The two-way trade that crosses the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor equals all American exports to Japan. That transit, and all our crossing points, must remain secure. In extending our security partnership, we can ensure continued flows

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of people and commerce while maintaining security on which these very flows depend. We need to do an even better job of managing the regular traffic across our border.

Already, we cooperate in preparing for emergencies -- exchanging information and manpower to coordinate our response to danger. We have agreements in place to work together in detecting radiological and nuclear threats, to improve security at ports, borders, and airports, and to assist first responders. We exchange public health officers and have agreed on principles for screening intercontinental air travelers in the event of a pandemic. In all of this, we are drawing upon the skills and knowledge of one another, and we are joined in the crucial work of protecting our people.

At the same time, Canada and America are joined in other vital causes around the world -- from the fight against nuclear proliferation to the fight against global warming, from the fight for justice in Haiti to the fight for democracy in Afghanistan. I, for one, will never forget the response of our Canadian friends to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. It was here in Ottawa, three days later, where tens of thousands of Canadians filled the streets on a National Day of Mourning. The Canadian people even took in Americans who have been left stranded by the shutdown of American air space. We in America have not forgotten your kindness. And we will never forget the solidarity, compassion, and friendship of Canada when it mattered most.

We know as well that Canada, too, has suffered casualties in the years since 9/11, and we honor their memory as we do our own. As always in Canada's history, this nation has been willing to do hard things, even when the costs run high. Along with our other allies, Canada and America are still fighting in defense of Afghanistan -- in the honorable cause of freedom for that long suffering country, and greater security for ourselves. To date, Canada has committed nearly two billion dollars to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, including a recent 50% increase at the Paris Conference. It is a generous investment, and a wise one, and together our countries are going to see this mission through.

Even in Iraq, where Canada has not always agreed with American policies, this nation has done all that those differences would allow to help the Iraqi people. In characteristic form, Canada has given generous humanitarian aid and development assistance. And your government has provided more than 770 million in combined assistance and debt relief to Iraq, helping a struggling young democracy at a critical time.

It's the mark of good friends that they're willing to correct you, and to do so without rancor. Many Canadians have objected to the policies of the United States in dealing with terrorists, and with enemy combatants held at the Guantanamo prison. It happens that I also regard the prison at Guantanamo as a liability in the cause against violent radical extremism, and as president I would close it. I intend as well to listen carefully when close allies offer their counsel. And even when they don't volunteer their advice, I'll ask for it and seek it out.

We're going to need that spirit in many efforts. We have a shared destiny, Canada and the United States. We are both continental powers, nations shaped by our diverse heritage and our frontier experience. We are also both Arctic nations. And because of this common geography, we must be acutely aware of the perils posed by global warming and take immediate steps to reverse its effects.

Three years ago, I traveled with some colleagues, including Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Lindsey Graham, to Yukon territory, a front line of global warming. We flew over miles of devastated spruce forests, every tree killed by insects that thrive in warm temperatures. As the trees die, fires multiply, and across the region the waters are vanishing. We heard from men and women near Whitehorse whose traditional way of life had been radically disrupted.

All of this is just a glimpse of the grave environmental dangers that global warming can bring, unless we act to prevent it. I was among the first in Congress to introduce legislation to curb greenhouse gasses. If I am elected president, it will be a top priority to enact an energy policy equal to this challenge. A sensible cap-and-trade emissions system, for instance, is a critical part of such a policy. Under U.S. and Canadian leadership, the Montreal Protocol began the process of phasing out gases that were destroying our planet's ozone layer. We also instituted a cap-and-trade system that removed the threat of acid rain. I believe we can apply it to great effect against the threat of climate change. And here, too, Canada and America can work in common purpose against common dangers.

We must also work to ensure reliable energy supplies and increase sources of renewable energy. As you all know, Canada is America's largest energy supplier. Not only does Canada have the second largest proven oil reserves in the world, 60 percent of the energy produced in Canada is hydroelectric, clean energy. We stand much to gain by harmonizing our energy policies, just as have gained by cooperating in trade through NAFTA. Since NAFTA was concluded, it has contributed to strong job growth and flourishing trade. Since the agreement was signed, the United States has added 25 million jobs and Canada more than 4 million. Cross-border trade has more than doubled since NAFTA came into force. We have established North

America as the world's largest economic market and the integration of our economies has led to greater competitiveness of American and Canadian businesses. Because of our common market, our workers are better able to compete, and to find opportunities of their own in the global economy.

There is still more work to do. Complying with NAFTA's rules of origin can be cumbersome and costly. Border delays can pose a serious impediment to trade, the equivalent of a tariff. And even now, for all the successes of NAFTA, we have to defend it without equivocation in political debate, because it is critical to the future of so many Canadian and American workers and businesses. Demanding unilateral changes and threatening to abrogate an agreement that has increased trade and prosperity is nothing more than retreating behind protectionist walls. If I am elected president, have no doubt that America will honor its international commitments -- and we will expect the same of others. We will strengthen and extend the open and rules-based international trading system. I aspire to lead a proud, outward-looking America that deepens its partnerships throughout the hemisphere and the world.

Long before NAFTA, America received one of its most valuable exports from Canada in the form of a great statesman, Dean Acheson. He was descended from a great Canadian distilling family and a man who knew Canada well. As secretary of state, Acheson liked to drop by the home of his great friend Hume Wrong, Canada's ambassador to the United States, for consultation and advice over a quiet drink. As I said, Acheson came from a distilling family.

The relationship was not always smooth. But it was productive. Canada and the United States together gave generously for the reconstruction of Europe. And together, too, we helped to forge the new trading system that restored the prosperity of the world after a terrible war.

We've been through an awful lot together, Canada and America, and together we have achieved great things. We have a long shared history to draw from, and deep reserves of good will and mutual admiration. I thank you for all that you have done to advance one of the finest friendships between any two nations in the world today. I thank you for the conviction and clarity you bring to that work ahead for our two nations. And I thank you all for your kind attention here today.

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