



Prime Minister and Bush Bilateral Meeting

Condesa Hotel Mexico – March 30, 2006 – 17h30 AM – 12 minutes 38 seconds

GEORGE W. BUSH (President of the United States): (Inaudible) I had a really good meeting with the Prime Minister on the choppers flying to the Mayan ruins. We've also had a very good meeting here, and we talked about a lot of subjects. I view the relationship with Canada as a vital relationship for the United States. The relationship of course is defined government to government. It's also defined people to people, and there's a lot of people in my country who respect Canada and have great relations with Canadians, and we intend to keep it that way. The Prime Minister of course was, made an emphatic case for softwood lumber, and I appreciate his steely resolve to get something done, and I assured him that our intention is to negotiate in good faith in a timely fashion to resolve this issue. And I appreciate your pushing it. We also talked about the

mutual values we share: respect for human life and human dignity, and along those lines, I want to thank you very much for two things, one, the quick response that your government and your country gave to those who suffered by Katrina, indication of the Canadian people's desires to help humans when they suffer. I appreciate very much your trip to Afghanistan and you and your government's support of the fledgling democracy, support of people that have been under the brutal thumb of tyrants that, so brutal they wouldn't let young girls go to school, and it represents the great Canadian tradition of really helping restore human dignity in people's lives. The Prime Minister and I have talked about a variety of subjects. We've got a lot of common interests. We've got a lot of trade between our countries, nearly half a billion dollars in the...I mean \$500 billion in the year 2005, and that trade means jobs on both sides of the border, and it's our intention to make sure that we continue to trade as freely as possible so that our people can benefit. All in all, Mr. Prime Minister, I found the day to be a valuable day and I want to thank you very much for your candour.

STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. Merci, M. le Président. J'ai exprimé plusieurs

sentiments au président. D'abord et plus important, j'ai exprimé le sentiment que malgré nos différences de temps en temps, les différences de nos perspectives, de nos intérêts temps en temps, et même surtout de nos polarités dans certains cas, que le Canada et les États-Unis partagent des valeurs communes importantes, des valeurs comme la liberté, la démocratie, les droits humaines, la primauté du droit, et nous partageons le sentiment que ces valeurs sont importantes pas seulement pour le Canada et pour les États-Unis, mais pour n'importe quel peuple à travers le monde. Nous avons discuté plusieurs questions mondiales, plusieurs questions de la sécurité nationale, surtout nous partageons des missions et des activités comme en Afghanistan, au Soudan, à l'Haïti, et nous avons l'intention de continuer notre collaboration. J'ai remercié le président pour le rôle des États-Unis dans la libération des Canadiens qui étaient des prisonniers en Irak. Nous avons décidé d'avoir une autre réunion plus tard au printemps. Nous allons continuer nos discussions sur ces questions et d'autres questions, comme par exemple les questions de l'énergie et de l'environnement. Nous aurons ce printemps une visite du président du "Committee for Environmental Quality", et nous avons cet officier et des autres, nous encouragerons des discussions entre nos pays pour voir s'il y a des possibilités pour une plus pleine coopération sur les

dossiers de l'énergie, la sécurité de l'énergie et le progrès environnemental envers la réduction de la pollution et des gaz à l'effet de serre. Nous avons discuté le renouvellement de NORAD que nous nous attendons bientôt. Nous avons discuté le bois d'œuvre comme le président vient de mentionner. Nous avons donné des instructions à nos officiers pour discuter des options, mais j'ai réitéré que la position du gouvernement du Canada est claire, et s'il n'y a pas, le président a engagé de trouver une résolution, mais si ça ne se passe pas, c'est l'intention de notre gouvernement de continuer nos options légales et d'appuyer notre industrie de bois d'œuvre. Nous avons discuté de certaines autres questions importantes pour les Canadiens et les Canadiennes, les questions des passeports, des difficultés que ça nous donne, la question de Devil's Lake au Manitoba et surtout les questions du...je veux dire la (inaudible) de BSE, pour la vache folle, pour la vache folle, pour les difficultés de la vache folle. Nous apprécions la collaboration du président dans la résolution de ça, mais dans tous ces cas, il y a beaucoup de choses à faire et le président m'a donné l'assurance de sa coopération dans ces dossiers. And I'll repeat, try and repeat all of that. First of all, just to begin by saying that I...we had a long meeting both this morning and this afternoon, the President and I,

discussing particularly global security issues, international and shared security interests, and as you know, we're cooperating on these things in places like Afghanistan, Sudan, Haiti. Canada and the United States from time to time will disagree on particular courses of action that should be taken, and we may have different perspectives and even different interests, but there should be no doubt that Canada and the United States share very important common values, values like freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and we believe that these values are important not only for Canada and the United States, but they are the right of every people on the face of the earth, and we may disagree how we get there, but that's the objective that we share. We're going to meet later on in the spring to further discuss some cooperation on some of these matters where we're also going to be discussing some initiatives we've taken to task some of our officials to discuss some energy and environmental concerns. We're anxious, we're in a continental security market. We're anxious to see our officials discuss not just energy security, but how we can harness energy, new energy technology to make real progress on greenhouse gas emissions and also on pollution, so we'll have some discussions in the next few weeks along those lines. We're going to move quickly to renew, to sign an agreement to renew NORAD,

to take that to Parliament in the not too distant future. Of course, we discussed softwood lumber. The President has expressed his desire to see a resolution. I certainly accept at face value the President's commitment to that. I just reminded the President that Canada's position on this is very clear, and if we don't see a resolution, Canada's certainly going to continue to pursue all its legal options as well as enhanced support for our industry through this battle. I talked about issues like passports, Devil's Lake, BSE, all areas where there remains some difficulties in some files, but I think we've agreed we'll work together to seek some collaboration on all of these fronts, in particular – and I didn't mention this in French – we've asked, we're going to be asking Secretary Chertoff and Minister Day to meet as soon as possible at the highest levels to do what we can to see how we can accommodate congressional legislation on passport and travel issues. These present for us some pretty significant challenges, and we are concerned about disruptions to trade and other travel that this may bring about. And let me just end by saying as I think you heard me say a few days ago, I expressed through Ambassador Wilkins, and I've had a chance to do it directly, how much the government of Canada appreciates the actions taken by our allies and our friends, both in the United Kingdom and in the United States in the

liberation of the hostages that were held in Iraq. You know, Iraq in particular has been a source of some disagreement, and dare I say some tension between our two peoples, but I think this incident reminds us that when the chips are down, we all pull together and support each other. I hope that's a lesson we keep in mind for the future.

(REPORTERS ALL SPEAKING AT ONCE)

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