



**PM Harper's final press conference with Fox and Bush**

March 31, 2006 - 10h30 - Cancun, Mexico - 50 minutes

VICENTE FOX (President of Mexico): (Speaks Spanish).

STEPHEN HARPER (Premier ministre du Canada): Merci. Merci, Président Fox. Bonjour, Mesdames et Messieurs. Mes remerciements à notre hôte, Président Fox.

J'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer président Fox et président Bush pour discuter de questions qui affectent nos pays. Je suis heureux de notre volonté commune de travailler ensemble. C'est important. Nous avons en Amérique du Nord une économie intégrée. C'est nécessaire de ne pas avoir des politiques d'isolation.

Nous avons discuté des progrès accomplis sur le partenariat nord-américain pour la prospérité et la sécurité et nous nous sommes engagés à consulter davantage le secteur privé. Nous allons créer un conseil nord-américain de la compétitivité composé de membres du secteur privé qui nous conseillera sur la compétitivité de nos économies.

Le conseil rencontrera nos ministres, identifiera nos priorités et s'assurera que nous faisons le suivi. Nous allons coopérer sur des questions importantes telles la sécurité aux frontières, la gestion des situations d'urgence et la sécurité énergétique. Nous élaborerons une approche coordonnée et exhaustive concernant la grippe aviaire et la pandémie d'influenza. Nous serons guidés par des principes communs.

Nous allons mener au cours des 24 prochains mois des activités pour améliorer la sécurité à nos frontières et faciliter le mouvement des voyageurs et des marchandises. Nous collaborerons dans le domaine de l'énergie, y compris dans les domaines de l'innovation et la recherche avec l'emphase sur les technologies propres.

Nous sommes heureux des discussions de nos ministres du commerce sur la collaboration sur les négociations d'échanges avec d'autres pays et les encourageons à poursuivre les travaux.

Ces rencontres ont été très productives. Je suis ravi que les présidents Bush et Fox aient accepté mon invitation pour la prochaine réunion des trois chefs au Canada en 2007.

And once again, ladies and gentlemen, good day. Thank you particularly for our host, President Fox, and to the workers here at the hotel and the

Mexican people for their warm hospitality.

Over the past two days, I have had the pleasure of meeting with President Fox and President Bush to discuss issues that jointly affect our three nations. I have been encouraged by the common will of our three nations. We are living today in an integrated economy. We cannot afford the politics of isolation.

During my meetings with Presidents Bush and Fox, we reviewed the progress for our security and prosperity partnership, which provides a framework to advance the common interests in areas of security, prosperity and quality of life.

We committed to further engage the private sector. We have agreed to set up a North American competitiveness council made up of business leaders from all three countries to advise us on ways to improve the competitiveness of our economies. They will meet with our ministers, identify priorities and make sure we follow up and implement them.

We agreed to expand our existing cooperation on key issues such as border security, emergency management, and energy security. As an immediate priority, we'll develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to preparing for a positive avian or pandemic influenza outbreak

in North America. Our action will be guided by shared principles.

We'll take concrete steps in the coming 24 months to improve the security at our borders and to ensure the smooth and efficient flow of goods and people, particularly where you have particular discussions with President Bush on the Windsor-Detroit corridor.

We'll collaborate on energy, especially with respect to innovation and science and technology with a focus on clean technologies. We also welcome the discussion, the recent discussions by our Trade ministers on NAFTA collaboration, on trade negotiations with third countries and we urge that this work be given priority.

These talks were productive and I'm of course very pleased that President Bush and President Fox have accepted my invitation to have the next leaders meeting in Canada in 2007. Thank you.

VICENTE FOX: Muchas gracias. Presidente Bush.

GEORGE W. BUSH (U.S. President): Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. It's a really good choice to pick Cancun to meet. As my press corps will tell you, they are looking forward to staying by the pool after I leave. It's a beautiful, beautiful part of the country. I want to thank you for your friendship as well. It's been a joy discussing very important issues

with you over the course of my presidency, and this is probably one of the most productive meetings we had.

It's also been a pleasure to meet with Prime Minister Harper in his official capacity as the Prime Minister of Canada. I find him to be a very open, straightforward fellow and if he's got a problem, he's willing to express it in a way that's clear for all to understand, and that's the way I like to deal with people.

We've got big goals for this very important relationship. One goal is prosperity and you can't achieve a standard of living increase for your people unless you have a prosperous neighbourhood and it's this prosperity that has been much of a focus on NAFTA and one of my vows, and I know the other leaders share this goal, is to make sure that people are able to connect the NAFTA relationship with the improvement of their own quality of life.

I know there's deep concern about social justice throughout the neighbourhood and social justice can be achieved more likely if people are able to realize their dreams and if there's a prosperous society and prosperity has been increased as a result of the trade between our nations and we must make sure that trade continues in a way that's fair and free but also in a way that enables our countries to be able to compete with the

great challenges we face, and we face prosperity challenges from abroad like never before. The challenge of a growing Chinese economy or the challenge of an Indian economy.

My attitude is we shouldn't fear these challenges. We ought to welcome them and position ourselves so that we can compete. And I think the leaders share that sense of unity when it comes to being a competitive part of the world in the future.

We talked about security. We got long borders. We've got to make sure we work hard to secure the borders. We also have got to make sure that we've got smart borders and so the whole vision of our borders has got to be to enhance trade and tourism but to prevent smugglers and terrorists and dope runners from polluting our countries. And I'm confident, with the use of technology and by close collaboration, we'll be able to achieve those objectives.

I want to thank the CEOs and the business leaders from the three countries who are here. I thought we had a very constructive discussion about ways to make sure that there is harmonization between our industries so that the people benefit and they've brought some really good ideas.

We talk about, of course, bird flu, avian flu and the need to be prepared in case there is an outbreak. You know, we spend a lot of time in my own country preparing for an avian flu outbreak. The strategizing has had coordinated efforts between the federal state and local governments, working to wisely spend money to come up with hopefully a vaccine that would then be available for sharing around the world.

And I do want to thank Canada for having taken the lead early on this issue and preparing the world for what is possible so that there's good information sharing if the bird flu would break out in southeast Asia, for example. But my point is it's very important for us to share information and data and strategies amongst our three countries so that if this were to happen, there is a focused, coordinated, intelligent response.

We talked about energy. My view of the energy initiative is that we've got to be wise about the resources we have and be smart about the investment for research and development so that we can change our energy habits.

And the truth of the matter is we'll all be better off if we use alternative sources of energy like ethanol or explore the added use of hybrid batteries in a better way. I mean, there are some really interesting things coming down the pike and I look forward to not only leading my own nation to

spend money to be on the leading edge of technological change when it comes to energy, but also sharing those technologies and ideas with our counterparts because we want to make sure that we've got national security concerns addressed when it comes to energy. We also want to be the stewards of the environment and we can do both by the use of proper technologies.

It's been a good meeting. I want to thank you for your leadership. I like coming to meetings where people put things on the table and we try to come up with solutions and this has been such a meeting, Mr. President.

Good job!

VICENTE FOX: Muchisimas gracias. (Speaks Spanish).

MODERATOR: (Speaks Spanish).

QUESTION: (Speaks Spanish).

VICENTE FOX: (Speaks Spanish).

GEORGE W. BUSH: I don't see how you can be prosperous if you don't have security. I mean, if people are concerned that, for example, the towns along the border aren't secure, it's going to be difficult to keep prosperity alive, and so I appreciate the President's commitment to security along our border and we share the same commitment.



It's very important to enforce laws. Robust economies depend upon the rule of law and their foreign countries enforce law, it kind of creates the conditions for continued economic growth.

Look, when you have robust trade like we have, there are issues that come up. One way to look at it is if we had no trade, there would be no issues and the more issues there are and the more opportunities there are to discuss them, the likelier it is these economies will continue to grow. And so I don't worry about having to deal with problems. As a matter of fact, I feel the problems that have arisen as a result of complex and active trade is positive and the fundamental question is can we resolve these issues in a responsible way?

One of the reasons we meet is to put ourselves in the position to do so.

You mentioned something about the elections. I'm not going to talk about them. The only thing I am going to talk about is I love to have a strong, vibrant democracy on our southern border and I'm going to thank the President for his strong leadership and his recognition that democracy is a very important legacy of his administration, the previous administration, that we certainly hope there will be a peaceful transition of power and I'm confident there will be one.

STEPHEN HARPER: I'll maybe just ajouter quelques mots. Ce n'est pas mon intention évidemment d'ingérer dans la politique mexicaine mais je peux dire la même chose que j'ai dit hier sur le leadership du président Fox. Nous avons eu des relations bilatérales et multilatérales progressives sans précédent et j'ai confiance que le président va laisser pour notre économie partagée une très forte démocratie où on respecte la liberté et les droits humains et où on a la fidélité aux principes importants pour nos progrès partagés. Ça veut dire les principes de l'ALÉNA, du partenariat, de la sécurité et de la prospérité et les avantages des marchés libres.

Et ces choses, si on peut faire même plus de progrès avec le prochain président, nous aurons des bénéfices pour toutes nos nations.

And I'll just repeat that. I obviously don't intend to make any comments or get myself involved in Mexican politics, but I'll just repeat what I said yesterday, which is that President Fox has provided unprecedented leadership for both our bilateral and our trilateral relations, unprecedented progressive leadership.

I believe that the legacy of that leadership will be to leave behind not just a strong democracy that believes in liberty and human rights, but also loyalty and adherence to the principles that are... on which the success of

our integrated economy is based, and those are the principles of NAFTA, the principles of our security and economic partnership and of course the advantages of free markets from which all of our nations benefit.

Jennifer Loven(phon), AP.

JENNIFER LOVEN: (Off microphone) guest worker program and how do you counter the angry argument from Conservatives on Capitol Hill who are saying that your demand for one could hurt the Republican Party this fall?

GEORGE W. BUSH: The migration issue has been a topic of discussion here, as you can imagine.

I told the President exactly what I told our country, that one, I expect a debate to bring dignity to America and recognition that America is a land of immigrants and people ought to be treated with respect and this debate ought to be a debate that does not pit neighbour against neighbour.

It focuses on three elements. One is that we are a nation of laws and therefore must enforce our laws. And that includes enforcing the laws of people coming into our country illegally. President Fox and I discussed this issue at length. I don't know if people recognize it, but his government, all aspects of the Mexican government came together to

send a clear message to the American people. The Mexican government understands it has a responsibility as well to protect the border. It is a nation of law.

You heard the President talk about not only enforcing the northern border but also the southern border.

I also have said to the American people that we must enforce our laws in the interior of the country. Employers must be held to account if they're employing the people in our country illegally.

However, part of the problem is that it complicates the lives of our many employers who are providing employment for people who are here illegally is that there has been a lot of document forgery. There's an industry that has sprung up and part of that industry is to provide forged documents so that our employers don't know whether a person is in our country legally or not.

I also believe strongly that an important part of securing a border and enforcing our laws is to recognize there are people in our country doing work that Americans will not do and those people ought to be given a chance to have a tamper-proof card that enables them to work in our country legally for a period of time.

That's called a guest worker program. One of the important issues about a guest worker program is what does that mean for someone's desire to become a citizen of our country? I believe if someone has been here in our country illegally, they should not get at the head of the line if they want to become a citizen. In other words, we have a line of people waiting, people who are in our country legally, waiting to become a citizen and people who have been in our country illegally should not get ahead of the line who were there legally.

A nation of laws can also be a welcoming nation and I believe a guest worker program will help us rid the society in the border, these coyotes who smuggle people in the back of 18 wheelers. I believe it'll help get rid of the document forgers. I believe it'll help people on both sides of our border respect the laws of our border and enforce our borders.

I believe it is important to bring people out of the shadows of American society so they don't have to fear the life they live. I believe it's important for our nation to uphold human rights and human dignity and the plan I've just proposed is one that'll do all that and achieve important objectives.

And I'm looking forward to working with the Congress. We're making, I've told the President we're making progress. You know, there's a legislative process. Some guy one time quipped, it's like watching people make

sausage. It's kind of, you know, probably appears a little unpleasant from your perspective. But we're making progress. And I want a comprehensive bill. And I've made that very clear to the members of the Congress and I will continue making it clear to members of congress.

MODERATOR: Jennifer Ditchburn, Canadian Press.

GEORGE W. BUSH: So no answer. I said I want a comprehensive bill. You're presuming there won't be a comprehensive bill. I believe there will be a comprehensive bill.

MODERATOR: Jennifer Ditchburn, Canadian Press.

JENNIFER DITCHBURN: Thank you. Mr. President, can you explain to Canadians...

GEORGE W. BUSH: Which one?

JENNIFER DITCHBURN: That would be you, Mr. Bush.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Me.

JENNIFER DITCHBURN: Could you explain to Canadians why they'll need to have a passport or an unspecified secure document before they cross over to the United States? And what would the impact be on both of our countries economically if Canada doesn't follow through by the deadline of the end of next year?

GEORGE W. BUSH: No, I appreciate you bringing up this issue. This is an issue, obviously it affects not only border crossings with Canada, it also affects border crossings with Mexico. The Congress passed a law and I intend to enforce the law. But the law said there ought to be a passport or passport-like document that, I believe, if properly implemented, will facilitate travel and facilitate trade, not hinder travel and trade.

And the reason I believe that is I think we can be wise about the use of technologies. I mean, envision a card that, it can be swiped across a reading device, it facilitates the movement of people.

Look, I understand this issue had created consternation. Your Prime Minister made it very clear to me that he's very worried that such an implementation of the law on the books will make it less likely people want to travel between our countries. I've heard from business leaders who are concerned about the bookings for conventions.

And so, what I've told the Prime Minister, and told President Fox as well, is that we have an obligation to work very closely with our counterparts to provide a set of standards as to what will meet the obligations of the law.

Again, I repeat to you, I believe this can be done in such a way that it makes future travel, future relations stronger, not weaker.

STEPHEN HARPER: Maybe I could just add to that. You know, obviously we are concerned. I expressed those concerns to President Bush and I know they've been expressed by Canadian business leaders as well. The President is confronted with legislation passed by Congress and has a responsibility to act upon that legislation. And we understand that, we understand the security concerns that are behind that.

At the same time, we're obviously concerned that if we don't move quickly and properly on this, that this could have affects on trade and movement of people, conventions, you name it, that is not helpful to our economy or to our relationship.

So we've agreed that Minister Day and Secretary Chertoff will meet as soon as possible to make this their top priority.

QUESTION: (Speaks Spanish).

VICENTE FOX: (Speaks Spanish).

MODERATOR: Mats Patalnik(phon) Reuters.

MATS PATALNIK: President Bush, Secretary of State Rice is finding common ground with the British today on the view that the next step against Iran could be sanctions. Do you agree that's the way to go if Iran fails to comply with the Security Council's 30-day deadline on its nuclear



program?

GEORGE W. BUSH: Thanks. First, I do want to offer my country's assistance to the people affected by the recent earthquakes in Iran. We obviously have our differences with the Iranian government but we do care about the suffering of Iranian people.

There is common agreement that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon, the capacity to make a nuclear weapon or the knowledge as to how to make a nuclear weapon. And the reason there's common agreement is because the Iranian government, with such a weapon as it's now constituted, would pose a serious threat to world security.

Condoleezza Rice is in Europe today to discuss with the P5, the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, plus Germany a strategy to go forward in a unified way that says to the Iranian government the world rejects your desires to have a nuclear weapon.

Condi is strategizing with those who will be making the U.N. Security Council decisions as to that united front. We agree on a goal. And now the question is how do we work together to achieve that goal?

And you're watching Secretary of State Rice work with our friends to remind the Iranians on a regular and consistent basis that if they want to

be... participate in the international order of things, if they don't want to isolate themselves, they must listen very carefully to what we are saying with unified voice.

MODERATOR: The last question, Bob Fyfe, CTV.

BOB FYFE: My question is to President Fox, and I wonder if we could prevail upon you, sir, to answer it in English.

A few weeks ago there was a very bloody murder here with the Ianiero family in Cancun. Two young Canadian mothers are very concerned back in Canada that Mexican authorities have mistakenly made them suspects amidst concerns, also in Canada, the Mexicans may have bungled this investigation.

Can you tell us where this investigation is going and can you assure those two young women that, indeed, they're not suspects?

VICENTE FOX: (Speaks Spanish).

STEPHEN HARPER: Maybe I will just add to that, I may have a little bit more freedom on this matter.

First of all, just to say that we do appreciate the full cooperation of the Mexican government and Mexican police at all levels. There have been consultation with our officials and I've spoken to the RCMP and they

assure me that that has been the case, particularly since the commits made by Secretary Derbez in Ottawa. So we are working together on this. We're full apprised of the situation.

I could just add one small thing, which is that we're told once again, and I think we've been saying this repeatedly for some time, there is no extradition pending, extradition demand pending nor is there one anticipated in the near future. And that's probably about all I can say.

MODERATOR: Muchas gracias.

(Applause)

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