

Panel: The International Northeast: Meeting the Challenges of a Competitive Global Marketplace

Tuesday, July 26, 2005



(Pictured from left to right: Louis Poisson, Dr. Stephen Blank, Speaker Bev Harrison, Brian Lee Crowley)

Redefining the US-Canada relationship was the topic of the discussion at Tuesday's panel, "The International Northeast: Meeting the Challenges of a Competitive Global Marketplace." Panelists concurred that recognizing the northeastern United States and eastern Canada as one economic region rather than two autonomous nations would be beneficial for trade, infrastructure investment and homeland security.

"Much needs to be done in the region to bring road and rail infrastructure up to par -- the system is deteriorating," said Dr. Stephen Blank of the Lubin School of Business at Pace University. "Integration is the key for the future."

Brian Lee Crowley, Executive Director of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, NS, took integration one step further by suggesting that the northeastern United States and eastern Canada should be defined as one economic region called "Atlantica." He explained that to strengthen the region, marine terminals and docks must be modernized. "It is insufficient to drop goods on a dock - they need to go on a train, truck or via short-sea shipping. New York and Halifax have drawbacks in this respect." Atlantica could become a reality, explained Crowley, if short-sea shipping is developed in the region.

Crowley added that the international northeast is being virtually ignored as a high priority corridor at the federal level. Only a few members of Congress, including Senators Olympia Snowe (ME), Charles Schumer (NY), and Hillary Clinton (NY), are prioritizing the issue.

(Link to Crowley's presentation: [*A Tale of Two Cities: How to put the International Northeast at the centre of the new global trading patterns*](#))

Louis Poisson, the Senior Trade Commissioner for the Canadian Consulate General, NY, stressed the importance of maintaining trade ties between the two nations - the largest bilateral trade relationship in the world. The United States - Canada relationship produces 5 million U.S. jobs and 2 million Canadian jobs. Aside from addressing trade issues such as softwood lumber, country of origin labeling and BSE, Poisson urged lawmakers on both sides of the border to partner to meet external challenges. He said that stem cell research and homeland security provide excellent opportunities for integration.

(Link to Poisson's presentation: [*Meeting the Challenges of a Global Competitive Marketplace*](#))

Dr. Blank closed the session by stressing that the United States and Canada are not simply trading partners but a single North American economy that share a supply chain.