

Fortress North America Means Goodbye Canada Sacrificing Canadian Sovereignty Won't Stop Terrorism

October 17, 2001

Toronto, ON – Canadian Premiers and business people are misguided and naïve when they suggest a common perimeter for the North American continent," said Paul Hellyer, former Liberal Defence Minister. "The gain would be infinitesimal and the cost would be dramatic – the inevitable end of Canada as an independent nation state.

The leader of the Canadian Action Party noted that the events of September 11, 2001, have made it clear that certain national policies and practices must be assessed and overhauled. However, there is absolutely no evidence that Canada is incapable of monitoring its own borders, designing its own immigration policies and gathering its own intelligence.

"We Canadians must realize that we are fully capable of protecting our citizens and our region of the world – as we have done successfully for more than a century. There is no proof to the contrary, and the Americans know this," said Mr. Hellyer. "I am certain we would be sacrificing our territorial integrity, our laws, our values, and our sovereignty for nothing."

As well, he stated that those who claim that a fortified perimeter is necessary to maintain present trade flows between Canada and the United States are simply trying to frighten Canadians.

"If the premiers and business are worried about hold-ups at the border, all they have to do is persuade the U.S. and Canadian governments to employ more custom and immigration inspectors," Mr. Hellyer said. "The queues will shorten and trade will flow as it always has. There is no valid reason why we cannot continue to trade with the U.S. and maintain our independence at the same time.

He endorsed the stance of U.S. Attorney-General John Ashcroft who thinks the present type of co-operation is quite acceptable. "In other words, we should tighten up our borders, and they should tighten up theirs. In effect, there will be two screenings instead of one, and, if anything, we would be more secure rather than less."

Mr. Hellyer also pointed out that: "The comparison with the European Union is misleading in the extreme. With the EU, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have transferred significant sovereignty to a supranational body. There is absolutely no way that the United States is going to give up its sovereignty to a supranational North American Union. It will keep its laws and we will have to give up ours."

In effect, he argued, Canada would be subject to U.S. customs laws, U.S. Immigration laws, and U.S. travel restrictions. "We would no longer be able to exercise any independence of judgement in these areas."

Finally, the former Deputy Prime Minister reminded Canadians of their proud past as an international voice of reason, as well as an independent ally of the U.S. He cited the escape of Americans to the Canadian embassy in Iran, the Land Mines Treaty and the World Court as examples, saying that Canada has a valuable role to play in the world as a peace-loving, rational, fair and independent nation.

For more information, please contact:
Paul Hellyer – (416) 535-1008
Email - phellyer@canadianactionparty.ca
www.canadianactionparty.ca