DISCUSSION TOPIC: Pre-Arrival Readiness Evaluation (PARE) pilot

Deborah Myers: Presentation on “Preclearance Update”

Deborah Myers, Director of Canadian Affairs and Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, gave a brief update on U.S./Canada preclearance. She reported that major progress has been made in recent years on preclearance. In 2015, there was a new preclearance agreement which allows for more locations where preclearance is available and expands immigration and customs services. Myers stated that DHS is now in a position of implementing this agreement in many airports. This will increase diplomatic channels and create a framework that will enable the U.S. to pursue cargo preclearance. The U.S. is not able to conduct cargo preclearance in Canada under existing legislation. Myers also explained that in July 2019 the U.S. and Canada began implementation of Phase III of the Entry/Exit information system, a project under the Beyond the Border Initiative.

Ron Reinas: Presentation titled - “Pre-Arrival Readiness Evaluation (PARE) at the Peace Bridge”

Rob Reinas, General Manager of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority, explained that the Peace Bridge is a major bridge that passes between Canada and the U.S. in the Niagara region and is
vital to the economies of both countries. The challenge at the Peace Bridge lies in the U.S. plaza which is quite small with only a three-lane approach. There has long been talk about moving some services to Canada so that there is less congestion on the U.S. side of the border. In the past, U.S. personnel have worked on the Canadian side.

Reinas went on to describe the new Pre-Arrival Readiness Evaluation or PARE program and its benefits and challenges. To facilitate bridge traffic during the bridge’s rehabilitation, only prepared trucks would be allowed to cross. This required all trucks to pre-pay border crossing fees and file e-manifests. This system was designed to process trucks in a few seconds with resulted in more efficient transactions and a decrease in border congestion and wait times. These results also allowed officers to be allocated to other necessary positions.

Reinas also illustrated how the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority is working with CBP to develop the next generation of border crossings. They are currently focusing on cargo innovation. They are considering how to relocate many CBP operations to the Canadian side without moving personnel. They are also looking at pre-primary screening which will save multiple screenings. This is also currently being conducted at the U.S. southern border with the difference being that all of this happens on the U.S. side.

Reinas continued that the challenges for CPB is scanning in Canada. He stated that Canada is behind in technology for scanning. The U.S. uses a new technology that is multi-energy. A low dose radiation scan is done of the cab of the truck and then a higher scan is done on the trailer. While this technology is used in the U.S., it is not permitted in Canada—a decision that has been supported by the Canadian Trucking Association. Reinas stated that this multi-energy portal is coming either way though. While it might not be used in Canada, it is awaiting truckers as they enter the U.S.

Reinas also mentioned the use of facial recognition which he acknowledges presents its own challenges. Facial recognition helps customs officers match the face to the person that is in the truck. There has been some pushback over the use of facial recognition with the debate that it creates a surveillance state; however, Reinas believes this argument is arbitrary when looking at the context of getting a passport which uses the same technology. Facial recognition software though is still being tested. Reinas explained that CBP is enrolling PARE 3.0 which includes all of the technology that was discussed above. They are still talking with the Government of Canada to see if multi-energy portals can ever be used.

Discussion and questions from the audience followed.

**Q: What about visas for people crossing the border? Does PARE work with visas?**

**A:** Reinas said that with respect to cargo, yes. A person’s face is matched to the e-manifest which includes visa status. The passenger environment has not yet been implemented.

**Q: Is this as good as the technology gets? Are there any other efficiencies?**

**A:** Reinas said that CBP is at the forefront of designing and implementing efficiency systems. The challenges will be mitigated if Canada accepts radiation monitors which would save millions of dollars. Canada’s adoption of radiation monitoring could also impact car travel. Currently, there is an agreement between the U.S. and Canada for rail preclearance in Ontario which has operated for 10-12 years.
However, this agreement has more than just customs requirements. The rail containers have other issues like bugs or wood that may make its way into the U.S. and cause problems. Reinas concluded by explaining that Health Canada now states that the Canadian Nuclear Commission has final say regarding multi-energy portals.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC : Beyond Preclearance Initiative**

**Gerry Bruno: Presentation titled - “Beyond Preclearance Initiative - moving our Canada-US border toward using smart technology”**

Gerry Bruno, Vice President of Federal Government Affairs for the Vancouver Airport Authority, presented on the Beyond Preclearance Initiative. Bruno stated that the absence of a current border accord between the U.S. and Canada necessitates preclearance. All previous accords have expired and, given the current political climate, no action is taking place in this area. There is still lots to be done in the absence of a border accord. The Beyond Preclearance Initiative started as a modest attempt but has since grown to include 57 organizations. The Beyond Preclearance Initiative has been able to fundraise and release a White Paper to examine future border technology and efficiency measures.

The Beyond Preclearance Initiative believes that private industry will come to the table and invest money to develop future pilots. At YVR, there have been many automated preclearance machines, and they have had multiple talks related to advancing preclearance. YVR wants to take the next step which will be the Beyond Preclearance Initiative. In fact, YVR hosted a conference dedicated to introducing and debating the Beyond Preclearance Initiative which established how to work in the short-term to develop projects. Additionally, another summit was held in Washington which resulted in other working groups that allowed for applicability into other areas of preclearance. These working groups are co-chaired by both U.S. and Canadian government representation.

Bruno discussed the challenge that has been identified of foreign travellers on a two-nation vacation to the U.S. and Canada. The Beyond Preclearance Initiative did try to resurrect the Prince Rupert pilot, but they are unsure whether it will come to fruition. There are several issues that have arisen such as rescreening of bags in preclearance as well as multiple different trusted traveler programs. While these programs are designed to help with efficiency, the fact that multiple different programs exist raises challenges. Having one established program would be simpler for the traveler. Bruno believes that there needs to be better communication and education for travelers regarding these goals and processes. Better communication and education could allow for a greater understanding of why security is beneficial and why certain changes need to be implemented. Bruno concluded by stating that agreement on a binational governance framework is necessary to allow policy recommendations.

**Q: What is being done for food security at airports?**

A: Bruno stated that this concern is currently being addressed. The U.S. and Canada did not previously have non-passenger security. Non-passenger security is being implemented now in Canada. All airside vehicles and workers are now screened in Canada, but there is still a lag compared to Europe.

**Q: What are the cost savings projected in the White Paper?**
A: Bruno stated that is something like $13 Billion a year.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC: Northern border, remote ports, and the need for co-location**

**Sen. Mike Cuffe: Presentation titled - “Northern border, remote ports, and the need for co-location”**

Montana Senator Mike Cuffe reported on the Northern U.S. border and the need for co-location, specifically in Montana. Cuffe noted that there have been major backlogs at the border with people waiting upwards of 3 hours to cross. He identified the problem as one of manpower. The U.S. Northern ports are short-staffed due to personnel being moved to the Southern border or further East. Relief personnel are supposed to be provided to the Northern border, but they will probably not arrive for several more months. Cuffe explained that Stephen Harper was cutting expenses including border personnel which led to many backups. Cuffe met with a MP and a MLA from BC to discuss the issues. Cuffe suggested several different recommendations for solving the border issues. He also contacted Harper’s riding office. Eventually the lines decreased, and border crossings returned to full manpower.

Cuffe then asked John Brenden, former Montana senator, to provide remarks on the issues at the Northern border. Brenden said that his district covered a wide area of Montana state. He stated that the problem of a reduction in border crossing hours on the Saskatchewan/Montana border needed to be solved. Brenden pointed out that Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe provided excellent leadership. He concluded by stating that the U.S.-Canada relationship is of utmost importance because it impacts every aspect of life on both sides of the border.

**ROUNDTABLE: CBP/CBSA**

**Rose Marie Davis: Presentation titled - “CBP OFO”**

Rose Marie Davis, Innovative Program Acquisitions, Office of Field Operations, Planning, Program Analysis and Evaluation for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, discussed what CBP is doing to transform the land border crossing process. She said that many of the lessons are learned from the airports. Stakeholders often bring many of these projects to CBP. Biometrics is one piece that is changing the processing of passengers. Currently, 24 airlines and airport authorities are working to implement this technology. Davis suggested that biometrics needs to be applied to the land border and that the buildings need to be modernized to include 5G technology. Additionally, first responders need to be given priority on the networks when there is an emergency.

Davis also explained how CBP is working with the Department of Transportation to develop smart border entries. Through partnerships like this, CBP is trying to design ports of entry with these new technological advancements. This includes vehicle, pedestrian, and rail and entails preclearance as well. Davis identified that the automation of cash and cash collection is also important. The Detroit office conducted a study related to cash collection and found that there were 20 seconds savings for people with transponders. Revenue modernization also allows for fewer personnel and equipment costs. For example, the use of Smart Safes allows the counting of the tills and puts out a receipt compared to
manual inspection. This technology also puts the money into the U.S. Treasury as soon as the Smart Safe receipt has been generated. This is now being rolled out throughout the U.S.

Q: One of the issues of automated data collection is the control of information. How should this be dealt with moving forward?
A: Davis answered that a test was conducted that allowed a private vendor to access CBP's data and allowed an abuse of the data. This test highlighted that CBP needs stronger security protocols to protect data at rest and in transmission. One thing that was done for biometrics was that stakeholders who interact with the CBP have to interact with the federal security standards. CBP is frequented with third party audits, which is another mechanism.

Q: In terms of intelligence, someone with a criminal background will usually be captured. How does this intelligence capture someone who does not have a criminal background or record?
A: Davis explained that when an individual presents themselves at the border, they are subject to inspection. When CBP uses facial recognition, they match that image to the image provided by the authentic source. There is also a random sample, deterministic lookups, and probabilistic sampling which provides three levels of scrutiny.

Mike Leahy:

Mike Leahy, Executive Director in the Commercial and Trade Branch of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), explained that the CBSA has been collecting e-manifest information for many years. He stressed that CBSA needs to look into better screening, however. He noted that a lot of drugs are still coming into the country via the postal service. Leahy did note that CBSA heavily scrutinizes everything that arrives from China and emphasized that everything from China is screened.

A roundtable discussion followed the presentations.

Q: How much of the annual analytics are manual or AI?
A: An unknown speaker answered that while the annual analytics are improving, they are still mostly manual.

Q: Has there been an impact on the access issue for the northern border?
A: Mike Leahy explained that CBSA has a team dedicated to infrastructure in remote ports. The Government of Canada invested over $400 million in improving border facilities. One of the biggest issues is the asylum seekers from the U.S.

Another individual answered that there is technology present in some border crossings that does not require manpower and that the border can continue to improve.

Ron Reinas stated that there is also a flagpole issue that needs to be addressed and asked how much time is being spent on these flagpole turnarounds.
Rose Marie Davis said that the CBP is looking at opportunities to partner with other groups. They want to do passport verification not only with airlines but with the CBSA as well. They believe there is an opportunity to share data.

Sen. Mike Cuffe said that one possible solution is to do co-location whereby two officers, one from each side of the border are watching out for each other which will cut the necessary manpower in half. There are opportunities to equalize credentials for both CBP and CBSA officers.

**Q: What are the actual mechanics of biometric data collection?**
Ron Reinas explained that angled cameras would be able to capture the driver and a passenger in a tractor trailer. The truck drivers would still need an e-manifest, however. With passenger vehicles, the question is whether the technology can capture more than just the driver. After conducting some tests and looking at the various cameras on the market, Reinas stated that they were able to capture well over 80% of passengers in a vehicle.

**Call for Action Items**

Action items were taken in person at the front desk. Please contact the event moderators for further details.