



Case No. 2006-0831CM

April 11, 2007

Christopher Farrell
Judicial Watch
501 School Street, SW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Farrell:

This is in response to your August 8, 2006, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Commerce (DOC), for records regarding the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America.

The DOC forwarded 31 pages to this Department for review and a determination as to whether they may be released. The 31 pages are enclosed, in their entirety.

There are no charges for FOIA services in this instance because the billable fees are below the Department's threshold of \$25.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Eckert", is written over the typed name.

Robert Eckert
Director
FOI/Privacy Acts Division
Office of Public Affairs

SPP Personnel_SNS Working Group
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January 24, 2006

SPP North American Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planning
Proposed Focal Points and Working Group Participants

Categories and sample issues to address	Focal Points	Participants
1. Travel and border issues	Tony Marfin (HHS/CDC), Aam0@cdc.gov Janet Benini (DoT), janet.benini@dot.gov	Steve Waterman (HHS/CDC), shw2@CDC.GOV Ben Schwartz (HHS/CDC), bxsl@CDC.GOV Renee Orme (DHS) renee.orme@dhs.gov Mark Teachman (USDA) Mark.E.Teachman@aphis.usda.gov Robin Bishop (Consular Affairs), BishopRM@state.gov Mitch Optican (Consular Affairs) OpticanME@state.gov Michelle Bernier-Toth Bernier, TothM2@state.gov (American Citizens' Services - Consular Affairs) Andrew Robertson andrew.robertson@hhs.gov Christina Hartman, erz3@CDC.GOV Geri Word (DoC), geri_word@ita.doc.gov

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January 4, 2006

SPP North American Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planning
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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
9. Supervisory and Regulatory Standards		
12-24 months		
1. Encourage identification of issues of common regulatory concern. Work together, bilaterally, trilaterally or multilaterally as appropriate, to facilitate cooperation in the application of standards and, where, appropriate, regulatory convergence in those areas, in the interests of safety and soundness, investor protection, and cross-border business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to encourage the relevant regulators to identify issues of common regulatory concern. SPP FSWG members to report on the outcome of these consultations. Provide an update on efforts to develop converged approaches to reporting of financial information and its consistent interpretation, application and enforcement. SPP FSWG to invite other bodies (in addition to supervisory agencies) in charge of setting standards to participate NAFTA FSC to have an exchange of information about the bank resolution schemes in each jurisdiction, identifying main differences and similarities and the reasons behind them Continue participating in the working groups of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS) to identify issues of common regulatory concern. The three countries seek to establish principles, standards and guidance papers that are essential for an effective insurance supervision within IAIS. Among the issues that could be addressed in future IAIS meetings are the ones concerning training insurance and facilitating the augment of trade flows by expanding the number of US and Canadian insurers working with Mexican motor carriers 	SHCP (UBA, DGSV) CNBV CNSF Finance Canada OSFI US Banking Regulators SEC

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
10. Financing for Development		
6-18 months		
1. [Improve North America's competitiveness by enhancing Mexico's competitive position through the establishment of a grant fund for development with US and Canadian resources to finance the development of physical infrastructure in Mexico.] Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Identify and evaluate physical infrastructure needs in Mexico contributing to the improvement of North America's competitiveness. Establish priorities and set a timetable for the application of the funds and the execution of the infrastructure projects Determine the amount of resources according to the priorities and needs previously identified.] Mexico 	Finance Canada US Treasury SHCP

Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
12-24 months		
3. [Consider creation of a seamless market for motor carrier insurance in North America, preserving reservations regarding cross border insurance operations and on the establishment of branches of foreign insurers.] Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [SPP FSWG directs the NAFTA FSC to discuss with regulators in the respective jurisdictions • Canada already offers its "PAU system" for American truckers – asking for reciprocity to reduce duplicative and burdensome US-administrative processes.] Mexico 	SHCP (DGSV) CNSF NAIC Finance Canada Transport Canada
4. Facilitate and increase trade flows by expanding the number of US and Canadian insurers working with Mexican motor carriers for coverage in the US.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSWG will ask the Trilateral Insurance Working Group to continue to address the concern of availability and affordability of insurance coverage through various solutions. • FSWG will also ask TIWG to explore additional solutions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Surplus lines registration in the U.S. for Mexican and Canadian insurance companies; ◦ Joint ventures and pooling arrangements; ◦ Use of reinsurance facilities in Mexico to support U.S. carriers interested in covering Mexican trucks. • Request the CNSF to follow through with the Mexican Ministry of Communications and Transportation (SCT) to provide the legal framework to release its driver and motor vehicle database information to US insurance carriers in order to support their underwriting process. • Request the US DOT to undertake a comprehensive review of the MCS90 requirements. 	SHCP (DGSV) CNSF NAIC TIWG Finance Canada Transport Canada US DOT SCT

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
5. Facilitate and increase tourism flows by various means, including the possibility of exploring the establishment of cross-border personal auto insurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPP FSWG to explore with insurance regulators the feasibility of implementing reciprocal arrangements. Provide an interim report together with recommendations for next steps to SPP FSWG. a) In order to increase tourism flows, US and Canada may adapt a similar provision as the one stated in Article 3, part III, number 1, of the LGISMS that states that the SHCP may allow foreign companies to underwrite insurance in Mexican territory that cover risks that can only occur in the countries where those companies are licensed b) Another way is to underwrite of joint insurance policies. In this regard, companies that have subsidiaries in the three countries may be quite capable to develop such an insurance product. Even more, different companies in the three countries may institute joint ventures for such end as well. 	SHCP (DGSV) CNSF NAIC
8. Annuities Issues		
6 - 12 months		
1. [Improve the mechanism for objective and accurate classification of disabilities as permanent or temporary within Mexico's social security system] US	• [FSWG to ask SHCP to report on the progress in establishing an independent third party to classify disabilities] US	SHCP DOC
2. [Improve the process for assuring fully-informed choice of benefits by certain beneficiaries within Mexico's social security system, as provided for in the transitional provisions of the 1997 social security law] US	• [FSWG to ask SHCP to report on the progress of the IMSS in achieving greater transparency.] US	SHCP DOC
3. [Take the necessary actions to have the Totalization Agreement come into effect] Mexico	• [FSWG to ask the US Treasury to promote the discussion and the implementation of the necessary steps to achieve the approval of the Totalization Agreement.] Mexico	SHCP US Treasury

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
2. [Encourage discussions to explore the possibility of direct branching opportunities for foreign banks and foreign insurance companies where they do not already exist] US and Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [FSWG to ask NAFTA FSC FSWG to further consider this issue] US and Canada 	US, Canada, Mexico Finance Ministries USTR Banking and insurance regulators
6. Securities Issues		
3- 6 months		
1. Encourage identification and discussion of concerns related to cross border broker contacts by foreign nationals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to request securities regulators to identify specific concerns and to discuss potential solutions. 	SHCP (DGSV) CNBV SEC Finance Canada Canadian Securities Regulators
12-24 months		
2. Encourage discussion of issues surrounding enhanced cross border transactions through a direct access to the existing electronic trading platforms of stock exchanges and derivative exchanges across the region without compromising investor protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to request the SEC, Mexico's authorities and Canadian authorities to discuss whether there might be ways to achieve bi-directional access to electronic trading screens To explore options that would permit more open, competitive and integrated North American markets, in particular, means by which a wider number of customers and intermediaries could participate in the Mexican market from the North American region in order to increase liquidity, volume and depth of the Mexican markets. 	SHCP (DGSV) BMV CNBV SEC CFTC Finance Canada Canadian Securities Regulators

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
7. Insurance Issues: Seek ways to improve availability and affordability of insurance coverage for carriers engaged in cross border commerce.		
6-12 months		
1. Achieve reciprocity/harmonization of insurance requirements, specifically between the U.S. and Canada, to reduce current inequities in motor carrier insurance regimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. and Canada to work towards a possible amendment to the U.S. DOT's FMCSA Regulation to allow Canadian insurers to directly sign the MCS-90 form. 	Finance Canada Transport Canada US Treasury US DOT
2. Encourage discussions on cross border insurance services to explore the mechanisms undertaken in Mexico allowing the establishment of subsidiaries without limitations on ownership by the U.S. or Canada in order to increase competition and reduce the cost of insurance for carriers engaged in cross border commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to ask NAFTA FSC to discuss with insurance regulators cross border insurance services in order to increase competition and reduce the cost of insurance for carriers engaged in cross border commerce, with mechanisms undertaken in Mexico allowing the establishment of subsidiaries without limitations on ownership. This will engage the Trilateral Insurance Working Group (TIWG) which consists of NAIC member state commissioners, and Canadian and Mexican insurance regulators NAFTA FSC to report back to FSWG. 	SHCP (DGSV) CNBV NAIC TIWG Finance Canada Transport Canada
3. [Continue discussion of a seamless market for motor carrier insurance in North America] US and CANADA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [SPP FSWG directs the NAFTA FSC to continue discussions with regulators in the respective jurisdictions Canada already offers its "PAU system" for American truckers – asking for reciprocity to reduce duplicative and burdensome US administrative processes.] US and Canada 	SHCP (DGSV) CNSF NAIC Finance Canada Transport Canada

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
2. ACH Issues		
6 - 12 months (and possibly beyond)		
1. Improve consumer and bank awareness in order to fully make use of efficiencies of FedACH International Mexico mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional activities for FedACH international mechanism to occur in the United States under "Directo a Mexico" program jointly undertaken by U.S. and Mexican gateway operators. Sessions to occur at Mexican consulates in the U.S. 	BANXICO FRB FRB-Atlanta
2. Encourage consultations among relevant home country financial authorities with the purpose of transforming the US-Mex one-way ACH into a bidirectional mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each NAFTA partner will consult with its relevant home regulators regarding the feasibility of these initiatives. NAFTA FSC to report on the outcome of these consultations and regulators' plans. 	BANXICO FRB
3. Tax Issues		
6 - 12 months		
1. Consider elimination of withholding taxes and branch level interest tax (BLIT) imposed by US and Canada on cross border interest payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canada and US treaty negotiators to explore repeal of the withholding taxes on interest and the BLIT. 	

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Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
4. Banking/Tax Issues		
3 - 6 months		
1. Strengthen financial information sharing schemes such as the one related to interest paid by banks to non-residents from the three countries of the region, respectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAFTA FSC to discuss and elaborate recommendations with tax authorities whether there are areas for improvement in current financial information sharing arrangements. Strengthen financial information disclosure for the banking system (international subsidiaries). 	SHCP (UBA, UIF, SAT) CNBV US Treasury FRB OCC
2. Explore possible ways to allow information sharing regarding interest income for Canadian nationals earned on their bank accounts in order to eliminate the need for Canadian customers to declare themselves as "non-US persons".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to ask tax administration officials (IRS and CCRA) to consult with a view to finding a means to allow information sharing regarding interest income for foreign nationals in their respective jurisdictions. 	US Treasury FRB Finance Canada
5. Banking/Insurance Issues		
1. Encourage discussions to explore the possibility of revising current NAFTA's reservations regarding the provision of cross-border banking and insurance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSWG to ask NAFTA FSC FSWG to further consider this issue. 	US, Canada, Mexico Finance Ministries USTR Banking and insurance regulators

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**SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP
WORK PLAN for the Financial Services Working Group (FSWG)**

"Work towards the freer flow of capital and the efficient provision of financial services throughout North America"

Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
1. Further collaboration on training programs for bank, securities and insurance regulators and supervisors.		
3- 6 months		
1. Take inventory of existing technical assistance training programs for banking regulators, and consider whether these programs continue to add value or whether any should be discontinued, and consider whether any additional areas should be addressed. Such as issues pertaining to "best practices."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each NAFTA partner will contact supervisors in its jurisdiction to discuss existing and future training programs and opportunities and to encourage discussion among supervisors of additional programs. SPP FSWG members to report on the outcome of these discussions and regulators plans SPP FSWG to take into account the training programs of the Association of Supervisors of Banks of the Americas (ASBA) SPP FSWG to explore possible collaboration on AML/CFT issues, such as remittances, including with other organizations such as the International Financial Institutions (World Bank, IMF, IADB). 	SHCP (UBA) CNBV FRB OCC Finance Canada OSFI

The hortatory wording of many deliverables reflects the fact that many of these issues are in the domain of our financial regulators who are independent of or semi-independent of the Executive Branches of our governments. They operate under their own mandates and must follow their own rules and procedures. Accordingly, the outcomes of discussions, and the timing of possible actions, if any, cannot be predicted in advance. The times specified for any given "deliverable" are only a "guesstimate" and should in no way be interpreted as binding or a prediction of action.

Deliverable	Actions	Leaders
2. Take inventory of existing technical assistance training programs for securities regulators; consider whether these programs continue to add value or whether any should be discontinued; and consider whether any additional areas should be addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to ask relevant regulators to take inventory of existing securities training programs for supervisors among the three countries. To also consider whether there are any particular areas not yet addressed where training for securities supervisors could prove mutually beneficial and to report on it. SPP FSWG to explore other types of technical assistance training programs on Payments and Settlement Systems, SROs, transparency and disclosure issues, securitization 	SHCP (DGSV) CNBV SEC Finance Canada Canadian Securities Regulators
3. Take inventory of any technical assistance training programs for insurance regulators; consider whether these programs continue to add value or whether any should be discontinued, and consider whether any additional areas should be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP FSWG to explore existing insurance training initiatives with regulators and consider whether any changes should be made NAIC will discuss with Mexico possible participation in NAIC education programs, including NAIC's International Program for Education and Regulatory Cooperation. This year (2005) OSFI (Canada) has proposed an advance Training Course Program in Mexico City. SPP FSWG will review Toronto Centre Programs for 2005/06 	SHCP (DGSV) CNSF NAIC Finance Canada OSFI/Toronto Centre
4. Encourage cooperation on financial literacy/financial education among relevant parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage contacts and consultations on how to share US Government's experience on financial literacy/financial education with relevant parties in Mexico 	SHCP US Treasury

Security and Prosperity Partnership
 Canada-United States
 Enhancing Coordination and Mutual Assistance in
 Preparedness Planning and Response for Pandemic
 Influenza and other Emerging Infectious Disease Public
 Health Emergencies Technical Meeting
 Ottawa, January 31 – February 1, 2006

Day 1 - January 31

8:30-9:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks (includes introduction of participants)	St. John/Becker
9:00-9:15	Review of Agenda and proposed meeting format	St. John
9:15-10:15	Scoping out Mutual Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Assistance Arrangements Includes existing State – Province Agreements and Previous experience local, national • Issues, Priorities for Action, Timelines • Expectations SPP and the Role of Pandemic Flu within the Initiative Overview of Meeting Outcomes	Giroux/US participants/All
10:00-10:15	Break	
10:15-11:15	From the Generic to the Specific: Pandemic Influenza <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of Pandemic Assumptions • Comparison of Pandemic Interventions 	King/ Gellin
11:15-noon	Towards a Plan of Action for Pandemic Influenza - Overall Multi-Sectoral Strategy Status of Canada's and U.S.'s Pandemic Preparedness Plans	Njoo/Gellin/Schwartz
	Lunch	

13:00-13:30	Instructions to working groups/questions	Facilitator: xxxx
13:30-17:30	Working Groups Travel and Border, Foreign Nationals, Strategic Stockpiles, Epidemiology and Laboratory Surveillance/Monitoring, Communications, Operational Planning, including SOPs and personnel exchange	
19:00-19:30	Informal Reception	U.S.-Can Participants
19:30-22:00	Delegates Dinner	U.S.-Can Participants

Day 2 – February 1

8:30-8:45	Opening Remarks and Review of Agenda	St. John
8:45-9:45	Working Groups: Travel and Border, Foreign Nationals, Strategic Stockpiles, Epidemiology and Laboratory Surveillance/Monitoring, Communications, Operational Planning, including SOPs and personnel exchange	All
9:45-noon	Groups report on progress	Group Leads
noon-13:00	Lunch	All
13:00-15:30	Groups Reconvene for a Plenary on SPP Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing issues and challenges• Review of decision making	
15:30-16:30	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific Tasks• Future sub-group meetings• Joint oversight• Facilitating Mutual Assistance through Government• Trilateral activities/planning including Mexico vs dual bilateral• Deliverables and Announceables	St. John

Proposed Agenda
Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America
North American Pandemic Influenza Planning
January 24, 2006, 1:30p.m. to 2:30 pm
Department of Health and Human Services, Room 317B
Teleconference: 1 888 795 7511 Passcode 679908

1. Introductions
2. Identification of USG Participants
3. Travel Logistics for Ottawa Meeting
4. Brief Summary of Working Groups Papers
5. Discussion of Draft Ottawa Agenda
6. Questions?

General Guidance for United States--Canada
SPP Working Group Breakout Sessions
January 31—Feb.1, 2006
Ottawa, Canada

Objective

The goals of this session are for U.S. and Canadian counterparts to identify the range of issues within each topic area where North American coordination or information-sharing would be of value; and for the identified issues, to begin discussing the current status of planning, future needs, under SPP* goals to develop: (1) a North American Pandemic Influenza Plan; and (2.) protocols/arrangements/agreements for cross-border mutual coordination and assistance.

Format of Breakout Sessions

1. Each group will have a Chairperson and Rapporteur (suggestion to divide these responsibilities between U.S. and Canadian participants).
2. Using draft papers developed by U.S. work groups as a starting point for discussion, prioritize issues and revise as needed, with the intention of drafting a North American Pandemic Influenza Plan.
3. For issues/components where coordination is considered most important, discuss existing and/or the need for new arrangements/protocols/ agreements.
4. Development of a proposed work-plan including identification of roles and responsibilities of government agencies in each country associated with specific SPP goals/objectives and deliverables. Include discussion of where Pandemic Influenza planning and relevant activities can be approached as a trilateral initiative.

*Potential contributions may include: 1) analysis of issues and the development of options, pros, cons for the consideration of decision-makers in each country. 2) comparison of established procedures and, if similar, potential value of international memoranda of understanding, protocols, arrangements, or other agreements; 3) comparison of established strategies and, if different, analysis of the differences, the rationale, and the need for communication messages that can explain these differences.

**Security and Prosperity Partnership
Canada – Unites States
Enhancing Preparedness Plans and Mutual Assistance for Pandemic
Influenza and Other Emerging Public Health Threats in North America
Technical Meeting
Ottawa
January 31-February 1, 2006**

Dr. Paul Gully – Opening remarks

Critical Outcomes –

- Collaboration protocols for large-scale emergencies
- Architecture for development of infectious outbreak plan
- Development of a mutual assistance agreement

Dr. St. John – Reviewed proposed agenda - no additions requested

Goal:

To meet deliverables of SPP – Goals were established by Canada, USA, Mexico

Deliverables

1. Mutual assistance agreement
2. North American agreement on Pandemic Influenza planning
(Pan. Flu an excellent “driver” to keep us on track – applicable to generic issues).

Tasks of this workshop

- identify issues, identify tasks to be discussed in working groups.
- Work will need to continue in each of the working groups

Goal: North American Pandemic Influenza Plan agreement be completed by June/06;
Mutual Assistant Agreement to follow thereafter.

Dr. Karen Becker –

During the next two days we would like to:

- examine existing mechanisms for collaboration
- identify what needs to be put in place to assist each other in dealing with events/emergencies.
- Not here to develop detailed mechanisms (will share the paper on Great Lakes Initiative)
- Goal of this meeting includes: identifying issues, gaps, barriers, how we differ and discussing how to address these.
- We also need to identify what form this plan will take.

Observations

Dr. Arlene King – Suggested that ongoing work on Pandemic Influenza Plans could be combined with this work rather than working on each separately.

Claude Giroux - We will not solve everything but should be able to identify the “table of contents” as well as the context.” There are a number of agreements already in existences i.e.: Great Lakes, North East, BC/Washington, etc.

Dr. Karen Becker - While I agree that existing agreements (State/Provincial and Territorial) are in place, often the Public Health component is missing,

Discussion followed with these key points:

- The need to identify an approach concerning licensure issues
- Need to identify objectives of joint planning
- Need to identify each countries' approach to risk communication
- Need to identify each countries' current pandemic planning needs to be examined
- Need to discuss use of pharmaceuticals in a country where they do not have approval
- Need to discuss the development and use of antiviral and vaccines
- Need to discuss border closures
- Mexico must be included in discussions
- Communications commented: The agreement we come to must be similar to arrangements already in existence in Homeland Security and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada as well as other arrangements we have at the international level.
- There is a need to consider all sectors in discussions and view protocols/arrangements through various lenses (economics, foreign policy, etc.)
- There is a need to identify and differentiate between policy and operational issues.
- Any agreements must not jeopardize or endanger health of each parties' own population.
- Mutual Assistance discussions may in the future need to focus on a wider lens than just emerging infectious disease specifically pandemic.
- PI is not just a Public Health but also a National security emergency
- Even with protocols in place the establishment and ongoing maintenance of networks is crucial.
- Time line of events of Pandemic Influenza needs to be taken into consideration in planning for Mutual assistance.
- Need to discuss process for the mobilization of resources over which Federal Departments have no jurisdiction.
- There should be no interference with existing agreements/arrangements- i.e. state/provincial/territorial. Federal governments can however help to complete these agreements/arrangements.
- Goals are either to harmonize policies where feasible and desirable and to explain differences where they exist.

- There needs to be an agreement on the identification of higher level objectives and then a demonstration that a agreement would be worked towards.
- There is a need to identify what issues are and are not open for discussion by each country
- One area of importance in which to work towards commonality and harmonization is common messaging.

BREAK-----

Presentation: Ben Schwartz (PowerPoint attached)

Presentation: Dr. Arlene King (PowerPoint attached)

Presentation: Dr. Njoo

- Overall Canadian Federal Government Pandemic Planning:

Just recently more government departments have begun to get involved in PI planning with the intent to develop an overarching Federal government plan that would cover all sectors of government and not just public health.

- Dec. 2005 : Formation of Deputy Minister level committee
- Meeting on monthly basis
- 6 working groups have been developed- each is co-chaired by a different Director General
 1. Federal Business Continuity and Human Resources
 2. International issues
 3. Public Health and emergency management
 4. Communications
 5. Social and Economic Impact
 6. Liaison group-Fed and Private sector
- End of March deadline for written reports by the working groups as policy recommendations
- Key issues for policy recommendations:
 1. Legal issues – each department should review it’s legal capacities and resources prior to considering the powers of the Emergency Act.
 2. Human Resources –what may be the human impact of pandemic influenza across all sectors of society
 3. Explicit acknowledgement that the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan should not be mistaken as the plan for the country. The current Plan is the public health plan but a national strategy that would include national security issues across multiple sectors must be developed.

4. Acknowledgment – all working groups should have common planning assumptions developed by the Public Health Agency [PHAC (common set of guidelines)].
5. Need more Federal/Provincial/Territorial engagement across sectors, particularly in those other than public health.
6. Antivirals –different approaches/views in terms of purchasing, using for treatment or prophylaxis, etc.

Presentation: Ben Swartz

Overall US Federal Government Pandemic Planning:

- Similar to Canada. A couple of years ago met with Arlene and Dr. St. John to begin discussions. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Draft plan was released in 2004.
- There is interest in PI planning at all levels of government. Tabletop exercise for the Executive Branch took place in Dec.
- Issues go far beyond health care in Pandemic preparedness which led to focus on national Pandemic Planning in White House including bringing in Federal Departments. In last 6 months, there is good collaboration among departments on how to prepare. There will be very intensive preparation up to release of plan in the next couple of weeks.
- There remain a number of important decisions that will need to be made at a higher level. PCC Policy Planning committees have been formed to consider policy related to specific issues, i.e., slowing spread/limiting spread in US through travel interventions.
- Other policies will be formulated as issues come up
- Homeland Security Council is considering bringing everything together to ensure that all the plans can link together to ensure consistency.
- Department of Defense also has their own plan and some facets of this will tie in with the National Plan.

Working group discussions followed.

Day Two:

Reports of Working Groups:

- Working group: Stockpile/operations: Chairs: Canada, Colin Harwood; USA, Richard Nolan
 - We have two systems, military and civilian; they must be synchronized with each other and nongovernmental organizations.
 - FDA also has some concerns about food products coming in – i.e., baby food, formula, etc.
 - Drugs will require additional discussions to determine what can and cannot be imported into each country
 - It is also highly necessary to manage the inbound flow since it comes from various sources
 - 2 potentially contentious and policy related issues: Are some stockpile items “off the table”, i.e., drugs or biologics that are in scarce supply like antiviral and smallpox vaccines?
 - Regulatory harmonization: discussions are going on between the US, the UK and Canada on issues related to regulatory questions such as transport etc.
 - To what degree is the stockpile information and inventory public information or is it protected; need to explore what information can and cannot be released.
 - Question: How broadly do we want to look at the drugs and supplies? Just those for influenza or more broadly for emergency use in any event? FDA commented that this will need to be explored more broadly looking at the regulatory framework.
 - In stockpile we also need to provide operational documents and clear guidance documents, i.e., SOPs.
 - It is important to review in a systematic way the agreements that currently exist cross borders. We need to explore the degree to which these include pandemic plans.
 - Commitment made by both US and Canada to research what the existing cross border agreements on pan planning are.
 - Next steps for broader steering committee are how do we manage and move forward.

Comment: Dr. Karen Becker: Perhaps we need to quickly develop a protocol for what we can do immediately, down the line in the next few month and what will be more longer term- each working group may need to look at this approach.

- Working group: Epi, surveillance and monitoring group: Chairs: Canada, Theresa Tam; USA, Nicole Smith
 - Proposed a trilateral group to be built based on the bilateral group that already exists with US and Mexico
 - The scope of the group would include animal and human health and epidemiology as well as surveillance and monitoring

- Membership would include national level members and select provincial and state membership
- Objectives would include: sharing of information and knowledge during the planning, sharing technical expertise during response in outbreak investigation and events.
- Strive for common case definitions and where there were differences explanations for these.
- Work toward risk communication strategies in ref. to technical work
- Next steps:
 - Identify the liaisons and contacts for preparedness and response activities
 - Identify the gaps and barriers that exist for sharing
 - Look at existing cross border agreements with states and provinces.
 - Group also identified an issue about personnel and who will do work
 - begin a work plan for this group
 - Look at the bilateral guidelines and the group that exists to build on
 - Be able to by June provide an annex document to the plans on this front
 - Look at the legal issues. It was noted that from there are no legal impediments to sharing information and data. For the movement of samples and reagents, there are mostly customs and border issues that need to be addressed with systems etc for moving them
 - RE: public communications- work of this group is crucial in what the communications group needs to address - Surveillance and monitoring is one of the fundamental ways that the public will understand the issues. It is essential that these common definitions be created and we have clear explanations for why any differences exist. The Canadian public will pay attention to what is being said and done by US.
 - Discussions are already ongoing with GSAG and WHO in the case definitions and communications. It is very important that we coordinate with International partners.

Comments:

- In GSAG meeting, pandemic plans were compared – excellent exercise and suggested practice to identify where differences exist and how to present the reasons why. In addition, we should start to plan what the response would be to a situation and what we should be communicating in the first 48 hours.

- Communication links and data sharing: some already exist in provinces and state agreements but these do not exist on a federal level. How will group deal with this? The current bilateral agreement already includes some of this information so that this issue can be explored by the group as well
- Information for the group: Animal stream includes domestic as well as wild animal streams. There is a group that already meets trilaterally on domesticated stream and would be glad to work with this group. Mexico is quite proactive in this area
- Another function of this group may be to review the new International Health Regulations algorithm that has been provide by the WHO and discuss the use of common algorithms to define public health events of international concern.
- Working group: Travel/Border: Chairs: Canada, Howard Njoo; USA- Anthony Martin
 - **Travel, Border, Transportation, Management of Foreign Nationals – will need to re-title or break this down differently**
 - 32 issues identified that they'd like to take forward – had to be significant, had to have common interest, had to be issues where we could hope to achieve agreement and progress in order to bring the issue further.
 - There has to be clear communication re: differences between Canada and US
 - Some of the issues will need to be handed over to surveillance group
 - Was function of this group to seek harmonization of policy?
 - Came up with 7 large categories of things:
 1. Definitions: of travel alerts, foreign nationals, travel restrictions
 2. Common Lists of Affected Countries: with pandemic, etc.
 3. Pandemic Stages/Phases: some of the differences, where US is going, Canada's emphasis on WHO stages, where there may be transmission in one country but not another
 4. International Entry Procedures: travel alerts, advisories, decreased numbers of ports of entry, egress, ingress points
 5. Transportation Issues: any changes at borders will result in delays and these can lead to disastrous consequences – have to ensure that cargo is moving for economic benefit
 6. Continuity of Border Operations – several occupational health oriented issues
 7. Traveller's Notifications

- There may already be agreements in place – group needs to come back together to begin identifying gaps. They have a lot of work still to do

Comments:

1. What is the dividing line between operational and policy and what is within our power to negotiate and discuss? For instance travel advisories – we can try to harmonize, however re: screening procedures, signage, these may have more of a policy spin – so how far can we go in working on this?
2. Acknowledgement of the environment in which we're working – we're now working in context of DM committee in Canada, in States working from other context – strict timelines for States in terms of deliverables. Re: border closures - sick duck in BC – decision was made at political level to close border. 2nd example: Canadian embassy expressed concern over how US would react in terms of border closures in the context of pandemic – in follow up to these concerns a meeting took place – we may not be in sync with our US counterparts in this regard – how to synchronize this? We're all working in a complex environment. From Canadian perspective, public health has had a strong voice – on US side public health may have less of an influence – maybe more DHS had a voice.
3. There may be some recommendation that there be some fairly high level policy forum – needs to be some kind of a melding in terms of policy in Canada and US – technical work is proceeding, but if not in sync with policy then that's a problem. Maybe a forum exists for this already? Solution: Develop more formal forum for discussion.
4. As actions are identified we'll need to deconstruct these in regards to their ramifications. What is the appropriate forum to discuss these things? We're not sure, but there are policy recommendations that need to be made.

General Discussion

- Have identified some potential areas where SPP may facilitate the identification of issues – take policy issues back to Washington – develop papers, policy papers, working papers... Senior leadership will be appreciative of any guidance
- HHS is a significant seat at the table. Each country has to make its own policy. Implementation plan includes range of options, for which you need to examine policy considerations and operational issues for each of these options. What would it mean to exercise any given option? Hope to gain out of this meeting a better granularity in terms of what issues are.
- This is an initial opening of the box – the working groups should have freedom to expand and include those who they feel may be missing.
- This discussion enables officials to bring the perspective of another country to senior officials – this discussion is very important. We'll work out how this gets communicated to Canadian Deputy Ministers.

- This meeting raises communications issues where we recognize that things aren't in sync – know in advance where things don't match so you don't read about it in the paper. Importance of early notification processes.
- To speak to what we know will be the context for a pandemic event – we know that it will immediately become very political – ongoing need for perception of control, etc. – there should be assumption that there will be political to political discussion.

Overall Communications perspective on groups:

- Communications contacts will hold a teleconference in coming days to start to talk about where they would go in terms of next steps. There is an established protocol between DHS and Canada. They've floated through working groups and have flagged sticky communications issues.

Betsy: It's been helpful to flow through groups and hear discussions – will help them in their planning process

Overall Legal perspectives:

- Each country operates within its own legal context, so whatever comes from this committee has to be assessed through the legal lens of each country. When specific proposals are brought forward they will apply legal lens and figure out potential problems and how they would fix them.
- Some solutions may have already been identified. They're ready to look at what we present to them.

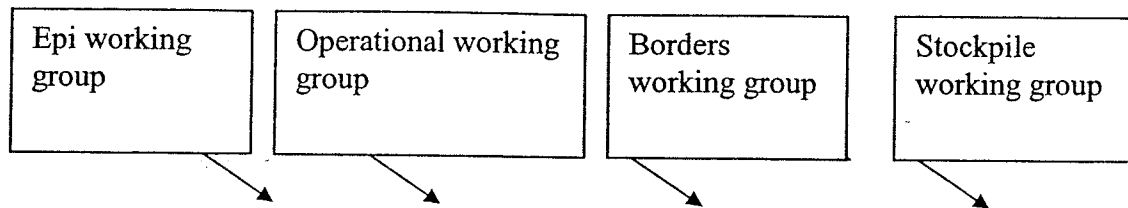
Next Steps

- Groups will reconvene to look at some next steps. Helpful for higher levels to understand that there is a process underway to drive towards some deliverables – maybe establish some timelines. We don't wish to micromanage your processes – groups should take ownership of their own processes.
- Needs to be some discussion in terms of what CAN be delivered within prescribed timelines. What things require long term strategy? Even identifying who needs to be in these groups could take some time.
- Incorporating Mexico into this process will require contacts at the national level first.
- Re: Rumoured leaders meeting – To the extent that working groups can reach out to Mexico, that would be helpful for him.

- In terms of concrete deliverables in June, there are probably some key activities already in place in context of pandemic that we can use to provide deliverables.
- Two issues that could well happen: 1) human importation of H5N1; 2) an outbreak of H5N1 in our poultry populations. Having a clear sense of how we'd respond to this might be useful and constructive discussion. Interesting to compare notes (b/w Canada and US) on these issues.

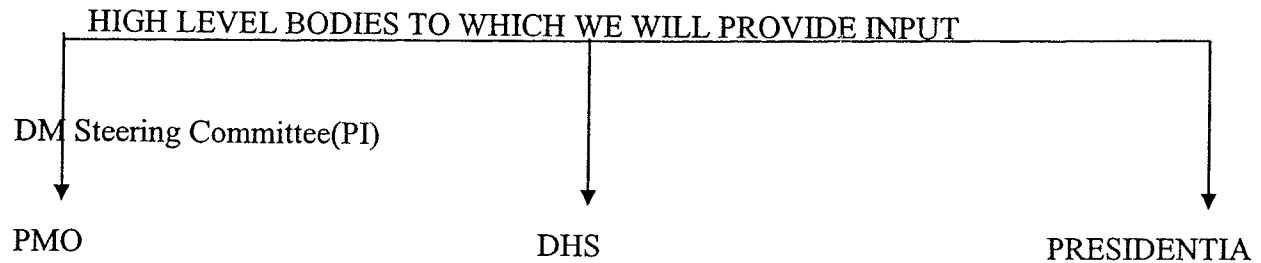
Proposed reporting structure: ---

Animal Health ← liason → Human Health



(SECRETIAT) collate work of working groups and create a single output to the three channels below)

CANADA- Ron St. John Claude Gireaux Arlene King	USA- Karen Becker Bruce Gellin	MEXICO- (to be named)
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- There have been multiple unilateral discussions with Mexico in the past . A conference call is upcoming and it is felt that we should inform Mexico about what has taken place and we should suggest to them that this become a trilateral initiative and ask them to join us as soon as possible. Call likely this Friday.
- Question; When will we bring in State/Provincial and local partners? We are in the process of determining the roles and responsibilities of local, state and federal authorities. There are currently many agreements in place. At the end of the day we must figure out some connectivity between these bodies. The SPP is

a federal initiative. We need to inform them that there is a point in time where they will have to be involved but at this time it remains a federal initiative. We will be careful not to tread on existing agreements.

End of Meeting