

WEBVTT

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<v SPEAKER_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute's podcast network.

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<v SPEAKER_1>I'm your host Colin Robertson.

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<v SPEAKER_1>On this episode, recorded on January 30th, we talk with Laura Dawson about our border with the United States.

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<v SPEAKER_1>CGAI board member Laura Dawson is Executive Director of the Future Borders Coalition.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Laura, welcome back.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's great to be back.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Thanks, Colin.

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<v SPEAKER_1>For listeners, this is another in our series of podcasts related to the work of the expert group on Canada-U.S.

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<v SPEAKER_1>relations, of which Laura and I are both members.

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<v SPEAKER_1>For listeners, the Future Borders Coalition recently convened its sixth annual bilateral dialogue in Washington on trade, travel and border security.

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<v SPEAKER_1>It brought together leaders from Canada and the United States at a moment when cross-border cooperation feels both more difficult and more critical than ever.

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<v SPEAKER_1>It took on the tough issues, border security and fentanyl, trade and supply chains, cross-border travel, and the systems that keep our economies moving.

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<v SPEAKER_1>The conversations, Laura wrote in her report, quote,

weren't polite, surface-level exchanges, unquote, but, quote, candid, sometimes challenging, and always substantive.

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<v SPEAKER_1>So let's get started.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Laura, first remind listeners what the Border Alliance is all about.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Sure.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So our organization, The Future Borders Coalition, was a product of airports and ports and airlines.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It was started back in 2018 by Jerry Bruno, who some people might know.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And it has grown to become...

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<v SPEAKER_1>Jerry's at Vancouver Airport, isn't he?

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<v SPEAKER_1>Or was?

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<v SPEAKER_1>Yeah.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Actually, let's back up there.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, it was started by Jerry Bruno at Vancouver Airport, who sadly passed away last year.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so I stepped in in 2022 to take over Future Borders Coalition, and I've tried to grow it out into an organization that takes not just cross-border travel, but also supply chains and trade very seriously.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And then as the number of Canada-U.S.

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<v SPEAKER_2>business organizations has diminished, we've taken on an increasing role in things that we never expected to, like fentanyl and illicit trade, Cusma, USMCA actions.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And really, we've become a clearinghouse for bringing business and government together to focus on cooperation wherever possible.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's really worked out very well.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We have about 60 members in both countries.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We're registered as a nonprofit in both countries.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And we've had a great level of support and encouragement from government officials in both countries.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So I think we're performing a really important function.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But my goodness, it's been a difficult year.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So we really have our work cut out for us.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And when you point out 60 companies, because I looked at your list, it's an impressive group.

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<v SPEAKER_1>It covers the whole gamut.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And when you talk about working with governments, we're talking about all levels of government, aren't we?

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<v SPEAKER_1>Not just federal, but provincial and municipal and county.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, absolutely.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I think kind of our sweet spot for where we work is at the sort of office director, deputy minister level.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We certainly welcome political participation.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We had a great group from the Canada-US legislative forum at our summit last week.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But where we like to work is in areas where cooperation is possible, but there are challenges with coordination and information and getting the right people around the table.

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<v SPEAKER_2>That's the role that we try to fulfill.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And we're kind of a legacy from the old Beyond the Borders initiative and the Regulatory Cooperation Council.

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<v SPEAKER_2>That's very much the spirit and also the substance of what we continue to do with our organization.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And just to remind listeners, Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation, this goes back to Harper Obama and then was carried through into the Trudeau and Biden, but it's since evolved into, well, I guess where we're at today.

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<v SPEAKER_1>But just for listeners, knowing that this was a time when we did make substantive movement relating to both regulatory cooperation and border cooperation.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, and the sorts of things that Canada-U.S.

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<v SPEAKER_2>economic and border cooperation rely on, it's the very technical issues that require a lot of attention.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's your Nexus card, it's pre-clearance at the airport, it's taking an animal across the border, it is new regulations on value for duty, it's how to fill out new forms, it's whether certain rules apply to both Americans and Canadians, it's snowbird taxes.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, because we are such an integrated economy and integrated communities, there needs to be a lot of focus on this small stuff.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Most of the stuff aren't things that politicians want to have a press conference about.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They want to announce big deal agreements.

00:05:12.280 --> 00:05:17.140

<v SPEAKER_2>But in the Canada US space, it's really about getting the details right.

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<v SPEAKER_1>No, exactly, and you really are an example, to me, of a coalition has come together where the rubber hits the road because all the things you named, from Nexus cards to bringing your pet across, this is what people care about every day as they cross the border.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And there's still significant crossings of the border, aren't there?

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<v SPEAKER_1>What are the numbers right now of back and forth daily?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Well, the daily back and forth, I don't have the exact numbers, but on the crossings of passenger travel, passenger vehicles, that's down to about 25% year on year.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So that is really affecting the border communities, people who rely on robust movement back and forth.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But in terms of cargo travel, those numbers continue to be very dynamic.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They do go up in anticipation, say, of a new tariff, or in anticipating of something that's going on in the policy sphere.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So we don't see the cargo numbers changing so much as just being more volatile than we're used to.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's not market signals that cargo is responding to now, as much as political and regulatory signals.

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<v SPEAKER_1>No, what we could, I guess, call the Trump effect for both passenger traffic, as you put it, as well as the goods and services side.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, I mean, we're certainly able to see changes in cross-border flow just based on certain things we read in the newspaper, for sure.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Okay.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Well, I looked at the agenda, which I thought was very thorough, and again, I thought highly practical, and I thought you had really good people at your conference.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Share with us your takeaways and tell us about the discussions on the tough issues, including fentanyl, migrants, cross-border travel, supply chains, and if you like, I'll name a subject, and you can just briefly give us a summary if you like, or however you want to do it.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I'll start from the top.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I think we have two kinds of presentations or meetings in our conference, and one is the top level or high level officials who are often speaking to each other in a fireside chat, or who we put in sequentially.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And this has been a year of a lot of drama, a lot of outrage in social media.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so finding senior officials who are willing to speak in this kind of forum and have very productive conversations about areas of joint interest and cooperation, and even areas where we don't agree, I really give those folks a lot of credit.

00:08:05.620 --> 00:08:25.540

<v SPEAKER_2>The Canadians and the Americans that we had really tried

to find a pathway forward in cooperation, whether we're talking about e-commerce regulations or fentanyl or investing in border infrastructure or World Cup 2026, this was not a group that was there to throw rocks at each other.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They wanted to figure out the best way that we could work together and advance this historically important relationship.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Then I think it was extremely important in our panel discussions, where we had experts from business and government, and people like Brian Clow, who was Justin Trudeau's Canada US advisor, and Andrea Van Voot, who was Stephen Harper's political advisor.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Those folks really added depth and richness to the program, as well as having current legislators who were able to comment on the state of the field and comment on where they saw the relationship going.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It was such a jam-packed program.

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<v SPEAKER_2>As you say, we had everything from fentanyl to Cusma Review, to airport-free clearance, to technology at the border.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We packed a lot in.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It was a very rich program.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Can you give us a sense of, say, the discussion on fentanyl or migrants, where people were coming out at the end of the day?

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<v SPEAKER_1>My sense is we're making progress on some of this stuff, but it's not always generally available in the regular media.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, that's exactly right.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I have been consistently impressed by the level of seriousness that the Government of Canada has taken on fentanyl and anti-illicit trade and border security over the past year.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yes, there were the tariffs that came out, the sort of everybody shook their head at, but Canada, particularly when he was Minister David McGinty, really set the ball rolling at public safety to take that challenge seriously, appointing Kevin Brousseau as the fentanyl are.

00:10:06.340 --> 00:10:07.140

<v SPEAKER_2>But for me-

00:10:07.160 --> 00:10:08.520

<v SPEAKER_1>He's still there, isn't he, Kevin?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

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<v SPEAKER_2>He was at our conference.

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<v SPEAKER_2>He hasn't yet got the hat and the scepter that I think a SAR should have, but he was there and I had a lot of good things to say.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Because the challenges in illicit products, whether it's fentanyl or illicit movement of people, or money laundering, other sorts of drugs, etc., is it's all a very thorny network and you have to pick away at all of the different pieces in order to make some progress.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Canada's made a commitment to do that in collaboration with their US partners.

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<v SPEAKER_2>More effective information sharing, investment in the tools that people need to identify bad actors, getting underneath these money laundering networks, finding not just fentanyl, but also fentanyl precursors, and tracing these products through the supply chains, through the use of declarations and the paperwork that folks have to file in order to do any trade action.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Canada spent about a billion dollars on this anti-fentanyl border initiative last year.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I think it's really paying off.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Again, it's so complex that it's difficult to capture it in any one headline.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But having government agencies at the federal level and the RCMP cooperate with provincial and municipal level policing authorities and their counterparts across the border, that's a big lift.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And they're doing it much, much better now than I've ever seen before.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And you got the impression from the American side that they actually do see progress.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And from the Canadian side, a kind of recognition that the efficiency and collaboration has really improved, as you say, as a result of these major investments.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, we got a very strong positive sense from the American participants.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I really enjoy working with the sort of operations level folks at CBP, US.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Customs and Border Protection, you know, port directors and folks that are at the airports, because they really understand the Canadian context.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I find that within the parameters of their job, be it resources or regulations, they really do try their best to find a way forward.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so I heard a lot more about cooperation, especially coming up to something like World Cup 2026, which is all hands on deck in order to manage the flow of people and make sure that that's a positive experience for legitimate travelers.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I heard a lot of good cooperative initiatives.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And even at the highest level, the American officials are taking Canada both seriously and positively.

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<v SPEAKER_2>One of the, I don't know if you want to call it dividends, but one of the things that's happened is because the US is better able to control the flow of illicit migration on the southern border, they actually have more resources to invest in the northern border.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And there's been certain other spending bills, which is allowing the US to invest in infrastructure on the northern border.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And that ultimately is good for Canada.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It really means that we can get goods and services, legitimate goods and services, through faster and easier.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And despite what we hear in the rhetoric of folks getting harassed at the border, at my organization, we don't see real evidence of this.

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<v SPEAKER_2>I have my phone line open.

00:13:43.960 --> 00:13:48.780

<v SPEAKER_2>If somebody's been harassed at the border or had some sort of unfair treatment, let me know.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We'll chase it down for you.

00:13:49.820 --> 00:13:53.540

<v SPEAKER_2>We want to get underneath us as much as anyone else does.

00:13:53.540 --> 00:13:56.960

<v SPEAKER_3>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the President and CEO of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:13:56.960 --> 00:14:01.560

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<v SPEAKER_1>Now, you mentioned the Americans are putting more resources because one of the complaints on the Canadian side for years has been the guns that cross the border from the United States into Canada.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Is that something that the Americans are helping us with?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:14:30.240 --> 00:14:39.360

<v SPEAKER_2>That's one of those things that falls into the category of better communication, better cooperation yields better results.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Rather than it being an ad hoc system of one law enforcement officer on one side of the border, calling another one if they happen to know the guy or girl's phone number, it is now much more systematic and routinized.

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<v SPEAKER_2>The channels for access and cooperation are open.

00:14:56.360 --> 00:14:59.320

<v SPEAKER_2>The channels for communication are open.

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<v SPEAKER_2>As you may know, sometimes there's information that used to come to a federal law enforcement organization like the RCMP, that they couldn't share with their provincial or municipal counterparts.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They had to daisy chain that back to the Americas, and the Americans would have to call the province or the city.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It was bizarre.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so now that we're figuring out that collaboration in law enforcement, in cross-border crime, it's paying dividends across the board.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Well, that's good, because I remember years ago the Millennium Bomber we caught because of that, as you talked about that person to person relationship to a woman on the Canadian side and a woman officer on the American side and stopped and found in the trunk of the car, because they came down to Los Angeles afterwards, where we held the trial.

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<v SPEAKER_1>It's quite interesting.

00:15:51.200 --> 00:16:01.320

<v SPEAKER_1>Let me move to supply chains, because that's really, in many ways, the heart of what we're trying to do at the border is keep those supply chains, which are vital to our manufacturing trade, going.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So one of my members, who is a bridge director, she says the most important thing that we have to focus on is throughput.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so when you're moving goods across the border, you want to move as many functions as you can away from the border, whether that's pre-inspection or filing your paperwork and advance cargo information, advance passenger information, use of new technologies, all of those initiatives help to increase the throughput.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And when you have more efficiency at the border, you have lower costs for producers and for consumers, and you have a much greater incentive to maintain these cross-border supply chains.

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<v SPEAKER_2>You know, there's not a lot we can do about some kinds of policy uncertainty, but if we can reduce some of the wait times and the uncertainty at the border, or having two different kinds of regulations, one north and one south for the very same thing, as much as we can do that, that reduces transaction costs and increases competitiveness.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And look, I know that there's a considerable investment going on in Canada's diversification to new markets, and that's terrific.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But more than 70% of Canada's exports still go to the United States.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Canada is still the largest buyer of US exports for more than 35 states.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So that trade isn't going away.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And rather than ignoring it, or pretending that trade relationship doesn't exist, increased investment and attention in the border relationship, border throughput, efficient supply chains is key.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Now, I know the numbers are reported as being down on both sides, a reflection, I think, of President Trump and tariffs and uncertainty and things.

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<v SPEAKER_1>But my impression from listening to you is that the efficiencies that we've been working on, you know, going back to the turn of this century, are having some effect.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And particularly, as you point out, in the last year on the Canadian side, with the major billion-dollar investment, is that a fair statement?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, it's a fair statement.

00:18:21.200 --> 00:18:24.980

<v SPEAKER_2>And so investment in technology.

00:18:24.980 --> 00:18:29.060

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, yes, it's important that we invest in human resources as well.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We have to have enough border officials on the job.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But we also have to give our border officials the tools they need in order to make admissibility decisions when a cargo or passenger arrives.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And the best way to support that admissibility decision is by moving that function away from the border, by being able to transmit the documentation in advance, by giving those officers access to AI tools so that they can look at not just the customs manifest as it comes across the border, but what are the businesses associated with this manifest?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Do they have a good reputation for compliance?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Are they known?

00:19:16.100 --> 00:19:18.020

<v SPEAKER_2>Are they part of the Better Business Bureau?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Or are they bad guys?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Or maybe they had some red flags against them?

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<v SPEAKER_2>That will help us to identify what's a high-risk shipment or a low-risk shipment.

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<v SPEAKER_2>If you don't have that kind of information, then technically every shipment is a high-risk shipment, and every shipment gets maybe more attention than it needs, and it's not an efficient allocation of resources, and we're not finding the bad guys.

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<v SPEAKER_2>We're trying to find the bad guys as effectively as we could.

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<v SPEAKER_1>We used to talk about finding the needle in the haystack, and you did that by reducing the haystack down.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Is that working out?

00:19:52.780 --> 00:19:57.580

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, that's exactly it, and I think that is working out.

00:19:57.900 --> 00:20:16.480

<v SPEAKER_2>The challenge that we have, and it's understandable, is we're talking about sovereign countries that have different ways of doing things and different rules on things like use of biometric data, for example.

00:20:16.480 --> 00:20:38.440

<v SPEAKER_2>And what we want to do in our organization is to ensure that as far as possible, folks are using, if not the same tools, at least compatible tools that can talk to each other, and that we're not getting really excited about inventing new things that will slow down how things move across the border.

00:20:38.440 --> 00:20:46.640

<v SPEAKER_2>So for example, there's a new border management system Canada has just rolled out called CARM.

00:20:46.640 --> 00:20:48.840

<v SPEAKER_2>And for the most part, it's really good.

00:20:48.840 --> 00:20:53.760

<v SPEAKER_2>But some of our members come forward and say, you know, in my case, it's not doing this thing.

00:20:53.760 --> 00:21:00.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And someone else say, oh, in my case, I'm having a real problem with large volumes of shipments.

00:21:00.440 --> 00:21:02.140

<v SPEAKER_2>And so, but so far, so good.

00:21:02.140 --> 00:21:05.280

<v SPEAKER_2>CBSA has been very responsive to say, yep, thank you.

00:21:05.280 --> 00:21:06.660

<v SPEAKER_2>We're working the bugs out.

00:21:06.660 --> 00:21:09.320

<v SPEAKER_2>We're going to make this work easier and better.

00:21:09.320 --> 00:21:25.900

<v SPEAKER_2>And having a CARM system that aligns with what they're using in the United States makes it even better so that the experience of moving cargo northbound or southbound should be very, very consistent with very few surprises for shippers.

00:21:25.900 --> 00:21:32.060

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, as a nexus holder and someone who crosses the border regularly, I certainly can tell you the improvement.

00:21:32.060 --> 00:21:42.700

<v SPEAKER_1>And I know you'll notice as well over the past decade, and just being able to use that nexus card and cross the border with the sort of facial scans on both sides now and tap your card and away you go.

00:21:42.700 --> 00:21:44.880

<v SPEAKER_1>There are different systems on both sides.

00:21:44.880 --> 00:21:49.120

<v SPEAKER_1>But for a while out, the Americans were ahead, but I think now we're catching up.

00:21:49.120 --> 00:21:51.180

<v SPEAKER_1>Is that a fair, again, fair comment?

00:21:51.180 --> 00:21:52.700

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, it's a fair comment.

00:21:52.920 --> 00:21:57.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And also, it's an opportunity to put another pad on the back for CBSA.

00:21:58.580 --> 00:22:07.600

<v SPEAKER_2>They have been engaged in what they call traveler modernization, which includes things like Nexus and biometrics at the airport.

00:22:07.600 --> 00:22:11.260

<v SPEAKER_2>But also, can we extend this to land crossings?

00:22:11.260 --> 00:22:14.620

<v SPEAKER_2>And can we extend it to the water crossings?

00:22:14.620 --> 00:22:24.420

<v SPEAKER_2>Or if you're up in the far north, or if you're in the canoe in the middle of nowhere that happens to be on a border crossing, how do we modernize that traveler experience?

00:22:24.420 --> 00:22:29.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And COVID and a few other things really slow down that process.

00:22:29.360 --> 00:22:49.840

<v SPEAKER_2>And now I see CBSA is really ramping up its traveler modernization, taking the lessons that it's learned from people having good experiences at airports, whether that's front of the line service, or whether that's getting through customs faster, and trying to apply that to other modes.

00:22:49.840 --> 00:22:53.300

<v SPEAKER_2>It's really not easy, but it's extremely important.

00:22:53.580 --> 00:23:08.440

<v SPEAKER_2>And on pre-clearance, interestingly, we think a pre-clearance is something that happens at a Canadian airport to go south, and it's great because we can go to Florida, or we can go to Arizona and clear customs right there in Toronto or Ottawa.

00:23:09.020 --> 00:23:30.460

<v SPEAKER_2>But there's a pilot project for a northbound pre-clearance project going on that will happen in upstate New York going into Quebec, and it will be Canadian CBSA officers who will be posted on American soil doing the pre-clearance function on the US side and co-locating with the US officers.

00:23:30.460 --> 00:23:39.160

<v SPEAKER_2>And so just like you mentioned the issue with weapons in pre-clearance, there's going to be lots of details and issues to work out.

00:23:39.160 --> 00:23:41.740

<v SPEAKER_2>So I'm kind of glad it's at a small crossing.

00:23:41.740 --> 00:23:55.980

<v SPEAKER_2>But if we get enough experience with this northbound pre-clearance, I think we can see it at airports in the United States going to Canada, as well as in the far north between Canada and Alaska.

00:23:55.980 --> 00:24:01.340

<v SPEAKER_1>Wow, because the American pre-clearance, I think, started in Eisenhower's era.

00:24:01.500 --> 00:24:04.900

<v SPEAKER_1>And we had talked about it, but we never came through.

00:24:04.900 --> 00:24:07.640

<v SPEAKER_1>So that's very encouraging.

00:24:07.640 --> 00:24:20.000

<v SPEAKER_1>Look, all of this, your conference took place against the backdrop of our ongoing negotiations on tariffs, whether we're talking steel or aluminum, our forest products or particularly the auto trade.

00:24:20.000 --> 00:24:27.100

<v SPEAKER_1>And then of course, the Cusma renewal renegotiation, whatever it's going to be.

00:24:27.100 --> 00:24:28.760

<v SPEAKER_1>How did that impact your conference?

00:24:28.840 --> 00:24:31.720

<v SPEAKER_1>And what was the corridor of conversations?

00:24:31.720 --> 00:24:46.020

<v SPEAKER_1>Because again, I can't help but think that these bigger, these negotiations, put it this way, the negotiations which are getting the media attention inevitably would have some impact on the border discussions.

00:24:46.020 --> 00:24:47.080

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:24:47.080 --> 00:24:57.460

<v SPEAKER_2>I think some people who don't know our organization well are surprised to see the level to which we are engaged in Cusma and USMCA and tariff issues.

00:24:58.020 --> 00:25:02.320

<v SPEAKER_2>But it's all part of an organism or an ecosystem.

00:25:02.320 --> 00:25:04.060

<v SPEAKER_2>Borders are connected to trade.

00:25:04.060 --> 00:25:08.720

<v SPEAKER_2>Trade is connected to trade rules, connected to international negotiations.

00:25:09.020 --> 00:25:23.440

<v SPEAKER_2>We've got our ore in all of these waters and have been quite involved in preparing folks for the review, trying to figure out what are going to be the priorities there.

00:25:23.820 --> 00:25:41.400

<v SPEAKER_2>But also, again, because we're both a US and Canadian organization, I'm able to testify both between Canadian legislative bodies, like the Senate and Parliament, but also I testified recently at the USTR hearing.

00:25:41.400 --> 00:25:42.720

<v SPEAKER_2>So I get both hats.

00:25:42.720 --> 00:25:46.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's a real privilege for me.

00:25:47.080 --> 00:25:55.100

<v SPEAKER_2>And our members are concerned and maybe a little optimistic about the USMCA Cusma review.

00:25:55.100 --> 00:26:02.940

<v SPEAKER_2>They don't see that there is much in the reality of U.S.-Canada trade that is insurmountable.

00:26:02.940 --> 00:26:05.280

<v SPEAKER_2>There are tweaks at the edges.

00:26:05.280 --> 00:26:07.260

<v SPEAKER_2>There are improvements that can be made.

00:26:07.260 --> 00:26:13.760

<v SPEAKER_2>We know from the USTR report the sorts of things that James and Greer is focusing on for Canada.

00:26:15.380 --> 00:26:18.960

<v SPEAKER_2>But none of those things are deal killers.

00:26:18.960 --> 00:26:30.520

<v SPEAKER_2>I think one of the greater concerns I have honestly about the review is that Canada is, I don't want to say it's not prepared, but it's prepared in a different way for this review.

00:26:30.520 --> 00:26:39.340

<v SPEAKER_2>In the past, the negotiators have been working very, very closely with all the sectors that were involved and potentially involved.

00:26:39.340 --> 00:26:41.480

<v SPEAKER_2>There was a lot of business consultation.

00:26:42.060 --> 00:26:44.720

<v SPEAKER_2>And we're not seeing that happen as much.

00:26:44.720 --> 00:26:54.160

<v SPEAKER_2>We're seeing business consultation with sectors that have been subject to these 232s that have been targeted, steel and aluminum and forest products, and that's great.

00:26:54.160 --> 00:27:04.880

<v SPEAKER_2>But I think there's a class of businesses that are sort of sitting back and waiting and saying, I manufacture this thing and I've got a good relationship with my US and Mexican counterparts.

00:27:04.880 --> 00:27:08.200

<v SPEAKER_2>When am I gonna get a chance to talk about how we can make this better?

00:27:08.200 --> 00:27:12.520

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think there's a gap in the consultation, which I

hope is being remedied.

00:27:12.520 --> 00:27:14.820

<v SPEAKER_2>There's some evidence that it is.

00:27:15.040 --> 00:27:18.440

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's one element that concerns me.

00:27:18.440 --> 00:27:30.960

<v SPEAKER_2>And the other element that's kind of a wild card is, within the context of the Cusma agreement itself, there's only so many subjects you can manage within a trade agreement.

00:27:30.960 --> 00:27:38.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And there's lots of other wild card things that are being mentioned, which are not things that are necessarily part of the legal effects of a trade agreement.

00:27:38.720 --> 00:27:57.300

<v SPEAKER_2>So we've got critical minerals, we've got Arctic security, we've got new provisions for oil and gas, we've got a lot of kind of cooperative things that are probably good for US.

00:27:57.300 --> 00:27:59.540

<v SPEAKER_2>Canada economic competitiveness.

00:27:59.540 --> 00:28:09.640

<v SPEAKER_2>But I don't know how you write those into the agreement, or if there's some sort of series of bilaterals or MOUs that take place.

00:28:09.760 --> 00:28:19.700

<v SPEAKER_2>I think that those sorts of advances are going to be very important for President Trump to be able to say, yep, we got a win here.

00:28:19.700 --> 00:28:27.040

<v SPEAKER_2>But I don't know how you include that in a trade agreement, and I don't know that our trade negotiators are prepared to do that either.

00:28:27.040 --> 00:28:31.300

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, you've anticipated my last question before I ask you what you're reading or screening.

00:28:31.300 --> 00:28:41.700

<v SPEAKER_1>You get into an elevator, and Prime Minister Carney is there, and he looks to you and says, so what's the one thing I need to do to get the border right?

00:28:41.700 --> 00:28:45.020

<v SPEAKER_2>The border is not a line in the sand.

00:28:45.020 --> 00:28:58.300

<v SPEAKER_2>The border is a series of channels of back and forth throughput between Americans and Canadians, both business, communities, families, etc.

00:28:58.300 --> 00:29:15.420

<v SPEAKER_2>To get the border right, you have to treat it like an ecosystem, you have to treat it like a continually evolving entity, and not something that you can open and shut, or regulate or dysregulate on a moment's notice.

00:29:15.420 --> 00:29:22.660

<v SPEAKER_2>You have to talk to the people who live and work on the border, and you have to manage it like the complex ecosystem it is.

00:29:22.660 --> 00:29:26.660

<v SPEAKER_1>And I'll tell them you should be reading The Future Borders Coalition's work.

00:29:26.660 --> 00:29:27.760

<v SPEAKER_2>I would love that.

00:29:27.800 --> 00:29:28.560

<v SPEAKER_1>Yes.

00:29:28.560 --> 00:29:32.300

<v SPEAKER_1>All right, my last question, what are you reading or streaming these days, Laura?

00:29:32.300 --> 00:29:38.080

<v SPEAKER_2>So in our household, as you know, I'm married to a retired US Foreign Service Officer.

00:29:38.080 --> 00:29:38.480

<v SPEAKER_2>And we live in-

00:29:38.480 --> 00:29:40.540

<v SPEAKER_1>Mastered at Venezuela at one point.

00:29:40.540 --> 00:29:41.200

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:29:41.200 --> 00:29:48.420

<v SPEAKER_2>And we live in Atlanta, but our house is this week full of Canadian authors, specifically women from Ottawa.

00:29:48.420 --> 00:30:01.060

<v SPEAKER_2>So on my husband's bedside table, he's got Madeleine Drohan's, He Did Not Conquer, The Story of Benjamin Franklin's Failure to Annex Canada, because my husband loves Benjamin Franklin.

00:30:01.060 --> 00:30:03.540

<v SPEAKER_2>For me, that topic is a little too spicy.

00:30:03.540 --> 00:30:04.880

<v SPEAKER_2>I need some escapism.

00:30:04.880 --> 00:30:06.080

<v SPEAKER_2>Thank you very much.

00:30:06.080 --> 00:30:18.620

<v SPEAKER_2>So I'm reading Jennifer Chevalier's Winter Witch, which is about 17th century New France and the movement of women from France to Canada and witch trials.

00:30:18.620 --> 00:30:19.840

<v SPEAKER_2>And it's very exciting.

00:30:20.200 --> 00:30:27.140

<v SPEAKER_2>And you will know Jennifer Chevalier as the hardworking producer on CBC radio, The House.

00:30:27.140 --> 00:30:27.960

<v SPEAKER_2>Who knew?

00:30:27.960 --> 00:30:30.980

<v SPEAKER_2>She's also a fiction writer and this is her very first novel.

00:30:30.980 --> 00:30:31.980

<v SPEAKER_1>I did not know that.

00:30:31.980 --> 00:30:33.400

<v SPEAKER_1>I did not know Jennifer had done a book.

00:30:33.400 --> 00:30:39.680

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, Jennifer Chevalier and Madeleine Drohan, both of whom are known and have listened to this podcast.

00:30:39.680 --> 00:30:40.900

<v SPEAKER_1>Laura, thank you.

00:30:40.900 --> 00:30:43.680

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:30:43.680 --> 00:30:45.680

<v SPEAKER_1>We were joined today by Laura Dawson.

00:30:45.680 --> 00:30:48.040

<v SPEAKER_1>We will link to the Future Borders Coalition website.

00:30:48.620 --> 00:30:51.200

<v SPEAKER_1>In our program notes, you can actually see what they are doing.

00:30:51.200 --> 00:30:54.180

<v SPEAKER_1>It is good work and we applaud Laura and her team.

00:30:54.180 --> 00:30:57.960

<v SPEAKER_1>You can find The Canadian Global Affairs Institute on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

00:30:57.960 --> 00:31:01.620

<v SPEAKER_1>The Global Exchange is brought to you by our team at The Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:31:01.620 --> 00:31:08.560

<v SPEAKER_1>My thanks go out to our producers, Charlotte Duval-Antoine, Jordyn Carroll and to Drew Phillips for providing our music.

00:31:08.560 --> 00:31:10.000

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:31:10.000 --> 00:31:11.780

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.