

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: *Napolitano's visit to Canada*

SOURCE: *Globe & Mail*

Tackling terrorism and organized crime at the Canada-U.S. border can be done without slowing down the billions in daily trade between the two countries, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano says.

“Together, the United States and Canada create and trade over a billion dollars worth of goods and services each day,” reads a joint statement released with Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan after Ms. Napolitano's two days of meetings with top Canadian officials, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

“We are committed to a collaborative approach to our border, one that enhances our security and public safety while facilitating the trade and travel that connect our two countries.”

The two countries also released an updated framework for managing the border during a crisis such as a terrorist attack or a pandemic.

In a brief question and answer session with reporters, Ms. Napolitano also addressed the controversy she triggered last month when she suggested in an interview that the Sept. 11 attackers came from Canada.

“Let me say once again, we know, and I know, that 9/11 terrorists did not cross the Canadian border,” she said. “I regret that the Canadian media only seems to hear an earlier misstatement to that effect. So let me be perfectly clear: We know that. But what they also need to hear, and what you need to hear from me, are all the things we are doing with Canada, and will continue to do with Canada, to further our joint security because we share the same interests.”

Mr. Van Loan said Canada has accepted Ms. Napolitano's correction and "moved on." He said Canadians must acknowledge there are home-grown terrorists in Canada, pointing to this year's successful conviction of Momin Khawaja for assisting British extremists.

"That's evidence that we cannot ignore," he said. "I do want to caution people that they would be naive to think that those threats of terrorism are behind us."

The Public Safety Minister also suggested cyber security is the new world arms race.

Not a day goes by without someone trying to hack government computer systems, he said, and fighting it is a constant challenge.

"We get better at it, they get better at it," he said at a news conference with Ms. Napolitano.

In advance of the Homeland Security chief's visit to Ottawa, opposition MPs said they wanted her to issue a clear statement to the U.S. audience that Canada is not a threat.

Ms. Napolitano had quickly issued a clarification on her original remarks on the perpetrators of 9/11 attacks, but by then, the damage was done. Former U.S. presidential candidate John McCain went public with his own forceful endorsement of the erroneous claim.

Ms. Napolitano was in Detroit Tuesday to announce new border security measures with Mr. Van Loan, who indicated in an interview that he didn't think Ms. Napolitano's original comments were a big deal.

"I'm not going to get too excited by a slight misspeak that she corrected immediately," Mr. Van Loan said.

Also Tuesday, the pair announced that a pilot program in which Mounties and U.S. Coast Guard officers ride together in the same vessel with the authority to chase down smugglers and criminals on either side of the border will be made permanent.

The program, known as Shiprider, involves joint patrols of the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and coastal waters.