

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

Border Security and Defense Cooperation in North America:  
Addressing Emerging Challenges  
**U.S.-Canada Border Security: Fireside Chat with Sec.  
Markwayne Mullin and Hon. Gary Anandasangaree**

DATE

**Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. ET**

FEATURING

**The Honorable Markwayne Mullin**

*Secretary of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

**The Honorable Gary Anandasangaree**

*Minister of Public Safety, Canada*

CSIS EXPERTS

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Christopher  
Hernandez-Roy:

Thanks very much, Alex. Secretary and Minister, welcome to CSIS. It's wonderful to have you here this morning. Secretary, as my colleague Alex just said, the U.S.-Canada border is the longest international border in the world. And as secretary of homeland security, what are your top priorities for ensuring that the border remains secure and a source of productive exchange between American and Canadian citizens?

The Honorable  
Markwayne Mullin:

Well, thank you. Well, we have, you know, just over 5,400 miles of border between us. And we just had a great opportunity to talk back in the green room. One thing that Canada and I are – being the U.S. – Canada the U.S. are focused on is illegal activity, period. And so when you start talking about the biggest concerns we have, the biggest concerns we see is what's happening on our southern border being pushed up to our – to our northern border. Because of the pressure we're putting on the cartels, the wall that we're being built, which will be completed – the primary wall will be complete this time next year, which means we'll have a barrier between the Pacific all the way to the – to the gulf of America, puts more and more pressure on the cartels.

And, you know, they don't just go away. Their business model still exists. The demand still exists. And so they start pushing and looking for other areas. Prime example, we just found our first tunnel in years that was just discovered. Meaning that we put so much pressure on land that they started going underground. And when they start going underground, we've seen more pressure coming across our northern border. We've arrested roughly 78 different nations, nationalities, coming across our northern border now. The biggest percentage of the individuals coming across our southern border are from Mexico. With that comes a lot more activity.

We arrest a terrorist – one either on the watch list or wanted terrorist – on our northern border almost weekly. And then we see a lot more drugs. Over the last year we've apprehended enough fentanyl that would kill 17 million Americans on our northern border. That's an increase. We see it constantly increasing. And so the cooperation between us and Canada is vitally important, because we've dealt with it. We know what's going to happen. We see the amount of increase of criminal activity that's happening. And we see the same – the same techniques that were on the southern border that are moving to the northern border.

When you have 5,400 miles, with only less than 300 of it that's being patrolled on a daily basis, it's a tremendous amount of territory for the activity to take place. And since we're seeing it picked up, our biggest priority now is to have great partnerships with our friends to the north to be able to actively stop it before it grows to the point that it is in Mexico. When we first started fighting this issue in Mexico, there was

only nine – really, four heavy cartels. Now there's nine. When we first started fighting this on our southern border, there was only a few areas that the cartels were fighting over. Now every single inch of our southern border, from our northern side of the Mexico border, is controlled by plazas – every inch. Every inch of Mexico's northern border is fought after for drug activity to be able to cross into the U.S.

And so we don't want that to happen with our Canadian partners. And so the meeting that we're having, that we had before this, meeting that we're going to continue to have, is all about working together strategically on the lessons that we've learned, working with Canada, teaching them the lessons that we know, sharing information, and catching before it gets out of control.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Thank you, Secretary. And we'll get into the challenges of the geography of that enormous border in a minute. But, Minister, maybe the same question to you. What are the top priorities for Canada's public safety ministry when it comes to the border? And perhaps, how is the U.S.-Canada border different than other international borders?

Minister Gary Anandasangaree: Well, thank you. Thank you for the invitation. Really good to be back here at CSIS. And we had a great meeting this morning with the secretary. I will just start off by saying, you know, 5,400 miles of – you know, it's an undefended – longest undefended border in history. Marking the 250th birthday of the United States, we have been our closest and the most trusted ally throughout this time. And I would say, in modern history we don't have a border such as the Canada-U.S. border.

Nine hundred million dollars of trade – billion dollars of trade takes place each and every year. Much of it is in an orderly manner that benefits both of our countries. We have vast majority of Canadians living within one hour of the U.S. border. So the context is quite important. And we rely heavily on each other for both security, but as well as trade and commerce.

The issues around security are critically important. We cannot police every inch of the border just given how vast Canada is. We also have a northern border in Yukon that is also oftentimes a source of great pride for us but, again, a harder place to secure, just given the geography.

From a strategic point of view, the work that we've done on migration over the last two years have been critically important. The border plan that we introduced in 2025 – 2024 December, which has been implemented now over the last 18 months, is bearing fruit.

So we know that, for example, migration is down significantly from north to south – in fact, 99 percent reduction in irregular migration from what we have been monitoring. We know that drugs are down. So are other illicit items going north to south.

We continue to strengthen the border. We know there is irritations between our – in our relationship when it comes to certain segments of the border, and that's work that we're doing – we're doing to secure areas where we see weaknesses.

But at the core of the work that we're doing is the deep relationships that our law enforcement have with each other and I'll give you some concrete examples.

When Ryan Wedding was arrested earlier this year, we had a member – a commissioner of the RCMP was in California as the arrest was made because we've been cooperating significantly on that case.

Just two weeks ago, the Peel Regional Police arrested 17 individuals; again, had FBI as part of that investigation. So this cooperation has been critically important to us and that is, I think, one of the – the deep source of security for me because the cooperation amongst law enforcement, whether it's DHS and Canada Border Services, or the operations center where we're embedded in Detroit, it's critically important and we're seeing that bearing fruit for security.

There's always more to do, and our commitment is to work on areas that need improvement. That's why we're investing on a thousand new CBSA and RCMP personnel, many of them who will be spread across the border to strengthen border security.

We're also invested in – heavily into additional technology, whether it's drones or Blackhawk helicopters, again, securing the border. But, of course, our commitment is to continue the collaboration and work towards greater border security.

Sec. Mullin:

I think one of the biggest issues that we have is just breaking down some of the territorial boundaries that we have between both countries.

It's difficult for us to be able to talk to Canada and say, hey, this is what you need to do, and they're like, hey, don't tell us what to do. And they'll tell us, well, you need to do this, and we'll say, hey, don't tell us what to do. And that's normal and we get it.

We've got to do a better job in the U.S. maybe listening to their concerns because sometimes we can get a little bullheaded. I definitely can get

very bullheaded, and at least – I mean, you can talk to my wife and she can tell you that.

But when we start seeing things that we know there's going to be a problem on our northern border – for instance, just a couple things to look at.

We know what's profitable or not profitable for the areas for the cartels to use. So we don't have to secure all 5,400 miles. We don't got to build a wall, so to say, on all the border because there's some places that are just so difficult for them to get to it's not profitable for them to do that because the biggest profit isn't necessarily drugs as much as it's human smuggling. And drugs is also a huge issue.

And then you also have to have certain places that you – that will work for you, that you can land assets in both areas, and all our regions are there. They have – they have small planes they fly over. They have drones that they've got to take – that they got to land.

So we can look at that area with our northern friends in Canada and say these areas we don't have to focus on; we need to focus on these areas because this is typical use that they also use this same type of geographic area on our southern border, and those are the areas that we need to put more emphasis and more focus on. And that trust is growing and that relationship is growing every single day because this is a new relationship that Canada hasn't had to deal with before, because the reason why we've had such a good amount of commerce between us and the reason why our border has been so open, so to say, for crossing is because there wasn't that much criminal activity. Now that we see the pressure moving there, though, that relationship's got to change, and we're working through that. The minister and I are working through that. We're building a relationship to make sure that we have one goal, and that goal is to – is to chase the bad guys. And both countries, can agree with that. It's just sometimes getting there. The end result's the same; it's just the process of getting there sometimes gets confusing.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Secretary Mullin, the minister mentioned the deep relationships that exist. And you've touched on some of what I'm going to ask you now, but what are the most important mechanisms for day-to-day coordination between U.S. and Canadian authorities, including, you know, borders, customs, immigration, and of course law enforcement agencies?

Sec. Mullin: Well, I think all of them. You've mentioned everything, from our border crossings with our customs, which – honestly, at our – at our border crossing areas, you couldn't have a better relationship between both countries because we've been doing it so long and there's a friendly

relationship between both sides. We have brokers on both sides that have to broker loads to come across the border. It's seamless. Even when I was in the private sector, we would buy equipment up north in Canada and we'd bring it down, there was never an issue. Stuff that's going from here to Canada, too, there's not an issue. So from the legal crossing areas, we have that part figured out. We can work very smoothly together. It's this new issue that we're dealing with, and that's just building that same type of relationship, so with CBP and our partners across the northern side.

But the biggest issue that we've really got to work on is sharing the intel and then acting on it in a timely manner. Intel changes constantly. Information changes constantly. And if it takes five days to act on something that we have the information on the week before, the asset that we're going after – be it HUMINT or property or drugs – is moved by then. And so the time between the – between when the information is given, regardless if it's flowing from Canada to the U.S. or from the U.S. to Canada, we have to have a better cooperation, and that means people have to be embedded in there. Because if Canada just sends us information, we've got to verify it before we react, right, because we've got our legal system we got to go through. We got to get judicial warrants and we got to go through the process. And if we send them information and they're not embedded with us, they got to verify the same information, too, and so then they got to do the research. But if we had the cooperation that we're embedded with them on the northern border and they're embedded with us here, then that information is flowing at the same time. So when the reaction – when the time is called to react, it can be reacted on in a matter of hours, not in a matter of days or weeks.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:                   And if I may –

Mr. Hernandez-Roy:           Please.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:                   – just pick up on this question, we have a number of very important distinguishing features at our border. One is preclearance. So the vast majority of travel between Canada and the U.S. there's preclearance that takes place, which, again, enables us to come to the U.S. and vice versa in a – in an expedited manner. We're not spending time once we land to go through the regular route of a tourist or a – or visitor.

Similarly, our borders are such it's very much mirrored with each other in terms of timing, in terms of the flow of information and individuals. We have synchronized individuals through the operations center that the U.S. has and vice versa. And that kind of real-time information sharing is critically important to us.

On the Canadian side we are aligning increasingly our laws with our Five Eyes partners, including the United States. So, as we speak, parliament's debating a bill called Bill C-22, which is lawful access, which will enable exactly the types of warrants and production orders that the secretary just talked about. We are catching up in many ways to ensure that law enforcement has modern-day tools to address modern-day problems, especially as a lot of the flow of the cartels and, increasingly, organized crime is online and is through certain programs and devices and electronic service providers. So we are modernizing our tools to really support the work of law enforcement.

The synchronization is important, because the security sharing that we have through the Five Eyes, and very much predicated on the relationship that that we have, it's 75 years old. And it's just continuing to strengthen. And as the nature of crime is much more transnational and organized, with cartels, with other nefarious players, governments need to be ahead of the game. And I think increasingly we're seeing that. We're seeing the level of cooperation that's required for us to fight crime proactively. It's too late by the time drugs get into our streets. We need to stop it at the border. You know, our national targeting center does this phenomenal job to stop illicit drugs and goods from coming in. But we can't do that alone. And that's why I think this cooperation is super helpful.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Minister, you just mentioned that governments need to get ahead of the game. And both of you have spoken extensively about the, I think, really deep cooperation at the federal level. But are there gaps in coordination between sort of subnational levels, between provincial and state polices, between local police forces, between First Nations police forces and their federal counterparts?

Hon. Anandasangaree: There's room for improvement, but I will say that we are starting from a good point, so – a good perspective. The 17 arrests from Peel Region, that is a regional police service. In fact, they're subnational – not even subnational. They're municipal police service serving what we call Peel Region. And they cooperated with the FBI on the 17 arrests. So that kind of cooperation is taking place. And it's taking place in somewhat of an organized way.

I will say just, about a month ago we had a major social media platform who notified Canadian law enforcement of a potential threat involving two young people. And both of those individuals were apprehended as a result of the cooperation from, again, a company that's based in the U.S., where the information flowed to local law enforcement to be able to make that arrest, through the proper channels which include, you know,

federal police services. And I do think the system is in place for the seamless transfer of that information.

Where we're we can do better is in terms of fighting organized crime, and the links that we need to make between what's happening at the local level – so, you know, extortion in Canada. We've had a number of municipalities where extortion has been a challenge. Brampton, Peel Region, as well as Lower Mainland, Vancouver. And what we've been able to do is establish coordination so that information sharing takes place. And, in return, that information is shared internationally, and particularly with our counterparts in the U.S. It is happening. I would like it to be more organized, more structured, and much more seamless.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Secretary Mullin, I think part of the discussion here revolves just the very fact that the border is so vast. I mean, it's hard to wrap your mind around 5,500 miles, which is something even bigger in kilometers. What are the operational challenges to manage such a border? I mean, it crosses vast forests, lakes, rivers, plains, Arctic tundra. What are the operational challenges?

Sec. Mullin: All of it. You mentioned something just while ago to the minister about, you know, local and state police. The good thing is in these most challenging areas, the local and state police are used to this. And there is already cooperation across the border, because if we're in a rural area in the United States on the – you know, on our northern border, Canada is also in a rural area on their – on the southern side of their border. So that cooperation is taking place. And we already have federal authorities, a lot of times, embedded on both sides of it. Because, yes, it is so rural, it's very difficult for the criminal activity, which takes me back to what I was talking about earlier, is some of these areas it's just not feasible for the cartels.

It's not profitable, it's too much infrastructure for them to be able to use to be able to get there. But because we do know it's the one off that you got to deal with, it's the lone wolf, or it's the one person that's doing the human trafficking, or it's the small amount of drugs that are coming into tribal areas, those areas we have to really concentrate on having the cooperation between the two, with having just federal authorities either cross-deputized with, or one individual that's embedded with them. And that that helps. That's a huge challenge. But we have it figured out. Ahat part we've done – we've done a really, really good job at, because, you know, they're rural and they figure it out. That's just – that's just what they're used to doing.

When you start talking about the biggest – the biggest area we have with that big, it's the aerial side of it. It's the drones. And then it's also the

cyber. There's a lot of amount of information that is going back and forth that are on small carriers or small antennas that the cartels are using on both sides. And they're direct communications. And that direct communication is tough for us to intercept. And we – because we're really good at intercepting communications when we've got a – when we've got a lock on you. But the cartels are used to that. So cyber is vitally important for us to have cooperation with Canada on. And all of us are, you know, very finicky about having someone look over our shoulder when it comes to cyber threats, but that's the way a lot of these individuals are communicating now. Because line of sight antenna in these rural areas don't always work. So we have – that's a challenge that both countries have to deal with.

And then the aerial side of it, being able to have the communication to have the freedom to be able to fly. So we have to deal with FAA. And they've got to deal with their airways too, and being very territorial by both sides. We've got to deal with how do we have that line of sight to be able to patrol back and forth on the border, and have – and have the freedom to do that, and then have the communication to react to it. I watched a video three weeks ago that we were patrolling, and we were – we were in a sat room watching it. And we saw eight individuals come across the northern border, get dropped off, and turn around and go right back. But it was in such a rural area we didn't have the position to be able to go pick them up.

So, when we do have something in the sky, we also have to have cooperation with local sides on both sides to be able to pick the individual up. Because when we – we did pick up the eight individuals that were dropped off, but the smuggler went back across Canada and went free. Not their fault, because we didn't communicate with them that we had – we had eyes in the sky. That's part of the communication that has to take place. That's one of – another challenge. So it's just working through small things that we all have to work through on a daily basis. And we'll get through it. The minister and I are going to build a great relationship, and we're going to be able to make this happen.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:

Let me really share a story with you. So I was in Quebec several months ago. It's a community where – it's a border town. And the 9-1-1 calls from Canada are actually picked up in the U.S. And fires deployed from the U.S. to Canada. And the border being open – you know, I think we close at 10:00, and particular incident, it couldn't – they couldn't come across because the border was closed. So there's some operational challenges. But my point here is that the relationship is so strong and so embedded, especially across border towns and smaller communities, where we do rely and, you know, essentially are supported by each other in such a profound way.

And that's why I think the starting point for this conversation around this, the length of the border, we can't forget the people-to-people ties that really do bind us, and the reliance that we have on each other across the 5,400-mile border, where every single day people are interacting with each other, shopping in each other's countries, dating each other, you know, finding relationships, finding schooling, and everything that we would expect good neighbors to be doing. And I think it's a really good story.

And the other thing I want to just highlight is this is the 25th anniversary, when we're talking about air, of 9/11. And you know, September 11th happened; people – flights were redirected to many of the Canadian cities, including Goose Bay, where the community actually opened up their doors and helped feed and house people for days on end. And again, I think just – it just speaks to the depth of this relationship that that we were starting, I think in many ways, a new chapter because of the new challenges that are – that are posed. But we are starting because we have a great story to tell over the last, you know, 250 years for the U.S. and 155 years for Canada, or 54 years for Canada.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Secretary Mullin, you've already spoken about fentanyl and drugs coming across the border, but what are other illicit commodities of great concern to you? Firearms, human smuggling, contraband, bulk cash, which of these is perhaps the most insidious?

Sec. Mullin: Well –

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Aside from drugs, of course.

Sec. Mullin: Well, all of them are important, but human smuggling I think is the thing that bothers me the most because it's not always just someone coming over here to work. We don't see that from our northern side of it. We see that from the southern side a lot more. Northern side of it, it's a lot different. Canadians aren't trying to get into the U.S. to get a job. Not saying it doesn't happen, but I'm just saying that's not – that's not the normal. So most of the activity that's coming across is either, one, they have ill intentions to the United States – because there's a reason why they're not going through the legal process, because, honestly, it's easier to get a visa to come in to work from the United States on the Canadian border and that is from Mexico because there's such a relationship there. The human smuggling, though, is either people that have bad ideas, or it's – or it's into sex trafficking, or labor trafficking, and that's hard. That hurts.

As I have mentioned before, the previous administration, they let – you know, we had 450,000 kids when we came into office missing, that just wasn't checked in on. We have found 147,000 of them; we're still looking for 300,000. And we have the most horrific stories about that. And so when kids and human smuggling is taking place on either border, it's very, very devastating.

I mean, we have one group that we broke up that these young ladies are claiming that they were raped 6(00) to 700 times, and these are teenage girls now. We have one that we just broke up recently that was a ring of people that had kept these kids down in a tunnel, and you couldn't write a horror story as to how bad this was. Couldn't write a horror story. I mean, it's stuff that I'll never forget.

And so the thing that's more personal to me is the human smuggling because it's just not – a majority of it is not just simply coming here to work. And that's something that we have to work very closely on. And our Canadian partners know this too. This isn't anything that's unusual to us. But I think that's probably the one that bothers me the most.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Modern-day slavery.

Sec. Mullin: Yeah.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Minister, I might ask the same question to you: What are your top priorities for – or, which are the illicit flows that are of greatest concern to public safety?

Hon. Anandasangaree: I will say fentanyl, but we know fentanyl comes from countries such as China and India. The flow of fentanyl is not from the north to south or south to north; it is coming from overseas with precursors that enable dealers to manufacture and distribute in our countries.

There is a silver lining in the fentanyl story. Last year, I would say there was about 20 deaths per day in Canada involving fentanyl. The fentanyl czar was here in D.C. yesterday. The numbers have gone down to about 15 per day. Now, that is – it's still 15 families who are not – you know, who are losing their kids each and every day, but we are making progress.

But, again, we need to be vigilant. Fentanyl and the scourge of fentanyl is impacting both of our countries. Increasingly it's now happening in Europe, and one of the conversations I've had with our G-7 partners is fentanyl is now creeping up in Europe. So as markets here close, they will either pivot to, you know, other forms of drugs or they will go to other parts of the world.

The poly-criminality that we see involving drugs it is a production line. When one production line closes or closes off other business lines will be opened up, and I think the fear for us is to make sure that those business lines close off overall.

The biggest challenge for us are illegal guns. There are illegal guns that are coming through the border that has deep impact in especially our inner cities. The area I represent, the city of Toronto, sees gun violence on a regular basis.

Although overall deaths and homicides are down we do see a disturbing trend of guns being used, and that is an area we need to work closer on and we've discussed it with the secretary today.

Certainly, on human smuggling I share the concerns and the deep impact human smuggling has on especially vulnerable populations and we see that in Canada. We saw the report of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls report that has called on governments to do more to fight human smuggling, which is a central challenge, I think, that both of our countries face but especially those involving vulnerable young women.

Sec. Mullin:

Let me just talk about the fentanyl and about the guns too, because we talked about this in the back is the more cartels or organized crime that take place in Canada, the more demand for the guns there are going to be.

And so you can't just fight the guns; you've got to fight the criminal activity. Because if you can take the criminal activity - we did this before with partners with the U.S. When the biker gangs started going in Canada, we partnered and we were able to push a lot of that back, because we also saw another huge flow of guns flowing at that time.

We see when the criminal activity increases in Canada the demand for guns move, and we - this is one of those things we've seen happen in Mexico and we want to get ahead of it in Canada because as long as the demand is there - it's kind of like drugs down here. As long as the drug demand is here, drugs are going to be flowing in. As long as there's a demand for organized crime up north, the gun activity is going to increase. Thank you.

The - when you talked about the fentanyl, the precursors, the United States - one of the reasons why we don't make a tremendous amount of fentanyl - most of it is flowing in from our northern and southern borders - is because we got rid of the precursors.

It makes it very, very difficult for the precursors to come into the United States. That's one of the areas we can cooperate with our northern and southern friends is those precursors. If we know where they're being used for it either needs to be highly controlled when they come in or don't let them come in at all.

It's very, very difficult to get those precursors into the United States. It doesn't mean they don't try; all the time they do try. But another issue that we have that we're working about that the minister and I talked about is there's a certain size – and I'm not going to name the size of the package, but there's a certain size of packages that flow automatically from Canada to the United States that don't get checked as long as you're underneath a certain size, as long as you're underneath a certain weight. And that weight can be very profitable because small amounts add up. If you send small amounts of small packages to 12 different addresses across one city you get in a large amount of drugs.

We've been working with them, trying to say, hey, it doesn't matter the size because criminals – and, by the way, this size was set up for manufacturing – legal manufacturing – to be able to send information or to send stuff, especially packages. I'm not saying Amazon because it was set up way before Amazon was there, but I'm just saying that that's why it was set up.

But now we know the criminals are taking care – and the cartels are taking advantage of that. So now that needs to be changed, and that's something the minister and I talked about too because there's a loophole there that they're exploiting, and we have to close it.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:

Look, on the postal piece, that's an issue of deep concern to us in Canada because a lot of the northern remote communities, many of them indigenous, are impacted by it.

So fly-in communities in the north in places like Nunavut it's one of the areas where – ways that drugs are getting into those communities. We have several communities that are dry so no alcohol, but drugs are able to flow because of being able to mail particular quantities – 500 milligrams, I believe – in Canada.

Sec. Mullin:

I wasn't going to say that. (Laughter.) At least I wanted them to do their own research. (Laughter.) I don't think I minded, but – (laughter) –

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:

I've been preoccupied with this for a while. (Laughter.) So we are, you know, very much in budget 2025. This is one of the commitments we made, to bring legislation to close this loophole. What you will see here

are commonality of challenges. And oftentimes we are struggling in our own respective territories on very similar – you know, whether it's transnational organized crime, cartels, illicit drugs, or illegal guns – very much mirroring a lot of the challenges that we face. And the way to address it is greater cooperation. And I think that's what we're both saying here, is that we will – and we will undertake to increase the level of cooperation that we already have.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: I think we have about five minutes, so maybe I'll get – if I'm lucky, I'll get two more questions in. But I want to turn the conversation –

Sec. Mullin: Is that your way to tell us to keep it short?

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: No, no. (Laughter.) It's just making sure that we get here on time. And I'd like to steer the conversation for a second to other responsibilities that fall under you, Secretary, beyond fighting crime – coordinating emergency and disaster response, for instance. How are the U.S. and Canada cooperating on those files?

Sec. Mullin: Well, that's one area we've always had good cooperation with. I mean, as the minister said a while ago, it's our 25th anniversary coming up from 9/11. And we knew immediately that we had to close our airspace in the U.S. And Canada didn't even hesitate to bring the planes in. I mean, these are planes that didn't have a lot of time, because some were just taking a short route and they didn't have a lot of extra fuel. And so they were literally just going into Canada and dropping. I mean, not dropping out the sky, but, I mean, just dropping on the airport. And the community was coming in and helping. At the same time, when they have a major disaster, we're able to respond.

We do got to work. I mean, like he was saying about Ontario, when the border closes at 10:00, and the 9-1-1 calls come in, and our fire or police need to try to respond – really, it's fire, not necessarily police – they need to respond and the border is closed, you think, well, that should be very simple. There should be somebody there at least, on call, to be able to open it up with a truck that's running the lights red and is going to spray a fire. Should be able to go across. That's just small stuff.

But on the emergency responses, we have – we have fought wars together, in Canada. We have spilled blood together in other parts of the world. There are very few countries that's fought beside us more than Canada. So when it comes to push comes to shove, even though we may disagree on stuff, when they need us or we need them we've always been there. And that doesn't change. We'll continue to do that.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree: And certainly, look, we're in a very difficult time, with respect to wildfires, floods. Both of our countries are going through similar challenges. Wildfire season this year is expected to be really difficult for us, especially on the West Coast. And we have routinely fire crew coming from the U.S. to help us. And we return the favor. Nobody's keeping track because it's such a common occurrence, one that we're very truly grateful for, and one where, I think, again, it speaks to the actual affection and people-to-people ties that we continue to build.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Excellent, excellent. Maybe to wrap this up, I could ask each of you, if you're sort of thinking 10, 15 years down the road, what does an ideal U.S.-Canada border relationship look like?

Sec. Mullin: Do you want to go first?

Hon.  
Anandasangaree: I think you should.

Sec. Mullin: Well, I don't have 10 or 15 years. (Laughter.) My time is limited. You know, the strength of the partnership, the trust between combating drugs, keeping our borders safe, keeping our country safe, strengthening those ties are what's important. We can't allow fractures to take place and to grow. Some of the fracturing we have right now between the countries, we've got to figure it out. Because we're not going anywhere, and they're not going anywhere. And so what we have to do is quit focusing on our differences and start thinking about what we have in common.

It's kind of like my wife and I when she gets really mad at me, and I'm well deserved to get mad at, sometimes I just have to stop and say, love you. I'm not going to tell you I love you, Minister. (Laughter.) What I'm saying – but there is a tremendous amount of love and trust that still exists between the U.S. and Canada. And sometimes when I say that it's just me, like, OK, look, we're – you're mad at me because I did something stupid. I own it, but at the end of the day we need to get past it. And arguing doesn't help; it only allows us to be more vulnerable for somebody else to sneak in and take my beautiful wife away from me. And I'm not going to let that happen. We've been here 29 years. So I'm just going to go say I'm sorry, even if I think I'm right – (laughter) – and I'm going to – and I'm not saying we have anything to apologize for, the U.S. Don't give me – I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that I do that with my wife to end the argument so we can move on. We've got to move past our differences so we can build that solid foundation, because we have criminals, we have cartels, we have organized crime that's taken advantage of it – taken advantage of the trust has been built for 250

years. Well, there were some times there we didn't really trust you guys, and rightfully so by the way.

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:

That one time we –

Sec. Mullin:

Yeah, there was one time that it was really bad, yeah. (Laughter.) Sometime around 1812, 1814, yeah. (Laughter.) We're past that, though – kind of. (Laughter.) But we – but we – but there's a – there's an amount of trust that has been there that the bad guys are now taking advantage of, and it's going to force us to re-posture, and we have to be ready for that threat. And I think that's where the minister and I are going to build on.

And then I'll turn it over to him, but I got to say this: We really need to thank the minister for coming in. He has to be back in Canada at 3:00 for votes. (Laughter.) I don't have to vote anymore, which is really cool because my whole life doesn't schedule around votes anymore. But just the fact that he came in, he got – he told me in the green room he had 18 hours that he was given by the whip to come here, be with us today, have this conversation, shake my hand, and get back in time to do another job for him that he has to do. And so I just really want to thank him for taking the time. I didn't know he was doing that, and that's really special. So now I owe him a trip to Canada. (Laughter.)

Hon.  
Anandasangaree:

With that, you're welcome anytime. Lots happening this year.

Look, grateful to be here. And I'll say that I will do this every single day if this means that we further our relationship, because it is critically important.

What differences we have is negligible compared to what we have in common and the work that we're doing together. So if there are irritations, we need to just work through them. We will work through them. There's no question. And we're not – neither of us are going anywhere. So it is a great foundation for us to build on.

Forget 10, 15 years; let's look at five years. Two things that I would – I would like to see.

One, fentanyl being erased from our communities. That is something that I know every family in Canada is being impacted by. Every community has been impacted, and it is something that hopefully will go away. We're doing everything we can as a government to address the border – at the border that the fentanyl – the scourge of fentanyl. We're doing it in partnership with our neighbors. But it is something that deeply impacts us. So that is – that is one thing.

Secondly, with respect to guns, we also want to get illegal guns off our streets. We don't want illegal guns to come through our border. And the secretary has offered some very important perspectives on how we do that, not just the symptom but also go to the root of the issue.

Finally, I think that \$900 billion I talked about in trade, that will just increase. That'll increase over time. That'll increase because we have so much to offer each other. And you know, as we build this, you know, beautiful North American economy, we both have a great deal to win by being closest and trusted partners to each other. So I just want to say thank you, Secretary, for your generosity and the – and the time we spent together. And thank you for welcoming us and hosting. This is an ongoing dialogue, an ongoing partnership that we will over time nurture and build on. So thank you.

Sec. Mullin: Thank you.

Mr. Hernandez-Roy: Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings our morning event to a close. I'd like to thank Secretary Mullin and Minister Anandasangaree for being here today and for sharing their insights. I'd like you all to please remain in your seats while the secretary and the minister exit the room, and until Secretary Mullin has actually exited the building. Please join me in thanking them. (Applause.)

(END.)