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WESTERN REGIONALISM: VIEWS ON CASCADIA

James D. Phillips[†]
U.S. Speaker

Paul is a very, very astute gentleman and has a very good sense of humor, I think.

He looked at me and he said, "What is a New Yorker going to talk about Cascadia," when we talked yesterday. I just have to tell you with all levity aside, I am very involved in Cascadia.

I apologize to you. I had arranged for both the speakers to be here tonight. One of them is on my Board and the other one is a key member, and, unfortunately, one thing after another came up, and neither one were able to arrive. Therefore, I want to give you a quick overview of the reality of what is going on in that region. It is probably one of the very most successful regions in the entire binational border area, and with very successful initiatives.

In addition, let me highlight the players. The players are the Discovery Institute¹ in Seattle, the Cascadia Institute in Vancouver, the Director and President are both on my Board, and then we have the Whatcom Council of

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¹ See <http://www.discovery.org/> (last visited Sept. 26, 2004).

Governments² who are out of Bellingham, Washington who are essentially the secretariat for the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Project.

That is truly the Cascadia network or Gateway. They have organized, all the way down to Mexico on the I-5 corridor.

Then there is sort of an overarching group that Paul mentioned, which is called Pacific Northwest Economic Region, also allied with Can/Am BTA, that is made up of three provinces of Yukon, Alberta and British Columbia and the five states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.³ I will talk a little about that as we go through the evening. Can/Am provides binational, transcontinental, overarching, behind the scenes support for what they do. As a result, I spent about five weeks this year in Cascadia. Therefore, I do get my foot over there occasionally. It is a wonderful area.

I want to talk about a success story that, perhaps, they hide under a bushel a little bit more. I am pleased that I can speak about it, because they might be a little bit more modest than I can be on their behalf.

The Cascadia Institute, which is headquartered in Vancouver, B.C. is a non-profit, policy public education organization that formed back in the 1980s to work on the regional and binational cooperation between B.C. and the Pacific northwestern states, particularly at that point, Oregon and Washington in the United States.⁴ That was in the 1980s before it was a popular notion that we were going toward free trade. They work on the interconnect- edness of the peoples and the territories in that area as a unified focus.

They recognize the interdependence of the economies, and the synergies and benefit of cross pollination and interaction between all the various matters. They tend to work on a binational level in almost all of their initiatives. It was the Cascadia Institute that was the founding organizers and secretariat of the B.C./Washington Task Force, which was one of the early groups that was mandated by the Governor of Washington State and the Premier of British Columbia to work on the intergovernmental and binational connection; addressing border infrastructure, sustainable growth management and tourism development in the area.⁵

On the southern leg of Cascadia, the focus is the Discovery Institute out of Seattle, Washington; their mission is to make a positive vision in the future practical.⁶ Simply stated, Institute discovers and promotes ideas in the common sense tradition of represented government, free market and indi-

² See <http://www.wcog.org/DesktopDefault.aspx> (last visited Sept. 26, 2004).

³ See <http://www.pnwer.org/> (last visited Oct. 27, 2004).

⁴ *B.C.-Washington State Corridor Work Gets Funding*, CANADIAN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES NEWSLETTER, May 2001.

⁵ David Crane, *Ex-Torontonians Discover Opportunity on West Coast*, TORONTO STAR, March 26, 1994, at B2.

⁶ *Id.*

viduality. One of the most exciting developments occurred about four months ago. Bruce Agnew, who was a Director of Cascadia Project, was able to get from the Bill Gates Foundation one million dollars a year for the next ten years, and that was awarded to Cascadia Discovery.⁷ Thus, there are very serious initiatives coming and I have been assured they will put it to very good use.

Within the effort of the Discovery Institute and the Cascadia Institute is a project called the Cascadia Project.⁸ This project is intended to examine a balanced, seamless and expanded transportation system between Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia with the belief that the system is needed to keep the region globally competitive.⁹ They are focused on the I-5 corridor, which is the highway corridor that runs from Vancouver to San Diego and the northwest rail line that runs parallel to it.¹⁰ They have now organized the western corridor organization, where they had the various organizations in all the states down to California that are working together on this excellent initiative.

They organize locally. They think long-term; they have a 50-year vision and a 20-year planning horizon in what they do.¹¹ They plan regionally. They finance internationally and they finance innovatively, and sometimes paradigm shifting methods are used to finance the various initiatives.

Within that whole project area, there is a project called the IMTC, which is called the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Project.¹² This is probably the single most organized, long-standing, and effective binational project that I know of in all my experience across the entire border. The IMTC is a coalition of Canadians and Americans formed to jointly identify and pursue improvements to cross border mobility in the Cascade gateway.¹³

When Discovery and Cascadia, as two organizations, began to define and to plan this initiative, they got the Whatcom Council of Government, which is headed up by Jim Miller and Gordon Rogers as the secretariat of IMTC. The Whatcom Council of Governments is a major member of Can/Am as well. They represent the local governments. They are the designated organizations through which all highway funds from USDOT flow and then they disburse through their operations to the priority projects that have been approved by the various governments.¹⁴ They are a real central artery of both

⁷ See <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/PacificNorthwest/Grants/Grant-29490.htm> (last visited Sept. 25, 2004).

⁸ See <http://www.discovery.org/cascadia/> (last visited Sept. 25, 2004).

⁹ See <http://www.discovery.org/cascadia/about.html> (last visited Sept. 26, 2004).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See <http://www.wcog.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=26> (last visited Sept. 25, 2004).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ See <http://www.wcog.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=23> (last visited Sept. 26, 2004).

funding and knowledge and intelligence in the so-called Bellingham region of the Cascadia area.

I want to talk about the IMTC. I hold it up as a success story. It is long-standing. It involves a coordination of about 70 organizations.¹⁵ It has been in operation for eight or nine years, involving at the Federal level from Transport Canada, the Washington State Department of Transportation, British Columbia Ministry of transportation, the BNSF railroad, Amtrak, Port of Bellingham, U.S. Customs, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services, Canada Border Service Agencies, Washington Trucking Association, brokerage firms, duty free shops, and motor coach companies. Also involved are municipalities, including the major cities and areas in the regional government, four border-crossing cities in Washington state: Bellingham, Blaine, Lind and Sumas. NGOs involved span from the regional chambers, Vancouver Board of Trade, the Cascadia Project, the Discovery of Cascadia Groups, and the Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council, which was put together by Peter Fraser sometime in the late 1980s. Other governmental agencies including the Consulates of the U.S. and Canada, the GSA, who is the landlord of the U.S. inspection facilities at the border, state provincial and federal legislators all participate.

Their objectives are infrastructure, planning and data collection.¹⁶ It is imperative to establish a knowledge base in order to anticipate changing trends. They deal in operation policy and staffing. They are the interface promoting Smart Border Declaration for the region and increasing U.S. border inspection staffing, which until 9/11 went neglected. Before 9/11, not a single inspector had been added to the U.S.-Canada border in fifteen years. Remarkably, we could hardly get mens' and ladies' rooms, or get funds to repair infrastructure, federal inspection stations on U.S. and Canada. That is no joke. Therefore, 9/11 exacted changes in numerous ways.

If there has been any good to come out of such a horrible event, there was a renewed political will to benefit the region. Further, everybody knew what they had to do because of people from groups like Cascadia, Discovery and the Whatcom Council. They knew what they had to do and they were able to do it once the political will came.

As far as funding, between 1990 and 2002, IMTC acquired 12.2 million dollars for these initiatives. It is not a small operation by any means. Most importantly, about 2.6 of that came from the B.C. province provincial government. Another 5.6 million came to the U.S. Federal Highway Authority, through the USDOT. Washington State kicked in 1.1 million and Transport Canada had contributed 2.8 million through grants and other political opera-

¹⁵ See <http://www.wcog.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=22> (last visited Nov. 1, 2004).

¹⁶ *Id.*

tions where they were able to get their projects. They do a good job of planning, as I said. They do a good job of articulating what has needed, how to do it, what I need to do it. They back it up with reality. They go to the governing bodies for funding, they have a very good record of accomplishment, and they spend their money wisely. When they are finished, they post audits, always come out showing they have done what they said they were going to do.

As far as results, I think they like to hide under the bushel. You will not see them too much in the paper or bragging, they just get the job done quietly and effectively. They are a great bunch of people. I wish of a couple of them would have been here tonight for you to meet.

The next step up is the Pacific Northwest economic region, and, as Paul so articulately said, these are five states and three Provinces. As Paul said, it would be about the tenth largest economy in the world if this area were a country.¹⁷ Their gross regional product is about 350 billion¹⁸ and they have a population of about 18 million in this group.

Can/Am is honored because we have been partners for a long time, and every year now, we share the annual PNWER annual meeting last year was in Calgary. Can/Am presents the border segment and the transportation segment. We bring speakers. I had Minister Caplan out last year to the meeting. In addition, PNWER does the environmental work and other aspects of this; and it is a very effective organization. Again, the key here is the integrated layering and the cooperation that is present at every step from the local to the highest level.

We talk about Windsor; we talk about Buffalo, who has the power, whose going to get the money. Out here, they work so collaboratively and effectively. They get the right priorities. They all get in the boat and they are rowing together. It is a real model for most of us to observe.

PNWER'S FOCUS

PNWER is fortunate, for instance to have great individuals, such as Ralph Klein. He is personally very active in this arena with Can/Am, PNWER and with the Cascadia region. The Premiers come to the meetings and speak. The Governors come to the meetings.

I would like to analyze the focus of the big picture PNWER region. You have the border issues, which nobody is missing anywhere across the border, agricultural issues. They have a regional energy strategy for supply in this

¹⁷ William Dibenedetto, *Welcome to Cascadia*, JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, Oct. 17, 1996, at 6A.

¹⁸ See 1996 Estimate, available at: <http://www.bmannconsulting.com/node/138> (last visited Sept. 24, 2004).

PNWER region. They have an emerging distributing generation technologies focus. There are working groups on each of these elements. These are the priorities, environment, green, sustainable, very, very important at all levels there to protect the air, water equality and get the job done.

Forestry, they address the flow of pacific forest product industries, that is straddling the border, some in the United States and some in B.C., of course, heavily. Health care, methods for states to reduce health care costs, high tech., looking at world connectivity, one of the biggest things they have identified in the Lower Peninsula and in the area of Cascadia is connectivity to the very widespread towns and villages in the area.

Urbanization, big in Seattle, big in Vancouver, but, essentially, a large part of the population is spread out among the beautiful lakes and areas in this area, so connectivity is very important.

They have been very fortunate and successful in getting infrastructure financing and international bonding mechanisms. Maritime security, working with Senator Patty Murray and Operation Safe Commerce and Seattle is one of the pilot ports that are involved.¹⁹

Sustainable development is very critical. Tourism is also an issue as they tout the two-nation vacation. They live and breathe two nation, come to Vancouver, come on down, see Portland, Seattle, nice things to see in Washington, Oregon. Alternatively, if you are coming to Seattle, you must go up and see our lakes, up to Whistler and the whole business.

Another issue is trade and economic development, working together again for the region investment. Transportation for work force development is a very critical issue, as is homeland security. Finally, the Olympics for Whistler are coming down the pike.²⁰ We are working hard on this.

There is a thing called NEXUS plus, which we are working hard on an initiative to be implemented by the time the Olympics come. Under NEXUS, we will have a NEXUS card; you are all familiar with NEXUS at the land. NEXUS air is being piloted in Vancouver. We are talking about NEXUS cruise. Six million people ride the ferries in B.C., Washington State, Oregon. We are talking about NEXUS ferry passes on one card. You and I can sign up, go through background check, and get a low risk travel designation. This is going to help a great deal when the rush comes for the Olympics. We have to plan for that well ahead.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration, *Business Opportunities*, available at: <http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?theme=223&content=090005198000c0be> (last visited Oct. 6, 2004).

²⁰ The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Bid, available at: <http://www.winter2010.com/> (last visited Oct. 27, 2004).

In closing, I would leave you with the argument that success here is the integration, the layering, the cooperation, the open communication. There is none better that I know. There are some almost as good, but this is got to be the very best. Henry made a good selection in suggesting that Cascadia be highlighted. I leave you with one last point, you might ask what the most frustrating problem that they all have is from day one, and it is called truck size and weights between the provinces and states. As hard as they work and as well as they are connected, they have not made one iota of progress harmonizing weights and size of truck. That is it for Cascadia.

Thanks for listening.

