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AMBASSADORS' AND MINISTERS' ROUNDTABLE – WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR HIGH-LEVEL COORDINATION?

Moderator: Consul General Joseph Comartin

Speaker: The Honorable James J. Blanchard

Speaker: The Honorable James S. Peterson

Speaker: The Honorable Peter MacKay

MR. PETRAS: Our next panel consists of ambassadors and ministers roundtable, and their selection is "what are the prospects for high-level coordination in Canada and the United States?"

Our moderator for this panel is Consul General Joseph Comartin. He is the Consul General for Canada in Detroit, and he is a lawyer. He started out his practice in Windsor, Ontario, and then he decided to go into politics, and for 15 years, he was a member of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons in Canada.

He was -- he got very strong support from the local union members with a seat in the House of Commons. He was reelected four times and was the opposition house leader from 2011 to 2012. He is now Consul General for Canada in Detroit, and he is going to introduce this panel and lead this discussion.

Joe?

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Thanks, Stephen. I have been joking about this cold, but I didn't get it when I was in Canada. I got it after I came to the United States, so I am blaming the United States for it, and that's because Windsor is south of Michigan, not north of Michigan or the United States as most or the rest of the continent is divided.

Let me start by introducing our panelists, first with Ambassador Blanchard, James Blanchard. I have got to say I have a whole bunch of material on him, but the only thing that is really important is that he was the ambassador to Canada. Everything else doesn't hale by comparison.

I think you also know that he was governor of the state of Michigan for a good number of years. He is presently practicing law as a partner and chair emeritus of the government affairs practice group in Washington, but he spends a fair amount of time in both Michigan at his cottage and in the Detroit area and his home.

Our second panelist is Jim Peterson. Jim was in parliament along with Peter. The three of us were in parliament at various times together. He is a former federal minister, secretary of state. He is currently of counsel at the law firm of Fasken Martineau.

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Yeah.

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Yeah. And in his role as minister, he was the minister of international trade, secretary of state for international financial institutions. He was also chair of the House of Commons standing committee on finance, which is probably the most powerful standing committee in our parliament.

As a former minister of international trade between 2003 and 2006, Jim has developed expertise in trade policy and experience in trade disputes. I think what is particularly interesting is some of the work he did while minister, he represented Canada at the World Trade Organization, a round of negotiations. Those focused on expanding trade and investment and leading emerging markets, including Brazil, Russia, India, and China. He also dealt with complex issues related with trade with Canada's NAFTA partners, European Union, Middle East, and the Americas. So he has a wide base across the globe in terms of Jim's experience.

Our third panelist is Peter MacKay. The only thing I remember about Peter, I was also --Stephen had mentioned -- I was also deputy speaker of the House of Commons for the last three years. I remember one time I was bugging him about judicial appointments. This is when he was minister of justice, and he actually tried to bribe me, he said "look, okay, I will make you a judge then," and I said "Peter, that's like really improper. You shouldn't do that," and he withdrew the offer.

But he was the justice minister for a number of years. He served in the parliament for over 18 years. I thought we had started at the same time, but you are three years ahead of me.

He had several important ministerial positions in addition to the minister of justice of Canada, a very interesting point at this point. You are both the attorney general and the minister of justice. That's a hot point in Canada right now.

He was the minister of national defense minister of foreign affairs, minister of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

In 2003, Peter was the -- elected as the head of the conservative party, and at that point, he led the, I guess, campaign to merge the party with another conservative party into the conservative party of Canada where he became deputy leader.

He is presently -- he left parliament in '15, I think that was, or '11. But he is currently serving on a number of volunteer boards. He is practicing law with a large firm in Toronto. He serves on a whole bunch of boards.

I am not going to list them all, but maybe I will: National Board of Special Olympics, Canada; Boost Child Youth Advocacy Centre, Wounded Warriors, Canada, supports Children's Aid Society, Big Brothers, Big Sisters at Acadia University and Canada-United States Law Institute, which is why he is here today. Okay.

We can start. What we did in preparation for this was to take a look at -- obviously, you heard a good deal of the factual situation of what we are confronted with climate change. Obviously, we have, as politicians, as leaders right around the globe taken a number of steps to confront this problem. I think probably the most recent one that we are all generally aware of was the Paris Agreement, determined at that point certain levels of CO2 and greenhouse gas generally that

would meet and every country in the world that signed on to the agreement had specific standards that they had to meet.

Unfortunately, the United States has now indicated they are going to pull out. They actually can't do it under the agreement until 2020, but China and Russia are not major participants either on this, so that's in terms of framework. Most of the other countries have, in fact, abided by the obligations they took on, some a bit slower than others, but it is working.

The hope is that at some point the United States, China, and Russia will come on. Obviously, all three of them are major emitters of greenhouse gases.

I think the other interesting point in terms of setting the scene from a government standpoint, if I can, was some of the points that John Godfrey made last night at the keynote address, and that is the work that subnational governments, municipalities, community groups states and provinces, that governments at that level, how they have taken up the torch. They are the ones who are pushing this and a number of countries greater than the national government is.

When you see the type of information that we had, it was a clear indication, this is a local issue. It is a world issue, but it very much impacts at the local level when you see those kind of numbers, the flooding, all the other financial consequences of climate change, that that is going on at that level.

So today what we are hoping to do is from our three panelists is have them address some of the problems they see, that government officials, both elected and appointed, have in terms of dealing with the climate change.

So let me start -- I did send around some questions that we have had an opportunity to prepare and not springing these on them.

I think the initial point that I would want to have addressed is the fact that Canada has and the United States are going -- and I am talking national governments now -- are going in somewhat different directions and levels of commitment in terms of dealing with climate change.

So my question is to the three panelists -- and I will start, Jim, with you -- what are the implications for North America and for the globe overall by this difference between Canada and the United States?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: Well, I really enjoyed the earlier presentation, also John Godfrey's last night, and also I want to thank the Consul for its continued support of this conference and the Institute, and Joe, welcome --

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: -- officially to our ranks and Maureen as well.

You all know that President Trump had his people withdraw from the Paris Calamint Court. They also withdrew from the TransPacific partnership. They also blamed President Obama for bugging his phones and the United Kingdom as well and described the current NAFTA's worst trade agreement ever devised and the new NAFTA, the best agreement ever made. So what do we make of all this?

The reality is, whatever goes on at the top is going to change in my opinion. We are going to have a new president. In two years, we are going to rejoin the Paris Calamint Court. It is a voluntary agreement anyway. States are already moving toward dealing with climate change.

I think you are going to see collections of states working together along with Canadian provinces. Most businesses in the energy field, I know I served on the board of an energy company for 17 years, are accepting the science of climate change.

They may argue about how much of it is manmade, how much isn't. They are already moving to renewables, even the big energy. Big oil companies are buying up or starting solar and wind and renewable energy projects all the time. So the momentum is going to continue no matter who is in the White House. It will accelerate once we have a different president. Yeah, I know I am a partisan Democrat, so you would expect me to say that, but the reality is it is going to happen.

The question is whether collectively, as John Godfrey said last night, collectively, we can have the kind of impact that we want to have. I can tell you the new Congress, the new House has created a select committee on the climate crisis. They don't even say climate change any more, and they are moving on the legislation that may or may not be adopted in the Senate or signed by the President, but the momentum is there.

Also, you know, it is interesting, almost all of the democratic candidates for president are talking about climate change. One of them is Jay Inslee, the Governor of Washington State, is making climate change the central focus of his campaign almost exclusively, which I think is also significant.

But you are seeing, as I said, industry is moving dramatically from coal to natural gas. I was glad John Godfrey mentioned nuclear because I happen to think we are going to need that, and that's a sensitive matter but I think an important one. So I think there is -- no matter what is being said in the White House, the movement toward cooperation and change and renewables and action is going to continue, and I think the younger voters are going to insist on -- those who are older may say "I won't be around when things really get bad," but I think young voters and millennials can play a very, very significant role in elections related to this issue on both sides of the border.

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Jim – Jim Peterson, can I ask you to address in particular from the viewpoint of Canada vis-a-vis being the smaller of the two partners what has posed particular problems for the current administration in Ottawa?

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Anytime we don't act in unison on this issue we are going to go backwards, or we are not going to make the progress that we should be making, and so you heard earlier about the cooperation at the scientific level. But at the political level, we are doing diametrically opposed directions, and we even have some dissent in Canada from the provinces. There are four provinces that are all conservative, which are not going along with the national effort, which had been worked out previously. Where does this leave us? Jim talked about what industry is doing in many cases and subgovernments, but I think we have to put in there, too, what is it that we, as individuals, can do? And just a very fast list. Our air conditioning and our heaters in our homes, can we walk and bike and take public transit as opposed to driving our car? Can we get electric cars? What about

solar panels and geothermal? What about switching to green suppliers of electricity?

Let me quote to you somebody, this was Alfred Russell Wallace who wrote in 1903 "Man's Place in the Universe," where he talked about the foul effusions of the industrial revolution and how they threaten humanity.

And his concluding remarks were "vote for no one who says it cannot be done; vote only for those who declare it shall be done."

And so also, we can ask every one of our politicians at all levels, what will you do, and more importantly, what are you doing in your own life to deal with these carbon problems?

Just to conclude here, both Prime Minister Thatcher and Prime Minister Blair were very concerned in their times about climate change, and I don't think it is any surprise that with leadership coming from the top like that, that some of the local councils in the UK dropped their emissions by 70 percent.

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Peter, I think Jim raised the issue of what's going on in Canada with the difference between especially around the carbon tax. And I don't know if I am supposed to call it that but the dispute over how to handle this with four of the provinces, Ontario eating away, but Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick opposing the government plan.

I guess along the same lines where the President and his cabinet is leading it on the U.S., so any comments on that?

MR. MacKAY: Sure. I would love to take that on, and personally, I am glad you did take the appointment that you did, although I think you would have been a good judge.

(Laughter.)

MR. MacKAY: I feel a little bit like the old Sesame Street adage, not like the other as a conservative on this panel. And so I am not here to defend the White House or any particular province, but what I will say is it is very much a matter of leadership, and I also very much associate myself with former ambassador's comment about the necessity -- and this isn't optional in my view -- it is going to require a North American approach, and we sometimes in the former NAFTA forget Mexico's role in all of this.

And we are a continent, and so I think we should be also looking for ways in which we can involve Mexico, although they have bigger challenges to be sure.

The question of leadership is going to be about embracing some of the technology in my estimation as opposed to the forcing of responsibility on those who are perhaps least able to make the necessary adjustments.

By that, I suggest that cabinet disproportionately hammers rural people, whereas the majority of the emissions -- and look, I am no scientist, I might be able to talk about political science -- but the majority of emissions it would appear are going to be coming from bigger urban centers, and yet, those who have to travel, those who have to produce food, those who are most responsible, quite frankly, for feeding the planet are going to disproportionately pick up the slack in the proposed carbon tax arrangement. So there is going to be court cases in Canada, in fact, and that's how adamant some of the provinces differ on the approach.

I'd like to take perhaps a different angle or tact on this, and this is try to incentivize. Jim, I think, Peterson has touched on a lot of the personal responsibility items that people can take on, but there is also ways in which government can encourage and incentivize.

One of the elements that is often left out of the equation -- and I talked a little bit about this to Dr. Takle last night -- is hydro. I am very proud of the conservative government's support for the lower Churchill and Muskrat Falls initiative, which is the largest hydro project on the planet, and many people are not aware of that. There is enough energy upon completion to basically energize the entire East Coast of North America when it comes on line. It is a large perpetual energy source. Interestingly, also, it is going to receive greater water sources because of melting water, melting ice I should say. A very compelling point that was made by John Godfrey last night in his remarkable address was this perpetual election cycle, and this is where the politics very much does impact how we bring about collaboration, how we get to a unified North American approach, despite who is in the White House or who is at 24 Sussex.

But we are in this campaign cycle now that begins after a government is elected, and the subject of governors very much impacts on whether we have a consistent approach to climate change among many other things, but the good news is, there are ample examples of where Canada and the United States, in particular, have addressed big climate change issues. Acid rain is probably the best example we can point to.

There is examples of collaboration that is ongoing, and Joe, you would be very aware of the International Joint Committee, which deals specifically with some of these issues in a very unified way. I am also encouraged, as we all should be, here we are on a university campus in this beautiful setting, the academic cooperation across border. Fantastic.

Chambers of commerce, non-governmental organizations are doing remarkable work in collaboration, even when governments are wrong footing each other or not working together in a way that would bring about or accelerate perhaps, so it is down to a personal level. Where leadership fails in politics, I think you are seeing, thankfully, a lot of these other organizations pick up the slack. And finally what we are seeing in technical advance is breathtaking in terms of new ways to reduce emissions, in ways to recycle energy, to have waste through energy programs that come on line. So government can do a lot and should do a lot more and should step up, but in the absence of that, I don't believe that all is lost.

I think for certain we have tremendous leadership on so many other levels that we will hopefully bring around the thought leaders at the top politically, and if not, democracy will prevail, and we may disagree on who should be driving the bus, but the people will decide.

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Jim, do you want to start?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: Yeah, I do. I am optimistic in that regard as well. The tone at the top, particularly in Washington, is not good, but you know, having served as ambassador and worked on U.S. Canadian issues since the '70s, I worked on acid rain when I was in Congress. The cooperation of our departments, our agencies is ongoing everyday.

As we speak, there are several heads of agencies or offices in Washington on the phone to Ottawa. It is at every level. The cooperation goes on and on and on, and it is very good. Of course, we heard about the scientific community as well. I think that's the good thing and that's going to continue. It would be helpful if we had a better tone at the top in Washington. I have two or three just miscellaneous things.

Number one, having lived in Canada and been in the energy business in Canada, Canada is far more dependent, the health of Canada's economy is far more dependent on fossil fuel than the U.S., it really is.

And that's a serious political challenge for any government in Canada, and it is not an easy one to deal with.

I would also like to say in terms of cooperation, Lana Pollack is here from Michigan. She is chair of the U.S. side of the International Joint Commission, three members from the U.S., three from Canada, and they deal with the boundary waters and many other things, Great Lakes issues, but they always look at environmental impacts, and Lana has been a leader in the environmental area in Michigan.

What's interesting is that boundary waters treaty, which created the IJC as I recall, it was 1909. I think it is probably the first environmental agreement between two countries anywhere in the world.

So we have been cooperating on this for a long time, and that's going to continue. The final thing I want to say is, I want to brag about my nephew who worked for years in environment, Canada, and my other nephew, his brother, who is a cardiologist, teaching cardiology and hypertension at the University of Michigan Medical School, they have collaborated on the impact of air quality on cardiovascular disease.

And their conclusion is not just wild swings in climate impact, the health of the heart and the lungs, but -- and I would like to hear this from our previous speaker -- short term greenhouse gases are a severe threat to cardiovascular health. I don't ever hear anyone ever talking about the fact that climate change can have a direct impact on human health.

It isn't just, you know, the change of conditions that affect our lifestyle and our business and our industry. More needs to be said about that. And the other thing we need to talk about -- look, we are not scientists here. We are political people, government, public servants. We have got to convince the public this is really much more serious than they realize, and we have talked about that, but one way perhaps is to explain, look, you see how good the weather forecasters are today? They used to be lousy 20 years ago. See how good they are today? You count on them, and they are usually accurate.

Well, those same people are telling us that climate change is a serious challenge. So you know, it is right in your face. You know, don't be a denier.

So that's just kind of some miscellaneous thoughts I have. Other than being from Michigan, we don't need electric cars if they are powered by coal-fired plants, folks. That's a nonstarter. So we need other sources.

CONSUL GENERAL COMARTIN: Peter?

MR. MacKAY: Well, I agree with so much of what was said, particularly the impacts on human health. We are all trapped in our own experience. I grew up in a small town on the East Coast, and the major employers were rail car factory, coal-fired generator, and a tire factory, all of which were big emitters.

And, you know, I hear with great alarm increasingly from people in my community that have unusual high instances of cancer. And so there is an undeniable connection to what's happening, and you only have to go for a jog in Beijing to realize the impact on human health, and suffering is undeniable, but therein lies one of the problems, is this symbiotic relationship that we have with countries who Joe pointed out at the outset are not playing ball. They are not signatories to COP 21 in Paris or Copenhagen or other international conventions. They are not even trying, quite frankly.

They are moving in the other direction. They are building coal-fired generators at an alarming pace, similarly in places like Pakistan, India, despite what they may say, and there are worse offenders as well. They are not moving in this direction.

So what do we do about that? John Godfrey's answer, I think, is the right one, in part, which talks about again incentivizing through technology and making their economy respond out of necessity.

If we can bring technological advancements, whether it is electric cars, whether it is changing how we can feed the grid and making it much more economically feasible and viable and making -- marginalizing those countries' economies, quite frankly, I mean, again, this is not a partisan but perhaps a regional perspective, in Canada, we hammer our oil industry, quite frankly, and there has been a lot of statements made about the Oil Sands in Alberta.

And so we leave it in the ground, or we send it at a massive volume discount to the United States of America where the United States is on the verge of surpassing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran if they haven't already as becoming the world's number one producer of energy, and we are giving our energy to the United States.

And what are we doing to our own population? We are buying it from Venezuela or indirectly from places like Iran or Saudi Arabia and then criticizing them about their human rights. And so we are hectoring the world and telling them they have to do better on the way they pollute or treat their populations, and yet, we are dependent on them for energy.

When we have the capacity we know not only to produce it but to refine it. And also, like the United States, the exporters, we could refine it on the East Coast, and this also has geopolitical implications because if Canada and the United States are able to supply places like Germany, France, and Italy, they don't buy from Russia who invade neighboring countries and who are not interested in climate change or the effects on humans.

So we have to, I think, be at least honest. I mean, we saw a very factual presentation, but we need to put facts on the table about what we are doing ourselves if we are going to realign our economies and we are going to actually take this on because, you know, writing a certain number in the Paris Accord as to what we are going to achieve and then coming back home basically not doing

much is like driving 200 miles on the seat of your pants, and say you can run that fast. It is not going to happen.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Jim, I see you were making notes as Peter was speaking. So I don't know if you wanted to jump in at this point.

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: All right. I would be delighted.

First of all, with respect to what Jim said about healthcare being affected by climate change, on February the 19th, the healthcare community met in Ottawa, February 19th of this year, the doctors and nurses and everybody else, and they outlined a lot of the pathologies that are taking place because of that climate change today and how it is going to get worse in the future.

Certainly, what Peter said about looking quite ridiculous I think in the eyes of the world, we are exporting about 3.7 billion barrels of oil, and we are importing at the same time about a billion barrels of oil, and we have got this incredible facility in St. John that is providing petroleum for East Coast and for Quebec and for Ontario.

Anyway it just doesn't make sense. I would like to go back to just one thing, Joe, and John's wonderful address last night. He was asked a question afterwards about, well, how do we get the world to come on side when there are so many poor countries? And is it going to make them poorer if we start to limit carbon emissions?

Well, about 15 years ago I think it started there was a movement that came out called contraction and conversions or C & C, and basically, it involved what looks like -- somewhat like the carbon trading today. You would have an international agreement, including all the Third World and developing countries to cap CO2 emissions in the air.

Secondly, you would estimate how quickly those emissions must be capped to reset target. Well, we have already done these two things just very recently at the meeting in Ottawa and elsewhere.

Thirdly, you would create a carbon budget from those figures and divide it, not among countries, but among every individual in the world, including those in the developing countries, and this would mean that those in the highly emitting industrialized countries would have to pay the developing countries money to get the credits that they would need. So that to me is not terribly alien from the cap and trade programs that we have been looking at already but on a more limited scale. So I would just like to throw that into the bundle of tools that we might have in the future. I am probably not as optimistic as Jim and Peter about a saving resolution to this whole thing.

I have heard the same types of reactions back in the 2005-2006 years when things were proposed and planned, and there were no actions that were taken. We are -- they would have been so much easier had we started earlier, but we are now in a very steep curve of about 11 to 12 years to meet our 2030 deadline.

And the trend is not great in terms of what we are doing. I think we are going to require more and more drastic actions to do it if we are going to meet those targets. And I think the world now pretty well recognizes, apart from a few sceptics and others, that that climate change is manmade. It is of our own doing, and we are sealing our own doom.

Now, what the hell are we going to do about it?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: You know, I want to mention, it is interesting that you mention, China and Russia not really being on board. The reality is we still have to lead by example, which is why we want to get things straight in Washington. We need to lead by example. Regarding China, I mentioned my nephew, his name is Dr. Jeffrey Brook. He is recently retired from environment Canada. He now teaches at the University of Toronto.

And I mentioned he is a leading expert on air quality and also the cardiovascular effects of that. So he was commissioned by the Chinese government to go to Beijing and monitor air quality before the Olympics because they were really worried the world would arrive, and you wouldn't be able to see for more than 200 yards.

I mean, it is really bad there, so they banned all cars for like several months to try to get the air quality better, and he went over there and measured it for the Chinese government, brought over there. Of course, he said it was awful, but his observation was that they continue to build coal plants and other things.

The health effects alone are going to start to affect their population and life span, and they are going to have health reasons to change their ways. It is going to be right in their face. They are not going to have a choice at some point, so it will be interesting to see.

The only other thing I want to mention is, I want to mention a guy that I served with in Congress. His name is George Brown. He was a Congressman from California, and he was a scientist. And he was chair of a subcommittee on environment and the atmosphere and the science and technology committee.

And I was a young member of that committee, and he started talking to us about climate change, and this was in the mid '70s. And so he drafted a bill that ended up becoming the Federal Climate Program Act of 1978. Actually, it became law, and it called for all these studies on what's going on with climate.

So George Brown knew all about this way back when. I am glad I put my name on the bill, one of many co-sponsors. It actually became law, but even then, we had people saying, well, we are going to have a new ice age probably. He was saying, well, the science appears to be warming, but let's look at it. Let's study it. Let's give grants to the scientific community to look at this.

So there have been people even in the political system, other than George Brown of California, who were worrying about this, and they have been around a lot longer than perhaps George, but I just want to give hats off to the guys who are no longer with us, but he was a wonderful public servant, and I am just glad he cared about it.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: In that regard, Jim, I guess the dispute that is going on between the federal government on the U.S. side and the state of California in terms of what's going to be the targets for emissions and efficiency of the thermal combustion engine, I mean, there is a gap between what is the national position and what is state of California.

We tend to be on the Canadian side, tend to be more to what California is trying to do as are a number of other states. Any sense of what the backlash will be?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: I don't know. I side with California, but I don't know.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Peter?

MR. MacKAY: Well, I side with California and Canada. I think we are well beyond spinning our wheels and talking about what the causes of climate change, whether it is real. I think everybody here -- and this presentation was compelling -- you wish time and time again you could confront those who are saying it is not happening or it is not happening as presented. You wish you could just confront them with those facts and say "look, we have to move beyond that."

And to what Jim said, this is now a reaching, very urgent state that is going to require action, and it is about action as opposed to the words. There is endless debate that goes on, and while we may be talking a good game -- and I know the diplomatic thing is never to disparage your own country or another country when you are a visitor -- but we are talking a lot and not doing enough. And I think the United States is actually doing more and talking less, although there is a negative connotation around the discussion.

And so you know, I remember something my grandfather used to say, you know, the best time to plant a tree was yesterday, but we can start today. And so we should be planting a lot more trees by the way because that is one of the small things that can be done in places like Haiti and others and has a massive effect on their soil and their erosion problems and the same with the coast lines.

But it is getting those great minds, and if they are not political minds, get the great science minds, get those technical advancements, get the private sector, look at what works and what hasn't worked, and try to bring about greater motivation.

And to that end where I draw, I think, tremendous hope -- and you can't live without hope for clean air -- is millennials because millennials do get it. I mean, they are sometimes ridiculed by people of another generation, but there is a sense of urgency among young people that I think doesn't exist perhaps.

You know, there are lots of notable exceptions, and we have lots of people in this room who have been at this for a long time and demonstrated leadership against, you know, the opposition, but I think young people, as a young generation, do understand the global commitment and urgency that is going to be required, and they are going to emerge. There is going to be an emergence of leaders from that generation who are going to, as the saying goes, put this at the top of the priority list.

John's point, again, has been referenced here as our speaker last night talked about the necessity of bringing government departments together around this issue. So it shouldn't just be the department of environment agriculture; it has to be financed. It has to be across a whole of government approach as he described it.

That's the only way that you are going to be able to move the machinery of government to get behind the necessity of prioritizing climate change in the number of issues.

The problem, of course, is that people don't want to vote against their own personal impacts. I mean, why do people smoke? Everybody knows it is going to kill you if you keep at it, but you know, when it impacts you in your own home

and you say it is going to cost me more to drive to work, it is going to cost me more to get groceries, the carbon tax debate that goes on in our country is completely focused around that. And everybody would love to drive Tesla, but it is not affordable.

So maybe the government has to look at incentivizing things like public transit. They have to look at doing more in terms of the cycling, incentivizing people to exhibit good behavior. That's where government policy can impact, and you know when we see electric cars they are coming on line.

I was at a Stanford energy conference last year. These companies, these car companies get it. They know that we can't continue to produce internal combustion engines. They recognize -- and they are pressing it, they are ahead of the curve, quite frankly, with their technical advances, but it is getting those advances to an affordable place and having more people make those adaptations in their day-to-day life. That's what is going to, at least, start incrementally bringing down the climate change.

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Our recent budget, they are offering \$5,000 bucks for an electric or hybrid car under \$45,000 Canadian. And I think that's a pretty good incentive.

I want to say that in talking to people in Canada about what we should be doing, I have often been met with the thing, well, it really doesn't matter because the rest of the world is not in sync and will be doing nothing, and -- but I agree completely with what Jim said, that we have got to lead by example.

How are these other countries going to get in line if we are not there? If we are there, we can at least shame them into coming with us, and we can have incentives to make it good for them to do it such as C & C.

I think Peter and Jim both mentioned this, how the know-how evolution of knowledge and technology in this area is going to be perhaps a real game changer. One area where I see it right now and it gives me a hell of a lot more hope for India and China getting on board is taking place in a company called Global First Power Nuclear. They have -- what they do is, they grind up the fissionable material, the enriched uranium into very small granules, and they coat it with graphite and silicone.

Now, in so doing, there can never be a meltdown. This stuff burns at 800 degrees centigrade as opposed to 2,000 in conventional reactors, such as Three Mile, Chernobyl, and the Japanese, which were meltdowns. This can't melt down.

Secondly, it cannot be used as weapons grade material.

And thirdly, it is replaced only every 20 years as opposed to every 18 months with conventional rods, and so -- and if a terrorist attack were to take place, yes, it would be scattered all over, but it would not be emitting any radiation.

So I think something like this can be a real game changer because, as you know, it is -- it doesn't emit CO₂, and I am slightly more optimistic than others are about China and India because they have such a long way to go, and these new technologies are going to be absolutely what they need.

And you can build them in module sizes anywhere from five megawatts up to 500, and so the price of them is going to come way down, and they will be

encouraged to use these as opposed to setting up grids that don't exist for huge coal generators.

MR. MacKAY: The technological advances are undeniable. Plastics, there is an island the size of Edward Island floating around in the Atlantic made up of plastic bottles, and it staggers the mind to think that we can't find a way to recycle in a more effective way and turn it back into energy.

The Arctic ice melting, there is a really interesting company, not surprisingly again out of California and connected to Stanford where that has come up with a silicon based sand that you spread over Arctic that slows the melting.

The research there has been remarkable in demonstrating how the Arctic ice core at least -- it helps to reflect the warming on the ice that is causing some melting. It is not going to reverse it. It is not going to stop it, but it will at least, again if nothing else, buy us some time.

So that technological edge is going to get sharper, and we need to support and resource and develop it if we are going to turn back this rising tide, pardon the pun.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Jim?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: Couple snippets: I mentioned George Brown of California. Of course, he was in the state legislature before Congress and smog was everywhere in the Los Angeles area. You don't hear about that now, but you can understand why people of California were much more militant about dealing with environmental issues and energy issues.

I want to mention a couple other things: For those of us who forgot, you know, government can have a strong impact. If you look at the antismoking campaign and the surgeon general reports of the United States, it had a huge impact on eliminating smog and regulating smoking areas; the same thing with seatbelts. You know, when we started out with seatbelt requirements, everybody thought you can never force the drivers to use them, but it worked.

So antismoking and seatbelt requirements are a classic case where government with strong action can have impact. It just takes time. And you don't want to be too creechy.

MR. MacKAY: Now we are telling them to use marijuana instead.
(Laughter.)

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Instead of smoking tobacco.

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: That's a whole other -- the traffic is slow in Toronto they tell me. So anyway, the final thing is we haven't mentioned the Green New Deal. All right. So there is like a hundred members of Congress who signed on to a resolution called Green New Deal. I am not sure, I tried to look it up, and I am not sure all that it means other than the aspirations most people feel are quite good. The critics will find stuff in there that is unrealistic, a timetable that is probably not realistic and discredit it, but it is another example of politics and young people and leadership having an impact. It will have an impact, and it is going to affect our presidential race.

So we will see what happens, but those are all signs that people are getting really worried, particularly newer younger members of our Congress.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Can we talk a little bit -- I mean, we have a federal election coming up in Canada in October of this year and, obviously, a

federal election on the U.S. side of the border in 2020. So it is a year-and-a-half away.

Any thought on what the impact is going to be of climate change as an issue in those two elections?

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: The polls in Canada show that it is in the top three issues for electors in Canada now, and I think it will become even more so. And I think, as younger people who are taking the lead on this continue to do so, parents are going to change, and so I think they will be demanding that we have people who meet this -- I call it a crisis that we are in right now.

MR. MacKAY: I think it will be a top issue for sure. If the economy continues to worsen, it drops, and that's unfortunate because I think, you know, it has been said by many people and in many spheres of influence that you can have complimentary prosperous economy and take these necessary steps.

In fact, the innovation technology piece, which requires investment, also creates prosperity, jobs, opportunities. That's the sort of creative piece that has to somehow be woven together with economic times, hard times, and a change to a green.

And the problem again is the level of cynicism. You know, we are going to change our democratic process. We are going to do certain things within a certain budget, and then it doesn't happen. And so there is a very skeptical public when it comes to politicians, quite frankly, deservedly so.

And so until you see demonstrative action I think on the environment, again, the problem -- and there is a lot of toxicity around politics right now, but the worst thing that can happen is people say that's it. I am in and out. I am not going to vote; I am not going to participate; I am not going to get involved, and this is this terrible cycle that I fear we could enter, and young people have a -- you know, having said I am optimistic, and I mean, there is a much shorter attention span, and with a greater sense of urgency also comes impatience.

And so I fear they are going to turn away or look for other way to have impact outside the political system, whether it is through NGOs, whether it is through their own work in their community.

So low voter turnout is something that could be a problem in our upcoming election, which is slated for October, but it could come sooner, and our system, of course, elections can be triggered by events.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: We have some of those going on. Just on that point, Peter, and I have been involved in the environment movement since the late '60s, periodically, it comes to the fore. I am in the environment, I am rejecting being involved in partisan politics, doesn't do anything, any thoughts on -- and it is fairly pervasive right now within the millennial generation of just backing off and saying I will go work on the community groups and other environmental groups, but I am not going to be involved myself on the political to influence policy and hopefully policy that is favorable that deals with the crisis.

Any of you as to what you say to people?

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Well, you try to scare them as well as this morning's speaker scared us. That's the best thing we can do for them at this point.

Let me -- in this whole debate, I am taken back to what happened in the Second World War in the United States. There was a hell of a movement for the United States not to be involved.

President Roosevelt against the wishes of all of Congress got the United States to be in very quick time the biggest supplier of tanks and planes of anybody in the world, and without that, the Second World War would probably have ended in another way.

Germany made had a huge -- Japan made a huge mistake in getting the United States in the War and gave us an excuse to do it. But up until then, they had been -- they were just turning the armaments that kept the Allies alive, and I think it is that type of effort that is probably going to be required.

I mean, John was quite right. There is no timeline to this. Well, we have to make some timelines that people will stick to.

MR. MacKAY: There isn't any leadership for sure from the United States. I mean, we can do our part, and I think we do to a large degree. The military comparison is interesting because the biggest, the largest consumer of energy on the planet is the United States Army. Think about it. They are the largest single consumer of energy.

So there is a stated interest in having the U.S. fill the void on some of these leadership positions, which they have in the past, certainly militarily and in other spaces, and the fear that they don't is in the void. Who fills that void? Often it is Russia, China, some of our less aligned, less friendly nations, so there is a concern about that.

But again, I don't want to see our government or our country turn down the road of hectoring without having a legitimate say we are doing our piece as well whether it is at a NATO table or whether it is on the climate change initiative. We have to have credibility in the world.

But back to your point, Joe, about how do we ensure that young people don't turn away? Your party, frankly, has been the best at engaging young people. The problem again is on the delivery side and having the capacity to make sure that they don't feel disappointed, that it hasn't actually lived up to the commitment, and that's where it becomes problematic.

If we are not able to actually gain some ground on these important issues, there will be discontinuation of low voter turnout.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Jim?

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: I want to again give you some good news; that the election in the United States from last November had a huge turnout by historical standards for a mid-term election, and actually, the gains by the party out of power -- what I mean by that, the democratic party were equivalent of gains during Watergate.

The difference, though, is we had a relatively strong economy, and yet, the Democrats made huge gains in Michigan. The turnout was greater than any mid-term election since 1962.

We are trying to figure out what the youth participation was, youth 18 to 21, 24, but I think it was up, and I think it will grow. If you do a poll now of voters,

yes, the number one issue is still jobs and the economy, and it usually is but not like it used to be.

It is health, which is important in the United States of all the debate about healthcare, universal healthcare, affordable healthcare, but the third comes up as registering climate change, which used to never register at all on the Richter scale.

And as I mentioned, you have at least one candidate that is making that exclusively as his campaign. So I think there are a lot of really good trends. And I think we are going to elect a new president. I think a year ago you all heard me say we were going to have big mid-term gains by the Democrats. We are going to elect a new president, and all of a sudden TPP and NATO and the Paris Calamint Accord with trade expansion and working with the world -- I will repeat that, working with the world, and Canada will be popular again because we will have a leader who believes in that, and that's how I see it.

(Applause.)

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: We lost track of time there, but we have about five minutes, so we will take some questions. Over here.

MR. VASARAIS: Thank you panelists. My question is, we have an Attorney General and ambassador and foreign minister of national trade here. You all alluded to the idea there are significant health impacts. Last night John Godfrey spoke to central climate refugees.

So the big question is, we can get the machinery of government in order, but how do we get the machinery of the private sector in order? Companies have vails that protect directors from liability.

So the question is, you look at climate refugees, you look at the presentation from this morning, and we look at the potential impact of the United Nations. Does this climate change or is this climate genocide? If it is a genocide and it is declared a genocide, what are the legal and trade ramifications of that?

MR. MacKAY: Well, I will take a shot at that. That's a massively important question. Part of the answer is, of course, the movement towards more corporate social responsibilities, and does the UN have their social development goals, which are aspirational, and in short, there has to be more enforcement and more sanction around that.

And at the top of the social responsibility goals to your point, it has to be efforts of enforcement around being good climate citizens to prevent the type of displacement that we are seeing, which is massively displacement in large part because of conflict, and again, it is interesting to look at some of the military studies.

Come of the best minds around social change and climate change actually are people who have served in uniform because they have been in many parts of the world where they have seen the impact, and they have come to the inevitable conclusion that we are on this catastrophic track. Shortages of water may be the next big world conflict.

They themselves as military are also big consumers of energy, and they know that that's the way from a military standpoint that you keep the advantage. If you have the ability to mobilize and to make advances ahead of your enemy, you win the day, but I remember something General Mattis said in context of the Iraq

Afghanistan conflicts, he said the most important six inches on the battlefield are between the soldier's ears, which is applicable across any subject. It is how we are thinking about these things.

So to answer your question from a justice perspective, I think we need more enforcement on the emitters, the big emitters. I think there needs to be punishment, quite frankly, for those who pollute and those that take advantage. There has to be on those who participate in human trafficking or who have exploited practices in labor. There has to be a consequence.

I would rather see more emphasis on the incentivization, but if you are on the other side of criminal behavior there is a sanction, and that has to be in the corporate world as well.

To your point, corporate liability now can make its way all the way back to the board room. And I referenced my community, we had a mine that blew up in my community and killed 26 men. And they tried to prosecute the company, and the whole prosecution ultimately collapsed under the weight and complexities and delays. And so our laws have not been keeping pace with that imperative to hold corporate corrosion and their boards of directors and decision makers, allowing them to hide behind the corporate veil has got to stop.

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: Isn't there an action right now against Exxon in the courts because they understated the impact on climate change?

MR. MacKAY: Well, Volks Wagon is a good example.

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: I think there is an investigation in New York State with the Attorney General on that. I am not positive, but yes, the answer is, I think so at the state level.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Okay. This will have to be the last question because we are out of time.

MS. KOWALSKI: Thank you for a very interesting panel. My question focuses on the discussion of the carbon tax, and there was a report from CDP a couple years ago showing that 70 companies -- or I'm sorry -- a hundred companies were responsible for something like 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

So I guess my question is, if you don't have a carbon tax, aren't you kind of letting those companies and other large fossil fuel emitters continue with externalities, which are kind of another way of saying free loading and not paying their costs, and shouldn't we be doing that?

HONORABLE JIM PETERSON: I think you are making a very strong case for putting a price on carbon. Everybody -- I think most big businesses would accept it. I think the question is under our federal program now it comes on at \$20 bucks and goes up to \$50 bucks in 2022.

There are many critics who are saying it will not have an impact unless you take it to \$200 bucks a ton. So let's see. At least, the government can reevaluate what it is doing in a couple of years, to see if it is working.

MR. MacKAY: The trouble with an across-the-board carbon tax in a country like Canada is we have a relatively small population for a massive geography, and we are a cold country. So we are putting tax on people who live in a cold climate that don't have an option but to heat their homes.

So it is very punitive, and you are going after a significant population that live in rural communities that have to drive to go to work, they have to heat their home. They don't have the option to use perhaps natural gas or in some cases alternative sources of in many.

And so currently, you have three percent of the Canadian population, three percent paying three quarters of the tax for the entire country's revenue. So you are disproportionately hitting a population in my view without taking the broader view that you need to put that burden to a large degree on the emitters and on the source as opposed to those who are just trying to scrape by and make a living, drive their pickup truck 200 miles down the road to go to work. And so it is a fairness issue as I see it. I think there are cap and trade issues. There are incentives dealing in urban centers, but that would never apply to rural communities. So I guess you look at it from where you sit.

I represented a rural community of fisherman, farmers, people who basically could least afford to pay more tax because they are already paying a lot of tax.

CONSUL GEN COMARTIN: Okay. On that note, join with me in thanking the panelists for their contributions.

(Applause.)

MR. PETRAS: Let me thank you all for paying attention. That was great.

GOVERNOR BLANCHARD: Thank you.

MR. PETRAS: All right. Everyone, we are going to take a five-minute break and start with our next panel ten minutes from now.

(Recess had.)