

INFORMATION BULLETIN

DATE: May 27, 2009

SUBJECT: Napolitano's visit to Canada

SOURCE: CTV News

Joint security initiatives

Van Loan and Napolitano announced Wednesday they have signed a number of new joint trade and security initiatives.

One of the programs is a joint assessment of threats to border security, while another would allow emergency vehicles, workers and equipment to cross the border more quickly in the event of an emergency.

The goal of both nations, Van Loan and Napolitano said, is to improve security and trade simultaneously -- saying one doesn't have to happen at the expense of the other.

In an interview Wednesday with Tom Clark, the host of CTV's Power Play, Napolitano clarified comments she had made earlier about treating the U.S. and Mexican borders in exactly the same way.

"U.S. law doesn't differentiate between the Canadian and Mexican borders, and my job is to implement the law," she said.

"But the techniques we use are going to be very different because the countries are very different, the challenges of the borders are very different."

Stronger relations under Obama

Earlier in the day, Van Loan told CTV's Canada AM that border and trade relations are stronger under U.S. President Barack Obama than under the previous administration.

"We're moving in a much more positive direction than in the past, where we are working co-operatively, we are making gains that are in Canada's interest and in the Americans' interest," Van Loan said.

In the past, Van Loan said, there was a perception that U.S. security concerns trumped all other issues, including the cross-border trade that is vital to the economies of both nations.

"We of course have one of the most important economic borders in the world, close to \$2 billion a day trades across that border and that's one reason that it's very important we keep that open," he said.

Napolitano stirred controversy a few weeks ago when she suggested the 9-11 terrorists entered the U.S. through Canada. She later issued a statement saying that she was misunderstood.