**Notes for Remarks by**
**Monte Kwinter**
**Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services**
**Conference on Canadian Federalism**
**and National Security**
**Queen's University**
**Kingston, Ontario**
**Friday, November 19, 2004**

Good evening.

I was very pleased to be invited to speak here this evening. This conference is an important gathering and one I was eager to participate in.
I've been in political life for a long time.
And I recall a story that was old when I was first starting out.

It concerns a supposed United Nations' study to determine the importance and future of the elephant. I'm sure many of you have heard it before. So, I'll give you the abbreviated version. Various countries responded. Some nations concentrated on the sex life of the elephant. Others on its economic importance in Third World countries. Still others on the best ways to serve elephant as a food source.

When it came to the Canadian contingent – their submission was entitled, "The Elephant – Is it a federal or provincial responsibility?"

That old joke poked fun at the seeming preoccupation of Canadian federalism – the classic constitutional question – which level of government is responsible?

There are still areas where this is being worked out between the federal government and the provinces and territories.

But national security isn't one of them.

The roles and responsibilities are very clear. In my view, national security is a model of how Canadian federalism works – and how it should work.

The federal government takes the lead – and that's as it should be. The government of Canada has the constitutional responsibility for defense. It has the broad reach and the mandate to enforce national standards and to negotiate with other governments.

It has made strides in the post-9/11 world through a variety of measures.

For example, there's the Smart Border Declaration and Action Plan to enhance security while easing the flow of people and goods across the Canada-U.S. border.

Or there's the National Risk Assessment Centre, which Ottawa has established to detect and prevent the movement of high-risk people and goods.

Integrated Border Enforcement Teams of Canadian and U.S. officials target cross-border criminal activity – including weapons and drug smuggling. They also help protect Canada and the U.S. from potential terrorist acts.

Growing from an initial experiment between British Columbia and the state of Washington, enforcement teams are now operating as well in New Brunswick, Alberta, Quebec and here in Ontario. And they're a real success story.

Ontario plays a role in these and other co-operative efforts. Our public security and law enforcement agencies work closely with their federal counterparts – such as CSIS and the RCMP.

And since the RCMP has a limited presence in Ontario and CSIS can't be everywhere, we do have an important role to play.

Making the most of our respective strengths is both a responsibility and an incentive to work together.

And I'm pursuing greater co-operation between provinces and territories, the federal government and our municipal partners as well as stakeholder American jurisdictions.

While the governments of Canada and the US lead on national security, Ontario is forging its own security links with neighbouring state governments.

Our approach offers mutual aid and co-operation with border states. I've travelled to New York, Michigan and Ohio following up on our government's commitment to greater border security.

One of my first actions on becoming Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services last year was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the federal government to help police better respond to security threats.

The agreement improved consultation and co-operation between the RCMP, Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police services in the province. It was an important first step in Ontario's counter-terrorism plan.

Certainly, 9/11 showed us the need for wider-ranging intelligence-gathering and that we had to do a better job of sharing what we learn.

There was a novel some years back where the story was revealed as a series of transcripts of wire-tapped conversations. They featured members of a gang plotting a crime.

These surveillance tapes were in the hands of various agencies. But each of them had only pieces of the puzzle and no one put the whole plot together in advance – because they didn't share the information.

That was a work of fiction but it did make a serious point. For security organizations to have information and not share it is no better than not having it at all.

Unlike certain other governments in the history of this province, we feel we get further by talking <u>with</u> rather than shouting <u>at</u> the federal government.

We made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build safe, strong communities. And we understand that security can only come from cooperation and a united approach.

Trade agreements, favourable duties and exchange rates – they're all important to the economy. But the foundation on which our economy and our way of life rests is security.

Yet we have to strike a balance – allowing people and goods to move freely while keeping our borders secure.

Overall, truck traffic at the province's border crossings has grown by about seven per cent per year since 1991.

Two-way trade between Canada and the United States represents about $1.7 billion worth of goods on the move every day. And each year, 50 million vehicles go both ways through Ontario's international border points.

So in the name of greater security, we can't just clamp down and close off our border crossings.

We can't afford to turn the Ambassador Bridge into Checkpoint Charlie. For one thing, it's the busiest truck crossing in Canada – handling about 10,000 trucks a day.

Our economy depends on this pipeline flowing as freely as possible. Turning off that tap would rapidly cause Ontario's economy – and the Canadian economy in turn – to dry up.

And a report last summer by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce noted that the province's economy is already losing more than $5 billion a year because of delays at the border.

Since our economic future relies on a foundation of security, we need to work together to cement it in place.

Ontario was pleased to see the federal government create Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and to develop Canada's first National Security Policy.

In Ontario, we've also put procedures and networks in place – and got people working together in ways that they hadn't done before. And these new approaches stood Ontario in good stead last year when we faced the challenge of SARS.

In addition, the power blackout in 2003 was another valuable 'road test' of our emergency preparedness.

But 9/11 was North America's major "wake-up call'.

In response, governments all across the continent have recognized the need for emergency preparedness, emergency management and the acquiring and sharing of better intelligence. Everywhere, they are backing up this realization by investing people, equipment and money.

Ontario has made – and continues to make – progress.
We've stepped up our patrols of the Great Lakes and other waterways in support of amendments to the federal Marine Transportation Security Act, which took effect last summer.

As home to Canada's largest airport and several important regional air travel hubs, Ontario also has a big stake in Canada-US standards of airport and flight security.

We are part of international law enforcement partnerships. We share information to prevent criminal and terrorist activities. We support international efforts to address potential problems, such as port security, at the point of origin.

And we also applaud U.S. and Canadian government measures to identify and share information on high-risk travelers, and on refugee or asylum seekers

On the home front, an all-party Standing Committee of the Legislature was tasked to review the adequacy of Ontario's emergency management statutes. If passed by the Ontario Legislature, the proposed legislation will expand the definition of emergency to include dangers from disease or health risk.

It would also allow the Province to respond to emergencies in a more expeditious and efficient manner.

If endorsed by the Legislature, the proposals would give the Premier and the government of Ontario greater powers to respond to – and control – provincial emergencies. They would clarify procedures and remove roadblocks at a time when every minute counts, while ensuring the proper checks and balances.

But it is important to remember that the majority of declared emergencies in Ontario are at the local level.

Each year, there are, on average, 30 municipally-declared emergencies. In contrast, there have only been two provincial emergencies in Ontario's history – both last year – the SARS outbreak and the blackout.

Important to our emergency preparation is making sure that municipalities have the right tools to respond.

To this end, we've instituted a number of programs supporting "first responders" – the police and fire services, emergency response and medical teams. We're making sure they have specialized resources available.

Currently, we have one Heavy Urban Search Rescue Team based in Toronto for deployment within or outside the province.

In addition, there are three Level-One Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear teams in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor. Also, we have five Level-Two teams in Cornwall, Sault Ste Marie, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Peterborough. And more are being considered.

And most recently, I created the position of Commissioner of Emergency Management – an overall leader to plan for, and respond to, all emergencies in Ontario.

To this new post, I appointed Dr. James Young, who played a lead role in Ontario's response to the 1998 ice storm and more recently, the SARS outbreak and 2003's blackout.

All part of the broader picture of emergency preparedness and emergency management – as I'm sure you heard directly from Dr. Young earlier today.

Step by step, initiative by initiative – Ontario is contributing to the development of and creation of a wider public safety net beyond our borders.

We're co-operating with Canada's territorial and provincial governments, with the national and state governments in the US, and, of course, with our key partner, the Canadian federal government.

Just this week for example, Ontario was part of a bi-national emergency preparedness exercise that included authorities from the state of Ohio, the U.S. and the federal government. And earlier this year, Ontario and Michigan participated in a joint nuclear emergency exercise – the second such exercise in three years.

Last month, Sault Ste. Marie became the most recent site of an integrated Canada-U.S. law enforcement team to fight cross-border crime.

These Integrated Border Enforcement Teams are multi-agency law enforcement teams that emphasize a harmonized approach to the Canadian and United States efforts to target cross-border criminal activity, as well as enhanced border security.
This initiative enables law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada to ensure that our borders are open for business, but closed to crime.

All of us are moving from an era when having some level of planning in place to <u>respond</u> to an emergency was considered enough.

Now, our focus is on mitigation – how to prevent or to lessen the effects of an incident or an emergency. From a terrorism standpoint, the ultimate mitigation is for intelligence networks to pick up plots and head them off before anything happens.

We are also working toward more detailed response plans and placing greater emphasis on recovery from disasters, however caused.

In a world where new public safety and security threats emerge constantly, we must anticipate and adapt. To do so, we continually review security processes and systems to address changing needs quickly.

There's an old saying – "You can't be too careful." That was never truer than it is today. And it sums up our challenge.

Our aim is to be "too careful." We are trying to anticipate and adapt to changing situations. We are casting the intelligence net wider and sharing what we reel in. We are putting safeguards on the safeguards.

But the reality is that we live in an environment where new threats to public safety and security constantly emerge. So, there will always be risk and always be room for improvement.

Now, as new challenges arise, we have processes and mechanisms in place to help us respond faster. And we are learning each and every day.

Co-operation and information-sharing are the watchwords.

That's how we'll stop those who would harm our society or our people.

And that's how we'll achieve the standards of community safety and security to which we are all committed.

Thank you.