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Conference Opening

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CONFERENCE OPENING

*Henry T. King, Jr.**

Life is a lot easier if you have a colleague like Sidney Picker to work with. I have a tremendous sense of empathy for Sidney. He has a great sense of humor, which makes life worth living in crisis situations.

NAFTA has been in place for nearly three-and-a-half years, and the time for stock-taking is appropriate. This is what this conference is about. We will be assessing NAFTA's impact to date and possible future impact, either in its present form or its expanded form.

In our first session with Gary Hufbauer, Daniel Schwanen, and Alejandro Nadal, we will be looking at NAFTA's economic effects. This will be a broad-scale look. Following this session, we will look at the legal effects of NAFTA; the totality, as seen by Pat Murphy, Larry Herman, and Beatrice Prati. Here again we will be looking at NAFTA in terms of the broad strokes.

NAFTA, as it is now in place is the largest trading group in the world. In terms of its future, we inevitably look for comparisons in terms of the possibilities which may exist for change. This will be the focus of our luncheon session with Bill Graham who is the Chairman of the House Standing Foreign Affairs Committee of the Canadian House of Commons. I am very relieved that Bill is here and sitting in our audience today. Bill is also a member of the Institute's Advisory Board.

Dispute resolution under NAFTA will be our early afternoon topic of the conference's first day with Bob Cassidy (substituting for Gary Horlick) and Simon Potter as our speakers.

The cultural industries exemption from NAFTA has been most controversial. It is now the subject of a WTO proceeding which has been hard-fought. This will be the subject of our late afternoon session with John Ragosta and Jennifer Fong (substituting for Ron Atkey) as our speakers.

Our evening session for the first day of the conference will deal

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with the extremely important topic of NAFTA's expansion to Chile and other countries. Here Jean Anderson and Rick Dearden will be our guides.

Our Saturday conference sessions will open with the focus on the impact of NAFTA on intellectual property. The big question to be answered here is whether NAFTA's intellectual property provisions are working as intended. In this session, Joseph Papovich and Allen Hertz will be our speakers.

Our next session was to have been chaired by my dear friend Mosby Harvey, but, unfortunately, I report with a deep sense of sadness that Mo Harvey passed away in late February. He was a stalwart member of our Institute Advisory Board, always attended our conferences, and fully participated in the development of our future plans. I know Sidney and I will both miss him greatly.

The session that he was to have chaired will deal with the question of NAFTA at three-and-a-half years; where do we stand and where do we go? And here Greg Mastel and Bradly Condon will be our guides in assessing present and future possibilities.

At our Saturday luncheon session we will be looking at NAFTA in a world context vis-à-vis the WTO, the EU, and Japan, among others. NAFTA's place in the world and its future impact on other countries outside NAFTA is an important subject of inquiry, and here Dick Cunningham will be our pilot in leading us through this very sweeping area.

After lunch on Saturday, we shall be looking at the effect of the provisions of NAFTA's environmental side agreement and whether they are, in fact, working. Here our speakers will be Greg Block, Director of the Commission on Environmental Cooperation created pursuant to NAFTA, John Knox, and André Beaulieu.

Our late afternoon session will deal with the key question of NAFTA's relationship to the U.S. States and Canadian provinces. Here James McIlroy and Matthew Schaefer will be our speakers.

The evening session of our second day will deal with the whole matter of corporate restructuring under NAFTA. We will be concerned with what effect NAFTA has had on corporate patterns of manufacturing, location, distribution, and of market penetration. William Kelly and David Winfield will be our guides in this inquiry.

At our Sunday morning session, Sidney Picker will be our first speaker. He will talk about his hands-on experience as a member of the Chapter 20 NAFTA arbitration proceeding. It is very important because his hands-on experience extended for over a year. He will also have some thoughts on the future.

After that, as perhaps a letdown, I will be talking on future plans of the Institute. We will be looking at our plans for the future and what areas we are going to examine.

We recognize that this is an ambitious program. We strongly feel that its sweep and scope will make it mind-expanding. We hope that when it ends you will be richer for having been with us. That is our basic plan of the Institute.

