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Canada needs more than one customer to be successful says CIBC's Jim Prentice

Nov. 19, 2012

While the United States will remain Canada's most important energy client, the country needs to advance its relationship with Asia to secure market access says the Hon. Jim Prentice, Senior Executive Vice-President and Vice Chairman of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

In a speech to the Canadian American Business Council, Mr. Prentice said Canada has been favoured with a wealth of natural resources and a neighbour that has needed them but Canada must diversify its customer base if it is to truly be an energy superpower. However, doing so will have its complications.

"While the United States has encouraged Canada to pursue diversified markets, we would be naïve to think that a blossoming relationship with China will not have implications on our relationship with the United States," said Mr. Prentice." And still, Asia is where the growth of today is, and where the growth of tomorrow will be. So that's where we need to be."

Mr. Prentice cautioned that it does not mean Canada can take its time building infrastructure and put up restrictive policy and expect that Asia will continue to 'keep beating down our door'.

"Yes, we offer advantages as a resource producer related to stability and security of investment," said Mr. Prentice. "And yes, the government should demand that foreign companies be committed to investing in Canada, building here with Canadian participation and playing by market rules.

"But we also need to remember that we are a higher-cost environment. Our strength isn't that we are 'cheap'. Our strength is that we are dependable, reliable, secure and

respectful of the rule of law - no surprising changes to taxes, royalties or foreign

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The speech is available at: http://files.newswire.ca/256/CABCSpeech.pdf

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