



Vote won't affect new passport rules, ambassador says

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MONTREAL—U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins travelled to Quebec to talk passports and to emphasize today's mid-term elections will have "no effect" on Canada-U.S. relations, even if the Republicans lose their Congressional majority.

Wilkins also departed from the niceties of diplomatic language to express his displeasure at a recent international poll that suggested U.S. President George W. Bush presents almost as great a threat to world peace as Osama Bin Laden, Iran and North Korea.

The EKOS Research poll, published in the *Star* last week, surveyed people in Canada, Britain and Mexico.

"To be open and candid with you, I must say that I find that personally offensive. ... I think it's important for all of us to remember that our president and our country did not start the war on terror," he told the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations.

Wilkins emphasized that U.S. security imperatives mean stringent new passport requirements — which will kick in in January for air travel — are not likely to ease even if the Democrats take control of the House of Representatives and Senate. "The bottom line is we live in a post-9/11 era, period. There's no turning back," Wilkins said.



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