

In terms of Canada-U.S. relations in the international field, this is an ever-present fact of life. Because Canada does not have the same global responsibilities and range of interests, there are times when we find it difficult to stay in concert with the United States. There are many such examples, but I will mention just one, because it is current and of overriding importance.

The threat of nuclear proliferation is a growing danger to the very survival of mankind. Canada and the United States, as well as many other countries, are at one in recognizing this frightful danger. We are even agreed in theory on what should be done about it, and I should emphasize that on many aspects of the problem there are encouraging signs of progress.

Canada is a world leader in the fields of nuclear-material supplies and technology. We believe that nuclear energy, properly controlled and safeguarded, offers one of the best hopes for a resolution of the present global energy crisis. In this, too, our capabilities and our convictions do not depart significantly from those of the United States.

Over recent years, Canada has moved progressively to establish what is today the most stringent nuclear policy on exports of any country in the world, including the United States. But, though we have shown leadership in the nuclear field, the effectiveness of our policy will remain limited, and even perhaps counter-productive, until there is a wider degree of international agreement on technology and safeguards than exists at present.

It is of the utmost importance that like-minded nuclear-supplier countries arrive at a common policy on this issue and that Canada and the United States, in particular, do not get out of phase in their efforts. We are working very closely to avoid this possibility but, for the complex global policy reasons I have mentioned with which the United States must cope, and for equally complex, though sometimes different, reasons affecting Canada, the achievement of a common approach to the wide range of nuclear questions represents a tremendous challenge.

I am happy to tell you that in recent days we have reached an interim agreement with the United States covering a broad spectrum of our bilateral nuclear relations and clearing the way for further joint efforts to achieve a more effective world-wide safeguards regime.

Thus, if this issue reveals the sometimes difficult nature of the Canada-U.S. relationship, it shows as well the determination to consult and co-operate which is the mark of true friendship.

An independent foreign policy for Canada is not only a necessity for a strong and vital country, it also provides that element of credibility which gives meaning and significance to Canadian support for United States initiatives in international affairs. If the world community took it as read that Canada would always agree with the United States, then Canada would be cast in the role of a mere cipher and we would be no good to anyone — least of all ourselves.

---