

It is true, of course, that the people of Canada and the people of the USA are North Americans all, formed by the continent they share, holding in common the values of Western civilization, enriched by the contributions of yet other cultures, and united in a mutual devotion to freedom and the democratic tradition within the framework of a federal system. It is also true, however, that differences of size may involve differences of perspective, and that long ago our two countries chose to seek the same goals by different roads, at a different pace, and chose as well to adopt different institutions for the conduct of their political affairs.

What I propose to do here is to examine how some of these similarities and differences have influenced and are reflected in the Canadian and U.S. approaches to foreign policy. In doing so I will focus especially on the differences -- not in a negative spirit, I assure you, but in a spirit of enquiry. Difference, after all, need not mean conflict. And differences must be identified and understood if we are to build on the similarities.

Let me begin with an example that in my view typifies both the similarities and differences. I think it is fair to say that human rights occupy a more prominent place in the foreign policy of Canada and the USA than in that of any other country. Other countries of course are