

After 1871, when the Treaty of Washington settled many of the points of disagreement between Canada and the United States, relations between the two countries improved. Similar political philosophies, mutually beneficial trade, the interchange of population, the settlement of the Canadian West and the habit of resolving outstanding problems by negotiation gradually reduced the causes of friction. Nevertheless from 1871 to 1940, Canadian-American relations, although friendly, were somewhat aloof. Canada's position as a part of the British Empire and later as a member of the evolving Commonwealth and Canadian consciousness of the disparity in population and wealth between the two countries, prevented any closer political alliance and confined co-operation almost entirely to the economic sphere.

Although the rise of aggressive totalitarian states in Europe and the Far East during the 1920s awakened a sense of common danger, the anxiety of both nations to avoid international commitments hindered the co-ordination of plans for the defence of North America. It was not until 1940 with the onset of war in Europe and with the United Kingdom facing the prospect of invasion, that Canada and the United States began to seriously consider the problems of their common defence.

Prime Minister King became increasingly concerned for the security of Newfoundland and the defence of the Atlantic coast and he proposed to President Roosevelt that bilateral defence consultations be convened. These consultations which were held in Washington on July 11 and 12, 1940, were chiefly concerned with Canadian requests for military equipment from the U.S. and with the extent of U.S. military assistance required to defend Canada against direct attack.

As no provision had as yet been made between the two countries for regular and continuing high-level consultations on defence matters, on August 16 the Prime Minister suggested to President Roosevelt that a meeting between the heads of government might be useful. When the President received the message he invited Mr. King to Ogdensburg, New York, where the two leaders met for several hours the next evening aboard the presidential train.

The conversation between the two heads of government resulted in the press release of August 18, 1940, known as the *Ogdensburg Declaration*:

"The Prime Minister and the President have discussed the mutual problems of defence in relation to the safety of Canada and the United States. It has been agreed that a Permanent Joint Board on