



# Statements and Speeches

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## COMMON CHALLENGES CONFRONTING CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, to the Southern Council on International and Public Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations, Atlanta, Georgia, April 29, 1977.

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If you took the Southeastern United States and visualized it as a separate country, it would be the fourth-largest trading partner in the world for Canada. This is really quite a remarkable statistic and may add to your very justifiable pride and satisfaction at the level and the rate of your growth.

It is because of all of these things...that I am anxious and delighted to be speaking with you today and I want, in the short time available to me, to give you a broad overview of Canada-U.S. relations. However, before I do, I know that as friends of Canada you have an obvious and a legitimate interest in what has come to be called the "national-unity" issue in our country, and I welcome this opportunity to say a few words on that particular subject. As you know, on November 15 last year, a government was elected in the Province of Quebec committed to the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada. This election has to be seen in the proper perspective to be understood. In the first place, it would be less than honest of me if I did not concede at the outset that, [in] any bilingual country such as ours, and in a country that, like yours, is a federation of provinces as opposed to states, there are invariably regional tensions and difficulties that for us are compounded by the so-called "French fact".

There was inevitably some fallow soil within the Province of Quebec, as there has been for many, many years, for separation, for a feeling, justifiable to a very great degree, that indeed French-speaking Canadians' aspirations and objectives were not being given the attention that they deserved. Having said that, however, I think it is important for our American friends to understand that the motivation behind the election of the Parti Quebecois in November was essentially economic as opposed to a widespread reflection of political dissatisfaction with our Confederation. I say that because Quebecers were basically voting for good government — or it might be more appropriate to say against bad government — and, of course, since that time repeated studies and analyses and surveys have all reflected one common and apparent fact, and that is that the great majority, not only of Quebecers, incidentally, but of all Canadians, are strongly committed to national unity and that indeed only something on the order of 14 or 15 per cent of the residents of the Province of Quebec would now opt directly for the separatist route.

The point that I am anxious to make to you is that there is, within our country, from coast to coast, a widespread commitment to the concept of national unity and