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MEMBER OF THE PRESS: May I follow up on that?

You said that nothing would happen if separation took place. Yet the fact is that you are here; and we have had Quebec Ministers -- particularly in New York; and, also, a new Quebec Office here.

How important is it to Canada and Quebec that Americans understand what is going on?

Why are you paying so much attention to what we expect is just a sort of benign presence--until the Canadians make their decision?

MINISTER LALONDE: I think it is important, in the meantime, anyway, that the American public be well aware of what is going on north of the Border. There has been a long tradition of ignorance -- maybe benevolent ignorance -- by the United States vis-a-vis Canada. I think it is important that the American governments, the American media, the American people, be aware of what is happening; and not be apt to react in a panicky way -- over-react to events; see them in their proper perspectives, historical perspectives; and, I think, avoid generally, the type of over-reaction that could be very damaging to Canada, and to Quebec, itself.

So I think that it is important that we, as Canadian politicians, should be quite willing to spell it out as we see it; and we will see what happens.