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PRIME MINISTER IN WASHINGTON

On his arrival in Washington on March 24, for two days of talks, accompanied by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and other representatives of the Canadian Government, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was warmly welcomed to the White House by President Richard M. Nixon.

It was "altogether appropriate", Mr. Nixon said, that Mr. Trudeau should be his first official guest, since the two countries shared so many interests.

The President's remarks follow:

As most of you are aware, the Prime Minister is the first official visitor since the new Administration assumed office.

In welcoming him personally today and also in welcoming him representing his country, I do so saying first that it is altogether appropriate that he should be the first official visitor to this country. Because, as we look at the relations between your country and my country, Mr. Prime Minister, we recognize many factors that are often spoken of in the classroom and in the press and on television.

We share the longest common border of all nations. We share the common law. We share a common language. We share many common characteristics with regard to our history. And, in addition to that, we share a very precious asset, the asset of friendship.

In describing that friendship, however, I should emphasize a characteristic about it that sometimes we forget. That characteristic is that the friendship that Canada and the United States has enjoyed for so many years is not characterized by that total unanimity of view which destroys creativity, but it is characterized by a lively diversity and through that diversity we have the hallmark of freedom.

As the Prime Minister and I will be talking, and as his associates will be talking with the Secretary of State and their opposite numbers, we will find most areas in which we are in agreement. We will find other areas in which we find that we have differences. But those differences are ones that, between friends, we will be able to discuss and find, in most instances, a common ground which is perhaps superior to the position that either of us had before.

This is the mark of true friendship. And it is why, in speaking to you today, Mr. Prime Minister, I welcome you in behalf of all of the American people, so many of us of whom have known and enjoyed your country.