

Reporter: Mr. Sharp, what do you expect President Nixon's visit to accomplish?

Mr. Sharp: Well, first of all it's an indication of how important we consider one another - Canada and the United States. This visit is both ceremonial and will also, I expect, deal with matters of substance, but it is, I think, first and foremost an indication of the important relationship our two countries have to one another.

Reporter: What has been the cause of the worsening of U.S.-Canadian relations?

Mr. Sharp: Well I don't think I accept the word "worsening". You know, it is interesting about Canadian and American policy in the last three or four years since Mr. Nixon came to office and since Mr. Trudeau came to office approximately at the same period. Both countries have followed rather parallel policies. There is a very great similarity, for example, between the Nixon doctrine and the Trudeau doctrine. We have felt and the United States have felt that the time has come for a redistribution of the burdens of defence and so on. We have also said that we are going to limit our commitments to our capacities and discharge them, just as President Nixon has said. So I don't really think that there has been a "worsening" of relationships. I think that there is now a more realistic appraisal and understanding of the nature of relations between Canada and the United States than there has been in the recent past. So I think that on the whole, the relations between our two countries are very healthy indeed.

Reporter: Does this more realistic awareness of the relations between the two countries involve a greater independence for Canada?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, I think that in Canada there is a growing feeling - a sort of national spirit, and a feeling of independence or perhaps a recognition that we have a role to play both in relation to the United States and the rest of the world that is different to other countries. Not different particularly from the United States, but different - it is a unique sort of a role as between our unique kind of a country. What we have done on our foreign policy, for example, is to try to project abroad our own nature. Unlike the United States we're a bilingual country. So we take special pains in our foreign relations to project this bilingual character in our relationships with other countries. We are a country that borders on the Arctic, the Atlantic, the Pacific. We are an American nation too. We've tried to project this reality and in the course of doing this we have, I think, understood a little bit better that we have room for manoeuvre and it isn't anti-American to sometimes differ with the United States.