

From our side of the border, we Canadians have watched the fascinating drama of the developing, evolving America, sometimes with concern, often with admiration and even envy and always with affection. Canadians appreciate the terrible burden of world leadership the United States has assumed, the remarkable generosity it has displayed and the equanimity with which it continues to endure the harsh and often unreasonable criticism that power and leadership cannot seem to escape.

Often, around the world, I see and hear glaring examples of man's ingratitude and a widespread lack of comprehension of what the United States is seeking to accomplish. Those are times when it is my pleasure to seek to put the record straight, to say "they're our neighbours and they're not like that at all".

Canada has followed its own road to nationhood — different from that of the United States but in its own way no less troubled and difficult and no less rewarding. We possess today, on our half of this North American continent, a land of proud achievements and of incredible promise. We do not underestimate the seriousness and magnitude of our present problems or of the challenge we now face to our national unity. But Americans, who have watched us for so long from their side of the border, will know that our sense of national purpose remains strong, that our will and our ability to accommodate legitimate though diverse objectives have not diminished, and that the determination of the great majority of Canadians of all backgrounds, and in every region, is to build a stronger and even more united Canada.

As we pursue this important task, we appreciate the attitude of our American friends. The total absence of any improper interference is only what we should expect from a trusted neighbour. It should be an example for others.

Indeed, there is much in our relationship that others could emulate. We live in a world where trust between neighbours is in woefully short supply and where suspicion and cynicism are the principal ingredients in international dealings. How satisfying in such a climate to know that, in Canada/United States relations, a simple phone-call between Ottawa and Washington is often enough to resolve a serious problem and that a handshake can serve as well as a complex treaty.

We Canadians want to keep things that way; I am sure you Americans do too. And we shall.

Mr Secretary, and honoured guests, I should like to propose a toast to the continuation of the warmth and friendship shared by Canadians in all parts of the country with their fellows in the United States.

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