

Given the importance of our bilateral relationship, and the importance of our respective roles in seeking solutions to global problems, Canada/United States amity is not only a desirable condition, it is an essential precondition for meeting the challenges of the future. We in Canada are certainly not about to underestimate the value of the genuine goodwill between our two peoples. And, I should have thought, our estimate of the value of this friendship is fully shared by our neighbour.

Some Perspectives on the Evolving Relationship

Some observers, when looking at the aggregate of subjects under discussion between our two countries, conclude that the relationship is, to use their word, "deteriorating". The last time I suggested that such a pessimistic conclusion was invalid, one editor attributed that opinion to my innate affable nature rather than to any perspicacious judgment of the situation on my part. I would concede that if enough people say to themselves, or accept as fact from others, that the relationship is deteriorating, then the description of the relationship will gain a life of its own and become part of the fabric of the relationship. But, as you will have gathered from what I have already said, I do not agree with pessimistic assessments of the relationship and I might add that I have discussed this very point with Secretary Kissinger who shares my view.

There are, of course, some highly visible contentious issues between our two countries with which we are all familiar. The problems are real, and no one in either government is underestimating them. But the current problems, taken separately or collectively, need not be disruptive to the foundations of the relationship. It is how we deal with them that counts. Two bordering, distinct and active nations, interacting on a wide range of complex issues, are unlikely to avoid problem areas. Indeed, problems have always been a part of Canada/United States relations. But together we have posted an excellent record for problem-solving, and our approach to dealing with the problems at hand is improving.

The Relevance of Change to the Relationship

The quickened pace of change within both countries as well as globally is making relations between our two countries more active and complex. With increasing frequency, aspects of both bilateral and multilateral issues are engaging the national interest of each country as both adjust to new domestic and international imperatives.