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# CANADA QUARTERLY

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## VISIT HIGHLIGHTS STRENGTH OF CANADA/U.S. RELATIONS

Concluding a two-day visit to Washington on February 25, Foreign Minister André Ouellet declared the state of the Canada/U.S. relationship to be "very good."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher echoed these sentiments: "We are very much encouraged by the relationship with the new government."

Ouellet, who spoke of "friendly but independent" relations between Canada and the United States, noted in particular that "trade irritants must not be allowed to deteriorate to the point that they could jeopardize our good relations."

Ouellet's visit was the first of several high-level meetings between Canadian and U.S. officials scheduled for this spring. These include Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Environment, Sheila Copps, International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren and Industry Minister John Manley.

In addition to his 90-minute meeting with Secretary Christopher, Ouellet met with Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell; Senator Richard Lugar, Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton.

In his meetings, the Canadian Foreign Minister stressed the imperative of managing trade disputes and the importance of "good relations between our two countries." He particularly emphasized the need to resolve a number of outstanding agricultural irritants, which he hoped could be settled in a "package."

He also pointed to long-standing trade disputes such as softwood lumber, where the U.S. is challenging a binational dispute resolution panel ruling favorable to Canada. "We think there's no justification for it, but we respect the process," he said.

He added: "Those issues that I have difficulty with are serious, are very important. But they have to be taken in the

overall aspect of our huge, huge trade relations with the Americans."

Canada and the U.S., by far the world's largest trading partners, conducted a record C\$269 billion in two-way merchandise trade in 1993, up nearly 20 per cent over the previous year. (See article on page 4.)

In their talks on multilateral questions, the two foreign ministers discussed Bosnia, the future of peace-keeping and the restoration of democracy in Haiti.

Secretary Christopher paid tribute to the 2,000 Canadian peacekeepers serving with UN forces in the former Yugoslavia. "I want to compliment, express our admiration for the courage and bravery of the Canadians," he said.

On the subject of Haiti, Ouellet said he had told the Secretary of State that the preference of the Canadian government was to "force the hand of the military" and that it was "necessary to put in place a process that would eventually lead to the return of President Aristide."

The two foreign ministers also discussed Canada's desire to play an active role in NATO's Partnership for Peace with countries of the former Soviet bloc, beginning with a joint venture with the Ukraine.

In what The Washington Post called "one of the first tangible by-products of the North American Free Trade Agreement," Foreign Minister Ouellet also witnessed the signing of a trilateral



Canadian Foreign Minister André Ouellet with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on February 25.

artist residency exchange program between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

"Our three countries cannot fully prosper in all the ways that matter if they remain no more than trading partners," Ouellet said. "This program will provide, with good luck, a new sense of the North American community."

On a separate issue, Ouellet was questioned about the visit to Washington of Lucien Bouchard, head of the separatist Bloc Québécois and Leader of the Official Opposition in Parliament, scheduled to take place a few days later. The Foreign Minister said, "Americans like Canada as a united country, as a very democratic country."

All figures are in Canadian dollars.  
The official noon exchange rate on March 18 was US\$1 = C\$1.3692.  
The average exchange rate for 1993 was US\$1 = C\$1.2898.

AP by Charles Tasmadi