

MODEL NEIGHBOURS

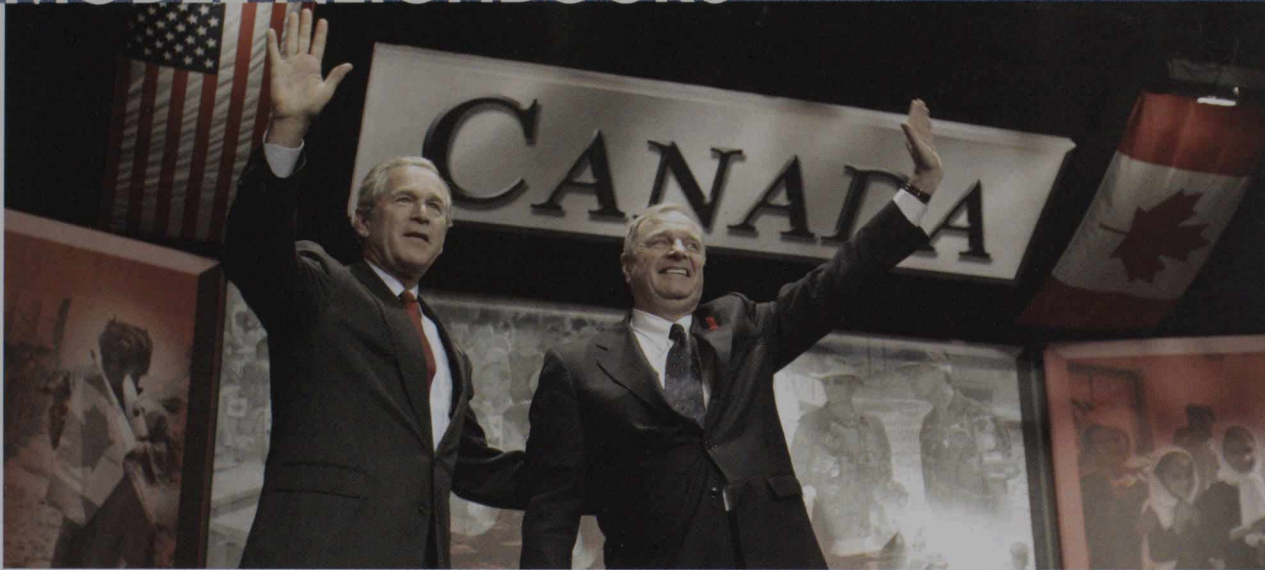


photo: Dave Chan, PMO

A commitment to cooperation: Prime Minister Paul Martin and U.S. President George W. Bush wave to the crowd at the Pier 21 National Historic Site in Halifax as part of Mr. Bush's two-day visit to Canada.

Despite cultural differences, perennial trade disputes and large divergences in power, Canada and the United States share a relationship unparalleled in—and instructive for—the world.

When the most devastating hostile act against the United States in 60 years took place on the morning of September 11, 2001, the NORAD command center in Colorado instantly coordinated national defence responses.

Remarkably, the commanding director that day was a Canadian, Captain Michael Jellinek. In a historic moment of national crisis, no one thought twice about a Canadian directing U.S. military forces in assessing the attack and securing North American skies.

“Can you imagine any other national being in charge of the American forces on that basis?” asks Rob Huebert, a fellow at the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute and associate director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary. “One of the hallmarks of the Canada-U.S. relationship is just how broad and deep it is.”

In defence, trade, academic endeavour, scientific and cultural exchange, the maintenance of the world's longest unmilitarized border and myriad other connections, Canada and the U.S. share a bond unparalleled not only in the world today but throughout history.

That point was underscored by the recent working visit to Canada by U.S. President George W. Bush and the joint statement, a New Partnership in North America, by Mr. Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin highlighting

the commitment by the two countries to deepen our cooperation in North America and in the world.

This partnership sets an agenda for both governments that is designed to increase the security, prosperity and the quality of life of our citizens. Examples of this cooperation include mutual efforts to reinforce the Smart Border Accord, expand economic opportunity in the global market place, protect our environment, improve our ability to combat infectious disease, fight crime, and prevent trafficking in humans and illegal drugs.

“The relationship between Canada and the United States is indispensable to peace and prosperity on the North American continent,” Mr. Bush told a press conference following the meetings. Added Mr. Martin: “We have common shared values, shared ambitions, and we share optimism, also. I think that that is what is fundamental.”

A comprehensive relationship

As broad as the line that stretches between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and despite differences in areas such as the war in Iraq, the Kyoto Accord and social issues that brought out protestors to have their say about the recent visit, relations between Canada and the U.S. are defined more by cooperation than any other factor.

“The two countries are so fortunate to have each other as neighbours,” remarks Clifford Krauss, the Canada-based correspondent for *The New York Times*.