

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me say, at the outset of my remarks, how pleased I am to have the opportunity to speak to this particular gathering. This is my first speaking engagement in Winnipeg as Secretary of State for External Affairs, and it is gratifying to have as my audience members and friends of the Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. It would be hard to imagine a more appropriate group with whom to discuss one of the most important themes of Canadian foreign policy, namely, Canada-United States relations.

Before I take up my subject I would like to take a brief look first at our overall approach to external relations. This will help to put our examination of Canada-United States relations in its proper perspective.

In 1970 the Canadian Government carried out a comprehensive review of foreign policy, the first such examination since the early postwar years. One of the most important conclusions of the review is that foreign policy is an extension abroad of domestic policy. The objectives of foreign policy must be relevant to Canadian national needs and interests if it is to attract the support of the Canadian people.

Linked with this conclusion are two major points of concern. One is the question of maintaining national unity, an essentially internal problem but with important external implications. The other is the very complicated problem of living distinct from but in harmony with the world's most powerful nation, the United States. This problem is obviously external in nature but it has very important implications for the Canadian domestic scene. It involves our sovereignty and independence. A considerable degree of interdependence between Canada and the United States is inevitable and indeed mutually beneficial. But the problem is to manage the relationship in such a way as not to undermine Canadian national identity and independence.