

When almost 80 percent of our exports go to the United States, it would be foolhardy to believe that rocky trade relations would not affect general relations over the long haul.

Given our unique trading relationship, it is remarkable that we have been content, until now, to leave its regulation entirely to the GATT and to national laws.

A bilateral relationship of such magnitude should not be left solely to multilateral or unilateral rules. To do so threatens to overload the diplomatic and political circuits, as I think the lumber dispute has clearly demonstrated. Both prudence and vision demand that some agreed bilateral framework be put in place.

Once we dispel the myths and look at the facts, it becomes clear that Canada and the United States have a shared interest in creating a larger North American market within a binding system of North American rules and institutions. Neither country is looking for favours; neither country is the demandeur. Neither country can take the other for granted.