

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE
NATIONAL PRESS THEATRE, OTTAWA, MARCH 12, 1981

TRANSCRIPTION DE LA CONFERENCE DE PRESSE DU PREMIER MINISTRE
AU THEATRE NATIONAL DE LA PRESSE, A OTTAWA, LE 12 MARS 1981

DAVID HALTON (CBC-TV): Prime Minister, the President and General Haig seemed to be telling us yesterday that the U.S. will only back the Alaska Pipeline if it is entirely privately financed. Since U.S. industry seems to be turning rather luke warm about the cost and viability of the project, I am wondering if you are worried that the prospects for the pipeline are receding and that the American Government commitment is weakening.

A. I certainly wouldn't agree that it is weakening. This is the position the Americans have taken with us from the beginning -- that this pipeline should be privately financed. It has certainly been our position as regards Canada, and I understand that it was, and remains, their position as the United States.

Because, I guess we all know a bit about private enterprise. If they think they can get some money from the government, they are not going to put it up themselves. So, I think it is beneficial in the short and medium term that the United States have repeated their position from the beginning that it was to be privately financed, because any hint to the contrary or any hope to the contrary would only have the result of delaying all of this because then the private sector would be waiting for some public help, which is not certainly to our advantage that the thing be delayed.