

The status quo is simply not a viable option for Canada's future.

Some would have us avoid bilateral arrangements with the United States because this would expose Canadian producers to the whims of an arbitrary and irresponsible U.S. Congress. In my view, comments such as these demonstrate a misunderstanding of our trading relationship with the United States. Do Canadian producers of lumber, fish, steel, copper, cement and beef really feel they enjoy total security of access today! They and others are exposed to all the uncertainties of potential trade restrictions under existing U.S. trade laws.

Of course, the American political system differs from the Canadian. The separation of powers under the U.S. constitution undoubtedly creates risks for our access. We are not going to change the U.S. system. But this does not mean that we should simply give up. In fact, I see sectoral arrangements as a technique for involving Congress in a process which would at least reduce risks to our access from existing trade laws. In the steel sector, for example, we are examining the possibility of minimizing the exposure of Canadian exports to escape clause action or legislated quotas. I know the Canadian industry shares this goal. You can be assured