

1. Address of President Nixon to Both Houses of Parliament, April 14, 1972

(*Ibid.*, pp. 4-6)

To all of you who have welcomed Mrs. Nixon and me so warmly on this occasion, I trust you will make allowance for my attempt to speak in the language I studied 37 years ago. When I tried it today, before I came, on our top linguist in the American government, General Walters, he said, "Go ahead, you speak French with a Canadian accent."

I will have to admit that I am not very much at home in the French language but, as a former parliamentarian in my own country, I feel very much at home in this Chamber. I am grateful for the high privilege which your invitation represents. I am grateful, too, for this chance to return to Canada, and for the opportunity of signing here an historic agreement to restore and protect forever the quality of our Great Lakes which we share together. That agreement testifies to the continuing vitality of our unique relationship which has been described so eloquently by the Prime Minister. In discussing that relationship today, I wish to do so in a way that has not always been customary when leaders of our two countries have met. Through the years our speeches on such occasions have often centered on the decades of unbroken friendship we have enjoyed and our four thousand miles of unfortified frontier. In focusing on our peaceful borders and our peaceful history, they have tended to gloss over the fact that there are real problems between us. They have tended to create the false impression that our countries are essentially alike. It is time for Canadians and Americans to move beyond the sentimental rhetoric of the past. It is time for us to recognize that we have very separate identities; that we have significant differences; and that nobody's interests are furthered when these realities are obscured.

Our peaceful borders and our peaceful history are important symbols, to be sure. What they symbolize, however, is the spirit of respect and restraint which allows us to co-operate despite our differences in ways which help us both. American policy toward Canada is rooted in that spirit. Our policy toward Canada reflects the new approach we are taking in all of our foreign relations, an approach which has been called the Nixon Doctrine. That doctrine rests on the premise that mature partners must have autonomous independent policies; each nation must

define the nature of its own interests; each nation must decide the requirements of its own security; each nation must determine the path of its own progress. What we seek is a policy which enables us to share international responsibilities in a spirit of international partnership. We believe that the spirit of partnership is strongest when partners are self-reliant. For among nations, as within nations, the soundest unity is that which respects diversity, and the strongest cohesion is that which rejects coercion.

Over the years, the people of Canada have come to understand these concepts particularly well. Within your own borders, you have been working to bring a wide variety of peoples and provinces and points of view into a great national union; a union which honors the integrity of its constituent elements. It was Prime Minister Laurier who said of Canada's differing components: "I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite; I want the oak to remain the oak." This has been the Canadian way. As a result, Canadians have helped to teach the world, as Governor General Massey once said, that the "toleration of differences is the measure of civilization."

Today, more than ever before, we need to apply that understanding to the whole range of world affairs. To begin with, we must apply it in our dealings with one another. We must realize that we are friends, not because there have been no problems between us, but because we have trusted one another enough to be candid about our problems and because our candour has nourished our co-operation.

Last December your Prime Minister and I met in Washington and he asked me if I thought the United States would always want a surplus trade balance with Canada so that we could always export capital here. My answer then, and my answer now, is no. As I said to him at that time, we in the United States saw this same problem from the other side before World War I. We then depended on European capital for our development and we wanted to free ourselves from that dependence. So, we fully understand that Canada is in that same position today.

Canada is the largest trading partner of the United States.

It is very important that that be noted in Japan, too!

Our economies have become highly interdependent. But the fact of our mutual interdependence and our mutual desire for independence need not be inconsistent traits. No self-respecting nation can or should accept the proposition that it should always be economically dependent upon any other nation. Let us recognize once and for all that the only basis for a sound and healthy relationship between our two proud

¹The President, sometime before, incorrectly stated in response to a reporter that Japan was the United States' best customer.