

I am delighted to be with you this evening, and to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished assembly of scholars. As one whose principal responsibility is Canada's foreign policy, I am particularly pleased to have the occasion to address in one place, members of both the Royal Society of Canada and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The academic community has traditionally emphasized the importance of reaching valid conclusions based on rigorous analyses, and which are capable of withstanding thorough cross-examination. I am happy, therefore, to see that aspects of the Canadian and American experiences are being examined here in that tradition. I have always felt that an assumed familiarity with the realities of the Canada/United States situation, which comes all too easily in two countries as close as ours, carries with it the danger that deductions about Canadian/American affairs might be less stringently tested than would otherwise be the case. This symposium strikes me as making a valuable contribution to a disciplined and constructive analysis of certain experiences that the United States and Canada passed through in their growth to nationhood. I expect that such an analysis will provide a useful insight into the relations between our two countries. In that spirit, then, I should this evening like to offer some observations on Canada/United States relations for your consideration.

Before doing that, however, I am reminded that it was 200 years ago yesterday that the Continental Congress, then convened in Philadelphia, passed a resolution calling for independence from England; Thomas Jefferson, we recall, was asked to draft a declaration which would articulate, and give justification for, the decision on independence. This marked the beginning of an adventure and an experiment in nationhood without rival in modern times. In separate Bicentennial celebrations across their nation, Americans are recalling and, more importantly, are reaffirming the founding principles and spiritual heritage which gave their nation its impetus and have helped sustain its strength. Canadians, who nine years ago celebrated their first centennial and reflected on its meaning, have joined with Americans in Bicentennial observances both large and small to pay tribute to their neighbour's accomplishments and to express their confidence in their neighbour's future. And, I should like to add my own personal good wishes to our American friends who are with us this evening.