

MR. PRESIDENT OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

MR. SECRETARY GENERAL

MR. DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

DISTINGUISHED PERMANENT OBSERVERS

IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE FOR ME PERSONALLY AND IN MY OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS THE AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT OBSERVER OF CANADA TO ADDRESS THIS MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL ON THE SUBJECT OF CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

BEFORE I TALK ABOUT OUR RELATIONS, LET ME SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT CANADA ITSELF AND HOW WE VIEW THE WORLD. GEOGRAPHICALLY AND CLIMATICALLY WE ARE VERY MUCH A NORTHERN COUNTRY STRETCHING ALL THE WAY TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN. WE ARE SO MUCH A NORTHERN COUNTRY THAT WE RARELY USE THE WORD SOUTH TO DESCRIBE ANY PART OF OUR OWN GEOGRAPHY. FOR MOST CANADIANS WHEN WE THINK "SOUTH" WE ARE THINKING OF THE UNITED STATES, MEXICO, THE CARIBBEAN OR SOUTH AMERICA. SO THERE WE ARE, STUCK AT ONE EXTREME, AND ONLY PARTLY HOSPITABLE, END OF THIS ELONGATED HEMISPHERE, WHICH MAY HELP TO EXPLAIN WHY WE HAVE NOT BEEN UNDERSTOOD, OR VISITED OR, FOR THAT MATTER, INVADED OR TRAMPLED UPON AS MUCH AS MIGHT