

and considered. Sometimes these measures are aimed directly at Canadian products or services. Often they are aimed at others, but we get sideswiped by them. We believe it essential to seek a more predictable and more competitive trading environment between our two countries.

And here's where that renowned contemporary phrase, "the level playing field", comes in. In our view, a level playing field means playing by agreed to rules, not necessarily your rules and not necessarily ours. Not, in other words, rules that are unilaterally imposed by either side. We see the negotiation of rules agreed to by both sides, rules that are fair and balanced for both countries, as a major benefit of a new agreement. Put it all together and we both have much to gain from a new bilateral trade agreement.

There is considerable international precedent, by the way, for the success of bilateral trade agreements between neighbours of unequal size. Not long ago, I was in New Zealand, which has had a bilateral trade agreement with Australia for three years. New Zealanders are so delighted with it that they want to speed it up, to shorten the transition period provided for their industries to adjust. So, for that matter, do the Australians.

We do have some concerns about our cultural identity, however, which not all Americans understand. For all the similarities between our two peoples, there are differences as well, and we have no intention of giving them up. We are a bilingual country. We will remain so. We are committed to a wider net of social programs than Americans are, to our health and unemployment insurance, to our pension plans, to the reduction of regional disparities. We will remain committed to them. We also have special policies to protect and promote our cultural industries — such as publishing, broadcasting, records and films. These are vulnerable in any small country that borders on a large one, and we take — and will continue to take — special pains to preserve them.

These things — our bilingual character, our social programs and our culture — are all part of what we Canadians regard as our unique identity. They are part of what makes us Canadians, and they are not at issue in the negotiations we will hold with you. In an address at the University of Chicago last week, my Prime Minister had a pretty good explanation why they are not negotiable. "Canada and the United States," he said, "are different sovereign democracies. In the United States, you cast the net of national security over more areas than we; in Canada, we cast the net of cultural sovereignty more widely than you."

It is my firm opinion that Americans who understand Canada — including American trade representatives — understand and appreciate our concerns about our cultural sovereignty, and I expect their understanding will be reflected at the negotiating table.

So Canada is ready to start talking whenever you are. The Canadian team will be led by our newly appointed Trade Ambassador for the talks, Simon Reisman, a distinguished and experienced trade negotiator, and a former deputy Minister of Finance.

In the weeks to come, while Washington is putting its negotiating team together, we will be consulting