



Statements and Speeches

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ON BEING GOOD NEIGHBOURS : CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Notes for an Address by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister, to the University of Chicago and the Time Speakers' Forum, Chicago, December 4, 1985.

... Canadians and Americans enjoy a bilateral relationship unparalleled in breadth and complexity. Our mutual respect for sovereignty and for our distinctive character is fundamental and enduring. This evening, I address the future of our already deep friendship, a future [which] I believe is rich in its promise of a yet more rewarding partnership.

As you know, a little over a year ago, Canadians elected a new government, with the largest parliamentary majority in our history, a national government, representative of every province, and supported by majorities of both English and French speaking voters. That mandate, in its nature and in its size, is unique in our history. We see it as an historic opportunity to set a new course for Canada.

This is not the time or place to discuss what has gone wrong in Canada in recent years — in our politics, in our economies, in our relations with the world outside. Let me speak, instead, of what it means for the future — of the three great tasks we have set for the government and for the country. Those tasks are national reconciliation, economic renewal, and constructive internationalism.

My country, like yours, is a federation. Our provinces have control over their natural resources, rights to certain revenue sources, and responsibility for important areas of social policy such as education and health. The national government has the power to levy any form of taxation, and, over the years, has become committed to massive equalization payments to provincial governments; and, in effect to joint financing of health care, post-secondary education and other social programs.

At its best, Canadian federalism is sensitive both to national goals and regional circumstances. It is accommodating. It is flexible. It is creative. It achieves much good. Our federalism has rewarded us richly in the past; it will do so in the future.

That is just one sound reason why the new government had to rewrite the National Energy Program of our predecessors. We negotiated the western accord with Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. We signed an historic agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador; a new frontier exploration policy, and a natural gas pricing agreement involving both the producing provinces and the consuming provinces. We want our Canadian energy sector to be, not a source of political and regional conflict but of national economic growth and development. We believe our new policies now make this possible.

One of our earliest initiatives was to do away with the Foreign Investment Review Agency. We brought in a new Investment Canada Act with a positive mandate to encourage new investment from domestic and foreign sources while recognizing the special nature of the cultural sectors of our economy. These
