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Statements and Speeches

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CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS -- A MODEL ADMIRER BY MUCH OF THE WORLD

Remarks by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau to a Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington, D.C., February 22, 1977

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Congress:

For much more than a century, individual Canadians, in countless ways and on countless occasions, have expressed to Americans their friendship. Today, as Prime Minister, I am given the opportunity to express those feelings collectively before the elected representatives of the American people.

I do so with pride, and with conviction.

I speak to you as a fellow Parliamentarian, honoured, as are all Canadians, by your invitation to appear in this historic chamber. Here, on the spot where so many of your distinguished leaders have stood, I express to you the most cordial of greetings. The warmth of your welcome reinforces what I have always known -- that a Canadian in the United States is among friends.

The friendship between our two countries is so basic, so non-negotiable, that it has long since been regarded by others as the standard for enlightened international relations. No Canadian leader would be permitted by his electorate consciously to weaken it. Indeed, no Canadian leader would wish to, and certainly not this one.

Simply stated, our histories record that for more than a century millions upon millions of Canadians and Americans have known one another, liked one another, and trusted one another.

Canadians are not capable of living in isolation from you any more than we are desirous of doing so. We have benefited from your stimulus; we have profited from your vitality.

Throughout your history, you have been inspired by a remarkably large number of gifted leaders who have displayed stunning foresight, oftentimes in the face of then popular sentiments. In this city that bears his name, on the anniversary of his birthday, George Washington's words bear repeating. In a message familiar to all of you in this chamber, he said: "It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness."

