

And we must be ourselves. Despite our deep and abiding friendship, we remain two distinct peoples, alike where it counts and different where it counts. For America, there has been the agony of civil war – the courageous act, one of the finest in all history, of facing up to and subduing racial intolerance and bigotry. There has been also America's remarkable resurgence after the tragedy of Vietnam and the recent constitutional crisis, the reaffirmation of that moral strength that helped to build the United States and upon which Americans have always been able to draw in difficult and trying times.

From our side of the border, we Canadians have watched the fascinating drama of a developing, evolving America, sometimes with concern, often with admiration and even envy and always with affection. Canadians appreciate the terrible burden of world leadership the United States has assumed, the remarkable generosity it has displayed and the equanimity with which it continues to endure the harsh and often unreasonable criticism that power and leadership cannot seem to escape.

Often around the world I see and hear glaring examples of man's ingratitude and of a widespread lack of comprehension of what the United States is seeking to accomplish. Those are times when it is my pleasure to seek to put the record straight, to say "they're our neighbours and they're not like that at all".

Canada has followed its own road to nationhood – different from that of the United States but in its own way no less troubled and difficult and no less rewarding. We possess today, on our half of this North American continent, a land of proud achievements and of incredible promise. We do not underestimate the seriousness and magnitude of our present problems or of the challenge we now face to our national unity. But Americans who have watched us for so long from their side of the border will know that our sense of national purpose remains strong, that our will and our ability to accommodate legitimate though diverse objectives has not diminished, and that the determination of the great majority of Canadians of all backgrounds and in every region is to build a stronger and even more united Canada.

As we pursue this important task, we appreciate the attitude of our American friends. The total absence of any improper interference is only what we would expect from a trusted neighbour. It should be an example for others.

Indeed, there is much in our relationship that others could emulate. We live in a world where trust between neighbours is in woefully short supply and where suspicion and cynicism are the principal ingredients in international dealings. How satisfying in such a climate to know that in Canada-U.S. relations a simple phone-call between Ottawa and Washington is often enough to resolve a serious problem and that a handshake can serve as well as a complex treaty.

We Canadians want to keep things that way; I am sure you Americans do too. And we will!

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