

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 extensively with the governments of Canada's ten provinces. The Prime Minister and all the provincial premiers met recently in Halifax and agreed to work very closely together on all aspects of the negotiations.

This agreement flows from the unique and special character of the Canadian federation. It in no way

diminishes the primacy of the federal government in leading the negotiations. It is intended to ensure that our negotiators are kept aware of provincial interests, and that an eventual trade agreement with the United States will bring benefits to all parts of Canada.

We are all well aware that we live in a tough and competitive world. A world growing more competitive by the day, a world in which the fifth generation of computers, the generation of artificial intelligence, is only a few years away.

John Young has prescribed the steps we must take if we are to remain competitive in this rapidly moving world. For both our countries, the challenge is to be creative rather than rigid, and to look outward rather than in. Americans and Canadians have an incredible capacity to create prosperity. Either of us can do it alone if we have to. But we will get much further much faster by working together, in an open and expanding market.