

# BETWEEN FRIENDS: THE CANADA-U.S. CONNECTION

The days following the horrific attacks on the United States highlighted as never before the close links joining Canadians and their American neighbours.

But the relations were not always so friendly. There was a time when they were strained and bitter, when the United States posed a military threat to Canada. In 1775, for instance, American revolutionary troops captured Montreal and almost took Quebec City as well. Some 30 years later in the hard-fought War of 1812, U.S. armies almost gained control of Upper and Lower Canada. The fear of further invasion was in fact a decisive element prompting the move toward Canadian Confederation in 1867.

## Turning point

Yet from these perilous beginnings has emerged one of the most harmonious bilateral partnerships ever.

A major turning point came during the Second World War, when Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the 1940 Ogdensburg Agreement; this committed the then-neutral United States to come to the protection of Canada if it was attacked.

The former uneasy neighbours were now steadfast allies.

Canada and the United States now have a long and distinguished history of shared values, institutions and rights. While the two systems of government differ, our common political culture—based on pluralism and freedom of speech—continues to serve as a model for many countries the world over. Canadians and Americans alike prize democracy, the rule of law and the market economy, and they have stood together to defend these principles.

## A unique partnership

Today, two-way relations between our countries are all-encompassing and almost every aspect of Canada's national life has some kind of involvement with the United States. Business, civil society and a shared culture—ranging from education to the media, from sports to music—have laid the groundwork for successful cooperation. Bringing understanding and vitality to the relationship are myriad personal friendships, professional links and family ties.

Canada and the United States enjoy an economic partnership unique in the world. The two countries are joined by the longest unmilitarized border, measuring some 8900 kilometres; it is crossed each year by 200 million people, and each day by goods worth over \$1.9 billion. We are each other's largest trading partner, and two-way trade has more than doubled since 1989. Our comprehensive relationships also support more than 2 million jobs in each country. These are essential inputs into both our economies.

There have been occasional strains over differences on issues such as acid rain, climate change or softwood lumber; but consultation and compromise have enabled Canada and the United States to negotiate key accords. Dispute settlement mechanisms in treaties and agreements ensure that problems are identified and resolved through conciliation and diplomacy. Thanks to World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement dispute settlement mechanisms, more than 95 percent of our trade with the United States is trouble-free.

## September 11 and after

Since the tragic events of September 11, the world has changed. But one thing remains constant: the closeness of the Canada-U.S. relationship. As Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and President George W. Bush have said, we're family.

Canadians and Americans have in common a multitude of interests, alliances, goals and aspirations going beyond any other relationship existing between two states anywhere. This is the partnership that will enable us to meet the global challenge of terrorism. 🍁

For more information on Canada-U.S. relations, visit: <http://www.can-am.gc.ca>

