

CA1 EA 8  
77504



External Affairs  
Canada

Affaires extérieures  
Canada

DOCS C.2

# Statements and Speeches

---

No. 77/4

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."



At a moment in the history of mankind when men and women cannot escape from the knowledge that the only hope for humanity is the willingness of peoples of differing complexions and cultures and beliefs to live peaceably together, you have not forsaken Washington's high standards. You have chosen to declare your belief in the protection of minorities, in the richness of diversity, in the necessity of accommodation. You have contributed new fibre to that seamless fabric we call the history of mankind -- that stumbling, incoherent quest by individuals and by nations for freedom and dignity.

Liberty and the pursuit of happiness have not been theoretical concepts for Americans, nor have they been regarded as elusive goals. You have sought each with vigour, and shared with all mankind the joy and the creativity that are the products of freedom. You have illustrated throughout your history the resiliency, the dedication and the inherent decency of American society.

The United States achievement in recent years of conducting a great social revolution -- overcoming difficulties of immense complication and obduracy, and doing so through the democratic process -- is surely a model for all nations devoted to the dignity of the human condition. Freedom-loving men and women everywhere are the beneficiaries of your example. Not the least among them are Canadians, for whom the United States has long been the single most important external influence -- the weather only excepted.

We in Canada, facing internal tensions with roots extending back to the seventeenth century, have much to gain from the wisdom and discipline and patience that you, in this country, in this generation, have brought to bear to reduce racial tensions, to broaden legal rights, to provide opportunity to all.

Canadians long ago determined to govern themselves by a parliamentary system that favours the flowering of basic aspirations -- for freedom, for justice, for individual dignity. The rule of law, sovereignty of Parliament, a broad sharing of power with the provinces, and official support of the pluralistic nature of Canadian society have combined to create in Canada a community where freedom thrives to an extent not exceeded anywhere else, a community where equality of opportunity between people and between regions is a constant goal.

The success of our efforts in the first century following Confederation was promising, but by no means complete. We created a society of individual liberty and of respect for human rights. We produced an economic standard of living that approaches your own. We have not, however, created the conditions in which French-speaking

---

Canadians have felt they were fully equal or could fully develop the richness of the culture they had inherited. And therein is the source of our central problem today. That is why a minority of the people of Quebec feel they should leave Canada and strike out in a country of their own. The newly-elected government of that province asserts a policy that reflects that minority view, despite the fact that during the election campaign it sought a mandate for good government and not a mandate for separation from Canada.

The accommodation of two vigorous language groups has been, in varying fashion, the policy of every Canadian Government since Confederation. The reason is clear. Within Quebec, over 80 per cent of the population speak French as their first or only language. In Canada as a whole, nearly one-fifth of the people speak no language but French. Thus from generation to generation there has been handed down the belief that a country could be built in freedom and equality with two languages and with a multitude of cultures.

I am confident it can be done. I say to you with all the certainty I can command that Canada's unity will not be fractured. Accommodations will be made; revisions will take place. We shall succeed.

There will have to be changes in some of our attitudes; there will have to be a greater comprehension of one another across the barrier of language difference. Both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians will have to become more aware of the richness that diversity brings and less irritated by the problems it presents. We may have to revise some aspects of our constitution so that the Canadian federation can be seen by six and a half million French-speaking Canadians to be the strongest bulwark against submersion by 220 million English-speaking North Americans.

These very figures illustrate dramatically the sense of insecurity of French Canada. But separation would not alter the arithmetic; it would merely increase the exposure.

Nor would the separation of Quebec contribute in any fashion to the confidence of the many cultural minorities of diverse origin who dwell throughout Canada. These communities have been encouraged for decades to retain their own identities and to preserve their own cultures. They have done so and flourished, nowhere more spectacularly than in the Prairie Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The sudden departure of Quebec would signify the tragic failure of our pluralist dream, the fracturing of our "cultural mosaic", and would probably remove much of the determination of Canadians to protect their cultural minorities.

---

Problems of this magnitude cannot be wished away. They can be solved, however, by the institutions we have created for our own governance. Those institutions belong to all Canadians, to me as a Quebecer as much as to my fellow citizens from the other provinces. And, because these institutions are democratically structured, because their members are freely elected, they are capable of reflecting changes and of responding to the popular will.

I am confident that we in Canada are well along in the course of devising a society as free of prejudice and fear, as full of understanding and generosity, as respectful of individuality and beauty, as receptive to change and innovation, as exists anywhere. Our nation is the encounter of two of the most important cultures of Western civilization, to which countless other strains are being added.

Most Canadians understand that the rupture of their country would be an aberrant departure from the norms they themselves have set, a crime against humanism; for I am immodest enough to suggest that a failure of this always-varied, often-illustrious Canadian social experiment would create shock waves of disbelief among those all over the world who are committed to the proposition that among man's noblest endeavours are those communities in which persons of diverse origins live, love, work and find mutual benefit.

Canadians are conscious of the effort required of them to maintain in healthy working order not only their own nation but as well the North American neighbourhood in which they flourish. A wholesome relationship with our mutual friend Mexico and a robust partnership with the United States are both, in our eyes, highly desirable. To those we have contributed much energy. And you in this country have reciprocated to the point where our relationship forms a model admired by much of the world -- one moulded from the elements of mutual respect and supported by the vigour of disciplined co-operation.

We have built together one of the world's largest and most efficient transportation and power-generating systems in the form of the St. Lawrence Seaway. We have conceived and established the world's oldest, continuously-functioning, binational arbitral tribunal -- the International Joint Commission. We have joined together in many parts of the world in defence of freedom and in the relief of want. We have created oft-times original techniques of environmental management, of emergency and disaster assistance, of air and sea traffic-control, of movements of people, goods and services -- the latter so successfully that the value of our trade and the volume of visitors back and forth exceeds several times over that of any

other two countries in the world. It is no wonder that we are each so interested in the continued social stability and economic prosperity of the other.

Nor should we be surprised that the desire of the American and Canadian peoples to understand and help one another sometimes adopts unusual forms. In what other two countries in the world could there be reproduced the scene of tens of thousands of people in a Montreal baseball park identifying totally with one team against the other, forgetting all the while that every single player on each is American, and a similar scene in the Washington hockey arena where thousands of spectators identify totally with one team against another, forgetting that virtually every player on the ice is Canadian?

Thus do the images blur, and sometimes they lead to chafing. Yet how civilized are the responses! How temperate are the replies! We threaten to black-out your television commercials. You launch fusillades of anti-trust proceedings! Such admirable substitutes for hostility!

More important than the occasional incident of disagreement is the continuing process of management we have successfully incorporated into our relationship. It is a process that succeeds through careful attention, through consultation, and through awareness on both sides of the border that problems can arise that are attributable neither to intent nor neglect but to the disproportionate size of our two populations and the resulting imbalance of our economic strength.

Those differences will probably always lead us in Canada to attempt to ensure that there be maintained a climate for the expression of Canadian culture. We shall surely also be sensitive to the need for the domestic control of our economic environment. As well, in a country visited annually by extreme cold over its entire land-mass, a country so far-flung that transportation has always posed almost insuperable problems, the wise conservation of our energy resources assumes a compelling dimension. And for a people devoted throughout their history to accommodating themselves to the harshness, as well as the beauty, of their natural surroundings, we shall respond with vigour to any threat of pollution or despoliation, be it from an indigenous or from an external source.

Our continent, however, is not the world. Increasingly it is evident that the same sense of neighbourhood that has served so well our North American interests must be extended to all parts of the globe and to all members of the human race. Increasingly, the welfare and human dignity of others will be the measurement of our own condition.

---

I share with President Carter his belief that in this activity we shall achieve success.

Even as we have moved away from the Cold War era of political and military confrontation, however, there exists another danger -- one of rigidity in our response to the current challenges of poverty, hunger, environmental degradation and nuclear proliferation. Our ability to respond adequately to these issues will in some measure be determined by our willingness to recognize them as the new obstacles to peace. Sadly, however, our pursuit of peace in these respects has all too often been little more imaginative than was our sometimes blind grappling with absolutes in the international political sphere. Moreover, we have failed to mobilize adequately the full support of our electorates for the construction of a new world order.

The reasons are not hard to find. In these struggles there is no single tyrant, no simple ideological contest. We are engaged in a complex of issues of overwhelming proportions yet with few identifiable labels. Who, after all, feels stirred to oratorical heights at the mention of commodity-price stabilization or full-fuel-cycle nuclear safeguards or special drawing rights? Yet these are the kinds of issue that will determine the stability of tomorrow's world. They will require innovative solutions and co-operative endeavour, for these struggles are not against human beings -- they are struggles with and for human beings, in a common cause of global dimensions.

It is to the United States that the world looks for leadership in these vital activities. It has been in large measure your fervour and your direction that have inspired a quarter-century of far-flung accomplishment in political organization, industrial development and international trade. Without your dedicated participation, the many constructive activities now in one stage or another in the several fields of energy, economics, trade, disarmament and development will not flourish as they must.

My message today is not a solicitous plea for continued United States involvement, It is an enthusiastic pledge of spirited Canadian support in the pursuit of those causes in which we both believe. It is, as well, an encouragement to our mutual rededication at this important moment in our histories to a global ethic of confidence in our fellow men.

In that same address to which I referred some minutes ago, George Washington warned against "the insidious wiles of foreign influence" and the desirability of steering "clear of permanent alliances with

---

any portion of the foreign world". Yet here I stand, a foreigner, endeavouring -- whether insidiously or not you will have to judge -- to urge America ever more permanently into new alliances. That I dare do so is a measure not only of the bond that links Canadians to you but as well of the spirit of America. Thomas Paine's words of two centuries ago are as valid today as when he uttered them:

"My country is the world, and my religion is to do good."

In your continued quest of those ideals, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you Godspeed.

---

S/C