



Statements and Speeches

No. 76/22

NEW BALANCE SOUGHT IN CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Remarks by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, at a Dinner Given in His Honour by the United States Secretary of State, the Honourable Henry A. Kissinger, Washington, D.C., August 17, 1976.

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The close dealings that characterize Canada/United States relations have become almost a byword. Perhaps this is in part because we have had much experience. There has always been a full agenda of common interests to be pursued and problems to be resolved. There always will be. I like to think that the numerous meetings Dr. Kissinger and I have made a point of holding in various parts of the world have played a part in setting the tone for the day-to-day dialogue that takes place between our officials. I regard it as most important that we preserve the habit of ready and continuing willingness to communicate openly.

This means that representatives from two neighbouring nations -- nations who know and trust each other well -- are able to speak candidly and realistically as friends. And, while it does not follow that sentiment and goodwill alone colour our perceptions of each other, neither are these irrelevant or unworthy factors.

At the same time -- in a world still struggling to rise above the confines, imperatives and abuses of national sovereignty -- we remain two nation states of unequal power, each with its own defined interests and objectives, most of which correspond but some of which conflict. It is also true that as a nation, trying firmly yet responsibly to chart the direction of its own national development, Canada has taken a number of policy initiatives that are not directed against, but affect most, its closest friends in the United States.

There is a balance to be struck here, between co-operation in mutual endeavour and the building of one's own national strengths from within. A new balance is not always easy to achieve, but responsible Canadians agree that its achievement is a realistic and worthy goal.

Of course, depending on one's perspective of change, I suspect that Canada's efforts to seek a new balance can be misconstrued. Perhaps this accounts for the conclusion of some observers that Canada-U.S. relations are somehow moving out of phase in certain areas, or that

Canadian actions are chipping away at the traditional harmony between the two countries.

I don't think these assessments objectively describe Canada-U.S. relations. Rather, it seems to me they reflect different perceptions of how Canada/United States relations should evolve. As a result of these differences in perception, Americans and Canadians are holding their respective actions up to a different light.

However, as a people who this year are celebrating the Bicentennial of your revolutionary experience, and who are reaffirming the ideals with which you have shaped your own nation, I am confident that Americans, above all our friends, can respect and appreciate why Canadians are concerned to give due attention to their own evolving national priorities.

It does not seem warranted to take the position that our bilateral relations are somehow less successful because of Canada's efforts to achieve national goals that Americans take for granted. Moreover, and this really goes without saying, it is unrealistic to conclude that Canada would acquiesce in what it regarded as a decline in its relations with the United States.

The active assertion of national will in both nations requires that we acknowledge the legitimate aspirations and interests of the other, that we recognize the changes that are taking place in Canada and the United States, and that we take into account the fundamental desire of Canadians and Americans that their relations, at bedrock, be mutually beneficial.

Against this background, I think we are just beginning a long but orderly process that will involve a reasonable and constructive re-adjustment in our relations, in which each of us grows more aware of the other's proper concerns. We begin with the advantages of a long-standing friendship, and of a substantial degree of common interest. Canadians are the first to recognize the contribution to peace and world betterment that United States international leadership represents. And I think you will agree that there are many ways in which Canada does assist in shouldering the burden.

I look forward to our talks tomorrow as being a prime example of the kind of dialogue that marks our relations. And I am confident the frequent consultations that Dr. Kissinger and I have found so useful will have established a pattern for the future.

S/C