



## Parliamentary Book Shelf

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**Uneasy Neighbo(u)rs: Canada, the USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture** by David T. Jones and David Kilgour, Mississauga, Ontario, John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.

Canadian-American relations have been called “the world’s longest undefended cliché”. The physical and cultural closeness of the two nations has historically generated a complex symbiosis that, while remarkably beneficial in many ways, often produces friction.

David Jones and David Kilgour, in their recent work, *Uneasy Neighbo(u)rs*, provide a fascinating and definitive examination of the relationship, as seen from either side of the border. Jones is a former senior American foreign service officer whose diplomatic career included a posting with the US Embassy in Ottawa. More recently he is known for his frank articles in Canadian print media on foreign affairs and defence matters in this country. Co-author David Kilgour is no stranger to Canadians, having served for many years as an MP from Edmonton in both the Liberal and Conservative Parties. He was Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, and Deputy Speaker of the House.

The uneasy relationship they dissect so thoroughly ranges from trivial differences such as the one reflected in the book’s title, through to matters of great importance that have divided Canadians and Americans, sometimes significantly, over the years. Today it is softwood lumber, mad cow disease, Arctic sover-

eignty and defence burden-sharing. In past decades the conflict has often centred on trade, free or otherwise. Given the natural north-south lines of communications it is not surprising that trade has so often dominated the agenda. Today, for example, it constitutes \$2 billion per day, the greatest exchange of goods and services between any two nations on the planet. Whatever the issue of the day, there is an underlying touchiness in the relationship that calls for study and understanding on both sides of the border.

Despite the closeness of the two North American cultures, the list of differences is a long one. These are often subtle by current international standards, but they can set the two nations on divergent paths, leading to quarrels and intemperate language on occasion (usually by Canadians). The authors delve at length into the principal divergences, in such areas as government, resource management, health care, education, religion, culture, gun laws, capital punishment, world roles and defence.

Given the range and number of such dissimilarities, Canadians are easily offended by the oft-heard declaration by Americans that, “Why, you are just like us!” Ultrasensitive about their identity and having a desire not to be seen as clones of their neighbours to the south, they worry about being so close to the world’s remaining superpower, which for one reason or another seems to pay little regard to Canada.

Americans, for their part, mistrust what they see as socialist tendencies in Canada, whose citizens have traditionally held rather different views on the role of the state in the daily life of its citizens, for example in the increasingly important area of health care. Moreover, the US, in the aftermath of 9/11, developed perceptions that its northern neighbour was weak in defending against the emerging terrorist threat to the continental US. The resulting imposition of restrictions on entry into the US has contributed to Canadian uneasiness.

Indeed, it is in the area of international affairs and defence that the relationship is being put to its most difficult test in the early 21st century, and here Jones and Kilgour reveal a degree of unanimity not found in regard to other issues. They both emphasize that the decline of Canada’s military, especially in the 1990s, has profoundly limited Canada’s ability to project its influence on the international scene. A less well-known but serious decline in Canada’s foreign service has likewise affected Canada’s international posture and reputation. Although the authors acknowledge Canada’s substantial role in Afghanistan, their outlook for a recovery of our defence and diplomacy is thoroughly pessimistic, at least for the shorter term.

Of immense value is the book’s detailed historical review of the Canada-US relationship in each of the main areas of intersection between the two nations. This is especially useful in that in each instance the history is presented in turn from