

## Remarks by U.S. Ambassador David H. Wilkins

### Opening of the International Exhibition to Commemorate the 225th Anniversary Signing of the Treaty of Paris.

May 6, 2008

*As prepared for delivery.*

**Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, May 6, 2008**

*"1783: Subject or Citizen? The Treaty of Paris" is the name of a new exhibition at the Library and Archives Canada. The Library and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration are pleased to commemorate the 225th anniversary signing of the Treaty of Paris. This international exhibition incorporates many valuable archival treasures from the vaults of both institutions, including the rarely seen American copy of the 1783 Treaty of Paris. The exhibition runs from May until August 5, 2008.*

[As prepared for delivery.]

Thank you and merci beaucoup.

I first want to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to archivists Ian Wilson and Allen Weinstein. This exchange represents years of hard work and dedication on their part and also represents why our U.S.-Canada relationship is so strong:

When we work together we simply get things done! So thanks again to you both.

I understand this is the first time the Treaty has left the U.S. archives and I'm thrilled our friends in Canada will get to experience such a vital part of our shared history.

It is my pleasure to be here with all of you this evening to celebrate the 225th anniversary of what many consider "the greatest triumph in the history of American diplomacy."

When you look at what this document accomplished, and who crafted it, it's easy to understand why:

More than two centuries ago the greatest minds, the most far-reaching thinkers of their day, brave, courageous, fearless men of history... John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay... labored for months over the document that would officially acknowledge United States independence from Great Britain.

Their tireless and brilliant negotiations in France formally ended the Revolutionary War and planted the seeds of history half a world away – the fruits of which we still bear today: the creation of a free, democratic North America.

Two sovereign, separate countries, ruled differently, yet defined *not* by those differences but by the common values and shared beliefs held sacred by their people.

I can't help thinking now, centuries later, that as brave Canadian and American forces stand together in Afghanistan as part of the NATO coalition there, working side-by-side to help that young democracy sustain itself, how blessed we are by the wisdom of our forefathers who gave us this precious gift of freedom.

How grateful I am for our troops who are willing to carry liberty's light to distant lands, for they see what our peace negotiators saw in Paris all those years ago... that freedom finds a way. It always finds a way.

History is the best proof of all that one-time enemies can become the closest of allies and the world's greatest hope.

For me this is a powerful reminder yet again of the wonderful friendship we share and the true blessings of liberty that have been granted to us. Blessings we should never take for granted.

Thank you again.

God bless Canada and God bless America.