

Conclusions: Building on Areas of Convergence in Canada-Europe Relations⁹

THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Canada and Europe are confronted by forces pulling them further apart. In Canada, due to centuries of immigration and demographic change, a European character is being transformed. As well “common threads” between Canada and Europe are continually under stress due to increased European integration and enlargement, as well as greater North American economic integration. This trend is evidenced by the low levels of bilateral trade between Canada and Europe,¹⁰ a pattern that will be difficult to reverse as Europe trades more and more within itself.

Nonetheless, Canada and Europe share core common values and interests. These include important quality-of-life concerns, including health care, environment protection, fairness and social justice. Respect for democracy, human rights, diversity, rule of law and participation in public life also form important common values.

Based on these shared experiences and values, Canada and European states should further collaborate on common challenges and international objectives. These include shared approaches to achieving peace and security (and promoting these approaches to other states, particularly the United States); trade and economic issues; Arctic cooperation; federalism; quality-of-life concerns (including environment protection and social programs); democratic challenges (including declining interest in politics and lack of confidence in government institutions); immigration and ethnic diversity; and preserving culture in an era of globalization.

PEACE AND SECURITY: BUILDING ON SHARED WORLDVIEWS

Drawing on a base of common core values, Canada and Europe share similar approaches to international affairs. Reflecting this, September 11 drew Canada and Europe closer. After an initial period of solidarity with the United States, Canada and European states leaned toward an attitude of “friendly scepticism” toward the American-led ‘war on terror.’ Against the current of post-September 11 exceptionalism of the United States, Canada and Europe share a commitment to multilateralism.

Canadians and Europeans hold a critical view of some American policies, including refusal to sign

⁹For further detail on ‘A Changing Relationship’, consult online video presentations from the Retreat, available at www.ecommons.net/ccfpd-europe, including: Ron Halpin (*Opening Comments*) Emanuele Castano (*The European Union and Canada: Laboratoires Identitaires à hauts risques*); Armand de Mestral (*EU-US Agreements: Whither Canada? The Case of Air Transport*); Omar Taspinar (*A View from the US*); Sima Godfrey (*Canada-Europe Scenarios Viewed from the West Coast*); and comments from Jeffrey Peck and Steven Lee.

¹⁰Europe accounts for just six percent of Canada’s international trade. For further details, see Ron Halpin (*Opening Comments*) available in online video at www.ecommons.net/ccfpd-europe.