

consulates situated in most of the major regional centres of the U.S. can be helpful in pursuing this work. Again, there are risks and dangers in this approach. We are sometimes susceptible to the accusation of "interference" in U.S. domestic affairs if we are seen to be forging domestic alliances. But when our vital interests are at stake, such risks may be worth taking.

My third conclusion is that Canada cannot afford to ignore even the first faint signs of a burgeoning threat to its trade interests in the United States. We have nothing to gain and much to lose by playing the ostrich.

My fourth conclusion is that the real bulwark against further restrictions on our access to the U.S. market must be found in some kind of institutional framework. It is only within the structure of a binding agreement that we can define the "rules of the game" and ensure that we have an equal voice in making the decisions that are so vital to our national livelihood and well-being.

It would be foolhardy for a country so dependent upon a single foreign market to leave our access to the vagaries of the local and sectional politics that are the bread and butter of the Congress, or to the twists and turns of GATT diplomacy, where Canadian interests may be trampled in the marathon struggles between the economic superpowers.

If the rules are just and impartially enforced, the rule of law can help to restore some balance to the inequalities wrought by differences in size and power. The United States, like all countries, has its special characteristics. One of them, and one that is sometimes a cause of considerable frustration for us, is the legal focus of the U.S. system. We need to work with the U.S. respect for laws and courts. We need to persuade the Americans that it is in our joint interest to establish a new legal framework that will submit our trading relationship to a system of binding rules and dispute-settlement procedures.

In short, we need to create a system of extra-national trade laws to prevent the politics of protectionism in either country from undoing the integrated market already forged by geography and economics. We need the legal framework of a bilateral trade agreement to make trade less political and more predictable. If we can take some of the politics out of trade, we will have both better trade and better politics. We need this on our side of the border, and the Americans need it too.