

*Tendency  
to favour  
narrowly-focused  
solutions*

means of countering some of the effects of U.S. influence in Canada, and there is no doubt that the public has in recent years evinced considerable concern over the specific issue of U.S. investment. Our data do indeed show some relation between attitudes toward the foreign-investment issue and support for the Third Option, but it must be emphasized that expressed concern over the level of foreign investment does not in itself seem to imply support for more sweeping new directions in foreign policy. Indeed, among the respondents who express most concern about U.S. investment in Canada, there is a tendency to favour more direct and narrowly-focused solutions, such as regulation of investment, review procedures, support for Canadian business, etc., rather than larger-scale changes in foreign and trade policy. While public support does exist for new government initiatives in some specific areas, the public mood with regard to the broader issues of foreign policy is more static and cautious.

Further evidence of this mixed pattern is seen in attitudes towards some other distinct, but nevertheless related, foreign-policy and foreign-trade issues — trade pacts, for example, such as the Auto Pact, or Canadian participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations. In both these rather more specific instances, public opinion displays a pattern similar to that associated with the Third Option, with the largest part of the national sample supporting the status quo, and approximately a third of the respondents indicating some willingness to move in new and non-traditional directions.

#### **Public support**

In general, the surveys tend to show that extensive public support for new directions in Canadian foreign policy, including the Third Option, has not yet developed and that there appears to be no significant shift away from traditional positions on a number of foreign-policy and foreign-trade issues. On the other hand, our data clearly indicate that the generally more nationalistic mood of Canadians in recent years is not a transient phenomenon. Over the past

*Data in this article were obtained from a series of national public opinion surveys conducted annually by Elliott Research Corporation in co-operation with the International Business Studies Research Unit at the University of Windsor. Like all estimates based on sample surveys, figures cited here are subject to a degree of sampling error. Small differences between percentages in particular should be treated with caution. Further information regarding the surveys and copies of reports providing technical information and/or more detailed discussion of findings cited here may be obtained from:*

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five years, the surveys have measured the evolution of support by a majority of Canadians for policies designed to assure greater control of their own future, particularly in the sensitive areas of trade and investment. Still, foreign trade and investment policies and other issues related to foreign policy do not rank high on a list of problems facing the country today, at least as viewed by the public at large.

For most Canadians, economic problems remain the first order of business on the public agenda. To date, the more nationalistic public mood that has developed has not been accompanied by widespread public demand for changes in existing foreign and trade policies. Certainly, Government commitment to the Third Option may eventually "lead" public opinion in new directions, but our evidence suggests that the present public mood in this area has thus far been resistant to such change. Even while the Third Option has been adopted as Government policy ostensibly in response to a changing national climate, much of the public appears as yet unconvinced that it represents the best of the original alternatives.