

broadened from the prevailing, and some would say 'toxic' focus on trade irritants.

In the 1990s, the confluence of growing policy interdependence, the globalization of business, and the re-intensification of a Community foreign policy point to a new plateau of complexity in bilateral EC-Canadian relations. At the same time, the number of important actors is on the rise: whereas before Canada could target the Commission and a few key Member States, now it also has to consider the growing authority of the European Parliament and the central role of the Council of Ministers. All these developments have made the task considerably more arduous of consolidating existing bilateral mechanisms of cooperation and consultation. Indeed, the TAD is a timely step in this direction since it is a recognition that, given the end of the Cold War and the movement towards European Union, the institutional and policy-making framework of Canada's trans-Atlantic relations would increasingly become anachronistic without a reform. Nevertheless, it cannot be expected to significantly stem the diminution of Canadian influence in Europe in the post-Cold War era.

As we have suggested, the significance of the TAD should not be overstated. On the one hand, it provides a framework within which existing bilateral mechanisms can be utilized and new ones developed. In addition to its political significance, it may yet offer a fertile environment for collaboration on such issues as competition policy and technical standards. Over the longer term, it may facilitate collaboration on issues of 'cooperative security' such as anti-terrorism, migration, and the interdiction of illicit drugs as well as in areas such as the environment and social policy. Less obviously, the TAD is also successful in preventing Canada's isolation in face of increasing US bilateralism vis-à-vis the EC.

On the other hand, the TAD does not introduce any fundamental changes to existing institutional mechanisms, particularly not to the unfulfilled 1976 Framework Agreement; there are no binding contractual commitments to make the TAD 'real'.⁸ That is to say, because the TAD has a broad mandate, there is a concern that mechanisms set up under it to facilitate political ties will become ritualistic (as some observers contend existing bilateral mechanisms already are). We argue that the new formalized political links will be more effective in conjunction with a revitalization of existing fora (or the creation of new ones) to confront the hard issues, particularly of trade access, that have risen in importance due to the emergence of the Single European Market (SEM) and the new issues of trade policy (i.e., intellectual property, investment, services etc.) that are being incorporated into the multilateral trade negotiations (MTN). The thrust of this analysis is that, at this stage, the TAD is largely symbolic.