

and that Canadians are engaged in a gallant struggle to free themselves from bondage to an imperial bully.

The relationship, however, is perceived differently by a large majority of the Canadians responsible for the conduct of external relations, and also by the foreign experts who have either visited Canada or had extensive experience with Canadians in such international forums as the United Nations, the Commonwealth or NATO. Canadian decision-makers agree overwhelmingly that the United States is "Canada's best friend". They also agree that Canadians gain through economic interdependence with the United States; that they do surprisingly well in bilateral negotiations with Washington — certainly better than might be expected from the disparity in population, wealth and military power; that the United States treats Canada better than it does other countries; and that Canada enjoys reasonable independence in its external policies. Many can see no significant difference in the interests of the two nations. All seem very confident that the United States would defend Canada against any potential aggressor, and almost as confident that it would never use its military might against Canada. Can there be another country, one is led to wonder, quite so fortunate in its relations with a more powerful neighbour?

But that, of course, is only half the picture. Most Canadian decision-makers not only cite relations with the United States as Canada's most important external problem but agree that high priority should be given to measures to strengthen Canada's independence and cultural identity vis à vis the United States. They oppose further steps of an apparently integrative character, such as Canada-United States free trade, sectoral arrangements like the Auto Pact, or a continental energy package. Most of them support the "Third Option", the Government's declared policy of intensifying relations with other countries in order to diminish Canada's vulnerability to changes in American society or American policies.

Mood reflected

How is one to explain this apparent inconsistency? In part the Ottawa establishment may be reflecting less its own convictions than its reading, not necessarily accurate, of the popular mood. The current rise in Canadian nationalism is generally believed to have been inspired by the high degree of economic integration with the United States a phenomenon that "peaked" some years back. It appears to relate more

closely, however, to the decline in the perceived Soviet threat to North America. Even the few Canadians so old-fashioned as still to be worried about the Cold War and the arms race are likely to agree that there is little possibility of Canada doing much to reduce these threats. The global military balance appears too crude to be significantly affected by Canadian action.

With the heavyweights engaged in close dialogue, moreover, the risks appear slight of the world stumbling into Armageddon. Dr. Kissinger, by pursuing the *détente* policies advocated by Canada for a couple of decades, has largely deprived Canada of its moderator role. This is not to claim that he pursues those policies *because* of Canada's advocacy. Even if one sees scope for further improvement in U.S. global policies, it is doubtful that reasonably-behaved smaller powers could obtain much of a hearing in contemporary Washington. Under such conditions, it is not necessarily irresponsible or illogical to give priority to less awesome threats, such as peaceful absorption into the Great Republic.

The Canadian decision-making *élite* is clearly not motivated by dislike of Americans or fear of overt American imperialism. The contrary is closer to the truth. Precisely because the United States, as viewed from the North, has such a benign image, many Canadians worry about their long-term capacity to resist the "continental pull". Canadians interact easily with Americans and share most of their values. Even at a time when the "American Dream" is tarnished, and Americans are indulging in an orgy of self-criticism, the fascination of the United States is difficult to resist. The homogenization of values is by no means confined to North America, but it appears to be accelerated by the extraordinarily high volume of trans-border trade, travel and communication. The most anti-American Canadians are prone to be the most absorbed in American events, and the most active carriers of American values. Movements in the United States critical of American society or policy quickly inspire echoes in Canada. Not without reason, John Holmes has spoken of the "Americanization of Canadian anti-Americanism". If present trends are permitted to continue, many fear, a subsequent generation may well conclude that the differences between the two nations no longer warrant the expensive trappings of Canadian sovereignty.

If the Americans had only been rougher in their treatment of Canada, and had created memories comparable to those

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