

Trade Negotiations and Cultural Industries

Our government's intention to promote culture in Canada through direct financial support is simply not at issue in a trade negotiation. The issue of whether or not specific Canadian cultural industries require special measures to assist them is a domestic issue that falls outside trade negotiations. We do not expect the extensive framework of American government support for similar institutions in the U.S. to be considered in trade negotiations either.

No country is more open than Canada to foreign cultural products. Anyone who doubts that should look at our book stores, our theatres, our cinemas, our magazine racks, our broadcasting system, our galleries and museums. Equally, no country in the world is more committed than Canada to making the rules of international commerce more transparent and fair.

But not all sectors are of equal weight. Canada, as do other countries, reserves the right to make distinctions between sectors based on certain explicit criteria. The United States casts the net of "national security" over more areas than does Canada; Canadians cast the importance of cultural identity more widely than do Americans. Canada's commitment to maintaining a vibrant, independent cultural identity should not stop us from seeking better trade rules for cultural industries. From the federal government's point of view, better rules are both possible and desirable.

We are prepared to discuss with the United States whatever concerns it may have. We expect a similar openness on their side. No doubt, as the negotiations progress, the U.S. side will state that it cannot meet certain Canadian demands; no doubt we will do the same. This is how negotiations work.

But we can make certain understandings explicit. We are prepared to discuss with the United States ways we can strengthen cultural industries through trade. Under no circumstances are we prepared to agree to any measure which weakens those Canadian industries or undermines their capacity to serve our cultural needs.

Canadian culture is strong and vibrant and it will grow and flourish. But I am acutely conscious that Canadian culture and the Canadian economy must grow together. This government believes we can strengthen our cultural identity while at the same time building on our economic relationship with the United States. That is the modern reality in Canada.

There is a relationship between this Government's desire to assist, promote and encourage the growth and vibrancy of Canadian culture both at home and abroad, and our willingness to sit down with our trading partners to work out a fairer, more predictable environment for all industries, including cultural