

What perhaps most impressed Canadian officials in Washington monitoring the EC-US discussions was not the decision of the US to reinforce and regularize its relations with the Community. After all, many of the changes that had been imposed and implemented were a logical extension of past activities and reflected the fact that the US lacked an agreement similar to the 1976 Canada-EC Framework Agreement that ensured regular bilateral discussions at ministerial and official levels. Rather, from the Canadian perspective, it was the sheer interest evinced by political appointees in the State Department in pursuing a relationship with the EC that had not hitherto been evident.²⁹ Canadian officials noted the recognition by the US of the Community's role as the single most successful integrative institution in Europe; and that the US would require — irrespective of the prevailing European architecture — an expanded and formalized political relationship as part of its strategy to ensure that its interests in Europe were protected.

iii) Canadian Responses to the Momentum of European Integration

The implications for Canada of increasingly close EC-US bilateral relations — a relationship that has at various periods in its history been beset by mutual recriminations³⁰ — were not lost on officials and Cabinet Ministers in Ottawa. The Washington-Brussels dialogue on closer relations once more raised the spectre of Canadian marginalization in Europe.³¹ It has been suggested that the reference to "trans-Atlanticism" in the EC-US discussions was bound to hit a raw nerve on the Canadian side since trans-Atlanticism has historically always included Canada.³² But perhaps the best way of putting the development of the TAD into perspective is to note that there was no clearly predominant causal factor: not the momentum of EC-US discussions (although they undoubtedly had an impact); nor, as we shall see, the effect of the dramatic geopolitical developments in eastern Europe on the thinking of the Conservative Cabinet; nor the role played by Canadian officials, primarily at the department of External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC), in interpreting and reacting to the developments in Eastern and Western Europe by undertaking reviews of Canada's policy framework towards the regions. Rather, these were all mutually reinforcing variables.

The story of Canadian policy responses to the evolution of European integration in 1989 and 1990 is not one of mass movements, of advocacy groups, or of Parliament. These actors played a relatively minor role. The choices available to Canada were contingent on the political leadership (displayed by PM Mulroney and SSEA Clark at the time), perception, and timing; they ought to be examined as an instance of the Conservative Cabinet realizing that its existing European framework was anachronistic, and of the bureaucratic politics and coalition-building in EAITC -