

APPENDIX A - MONTREAL FOCUS GROUP REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

This memorandum summarizes the results of two focus group discussions dealing with free trade which were conducted in Montreal on July 15. These groups were part of a series of groups conducted across Canada by Decima Research for the Department of External Affairs. One group consisted of higher socio-economic status (SES) participants whose annual family or household income exceeded \$40,000, and the other included lower SES individuals, most of whom had annual family or household incomes below \$40,000 per annum.

B. Attitudes Towards the U.S.

While overall positive feelings towards the Americans as a people are present, generally negative perceptions were held of the U.S. government. Some participants blamed President Reagan for the United States' overbearing role in world affairs and what they described as a U.S.A. first or nothing attitude, and many people viewed the American government's initiatives in other countries, especially Nicaragua, as undue interference. A concern shared by many was a belief in the aggressive nature of the U.S. government, both in territorial and economic terms.

While a minority of participants viewed the Americans as "good" neighbours, again referring to the people as opposed to the state, a plurality felt that Canada had to toe the line if it wanted to maintain a good rapport with the United States. Many believed Canada's economy was totally dependent on the United States. A few also thought that if Canada was to take initiatives that the Americans disliked, Canada would have to reverse its position or else face American sanctions. Some felt the United States never assumes its share of the blame for bilateral disputes, problems or issues (several people