

can give a basic orientation to policies. But they are not policies themselves. Within the limits of any one of these options, quite a wide range of different practical measures could be adopted. Depending on circumstances, quite different policy mixes could be consistent with the option in question. All the option gives you is the sense of direction in which you want to be heading.

Even this may over-state the case. There is a real difference between the first option on the one hand and the second and third on the other. The first is not really a strategy at all. It is reactive. It involves waiting on events. It means facing individual issues as they arise, and deciding these issues on their own merits, not in relation to some larger purpose. In this sense, it does not pretend to tell you where you are going. The second and third options, by contrast, involve choosing a goal, acting rather than reacting, and judging individual issues in relation to the goal chosen. In the case of the second option, the goal would be integration with the United States in some form; in the case of the third option, the goal would be an economy and culture less vulnerable to the continental pull.

All three options are of course abstractions. Like all abstractions, they tend to simplify complex matters. But the distinctions they draw between the various courses open to Canada are basically valid and useful. None of these options is a straw man, set up only for the sake of being knocked down. Nor is this a case of three alternatives, of which two are plainly unacceptable extremes and the third merely a compromise with no virtue other than the fact that it is a compromise. On the contrary, each option has a perfectly respectable argument that can be made for it. Each has to be thought through in its own right. And you will find that the article on Canada-United States relations tries to pursue the logic of each option in a detached and dispassionate way; it gives a fair picture of the implications in all three cases.

The Government has given these options careful consideration. The published article on Canada-United States relations in fact represents the distillation of a number of discussions in the Cabinet and studies by officials. This process has been going on for the better part of a year. The Government's conclusion is quite clear: our choice is option three. We believe that option one, the pragmatic option, runs a serious risk over time of weakening Canada's relative position. We believe that option two, the option of integration, is unacceptable for a variety of reasons. In the Government's view, the best choice for Canada is option three: to pursue a comprehensive long-term strategy to strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of our national life and in the process to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability.

The third option, then, demands some additional comments. To begin, let me repeat: an option is not a policy;