

The Canadian Embassy in Washington is perhaps not the best place from which to assess the degree to which the Government has been consciously applying the Third Option in individual policy decisions and to what extent such decisions have simply reflected the ordinary play of political and economic forces in our changing and growing society. It seems obvious, nonetheless, that a number of decisions — to withdraw from the Canadian editions of foreign-owned magazines (e.g. *Time*) tax status originally intended to support only genuinely Canadian publications, to require screening of takeovers and certain other categories of foreign investment in Canada and to seek to develop a "contractual link" with the European community, for instance — do reflect the same thinking that led the Government to conclude, on a more philosophical plane, that the Third Option was the correct one.

Focal point

It is surely also true that this statement of objectives in our relations with the United States, once formulated and accepted, has provided a focal point to which a great number of individual issues can be and have been related. It has become customary to ask ourselves not only whether a proposed course of action is sensible or desirable when considered in isolation but also how it fits with the broader and longer-range objectives for Canada formulated by the Government. This does not mean that such considerations never before entered into policy-making, but the fact that we have in some detail defined where we want to go in our relations with the United States obviously makes it easier to think about our approach to individual issues in a broader context.

The Third Option is not, of course, nor was it intended to be, a detailed prescription for every element in Canada-U.S. relations. The Canadian Embassy in Washington is particularly conscious of the fact that, whatever conceptual framework may be chosen, our relations do involve a multitude of practical, day-to-day encounters, most of which go smoothly and take place in the private sector and never hit the headlines. With such a variety and multiplicity of moving parts in our relationship and with two separate national jurisdictions providing the backdrop, it is not surprising that there should be occasional points of friction — even a burnt-out bearing now and then. On this level — and it is the level at which the majority of Canadians become aware of Canada-U.S. relations — our policy, wheth-

er or not the Third Option, can only be seen in a framework or way of approaching the relationship, not a fully-developed blueprint.

While any Canadian Government with the power over recent years would have been expected to act, and no doubt would have acted, to protect Canadian energy resources (where the essence of our policy in fact, goes back to the beginning of the century), the Third Option does provide a guideline against which such decisions are now considered. Any Canadian Government might well have decided that because of our own needs, it had become necessary to phase-down oil exports to the United States and that it was essential to defend the Canadian interest, in part, to cross-border environmental issues. Acceptance of the Third Option, however, provided a general rationale for so doing and made it less respectable to argue for continental solutions to problems involving both countries. The Third Option seems to have given expression to the aspirations of Canadians for a greater sense of identity *vis-à-vis* the United States and may well have proved self-fulfilling in encouraging them to achieve it.

What the Canadian Embassy in Washington is well placed to help assess is whether or not our choice of the Third Option and the policies deriving from it have caused a reaction in the United States or a change in the American perception of Canada that has created or will create a deterioration in our relations. The short answer is that our choice has not led and need not lead, to any deterioration in the intergovernmental relationship as long as Canada is not perceived, as Secretary Kissinger put it in Ottawa, as defining itself in opposition to the United States.

Nationalist dilemma

This touches, of course, on one of the fundamental dilemmas and recurring temptations that face spokesmen for Canadian nationalism. The dilemma is that of identifying, emphasizing and encouraging Canada's positive distinctiveness from our neighbour, ally and friend without being or becoming anti-American. In my view, the vast majority of Canadians are not. The temptation is to urge support for nationalist positions or to urge the adoption of policies not for the often valid Canadian reasons that lie behind them but because of their supposed anti-American appeal. If spokesmen for Canadian nationalism attribute anti-American motives to Canadian policies at home, then they will be seen that way in the U.S.A.

*Individual issues
now placed in
broader context*