

For example, U.S. corn exports. The U.S. currently has 64 subsidy programs in place for corn. In Canada's countervail of U.S. corn exports, only four programs were penalized.

Under mirror legislation, Canada could countervail 75 percent of those subsidy programs rather than 6 percent.

But that's not all. The U.S. has a wide array of subsidy programs in virtually every sector of the economy. Do not think that these would go unnoticed or untouched.

Willy de Clercq, the European Community's top trade official, said last week that, if the Omnibus Bill passes, the Community will be forced to retaliate. He also said that this legislation will pull the plug on the current GATT round which was launched with great expectations in Uruguay a year ago.

What U.S. legislators, in fact legislators around the world, must keep in mind is that their actions today will determine the shape of the international trading system well into the 21st century.

What we need is forward-looking trade policy. As Marshall McLuhan so aptly put it, we must not march backwards into the future.

What we need is a new spirit of enterprise in North America, one which values partnership above partisanship. Twelve European countries have demonstrated the benefits of partnership without losing their identity: sovereign nations working together to bring growth, prosperity and jobs to their citizens.

What we need is the grand vision, on both sides of the border, of a North American economic order where, in the words of Canadian scholar Maxwell Cohen, certain institutional mechanisms would be essential to protect independence while jointly operating the emerging system.

Simply put, do our political leaders have the vision to see past the next election.

This is the message I think Americans and Canadians should consider. As editorial writers, you are in a privileged position to influence public opinion, to make the case for liberalized trade.