

Underlying Issues and the Context of the Study

Underlying this study are issues that have been a subject of debate in the United States and in Canada for some time. The Canadian/American business relationship represents the largest trade partnership in the world as the Canadian and American border is the longest unguarded border. Yet, while these two nations are close in terms of their shared interests in an economic and broader sense, each nation has its own economic traditions that have been shaped by its independent pattern of historical development. The relationship suggests certain basic strategy questions. Given the simultaneous closeness and independence, should Canada's strategy for advancing its economic objectives be to reinforce its relations with its traditional friends, such as those who advocate free trade? Or, should a communications program to improve investment and trade relations be targeted at interests within the United States that have opposed generalized free trade but might welcome a special economic relationship with Canada? These strategic policy questions establish a theme that underlies the examination of attitudes contained in this study of American economic leaders.