

III. CURRENT SITUATION AND RECENT CHANGES IN DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

Participants were asked to consider the state of national unity, relations with the United States, and domestic economic growth in this context.

A. National Unity

Most participants said they felt more confident than they used to about the state of national unity. The prevailing opinion was that for a variety of reasons, threats to unity had diminished. For most, even in the Vancouver groups, this subject immediately brought to mind the relationship between Quebec and the rest of the country, rather than the feelings of Western alienation which had been widely reported in recent years.

When discussing the easing of tensions within Quebec, the Vancouver participants were quick to point to the issue surrounding the resignation of several Parti Quebecois Cabinet Ministers as evidence of an eroding separatist sentiment.

Among the reasons cited for improved national unity were the election of the new government, described as having a truly national mandate and a more conciliatory approach to relations with the provinces.

A number of participants also suggested that the economic recession forced many people to put aside regional differences and focus on solving economic problems.

Finally, a number of Vancouver participants argued that one of the main reasons behind the improvement in unity was a growing recognition and acceptance of the place of