

Communication

Canada



Listening to Canadians on the Canadian-American Relationship

Communications Survey

Winter 2003

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Enquête sur les communications

Listening to Canadians on the Canadian-American Relationship

Communications Survey

Winter 2003

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Published by Communication Canada in July 2003.

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Research Branch at (613) 992-6906.

Catalogue Number: PF4-7/2003-1-3

ISBN: 0-662-67276-3

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Introduction

The mandate of Communication Canada is to improve communications between the Government of Canada and Canadians. In doing so, it provides corporate communications products and services, and supports the Government's commitment to a strong and united Canada.

Within this framework, Communication Canada carries out relevant research activities and shares results throughout the Government of Canada to increase understanding of societal trends, issues and events affecting government communications.

For the first time, the survey examined perceptions of the Canadian-American relationship. In order to develop a greater understanding of this complex relationship, two separate studies were conducted. Questions designed by Communication Canada were included in the Ipsos-Reid U.S. omnibus survey and two modules of the winter 2003 *Listening to Canadians* survey were devoted to this topic. This report comprises the results of both studies, which were conducted prior to the launch of the war in Iraq, at a time when debate on the issue was uppermost in the minds of respondents in both countries.

GPC Research conducted the fieldwork for the *Listening to Canadians* survey. The Canadian-American questions were posed between February 11 and 17, and February 25 and March 3, 2003. A total of 2833 Canadians were interviewed. We continued our practice of periodic oversampling in Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

The Ipsos-Reid U.S. omnibus survey took place between February 28 and March 6, 2003. A total of 1996 adult Americans were interviewed across the United States.

Executive Summary

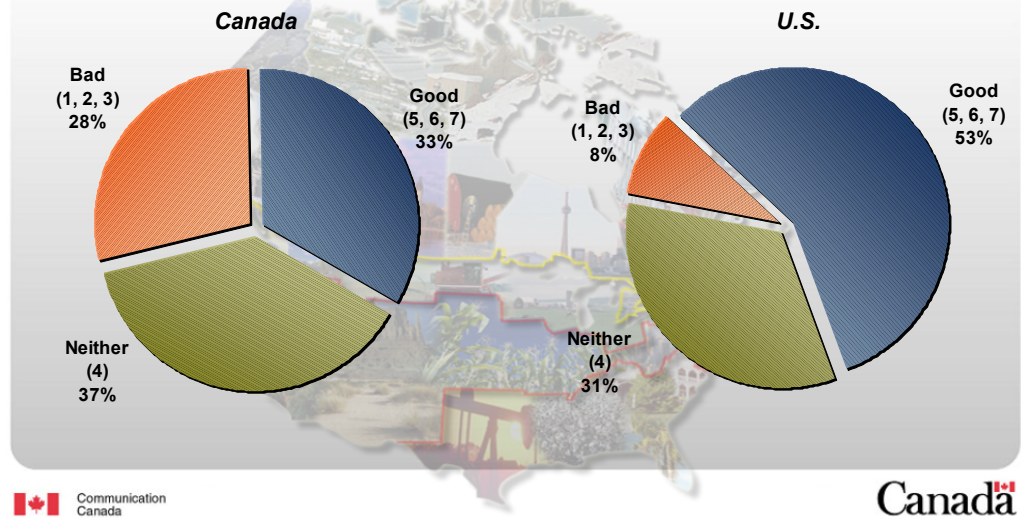
This report is based on results from Communication Canada's *Listening to Canadians* survey of winter 2003 and a mirror study conducted in the United States at the same time. The key findings are as follows:

- Canadians are divided on the state of current relations between the governments of Canada and the United States. Roughly one-third of Canadians feel the relationship is good, another third say neither good nor bad, while a final third say it is poor. However, a majority of Canadians feel the relationship has been worsening over the past two years. American opinion stands in stark contrast. A majority of Americans feel the relationship is good and that it has remained essentially unchanged over the past two years.
- Canadians are more able to point out important issues facing the North American relationship. Not surprisingly, with the war pending at the time of the survey, most Canadians believed that the Iraq issue was the most important. Conversely, nearly one in two Americans were unaware of any major issues challenging the relationship between the two governments.
- A strong majority of Canadians say they are aware of trade disputes pending between Canada and the United States, with 88% of these pointing to the current lumber dispute. Moreover, when it comes to trade, a majority of Canadians also feel that the United States has been unfair in its dealings with Canada. Nevertheless, they are confident in the Government of Canada's ability to resolve any present or future problems in the relationship, including those related to trade. A strong majority of Americans are unaware of any trade disputes. Of those who are aware, a majority are unable to specify any particular dispute.
- Regarding support for greater co-operation on a series of bilateral issues, a majority of Canadians are in favour of closer ties on border security, increased trade, and common environmental policies and defence. They are less supportive of greater co-operation on issues such as immigration, economic and foreign policies as well as the possibility of a common currency, as these may be perceived as limiting Canadian sovereignty.
- Americans are significantly more supportive of greater ties with Canada on all issues measured, the exception being a common currency. They are most interested in co-operation on border security, which they believe will make North America safer and protect their economy. Furthermore, Americans are confident that Canada can be relied upon to help protect the homeland security of the United States. This sentiment is especially true for Americans living along the Canadian border.



State of Canadian-American Relations: Canada–U.S. Comparison

“How would you rate the current relations between the Government of Canada and the U.S. Government?”

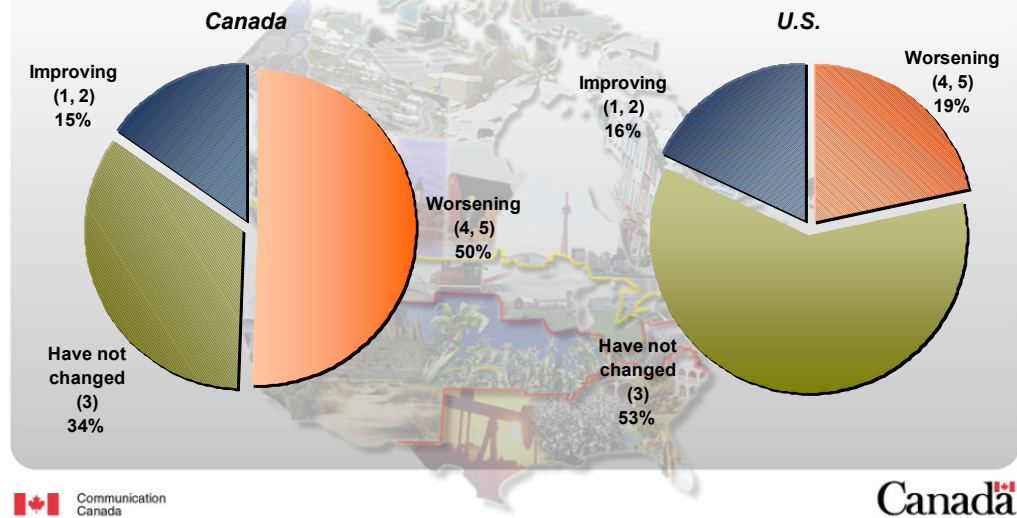


- Just one-third of Canadians believe current relations between the Government of Canada and the U.S. government are good, while a majority of Americans think so.
- In Canada, the Atlantic provinces have the most positive view of the relationship, nearly half (47%) saying the relationship is good.
- Canadians earning \$60,000 or more and university-educated Canadians are more likely to rate the state of relations as bad, at 35% and 33% respectively.
- In the United States, northern tier residents are most likely to report that relations between our governments are good, with nearly six in ten (59%) feeling this way.
- In the southern tier, slightly less than half of Americans (48%) hold the same opinion.
- Sixty-one per cent (61%) of Americans in the highest earning bracket (US\$50,000+) rate the state of relations as good compared to 49% of those who make less than US\$50,000.



Trends in the Canadian-American Relationship: Canada-U.S. Comparison

“Over the past two years, would you say that Canada-U.S. relations have been improving, have not changed or have been getting worse?”



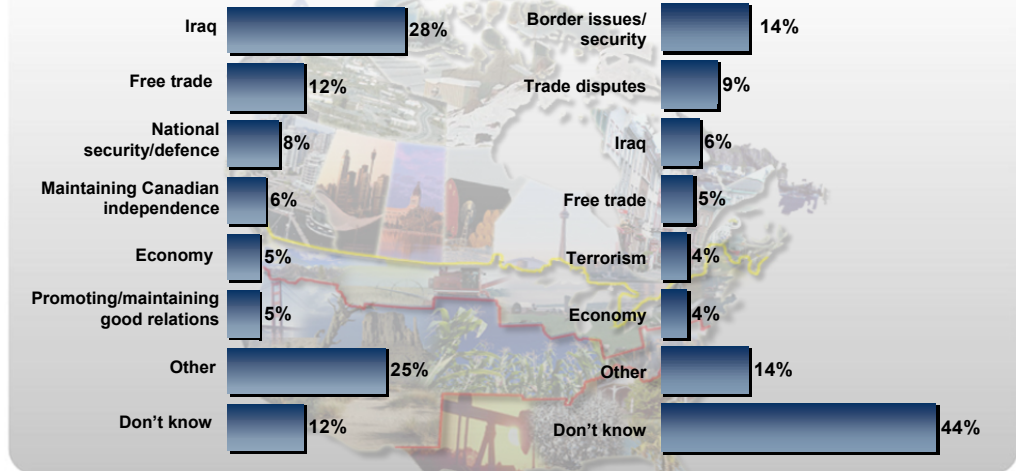
- One in two Canadians believe that the Government of Canada’s relationship with the U.S. government has worsened over the past two years.
- Americans hold a different view. A majority of them feel the relationship has remained essentially unchanged. This is particularly true of Americans with college education (60%), those aged 18 to 34 (57%) and those earning more than US\$50,000 annually (57%).
- Perceptions that the relationship has worsened are strongest in Alberta, where 66% feel the relationship has deteriorated (59% in Western Canada as a whole).
- Canadians earning \$60,000 or more (60%), university-educated Canadians (58%) and Canadians aged 55 and older (56%) are most likely to feel that the relationship has worsened over the past two years.



Top-of-Mind Issues: Canadian-American Relationship

"What do you think is the MOST important issue facing the Government of Canada's relationship with the United States government?"

"What do you think is the MOST important issue facing the U.S. Government's relationship with the Government of Canada?"

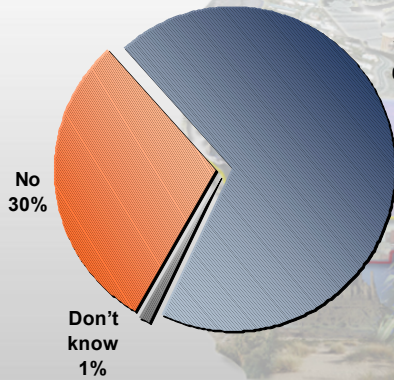


- When asked to name the most important issue facing the Canadian-American relationship, almost three in ten Canadians mentioned Iraq.
- On the other hand, only 6% of Americans mentioned Iraq, while 14% reported border issues and security as the most important issue facing our relationship, followed by trade disputes.
- Nearly half the American population (44%) could not identify any specific issue. This suggests that the Canadian-American relationship is not a concern for most Americans.
- Nevertheless, 63% of northern tier residents, that is, those with greater exposure to Canada and the bilateral relationship, were able to identify an important issue. Conversely, only 51% of Americans living in the southern tier states could do the same.

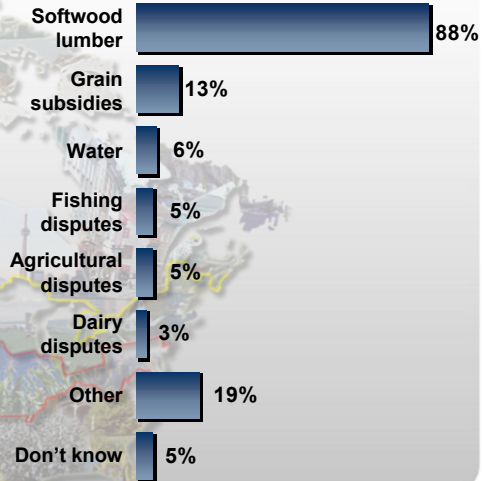


Canadian Awareness of Trade Disputes

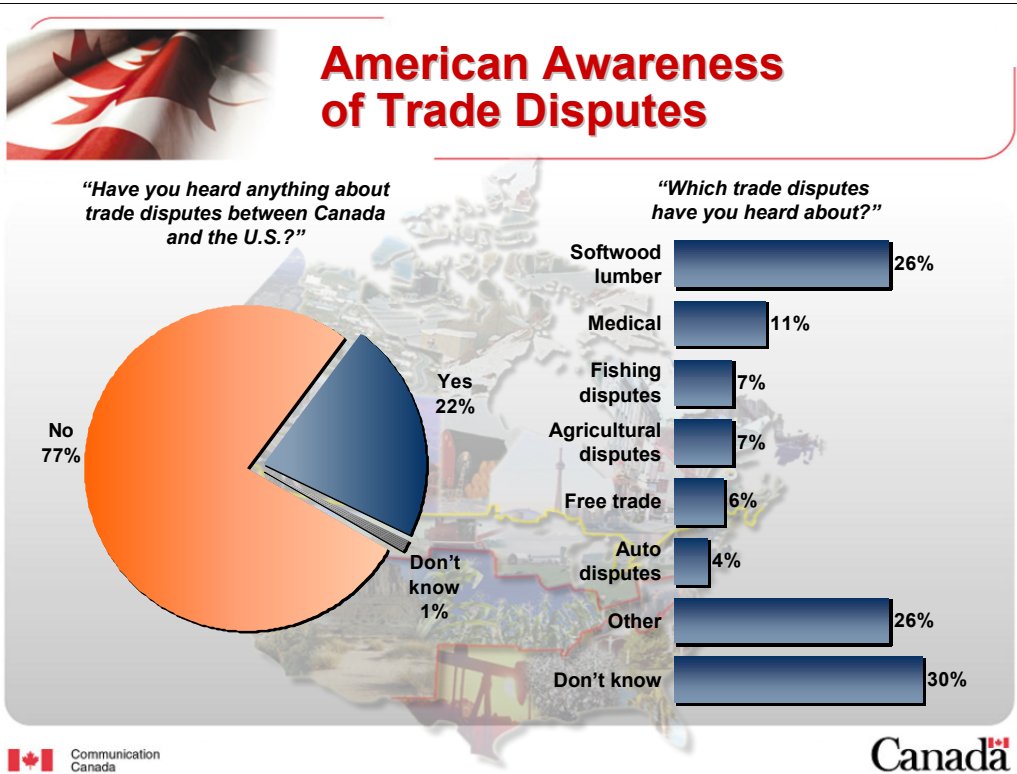
"Have you heard anything about trade disputes between Canada and the U.S.?"



"Which trade disputes have you heard about?"



- Canadians are very aware of trade disputes between Canada and the United States. Nearly seven in ten say they have heard about disputes.
- Of those who have heard about trade disputes, almost 90% mention softwood lumber.
- Awareness of this issue is particularly high in British Columbia (94%) and Alberta (90%).
- Prairie Canadians are more likely to mention the grain subsidies issue. This issue was mentioned by almost half the respondents (49%) in Saskatchewan, by 29% in Manitoba and 22% in Alberta.



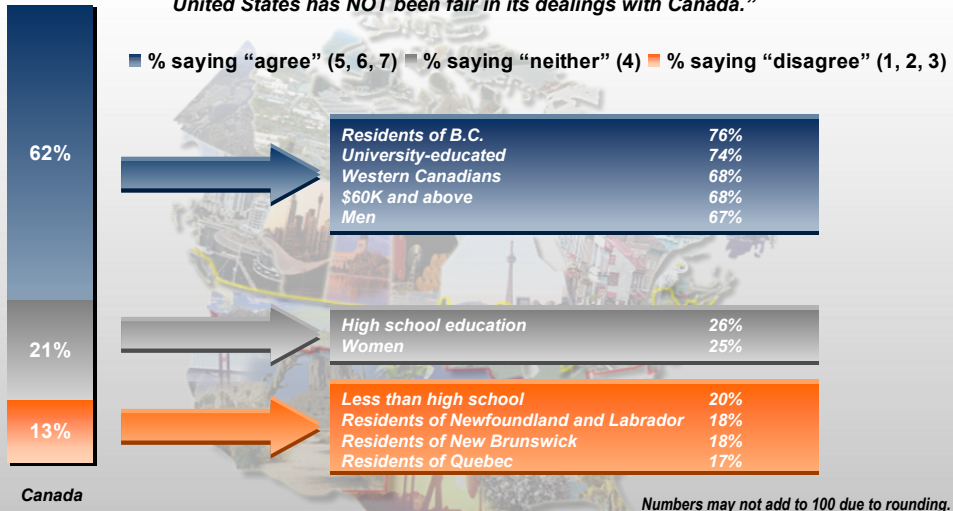
- In sharp contrast to Canadians, more than three-quarters of Americans are not aware of any trade disputes between Canada and the United States.
- Furthermore, close to one third of those respondents who are aware of disputes are unable to identify any specific issue.
- Awareness among Americans is higher in the northern tier, where almost 30% report hearing about trade disputes.
- Trade disputes mentioned by these Americans include those involving softwood lumber, fishing, grain subsidies, beef, water, garbage, and potatoes.
- Despite the fact that softwood lumber is the issue most often mentioned in both countries, only one in four (26%) of the 22% of Americans aware of trade disputes mention this particular dispute. This contrasts with 88% of the 69% of Canadians aware of trade disputes.
- American men (28%) are more likely to be aware of trade disputes than are women (17%).



Attitudes on Trade: Canada

“When it comes to trade disputes, the United States has NOT been fair in its dealings with Canada.”

■ % saying “agree” (5, 6, 7) ■ % saying “neither” (4) ■ % saying “disagree” (1, 2, 3)



Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

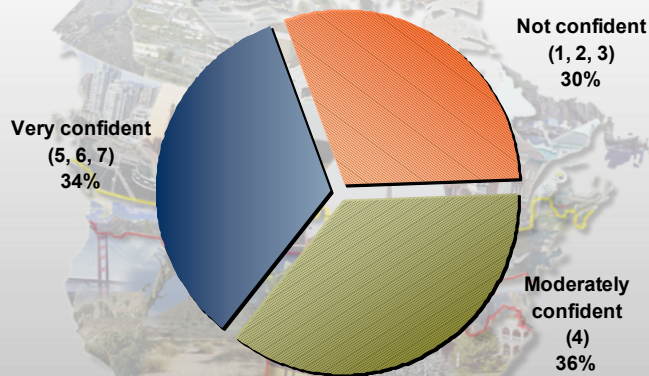


- A majority of Canadians believe that, when it comes to trade disputes, the United States has not been fair in its dealings with Canada.
- In British Columbia, where softwood lumber disputes are a concern, more than three-quarters (76%) believe this to be true.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of university-educated Canadians agree with the statement, compared with less than half of those who have not completed high school (47%).
- A strong majority of Canadian men (67%) agree that the U.S. has not been fair in its dealings with Canada, while just over half (56%) of Canadian women believe the same.



Confidence in GoC to Resolve Problems with the United States

"How confident are you in the ability of the Government of Canada to resolve present or future problems in Canada's relationship with the United States?"

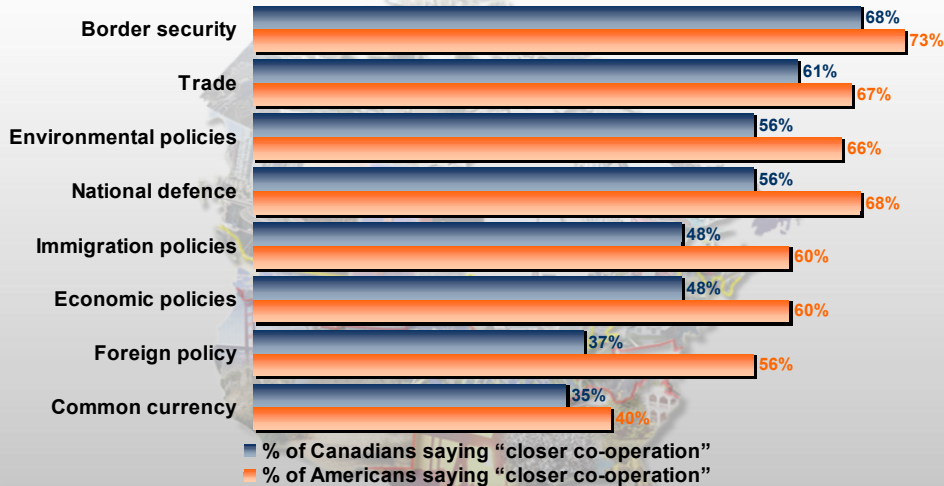


- Despite perceptions that, when it comes to trade disputes, the U.S. has been unfair in its dealings with Canada, 70% of Canadians are moderately or very confident in the Government's ability to resolve present or future problems with the United States.
- Of those Canadians with less than high school education, 45% report moderate confidence in the Government of Canada to resolve these problems.
- Furthermore, 46% of young people (aged 18-34) are confident in the Government's abilities in this area while 35% of those aged 35-54 are not.



Canada-U.S. Co-operation

"Would you say that you support or oppose greater co-operation in each of the following areas?"

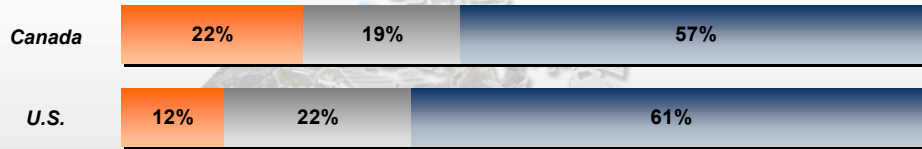


- Americans are more likely to support greater co-operation between Canada and the United States than are Canadians.
- The biggest gaps between Canadians and Americans are in the areas of foreign policy (19-point gap); national defence, immigration policies and economic policies (12-point gaps); and environmental policies (10-point gap).
- In our focus group discussions held in Canada, participants tended to base their rationale for closer relations on tangible benefits to Canada or a sense of necessity. For example, border security and trade benefit Canada and are also seen as necessary given geography and the current mood in the United States. On the other hand, participants opposed greater co-operation on issues such as foreign policy and common currency, where they see no obvious benefit and fear loss of Canadian sovereignty.
- University-educated Canadians are more likely to oppose co-operation on all issues than Canadians with less formal education.
- A strong majority of Americans in the northern tier support greater co-operation on border security, national defence and economic policies.

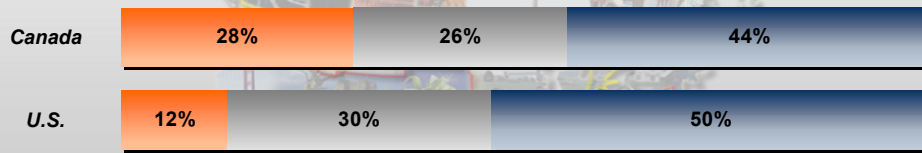


Common Border Policies: Canada–U.S. Comparison

Creating common border policies between Canada and the United States will make all of North America safer.



Creating common border policies between Canada and the United States will protect our economy.



■ % saying "disagree" (1, 2, 3) ■ % saying "neither" (4) ■ % saying "agree" (5, 6, 7)

Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

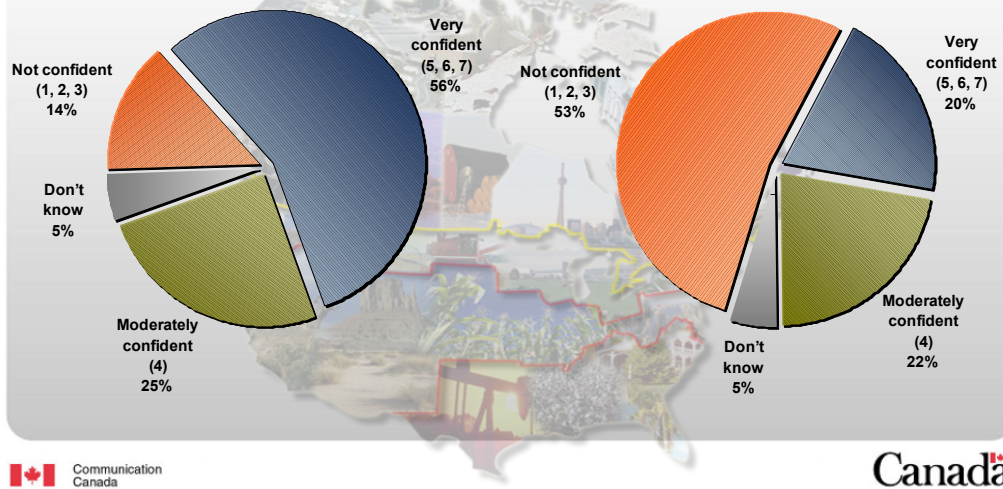
- A majority of both Canadians and Americans agree that creating common border policies will make all of North America safer.
- Canadians, however, are less convinced that doing so will protect Canada's economy.
- Americans, on the other hand, are four times more likely to agree than to disagree that common border policies will protect their economy.
- Sixty-five per cent (65%) of Americans older than 55 believe that creating common border policies will make North America safer, compared with 56% of those in the youngest age bracket (18-34).
- Nearly three in ten (29%) university-educated Canadians disagree that common border policies will make all of North America safer.



American Confidence in Canada and Mexico

"How confident are you in the reliability of Canada in helping protect the homeland security of the United States?"

"How confident are you in the reliability of Mexico in helping protect the homeland security of the United States?"



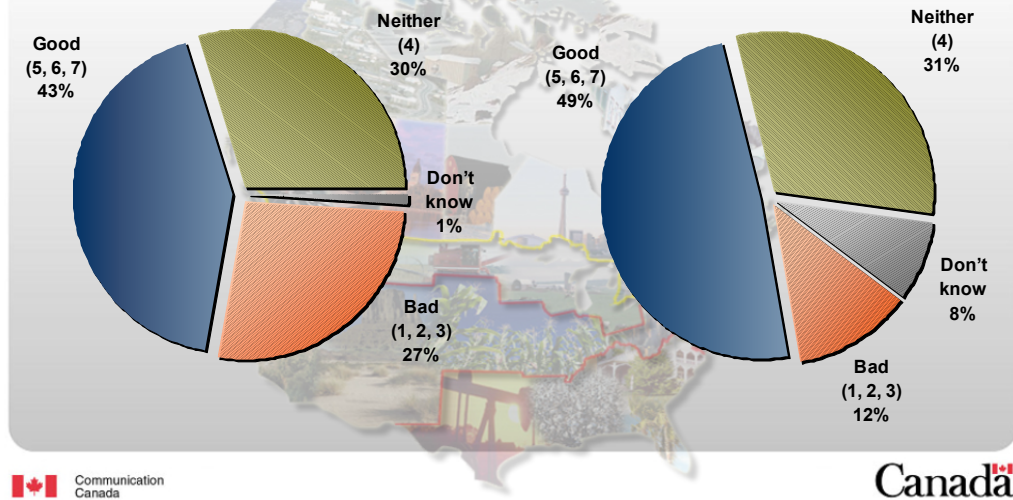
- The great majority of Americans are either very confident (56%) or moderately confident (25%) in the reliability of Canada as a defence partner.
- Confidence in Canada is strongest in the northern tier states, where 64% feel very confident, and the central/western states, where 57% feel very confident.
- This is not the case when it comes to Mexico. Only 42% are very or moderately confident in Mexico's ability to contribute to American security.



Managing the Canadian-American Relationship

"How well do you think the Government of Canada is managing its overall relationship with the United States?"

"How well do you think the U.S. Government is managing its overall relationship with Canada?"



- Finally, at the time of these surveys, despite the looming war in Iraq and the different positions of the governments of Canada and the United States on the war, overall, both Canadians and Americans felt their governments were doing a good job of managing the Canadian-American relationship.
- However, Americans are more likely to feel their government is doing a good job.
- Furthermore, fewer Americans rate their government's performance as bad. Canadians are more critical of their government's performance, with more than one-quarter rating its ability to manage the relationship as bad.
- Western Canadians are more likely to rate the Government's performance on this issue as bad (36%), while Atlantic Canadians are more likely to believe the Government is doing a good job (49%). Residents of Quebec are more likely to be ambivalent, with 37% answering neither good nor bad.
- More than half (52%) of American men believe the U.S. government is doing a good job managing its relationship with Canada, compared with 46% of American women.

The Survey: *Listening to Canadians on the Canadian-American Relationship - Winter 2003*

- Total sample: 2833 adults aged 18 and over
- Telephone interviews conducted by GPC Research between February 11 and 17, and again between February 25 and March 3, 2003.

Total Interviews by GPC Research

	Number of interviews conducted	Maximum margin of error
Atlantic	605	+/-3.98%
Newfoundland and Labrador	201	+/-6.91%
Prince Edward Island	202	+/-6.90%
Nova Scotia	101	+/-9.75%
New Brunswick	101	+/-9.75%
Quebec	604	+/-3.99%
Ontario	810	+/-3.44%
West	814	+/-3.43%
Manitoba	204	+/-6.86%
Saskatchewan	205	+/-6.84%
Alberta	201	+/-6.91%
British Columbia	204	+/-6.86%
Total	2833	+/-1.84%

The Survey: U.S. Mirror Study

- Total sample: 1996 adults aged 18 and over
- Telephone interviews conducted by Ipsos-Reid as part of their U.S. omnibus survey between February 28 and March 6, 2003

Total Interviews by Ipsos-Reid

	Number of interviews conducted	Maximum margin of error
South, southwest and border	648	+/-3.85%
Central/West	961	+/-3.16%
Northern tier	387	+/-4.98%
Total	1996	+/-2.19%