

# **Wave 2: Top Line Results of the Canadian and U.S. Decision-Makers Surveys**

Executive Summary

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Immigration and Security*

Survey results reveal that Canadian and American attitudes toward immigration continue to differ significantly. Despite having a rate of immigration that is more than twice that of the U.S. (as a proportion of the population), only 17 per cent of decision-makers in Canada feel that immigration has had a negative impact on their economy and society, compared to 54 per cent of U.S. decision-makers. Conversely, three in four Canadian decision-makers (75 per cent) say the impact of immigration has been positive, compared to one in three U.S. decision-makers (33 per cent). Turning to results for the general public, we find that Canadians are less likely than their elite counterparts to view immigration positively, although the majority (57 per cent) feel that immigration has had a positive impact. In the U.S., elite and general public views on this issue are largely similar, with only about one in three from either group indicating that the impact of immigration has been positive.

Results also reveal that few American decision-makers or general public respondents believe that terrorists enter their country by way of the Canada-U.S. border. In fact, among the options tested, Canada is seen as the least likely source for terrorists entering the U.S. (six per cent of decision-makers and nine per cent of the general public). Instead, the majority view, held by 48 per cent of decision-makers and 54 per cent of the public at large, continues to be that terrorists come directly into the U.S. from overseas.

Despite a relative lack of concern about Canada as a source of terrorism, American decision-makers are split in their views on whether Canada is doing enough to ensure that terrorists do not enter the U.S. by way of the Canada-U.S. border: 47 per cent express confidence in Canadian efforts to prevent terrorists from entering their country, while 40 per cent are not confident. The U.S. public expresses higher levels of confidence in Canadian efforts in this area: six in ten Americans (61 per cent) say they are confident that Canada is doing enough to ensure that terrorists do not enter the U.S., and only one-third (33 per cent) say they are not confident.

With the first phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) coming into effect in January 2007, we find mixed support for this initiative among both U.S. decision-makers and the U.S. public as a whole (although decision-makers are particularly likely to express doubts about the effectiveness of this initiative). The law, which would require all travelers (including U.S. citizens) to present a passport when entering the country, is seen as enhancing security a great deal by only one in ten decision-makers (10 per cent), and about one in four members of the general public (26 per cent). An additional three in ten decision-makers and Americans in general think that the policy will enhance security a fair amount. However, there is a sizeable proportion of both American decision-makers and general public respondents who are not convinced of the security benefits of these new requirements: four in ten decision-makers (38 per cent) and three in ten general public respondents (28 per cent) feel it will only enhance security a little, and a respective 18 per cent and 15 per cent think it will not enhance security at all.

## *Trade and Integration*

Turning to views on trade, results reveal that Canadian decision-makers are more likely than their U.S. counterparts to express support for free trade between the three North American countries (79 per cent versus 65 per cent, respectively). General public results are largely consistent between the two countries, with seven in ten from both countries expressing support for North American free trade.

Survey results also reveal that Canadian and American decision-makers hold very different views about the impact of NAFTA. Two-thirds of Canadian decision-makers (66 per cent) feel the impact of NAFTA on Canada has been positive, while fewer than one in three American decision-makers feel NAFTA has had a positive impact on the U.S. (32 per cent). The Canadian public also expresses somewhat more favourable views on the impact of NAFTA than do their American counterparts: almost four in ten Canadians (37 per cent) feel the impact of NAFTA has been positive, compared to only one in four Americans (26 per cent) who feel the same way.

Results also reveal that the majority of decision-makers in both Canada and the U.S. agree that the three North American nations should further integrate their economies in order to make North America more competitive in the global economy (55 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively). The general public in both countries is somewhat less likely than their elite counterparts to agree with this idea, although the plurality of both Canadians and Americans are in favour of increased economic integration (45 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively).

Rethinking North America also examined views on the integration of energy and environmental policies. Results reveal that U.S. decision-makers prefer coordinated North American policies over independent national policies in the energy sector (59 per cent versus 26 per cent, respectively). Conversely, Canadian decision-makers lean to independent national policies (55 per cent), rather than coordinated North American energy policies (40 per cent). The general public in Canada and the U.S. hold largely similar views as their elite counterparts on this issue (although the US public is somewhat more likely than US decision-makers to feel energy should be addressed by independent national policies).

Decision-maker results are reversed between the two countries in terms of support for coordinated environmental policies: Canadian decision-makers are more likely than their American counterparts to prefer integrated policies in this area (80 per cent versus 62 per cent, respectively). Support for coordinated environmental policies is more consistent between general public respondents in the two countries: seven in ten Canadians (70 per cent) and two-thirds of Americans (66 per cent) prefer that shared policies on the environment be developed, and only about three in ten in either country feel the environment should be addressed by independent national policies.

## *The Environment*

The Rethinking North America study also asked a number of questions examining Canadian and American views on protecting the environment. Results reveal that Canadian decision-makers are significantly more likely than their American counterparts to agree with placing stricter laws and regulations on companies in order to protect the environment (77 per cent versus 54 per cent, respectively). Conversely, American decision-makers are more likely to favour encouraging companies to reduce their impact on the environment on a voluntary basis. The Canadian public express largely similar views to those of Canadian decision-makers on this issue, while the U.S. public is more supportive of stricter regulations on companies than are U.S. decision-makers (64 per cent versus 54 per cent, respectively).

Canadian decision-makers are also more likely than their American counterparts to favour stricter regulations on individual citizens to protect the environment: more than half of Canadian decision-makers (52 per cent) favour the implementation of stricter laws and regulations on individuals in order to protect the environment, compared to 35 per cent of American decision-makers. The Canadian public is also somewhat more likely than the U.S. public to favour stricter laws and regulations on individual citizens (54 per cent versus 42 per cent, respectively).

## *Canada-U.S. Relationship*

This edition of Rethinking North America also continued to examine Canadian and American views on North American relations. Results suggest that Americans hold significantly more positive perceptions of the Canada-U.S. relationship.

When asked how they would currently describe relations between Canada and the U.S., fewer than half of Canadian decision-makers (46 per cent) or general public respondents (43 per cent) indicate that relations are good (and one in five say relations are poor). American decision-makers are much more positive in their appraisal of the current Canada-U.S. relationship: fully seven in ten U.S. decision-makers (71 per cent) feel that relations are good, and fewer than one in ten describe relations as poor. The U.S. public is somewhat less likely to see relations between the two countries as being good, however, six in ten (58 per cent) feel relations between the two countries are good.

Similar results are exhibited when decision-makers and the public are asked about their overall opinion of the other country. Canadian decision-makers and public respondents hold mixed views on their southern neighbour, with four in ten from both groups expressing favourable views about the U.S. In contrast, a clear majority of American decision-makers (78 per cent) have a favourable opinion of Canada, and fewer than one in ten have an unfavourable view. The American public is somewhat less positive in their appraisal, however, a clear majority (66 per cent) hold a favourable impression of Canada, and fewer than one in ten characterize their impressions as unfavourable.

