

# Canadian journal

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### Journal #1: More of the Same

In a November 14 article in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Jack Granatstein claims that, although US President-Elect Barak Obama is certainly more charismatic and likable than current President George W. Bush, Obama's foreign policy is likely to be much the same as Bush's. Obama will, he says, bring more troops into Afghanistan, re-open NAFTA, while pushing protectionism, and oppose issues that are important to Canadians, like gay marriage.

This, he says, will not appeal to the anti-American coalition, the Greens, the New Democrats, or really, any party at all unsympathetic to the United States. He compares Obama to former US President Bill Clinton, who was, at first, cheered by Canadians, then criticized for his use of American troops, his involvement in NAFTA. Obama, says Granatstein, will call on the Canadian Prime Minister to send more troops into Kandahar. He will fail to live up to the expectations of the left. His environmental plans, while grand, are too grand to make it through congress. (Granatstein, 2008) Granatstein is probably right. Many Canadians will take exception to some of the moves Barak Obama makes as president. However, it is hard to imagine groups like the anti-American coalition liking any American president.

It is also hard to imagine the United States acting out of its own interest and in the interest of another nation – even Canada. So what is the Canadian government to do? The same thing the United States does. The Canadian government should consider the needs and desires of its people first. If the people are willing to help an ally or if their safety would be increased by helping an ally, then Canada ought to cooperate with the United States.

The United States is currently Canada's greatest trading partner. Therefore, not cooperating with the will of the United States government is liable to have negative effects on the economic and physical security of Canadians. But if the people of Canada truly feel that the United States is wrong enough in Afghanistan and in trade to warrant less cooperation, then they might choose to act in favor of their ethics, rather than economics.

#### Journal #2: Finance and Foreign Policy

On November 19th, The Conwest News Service posted an article on Mark Carney's (governor of the Bank of Canada) speech to the UK Chamber of Commerce. According to the service, Carney said that Canada has both benefitted from and given benefits to the UK in the past. Carney points out that while other banks have relied on government bail-outs, Canada's have remained stable without such help. But, says Carney, in order for Canada to be continually successful, the nation needs to keep "continuously open markets." According to Carney, economic instability has led many to become home-centered and nationalistic. This, he says, has slowed growth (Carney, 2008).

Carney makes a great deal of sense. Most of the major world powers have become successful because of trade. Throughout history, those who have had greater access to trading ports and water ways have developed more quickly than landlocked civilizations. It would be a shame to have access to other nations and to ignore it. On the other hand, one can understand why Canadians might wish to keep banking and financial ventures near home. As markets around the world become increasingly unstable and the good credit of some turns bad, it might be nice to know where the nation's money is.

Journal #3: The Fat Lady Can Sing, but not if she's foreign.

As Carney looks for a reason to open markets, Premier Jean Charest is ready to start closing them. Indeed, according to William Marsden in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Charest is prepared to wage an economic war to protect Quebec's culture. Charest means to help preserve Quebecer culture by taxing foreign films and music. Those opposed to Charest's move argue that levying such a tax might spark retaliation. America, especially, he says, would be likely to tax back. Indeed, while Quebec's culture is worth preserving, it can probably withstand competition from foreign countries. If it cannot, it might not truly be worth the effort. Meanwhile, in this time of economic turmoil, upsetting trading partners might not be the best plan ever hatched (Marsden, 2008).

Journal #4: Foreign Policy and Foreign Oil

According to a November 18th article in *The Cape Breton Post*, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's move toward greener policies is a good one. American president-elect Barak Obama stressed lessening America's dependence on foreign oil and promised to move toward "greener" fuels and practices. While, as the *Post's* writer asserts, Canada is foreign, it is not unfriendly, and moving toward greener energy is, therefore, in Canada's best interest. Harper seems to believe that if Canada follows the same plan America follows in reducing harmful emissions and looking toward clean energy, America may be more willing to trade with the nation (*The Cape Breton Post*, 2008).

Harper may be right, but if Americans can produce their own clean fuel, they are not likely to buy it from Canada - unless the fuel was substantially

cheaper. If Canada strode ahead of the United States in clean fuel research and technology, however, the United States would, more likely than not, want to do business. Therefore, if Harper comes up with a plan to get ahead in the game, he may win attention from the United States. However, if not, he should focus on improving the lot of Canadians, rather than trying to compete with his neighbor. Pursuing greener energy might be of help to Canada and other trading partners. It would not be bad at all for Canada to be independent of foreign oil, and those who are behind Canada in technological advancement would, almost certainly, be interested in trade.