

SECTION 3

Strengthening Sovereignty, Identity and Democracy

The theme that underlies this section of the AFB is the desire for congruence between Canadian identity — how we see ourselves as a nation (our imagined community) — and the scope of choices available to policy-makers to give weight to who we are and who we want to become. Elected leaders must be able to make fundamental political choices on our behalf; otherwise our democracy is little more than a Potemkin village facade for decisions made elsewhere.

One of the most important factors affecting our national identity is the dominant cultural, economic, political, and ideological influence of the United States. Given the huge power imbalance, no challenge is greater than that of maintaining sufficient “distance” to ensure we have the policy teeth necessary to give expression to Canadian identity.

We have distinct values and interests, which are a function of our history and geography, and our place in the global economy and community of nations. We want to chart a course that gives expression to our founding myths and our historical experiences, and advances the social justice values that have shaped our society.

Our policies, laws, and institutions should reflect our unique social character and blend of individual and collective rights; they should facilitate the management of our complex federation (tri-national and multicultural). We want to chart a course that enhances Canada’s reputation as a good global citizen: committed to peace, human rights, respect for international law, responsible environmental stewardship, social and economic justice.