

18TH ANNUAL PREMIERS' CONFERENCE

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St. Andrews, New Brunswick

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

While recognizing the primacy of the role of the federal government in international trade relations, the Premiers were of the opinion that the provinces also have legitimate interests and concerns in the international arena. Given these legitimate concerns and the large volume of Canadian trade with the United States, they agreed that it is entirely appropriate for the provinces to assume a more prominent role in Canada-U.S. relations. They noted that this increased role for provinces was supported by the recent Report of the Canadian Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs which stated that:

There needs to be ... a new awareness at the federal level that a national foreign policy properly includes both federal and provincial activities, not merely federal matters. There needs to be more openness by federal departments and agencies regarding the overall direction of Canadian policy towards the U.S. and a greater degree of solicitation by Ottawa of provincial views.

The importance of the U.S. market is such as to suggest that in addition to multilateral negotiations, Canada has also much to gain from bilateral trade negotiations with the United States. This will require close co-operation and liaison between both the federal and provincial governments, since it is only through such joint efforts that provincial, as well as federal, needs and priorities can be adequately reflected.