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## Canadians, Americans drifting apart on shared security since 9/11

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From Tuesday's Globe and Mail

*Border woes, sinking U.S. dollar are other factors causing 'drift and distance,' poll shows*

The highs and lows of the Canada-U.S. relationship are felt most keenly in the border towns that dot the 49th parallel.

As he prepared to celebrate the northern version of Thanksgiving in Emerson, Man., last week, Mayor Wayne Arseny said he has seen the relationship strengthen and then soften over the last decade.

After 9/11, a sense of sympathy drew Canadians and Americans closer together, he said. In those days, both the Maple Leaf and the Stars and Stripes flew outside Mr. Arseny's home. He had good friends on both sides of the border, and Americans from nearby Pembina, N.D., visited regularly. But lately, the border seems like an insurmountable obstacle, he said. With the need for passports, heavier scrutiny from border guards and the slide in the U.S. dollar, old American friends are increasingly reluctant to come north, Mr. Arseny said.

"We're seeing a dramatic change," he said. "The Americans just aren't coming any more."

It's part of a sense of separation that has grown over the last several years, according to the latest opinion polling by Nanos Research, done in conjunction with the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Although Canadians still feel a strong connection to their southern neighbours, American misadventures in Iraq and the global war on terror have accentuated a desire among ordinary Canadians to draw a sharp line of national difference.

"The overall highlight is one of drift and distance - 9/11 was a watershed moment that had a massive influence not just on our relationship with the U.S. but also in terms of the border and national security co-operation," said pollster Nik Nanos. "The further we get from 9/11 the less intense the sense of urgency to co-operate on security."

Americans are more likely than Canadians to be open to co-operation on issues such as counterterrorism, border protection and energy policy, Mr. Nanos said. Canadians have grown less and less favourable to that kind of co-operation in the six years since the study was launched. In 2005, 29.8 per cent of Canadians

wanted to see much closer collaboration on national security. That number dropped in the last years of the George W. Bush administration, and then rose briefly under President Barack Obama before declining again in 2010 to 19.5 per cent.

"There's probably a growing sense that a military solution isn't necessarily the most effective," said Munroe Eagles, director of Canadian Studies at SUNY-Buffalo. "There's probably also a sense of frustration with President Obama for not disengaging quickly enough with some of these foreign policy initiatives of the Bush administration."

On human rights, Canadians show signs of drawing closer to the U.S. again, after the controversies over the abuse of detainees in Iraq and the rendition of terror suspects that scarred America's reputation in the middle of the decade. More than 50 per cent of Canadians now say the U.S. is the country closest to Canada on human rights, compared to 26.4 per cent in 2005.

And when it comes to family values, the U.S. has pulled closer to Canada again, after Canada's support for same-sex marriage sent poll numbers downward in 2006. But when it comes to business relationships, Americans still place Canada well down the list of trading partners. Both Japan and China score higher among Americans who are asked which country most resembles the U.S. in terms of business values.

"Canadians have a naive and optimistic sense that Americans really appreciate the intensity of the binational relationship, and like so many other aspects of the relationship, the appreciation is [not shared equally]," Prof. Eagles said.

Like Mr. Arseny, he believes the greatest threat to the relationship is the thickening of the border, which discourages the exchange of people and goods that fuels what is seen on both sides as a productive, amicable relationship.

"Piling up policing at the border is really dragging down the relationship," Prof. Eagles said. "I see it as a major step backwards."

## **CANADA/U.S. PERCEPTIONS**

17.5 per cent

Of Canadians strongly agree that Canada should follow its own interests even if it leads to conflict with other nations. This is higher than the 17.1 per cent in the U.S.

46.7 per cent

Of Americans think Canada is the country closest to them on family values. This is up from a low of 35.8 per cent during the same-sex marriage debate.

55.9 per cent

Of Canadians think the U.S. is the country closest to them on business values.

20.3 per cent

Of Americans think Canada is closest to them on business values. Japan scored highest at 26.6 per cent.

19.5 per cent

Of Canadians think Canada and the U.S. should move to closer co-operation on national security, down 10 per cent from 2005.

## 87.5 per cent

Of Americans says it's very or somewhat important for Canada and the U.S. to work together to develop an integrated energy policy to reduce dependence on Mideast oil.

## 35.6 per cent

Of Canadians say Canada should push much closer co-operation with the U.S. on anti-terrorism, down from 43.7 per cent in 2005.

## 18.0 per cent

Of Canadians rank U.S. visitors as most worthy of thorough questioning at the border. Mexico leads at 46.8 per cent.

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