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Integration and Fragmentation in Canada and the United States: Autonomy under Continental Anti-Terrorist Defence.

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The terrorist coup of September 11 transformed Canadians' consciousness of their position in North America. Having prided themselves on their increased trade and investment integration in the continental economy, they suddenly found they were exposed to the consequences of extreme dependence. The U.S. self-blockade along its borders caused a panic within a business community dependent on just-in-time, cross-border production. The government in Ottawa reoriented itself from national development schemes to satisfying the US government that its security measures were trustworthy. The institutions of the North American Free Trade Agreement languished unused while Canada attempted to determine the price of readmission into a secure economic relationship with the United States. Immigration policy, refugee policy, border inspections of cargoes and travelers, continental defence, counter-terrorism, air- and sea-port security were all involved in the mix. Just when Canada's neoconservative governments felt they had got their policy mix right, they found themselves living less in fear of al-Qaeda than of Uncle Sam's reactions to al-Qaeda. Far from delivering a new stability, integration via trade liberalization had produced a new fragmentation. Dependence on the American economy had morphed into dependence on the American psyche, leaving a Canadian society which is more conscious of being integrated within continental systems, feeling more precarious because more cut off at the newly refortified border.