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TRADE

Canadians wary of U.S. goods crossing border: poll

Americans don't worry about Canada but believe Japan and U.K more akin to their business values

By Nina Chiarelli
Telegraph-Journal

One in four Canadians admit they're suspicious of American goods crossing the border into Canada, while one in 20 Americans are mistrustful of Canadian goods going south, says a cross-border survey.

A poll by SES Research found apprehension by Canadians and Americans differ depending on the country of origin when it comes to the arrival of foreign shipments to their respective borders.

Forty-nine per cent of Americans said goods arriving from Mexico should be thoroughly inspected. Another 28 per cent said Chinese goods should be thoroughly inspected.

The third most popular response among Americans was goods arriving from France. Six per cent of Americans said those shipments should be thoroughly inspected before clearing customs.

Conversely, 24 per cent of Canadians chose shipments from the United States as a group to be inspected after goods arriving from Mexico and China, at 39 and 28 per cent respectively.

Nikita Nanos, president of SES Research, said perceptions reflect the average opinions of most people.

"From the perspective of an average American, anything coming from Canada is not really a problem. They're more concerned about anything that comes from China and Mexico," he said.

"For American legislators, and politicians, and public policy-makers; I think they should at least raise their eyebrow or be a bit concerned that Canadians have any concern whatsoever about American goods crossing the border."

The survey also showed that Americans don't necessarily identify Canada as

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a country with similar business values, despite the successful trade relationship that exists between both countries.

Although 63 percent of Canadians identified the United States as the country with the closest business values to Canada, Canada ranked third behind Japan and the United Kingdom in the eyes of Americans, according to the survey.

Mr. Nanos said he believed this could be as a result of the "good ally halo effect" since the United Kingdom has taken similar public policy stances on major issues, such as the war in Iraq.

"However, despite this difference on business value perceptions, Canadians and Americans were in agreement over the need for an integrated energy policy and cooperation on national security, border security and anti-terrorism measures," Mr. Nanos added.

Thirty per cent of Canadians and 37 per cent of Americans said both countries should be moving much closer on security policies and interests.

The online surveys were conducted from Aug. 22 to 24. They surveyed 1,103 Canadians and 1,057 Americans, aged 18 years old and older. The margin of accuracy for both surveys is plus or minus three per cent 19 times out of 20.

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