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Discussion Following the Remarks of Mr. Graham

Discussion

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DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE REMARKS OF MR. GRAHAM

MR. KING: One question. I am concerned that we have a unilateralist approach, possibly derived from people like Wolfowitz, Pearl, or Rumsfeld. You have a parliamentary system up there where people have to respond, people with the administration have to directly respond on a day-to-day basis to questions. Here we have a lot of non-elected officials who determine policy. Do you have any evaluation as to whether unilateralism is promoted by the system we have in terms of representatives in Congress as against day-to-day answers in Parliament?

MR. GRAHAM: Henry, that is a very interesting question. It one that we have constantly worked on. There are different stresses that a parliamentary system imposes on leadership or cabinet than a congressional system. It is not just the United States that has a Congressional system. I was recently in Brazil. They are trying to get a somewhat better mix between Congress and their Executive, as is Mexico.

I do not think that one or the other system necessarily leads to unilateralism. We have very close links with Congress through our Canada/U.S. Parliamentary Association and I have been an active participant in it until I was recently put in the cabinet. Now, we tend to get the multilateralists and the Canadian conscious ones that come to our Canada/U.S. But the fact of the matter is that it is well known that only about 40 percent of Congressmen have a passport. So, all politics is local as Tip O'Neil used to say. Ultimately, it is local.

I do not know that if Congress were in charge instead of the administration you would get a more multilateral or more unilateralist approach. I do think there is one thing that distinguishes the parliamentary system from the congressional one. I find this when I go to Europe and meet with our European colleagues. Most of the Europeans come from somewhere where they are not elected. Colin Powell, Joschka Fisher, Jack Straw, and myself all tend to have a somewhat different approach. I go back to Toronto. When I am on the streets people stop me and say, "Bill, what are you doing?" Or they might say, "We are with you" or "you are crazy." It is a different mentality. You certainly have a different mentality, but I think Canada tends to be more multilateral because we have to be than the United States. I think that is the big difference.

My friend Pierre Petagrove often cites the statistic that since the liberal government came to power in 1993, the share of GDP of trade, imports, or trade in terms of Canada has gone from 25 to 40 percent in the last ten years. That makes us a multilateral country. Now, of course, the vast majority of

that is with the United States and that is why the United States is, by far, our most important foreign policy relationship.

MR. GELFAND: My name is Marty Gelfand. I am a former student of Professor King's and now staff counsel for Congressman Kucinich here in Cleveland.

MR. GRAHAM: Does he have a passport?

MR. GELFAND: I appreciated your comments that Canada pursues a complimentary rather than identical role. I certainly appreciate that and a lot of people in this country do.

The question I have is in your dealings with our administration, do they view things that way with respect to Canada? I have to say that Canada has had somewhat of a more low profile than say France because you are not on the Security Council and I think that is shown in a lot of the things we see like, for instance, we have freedom fries instead of French fries. As far as I know, you can still get Canadian bacon on an English muffin. Do you see the U.S. administration sharing that view of complimentary versus identical?

MR. GRAHAM: I remember I was in Washington some months ago to meet with Secretary Powell. We went out and had a press conference. We were already in that sort of pre-Security Council kind of wrangle. The Fox television reporter shouted out, "Mr. Graham, Canada is getting wobbly on it's relationship with the United States."

I said, "No." We are not wobbly. We have a different view of how this should be resolved, and I am coming here to urge that view. That does not make us wobbly. It makes us true to our conviction and we can be a better ally to you by bringing that conviction to you.

Now, when the stress really becomes tough, of course, then is when people really have to recognize the differences. At that point it becomes quite difficult. We have gone through a difficult moment. Your ambassador in Canada has made some very strong speeches about how disappointed the administration is because of the decision we took. But if you read his speeches, what he said is the administration is disappointed. He always comes back to the point of Canada's close collaboration. We have signed in the last six months three key agreements, one being this joint agreement on in case of a terrorist or national disaster that we have to work on together. I have had great conversations with Paul as the former governor of Massachusetts. He is very closely connected with the administration. He knows how they think and he is close to them and he does not hesitate to express his mind, which I like. We are talking with complete frankness with one another. I would not hide from you the fact that there has been disappointment, but I also think there has been recognition in the administration, like the softwood lumber file. There may be a big difference of opinion here, but we are still joined at the hip like Siamese twins and by

nature linked. We will continue to work on those relationships and we will get through this.

I do not think that there was the same attitude towards us as France, because we do not have the same attitude as France. I will be very frank with you. We have told the French authorities our view. The French threat of a veto was what prevented the Security Council coming together here. Our proposal was to give it an opportunity. Set out some guidelines that Sadaam Hussein has to conform to so that there can be an assurance that there is not going to be an attack, no matter what, but give it a time frame. The time frame we proposed was, in our proposition was March 27th. Some people had some trouble with that time frame. But the attack did not come until April 10th. We proposed a time frame that was actually much before that. I think it was the end February. It was early on. If you look at the situation, what we were trying to do was to bring the Security Council together. Whereas, the other view was more, this is not going to happen anyway. That was never the Canadian position. From the very beginning, we were very strongly in support of resolution 1441. I always said we wanted resolution 1441 to succeed and it was unfortunate that we could not come together with the Security Council. We consider that failure in diplomacy as Canadians to be a very serious problem for global diplomacy. We think it is going to create long-term difficulty. I have spoken to the Russian Foreign Minister and my European counterparts and we all share in this view.

The meeting in Brussels that I attended last week was one where everybody recognized that there had been big strains on the transatlantic relationship. We have to come together now and put this behind us and look to the future. I think that is a very important perspective to have in our relations.

MR. HUFBAUER: Minister, I would like to try to push you into the zone of indiscretion. I have three questions on WMD. Suppose that within the next month or so the coalition forces finds very large stocks or an assortment of biological and chemical weapons. Would that change Canadian opinion on the wisdom of the preemption strike?

MR. GRAHAM: Wisdom?

MR. HUFBAUER: What are your thoughts on the preempted strike and military action without U.N. Security Council prior approval?

Question two. Suppose we do not find substantial stocks of WMD in the next month or two. Will the Canadian opinion tend to be, we told you so cowboy? Would there be a lot of vindictiveness?

Question three. Again, suppose we do find it. What percent of Canadians will go with what I think will be a predictable majority line in much of the Middle East and a substantial minority in Europe that it was all planted by the CIA?

MR. GRAHAM: Sometimes I have had difficulty with the press at home, but I have never had that kind of question. There may be land mines planted in front of me. It doesn't matter which way I go, I am going to step on one of them. Maybe I will answer those questions a little bit elliptically.

I think that if large stocks are found, clearly there will be those who believe that what was done had to be done. Those who strongly believed that Iraq could have been contained or that more time should have been given for the diplomatic process to work out before the resort to force, mirror the Canadian position. Our position always was if force is necessary, we are for it, but give it time to work out the diplomatic thing and we thought we had the workings of that. I strongly believe that regardless of what is found, our position was founded in the right situation in terms of the circumstances of the moment.

Once the conflict began, of course, there is no question about whose side we are on. Somebody asked me if this means that we are in favor of regime change. I responded with a question. "Do you want Saddam Hussein to win?" You have to ask that question to realize whose side you are on. You are ultimately on the side of the coalition partners once the conflict began. If you were to rewrite history and go back, I think our position was we needed more time for the diplomatic process to work and there was a chance. Some of the conversations I had in Europe were of the view if there had not been such hard positions on both sides, there might have been a chance for it to work out. The global community missed an opportunity to come together around a diplomatic solution.

Now, if none are found, I do not think there will be sort of a triumphant, we told you so. The National Post is already triumphantly saying, "We told you so." I have to be careful what I say. As many of you know my son is presently in Baghdad. He writes for the National Post. I am very concerned about his well-being. He was in the Palestine Hotel when it was shot up by an American tank. He knows very well about the dangers that are taking place within that city. This is a very serious situation. I do not think the Canadian opinion will change that much. The Canadian opinion, Gary, as I said earlier in my speech is conflicting. If you ask Canadians should we go into this war under the present circumstances, when it was taking place, 70 percent said no.

I was running a hotline in my department. We were getting over 1,000 calls a day. I have never had anything like this before, ever. It was running 70 percent in favor until Ambassador Cellucci made his speech when it went up to 90 percent, because people were phoning and saying why is the American Ambassador telling us what to do. If you asked the same people should we be with our American and British friends and allies, 65 percent to 70 percent say we want to be supportive of our American friends now.

So, we are where as Canadians you would expect us to be. Some would take the position we did the right thing, while some will say we did the wrong thing and think we should come in on America's side. I think those polls reflected that. I strongly believe that the action of the Canadian government in two respects. One in keeping our ships there, because there was some pressure we should come out of the region entirely. We are going to disassociate with the war. The ships were there and they were doing their work for anti-terrorism. They were there in the region and the fact that we loyally kept up with the contracts, as I said in my speech, not a large number, but some 31 personnel that were engaged with U.S. and British forces. We lived up to those contracts and said they will stay in their place and play the role they guaranteed they would play.

I would say we combined a principal position that we did not believe the war was a right war to be engaged in the circumstance that was committed, but we also loyally fulfilled our responsibilities as an ally and friend of the United States in respects where we had obligations. I think that is where Canada was and where Canadians wanted us to be. That sort of sums up the complexity from the Canadian public opinion. Like all poles, it depends what question you ask and how you ask it.

MR. WADDELL: Chris Waddell, Carlton University. I will not try to be quite as hypothetical as the previous question. Looking ahead in the short-term, could you identify two or three things you think we should be looking for as indications whether tensions between the United States and some of its allies are changing at all? What are the issues that are on the immediate horizon that you think we should be looking out for?

MR. GRAHAM: I think that just as a good barometer, my good friend Paul Cellucci's speeches. Of you look at them just over in the last few days, you will see quite a difference. I think there is clear recognition that we have to get back to making the business relationship work rather than point to where the problems are.

As I said, my meeting in Europe was very much focused on that. Everybody was focused on that. So, I am hoping that as we come around, the litmus test is in the area of the reconstruction of Iraq. I do not think there is any problem about humanitarian aide. We have promised \$100 million. The humanitarian aide will go through the agencies. We do not want to see replicated in the new period, the same arguments around the Security Council that divided people over the issue of reconstruction that defied it leading up to the decision that was made by the United States and Great Britain resulting from resolution 1441. I got the impression that everybody wants to avoid that. That is where I think where we will all seek to work together, but I do have to say, of course, for us to take Canadian taxpayers money and put it into activity in Iraq, we will have to have a form of

international legitimacy to enable us to do that. We cannot just write a check to an American organization.

It is going to have to be an international effort. This will not descend into a disagreement about these issues, but I do believe there will be a vigorous debate.

It is not going to be us Canadians. It is not going to be the Europeans. When I was in Europe, they made it very clear that Europe can play a big role here. They have a lot of money and a lot of resources, but they just cannot turn it all over to a purely military administration. There are areas where we are going to want to have a form of international cooperation. My colleague John Manley and several other representatives are in Washington this weekend at the IMF and other meetings. The message will be, we are there. We want to help. We are willing to commit resources, but we have to have a framework that enables us to do that. We want to work for that in a positive way. We recognize it has to be pragmatic.

Jack Straw makes the point, I think it is a very good one. When you talk of the U.N. role, there is not just one U.N. role. The U.N. role in Bosnia is different from the role in East Timor, which is different from the role in Kosovo. So there is not a cookie cutter U.N. role. We need to have some way to get international engagement and legitimacy and we are confident in the long run we will get that.

MR. SCHAEFER: How should we determine or how does Canada determine in international negotiations when the U.S. is being unreasonably unilateralist or whether other countries are being unreasonably inflexible given sometimes the special role the U.S. plays.

Let me give you a concrete example. Take the Land Mines Convention Negotiations. The U.S. asked for an exception for the land mines between the Koreas, saying this will prevent invasion. It would take many, many more troops than are there now to remove the land mines. Other countries object to this. How does Canada view these types of issues? Is it other countries being inflexible or being unreasonable unilateralists, and what is Canada's role in these debates?

MR. GRAHAM: That is a very good question. It is also one that the Prime Minister steadfastly refuses to allow me to answer because we do not answer hypothetical questions. Several ministers have gotten into deep trouble by answering hypothetical questions. I think your question really illustrates where Canada does try to see itself as a bridge filler. I understand what you are talking about. The Land Mines Convention is called the Ottawa Convention. We were very proud of that. We would have been much prouder had the United States been engaged. The crazy thing is that the United States is engaged. I mean more money is raised in the United States for clearing of land mines than any other country in the world. The United States makes a huge participation to land mine clearance and the land mines

issue and then gets attacked by certain people for not signing the convention. I do not know what position Canada took.

I think flexibility, a pragmatic approach is one which I think generally characterizes Canada's foreign policy positions and, one where we try to build a bridge. I go back to the example I gave to you earlier about the proposition the Prime Administrator made for the Security Council around the Security Council's difficulty with resolution 1441.

Given a set of parameters, but also given what the French call the *débuter*, a date, in which everyone can say this thing is not going to drag on ad infinitum. A point at which British and Americans who are committed to making sure that Iraq would be disarmed would say that, yes, there is a clear point of departure where we will have the authority. I think that would have helped significantly. If one party or the other would not accept the conditions and other would not accept the date, those two hard positions made it impossible to get the compromise. Generally, Canada seeks to develop those types of compromises and sometimes we are not able to achieve them.

Take something like Kyoto, in the end, we decided to go into Kyoto even though we recognized the Canada/U.S. economic relations are such that it made it a difficult decision for us. But we believed it was necessary and it was the right agreement, so we did it. We work as closely as we can, particularly with the United States to make sure we are aligned with the United States and the policies we engage in internationally. On something like North Korea you will see a great deal of collaboration in attempt to be as helpful as we possibly can on what I consider to be, in many ways, a much trickier than Iraq in terms of the potential for mischief in the world and problems. We will be there to work on those issues together and we like to believe there is some sense of working to bringing parties together. That is why I would like to go back and finish with what I tried to say earlier. We had differences over the war. In the end, I think we are a better ally to the United States if we have that capacity to be an independent voice. When I go to Europe, when I go to the Muslim countries, they say Canada is different. We can use that difference to be helpful to the United States if we work together to find common solutions.

MR. KING: We will end on that high note. You were wonderful.

