
January 2003

Discussion Following the Remarks of Mr. Colledge and Mr. Riehle

Discussion

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Recommended Citation

Discussion, *Discussion Following the Remarks of Mr. Colledge and Mr. Riehle*, 29 Can.-U.S. L.J. 185 (2003)

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cuslj/vol29/iss1/29>

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DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE REMARKS OF MR. COLLEDGE AND MR. RIEHLE

MR. CRANE: Those are two very stimulating presentations as we can see by the fact that not a single person in the audience fell asleep even though it is after dinner.

It is interesting that on this issue of boycotts, to flip the issue around, periodically we have in Canada the reverse of that. There are buy Canadian or buy American campaigns. What is interesting is that they hardly ever work. People go out and they say I like that sweater, I like that tie, I like whatever it is, and they just buy it. I would suspect even if people state an intention to boycott, when they actually get into the shop what appeals to them most might be more influential than what they are boycotting against.

Tom, if I could ask just an early question. One of the things that concerned Canadians is how a single TV image can have a quite a distractive effect. I am speaking of the extraordinarily unfortunate event that occurred at a hockey game in Montreal; some people booed the American National Anthem. It is the kind of thing that was made for television, because it is shown over and over and over again. It has become a hot button issue that these more extreme radio hotline show people bring up. We had the same experience in Canada where some crazy person decided to burn the Quebec flag. That got played over and over again on television in Quebec to show how awful the rest of the country was and why Quebec should celebrate. There is always a danger that one of these symbolic acts, which is totally unrepresentative of the population as a whole, can intervene and call it public understanding.

What I wanted to ask was in relation to Paul Cellucci's comment that he thought we were family. When one person in the family is threatened, the rest of the family comes together. That was sort of the analogy. Canadians felt that when the U.S. had been threatened, and this was with the September 11th events, a lot of things happened including the housing of people whose flights were diverted, we wrote a new immigration act, we gave our police all kinds of powers we really do not want them to have, and we certainly moved a lot on border issues. We have allocated several billion dollars to additional security and defense spending. We have got the Navy in the Persian Gulf. In fact, this is one of the paradoxes, as Ambassador Cellucci pointed out, even though Canada is not officially part of the U.S. war effort in Iraq, after the United States, Britain and Australia it has more military force over there as a benefit to Iraq and to the coalition and is doing more than any of the other countries in this coalition of the willing. We had troops in Afghanistan earlier, and we will have troops there again. Is there any recognition of that

or does the war in Iraq simply totally overshadow anything that happened before?

MR. RIEHLE: Symbols are powerful. To McDonald's endless regret, it has become a symbol of American cultural overreaching. The media is very different in the United States than it was even five years ago. There are a multiplicity of 24-hour TV news programs, each of which uses symbols to attract an audience. Symbols are powerful. In the end, there are symbols that are a distraction for a day and symbols that change minds. The ones that change minds are the ones that resonate with feelings that people have.

I think what is very clear in the data is that the affection people have for Canada; the assumption Canada's going to be on our side. So the worst kinds of symbols, the insults from members of the Parliament, cannot shake that in Americans. I do not think in the end they are that effective.

On the other side, the war in Iraq, for viewers in the U.K. and viewers in the United States is a different experience than viewers anywhere else in the world. We did not notice what any other country is doing except possibly France. We are caught up in this drama of watching our young people in this experience.

MR. KING: I had a question based on my observations. I wondered whether these opinions are just a moment in time or do they change?

Also, one of the points that hit me on the French approach, is that everybody had quotable phrases. Statements by Chirac and the Ambassador to the U.N. were attributed throughout the press of the United States. Are memories short on this? Is this anti-French approach going to last? How do you go about correcting it if you wanted to?

On Canada, I do not think it has had that much effect. I think that many people are ill-informed on Canada's position on the Iraq situation. The question is, is this a moment in time? Does your experience lead you to believe that it will change over reasonable distance from this moment?

MR. RIEHLE: Dr. King, the attitudes about positions taken on Iraq or about terrorism are moments in time. What I am arguing is that we are about to go past this two year long distraction back to fundamental differences between France and Germany on the one hand, the continent, the U.K., and Canada and U.S. on the other. That is where we are headed.

A SPEAKER: A question for Michael. It is on the questions you polled about the perimeter, about relations with the United States, the border, those sorts of issues. Did you cross-tabulate those against voting tension? If so, can you make any statements or generalizations about what liberal voters believe?

MR. COLLEDGE: We did not on this survey. But those who are tend to be more supportive of the Canada-U.S. relationship and have the biggest economic gains to be had. So they tend to focus in Alberta and Ontario. By definition, they split liberal and alliance along those lines for the most part. I

do not think it is driven by a political stance right now, as much as it is driven by where there are economic gains to be made. You see less support in Atlantic Canada, because they do not see the bigger benefits for them.

A SPEAKER: Presumably the Prime Minister's position on some of these issues is driven by some sort of perceptions of politics in it?

MR. RIEHLE: In Quebec?

A SPEAKER: In the rest of the country.

MR. COLLEDGE: In the rest of the country, yes.

MR. HOLLOWAY: Ian Holloway from the University of Western Ontario. First, a brief comment, then a question for Michael. It struck me as interesting that a number of people in Canada got bitter and twisted about Ambassador Cellucci's comments, yet, we did not seem to think anything was wrong with our Prime Minister appearing on *This Week* with George Stephanopoulos telling Americans what they should do. I will just say that and let people take it for what it is worth.

I have forgotten exactly how the poll question was phrased, but one of the questions you showed us had to do with attitudes; how willing we Canadians are to see our sovereignty eroded to protect the security of North America? Do you have a breakdown of how Quebecers voted on that? In other words, was that result skewed because some portion of Quebec population would be quite happy to see Canadian sovereignty erode?

MR. COLLEDGE: In that series, it was would you give up Canadian sovereignty if it increased overall North American security. If I remember correctly, Quebec was different, but they were not on the whole post 9-11 sort of set of questions. They were not off the wall different, as we have seen it on other issues where they can be 20 or 30 points out off from the rest of Canada. On that question, they were slightly more likely to say they would not give up any sovereignty; a more protectionist view around cultural issues, obviously. On a question of would you give up personal freedom, Quebecers were much less likely to say they would do that than the rest of Canada.

MR. CLELAND: Mike Cleland, Gas Association. I was struck by watching the way the swings in public opinion and lots of things move public opinion, most of them accidentally at one time or another. Governments have to keep an eye on public opinion, otherwise they fall. Some governments lead public opinion. I am just curious as to what extent you see evidence of leadership actually affecting public opinion?

MR. COLLEDGE: It was funny, because Mr. Burney said earlier that there is not enough political leadership in Canada on the Canada-U.S. file, but there is more support for deepening Canada's relationships now than there was for the free trade agreement back when it started. So I think there is an opportunity, if you want to look at it in that context. The door may not be wide open, but it is certainly ajar. Remember it was closed at the time of

free trade agreement and they went ahead. Canadians support of free trade and globalization has climbed consistently over time.

MR. CLELAND: That could be an accident or attributable to many things. To what extent, not necessarily on this issue, does leadership really swing public opinion?

MR. RIEHLE: I think people demand leadership when they are dissatisfied with their situation. They want to be led out of it to some other place. When they are pretty happy with the way things are going, they look for good Administration. Americans were dissatisfied with the situation after September 11th. They did not like President Bush. They did not find him a compelling leader. But they found his reaction to terrorism to be compelling. He was very resolute and he took them in a new direction. He is benefiting from it.

I was telling Mr. Crane, if you look at world opinion, there is only one world leader who led the opposition against the war who has benefited, and that is Chirac. I wonder about Chretien. I do not know that much about Canadian politics, but if I were advising him from my ignorance, I would be much stronger about the position he has taken, assert the correctness of his position, and be less apologetic. That would be my opinion.

MR. GELFAND: My name's Marty Gelfand. I have one question for Michael and one for Tom. For Michael, you said that Alberta and Ontario were unique among the provinces in not opposing or favoring the war. Did those results surprise you?

My question for Thomas, you said the war is over and now people are more focused on the economy. It sounds to me more like that sort of a snapshot in time, maybe today's poll or yesterday's poll, but if you were to put on your prophet's cap, where do you see public opinion going if there is a lot of chaos in Iraq? Also where do you see public opinion going should the United States decide to keep going on into Syria, Iran, or possibly North Korea?

MR. RIEHLE: There is chaos in Afghanistan. That poor guy who is the head of government there is basically the Mayor of the north side of the capital and that is about it. That has not had any bad impact on public U.S. opinion.

There will be chaos in Iraq. Nonetheless, U.S. public opinion will turn inward on its own interests, because as I showed you, people began to recognize last June that the economy was in serious trouble. When this situation in Iraq comes to some sort of conclusion, people in the United States are going to turn to the government and say we have known this since June. How could you have ignored these problems all this time? They are not going to give them any credit for fighting a war in the meantime.

MR. COLLEDGE: No, it did not surprise me. I think as the war had been more successful, both Ontario and Alberta sort of looked at the potential

economic losses. There is angst around are we on the wrong side and what is going to happen to us?

We have done a study for a couple of years on just western Canadian views. We asked are you more like your neighbors to the east, west, or to the south? Albertans are as apt to say they are like Texans, as they are Ontarians. So, there is a clear pipeline, pardon the pun, and an economic interest down there.

MS. CHERNIAK: My name is Cyndee and I am an international trade lawyer from Canada. My concern is always that the Administration does not make decisions, but rather that individuals make decisions. So the individual Americans who will be making decisions not favorable to Canada are Republicans who knew that Canada did not support the war and those individuals in the higher income tax brackets. As a Canadian international trade lawyer, I say there are Republicans in the White House, Republicans in the Senate, and the Republicans are in control the House. If I am doing business with the American government or I need a regulatory approval, it is likely that the someone who is making the decision would know that Canada did not support the war, would be angry, and I might not get what I want.

I act for clients who are doing larger business transactions. With people in the higher income tax bracket, is this going to affect economic relationships between Canadians and Americans due to the fact that it is the higher income earners in the United States and Republicans who are aware that we did not support the U.S. whole-heartedly with respect to the war in Iraq?

MR. RIEHLE: You raise a very good point. I raised it to point out the irony that the kinds of Americans who want retribution are exactly the Americans who have always been supportive of free trade. But the point you raised is exactly right. Certainly, within the Administration, they keep score. There is no question about that. You can see in the outer rings of public opinion. The strongest Republicans kept score. When you get out to Independents and Democrats, you find people who are a little ambivalent about the policies and who did not necessarily notice who was on what side. With the Administration there are going to be problems. I wonder with large American businesses if there might also be. I do not know.

A SPEAKER: I have a question for Thomas. In Europe, when you turn on a television you can now get in a range of channels from around Europe. In most countries you can actually pick up a fair amount of Italian TV or Spanish TV, just by sort of getting an image of what is going on.

We have heard today the biggest customer Ohio has is Canada. A lot of trade and a lot of jobs in Ohio depend on Canada as a border state. In the Wyndham Hotel where I am, there are 79 channels, not one of them is from Canada. Do you find that odd? Does that indicate a lack of indifference

towards Canada? Does your polling reflect that people just do not know what is going on?

MR. RIEHLE: In the late 1970's, early '80's, American industry was really on its back. We could not make cars. We could not do anything right. One of the reasons was the United States market is the best market in the world. If you are an American company, you can focus inward and never really run out of customers. The rest of the world wanted in. That hobbled the United States for a long time. When imports took away business from U.S. companies, U.S. companies got smarter and better. A lot of the success of the United States has been from competition from Canada, Asia, and elsewhere but the limitation persists. American business tends to look inward because there is plenty here for us here. We do not feel a need to look elsewhere. It is odd, but it is a reflection of the success of the United States, too.

MR. SILVIA: I am Tom Silvia from the State Bar in Michigan. I have one question for each panelist. For Michael, last year when I was here, I was more than a little bit embarrassed to be here with my Canadian friends because the United States had just killed a number of Canadians in Afghanistan. To what extent has that affected poll results in your poll?

For Tom, when you did the breakdown of the boycott results which are so partisan and so split with the undecided in the middle, does that exactly reflect the election results that got the Bush Administration into the White House?

MR. RIEHLE: Fifty-fifty.

MR. SILVIA: With the undecided voter in between?

MR. RIEHLE: Outside of the specifics, as you say, the snapshot of what has happened with terrorism and the war, the United States remains as a country evenly divided.

MR. COLLEDGE: I do not think that the friendly fire incident has affected poll numbers over the longer term. Canadians have this considerable angst about what the U.S. thinks of us. Not getting an apology right away probably upset Canadians. Not being mentioned in the speech post 9-11 probably upset Canadians. Those things are overwhelmed by the relationship and the sort of longstanding economic ties we have developed over time. So, I do not think it had a big impact.

MR. CRANE: We are going to wind up this session now. We have had a very good discussion. It has raised as many questions as answers and this is to be expected as we get into this kind of fascinating detail. What I took out of this is that despite all our differences there is a strong relationship that continues and is based on a long history and a sense of shared purpose and shared values. I heard our Minister of Industry talk at an automotive conference the other day. He said for Canadians the important thing, even if

we disagree with the United States, is to treat the United States with respect, civility and empathy. I thought those were very good words.

The other thing that comes up, are all these worries about boycotts. They were overblown by the business community in Canada. They may have had some merit, but the kinds of fears that were raised, I think overstated it. When one looks at what is happening today, the border and security and defense issues are going to continue to progress. Canada is investing a lot more. Both countries are working very hard on the border issues. There are going to be some announcements on major infrastructure projects starting in Windsor and Detroit in the not too distant future. Canada will face a decision on a ballistic missile defense issue in the coming months. The President, as far as we know, is still coming to Canada. There are important issues on energy that have to be resolved. I talked to the American Ambassador the other day because he has highlighted in a couple of speeches that energy is going to be a major point of discussion. I asked him what the major energy issues were. He said to speed up the approval process for natural gas pipelines and for electricity transmission systems. Those kinds of things are going to go ahead as they will in many areas.

Canada and United States both have a huge stake in seeing the Doha Round succeed. We can support each other quite strongly on issues such as agriculture, many of the service issues, and the more general issue of bringing down industrial tariffs. There are going to be many areas for cooperation. I could add last to that list for this evening, the reconstruction activities in Iraq and in Afghanistan, which will entail both our countries, the World Bank, the inter-American, not the Nation Development Bank, and other institutions where we can also work together. I think that although we have differences for example on Vietnam, we also had cooperation in Kosovo, the Balkans, and many other areas. If I am interpreting both of you correctly, we have a relationship that is strong with deep roots that can withstand the bumps in the road. Thank you.

