January 2006

Discussion following the Remarks of Colin Robertson

Discussion

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cuslj

Part of the Transnational Law Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cuslj/vol32/iss1/50

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Journals at Case Western Reserve
University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Canada-United States Law
Journal by an authorized administrator of Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons.
served as ambassador to Washington, added like it or not, Americans are Canadians' best friends.\textsuperscript{91} I will conclude with this radio conversation recorded off the coast of Newfoundland between some Canadians and the American Navy. "Canadians: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision." Americans: "Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision." Canadians: "Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision." Americans: "This is the captain of a United States Navy ship. I say, again, divert your course." Canadians: "Negative. I say again, you will have to divert your course." Americans: "This is the Aircraft Carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again, that's 15 degrees north, or counter measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship." Canadians: "We are a lighthouse." Your call, eh? Ladies and gentlemen, God bless Canada, God bless America, God bless North America!

DR. KING: Stay here.

MR. ROBERTSON: And God bless Henry King.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE REMARKS OF COLIN ROBERTSON

DR. KING: Oh, boy. That's a great speech, and we will throw it up to questions. I will have a few questions if nobody else does. But you know historically, Canada has not had the attention [in Washington] that Washington does [in Ottawa], and you are on the frontiers of that. Do you think you are getting anywhere in terms of the activity, the lobbying activity and all that? What's your assessment? What's your assessment in Canada?

MR. ROBERTSON: Well, I hope so. My bonus is coming up. Yeah, I think we are doing what has to be done. What I am doing now is a process that really began in the late '70s. As you know, traditional diplomacy, you deal with the Administration. It is executive to executive. The classic embassy would deal with the State Department, and there it would stop. But in the late '70s, we had an important issue. Fish has always been – fish and lumber go back to before our confederation – really it goes back – the first lumber dispute goes back to the first Administration of George Washington when then the State of Massachusetts because it included Maine, took action to curb the timber imports in New Brunswick.
DR. KING: Oh, really.

MR. ROBERTSON: And back in the '70s, we had something called the East Coast Fisheries Agreement, and some of you around the room know this better than I, but we negotiated with the Jimmy Carter Administration an agreement how we were going to manage fisheries on the East Coast. Now, there is no fish for anybody on that side because at the time we negotiated this, it went forward we thought – we negotiated with the United States, I think Marcel Bouselle was our chief negotiator and ambassador at the time – and never reached the Senate for ratification because of two things: First of all, it was Claire Martel who was the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and fishermen on the East Coast said, no, we don't like this and, secondly, because at that point –

DR. KING: He covers Bocky Island where we have a summer home.

MR. ROBERTSON: Well, he was effective, and Teddy Kennedy, who was running against the President in the primaries, wasn't going to let this thing go, so the thing died. At that point, a man named Alan Gottlieb, who became Ambassador, said we have got to take – we have to read the American Constitution. Gottlieb had gone to Berkeley, and he actually understood the American Constitution, something that perhaps not all Canadians know and should read, but at that point, we began to create a group within our embassy that lobbied Congress, and what I do and what my group does – there are now 35 of us – it is the latest manifestation and recognition that there are coequal branches and particularly so in the sixth year of any president.

DR. KING: So you are making progress.

MR. ROBERTSON: We like to think so. We have made some progress.

DR. KING: Okay. One other thing that I wonder if it caused tensions between the United States and Canada, Canada is a party to the world. They are a party to the International Criminal Court, party to the law to seek convention.

MR. ROBERTSON: Belong to almost everything.

DR. KING: Huh?

MR. ROBERTSON: We belong to almost everything.

DR. KING: Yeah. Has that caused tensions between the United States and Canada? In other words, Canada is part of the world.

MR. ROBERTSON: I think if we play our cards correctly, it is an advantage to the United States to have a friend and neighbor and ally that belongs to everything because we are all North American. We understand the rest of the world, perhaps better [than the United States] sometimes, because we belong to so many of these associations so that interpretive capacity is appreciated by both the administration, State Department, and on Capitol Hill.

DR. KING: That's very good. Other questions? Yeah. Mr. Bob Crow.

MR. CROW: The style of the previous ambassador is one fairly direct and upfront. Do you anticipate that that style will continue?
MR. ROBERTSON: Yeah. I think we have changed the paradigm, and I was saying this to David earlier. I think and I was remarking—I had a conversation a couple weeks ago with one of the great men, Dennis Stairs, who—and he interviewed Paul Martin back in 1972, and Paul Martin at that point said then and David reflected then, our Ambassador in Washington should probably be a politician, first and foremost should have confidence in the Prime Minister, but be a politician because I have now been in Washington a year-and-a-half, and it is like living on a kind of side set of West Wing. It is politics all the time.

DR. KING: That must be interesting.

MR. ROBERTSON: It is. But being a politician as Frank McKenna put it; you almost got to have a secret handshake. I think it is really important that gets it in that front so my personal view, personal view underlined, is that our interests are well served by having somebody who is—as Sam Rayburn said to Lyndon Johnson, who has actually run for the office because in Washington, that's what really counts, and so I fully expect Wilson will continue on. He has already been on the Hill. Last week he was up there pushing on our two big issues up there, and I talked about passports and other issues.

DR. KING: Right. Other questions? Yeah, Michael Robinson as usual.

MR. M. ROBINSON: As usual.

DR. KING: Michael is a dream for a chairman like myself. Whenever there is any silence in the room, Michael is there to alleviate the silence.

MR. M. ROBINSON: A short one, Henry, though. There is a very great friend of this organization named Jonathan Freed, and most of us here know him very well, and we gather he is now by Mr. Harper been identified as too close a friend of Paul Martin and been sent off to the IMF, but at least he is back in Shalwa. I guess my question is: Will we still be able to drag him over to the embassy from time to time because, A, he is a great friend of ours, and, B, I think he is probably the original guy who learned how to work the Hill under Gottlieb, under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and is one of the really great experts. Will you be—will we be able to pull him over to external or foreign affairs from time to time?

MR. ROBERTSON: Yes.

MR. M. ROBINSON: Good.

DR. KING: David Crane. David is a famous columnist with the Toronto Star. Tell us about the book, well, not now. Next year.

MR. CRANE: I asked Jim Blanchard last night why the United States was not supporting us against our war on terror when we had supported theirs, by which I meant we had heard no expression of support, our efforts were to deal with Brigitte Bardot. My question is a bit different than that.

MR. ROBERTSON: I thought Danny Williams.

MR. CRANE: This issue of climate change is a very serious issue, and I think based on the scientific knowledge we have, it is a real threat. It is a
threat not to the people in this room; it is a threat to their grandchildren and their children. The United States has been, at least through the [Bush] Administration, though not necessarily reflective of the American public, quite hostile to the Kyoto Protocol and to making a serious effort to deal with this issue. We are about to go into negotiations on the next round. What follows after 2012, and I guess there are two aspects to the question: One, do you expect any serious shift in American thinking to take on its responsibility to deal with this issue? It is still the largest single emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, and, secondly, as Blanchard said last night, for North America, we really have to cooperate in dealing with this problem. It is much more difficult for Canada if the United States is not participating. Do you see any avenue by which the two countries can work together?

DR. KING: Did everybody hear the question? It is news with dealing with climate change. The United States is not party to the Kyoto agreement. Canada is. We are all in it together, and that's the question, whether you foresee cooperation on the issue.

MR. ROBERTSON: David, I will give you my observation. This Administration is probably not for changing, but looking ahead today, the two – and again we all read the polls and things – the two leading contenders, on the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton, and on the Republican side, John McCain, both would have a different view than the current Administration on Kyoto. Both Senator Clinton and Senator McCain were in Alaska last July, and both of them came back and both of them talked to people in our offices, and both of them are convinced that there is a serious challenge there. So I think that's on the one level you will probably see based on where we are looking at today a delicate approach, but also, I look at what we are seeing at the state level.

California, which has the power to move, to do so much, for example, on auto emissions is effectively and some would argue beyond Kyoto because it comes in a practical application, and that ends up in application all across the United States, because that's the biggest market for the car companies. And while they initially tried to take on California in the courts – and this is California courts and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger as well, we are seeing change as well, and of course, you know the Canadian Government has not substantially changed its position since the election. So am I encouraged? Yeah. One observation I have – and I found this on watching ANWR – there is a green thread that runs through both Democrats and Republicans. What people forget about Republicans is that they fish and hunt, and they care about the environment.

DR. KING: Well, I am glad to know that. Well, Ted, thank you again. I have some announcements I am going to make. Thank you so much. You were wonderful.
Colin, you were just wonderful. Now beware of your children. Take care because we can't afford to lose you. Our program next year, what we are proposing as a subject for the conference is entrepreneurship in Canada and the United States, and we hope that we will have a very good attendance at the conference. It is the yeast of growth economically. Entrepreneurship is where it all begins, and I hope that we have a successful conference as we have this year. I wanted to thank you Chios Carmody over here, our Canadian director. I wanted to thank students, Ruth Levine, Payal Deora, and Mark Bardwell. So many thanks.

I also wanted to thank Melissa Kassier. She did a wonderful job. And at my right hand at all times was David Greenspan. Stand up, David. And Katherine Johnson, otherwise known as KJ, played a magnificent role in the success of the Niagara competition. KJ, stand up. Julie Kraus, wonderful. Julie, you should get up and take a bow. George Costaris and Marilyn Becker from the Canadian consul were wonderful. But above all, I want to thank Dan Ujczo. He was wonderful, wonderful. Stand up, give a good hand.

And Michael Robinson, with your permission, I declare us adjourned. Thank you!

(Session concluded).

(Conference adjourned).