

2011

# H-Diplo

## H-Diplo Roundtable Review

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**Volume XII, No. 17 (2011)**

27 April 2011

*Roundtable Editors:* Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse  
*Roundtable Web/Production Editor:* George Fujii

Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux  
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Western Ontario

**Brian Bow. *The Politics of Linkage: Power, Interdependence, and Ideas in Canada-US Relations*.** Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009. 232 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7748-1695-3 (hardcover, \$85.00); 978-0-7748-1696-0 (paperback, \$32.95).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XII-17.pdf>

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Introduction by Francine McKenzie, University of Western Ontario

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Although many countries have claimed a special relationship with the United States, few have done so with as much persistence and determination as Canada. Canadian governments, diplomats, and scholars make the claim for several reasons. Sometimes it simply seems like an apt characterization; at other times it has been more desperately invoked when Canadian and American goals and interests have diverged. It has been a useful lever to enhance Canada's position in bilateral negotiations. Perhaps most importantly, the alternative – that the two have an 'unspecial' relationship – has been unthinkable. The special relationship is therefore more than a descriptive category of bilateral relations: it has been a policy pursued by Canadian governments since the Second World War.

Developments since 1945, such as the Cold War, the aspirations of the United States to global leadership, and increased economic interdependence, have compelled the Canadian government to pay close attention to relations with the United States. Canada's international historians have similarly followed the twists and turns, the highs and lows of Canadian-American relations. This has been a long- and much-studied subject by scholars north of the border and one might reasonably assume that there was little more to say. Judging by the reactions to Brian Bow's prize winning book– *The Politics of Linkage: Power, Interdependence and Ideas in Canada-US Relations* – there is much that needed to be said and Bow has said it. The reviewers are unanimous in their praise for Bow's study. Anderson describes it as "one of the most thought-provoking works on Canada-U.S. relations that has emerged in several years"; Chapnick praises Bow's book as "a model of interdisciplinary scholarship"; James notes that Bow has done a "great service" to Canadian studies; and Thompson sums it up as "a splendid exploration of the past six decades of the United States-Canada relationship that must be ranked among the most profound on the subject". The reviewers' praise and gratitude for *The Politics of Linkage* confirms that although much has been written about the Canadian-American special relationship, the bilateral pairing is not particularly well understood.

Bow's purpose is to explain how and why the relationship has worked and evolved since the end of the Second World War. His argument is thoughtfully constructed and clearly articulated. He explains why in moments of strain the United States has not made use of hard linkages – meaning they have not connected an outcome in one policy area to possible outcomes in other policy areas - to get their way. In other words, he explains what various American governments might have done but did not. As Thompson points out, this is akin to explaining the significance of the dog that did not bark. Bow's explanation centers on the existence of a transgovernmental network that embraced a shared diplomatic culture in the 1950s and 1960s. The people within this network managed the Canadian-American relationship according to powerful norms, one of which was that hard linkages would not be used. But that norm faded in the 1970s for several reasons, according to Bow, such as the growth of government bureaucracy. And yet the U.S. government continued to avoid using hard linkages in its various disputes with Canadian governments. Despite the appearance of continuity, Bow suggests there was a different explanation for such restraint

post 1970, in particular offsetting or constraining considerations, often located domestically, that made such linkages either too costly or ineffective to pursue. He examines four contentious moments in Canadian-American relations – over nuclear weapons (1959-63), Arctic waters (1969-71), the nationalization of oil and gas (1980-83), and the war in Iraq (2002-04) -- to make his case. At the heart of his argument is the eclipse of the shared diplomatic culture, which he posits is key to understanding Canadian-American relations today.

The reviewers all find his explanation convincing and stimulating. Nonetheless, they have suggestions to push the argument further. Anderson, a political scientist, explains at length how Bow could dig deeper with a more theoretically informed approach. While he praises Bow for a judicious use of theory, he suggests that theoretical works on conflict management might allow for a more refined explanation of an American decision-making process not to invoke linkages. James, the other political scientist amongst the reviewers, is satisfied with Bow's theoretical foundation. Anderson also questions Bow's distinction between soft and hard linkages. Is the distinction as obvious and neat as Bow asserts? Moreover, he suggests that Bow might have examined more closely the objectives behind discussions of linkages, noting that the diplomats involved might have been trying to widen the space for negotiations. He also observes that where one sits in the bureaucratic hierarchy has some bearing on whether or not one is likely to consider linkages as an option. Hence the absence of a linkage could have a more nuanced or complicated explanation than the ones to which Bow returns, related either to the power of the no-linkage norm or the restraint imposed by interests. Moreover, the absence or presence of a linkage itself might tell us something more.

The two historians in this round table (Chapnick and Thompson) do not call for a more fully developed theoretical foundation. They praise Bow for his accessibility, "mellifluous prose", willingness to consult archives and make use of oral history, and appreciation of historical contingency. They appreciate his historical skills even though his disciplinary home is political science. As Thompson put it, each of the four substantive chapters could "stand alone as a worthy historical account of the 'crisis' that it describes". The summaries are not necessarily original, according to Thompson, but they are "more nuanced, more empirically-based, and more comprehensive than any before." He adds, more critically, that Bow might have chosen other case studies, in particular one in the cultural domain.

Thompson, Chapnick, and Anderson question Bow's conclusion. As Chapnick explains, the superior analysis throughout led him to anticipate "a path-breaking conclusion". That expectation was disappointed. Bow retreats to safe ground, repeating his main argument and positing that there will be no return to the norm-guided quiet diplomacy of the 1950s and 1960s. Thompson and Anderson challenge the view that the earlier stage has faded entirely. The Mulroney-Reagan years, as well as more recent developments in managing the Canadian-American border, cast some doubt on whether the shared diplomatic culture faded after 1970, never to return.

One of the ways in which *The Politics of Linkage* is so novel is that it does not treat the special relationship as a unilateral Canadian policy. Bow explains the ways that American

governments have managed the special relationship. While the reviewers implicitly welcome the focus on the U.S., they are divided about whether or not it is entirely satisfactory. James notes that the developments that Bow highlights to account for the change in the Canadian-American special relationship “have unfolded principally on the U.S. side of the border”. Chapnick is more critical of the U.S. focus, suggesting that Bow could also look to fragmentation in the Canadian political process to explain the collapse of the shared diplomatic culture. Anderson, on the other hand, believes that the American narrative with respect to the Canadian-American relationship is only partially constructed. Given the small number of American scholars who are interested in the subject, we will likely have to wait for another Canadian scholar to write that story.

The strengths and merits of *The Politics of Linkage* are many. It is a splendid work of interdisciplinary scholarship. It is methodologically sophisticated, well written, accessible, and deeply insightful. It might not be the last word on Canadian-American relations, but it will certainly shape and inform subsequent discussions.

### Participants:

**Brian Bow** is Associate Professor of Political Science at Dalhousie University. While on sabbatical for 2010-11, he is also a Senior Fellow at the Center for North American Studies at American University. He has previously been a visiting fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Georgetown University, Carleton University, and the Australian National University. In addition to *The Politics of Linkage*, he is the co-author of *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada?: Challenges and Choices for the Future* (University of Toronto, 2008), and more than a dozen articles and book chapters on various aspects of US-Canada relations and Canadian foreign policy. He is currently working on a book, exploring the history of North America through the lens of comparative regional integration.

**Francine McKenzie** is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Western Ontario. She received her PhD from Cambridge. She is the author of *Redefining the Bonds of Commonwealth 1939-1948: The Politics of Preference* (Palgrave 2002) and co-editor with Margaret MacMillan of *Parties Long Estranged: Canada and Australia in the Twentieth Century* (University of British Columbia Press, 2003). She is currently writing a history of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1947-1994 and co-editing a collection on the historical intersection of trade and conflict.

**Greg Anderson** earned his PhD from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University (Johns Hopkins/SAIS) in Washington, D.C. and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. He is also a Fellow of and Research Director for the Alberta Institute for American Studies at the University of Alberta. Greg's research interests include Canadian-American relations, U.S. foreign policy, and U.S. foreign economic policy, with a particular emphasis on U.S. trade policy and trade policy institutions. Some of his recent publications include “Did Canada Kill Fast Track,” *Diplomatic History*, (Forthcoming, 2011); with Christopher Sands. “Negotiating North America: The Security and Prosperity Partnership.” *Hudson Institute White Paper*. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute. Fall 2007; “North American Economic

Integration and the Challenges Wrought by 9/11,” *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 3 (2) (Summer 2006); and “The End of the Renaissance?: U.S. Trade Policy and the Second Term of George W. Bush,” in George A. MacLean, ed., *Canada and the United States: A Relationship at a Crossroads*, (Winnipeg: Centre for Defense and Security Studies, 2006), 79-93.

**Adam Chapnick** is the Deputy Director of Education at the Canadian Forces College and an Associate Professor of Defence Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. He is the author of *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United Nations* (2005) and *Canada’s Voice: The Public Life of John Wendell Holmes* (2009). His next book will consider the history of Canadian conduct on the United Nations Security Council.

**Patrick James** is Professor of International Relations and Director of the Center for International Studies at the University of Southern California (PhD, University of Maryland, College Park). James specializes in comparative and international politics. James is the author of 18 books and over 120 articles and book chapters. Among his honors and awards are the Louise Dyer Peace Fellowship from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, the Milton R. Merrill Chair from Political Science at Utah State University, the Lady Davis Professorship of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Thomas Enders Professorship in Canadian Studies at the University of Calgary, the Senior Scholar award from the Canadian Embassy, Washington, DC, the Eaton Lectureship at Queen’s University in Belfast, the Quincy Wright Scholar Award from the Midwest International Studies Association (ISA), the Beijing Foreign Studies University Eminent Scholar and the Eccles Professor of the British Library. He is a past president of the Midwest ISA and the Iowa Conference of Political Scientists. James has been Distinguished Scholar in Foreign Policy Analysis for the ISA, 2006-07, and Distinguished Scholar in Ethnicity, Nationalism and Migration for ISA, 2009-10. He served as President, 2007-09, of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, and Vice-President (2008-09) of the ISA. He serves as President of the International Council for Canadian Studies for 2011-13. James also served a five-year term as Editor of *International Studies Quarterly*. His most recent books on Canadian politics include *Handbook of Canadian Foreign Policy* and *Constitutional Politics in Canada After the Charter*.

**John Herd Thompson** is Professor of History at Duke University and writes and teaches trans-national/comparative North American history. With Stephen J. Randall, he is the co-author of *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, which appeared in a fourth edition from the University of Georgia Press and McGill-Queen’s Press in 2008. His chapter “Forgotten, Imaginary, Ambivalent: The “Partnership” and “Special Relationship” Paradigms in the U.S.-Canada Relationship” will appear in Greg Anderson and Christopher Sands, *Forgotten Partnership Redux – Canada-U.S. Relations Twenty-Five Years On* from Cambria Press. Thompson wishes that his analysis of the U.S.-Canada “special relationship” in the chapter were as thoughtful as that set out in Brian Bow’s *Politics of Linkage*.

With the *Politics of Linkage*, Brian Bow has solidified himself as one of the foremost experts on Canada-U.S. relations. This is a readily accessible book that will appeal to a wide range of readers, including both policy scholars and wonks. The most effective and interesting parts of this book are the four case studies that form the book's backbone; nuclear weapons, 1959-63; the arctic, 1969-71; oil and gas, 1980-83; and the War in Iraq, 2002-04. Moreover, while the jargon-free scholarly analysis will provoke debate among experts, the case studies comprise a rich and interesting diplomatic history of familiar flashpoints in Canada-U.S. relations that will appeal to history buffs of all stripes.

Political scientists can often be overly obsessed with theory to the point that the theory overwhelms the richness of the historical narrative. The *Politics of Linkage* manages to thread this needle quite nicely, offering just enough political science theory to anchor the argument while not allowing the framework to unduly distract. The broad thrust of Bow's work is that for a time between the end of World War Two and the early 1970s, Canada and the United States enjoyed a genuinely special political, economic, and strategic relationship. It was a relationship characterized by deference, exceptionalism, and a set of understood norms against the sort of issue linkage that often poisons diplomacy. Yet, by the early 1970s, something had begun to change.

Taking Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's well known *Power and Interdependence* as a starting point, Bow explores the dimensions of these changes in the diplomatic culture by arguing, in part, that the growth in interdependence between the two countries contributed to the erosion of this "special relationship" by simultaneously creating a series of stakeholder groupings in both countries that periodically "blocked" policy initiatives and altered the "diplomatic culture" that had evolved between the two countries. Refreshingly, this simple framing is actually one of the strengths of this book, particularly since it is put forward to unpack what is a subtle, and very complex relationship.

Bow's book is one of the few studies I am aware of that tries to move beyond anecdotes in describing Canada-U.S. relations to evaluate this "special relationship" in such a systematic manner. Importantly, this book pays significant, and refreshing, attention to the role of people, and the bureaucracies in which they work as causal factors in the shifting dynamics in Canada-U.S. relations.

I appreciate the invitation to contribute to a discussion about one of the most thought-provoking works on Canada-U.S. relations that has emerged in several years.

### **Linkage and Conflict Management**

I am quite sympathetic to the broad argument advanced in *Politics of Linkage*. I think Bow is correct in arguing that something has changed in the "special relationship" Canada and the United States enjoy/enjoyed. Others have argued that Canada has become much more like other countries in American policy thinking, or that Canada remains special, but not

especially important! Bow's contribution here is to try and drill down a bit into the "how" and "why" of the relationship change.

One of the merits of this book is that it is free of the kind of disciplinary jargon that besets many studies. I also think the book highlights the potential of even more systematic analyses of the dynamics of bargaining and negotiation to unravel the nuances of the "special relationship." Bow richly describes some of these dynamics within each of the case studies. But scholars might advance such explorations even further by drawing upon the lessons offered by scholars of "conflict management," sometimes also called bargaining and negotiation. Specifically, I have in mind work by Robert Axelrod, Kenneth Oye, Terrence Hopman, and I. William Zartman.<sup>1</sup> Deriving their analyses from game theory, conflict management scholars engage the dynamics of power within negotiations, seek to understand the process by which solution sets are arrived at and, importantly for Canada-U.S. relations, consider the so-called "structuralist paradox" wherein the ostensibly weaker party to a negotiation is frequently able to wrestle concessions from the more powerful.

*The Politics of Linkage* raises numerous questions about the norms governing linkage, many of which derive from the asymmetrical nature of the "special relationship." Bow offers us some tantalizing insights into how the dynamics of power between the two countries ebb and flow over time and shape outcomes. The insights of conflict management scholars could probably help us drill down even further.

For instance, I was struck by Bow's use of a series of counterfactuals as a means of getting at some of the culture that clearly infuses Canada-U.S. diplomacy. The many "roads not taken" in each of the case studies are instructive in helping us understand the nature and limits of U.S. restraint in the context of so much asymmetry in Canada-U.S. relations. At the same time that "roads not taken" offers us the suggestion that something "special" is at play in Canada-U.S. relations, it leaves us peering back into something of a black box in terms of understanding what precisely transpired. It is into this black box that conflict management peers, seeking to get into the minds of the parties to a negotiation. Under what conditions do power differentials matter? When? For which party? And on what issues?

In the case of Canada, is American restraint (some have referred to it as "Canadian exemptionalism") the byproduct of benevolence rooted in diplomatic culture or indifference rooted in the size and complexity of America's global agenda?

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Axelrod, "Prisoner's Dilemma," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no. 1 (March 1980):3-26; Kenneth Oye "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy," *World Politics* 38 (October 1985): 1-24; Terrence Hopmann, *The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflicts*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Rubin, "The Study of Power and the Practice of Negotiation," in I. W. Zartman and J.Z. Rubin eds., *Power and Negotiation* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); I. William Zartman, *The Negotiating Process: Theories and Applications*, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978).

For example, there is enough Canadian literature on the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Negotiations 1985-1988 to seemingly fill entire libraries. Yet, as of yet there is no single American narrative of this important negotiation. Moreover, in all of the studies of this period, it is clear that the free trade negotiations were a turning point in Canada's history. Significant parts of the federal bureaucracy were reorganized just to negotiate with the United States. The nation's most experienced negotiators and experts were put on the file, with a direct line to the Prime Minister's office. And, in 1988, free trade with the United States transformed the Canadian federal election campaign into a virtual referendum on Canada's relationship with the United States. In contrast, most Americans, including many in Washington, were unaware there were negotiations taking place. A small number of relatively junior trade policy officials were in charge of the U.S. side, with limited profile, and certainly no access to the White House. The U.S. had a number of indirect objectives at stake in the Canada talks, including some signaling within the stalled multilateral GATT negotiations that the U.S. was prepared to go in a bilateral or regional direction.

In short, the stakes for each side were very different. As a result, the dynamics of power operating across the bargaining table shifted frequently between 1985 and 1988. How, why, and what it all says about how "special" the Canada-U.S. relationship really is, merit additional study. Bow's work here in *The Politics of Linkage* richly adds to our limited, and still anecdotal, understanding of what takes place inside this black box.

### **Hard vs. Soft Linkage**

One of the more interesting sets of dynamics about Canada-U.S. relations outlined well by Bow's analysis is his attempt to specify the use of hard and soft issue linkage in the context of the "special relationship." I again think that literatures in conflict management could help us tease out some of the rationales for or against linkage generated inside the black box we so often refer to as the "special relationship." Happily, Bow nicely starts us down this road by suggesting that within the bilateral diplomatic culture there has been a norm against issue linkage. Moreover, Bow posits some distinctions between hard and soft issue linkage and their use in certain circumstances. This strikes me as fertile ground to advance the systematic analysis of patterns of hard and soft linkage within the "special relationship."

Under what circumstances has the norm against linkage been violated? How consistently since the 1970s and the breakdown of the diplomatic culture that Bow identifies has this violation occurred? How do we evaluate whether the linkage of issues has been "successful" from a policy point of view? Would, for instance, a successful hard linkage be defined by a policy reversal of some kind? Or could such success in hard linkage be realized much further down the road in some other negotiation? This also stimulated significant thinking about the distinctions between hard and soft linkage. Are issues within a negotiation so easily classified as hard or soft? When is issue linkage really about signaling than the present set of talks? In several of Bow's case studies, it is clear that U.S. dealings with Canada have implications elsewhere on America's global agenda. In which instances does this kind of apparent issue linkage override norms against it in Canada-U.S. diplomatic culture? I also wondered about the stage of conflict at which linkages were seriously



considered and by whom? If there is (or was) a norm operating in Canada-U.S. diplomacy at what levels does this norm operate, at what stages of a negotiation, and on what issues?

For example, staff level contacts and bargaining may or may not toss around the idea of linkage, but they would be loathe to include such options as part of bilateral communication in the absence of authorization from principals above them in their respective bureaucracies. Conflict management literature may again be instructive for further research since much of it seems to assume significant degrees of linkage (rather than norms against it) wherein the parties seek to “expand the bargaining space” or search for “solution sets” through the explicit use of linkage. How far that linkage extends depends a lot on where in the bureaucratic pecking order negotiators are communicating. If you are a junior staffer, you are going to seek solution sets wherever you can, but only within the narrow purview of your portfolio. If you are a political appointee or elected official, you have the authority (and possibly the mandate) to look for linkage at broader, strategic levels that may draw in and “link” a range of seemingly unrelated issues.

If there ever was a unique diplomatic culture supported by a transgovernmental network at work in Canada-U.S. relations, it would seem to me important to identify and differentiate between linkage scenarios that are merely part of the normal course of seeking solution sets to narrow issues, strategic bargaining among principals designed to do the same, or more menacing kinds of explicit or implicit threats made at these different levels. The point is that “linkage” within negotiations or disputes goes on all the time. The question is which bits of linkage are signs of the erosion of bilateral norms and which are actually part and parcel of such a norm?

I agree with Bow’s assertion that Canada and the United States have enjoyed something “special” in their diplomacy, and that it has taken a few hits. Early in this volume, Bow suggests a number of plausible factors that contributed to the erosion of the norm, including basic demographic changes within each of the transgovernmental networks. Sorting all of this out, perhaps even modeling some of these dynamics, is a methodological challenge. Although *The Politics of Linkage* is not an explicit call for this kind of effort, Bow implicitly places this set of issues high on the agenda for others to pursue.

Those of us who study Canada-U.S. relations have heard countless speeches from public officials reading a shopping list of reasons why Canada-U.S. relations are so “special.” By what measures should we be evaluating whether a “special relationship” actually exists? And, how could we distinguish it from what the U.S. enjoys with other allies? For instance, clips of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently appeared on Canadian news telecasts in which he praised the contribution of Canadian Forces to the NATO effort in Afghanistan. For some, the fact that America is acknowledging Canada’s efforts is evidence that the “special relationship” is alive and well. Yet, I can imagine Secretary Gates saying precisely the same thing, in the same news conference, about the contribution of British, Dutch, or German troops.

At the same time, there remains an ease among Canadians and Americans that simply doesn’t exist in other dyadic relationships. Is the “special relationship” rooted in Canadians

and Americans occupying the New World? Could it be rooted more broadly in what some have called the Anglosphere? How key are the high-level personal relationships that animate the case studies in *Politics of Linkage*? How important are the President and Prime Minister in making sure the transgovernmental network operates smoothly? In the context of a broad norm against linkage, where did relations among principals break down? Most bureaucrats will do “A” quality work for a Prime Minister or President who identifies an issue as a priority, but will only do “C” quality work if the issue is not a priority for their bosses. Others have argued that even at the height of tensions like those described in the case studies here, each country’s bureaucracies continue to make the trains run on time. How do we know the difference between the kind of deterioration in Canada-U.S. relations brought about by the erosion of a diplomatic amity versus more subtle kinds of “foot-dragging” or inattention? Moreover, is it even a deterioration at all?

### **Too Canadian?**

*The Politics of Linkage* makes a significant effort to account for the American point of view within the “special relationship.” Yet, as noted above, the American narrative remains fertile ground for additional work (recent revelations from Wikileaks may be facilitating this). The relative attention given to Canada-U.S. relations by Canadian and American scholars has undoubtedly skewed the historical record. The Canadian focus on its most important bilateral relationship inevitably leads to a rich archival record and willingness on the part of Canadian officials (past and present) to share their insights with scholars. Unfortunately, many parts of the U.S. narrative remain unexplored in the archives or lost forever as some of the key American figures pass away. For instance, two of America’s lead negotiators for the free trade negotiations with Canada in the late 1980s, Peter Murphy and William Merkin, have passed away, their perspectives largely untapped.

We need more efforts such as Bow’s to uncover more of the American narrative so that the dimensions and limits of American self-restraint toward Canada can be better understood. For instance, has the norm against linkage within the diplomatic culture been viewed the same way, and in the same periods, on both sides of the border? Is it possible that the “roads not taken” outlined in the *Politics of Linkage* might be less about U.S. self-restraint and more about the worst fears of Canadian politicians in dealing with the 500lb gorilla in Washington, D.C.? Moreover, each of the Bow’s case studies strongly suggests that it was Canada, not the United States, which made the bulk of the diplomatic missteps that soured things. This may be an oversimplified reading of Bow’s argument, but it made me wonder whether both sides ever view “norms” within bilateral relations in quite the same way. Is it really a shared norm or one held up by a bit of a largely Canadian mythology about a “special relationship?” If we were to apply parts of this analysis to Britain, might we find a similar set of norms? Comparative approaches such as these, where “special relationships” are also thought to exist, could help us account for the depth of economic integration in the Canada-U.S. context as an element in norm maintenance.

### **High and Low Politics**

*The Politics of Linkage* has, for me, also re-stimulated some thinking about the constitution of high and low politics in the bilateral setting. Each of Bow's case studies certainly represents a flashpoint in bilateral relations. And, if the involvement of the highest levels of government serves as part of the criteria, then each is high politics indeed. However, in each of these episodes the asymmetrical significance of the issue for each country is among the most salient of characteristics.

Much like the Canada-U.S. free trade negotiations, the stakes for Canada in each of the case studies in the *Politics of Linkage* were much higher than for the United States. They may have been "high politics" in Canadian terms, but much less so in U.S. thinking. Even where nuclear weapons are concerned (chapter 3), were the geostrategic stakes of Canadian decision-making for the United States equivalent to the effect of those same decisions on bilateral relations for Canada? Are these kinds of interactions perhaps a case of "high stakes meets low stakes?"

Consider the long-running softwood lumber dispute. In Canada, this issue certainly represents high politics. The economic stakes are significant. Forestry is historically British Columbia's largest employer. When this dispute heats up, it is front-page news across Canada. Government bureaucracies in the timber producing provinces and in Ottawa gird themselves for battle. Canada's top forestry experts and negotiators are mobilized. Prime Ministers are regularly asked about the issue by opposition parties in Question Period. In the United States, few have ever heard of the softwood dispute. The issue is most often relegated to the back of the business pages or trade publications in timber producing states. Experts from the American government are few in number and unenthusiastic about working on an issue that is unresolvable and considered by some to be a career killer (it's tough to demonstrate that you've advanced the President's agenda when the dispute is perpetually active). Is this "high politics" for anyone but Canada?

Brian Bow's nuclear weapons case study describes the famous incident in which a memo containing U.S. objectives during Kennedy's May 1961 visit with Diefenbaker was left behind. It quickly caused a stir because of the memo's suggestion that Canada should be "pushed" on a number of issues. It is reminiscent of another incident, lower on the bureaucratic food chain from the 1990s involving the bilateral dispute over advertising revenue in magazines (so-called split run editions). Following one unsuccessful negotiating session in Ottawa, American officials reportedly left behind a list of Canadian products that would be targeted for tariff retaliation in the event of a favorable ruling on the issue in the WTO. Many of the products were in sensitive federal ridings, including the Hamilton-East riding of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps. The list was clearly intended to intimidate, but does this qualify as high politics? Or are these the typical gyrations of a negotiation? Did it matter that lower ranking officials left behind the list? Is this an episode of linkage? Is it hard or soft linkage?

The United States has an enormous global agenda. The reasons for inaction with respect to Canada may have numerous sources, whether rooted in that agenda itself, or in the inertia toward many bilateral relationships that such a big agenda generates. Again, the structuralist paradox put forward by conflict management is instructive since we see a

superpower giving concessions or showing restraint because it's distracted or the stakes are not that high.

## U.S. System

Bow plausibly casts the 1970s as a major turning point in the erosion of the diplomatic culture in Canada-US relations for several reasons: Watergate, Vietnam, policy entrepreneurs in Washington, Congress and the Administration, and shifting coalitions within the private sector arising from ever-increasing degrees of integration.

The American system is highly diffuse by design. The struggle for control over foreign policy is ongoing and ebbs and flows over time, making foreign assessments of U.S. decision-making difficult. To what extent were norms and patterns of transgovernmental cooperation simply overwhelmed by structural changes arising from factors exogenous to the relationship itself? Who, or what, shoulders the lion's share of responsibility for the erosion of the diplomatic culture? Is this a structural shift or diplomatic ineptitude? Perhaps more pointedly, if we accept that the postwar period has seen the long-term erosion of shared norms of accepted/understood behavior, including the period through 2003 and the invasion of Iraq, how should we characterize the period 1985-1994 which, for some, represents a high point in effective bilateral relations?

The late 1990s through the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, represent for some a recent low-point in Canada-U.S. relations. As Ottawa deliberated on whether to join U.S. efforts, the political air was full of linkage and rumor of linkage. One sticking point with such linkage talk is that it failed to appreciate the degree to which the U.S. system (and the NAFTA dispute settlement mechanisms) legalizes disputes like softwood and effectively takes them off the political table. By the time the Iraq debate was at full steam, there was little scope for President Bush to have linked softwood in any form to Canada's decision to stay out of Iraq, even if Bush had wanted to.

American Antidumping/Countervailing Duty law (AD/CVD) is specifically designed by Congress to protect American producers. Over the years, Congress has redesigned and modified those laws several times, intentionally limiting the executive branch's capacity to strike political deals (engage in linkage). Over the years, Congress has grown tired of the executive branch making economic concessions that hurt American industry as a part of negotiations on the broader foreign policy agenda. Hence, trade remedy laws are legalistic enough that the President has a tough time doing much of anything without the major domestic interests agreeing. This was exactly the situation with softwood. If Bush had wanted to link Canadian participation in Iraq to softwood, the President would also have had to persuade the US softwood lumber lobby to abandon its legal claims under U.S. law.

This sounds a bit like Keohane and Nye's argument (and Bow's about Canada-US relations) about interdependence generating a range of blocking coalitions undermining the diplomatic culture. However, this is also just the U.S. Congress flexing its muscles and protecting domestic constituents from a president oriented around foreign policy. These are domestic structural considerations that fit awkwardly with the "breakdown in

diplomatic culture” thesis since they are exogenous to the bilateral relationship. Canadians often think the president can snap his/her fingers and make a deal happen. This is seldom the case. Further, it might have more to do with the U.S. political landscape (the 1970s Congressional crackup, or longer-term shifts in U.S. polity) and the pressures that openness to the global economy are generating in the United States itself.

Hence, I am highly skeptical that there could have been genuine linkage between Iraq and softwood. In fact, the fear of linkage by Canada in this case may have been as important as any actual linkage could ever have been. Once again, scholars of conflict management often point to these kinds of psychological factors, both overt and subtle, in issue linkage as mechanisms for altering the bargaining space between two parties.

Bush’s cancelled May 2003 trip to Ottawa was frequently cited as punishment for Canada’s unwillingness to commit troops to Iraq and yet another sign of the decline in Canada-U.S. relations. Yet, just two years later, March 2005, the North American Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) was hatched, explicitly linking border security to facilitation measures designed to keep the border open economically. In many respects, this set of linkages was all Canada’s doing, starting in late 2001 with the Smart Border Accords, and all of which made its way high onto the American agenda.

With good reason, some see the SPP as a poorly crafted exercise. At the same time, it is clear that a distracted U.S. administration was open to Canadian proposals regarding security and border facilitation that has arguably strengthened interactions within the transgovernmental network, particularly in areas such as security cooperation in aviation and at borders, as well as pandemic response and emergency preparedness. Moreover, unlike Iraq which Canada sat out, the war in Afghanistan has necessitated significant cooperation and coordination between the U.S. and Canadian militaries and diplomatic corps. If the shared experience of the “Greatest Generation” facilitated the longevity of a unique bilateral diplomatic culture through the 1970s, is it possible that the shared experience of Afghanistan will contribute to the same?

If one of the tests of an excellent piece of scholarship is the amount of thought it stimulates in its readers, Brian Bow’s *The Politics of Linkage* easily passes that test. This work effectively attempts to untie some of the most fundamental knots in Canada-U.S. relations, and is strongly suggestive of avenues of inquiry the rest of us should be following. I’ve already got two copies of this volume on my shelf. I’ll look forward to adding more of Bow’s work in the years ahead.

In spite of the trend towards interdisciplinarity in the humanities and social sciences, scholars of the history and, by extension, the nature of the Canadian-American relationship have generally stayed loyal to their disciplines. Historians have constructed grand narratives. Drawn from archival material, or based on years of reading within the secondary literature, their historical training has led them to emphasize empirical research over complex methodological frameworks.<sup>1</sup> To their credit, the results have been accessible to a general audience, as well as largely convincing, but these writers have been less effective in bridging what is a still too large divide between Canadian international historians and social scientists who study Canadian foreign policy.

The experience of North American political scientists is just the opposite. Significantly greater effort has been placed on theories of complex interdependence or, more recently, structural specialization, but such efforts – while analytically rigorous – have too often been presented in language that is accessible only to specialists and draws from limited, if any, archival evidence. Their studies have consequently alienated historians, if historians have considered them at all.<sup>2</sup> Today, too many political scientists who study Canadian-American relations fail to appreciate long-term strategic trends while their colleagues in history routinely neglect new, micro-level studies which could otherwise contribute notably to the evolution of the grand narrative.

It is for this reason that Brian Bow's contribution to scholarly (and popular) understandings of the history of the Canadian-American relationship is so important. *The Politics of Linkage: Power, Interdependence, and Ideas in Canada-US Relations* is a model of interdisciplinary scholarship. Few books manage to combine serious archival research and oral history with sophisticated social science theory, and even fewer do so without sacrificing literary accessibility. In proposing a social interpretation of Canadian-American relations that emphasizes the importance of diplomatic culture, Bow has added not only to theoretical discussions of, arguably, the closest bilateral relationship in the world, but also to the broader historical framework within which that relationship has evolved.

The book's basic argument is straightforward. There was a time, explains Bow, when Canada and the United States enjoyed a genuinely special relationship. In the decades immediately following the Second World War, the two countries shared "a distinctive

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States into the Twenty-first Century* (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2007); and John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> For example, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); and W. Andrew Axline et al., eds. *Continental Community? Independence and Integration in North America* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); and Patrick Lennox, *At Home and Abroad: The Canada-US Relationship and Canada's Place in the World* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2009).

diplomatic culture that shaped the way policy-makers on both sides thought about what their interests were and how bilateral disputes could be resolved” (2). Quiet diplomacy was the rule, and coercive linkages – forceful efforts “to break an impasse or otherwise improve one’s bargaining position on a particular issue by tying it to another, unrelated issue” (3) – were out of the question. By the 1970s, that culture had been lost. The relevant actors had changed, the allocation of power within the national decision-making processes in both countries, but particularly in the United States, had evolved, and new constraints had emerged to eliminate any opportunity to return to the previous era.

Bow is less concerned with whether the new challenges within the Canadian-American relationship are healthy than he is with how policy-makers from both countries deal with one another in the future. He counsels practitioners to accept the inevitability of contemporary institutional constraints and to develop bargaining and negotiation strategies that take into consideration the impact of an American political process that is increasingly fragmented and incoherent. After six years of minority governments in Canada, and with the Canadian provinces inserting themselves ever more regularly into international policy discussions, Bow might have laid just as much emphasis on the fragmentation of the Canadian political decision making process, but his argument is compelling nonetheless.

Bow’s interdisciplinary approach succeeds because of a combination of clear writing, itself a much neglected art among theoretical analysts, and his well-articulated and easy-to-follow justification of his methodology. Historians in particular who are less at ease with discussions of recent trends in realism and constructivism should have no trouble understanding how Bow’s theory departs from both of them; moreover, they are likely to find Bow’s critique of structuralist interpretations of the Canadian-American relationship convincing. They should understand his decision to focus his analysis on the evolution of the U.S. attitude towards coercive linkages in negotiations with Canada. And, in spite of historians’ tendency to focus on the challenges inherent in generalizing from a series of case studies, they should find Bow’s decision to focus on four particular Canadian-American disputes – the nuclear weapons confrontation of 1959-1963, Arctic challenges between 1969 and 1971, reactions to Canada’s National Energy Program from 1980 through 1983, and the Canadian decision to explicitly reject calls to support U.S. efforts to intervene in Iraq (2002-2004) – reasonable. Indeed, college and university educators who teach in interdisciplinary programs might use this text as a model of how to explain and justify a sophisticated methodological approach without alienating the average reader.

The content of the case studies themselves is also impressive. Bow has supplemented his broad reading of the secondary literature with a series of detailed interviews with Canadian and American policy practitioners who played a significant role in the outcomes of each of the four bilateral disputes that he covers. Of course, subject matter specialists will be able to point to instances where Bow has perhaps sacrificed nuance for simplicity,

but his cases are generally accurate, and are described with an appropriate level of detail.<sup>3</sup> There is little in the cases that is path-breaking, although Bow's summary of the Canadian decision not to outwardly support the U.S. intervention in Iraq is particularly noteworthy for its balance and thoroughness. Nonetheless, *The Politics of Linkage's* confirmation of pre-existing thinking through a combination of research in the archives and detailed interviews – the disappointing failure to include a list of those interviews in the bibliography notwithstanding – makes the argument that much more credible. Having read so broadly, Bow can also attest to what was not considered by policymakers, which is equally critical in assessments of American failures to pursue coercive linkages against Canada at times when such an approach seemed viable.

Bow's superior analytical skills and his capacity for clear thinking and writing incline the reader to look forward to a path-breaking conclusion in which he might lay out a way ahead for North American policy practitioners. The final chapter is, as a result, somewhat depressing: Bow's sound, reasoned assessment that the Canadian-American relationship will never again be managed with the relative ease of the 1950s and 1960s is hard to dispute. There are no easy solutions, he suggests rightly, and the challenges are forever growing larger.

In summary, this book makes an important contribution to historical and contemporary understandings of Canadian-American relations. Just as important, it sets an impressive standard for works that bridge the gap between research in history and in political science.

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<sup>3</sup> On the lack of nuance, one might compare Bow's assertion of Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's skepticism of polling data (52) with Patricia I. McMahon's interpretation in her *Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).



Brian Bow does the interdisciplinary fields of Canadian studies and foreign policy analysis a great service with his study of Canada-U.S. relations. Offering a “social interpretation” (3) of how the special relationship evolved in the era after World War II, Bow reveals a command of both the sweep of history and its details. The research is compelling; impressive archival and secondary research is conveyed in the extensive notes.

This is a book that describes and explains a shift in the dynamics of foreign policy between two states that, at least superficially, would appear not to change much in relation to each other. Bow’s analysis, however, convincingly shows how decision-making in the dyad is subject to a different configuration of forces over time. As will become apparent, the relationship goes from relatively predictable to otherwise. Bow concludes by saying that there is “no going back” (180).

Where, then, does the story start? It begins with a post-World War II “partnership” (164), with the agenda-setting exegesis from Charles Doran still standing as the master work on that subject.<sup>1</sup> Bow zeroes in on the causal mechanism behind the special relationship identified by Doran and reassessed at varying times and through diverse means by others. The partnership, as described in detail by Bow, rested upon a “shared norm against resort to coercive linkages” (3). In fact, linkage *itself* is regarded as bad by both sides in the decades following World War II (166), which created the ability to solve problems incrementally and, perhaps most importantly, with little or no grandstanding for domestic political purposes. Instead, bureaucrats on both sides of the border kept things in line with what now would be described as Track II diplomacy.

Norming against issue linkage greatly inhibited the escalation of conflict, as the case study of the Diefenbaker era reveals, because disagreements over nuclear weapons became contained. Conflict, in other words, might arise over an issue but end up in a silo-like existence rather than becoming more expansive. What makes this argument about the impact of norming so effective is that it stands up to extreme variation in the individual level of analysis. While John Kennedy and Diefenbaker may have detested each other, for example, the network of bureaucrats under them had a tradition of working things out and preventing personality conflicts at the top level from impacting upon the long-term relationship. In spite of genuine U.S. anger at John Diefenbaker, there is no evidence at all of “coercive issue linkage” (72).

Perhaps even more persuasive is the Pierre Trudeau-era evidence vis-à-vis support for a norm-based as opposed to personality-oriented explanation for foreign policy processes and outcomes. It would be hard to imagine a combination of leaders who would be less likely to get along than Richard Nixon and Pierre Trudeau. As expected, they did not much

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<sup>1</sup> Charles F. Doran, *Forgotten Partnership? U.S.-Canada Relations Today* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

like each other from the outset. However, Bow reveals restraint in the conduct of the presumably left-of-center and nationalist Trudeau on various occasions where it might not have been expected – especially with a hostile disposition toward his U.S. counterpart.

Trudeau's presentation of Canada's arctic claim, for instance, could not be characterized as "expansive" (79), in spite of the fact that he would have every reason to be nationalistic on this issue in the context of domestic politics. His natural base of supporters and likely marginal voters would be pleased to hear fiery rhetoric on such an issue – telling the Americans off – but that is not what they got from Trudeau. While remembered as confrontational and anti-American later in his prime ministership, early on, as Bow points out, Trudeau could not be characterized as "jingoistic" (86). Network-connected U.S. officials, aware of Canadian concerns about autonomy, restrained coercive linkages and discouraged confrontation. These bureaucrats, as revealed by Bow's research, showed awareness of and adherence to the norm against use of coercive linkage (96-97). This explanation contradicts a personality-based account, which would have predicted an escalating war of words between Trudeau and Nixon.

Given the continuing central role of the U.S. as a quasi-hegemonic state, the next part of the story contains implications for the world far beyond relations with Canada. The story is an unhappy one, in that the dynamics of U.S. foreign policy began to change and the norm against issue linkage eroded. U.S. foreign policy became more "fragmented", which in turn greatly weakened the "transgovernmental network" that had restrained, in particular, hard line issue linkage. A 1972 speech by Nixon on the subject of currency made it clear that domestic politics would play a much greater role in U.S. decision-making than before. The address signaled a "profusion of new players"; in particular, greater public oversight over foreign policy and increased legislative activism could be expected in the future (99).

Given this new configuration of forces, the mutually held norm against coercive issue linkage operated in a greatly reduced capacity. The new era of Canada-U.S. relations instead would be in step more with an account based on rational choice. So the chapters that follow, on Trudeau's 1980 National Energy Program (NEP) and Afghanistan, unfold quite differently and show foreign policy as a product of rational calculations.

Neither U.S. political leadership nor its energy industry had much use for the nationalistic and developmentalist agenda embodied in the NEP. U.S. reaction to the NEP came swiftly and included threats beyond those witnessed for issues of arguably much higher intensity (103). How can this be explained? While many south of the Canadian border loathed the NEP, it still rested mostly within the domain of the so-called 'low politics' of economic issues, as opposed to the 'high politics' of national security. Bow solves the puzzle of the high intensity U.S. reaction by describing an expanded set of actors with no interest in honoring the previous norm of mutual restraint. Intense pressure from U.S. energy interests and Alberta combined to force a significant retreat on the part of the Trudeau government (120-121, 117). While it did not repeal the policy, Trudeau "renounced the developmentalist agenda" linked to the NEP (115).

Bow shows convincingly how both sides in the energy dispute of the early 1980s responded much more to calculations about benefits in relation to costs as opposed to norms that urged restraint against coercive linkages. Especially worth noting is the quasi-threat by the U.S. to exclude Canada from elite meetings of one sort or another (122-123, 125, 126). This strikes at an area that would seem very off limits given its prominence within Canadian history, that is, insecurity about national identity should not be exploited by the U.S. partner. Canada responded to this U.S. pressure (which had other aspects as well) by backing away from what had been a more state-centric and nationalist economic agenda. In recounting this story, it is hard not to think of the extraordinary Canadian reaction to an article that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* in the mid-1990s that also struck at national insecurities. Given its massive debt, the article claimed that Canada should regard itself as an honorary member of the Third World. The decisive reaction, which entailed a green light for Paul Martin to reduce spending dramatically, is easy to recall because of its scope and standing as a massive policy reversal. What this later incident suggests is that Canadian insecurity continues to be very real and may be used more often by a U.S. that is no longer so reluctant to avoid the use of coercive issue linkage.

Bow is able to explain the general persistence of mutual restraint – so the story is not entirely unhappy after all – in terms of a cost-benefit calculus as opposed to normative persuasion (4-5). Consider, for example, his account of the Canadian role in Afghanistan and non-participation in Iraq. He provides convincing evidence that the U.S. eschewed coercion because anticipated costs exceeded benefits (160-161). Canada's participation in Afghanistan is accounted for equally well by an explanation based on rational choice. Its military contribution to Afghanistan, which featured a direct role in the fighting as opposed to peacekeeping, effectively created a shield against further demands by the U.S. regarding participation in the invasion and occupation of Iraq (145).

More general affirmation for the importance of rational choice and domestic politics appears with Bow's observation that Canadian leaders have learned the danger of provoking U.S. interest groups (100). No longer can prime ministers count on norms to limit U.S. reactions; the network that once reined in the extreme effects of interest groups and attendant congressional meddling no longer is capable of doing so. The result is a much more volatile situation in terms of how the U.S. will react on any given issue and a higher probability that conflict in one area will produce coercive linkage in another. It is much harder to predict U.S. reactions in a world with so many more significant players on that side of the border than in the norm-governed era of its relations with Canada (177).

Bow sums up the story of Canada-U.S. relations since World War II as follows: "To put it simply, norms did most of the work in the 1950s and 1960s, and coalitions have done most of the work since then" (172). In other words, the current era of Canada-U.S. relations is one of rational calculation regarding coalitions. This is important in a more general sense because of the special leadership role of the U.S. in the world. Bow's story tells us that significant changes have unfolded principally on the U.S. side of the border. Domestic politics is ascendant in explaining much of what occurs in foreign policy. All of this supports the high-profile claim of Bueno de Mesquita that strategic interaction following

from individual choices among a wide range of actors, as opposed to a more state-centric analysis, provides the more convincing explanation of foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

Bow's work on Canada-U.S. relations, in closing, is a fine contribution to that subject area as well as foreign policy studies in a more general sense. It builds effectively on prior theorizing about the special nature of one interstate pairing to create a model of issue linkage that may find much wider application.

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce, Bueno de Mesquita, "Domestic Politics and International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 46 J(2002):1-9.

The judges in the 2010 Donner Prize competition for the best book on Canadian public policy made no mistake to choose Brian Bow's *Politics of Linkage*. Bow has crafted a splendid exploration of the past six decades of the United States -Canada relationship that must be ranked among the most profound on the subject.

Although the U.S.-Canada relationship is a matter of indifference to most U.S. scholars (with Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye as partial exceptions discussed below) and of massive indifference to scholars from other countries, Canadian scholars have devoted prodigious energy to examining its every nuance. Many among those scholars, and many Canadian politicians, have asserted that the fundamental maxim that "nations have no friends, only interests" has not historically applied to binational interactions between the U.S. and Canada.<sup>1</sup>

In his first chapter, "The Social Foundations of the Special Relationship," Bow accepts this cliché but immediately sets it in a very specific historical context. "There was a time – in the early Cold War decades – when the Canada-U.S. relationship *was* genuinely special," he begins.(3) He then offers an explanation as to why and how this anomalous North American partnership came to be, about how it functioned, and identifies what its "mostly tacit bargaining norms" were.(3) As have other scholars, Bow attributes the genesis of the partnership to the particular circumstances of World War II and Cold War North America; he makes clear, however, that the United States and Canada "certainly were not equal partners." (7) The men (they all seem to have been men) who managed the partnership were not politicians but "government officials and military officers of the two countries [who] learned to work with one another."(11) They came together in "an informal transgovernmental network" that "was governed by a distinctive diplomatic culture that shaped the way policy-makers on both sides thought about what their interests were and how bilateral disputes could be resolved."(11 & 3) The most important norm within this diplomatic culture was that "neither side would try to force a favourable resolution of an issue by making coercive linkages to other, unrelated issues."(3)

In his second chapter, "Power, Interdependence, and Ideas," Bow considers relevant literature on asymmetrical international relationships. Bow of course foregrounds the (relatively short) discussion of the U.S. and Canada in Keohane and Nye's *Power and Independence: World Politics in Transition* (1977). Bow makes clear that Keohane and Nye noted the same "shared norm against coercive linkages" that he posits, and concedes that their book "provides great insight into what is distinctive about the Canada-US relationship." After these kind words, he then devastates their specific explanation of U.S.-Canada bilateral bargaining throughout the rest of his book. If the Keohane-Nye contention that growing North American economic interdependence created the shared norm against

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen J. Randall and I have challenged at length the concept of the "special relationship" throughout four editions of *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens, GA, and Montreal: fourth edition, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008).

the use of coercive linkages was correct, Bow points out, then increased interdependence would strengthen that norm. (25) Bow argues instead that despite the massive increase in “economic interconnections between the two countries...after 1970...the diplomatic record since then suggests that Canada’s bargaining position has not improved, and actually may have deteriorated.”(26) Bow is much gentler with the alternative realist approach to international relations than he is with Keohane and Nye. He is equally resolute, however, that even the most subtle formulations of realism are inadequate to explain confrontations “in which Canada pursued policies that directly challenged important national security priorities of the United States without paying a price in terms of direct, coercive linkages.” (29)

To make the case for his culturalist counter-argument, Bow next considers “Four Crises in Canada-U.S. relations” in individual chapters. (36) In global context, “crisis” seems a hyperbolic word to apply to any Canada-U.S. disagreement, but readers should suspend their disbelief and forgive the hyperbole. He has selected four bilateral disputes that were initiated by Canadian action (or inaction) that engendered U.S. disapproval: Canada’s reluctance between 1959 and 1963 to accept the U.S. nuclear weapons that it previously had agreed to adopt; Canada’s unilateral assertion between 1969 and 1971 of sovereignty over Arctic waters; Canada’s attempt in the early 1980s to implement a national oil and gas strategy; and Canada’s 2003 decision not to join the U.S. “coalition of the willing” in the invasion of Iraq. Bow makes clear that he hasn’t cherry-picked these disputes because they “illustrate” or “confirm” his diplomatic culture argument; instead, he argues that he has “deliberately chosen the kinds of cases that are *least* likely to support it...bilateral disputes where the stakes for the United States were high.”(36-37)

Each of these four chapters could stand alone as a worthy historical account of the “crisis” that it describes. In each case, Bow has exhausted the secondary literature, mined the archives, and conducted interviews with historical actors. But the overall patterns of the relationship that Bow posits will matter more to most *H-Diplo* readers than the precise historical accounts. In the first case, the nuclear weapons dispute of 1959-1963, the proscription against U.S. use of “hard” coercive linkages to bargain with Canada was hegemonic: U.S. negotiators never considered a single linkage scenario that might compel Canadian compliance – despite three readily-available economic linkages that Bow identifies. As he explains it, “the vitality of the norm against coercive linkage is reflected not so much in what U.S. officials said as in what they did not say.(70) For readers who might consider Bow’s proof of absent U.S. linkage scenarios to be problematic, I offer a well-known example from fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. After Watson observes that “the dog didn’t bark in the night,” Holmes rejoins “precisely!”

With each successive dispute, however, the distinctive U.S.-Canada diplomatic culture became more fragile, the transgovernmental network more attenuated, and the proscription against U.S. use of coercive linkages weaker. In the Arctic waters dispute, the U.S. Defense Department pressed for linkage and considered linkage options, but the State Department officials who managed the U.S. negotiations were still sufficiently immersed in the norms of the distinctive diplomatic culture to prevail and linkages to be rejected. But “the absence of specific coercive linkages...did not mean that there were no consequences

for Canada” from “soft linkages” employed by the Richard Nixon administration.(98) In the National Energy Program dispute, the Reagan administration quickly considered coercive issue linkages, including massive trade retaliation and threats to “informally suspend Canada’s membership in the club of advanced economies,” the G-7.(125) The reasons that the United States did not use these coercive linkages “were anchored in practical political calculations and not normative compunctions.”(120) Canada’s non-participation in the U.S.-led Iraq invasion is recent enough that Bow lacks evidence for the sharply-honed analysis of the three earlier cases. Although “there is no solid evidence that overt threats were ever made,” he suggests, however, that “the Chrétien government was alarmed by the prospect of future linkages” to the point that it made a greater commitment to other dimensions of the U.S. “war on terror,” most notably in Afghanistan.(128) Unlike the nuclear arms dispute four decades earlier, “the United States was *not* restrained because of any reflexive adherence to overarching norms about how Canada-US bargaining was supposed to work.”(146)

Bow weaves his chronology of and his explanations for the decline of those norms, and thus of the U.S.-Canada special relationship, throughout *The Politics of Linkage*. He dates “the broader perception among political elites in both countries that some of the premises underpinning the postwar system of bilateral dispute management were unraveling” to the early 1970s.(98) He chooses the so-called “Nixon shocks” of 1971 – the initial non-exemption of Canada from U.S. import surcharges and investment controls – as his turning point, and interprets Nixon’s 1972 speech to the Canadian Parliament calling for a more “mature” bilateral connection as “a eulogy for the old special relationship.”(99) In what some readers may consider a departure from his cultural explanation, Bow explains the transformation of the U.S.-Canada relationship largely in structural terms: the relative decline in the importance of the U.S. Department of State and the Canadian Department of External Affairs. His account is also U.S.-centric: he describes the “profusion of new players within the US foreign policy making process, many of whom had little or no knowledge of – and no incentive to prioritize – the bilateral relationship as a whole.”(99) Bow concludes that the death of the shared distinctive diplomatic culture, and thus of the U.S.-Canada special relationship, brought about “Canada’s surprising turn toward formal, integrative forms of bilateral dispute management,” most notably with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement of 1987. (101) No single part of what Bow tells us is conspicuously original, but his overall account is simultaneously more nuanced, more empirically-based, and more comprehensive than any before it.

*The Politics of Linkage* is not, of course, perfect. Recurrent cultural disputes are conspicuously absent, and in conflicts over Canadian policies that threaten U.S. cultural exports there is much less evidence that Washington has been constrained by norms of U.S.-Canada negotiations. To the United States, disputes over cultural industries are high stakes. In most years cultural industries are the first or second most significant U.S. export by value. Bow touches, however, on the reason for the relative U.S. truculence with regard to cultural industries: concern that special treatment for Canada would create a bad precedent for relationships with other U.S. allies.

By the standards of contemporary Political Science, Bow writes mellifluous prose. But his lengthy consideration of counterfactual linkage scenario situations can become tedious, especially for the historians among his readers. Other things about the book will delight historians, however. Bow offers a subtle explanation of change over time in the U.S.-Canada relationship, and sets that explanation within an admirable narrative. To Bow, U.S. and Canadian negotiators are not simply “actors” speaking lines, but individuals who display agency: they are not simply subsumed by institutions or impersonal geopolitical forces. Bow also understands the importance of contingency in history.

One of those contingencies was the overlap in office from 1984 to 1992 between Brian Mulroney’s Conservative government in Ottawa and the Republican presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Those eight years offer evidence of a warmer U.S.-Canada relationship, if not a special one. But the increased warmth generated by the temporary Tory-Republican rapprochement need do no great violence to Bow’s central thesis: it did not resurrect the distinctive diplomatic culture that had once shaped the U.S.-Canada relationship. Perhaps Jean Chrétien best described the altered essence of U.S.-Canada relations. Asked about his approach to them by journalists at the beginning of his prime ministership, he answered that “Business is business and friendship is friendship, and the two cannot be confused.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chrétien cited in Thompson and Randall, *Ambivalent Allies*, p 285



Author's Response by Brian Bow, Dalhousie University

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It is a great privilege to have one's work selected for this kind of attention, and I'm immensely grateful to the H-Diplo roundtable organizers, the chair, and the four reviewers for their careful consideration of my work.

When you write something long and complicated, you are always a little worried that at least some of your readers won't recognize the main ideas as such. So John Herd Thompson's review was especially satisfying, for having very carefully picked out and carefully summarized almost all of those main ideas in just a couple of pages; Patrick James' review is also very helpful in this way, and in making very useful connections to broader Political Science debates.

All four of the reviewers are a little coy about whether or not they actually agree with the core arguments in *The Politics of Linkage*. (Greg Anderson is a partial exception here.) My hunch is that this is at least partly a reflection of the broader academic culture within the Canadian foreign policy and U.S.-Canada relations specialist communities, characterized by reciprocal deference and an inclination to explanatory eclecticism. If I'm right about that, then it's a little bit ironic, because I wrote the book with the idea that it would directly challenge some specific interpretations of U.S.-Canada relations, and thereby shake up the field's tendency to accept "everything matters, at least a little bit" as an explanation, or at least provoke some more strenuous debate about the main drivers of the bilateral relationship. Having said that, I do recognize that my own argument is a layered and qualified one, so perhaps I haven't really broken away from the field's habit of circumspection...

Several of the reviewers made a point of noting that the four case studies themselves have not uncovered much that is new about those episodes, and that the book's main contributions come through the way that the cases are put together. That certainly fits with the way I was thinking about what I was doing, and why. The cases I chose had already been studied extensively, and there were few hidden gems left there to dig up. But I did think that embedding them in the larger pattern might put each of these episodes into new perspective. Virtually all of the research on the nuclear weapons case, for example, has emphasized the dramatic showdown between Diefenbaker and Kennedy in early 1963; I hoped that by drawing the readers' attention to the remarkable self-restraint that the U.S. exercised in the second half of 1962, I could make the case that this episode was not so exceptional, and could in fact be seen as part of a broader pattern of limited conflict. Looking back on it now, I wish I had put more effort into highlighting where and how my own reading of these four episodes diverged from other prominent accounts, especially where there was obviously well-developed historiographical controversy.

My overall interpretation of the bilateral relationship wasn't entirely new, either. As I noted at the outset, the book's main aim was to renew a traditional interpretation that had degenerated into cliché, to specify it more carefully, and to set it on a more stable empirical footing. I also aimed to connect this traditional interpretation to cutting-edge theoretical

(and metatheoretical) debates in Political Science, and the reviewers have identified some of these connections. James, Thompson, and Anderson all picked up on the tension between ideas (constructivism) and interests (rational choice) that runs through the book.

Thompson notes that some readers may see my argument about the importance of changing domestic political structures as a “departure” from the core “cultural” argument, and indeed a few have mis-read it this way. This part of my overall argument does go outside of a *strictly* cultural interpretation, but I see nothing wrong with mixing together social and structural elements this way. As Thomas Risse pointed out nearly twenty years ago, “ideas do not float freely,”<sup>1</sup> and in this case we need the structural element (domestic political structure) to understand why norms shared by middle-level bureaucrats could have such an impact on the course of bilateral bargaining, and why the salience of these norms dissipated so quickly in the 1970s.

Something had to drive U.S. relations with Canada after the unravelling of the post-war diplomatic culture in the 1970s; James correctly points out that I find that new driving force in domestic political struggles between rival coalitions, and that this can be read to support Bruce Bueno de Mesquita’s general argument about the primacy of domestic political rationality over the state’s external orientation.<sup>2</sup> But I hope that doesn’t distract readers from the way these levels of analysis are inter-connected and their explanatory primacy is contingent. In the original *Power and Interdependence*, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye argued that U.S.-Canada relations were exceptional, because they seemed to be driven mainly by domestic and transnational dynamics, rather than state-centric/geopolitical ones.<sup>3</sup> But, as I argue in the book, that was really only true after the early 1970s. In fact, state-centric analyses were actually quite appropriate for U.S.-Canada relations in the 1950s and 1960s, because at that time U.S. officials were both willing and able to deflect pressures from domestic interests, as part of their commitment to ‘manage’ relations with Canada according to the post-war diplomatic culture. And the breakdown of the post-war system of diplomatic management that I describe did bring domestic politics to the forefront, but it’s important to recognize that this fragmentation was brought about in part by changing geopolitical circumstances (i.e., America’s relative decline in the 1970s).

Anderson, in his very thorough and wide-ranging review, makes a pitch for greater attention to the insights of conventional rational choice bargaining analysis, particularly the relatively “low-tech” (i.e., not math-driven) kind that was most popular in the 1970s and 1980s. Early versions of the book manuscript did engage more extensively with this literature, especially in the specification of the counterfactual scenarios. I think there are

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Risse-Kappen, “Ideas do not float freely: transnational coalitions, domestic structures, and the end of the cold war,” *International Organization* 48, 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 185-214.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, “Domestic Politics and International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly* 46, 1 (March 2002): 1-9.

<sup>3</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1977).

great opportunities for a productive division of labor between rational choice approaches which link given interests to strategic choices, and constructivist approaches that try to understand where those preferences come from. I wish I had had more room to develop that kind of analysis in *The Politics of Linkage*, and I would certainly second Anderson's call for more ambitious and more genuinely integrative attempts to bring these two styles of analysis together.

Anderson's questions about what constitutes linkage, and the distinction between "hard" and "soft" linkages, are good ones, and I'd be the first to admit that I don't have them entirely worked out. In any negotiation, there is often room for debate about whether a given policy change should be seen as part of the core issue at stake or it properly belongs to a different issue area (and is therefore the basis for linkage). An expression of frustration that indicates an intention to be demanding in some future negotiation could be intended as, and perceived to be, either a "hard" or a "soft" linkage, depending on the context and the formulation. Often a signal carefully calibrated to be perceived *not* to be a linkage will be interpreted as a soft linkage, or even a hard linkage. Linkage, in other words, is in the eye of the beholder. There is thus a pressing need for those that study diplomacy and negotiation to think much more carefully about these ambiguities, from a rational choice point of view emphasizing signalling and uncertainty, from a constructivist point of view emphasizing the social construction of the issues themselves and of the meaning imbued in specific bargaining "moves," or perhaps some combination of those perspectives.

James returns in a few places to the question of political leaders and their importance, and Anderson raises some questions about this as well. I didn't spend much time on this in the book, but it is important in specifying what kind of argument I'm making, and where it differs from a lot of the existing research on U.S.-Canada relations. I do think that leaders are often important in particular cases, but I think that importance has been over-estimated in a lot of previous work, both in specific cases and in explaining broad patterns over time. By deliberately choosing cases where the president and prime minister did not get along, I wanted to highlight the way that other factors created long-run continuities in the process of bargaining which seemed to deflect or over-ride the impact of political leaders.

Both Thompson and Adam Chapnick note that I attribute the transformation of the relationship in the 1970s to domestic political changes in the United States, and don't say much about concurrent political changes in Canada. That is something that quite a few Canadian readers have complained about, but while I do think there have been major changes to the Canadian system, and they have had important effects on Canadian priorities, I don't think they have had important effects on the way that *the U.S.* approaches the bilateral relationship (which was after all my main research concern). The literature on U.S.-Canada relations is almost comically lop-sided, with the vast majority of accounts coming from Canada, concerned mainly with Canadian choices, and often relying entirely on Canadian sources. I went into the book project hoping to tilt against that imbalance, and I thought I'd done as well as I could, but—as Chapnick points out—in the end I wasn't able to achieve anything like real parity between U.S. and Canadian sources. I used to suspect that Canadian researchers tended to stick to Canadian policy choices and Canadian sources because they were a little self-obsessed; but bitter experience suggests that they do it

mostly because that's all they can get their hands on. There just isn't much out there on the American side, in terms of archival materials or even well-placed potential interviewees.<sup>4</sup> Having said that, though, I still think there needs to be much more of an effort to look at issues from both sides, and to try to get the U.S. side of the story as "directly" as possible. Given the way that archival records relating to foreign policy in the U.S. seem to be drying up these days, students of U.S.-Canada relations will have to start being much more aggressive about trying to get interviews with US policy-makers "in real time" and/or keep their fingers crossed for more WikiLeaks bonanzas.

All of the reviewers rightly note that *The Politics of Linkage* is heavy on thinking about the implications of past developments, and light on looking to the future. That is certainly a reflection of the way I approached the research in the first place, and my own purposes in writing the book: I was mainly concerned with understanding the past in its own right, rather than using the past to test/support arguments about the future. It probably also had something to do with 9/11, as I still hadn't yet worked out for myself what difference it might make to the bilateral relationship. At the time, I felt quite strongly that the changes to the bilateral relationship during the 1970s were actually much more significant than those following from the Free Trade Agreement, the end of the Cold War, or 9/11. I still think that's true, but if I were to do it over again, I would certainly pay much more attention to relatively recent developments like the globalization of the world economy, the transnationalization of production after the Free Trade Agreement, the thickening of international regimes like the World Trade Organization (noted by Anderson), and the increasing focus on policy harmonization and military inter-operability. Closer attention to those developments wouldn't change my interpretation of the basic pattern over the last sixty years, but they would sharpen the discussion of the nature and limits of U.S. self-restraint today, and perhaps point to new arguments about how Canada and the U.S. can establish a renewed bilateral partnership.

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<sup>4</sup> The depth of the problem is revealed in Edelgard Mahant and Graeme Mount's 1999 book, *Invisible and Inaudible in Washington: American Policies toward Canada* (University of British Columbia Press). After months of digging through U.S. archives, they were only able to turn up enough references to Canada to put together a shallow overview of major bilateral negotiations.