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Introduction by Francine McKenzie, Western University

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Introduction by Francine McKenzie, Western University

2009 was the centenary year for Canada's Department of External Affairs (renamed the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in the 1980s). To mark the occasion, historians in the department organized several conferences to explain its history and workings and assess its achievements. The papers included in *In The National Interest* were produced for one such conference.

The contributors to this volume include historians and political scientists. Their challenge is to explain the national interest, determine the extent to which it has shaped Canadian foreign policy, and evaluate its merits and shortcomings. Michael Carroll and Greg Donaghy, the editors, justify this focus because of its topicality: "For better or worse, discussions of contemporary Canadian foreign policy are firmly centred on frank assessments of competing definitions of the national interest." (2) The case studies in the collection are far-ranging, including Arctic sovereignty, continental security, the nationalization of oil, multilateral diplomacy at the United Nations, and the promotion of women's rights. Together they cover most of the twentieth century, starting in the 1920s and ending in the 1990s.

The three reviewers include one historian and two political scientists. Lara Silver is a specialist on the history of Canadian foreign policy, with a particular interest in the ways prime ministers have shaped foreign policy. Andrew Cooper combines expertise on Canadian foreign policy with additional interests in global governance, international relations theory, and international trade. Krzysztof Pelc is an expert on contemporary international trade issues and the World Trade Organization; his review addresses the chapter on trade policy with a few additional observations on the foreign policy challenges confronting Canada.

A focus on the 'national interest' begs a comparison with an alternative conception of foreign policy rooted in values. Lester Pearson, Canada's Prime Minister (1963-68), celebrated diplomat, and recipient of the 1957 Nobel Peace prize for his efforts in defusing the Suez Crisis, distrusted "the national interest as a guide for foreign policy decisions if this were to be interpreted in a narrow or short-sighted way," according to his son and former diplomat, Geoffrey Pearson.¹ Canada's liberal internationalism or Pearsonianism (comparable to Wilsonianism in the way it is frequently invoked and often misunderstood) has been understood as antithetical to a national interest approach to foreign policy. Carroll and Donaghy allude to this tension in the introduction when they describe the storm of protest unleashed in the mid-1990s in response to Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy's human security agenda. Realism and internationalism, pragmatism and idealism have been treated as binary. Their respective champions defend each approach in terms of the consequences for Canada's standing and influence in world affairs. (Cooper faults the editors for overplaying the significance of Axworthy's redirection of foreign

¹Geoffrey A. H. Pearson, *Seize the Day: Lester B. Pearson and Crisis Diplomacy* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), p. 6.

policy and redefinition of national interests.) The incompatibility of the two approaches informs the chapters in this volume, although it might have been useful to problematize the relationship between them rather than accept them as mutually incompatible.

Although 'national interest' is a term that is frequently invoked, several contributors note that it is not easily or simply defined. There seem to be two types of national interest at work in this volume. First, it is a tangible goal. Jack Granatstein provides a top five list of national interest categories: territorial security, national unity, economic well-being, independence/sovereignty, and the promotion of democracy and freedom. The national interests discussed in other chapters all fall within these categories, although they have more refined definitions related to their individual case studies. The authors collectively highlight enduring national interests as well as the ways in which they have evolved and broadened in response to the transformation of the international community. As a result, issues like women's rights have become a foreign policy priority, although Silver criticizes Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon for not explaining how support for "women's equality in southern countries should be in Canada's national interest."

Second, 'national interest' is also an approach, based on promoting national advantage first and foremost. The editors and contributors by and large endorse the national interest approach. They often make their case by demonstrating moments when it was not the guiding principle of Canadian foreign policy, for example in the rejection of the acquisition of nuclear weapons, attempts to decrease Canada's reliance on the American market, or in the promotion of multilateral diplomacy at the United Nations. Such moments are usually characterized as quixotic, if not downright foolish. Adam Chapnick's study of Canadian diplomacy at the United Nations in the 1950s addresses the incompatibility of national interest and values-based approaches to foreign policy. He explains that internationalist and collective interests in peace and disarmament overshadowed the UN's value to "Canada's national interest in order and stability" (96). He faults Canadian diplomats for setting aside "the national interest in favour of more parochial concerns" and refers to the general outlook as one of "misguided optimism" (97). He is not alone in his endorsement of the national interest as the soundest basis for foreign policy. Granatstein equates moralism with an "unrealistic position" and he admonishes those who "shout out that Canada is a moral superpower," particularly when that means telling Americans "that we know best" (77-8). Michael Hart's endorsement of the national interest as the only sensible way to formulate foreign economic policy is also stated with clarity and force. The editors also back this approach: "Strip away the lofty idealism of Borden's imperialism or the soaring rhetoric of St. Laurent's internationalism and underneath stands revealed the enduring preoccupation with national advantage that has rightly driven Canada's diplomats and their political masters" (8). The three reviewers seem to agree with the national interest approach too, although I could be reading into their comments.

Cooper and Silver agree that the national interest is difficult to pin down, in part because it has changed in response to domestic changes as well as a more complex policy environment at the end of the twentieth century than at its beginning. Cooper praises the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for its resilience and adaptability. Despite specific definitions of the national interest in each chapter, Silver suggests that the

national interest remains elusive. As she puts it, the volume consists of “an assortment of the authors’ snapshots” and she asks whether “the ‘national interest’ will ever be captured long enough to get a good look at its attributes.” She adds that a conclusion would have been helpful to bring together the different strands and working definitions of national interest. This seems a helpful suggestion, particularly appropriate for edited collections. Pelc offers an explanation for why the national interest is obscure. He agrees with Michael Hart that economic national interests have long defined foreign policy but their pursuit, through such quotidian activities as trade, receives little public attention. In other words, the concept of national interest flies below most people’s radars. He also criticizes the selection of chapters in this volume for perpetuating the idea that humanitarian and political issues constitute the national interest. It is up to readers to decide if economic interests are the *sine qua non* of national interests.

Norman Hillmer’s study of O.D. Skelton opens the collection. Skelton was one of the most formative early under-secretaries of the External Affairs Department and his over-arching interest was independence from Britain. As Cooper notes, Skelton’s obsession came at the expense of other interests such as national security, a point that Galen Perras explains more fully in his chapter on continental defence preparations before the Second World War. Silver points out the importance of identity and authority as areas that might have been included in the volume – such as Canadian nationalism and the Statute of Westminster which upheld Canada as an equal and sovereign state – to set the stage for the rest of the collection instead of starting mid-flight in the 1920s. Despite the fact that Ottawa had the authority to set foreign policy by the 1930s, preoccupations with independence, particularly in connection with relations with the United States, persisted. Half of the chapters (Perras on continental security in the 1930s, Granatstein and Stephen Randall’s chapters on Canadian-American relations, Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert on arctic sovereignty, Tammy Nemeth on energy policy, Hart on trade policy) tackle this essential and unavoidable relationship, one that has inspired both resistance and acceptance amongst Canadians and their policymakers.

Andrew Cooper characterises the volume as an insider’s study, focusing on departments, some prominent diplomats, as well as prime ministers. He points out that despite a long-standing preoccupation with national unity, official conceptions of the national interest were impervious to public opinion and demographic developments. Policymakers understood foreign policy to be an elite preserve, a view that lasted into the 1980s. Two of the contributors nonetheless tackle the impact of public opinion and ethnic communities on the national interest. Cooper and Silver praise Heather Metcalfe for her insightful and useful chapter on Canadian public opinion on the eve of the Second World War; Robin Gendron’s focus on the department’s cultivation of francophone states as a way to heal the divide between English and French Canadians is appreciated although Silver wonders whether this initiative revealed how “a domestic pressure group hijacked the ‘national interest’ and steered it toward its own narrower interests.”

Both Cooper and Silver discuss the powerful prime ministerial impress on Canadian foreign policy. The chapters by Nelson Michaud and Stephen Randall deal explicitly with the ways in which prime ministers have shaped foreign policy, although prime ministers appear in

every chapter. Their authority over foreign policy is clear even though their influence has not always served the national interest, according to several of the chapters. However Silver objects to the labels that Michaud uses to describe the administrative styles of prime ministers – for instance, Brian Mulroney as captain and Stephen Harper as commander. She suggests that such labels tend to stifle understanding by encouraging “inaccuracies in thinking and ultimately dull[ing] the critical faculties.”

The reviews offer different final judgements. Pelc objects to the structure of the volume which reinforces misleading ideas about the internationalist imperatives of Canadian foreign policy. Cooper is the most praiseworthy, believing that the chapters offer useful new information that will contribute to our understanding of the national interest. Silver praises individual chapters but points out what she believes are important oversights, including overlooked examples and events, an incomplete context, and no summation. What the reviewers do not discuss explicitly is the overall coherence of the volume’s examination of the national interest. There is perhaps another unintended way in which the volume is coherent: its prescriptive endorsement of the national interest as the soundest basis for Canadian foreign policy.

Participants:

Michael Carroll received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto and is an assistant professor in the Department of Humanities at Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton, Canada. He is the author of *Pearson’s Peacekeepers: Canada and the United Nations Emergency Force, 1956-1967* (UBC Press, 2009) and is currently editing (with Greg Donaghy) *From Kinshasa to Kandahar: Canadian Diplomacy in Fragile States, 1960-2012*. He is also working on a study of Canada’s involvement in Indochina from 1954 to 1973.

Greg Donaghy was educated at the University of Saint Michael’s College in Toronto (B.A.), Carleton University (M.A.), and the University of Waterloo, where he received his Ph.D. in 1998. He joined the Historical Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 1989 and was promoted to Head of the Section in 2003. Dr. Donaghy has edited six volumes in the series *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, as well as several collections of essays on post-war Canada. His publications include the monograph, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-68* (2001), and most recently, “Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Canada, the United Nations, and the Search for a Korean Armistice, 1952-53,” *War and Society* Vol. 30 No. 2, August, 2011, 134–46.

Francine McKenzie is Associate Professor in the Department of History at the recently renamed Western University (formerly the University of Western Ontario). She received her Ph.D. from Cambridge. She is the author of *Redefining the Bonds of Commonwealth 1939-1948: The Politics of Preference* (Palgrave 2002) and co-editor 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.

Andrew F. Cooper is Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Waterloo and Distinguished Fellow, The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI).

Krzysztof J. Pelc is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. His work appears, among others, in *International Organization*; *World Politics*, the *International Studies Quarterly*, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, the *World Trade Review*, and the *Journal of International Economic Law*. He is currently at work on a book manuscript on the politics of flexibility in trade, entitled "Making and Bending Trade Rules: Resolving the WTO's Architectural Challenge."

Lara Silver has completed the requirements for a Ph.D. from the University of Kent at Canterbury in the Department of Politics and International Relations, and lectures in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia. She specialises in international relations of the twentieth century, particularly Canadian diplomatic history. Recent publications have focused on the readiness of the Canadian soldier during the First World War; the beguiling use of metaphor in the creation of the 'Atlantic Community' in the 1940s; and the diplomatic downplay of the 'North Atlantic Triangle' by the Department of External Affairs in the late 1940s and 1950s. The current book-length project examines the formation of national role conceptions in the minds of Canadian prime ministers from Macdonald to Trudeau, and their impact on foreign policy.

This fine collection edited by Greg Donaghy and Michael Carroll has a strong inside Ottawa flavor to it. For aficionados of the evolving debates about Canada's national interest it has a lot to offer, some of which is familiar but much that revises our appreciation of the actors who have shaped the framing and projection of Canadian foreign policy.

The state-centric orientation of the volume plays to the strengths of the contributors but also to the temporal concentration of the chapters towards a pre-1980s timespan. Although there is a commendable effort via three chapters to add some light on recent trends, the bulk of the contributions focus on the 1920s up to end of the Trudeau years.

It is also a book that highlights individual personalities. Some of these are very well known as the major stars of the traditional Canadian foreign policy 'club' inside the Department of External Affairs (DEA), notably O.D. Skelton, Hume Wrong, Norman Robertson and, of course, Lester Pearson. However, there are a number of cameo appearances from a strong supporting cast including largely unsung bureaucrats such as Norm Chappell the long-serving energy counselor at the Canadian embassy in the U.S.

Notwithstanding the insider flavor of the collection, the limitations of even the most eminent club players are not shied away from. In some cases this is a reflection of the fact that the main actors were so transfixed on one form of global transformation – particularly the shift from the UK to the U.S. in the 1930s - that they overlooked another more immediate danger. This was certainly the case with O.D. Skelton, who is given special treatment by Norman Hillmer as the champion of Canadian independence in foreign policy. As Jack Granatstein cogently critiques, "Skelton wrote innumerable memoranda excoriating British policy in Europe" while missing "the necessity of stopping Hitler." (71)

The traits that are most commendable are the skillful assessments by officials about where Canada could do things to strengthen the Canadian national interest and where caution or avoidance of trying to too much was preferable. This theme comes to the fore in Adam Chapnick's fine chapter that argues that Canadian diplomats were quickly disabused of any sense of idealism at the UN in favor of the need to apply forms of technical leadership based on "its capabilities and the relative interests of the great powers." (97) It comes out in the equally good chapter by my colleague Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert that presents the decision not to seek formal recognition of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic as an appreciation of functional limitations necessitated a more ambiguous stance rather than as a sell-out.

Moreover, similar traits jump out in the subordination of robust and often misguided initiatives by politicians (whether by John Diefenbaker or Walter Gordon) to practical policy choices as depicted through Michael Hart's contribution. In his chapter detailing the trajectory of Canadian External Trade Policy, 1945-1982, Hart is as scathing of Diefenbaker's nostalgic tilt back to Britain and the Commonwealth as Gordon's attractions

to the ideas of the “interventionist left” in order to make the Canadian economy “less reliant on American investment capital and international trade in general.” In both cases the role of state officials was to resist such impulses: “Professionals in the bureaucracy [viewed] Diefenbaker’s desire to shift 15 per cent of Canada’s trade from the United States to Britain as impractical. They found Gordon’s desire to make Canada less reliant on United States capital and markets just as foolish.” (143)

Yet, even accepting the dominance of the state-centric perspective over the span of much of this book, the silence (or even open contempt) for societal perspectives on foreign policy is striking. Indeed as showcased by Heather Metcalfe in her insightful chapter on public opinion, not only Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King but also Skelton, were resistant to any intrusion in their club by even members of other elites such as intellectuals and journalists. Yet, when decisive action was required at times such as September 1939, the Canadian public was out in front and not laggard in supporting what action needed to be done. Still, the resistance continued. As late as 1985, as Nelson Michaud tellingly observes, Erik Nielsen, Canadian Minister of National Defence “strongly opposed issuing a defence green paper – to which Canadians could react- on the sole basis that foreign and defence policies were not matters to be discussed with the general public.” (183)

Such a mix of strengths (caution and appreciation of limitations in the international arena) combined with weakness (the lack of attention to management techniques and the creation of extended client groups) reveals how quickly major pillars of the traditional foreign policy establishment could be eroded in the Trudeau years. As depicted in a wide number of chapters, but most tellingly in the chapter by Tammy Nemeth on energy policy, the old establishment was shunted aside through this period.

In some ways, as reinforced by the chapter by Robin Gendron on the Francophone Community, this shift in power was a reflection of the grueling nature of some internal tensions within the older club just as Trudeau was coming into power. Instead of a consensus on how DEA should respond to pressures for change in Quebec there was fragmentation between hard liners and soft liners.

And although not wanting to fall into the category - unnamed, at least in terms of political scientists - of academics who Michael Hart suggests ignore the impact of trade and economic policy on external relations prior to that time, 1982 (with the merger of DEA and Industry, Trade and Commerce, plus the forthcoming initiative on possible sectoral agreements with the U.S. as the harbinger of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the dynamism of the Economic Affairs Bureau) does seem to mark a shift towards bolder initiatives that reflected more explicitly the national interest. This sense of renewed dynamism comes out as well in Stephen Randall’s comprehensive chapter.

The overall impression of the collection therefore combines vulnerability and resilience for DEA/DFAIT (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada). As rehearsed early on in the King/Skelton era, the department was always susceptible to prime ministerial actions that trumped its own preferences. But this sense of control was magnified from the Trudeau era on, with Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney, Jean Chretien, Paul Martin and Stephen Harper

reinforcing the trend to dominance from the centre of government. Major shifts from the FTA, to the refusal to join in the invasion of Iraq, to the decision by Paul Martin to move Canadian troops from Kabul to Kandahar, were done without core departmental input.

From this perspective, I believe that the decision of the editors to start with the debate on Lloyd Axworthy and human security is misleading. The Axworthy initiatives were niche initiatives of choice - whether beneficial or not to Canadian foreign policy - not the main-game. On the big issues of the day [notably Canada-U.S. relations and the North American Free Trade Agreement, (NAFTA)] Axworthy was kept out of the core decision-making circles. Moreover, as witnessed by the early trajectory of Prime Minister Harper's policy towards China, values can get in the way of the projection of national interest beyond the Axworthian moment.

The other theme of salience is the deep resilience of the Department of External Affairs/DFAIT. Even when found wanting, the department has bounced back through impressive displays of adaptation. Skelton changed his mind at time of war that "Britain's key national interest of survival was critical to Canada." (71) DFAIT learned in the 1980s how to utilize the changing "institutional basis for the development and delivery" of trade policy. (149) And as Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon's concluding chapter on the Beijing Conference on Women ably demonstrates, the department learned how to operate successfully both as a generalist and specialist actor in sensitive areas of an expanding global and interdepartmental agenda in the post-Cold War era. Such resilience reinforces the claim of the editors that not only has the department "come a long way from its origins" but that it has done so in context of a very different and vastly more complex policy-making process. (8)

Michael Hart, in his article “External Affairs and Canadian External Trade Policy,” begins by assuring his reader that while the prevailing wisdom has long held that Canadian foreign policy focuses on political and humanitarian issues to the detriment of economic issues, nothing could be further from the truth. This claim is echoed throughout the chapter, with Hart professing that “trade policy has always been one of the most important components of [Canada’s] foreign policy” (145).

I tend to agree. The volume’s editors, however, clearly believe otherwise: the book, if anything, works to reinforce this misconception, since Hart’s chapter is the only one, out of twelve, to examine trade, with one other contributor focusing on another facet of economic affairs, in Tammy Nemeth’s chapter on energy policy.

Yet this is reflective of a recurrent paradox in Canadian foreign affairs. While a small country like Canada, by its very nature, is highly dependent on trade, this does not mean that trade need be especially high on the policy agenda, or that its constituents necessarily follow trade matters closely. Small economies are price takers, in that they cannot influence world prices, and they have limited bargaining power, meaning they can do little to affect other countries’ policies single-handedly. As a result, Canada is left with a highly constrained menu of allowable policy options, traditionally preferring free(er) trade and open markets.

Such limited agency in the realm of trade also explains how, compared with the pendulum swings in United States’ trade ideology over the same period, for instance, Canadian views on trade have seen little change over the last century. As Hart indicates, the only buoying of the boat to be seen took place under Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and later Prime Minister Trudeau, both of whom sought—for very different ideological motives—to diminish trade reliance on the U.S. market. Diefenbaker sought to shift trade to Great Britain, while Trudeau was aiming for European and Japanese markets. In both cases, the leaders soon realized that affecting established trade flows in any significant fashion was akin to rerouting a river, and would require “heroic or draconian policy measures” (145). Surmounting the pull of geography in trade is no easy task.

Also as a result of its position in the global economy, Canada has benefited significantly from the progressive economic integration of the second half of the century. Hart neatly elaborates how the particular compromise that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) struck in 1947 was “tailor-made for Canada” (147). On the one hand, it pushed for deep cuts of trade barriers in manufactured products, and on the other, it allowed long transition periods, together with the many loopholes and escape clauses characteristic of the GATT regime, allowing country-members both to pursue foreign policy objectives, and to limit the costs of adjustment domestically. The final outcome was thus close to Canada’s ideal point; perhaps more so than for either the U.S. or Europe.

It would have been interesting to get a sense of what the evolution of Canadian trade policy might tell us about the likely Canadian position on contemporary trends in trade: how might Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) officials treat the recent wave of preferential trade agreements, which decrease the likelihood of further multilateral deals, and as a result diminish Canada's bargaining power with the great powers? And do Canadian values affect the views of Canadian representatives's views about the inclusion of environmental, labour, or human rights standards as an integral part of agreements, a much talked about issue in recent years?

The recurrent feature of Canadian trade policy that transpires most clearly within Hart's highly readable, sweeping portrait of post-war Canadian trade policy is pragmatism. This is hardly happenstance. What accounts for such pragmatism also goes some way in explaining the prevailing wisdom—the existence of which is unquestionable—which Hart begins the chapter by debunking. Trade does not rank high in terms of public attentiveness in Canada. That is not because it is unimportant. On the contrary: it is so important that together with Canada's limited bargaining power and its dependence on foreign markets, trade officials are highly constrained in their actions, and constituents need worry little about significant shifts in policy. Given its position in the world, Canada would pay a disproportionate price for straying far from the status quo. As a result, any changes to come are likely to remain "incremental, pragmatic, and cautious" (149).

The Canadian 'national interest' is by nature complex, multifaceted, and difficult to pinpoint, resulting in a foreign policy record that is open to scrutiny by the academic cognoscenti. This book provides historical accounts of the Canadian public servants who rigorously pursued the national interest, and who sometimes regrettably lost sight of it. Somewhat expectedly, the authors themselves do not always manage to successfully track down Canada's national interest over the century from 1909 to 2009; Norman Hillmer describes the 'national interest' somewhat apologetically as a "slippery beast." (11) The outcome is that the book is an assortment of the authors' snapshots, replete with their commendations of jobs well done, and lamentations over the occasional misdirection in Canadian foreign policy.

Absent from the book is a chronicle explaining the various strains of Canadian nationalism that beleaguered the country's earliest political leaders.¹ Loyalties to Britain remained steadfast after the departure of the last British troops in 1906, and enabled the Round Table movement to gain ground, with its advocacy of an Imperial Federation.² Running counter to the imperial connection to Britain were the ideas of the outspoken French Canadian, Henri Bourassa.³ Bourassa's forthright dissent against the Canadian imperialists and the Round Tablers served to agitate public opinion in Quebec, and the drumbeating for greater Canadian independence was well noted in Ottawa. An opening chapter on these early years of the twentieth century could have provided helpful context to explain the contentious backdrop in which the Department of External Affairs was founded in 1909.

The opening chapter of the book actually starts in the 1920s, and focuses on the contribution made by the former professor at Queen's University turned under-secretary, Oscar D. Skelton. Skelton's interest in securing greater independence for Canada underscored his advice to Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King. Steps towards greater independence, such as the signing of the Halibut Treaty in 1923 (the first treaty to be signed without a British counter-signature) and the Balfour Declaration in 1926, are not mentioned in the chapter. Instead, the impact that Skelton had in invigorating the Department of External Affairs is given emphasis. Having noticed that the department lacked initiative and breadth, it was Skelton who set up a competitive recruitment campaign in 1927, with an extensive written examination that determined whether or not

¹ Interested readers can be directed to the following book, C. Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

² On the Round Table movement in Canada, see C. R. J. Rickerd, "Canada, the Round Table and the Idea of Imperial Federation", in *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, ed. A. Bosco and A. May (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), 191-221; C. Quigley, "The Round Table Groups in Canada, 1908-1938", *Canadian Historical Review* 43, no.3 (1962).

³ M. P. O'Connell, "The Ideas of Henri Bourassa", *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 19, no.3 (1953): 361-76.

the candidate would be interviewed. Skelton's penchant for administration, and his background as a professor, came in useful. The department brought in bright young men, some of whom remain icons in Canadian diplomatic history, such as Lester B. Pearson and Norman Robertson, who were recruited in 1928 and eventually became under-secretaries themselves. Skelton's encouragement toward French Canadians reflects his sensibility that national unity was of the utmost importance.

Hillmer succeeds in making this chapter an enjoyable read, and some parts are even humorous. The difference in personality between Skelton and the first Canadian diplomatic representative in the United States, Vincent Massey, is one such example. Massey's flair for pomp, his desire for a luxuriously furnished mansion in Washington, and his preference to be outfitted with an elegant diplomatic uniform contrasted sharply with Skelton's practical side. Moreover, Massey's overt anglophilia concerned Skelton. Skelton's desire to establish an autonomous Canadian presence abroad prompted him to set up legations in Paris and Tokyo in 1928. It would have been helpful to read something about security concerns in the late 1920s. Anglo-American naval rivalry and tensions could have manifested into armed action, and this was a major concern of the prime minister.⁴ Skelton is known for having explained to the public that Canada's role was to foster 'good-will', and indeed, King and Massey periodically explained to the public that Canada's very role was to serve as the 'interpreter' between its American and British counterparts, so it is surprising that references to this role do not feature in the chapter.⁵

The following chapter by Galen Roger Perras continues to highlight Skelton's contribution in light of the security concerns of the 1930s. The passage of the Statute of Westminster on 11 December 1931, which granted Canada the autonomy to conduct its external affairs, deserves some mention here, but curiously, it is not only absent from this chapter but also from the rest of the book. Having the 'apron strings' considerably loosened was liberating,

⁴ The tension in the Anglo-American relationship over the course of the 1920s is discussed in B. J. C. McKercher, "No Eternal Friends or Enemies: British Defence Policy and the Problem of the United States, 1919-1939", *Canadian Journal of History* (August 1993): 257-93; and B. D. Rhodes, "The Image of Britain in the United States, 1919-1929: A Contentious Relative and Rival", in *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy*, ed. B. J. C. McKercher (London, Macmillan, 1991), 187-208; and F. Venn, "A Futile Paper Chase: Anglo-American Relations and Middle East Oil, 1918-34", *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 1, no.2 (July 1990): 165-84; A. Williams, "Before the Special Relationship: the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Foundation and the Rumour of an Anglo-American War", *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 1, no.2 (2003): 233-51; and, B. J. C. McKercher, "Between Two Giants: Canada, the Coolidge Conference, and Anglo-American Relations in 1927", in *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy*, ed. B. J. C. McKercher (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1991), 81-124.

⁵ Utterances of the 'interpreter' role feature in several addresses by the prime minister and the minister in Washington, see for example, *The Message of the Carillon and Other Addresses by the Right Honourable W. L. Mackenzie King* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1927), 178; *Good Neighborhood and Other Addresses in the United States by the Hon. Vincent Massey* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1930), 3-4. Massey also mentions this role that he played in his memoirs, see *What's Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), 157.

but also challenging, as it made decision-making in Ottawa all the more consequential in the international run-up to the Second World War.⁶ In this chapter, Perras emphasizes that Canada's cooperation with Washington served the interests of both countries, but that Canadian officials in the Department of External Affairs sought to prevent the Americans from exerting a dominating presence. Much of the diplomacy was left to King, who also served as the minister of external affairs. Perras suggests that King's dual posts should have been separated, and that King's hope that Canada might serve to "link" the United States and Britain was typically "fuzzy." (33) Perhaps more credit should be given to King, as he did have some success in bringing about this objective, as argued elsewhere.⁷

Heather Metcalfe's contribution on the importance of maintaining national unity during the late 1930s is a useful one. Attention is given to the internal demographic makeup of Canada, what it meant to be 'Canadian', and how ultimately, the decade's repeated crises in Europe brought the issue of identity to the fore. As a result, Canadian foreign policy muted any interventionist sentiment in favour of an isolationist one, which better suited the ethnic minorities in the prairies, and the younger generation of Canadians. King practiced a policy of ambiguity, the key to his enduring presence in politics, as it prevented different feathers from being ruffled. His focus on national unity, relations with Britain and the United States, and a free hand approach in relations with both the League of Nations and the British Empire were sufficiently placating to enable him to carry on without raising a political storm on the domestic front.⁸

The inevitability of cooperating with Washington underlines J. L. Granatstein's chapter. He argues that the creation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence in August 1940 ultimately protected Canadian interests and advanced the Allied cause, and, that this 'turn to the south' was a great achievement for Skelton. In contrast, he rebukes the Diefenbaker government for refusing to accept nuclear warheads some twenty years later, 1959-1963. Granatstein criticizes the Minister of External Affairs and the under-secretary, Howard Green and Norman Robertson respectively, for having allowed their personal sense of morality to get ahead of the national interest. Granatstein's final words, that 'getting on

⁶ The steps toward being granted autonomy in external affairs are discussed in L. Lloyd, "Loosening the Apron Strings: the Dominions and Britain in the Interwar Years", *The Round Table* 369 (2003): 279-303.

⁷ King's strategy, and his success, in 'linking' the United States and Britain together is persuasively presented in: T. M. McCulloch, "'The Key Log in the Jam': Mackenzie King, the North Atlantic Triangle and the Anglo-American Rapprochement of 1935-39", *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (2004/2005): 45-68; and T.M. McCulloch, "Roosevelt, Mackenzie King and the British Royal Visit to the USA in 1939", *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 23 (2007/2008): 81-104.

⁸ An insider's perspective of the prime minister's 'ambiguous' approach in external matters is helpfully outlined by Escott Reid in his article, "Mr. Mackenzie King's Foreign Policy, 1935-36", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 3, no.1 (Feb. 1937): 86-97.

with the Yanks' was essential and necessary, remains a dictum that is congruent with his other works.⁹

In the following chapter, Adam Chapnick reinforces the understanding that decision-makers were occasionally blind to the realities of Canadian interests. In examining the Department of External Affairs and the idea of the United Nations over 1943 to 1965, he notes that the department's reports emphasized what Canada was doing *for the world* rather than for its *own* national interest. Chapnick queries whether Canada benefitted from the admission of sixteen new members into the United Nations General Assembly in 1955, an undertaking in which Canada took part. The department became more aggressive after 1963, and thereafter Canada became an ambitious coalition builder. That being the case, Chapnick still concludes that the national interest was set aside in favour of more parochial concerns, based on the relative interest of the great powers.

Covering similar terrain in the timeline, the chapter by P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert examines the issue of Arctic sovereignty during the years 1943 to 1968. Sandwiched between two opposing superpowers, Canada had become the potential frontline for the next global conflict. The dilemma for Canada was how it could protect the continent against the Soviet Union, while also protecting the north against the United States. The authors find that Canadian policymakers performed admirably, and effectively safeguarded Canadian sovereignty, by exercising both prudence and practicality. On the matter of building the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line across the Canadian Arctic in the 1950s, the authors contend that this was a 'win-win' situation for Canada, as Washington bore the full cost of construction, subcontracted to Canadian companies, and hired Canadian staff. The authors do suggest an avenue for their critics to take, pointing them toward the environmental losses in having the DEW line constructed and in the socio-cultural legacies for the Inuit people; but the implicit message delivered is that these areas are collateral damage in the greater victory of securing the national interest.

The marginalization of segments of the Canadian population is taken up in the following chapter, which examines diplomatic efforts to engage with the francophone community over the years 1964-72. Herein, Robin S. Grendon explains that the Department of External Affairs courted francophone states, seeing this policy as serving the national interest, in order to reinforce the French dimension in Canadian identity. Energies expended to improve relations with French-speaking countries were deemed a necessary strategy, as French Canadian nationalists were threatening the unity of Canada. New embassies opened up in Senegal and Tunisia in 1966, and developmental assistance increased from \$300,000 in 1963 to \$7 million a few years later. From the perspectives of the under-secretary, Marcel Cadieux, and the Canadian ambassador in France, Jules Léger, this direction of resources was long overdue, as they advocated a bilingual and bicultural Canada. However, both individuals differed on the question of whether Quebec should be able to act on its

⁹ 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 J. L. Granatstein, *Whose War Is It? How Canada Can Survive in the Post-9/11 World* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2007).

own behalf internationally; whereas Cadieux was opposed to any concessions to Quebec's international ambitions, Léger advocated a more conciliatory attitude. In the end, a compromise was reached enabling Quebec to participate in *La Francophonie*, an international organization.

This chapter highlights both the challenges and the dangers in dealing with disgruntled portions of the Canadian population. While Grendon clearly refers to the threat posed to Canada's national unity, it could be more clearly explained how the participation in a francophone international community ultimately benefitted Canadians, and whether it was successful in bringing about domestic harmony. Without a strong conclusion on the merits of the endeavour, it can appear to the reader that a domestic pressure group hijacked the 'national interest' and steered it toward its own narrower interests.

On the matter of how federal moneys are obtained and spent, Michael Hart's chapter emphasizes that Canadian foreign policy was always focused primarily on economic policy, rather than on political or humanitarian matters. Over the years 1945 to 1982, the Department of External Affairs worked to coordinate the Finance Department and the Trade and Commerce Department. Hart recounts his personal experiences as a high-ranking public servant, and argues that trade policy was largely immune from the 'schizophrenia' that characterises much of Canadian foreign policy. Trade policy officials sought to access foreign markets and protect vulnerable domestic industrial sectors. The negotiation of the Canada-United States Auto Pact is heralded as the most important trade policy achievement of the 1960s, which laid the groundwork for the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement. Hart reserves his criticism for Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, for failing to see that foreign policy should be trade relations policy. Business thrives in orderly, stable and predictable economic climates, and the radical departures that Trudeau sought to achieve were, in Hart's view, neither warranted nor likely to succeed.

In Tammy Nemeth's chapter, Trudeau is similarly lambasted for challenging conventional wisdom and seeking to chart out new directions for external affairs. Trudeau's decisions to phase out oil exports to the United States in 1974 and implement the National Energy Program in 1980 were intended to decouple Canada from the continent. In so doing, Trudeau's view of the national interest differed from that of the Department of External Affairs, which had long managed the Canada-United States relationship based on a pattern of 'informal continentalism'. The departments of External Affairs and Energy, Mines and Resources struggled for jurisdiction. Trudeau allegedly did not trust External Affairs to advise and assist on the New Energy Program, so he intentionally kept its officials in the dark over the course of 1979-80. As a result, both Canada's energy policy and its relationship with the United States suffered. The blame is directed at Trudeau for being errant in his vision of the national interest.

The actual part played by prime ministers in the conduct of foreign policy is a matter of dispute, and is taken up by Nelson Michaud in his examination of Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper. Michaud emphasizes that over the last twenty-five years, the prime ministers have played different parts in the conduct of foreign policy. Mulroney is accredited for having begun the democratization of the foreign policy-making

process in Canada, a 'birthday', as Michaud refers to it, albeit it is a point that this reader finds unpersuasive.¹⁰ A more serious dispute involves Michaud's typology that is used to explain the differences between prime ministerial management styles. Mulroney is a 'Captain', Chrétien is 'Lenient', Martin is a 'Commander', and Harper is a 'Shackler', at least in his early years. While it is conceded that the personalities of political leaders do matter in analysing foreign policy behaviour, there are dangers in describing leaders in metaphorical terms. Much research conducted on metaphors has revealed that it is impossible to learn something anew without first drawing a comparison to something familiar.¹¹ However, to identify prime ministers under metaphorical labels leads to inaccuracies in thinking and ultimately dulls the critical faculties, with the potential consequence that readers opt for the metaphorical label, and in so doing, accept its blurred meanings. Better to drop the metaphor and present extensively the differences among leaders, than to risk conveying something altogether unclear.

Stephen J. Randall takes up the tendency toward neglect in his chapter on Canada's bilateral relationship with the United States. Randall appears to agree with Michaud that the prime minister plays an important part in 'managing' the relationship with the United States, and that other actors fall into 'supporting' roles and frequently play 'off stage'. Randall considers that Mulroney managed the bilateral relationship with President Ronald Reagan by developing a close and effective personal rapport with him. Issues of acid rain, free trade, and arctic sovereignty were addressed, making the Mulroney years the apogee of the bilateral relationship. The decline in that relationship came with Chrétien, which was intentional on the prime minister's part. Prime Minister Paul Martin is touched upon briefly here, but the matter of ballistic missile defence is not – a pity, as it is a helpful issue to examine in assessing whether alignment with Washington is really so necessary.

The final chapter of the book focuses on the interdepartmental leadership that took place in the preparations for the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995. The Status of Women Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Canadian International Development Agency worked together as key players, sharing the goal of advancing women's equality globally. The gender-related issues included human rights, violence, and economic equality, and they are considered herein as salient to Canada's national interest. However, it may be unclear to the reader how *Canadian* women stood to benefit from the initiatives undertaken, and therefore, why women's equality in southern countries should be in Canada's national interest.

The reader may be left wondering if the elusive beast that is the 'national interest' will ever be captured long enough to get a good look at its attributes. Granatstein does the book a

¹⁰ Although Trudeau is not given focus in this chapter, he did spearhead the drive for the public to send in their letters when launching the foreign policy review over 1968-69. After having spent substantial hours going through boxes of these letters in the archives, this reader can attest that the citizens' concerns were penned, and noted.

¹¹ G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3; Susan Sontag, *Illness as a metaphor and AIDS and its metaphors* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 93.

great service by hammering out a list of five Canadian national interests: the protection of the territory and security of its people; the maintenance of unity; the protection and enhancement of independence; the promotion of economic growth to support the prosperity and welfare of its people; and lastly, the protection and enhancement of democracy and freedom.⁽⁷⁰⁾ These attributes are worth referring to if one is wondering whether to support an endeavour that takes up substantial federal moneys. As the book lacks a conclusion, one must reflect upon the chapters to make sense of how the national interest was perceived, pursued, and sometimes attained; and moreover, how lesser beasts occasionally, and undeservedly, entered the spotlight.

Response by Greg Donaghy, Historical Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, and Michael Carroll, Grant MacEwan University

We are grateful to Professors Andrew Cooper, Krzysztof Pelc, and Lara Silver for contributing to this roundtable on our collection. Addressing the research and arguments of thirteen contributors as well as the overall themes of a collected work is a tough and unwieldy challenge. This is especially true of a collection that spans a century. As editors, let us respond to the reviewers' comments on the book as a whole, and invite our contributors to react to specific criticisms of their chapters, perhaps placing their reactions in the context of Canada's evolving 'national interest.'

We are, of course, delighted that the general tenor of the three reviews is positive. We are not, however, surprised. Our contributors are some of the best scholars in their field, and they responded to our requests, often contradictory, for space-saving cuts and more detail, with skill, speed, and goodwill.

One of the real limitations of this kind of collection, identified in varying degrees in each review, is its lack of comprehensiveness. This arises in part from the very nature of collective works, particularly those arising from a conference. This collection emerged from a successful public gathering at the Center for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary that marked the 100th anniversary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Conference logistics limited the range and availability of personnel, and helped define the subjects and themes pursued. At the same time, the form allowed for the recruitment of specialized experts on relatively narrow topics, an undoubted strength. On the whole, we think we have the balance just about right.

There were other elements that needed to be balanced as well. Clearly, the book had to focus on the Department of External Affairs, whose history we were celebrating, without becoming a dreary account of what one clerk said to another, as bureaucratic units – sections, divisions, and bureaux – were shuffled this way and that. We are pleased that both Silver and Cooper found the collection readable and accessible, highlighting many of the lively personalities involved in policy-making.

We also think, despite the mild accusations to the contrary leveled by Cooper and Silver, that we struck the right balance between bureaucratic insiders and public opinion. Indeed, the role of various 'publics' in defining the 'national interest' shines through in Heather Metcalfe's innovative work on the 1930s, Robin Gendron's look at French-Canadian attitudes in the 1950s and 1960s, and in Adam Chapnick's discussion of efforts to sell the UN to Canadians in the 1960s. It seems clear to us that the Department has always shared its role in defining the 'national interest' with the Canadian people.

Professor Pelc's review, which deals with just one chapter, is clearly idiosyncratic. We are, however, pleased that he found Michael Hart's history of DFAIT's role in Canada's international trade policy to be such a fine article. Indeed, we feel that it is one of the best short introductions to a complicated subject available. To some extent too, we agree with

Pelc's specific charge that the book shortchanges the history of Canadian trade policy. Indeed, as he rightly points out, the field generally does not pay enough attention to Canadian trade policy. Just as important in this context, however, trade was only explicitly linked to foreign policy when the Department of External Affairs merged with the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce in 1982. For most of its existence, External Affairs dealt largely with political, security, and humanitarian issues, themes reflected in this collection.

Two final points. At the end of his thoughtful review, Professor Cooper suggests that we might be misleading readers by starting our collection with a reference to Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and his human security agenda of the 1990s. It was not our intention to suggest that this agenda necessarily reflected the 'national interest,' though on reflection, we would draw attention to the surprising durability and importance of some of its elements in the post 9/11 world. Rather, we wanted to account for the recent and sudden surge of interest among Canadian academics in the very idea of the 'national interest.' For Canadian historians and policy analysts, too often beguiled by the idyllic image of Canada as the disinterested peacekeeper or middle power, the national interest is an unfamiliar lens. It was worthwhile to invite scholars who were comfortable using this metaphor (and some who were not) to tackle issues in Canada's diplomatic past explicitly through this prism.

And this brings us to a point made by Professor Silver in her very detailed review: our collection does not include a conclusion that defines the 'national interest.' She's right, and perhaps we ought to have written one. However, we felt that the contributions spoke for themselves and established the main point of *In the National Interest*: immutable and self-evident definitions of the 'national interest' generally do not exist. Instead, Canada's interests and international role are subject to constant discussion and redefinition.

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