

# PLAYING BY NEW RULES: ALLAN GOTLIEB, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF CANADA-US RELATIONS

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*In the early 1980s, the Trudeau government adopted a new, high-profile style in the conduct of Canadian diplomacy with the United States. Canadian Ambassador Allan Gotlieb led the campaign of public diplomacy to raise the consciousness of Americans, in elite circles and the broader public, about Canadian concerns. Here, Andrew Cooper examines the origins and nature of the approach, its strengths and weaknesses, and its possible role in future Canada-US relations.*

Canadian diplomacy vis-à-vis the United States took a new shape at the beginning of the 1980s. Most strikingly, “public diplomacy” became a central feature in the management of Canada-US relations. A comprehensive analysis of Canada’s experience with respect to public diplomacy sheds light on certain broader questions about the concept and practice of this diplomatic technique.<sup>1</sup> The origins of Canadian public diplomacy possess both external and internal dimensions. Externally, the most important factor influencing the shift in approach of Canadian diplomacy was a transformation in the “rules of the game” in the Canada-US relationship. Internally, a central factor was the role of Allan Gotlieb as the architect and leading practitioner of this “thoroughly modern” type of diplomacy,<sup>2</sup> especially during his ambassadorship to the United States from December 1981 to January 1989. Indeed, the practice of Canadian public diplomacy toward the United States during the 1980s may be said to be his diplomacy to a large extent. The ends and means of Canadian public diplomacy distinguished this approach both from traditional Canadian diplomacy and other forms of public diplomacy. Finally, the substantive problems underlying Canadian public diplomacy have not only blunted the original momentum of Canadian diplomacy toward the United States but also pose serious constraints on the future of this approach.

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1. Despite a great deal of activity labeled public diplomacy, surprisingly little scholarly attention has been devoted to the phenomenon. One of the few studies which has looked at specific aspects of Canadian public diplomacy is Charles F. Doran and Joel J. Sokolsky, *Canada and Congress: Lobbying in Washington* (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy, Dalhousie University, 1985), Ch. 1.
2. Allan Gotlieb, quoted in David Shribman, “Mr. Ambassador: Canada’s Top Envoy to Washington Cuts Wide Swath,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 July 1985, 1.

## THE ORIGINS OF CANADIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The development of Canadian public diplomacy in the 1980s reflected the changing context of Canada-US relations during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Faced with a relative decline in its international competitiveness during this period, the United States responded by redefining the goals and instruments of its foreign economic policy. A turning point was the "Nixon shock" of August 15, 1971, when the Nixon administration both suspended the convertibility of US dollars into gold and placed a 10 percent surcharge on manufactured goods entering the United States. Canadians saw the "Nixon shock" as an indication of the unwillingness and/or inability of the United States to adhere to major tenets of the post-war economic order, which Canada and Canadian diplomacy had strongly supported. More specifically, the fact that the United States did not exempt Canada from the import surcharge signaled to Canadians the end of the much-proclaimed special relationship between Canada and the United States. By representing Japan and not Canada as the leading trading partner of the United States, the Nixon administration added "insult to injury."<sup>3</sup>

The Canadian sense of uncertainty over the direction of US foreign economic policy was heightened by a shifting emphasis in the US domestic political system. The ebbing of the "imperial presidency," the emergence of Congress as an increasingly important actor in foreign policymaking, and significant changes made in the Committee seniority system in the immediate post-Vietnam and Watergate period made decision making in the United States more complex. Wider participation, with a greater emphasis on individual initiatives on foreign policy issues, resulted in a more open, freewheeling, and unpredictable approach. This decentralization of foreign policy leadership was reinforced by the increased linkage of foreign policy issues to domestic American concerns. The overall result was a narrower, more constituency-oriented foreign policy.

America's allies felt the impact of these developments. The most dramatic case of Congressional intrusion into the Canada-US relationship was with regard to the East Coast Fisheries Treaty. After prolonged negotiations on the issue of overlapping fishing claims, a draft treaty was drawn up in March 1979. However, the determined opposition of a few influential US senators (with the strong backing of New England fishermen) blocked ratification of the agreement. Canadian interests became highly vulnerable to rider amendments tacked onto legislation dealing with unrelated matters, or were side-swiped by general legislation directed at other targets. Such actions featured extensive "log-rolling," temporary alliances, and policy linkage.<sup>4</sup>

In view of this background, Canadian decision makers had an obvious rationale to rethink the Canada-US relationship. In the 1970s, however, the

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3. Thomas Enders, "The United States and Canada: Comparisons and Interrelations," address at Stanford University, 3 May 1979, reprinted in *Department of State Bulletin*, June 1979, 2.

4. See, for example, David Leyton-Brown, *Weathering the Storm: Canadian-U.S. Relations, 1980-83* (Toronto: Canadian-American Committee, 1985), 19.

Trudeau government did not respond by addressing directly the question of managing Canada-US relations. Rather, as signified by the so-called third option, Trudeau took a more independent or autonomous position.<sup>5</sup> In Canadian foreign policy, attempts were made to diversify relations through the recognition of the People's Republic of China and the contractual agreement with the European Community. In domestic economic policy, national sovereignty and the strengthening of the Canadian economy received priority. In practice, the approach took the form of a variety of defensive steps (for example, controls on the export of crude oil, on the penetration of the US media into Canada, and on foreign investment through the establishment of the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA), and a more assertive posture on national economic development (for instance, the establishment of Petrocan and the Canada Development Corporation).

What Stephen Clarkson calls the "divergent 'Nationalisms' of North America"<sup>6</sup> intensified tensions in Canada-US relations during the 1970s. With the coming of the Reagan administration in 1981, the new Canadian assertiveness provoked a confrontation. The Reagan administration's faith in the magic of the marketplace was completely at odds with the statism of the Trudeau government. The extent of this ideological gap was evident most clearly in the controversy over Canada's introduction of the National Energy Program (NEP) in October 1980. While the Canadian government's motives centered on the need for security of supply, a redistribution of revenues, and the "Canadianization" of the energy industry, Americans were concerned that the NEP signified an erosion of the principles of "national treatment" and non-discrimination against foreign capital. The adversarial tone of the Canada-US relationship in the early 1980s was intensified further not only by the differences in personality, but by the divergent perspectives on international security questions between Prime Minister Trudeau and President Reagan. While Trudeau pursued North-South cooperation and embarked on a highly publicized peace initiative, Reagan's commitment rested squarely on making America strong again.

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“. . . a new challenge is facing the Canadian government[:]. . . to explain to the American people what Canada is, where it is going and why.”

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By 1982, nevertheless, there were signs that Canada wanted to stabilize the Canada-US relationship. To begin with, the Canadian government made

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5. The first option was diplomacy with the United States as it had been traditionally practiced. The second option was to develop closer links with the United States. The third option was diversification.

6. Stephen Clarkson, *Canada and the Reagan Challenge* (Toronto: Lorimer/Canadian Institute for Public Policy, 1982), 17.

an effort to respond to some of the criticism of its policy initiatives. In an interview with James Reston, Prime Minister Trudeau portrayed his economic approach as a middle path between the Canada-firsters and continentalists. "We all have the means to defend ourselves against foreign investments;" he said, "the question or the problem is that we also want foreign investment and therefore we have to strike a balance between how much we allow and how much we disallow."<sup>7</sup> Building on this more moderate stance, an attempt was made to develop a more coherent American strategy. The new approach was premised on the assumption that the complexity of the Canada-US relationship had to be met head-on rather than through seeking counterweights to the United States by way of either diversifying relations with other countries or through multilateralism. A background document to the discussion paper, *Canadian Trade Policy for the 1980s*, highlighted the centrality of the United States in Canadian foreign policy: "The task of managing the Canada-US trade relationship is fundamental to Canada's well-being and to relations with our other trading partners."<sup>8</sup>

Public diplomacy emerged as a key element in this new strategy. At the same time, this approach reflected the personal style and personal priorities of Allan Gotlieb. In the 1970s, Gotlieb had become the leading advocate in the Canadian Department of External Affairs (DEA) for the sophisticated and long-term use of public diplomacy. Significantly, the first explicit reference to "public diplomacy" in a DEA document occurred in 1977 soon after Gotlieb was promoted to the position of under-secretary of state. Although this reference was a highly generalized one, stating that just as the "scope of international public diplomacy is being extended rapidly by electronic communication and by rapid and easy travel, . . . [the pursuit of Canada's public diplomacy presents] increasingly widespread opportunities, and increasingly complex difficulties,"<sup>9</sup> it did allow a fuller discussion of the concept.

The application of the concept of public diplomacy in the Canada-US relationship paralleled a shift in Gotlieb's own career from influential public servant to high-profile diplomat. Gotlieb's appointment as Canadian ambassador to the United States in 1981 marked a shift from theory to practice. In a newspaper interview soon after he arrived in Washington, D.C., Gotlieb gave an indication of the importance of this new thrust: "I am persuaded that there is an element of public diplomacy to diplomacy and that it is a growing element."<sup>10</sup>

It would be misleading, however, to say that Gotlieb's approach was developed in a vacuum. The concept of public diplomacy is not completely novel, either from a comparative perspective or even in the more specific Canadian context. The practice of Canadian public diplomacy in the 1980s

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7. "A Talk with Trudeau," *The New York Times Magazine*, 2 October 1982, 40.

8. External Affairs Canada, *A Review of Canadian Trade Policy: A Background Document to Canadian Trade Policy for the 1980s* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1983), 213.

9. Department of External Affairs, *Annual Report 1976* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1977), 74.

10. Quoted in David Shribman, "Canada Increases Washington Lobbying Efforts," *The New York Times*, 27 May 1982, A17.

was built partly on the foundations of the activities of the DEA's Bureau of Public Affairs extending back to the 1960s. With specific reference to the United States, the "New Look" program initiated by the Canadian government in the early 1970s included an information campaign designed to build understanding of Canada in the United States. The phrase *public diplomacy* had entered the language of public debate prior to Gotlieb's use of the term. When appearing before the Senate Select Committee on Canada-US relations in June 1975, Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan J. MacEachen had gone so far as to state, "As an increasing number of Canadian policies are now having an impact on the United States, a new challenge is facing the Canadian government . . . one of public diplomacy — to explain to the American people 'what Canada is, where it is going and why.'"<sup>11</sup>

The growing interest in public diplomacy within Canada, moreover, cannot be viewed in isolation from the increasing debate in the United States on the role of public diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy. This internal American controversy began with the publication of the Stanton Panel on public diplomacy in 1975.<sup>12</sup> It intensified as the purpose and style of public diplomatic efforts became the subject of bitter debate between conservatives and liberals during the Carter and Reagan presidencies. A number of high-profile journal and newspaper articles opened what had been a topic of interest almost exclusively of the foreign policy community to a much wider audience.<sup>13</sup> As predicted by one of these writers, Kenneth Adelman, the overall effect was to make public diplomacy one of Washington's major growth industries.

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Public diplomacy could be contrasted with the  
"flying by the seat of our pants" approach.

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What Gotlieb did for Canada's public diplomacy initiative was to systematize, legitimize, and publicize the concept. His success in reshaping the tone and content of the Canadian approach towards its most important bilateral partner was a reflection of his intellectual capability, managerial skill, personal energy, and talent for surrounding himself with effective officials. His willingness to break away from the status quo and the orthodox may also have been influenced by the fact that he was not confined in his thinking or practice by a traditional Canadian foreign service background. Between service as

11. The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Canada-United States Relations, Vol. 1, The Institutional Framework for the Relationship* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, December 1975), 66.
12. For a good discussion of United States public diplomacy see Hans N. Tuch, "Public Diplomacy: What It Is and How It Works," *Murrow Reports: Occasional Papers of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy*, Fall 1985.
13. Most notably, Kenneth L. Adelman, "Speaking of America: Public Diplomacy in Our Time," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 59 No. 4 (Spring 1981): 913-36; and Richard N. Gardner, "Selling America in the Marketplace of Ideas," *The New York Times Magazine*, 20 March 1983, 44, 58, 61, 63-4.

assistant under-secretary of state and legal adviser in the DEA from 1967 to 1968 and his appointment as under-secretary of state in the DEA in 1977, he served both as a deputy minister elsewhere in the bureaucracy and as a policy adviser to Prime Minister Trudeau (most notably, as his personal adviser at the Ottawa economic summit of the Group of Seven industrial nations). At the very least, this varied experience exposed Gotlieb to a wide range of domestic policy issues with foreign policy implications. To give the most obvious example, it appears likely that it was Gotlieb's experience as deputy minister in the new Department of Communications (1968-73) that allowed him to appreciate fully the impact of the electronic communication revolution on diplomacy.

Gotlieb's role in formulating and implementing Canadian public diplomacy was enhanced by his close relationship with Prime Minister Trudeau. Developed on the basis of a shared intellectualism, legal training, reforming impulse and a managerial-rational approach to policymaking, this relationship allowed Gotlieb to assume an increasingly dominant position in foreign policy-making during the Trudeau years. Gotlieb's preeminence was especially evident after the election of February 1980 when the prime minister became preoccupied with the Quebec sovereignty-association question and the repatriation of the Canadian constitution.

Gotlieb's ascendancy also mirrored the declining ministerial role in Canadian foreign policy. The position of secretary of state for external affairs was shuffled frequently during the Trudeau years. As a consequence, the incoming ministers had little chance to make an impact on foreign policy decision making. Significantly, the only real ministerial challenge to Gotlieb's primacy came not from Liberal appointments but from Flora MacDonald during the short-lived Clark government — a challenge based on the concept of individual ministerial responsibility and her own experience and political position.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE ENDS OF CANADIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

By design, Canadian public diplomacy constituted a central component of an overall strategy to manage relations with the United States, by "containing the irritants and building on areas of cooperation."<sup>15</sup> To a large extent, this approach had an image-building, public relations purpose of "explaining Canadian political, economic and cultural realities . . . and defending Canadian economic policies and practices to influential US circles."<sup>16</sup> As Gotlieb elaborated in a speech in April 1984 at the Brookings Institution, "It is essential for us to bring our message to the principal actors on a particular issue, wherever they may be."<sup>17</sup> But public diplomacy was also intended to

14. David B. Dewitt and John C. Kirton, *Canada as a Principal Power* (Toronto: John Wiley, 1983), 225-26. See also Flora MacDonald, "The Minister and the Mandarins," *Policy Options* (September-October 1980): 29-31.

15. *Canadian Trade Policy for the 1980s*, 213.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Allan E. Gotlieb, "Managing Canadian-US Interdependence," in *US-Canadian Economic Relations: Next Steps?*, edited by Edward R. Fried and Philip H. Trezise (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1984), 133.

act as a feedback system for Canadian policymaking, “factoring into domestic calculations international, particularly US, considerations.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, it was to serve as a two-way channel for the flow of information, from Canadian to American decision makers and back again.

This is not to say that the objectives of Canadian public diplomacy reflected only a broad external rationale. It would be inaccurate to argue that this mode of diplomacy was used only because it offered a means for Canada to adapt to the greater complexity in Canadian-American relations.<sup>19</sup> Public diplomacy promised to fulfill other, more domestically-oriented purposes as well. From a bureaucratic perspective, it provided Trudeau and Gotlieb with strong means of critiquing what they considered the traditional deficiencies of Canadian foreign policymaking. As an element of “a centrally managed, comprehensive, and strategic” approach,<sup>20</sup> it stood in direct contrast to the “flying by the seat of our pants,” ad hoc approach characteristic of Canadian diplomacy in the past. Public diplomacy thus was linked to the development and implementation of a “coherent Canadian approach” in pursuing Canada’s interests vis-à-vis the United States.<sup>21</sup>

The assertive nature of public diplomacy also contrasted with the “quiet diplomacy” traditionally favored by Canadian foreign policymakers (an approach formalized by the 1965 Merchant-Heeney Report). As Gotlieb said in his Brookings speech, “We need not get too excited about the phenomenon of public disagreement.”<sup>22</sup> This major break with the past had a dual purpose. Externally, it could be argued that by bringing disagreements with the United States out into the open, Canadian diplomacy would be made more effective. Domestically, it was evident to policymakers that such a departure would be attractive to a vocal and influential segment of Canadian public opinion. Specifically, a more assertive, self-confident foreign policy approach would have particular appeal to Canadian nationalists who had long criticized quiet diplomacy for being overly cautious and passive.

In the governmental context, public diplomacy was intended to constitute a response by Ottawa generally — and the DEA specifically — to the proliferation of actors with an active interest in Canada-US relations. For one thing, it was a means by which the federal government could come to terms with the efforts of the provinces to make their own specific interests and needs

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18. *Canadian Trade Policy for the 1980s*, 213.

19. Allan E. Gotlieb, “How to smooth diplomatic rough spots,” *Financial Post*, 3 July 1982, 57. An extensive academic literature has developed on how weak countries deal with strong countries from “inside” in a complex, interdependent world. See, for example, Robert O. Keohane, “The Big Influence of Small Allies,” *Foreign Policy* No. 2 (Spring 1971): 172-79; Barbara G. Haskel, “Access to society: a neglected dimension of power,” *International Organisation* (1980): 89-120. For an interesting case study see Chung-in Moon, “Complex Interdependence and Transnational Lobbying: South Korea in the United States,” *International Studies Quarterly* (March 1988): 67-90.

20. Gotlieb, “Managing Canadian-US Interdependence,” 134.

21. Gotlieb, “How to smooth diplomatic rough spots,” 57.

22. Gotlieb, “Managing Canadian-US Interdependence,” 134. At a 1982 seminar, Gotlieb added, “There is nothing wrong with letting our problems hang out . . . It is good for the public to understand the differences . . . Canada and the US are not always on parallel paths” (Hyman Solomon, “Old-style diplomacy no longer rules,” *Financial Post*, 21 August 1982, 9).

better known to American decision makers. This was particularly evident in regard to energy, an issue that was the focus of activity by Alberta and the other producer provinces opposed to the NEP. In addition, a more proactive style of diplomacy in the United States was intended by Gotlieb as a means of establishing the DEA's lead status over other departments and agencies, by broadening the DEA's role in a whole range of functional issues such as environment, fisheries, transportation, agriculture and energy. This lead status was important, for significant gaps existed in the DEA's coordinating role over Canadian foreign policy at the beginning of the 1980s. It may be that one reason for Gotlieb's enthusiasm for taking on the ambassadorial post in Washington was related to this aspect of inter-departmental politics.<sup>23</sup>

Canadian public diplomacy also helped answer those critics who were suspicious about the continuing relevance and applicability of the practice of diplomacy in general — a point of view given encouragement by Prime Minister Trudeau himself when, for example, in an oft-cited remark, he suggested that diplomacy was “a little outmoded” in the modern world. In the same vein, a long-term, sophisticated strategy of public diplomacy targeted at the United States provided a useful rejoinder to criticism that “most of [the DEA's] positions are expendable. Much of its work redundant. Many of its officials are unnecessary.”<sup>24</sup> In this connection, Gotlieb tried to establish that his diplomacy was based on technical and geographic expertise and addressed concrete issues. With perhaps only a little exaggeration, he said to one American interviewer that this form of diplomacy was “different from traditional diplomacy. It is not in any books. It is not widely understood. And it is not practiced in any other country.”<sup>25</sup>

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What Canadian public diplomacy was not expected to do is as important as what it was expected to do. In this context it is useful to contrast the Canadian approach with the American. The concept of public diplomacy came to the fore in the United States as well as in Canada in the early 1980s, but the two approaches differed strikingly. Unlike the highly focused nature of

23. Gotlieb has addressed the question of the role of Canada's diplomatic representatives in a 1979 address. “The post abroad,” he stated, “is a microcosm of the Government of Canada as a whole . . . [Ambassadors] must be creative and committed — leaders capable of leading on a variety of questions at the same time” (*Canadian Diplomacy in the 1980s: Leadership and Service* [Toronto: Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1979], 15).

24. James Eayrs, *The Toronto Star*, 10 September 1969, quoted in Peter C. Dobell, “The Management of a Foreign Policy for Canadians,” *International Journal* (Winter 1970/71): 202.

25. Shribman, “Mr. Ambassador,” 1.



Canadian public diplomacy, US public diplomacy played to the world. More to the point, the East-West ideological conflict heavily influenced the tone of US public diplomacy. If American conservatives and liberals disagreed on the design and content of this mode of diplomacy, they concurred that public diplomacy should play a key role in the "war of ideas with our adversaries." While distancing themselves from the conservative perspective by placing greater emphasis on a two-way transmission of information, liberals remained just as committed to the view that the purpose of a campaign to sell America in the world should be to generate support for US national security objectives.<sup>26</sup>

Canadian public diplomacy was far less laden with strategic or ideological content. Although its proponents placed considerable attention on depicting Canada's own values and way of life, this was largely to explain why Canadian imposition of restrictions on American interests did not contradict the expressed desire of Canada to "confirm and extend the existing links" with the United States.<sup>27</sup> In distinguishing the Canadian from the American position on NEP, FIRA, acid rain and other issues, Gotlieb laid particular stress on the "basic traditional differences"<sup>28</sup> between the two countries in regard to direct government intervention in Canada. Illustrative of this approach was his May 1982 article in the business section of *The New York Times*, in which he emphasized the "pro-Canada" rather than the "anti-American" aspects of the NEP.<sup>29</sup> By taking this line, Gotlieb hoped to give a more positive connotation to the bilateral irritations dominating the Canada-US relationship in the early 1980s. That is to say, these irritations would be understood to reflect legitimate policy differences between two confident sovereign nations rather than a threatening sign of a widening rift between two erstwhile best friends.

Again, clearly this approach had domestic as well as external roots. Emphasizing that the irritations found in the Canada-US relationship rested on complex circumstances added credibility to the use of public diplomacy as a serious long-term tool for managing the relationship. It could be argued that public diplomacy, unlike the quiet diplomacy of the past, assumed equality between Canada and the United States in the bilateral relationship.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the sophisticated concept of public diplomacy pursued in the 1980s was a clear departure from the raucous, (in the end, ineffective,) platform-type of public diplomacy so often condemned in the past by experienced foreign policy commentators. For example, in the aftermath of Prime Minister Pear-

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26. See, for example, Gardner, "Selling America," 58, 60.

27. Gotlieb, "Managing Canadian-US Interdependence," 127.

28. Christian A. Herter Lecture at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, quoted in David Shribman, "Canadian Urges 'New Rules' in Ties with US," *The New York Times*, 2 April 1982, A7.

29. Allan E. Gotlieb, "Freezing in the Dark is Not Our Style," *The New York Times*, 16 May 1982, C2.

30. Thomas Enders, for one, stated that the "special relationship" between Canada and the United States was based on the assumption that the two countries were "inherently unequal." To Enders, with experience as the US ambassador to Canada, one implication of the change in the relationship during the 1970s was that "we have to conduct our relations far more openly than before, using the media as a means to inform and engage the players on both sides" ("The United States and Canada," 6).

son's April 1965 "stop the bombing" speech at Temple University (perhaps the most famous post-1945 example of a Canadian politician going public), a leading student of Canadian foreign policy quoted with approval the comments of a former senior member of DEA that "public diplomacy may be the very worst tactics [sic] because it inevitably rouses the national ego on the other side."<sup>31</sup> This "loud" imagery continued to stigmatize the concept of public diplomacy, at least as it was expressed in the Canada-US context, into the 1980s. It came from some US State Department officials as well as old DEA hands. In the midst of the controversy over the NEP, for example, the minister of the American embassy in Ottawa stated that the rise in a public style of diplomacy had contributed to a "defensiveness and edginess" in the Canada-US bilateral relationship.<sup>32</sup>

#### THE MEANS OF CANADIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In assessing the means by which the goals of Canadian public diplomacy were pursued in the United States, the feature that stands out is the multifaceted nature of the approach. At one level, Canadian public diplomacy represented an attempt to influence or "work" the American political system from the inside. An intensive Canadian lobbying campaign was launched in the United States soon after Gotlieb took up his appointment in Washington. The essential elements of this campaign are well-known.<sup>33</sup> Most significantly, the Canadians modified the traditional reliance on normal diplomatic channels and placed a new emphasis on monitoring and gaining access to Congress and key interest groups. As the Canadian ambassador put it, "Canadian diplomats can never again go by the book which says you must deal only with the foreign ministry or, by extension, the administration. To do so would ignore the constitutional and political realities of the US."<sup>34</sup> This approach relied on the use of a wide variety of insiders whose function was to gain information about specific issues, to develop strategies on how best to get Canada's point of view across to American decision makers, and to facilitate access to those decision makers. These experts included lawyers, media consultants, pollsters, public relations specialists and private lobbyists. It was an ongoing process for, as Gotlieb quickly realized, building on a well-known American baseball adage, "In the Congress of the US, it's never over until it's over. And when it's over, it's still not over. Nothing is over definitively."<sup>35</sup>

It may be argued, however, that a campaign of this sort by itself would constitute "public diplomacy" only in a very narrow sense. Because the lob-

31. Peyton Lyon, "Quiet Diplomacy Revisited," in *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada*, edited by Stephen Clarkson (Toronto: University League for Social Reform/McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 24. Gotlieb was careful to warn that public diplomacy "should not be used to inflame controversy" (Soloman, "Old-style diplomacy no longer rules," 9).

32. Richard Smith, in an address entitled "Quiet vs. Public Diplomacy in US/Canadian Relations," quoted in Leyton-Brown, *Weathering the Storm*, 41.

33. Doran and Sokolsky, *Canada and Congress*.

34. Gotlieb, "How to smooth diplomatic rough spots," 57.

35. Quoted in Shribman, "Mr. Ambassador," 8.

byists engaged by the Canadian government had to be registered with the Department of Justice, there was an element of openness involved in this activity. The Canadian embassy actually went public on a number of occasions, as when it distributed a fact sheet on acid rain to members of Congress. But, as shown by this case, the bias of this approach in terms of its targeting was decidedly Washington-centric. Furthermore, its first priority was not necessarily the promotion of a deeper understanding or recognition of Canada's position or needs in the United States. On the contrary, the immediate purpose of much of this Canadian lobbying effort was to build ad hoc alliances with domestic US interests on specific issues, a form of diplomacy focused essentially on short-term tactical, not long-term perceptual, considerations.

Efforts to widen the perspective of Canadian diplomacy in the United States took a number of forms. For one thing, the lobbying campaign was extended beyond the Beltway. If the Canadian embassy continued to pay considerable attention to building contacts with the powerful players in Washington, it actively cultivated regional public opinion leaders in the United States as well. Canada's efforts to "get our story out and get it out attractively" centered on communications techniques such as packaged satellite feeds to local US stations.<sup>36</sup> Canadian diplomats also spent a great deal of time lecturing and being interviewed throughout the United States. This regionally-oriented activity mobilized personnel at Canadian consulates as well as the embassy in Washington. The DEA issued a news release entitled "Canadian Consulates: An Aspect of Canada-US Relations," acknowledging that "traditionally [consulates] have been involved in trade promotion, tourism, immigration, and also services to travelling Canadians. While these are important functions, in recent years the role of the consulates has evolved and they have developed programs to respond to Canada's need to expand its economic and political information gathering and, in turn, to disseminate information to Americans about Canada and its concerns."<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the DEA made a concerted effort to build up Canada's links with the intellectual/academic community in the United States. This entailed a more indirect approach to the representation of Canadian interests than the lobbying effort. It involved informational, cultural and educational components that were incorporated into a strategy, to use the words of an American proponent of public diplomacy, of "openly communicating with foreign people so as to affect their thinking."<sup>38</sup>

The informational component aimed primarily at the American media. Influential personalities from the press and television were regular guests at dinner parties or other social events hosted by Ambassador Gotlieb and his wife, Sondra. At the level of the working press, American media personnel were well represented on visitor programs to Canada. Such programs included

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36. Barbara Gamarekian, "Foreign Image Making: It's a Job for the Experts," *The New York Times*, 11 October 1984, B10.

37. External Affairs Canada, "Canadian Consulates: An Aspect of Canada-US Relations," (Domestic Information Programs Division, Canadian Foreign Policy Texts, September 1982), 1.

38. Gifford D. Malone, "Managing Public Diplomacy," *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1985): 200.

not only general briefings but specific activities designed to get the Canadian point across on particular (and often sensitive) issues. One program, for example, included a trip to Muskoka in northern Ontario, allowing non-Canadians not only to view the beauty of the region but also to see the impact on that region of acid rain.

Canadian cultural diplomacy departed even more dramatically from the tactics associated with the lobbying campaign. If the efforts to make Canada "an effective player within the complex process of American government decision-making"<sup>39</sup> may be seen as the hard face of Canadian public diplomacy in the United States, cultural diplomacy, involving an attempt to influence the wider policymaking environment in the United States by sending Canadian cultural personnel and products, represented its soft face.<sup>40</sup> The integration of cultural diplomacy into a wider approach again was largely Gotlieb-inspired. Before he was appointed ambassador, Gotlieb had made it clear that he believed that international cultural relations should serve specific, functional aims and needs. In an address to Canadian university administrators in November 1979, Gotlieb rejected the idea that cultural activities were justified "simply for their own sake, for the sake of the individual whose work is being supported, or indeed for any more abstract principle of national glory or self-image." Rather, he bluntly asserted, "Cultural policy is inexorably linked to political, economic, commercial and industrial policy, and is a vital aspect of overall relations between countries and between people."<sup>41</sup>

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The problems associated with Canadian public diplomacy, rather than its successes, have dominated attention.

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Cultural diplomacy was meshed, finally, with a comprehensive educational offensive directed towards the United States. The academic side of Canadian cultural diplomacy provided sponsorship for seminars, conferences, a textbook, and research at the faculty level. It also tried to develop what may be termed *cadres* in the United States through support for Canadian Studies programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The aim was "to develop an informed, well-disposed and sustained interest in Canada among the US intelligentsia."<sup>42</sup> Still more ambitious plans were contemplated to extend these efforts to educate

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39. Allan E. Gotlieb, "Canadian Business Representation in the United States," in Allan E. Gotlieb, Roy T. Cottier and R.G.P. Styles, *Canadian Business Representation in the United States* (Toronto: Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 1984), 4.

40. See Andrew Fenton Cooper, ed., *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions* (Toronto: Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 1985).

41. Allan E. Gotlieb, "Cultural Diplomacy: A Question of Self Interest," in "Notes for an Address Before the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada," Winnipeg, 12 November 1979, 4.

42. External Affairs Canada, "Canadian Consulates," 3.

American public opinion to the population at large — utilizing such devices as television advertisements and direct mail.

With respect to the feedback function of public diplomacy, Canadian diplomats in the United States made a concerted effort to advise (and warn) Canadian decision makers about what issues and concerns were high on the American political agenda, an effort that required frequent travel between the two countries. This function, in tactical terms, complemented the work of Canadian diplomats in the United States itself. Often, of course, the two functions overlapped as remarks made by Canadian diplomats assigned to the United States were either picked up by the Canadian media directly, or filtered through the American media.

#### PROBLEMS IN THE PRACTICE OF CANADIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

For a considerable time, Canadian commentators judged the practice of Canadian public diplomacy toward the United States to be not only innovative but highly successful. One leading Canadian journalist went so far as to say, "Beyond doubt, Allan Gotlieb has been Canada's most effective representative in Washington since we first opened a legation there in 1927 and elevated it to an embassy in 1943."<sup>43</sup> Public diplomacy was credited with helping transform the tone of the Canada-US relationship. Gotlieb was praised for having put Canada on the map in the United States. From a more functional perspective, the process seemed to have had some impact on decision making in the United States in selective cases. Defensively, it appeared to have contributed to Canada's winning exclusion from American protective action over the dumping of steel and copper. More proactively, it was probably instrumental in getting the video-text technical standards in the United States based on Canadian Telidon standards. Even where Canada scored no discernible success, most notably on acid rain, public diplomacy was viewed in a positive light as having raised the issue to a higher level on the American domestic political agenda.

This perception of success reflected both the intelligent conceptualization and the industrious practice of Allan Gotlieb. Conceived by Gotlieb as a means of playing the game according to the new rules, and carried out with specific targets in mind, the approach won high praise in the United States as well as Canada. A reporter for *The New York Times* wrote in October 1984 that Gotlieb had been doing a good job.<sup>44</sup> Another, in a July 1986 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, was more laudatory, asserting that the Canadian ambassador's pioneering of a new style of diplomacy had won him unusual access "at the highest levels of the administration and Congress."<sup>45</sup>

43. Richard Gwyn, *The 49th Paradox* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 260. See also William Lowther, "A new zeal in Washington," *Maclean's*, 25 October 1982, 39; William Johnson, "Canadians Shine in Washington," *Globe and Mail*, 29 September 1984; Val Sears, "Meet Mr. and Mrs. Canada," *The Toronto Star*, 21 December 1985, B1; Allan Fotheringham, "Gotlieb's looking good," *The Toronto Sun*, 31 July 1985, 12; "Our man in Washington is 'hot,'" *Financial Post*, 16 November, 1985, 28. For a more cautious assessment see Ron Graham, "The View from Washington," *Saturday Night*, April 1984, 46-50, 52-53, 55-56.

44. Gamarekian, "Foreign Image Making," B10.

45. Shribman, "Mr. Ambassador," I.

Subsequently, however, the problems associated with Canadian public diplomacy, rather than its successes, have dominated attention. To a large extent, these problems reflect the serious structural defects inherent in its practice. For such an ambitious strategy, it had comparatively few resources. The \$550,000 (Canadian) allocated by the DEA for the management of Canada-US relations for the fiscal year 1983-84 remained relatively modest. Although additional sums were allotted in subsequent years to the Canadian embassy for activities relating to public diplomacy, under-funding has remained a concern. As Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark admitted in June 1986, total Canadian expenditures were "dwarfed by those of other countries, such as Japan, which spent more than four times as much as Canada."<sup>46</sup>

Canada's specific domestic economic and political characteristics exacerbated these structural weaknesses. The very integration of the Canadian and the American economies militated against a Canada Ltd. style of diplomacy in the United States along Japanese lines. Many Canadian companies active in the United States tended to operate on the premise that it was wiser to portray themselves as domestic American concerns rather than be recognizably Canadian. Accordingly, these companies were reluctant to be too demanding in their lobbying efforts in the United States, or else conducted their lobbying activities under the protective covering of an American-based affiliate. In addition, the highly salient federal-provincial divisions in Canada continued to be an obstacle to united diplomatic action in the United States. While Canada's diplomatic efforts in the 1980s toward Washington were assertive and highly focused, they did not represent a common effort by Ottawa and the provinces. In fact, the Canadian approach may even have had the unintended consequence of increasing regional tensions. By being highly visible on issues of particular relevance to central Canada (such as steel), the campaign may have generated an unfavorable perception on the Canadian periphery toward the US lobbying activity. Such a perception, in turn, would have reinforced the provinces' determination to look after their own regional needs and interests. In addition there were specific situational factors, the most important of which was the assumption of power in September 1984 of a Progressive Conservative government under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The change of government transformed both the focus of Canadian foreign policy and the style of Canadian diplomacy toward the United States. The Mulroney government's overall foreign policy approach has been completely different from Trudeau's. Strategically, the priority of the new government has been to emphasize Canada's role as a reliable US ally. Economically, the Mulroney government has pursued a US-oriented approach, highlighted, of course, by the free trade initiative. In terms of diplomatic style, it has demonstrated a parallel shift away from a Washington-centered diplomacy towards a diplomacy centered on Brian Mulroney himself. This shift was exemplified by the March 1985 "Shamrock" summit between Reagan and

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46. Quoted in Canada House of Commons, "Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and Internal Trade," 17 June 1986, II:12.

Mulroney in Quebec City, where the spotlight of attention was not on policy issues but rather on the relationship between the two leaders. As Richard Gywn commented, "Direct calls between Ottawa and the White House now represent the principal north-south link."<sup>47</sup>

These changes inevitably weakened the impetus of Canadian public diplomacy in the United States. Although Gotlieb remained at his post after the change of government, his role as foreign policy adviser and practitioner was no longer preeminent. As suggested above, Gotlieb's ability to pursue an ambitious public diplomatic approach rested heavily on his close relationship to Prime Minister Trudeau. This very fact militated against a similar relationship developing with Mulroney. If Mulroney clearly respected the expertise of the Canadian ambassador in Washington, D.C. (Mulroney called him "a remarkable asset for Canada"), Gotlieb no longer enjoyed an unrivaled position as an adviser on Canada-US relations after 1984. For example, Simon Reisman was given a relatively free hand and a great deal of bureaucratic support when he was appointed ambassador and chairman of the Preparatory Committee for Trade Negotiations. In addition, Derek Burney (formerly the head of the DEA's US division) moved from the position of associate undersecretary of state in DEA to become Mulroney's chief of staff. With respect to the ministerial role in foreign policymaking, discontinuity under Trudeau has been replaced by continuity under Mulroney, with Joe Clark remaining in the post of secretary of state throughout the Conservatives' term of office.

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Some fundamental incompatibilities also emerged between the foreign policy priorities of the Mulroney government and the priorities of long-term public diplomacy. As a result, the delicate balance between a short-term political approach and a long-term consciousness-raising approach has eroded. On the one hand, the Mulroney government's attempts to cut government spending appeared to downgrade Canadian cultural diplomacy in the United States (symbolized by the threatened closure of the 49th Parallel art gallery in Manhattan). On the other hand, the government's interjection of free trade into the forefront of political debate turned the attention of the Canadian cultural community back to traditional inward-looking, defensive concerns. The view of the president of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, appearing before a parliamentary committee looking into the issues surrounding free trade, provides a good example: "There is little to be gained through access to the United States, if, in the process of doing so we lose control of our cultural destiny, over our identity."<sup>48</sup>

47. Richard Gywn, *The 49th Paradox*, 265.

48. Quoted in Salem Alaton, "Free Trade Raises CCA Hackles," *Globe and Mail*, 5 November 1985, E6.

A third crucial problem with the practice of Canadian public diplomacy has stemmed from what may be termed the reputational factor. Ambassador Gotlieb's link with public diplomacy in the domestic Canadian perception was a double-edged sword. If the media were instrumental in contributing to the view that Gotlieb's public diplomacy was working, the media also did much to publicize the problems and contradictions involved. The prime strength of Canadian public diplomacy, therefore, turned into one of its most serious defects.

This problem grew from a number of incidents that received considerable media coverage in 1985 and 1986. First, there was the Prentice-Hall takeover controversy. This focused on a letter sent by the ambassador to a Canadian cabinet minister, warning him that the Gulf and Western Corporation would wage what Gotlieb called a "scorched earth policy" if the Mulroney government prevented that corporation from taking over the Canadian publishing house. Such an intervention — appearing, as it did, to be contrary to the idea of cultural sovereignty — outraged Canadian nationalists. This group had already been placed on the defensive by the change of the Foreign Investment Review Agency into Investment Canada and the abandonment of the NEP. Second, there was the "slap flap" episode in March 1986, when Sondra Gotlieb apparently struck the face of the embassy's social secretary in front of a number of reporters. Third, and most seriously, there was the damage inflicted on Canadian public diplomacy by the investigation into the ethical conduct of former White House Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver. The question of what work Deaver did for Canada in return for a \$105,000 (Canadian) contract, and when he did it, proved to be embarrassing to Gotlieb personally. Moreover, the controversy threatened to undermine Canadian needs and goals in a highly sensitive area, because at issue was whether Deaver had violated conflict of interest laws by lobbying his former associates at the White House about a Canada-US research and cleanup agreement on acid rain.

The backlash generated by these incidents was compounded by an apparent lack of awareness on the part of many Canadians of the purposes of diplomacy. In the Prentice-Hall case, for instance, Gotlieb was accused of advocating the sale of the publishing house whereas he was in fact merely factoring American considerations into Canadian policymaking, a prime purpose of public diplomacy. In regard to the style of dinner party diplomacy practiced by the Canadian ambassador, critics accused Gotlieb of wasting the Canadian taxpayers' money — oblivious to the fact that the most successful present and past ambassadors in Washington had practiced a similar sort of diplomacy (and had done so on a more lavish scale). As far as lobbying was concerned, what Gotlieb perceived as adapting Canadian diplomacy to changing US rules of the game was seen by his critics as playing by US rules. Some Canadian nationalists went so far as to suggest that Gotlieb had "gone native." "I'm wondering," one prominent publisher said, "if our ambassador remembers which country he's supposed to be working for."<sup>49</sup>

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49. Mel Hurtig, quoted in John Partridge and Christopher Waddell, "Gotlieb's letter on publishing policy



In such an environment, the credibility of public diplomacy could only be preserved by its continued capacity to be effective on issues of concern to Canada. Here again, however, problems surfaced. They stemmed in part from heightened domestic Canadian expectations of public diplomacy as a management tool in Canada-US relations. These expectations clashed with the actual ability of that type of diplomacy to deal with the ever-rising tide of protectionist sentiment in the United States. In dealing with Congress, access did not necessarily mean influence. Despite all of the Canadian embassy's efforts to manage the relationship, a number of important Canadian industries were hard hit by US protectionist action in 1986 — most decisively the cedar shingles and shakes industry. Despite all of Gotlieb's contact with the powerful players, Canada was not immune from surprises. Domestic Canadian critics blamed Gotlieb for failing to foresee the delays in the US Senate Finance Committee's approval of the fast track process for the Canada-US free trade agreement — a delay caused primarily by Congressional-Administration feuding in Washington and not by a lack of assertive Canadian lobbying.

#### CONCLUSION

By embarking on an ambitious, long-term campaign to get Canada's point of view across to influential decision makers in the United States, Allan Gotlieb was operating on the premise that the best way to defend and pursue Canadian interests was through a forward strategy. This was a high-risk approach. The question is, was it effective? As Doran and Sokolsky warned in their useful study on Canadian lobbying efforts in the United States, "The practice of public diplomacy does not guarantee fruits."<sup>50</sup> Nor does the emergence of Canadian public diplomacy mean that this type of diplomacy will continue as practiced by Ambassador Gotlieb.

The success of public diplomacy depends to a considerable degree on its impact on the targeted nation. Public diplomacy undoubtedly made Canada better known in the United States, especially within elite circles. But this recognition does not seem to be reflected in the "scorecard" of the Canada-US relationship. If certain successes may be attributed to the use of public diplomacy, there were also setbacks for Canada despite its use. Another important factor in assessing public diplomacy is the extent of domestic support for the approach. In the case of the Canadian initiative toward the United States, this support appears to have been extremely fragile. Despite some initial enthusiasm, when public diplomacy met with setbacks observers

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irks nationalists," *Globe and Mail*, 5 November 1985, A4. The problem was complicated by the fact that Gotlieb was accused by some critics of being "a man for all seasons," supporting programs such as the NEP during the Trudeau years and then withdrawing that support after the victory of the Conservative Party. Again, attacks of this nature often indicated a lack of awareness of the purposes of diplomacy. See, for example, Gotlieb's letter to *The Toronto Star*, 25 November 1987, A26.

50. Doran and Sokolsky, *Canada and Congress*, 13. See also the earlier study of Peter C. Dobell, "The influence of the United States Congress on Canadian-American Relations," in *Canada and Transnational Relations* edited by Annette Baker Fox, Alfred O. Hero, Jr., and Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 310-336.

tended to question the approach as counterproductive to Canada-US relations. A headline in *The New York Times* accurately expressed the Canadian mood: "High Profile Has Pitfalls, Canada Finds."<sup>51</sup>

This is not to suggest, however, that Canada will retreat completely from the practice of public diplomacy in the United States. In all likelihood, there will be a move away from the ambitious strategy favored by Allan Gotlieb towards more modest, cautious activity. Some components of Canadian public diplomacy, such as the effort to make Canada better known among the US media, will be downplayed on the premise that the damage Canada suffered from unflattering publicity outweighs any benefit from favorable publicity. Other components, including efforts to build up the intellectual connection between Canada and the United States, may be shunted increasingly to the private sector. Still others may well be retained relatively intact, although in a less systematic, high-profile form. Whatever advances made to institutionalize the Canadian position vis-à-vis the United States, some form of lobbying and alliance-building activity is probably inevitable given the extremely high level of interdependence between the two countries, the complexities attached to the free trade agreement, and the internal evolution of the American political system. If Canadian public diplomacy as it was practiced in the early 1980s has waned, the impact of this initiative will continue to affect the management of Canada-US relations in the future.

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51. Christopher S. Wren, "High Profile has Pitfalls, Canada Finds," *The New York Times*, 8 June 1986, 11. See also Marci McDonald, "Damn You, Connie, You've Ruined Our Foreign Policy," *Washington Monthly*, September 1986, 32-40. For a defense of Gotlieb see Allan Fotheringham, "Canadian press vents spleen on Gotlieb," *Financial Post*, 18 July 1988, 13.