



Kim Richard Nossal, “Canada and the General Assembly: A Global Bully Pulpit,” in *Canada and the United Nations: Legacies, Limits, Prospects*, eds. Colin McCullough and Robert Teigrob (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, forthcoming 2016), 161–82; page turns indicated thus [162]

Acknowledgements¹

The literature of Canada and the United Nations tends to focus on the often significant role that Canadian officials played in the formation and development of this international organization, and in using the UN as an integral part of a strategy of middle-power internationalism during the Cold War. In this view, Canadian governments saw the UN in largely *Realpolitik* terms, seeing the UN as an instrumental means of advancing broad Canadian interests in systemic peace.² But, as Allan Gotlieb, a former deputy minister of foreign affairs and ambassador to the United States, reminds us, Canadian governments have tended to swing between the poles of realism and romanticism in their foreign policies. One pole, he wrote in 2004, “ties us to hard reality, *Realpolitik* if you will, and makes us want our governments to protect our national interests when it deals with other states.” The other pole is idealism, “a visionary, at times almost romantic, approach to our position in the world.” This “idealistic vocation” emphasizes the pursuit of justice globally, the promotion of freedom and democracy, and the improvement of the condition of the poor, the weak, and the oppressed.³

In this chapter, I argue that the UN as a global institution has played an important role in the pursuit of Canadian romanticism in foreign policy. For the annual plenary session of the General Assembly offers an unparalleled podium for the articulation of Canadian views about

¹ I am grateful to Jenna Adams for research assistance, and to Greg Donaghy and John English for helpful suggestions.

² F.H. Soward and Edgar McInnis, *Canada and the United Nations* (New York: Manhattan Publishing, 1957); Garth Stevenson, “Canada in the United Nations,” in *Foremost Nation: Canadian Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, eds. Norman Hillmer and Garth Stevenson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), 150–77; John W. Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979, 1982), vol. 1, chap. 8, vol. 2, chaps. 12-13; Clyde Sanger, *Canadians and the United Nations* (Ottawa: External Affairs Canada, 1988); Keith Krause, W. Andy Knight and David Dewitt, “Canada, the United Nations, and the Reform of International Institutions,” in *The United Nations System: The Policies of Member States*, eds. C.F. Alger, Gene M. Lyons and John E. Trent (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1995), 132–85; Adam Chapnick, *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United Nations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Tom Keating, *Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³ Allan Gotlieb, “Romanticism and Realism in Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Benefactors Lecture 2004*, C.D. Howe Institute, Toronto, 3 November 2004, esp. 28–31, https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/other-research/pdf/benefactors_lecture_2004.pdf.

global politics, not only to a global audience but also to a Canadian audience. In this sense, the iconic black and green speaker's rostrum has been used by Canadian leaders as a "bully pulpit."

[162] At first blush, it may seem inappropriate to apply such a parochial phrase to the global. After all, the term is deeply connected to American politics, and the American presidency in particular. It originated with Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States from 1901 to 1909, and his view of the opportunity that the office of the president afforded him to push his progressive political agenda. According to Lyman Abbott, who was a keen advocate of Roosevelt's progressive politics and one of the president's friends, Roosevelt was unapologetic about using his messages to Congress to talk indirectly to the American people about moral principles in government. "I am accused of preaching," Abbott recounts Roosevelt telling a group of friends during his presidency, "but I have such a bully pulpit."⁴ It should be noted that in the early 1900s, "bully" had a much wider range of vernacular meanings than it does now, when its dominant meaning is someone who hurts or frightens someone who is weaker. In the early 20th century, "bully" not only had a range of negative meanings (including a protector of prostitutes and a hired ruffian) but a number of positive meanings. It was a term of endearment, particularly between men; and one of its many meanings in early 20th century vernacular was "capital" or "first-rate" (still used today in the expression "bully for you"), and it was in this sense that Roosevelt was using the word.⁵

Thus, despite its American origins, "bully pulpit" is an appropriate descriptor for the General Assembly rostrum, given the Oxford English Dictionary definition of the phrase today: a "position of authority that provides its occupant with an outstanding opportunity to speak out on any issue." But it is also an appropriate term in this context because it underscores the degree to which Canadian governments have on occasion been inclined to engage in what Fen Osler Hampson and Dean F. Oliver called "pulpit diplomacy."⁶ Although they used this term in the context of their discussion of Canadian foreign policy during the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien from 1993 to 2003, it in fact has wider application, as Gotlieb clearly shows: the "visionary" inclination in Canadian foreign policy was evident both before and after the Chrétien era.

As I will show, from the founding of the United Nations in 1945, all governments in Ottawa prior to the election of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper in 2006 were inexorably drawn to using the General Assembly rostrum as a bully pulpit. We can see this dynamic occurring on both sides of politics: both Liberal and [163] Progressive Conservative governments used appearances in the General Assembly to press Canadian foreign policy objectives. To be sure, the more visionary tendency identified by Gotlieb tended not to emerge until the late 1950s, when the Progressive Conservative government of John G. Diefenbaker clearly saw the General Assembly podium as an opportunity to deliver a very particular visionary and romantic political message. But the tendency started by the Diefenbaker government was carried on. The Liberal governments of Lester B. Pearson (1963–68), Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968–79, 1980–84), Jean Chrétien (1993–2003), and Paul Martin (2003–2006), and the Progressive Conservative governments of Joe Clark (1979–80), Brian Mulroney (1984–93), and Kim Campbell (1993) all used the General Assembly as a global bully pulpit (though in this chapter I do not look at the brief Clark, Campbell or Martin governments). And after 2006, the

⁴ Lyman Abbott, "Theodore Roosevelt," *The Outlook*, 15 January 1919, 91, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Outlook-1919jan15-00091?View=PDF>.

⁵ See Doris Kearns Goodwin, *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), chap 1: when Roosevelt expressed delight, one of his favourite exclamations was "This is bully!" Likewise, crowds greeting Roosevelt in New York in 1910 on his return from Africa chanted "Teddy, Teddy, bully for you, Teddy!"

⁶ Fen Osler Hampson and Dean F. Oliver, "Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine," *International Journal* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 379–406.

Conservative government of Stephen Harper, which openly disdained the United Nations, could not resist the temptation to pursue its own brand of romanticism using the General Assembly.

The Pulpit in Historical Perspective

From the very beginnings of the UN, Canadian government leaders used the podium of the General Assembly to press for changes in global practices. In the first two years of the operations of the new international organization, the Canadian government became increasingly concerned about the role of the Soviet Union in global politics, particularly the aggressive efforts of the government in Moscow to expand its power and influence. This policy was reflected in the Soviet approach to the United Nations, which Moscow regarded as a Western-dominated organization. But while the Liberal government of William Lyon Mackenzie King was concerned about Soviet behaviour at the UN, it was also concerned that the Soviet Union and its allies would pull out of the UN. While some governments were arguing in 1947 that the solution to the emerging conflict at the UN was the reform of the UN Charter, the Canadian government decided to make its concerns about the future of the UN public, using the General Assembly podium to do so.

On 18 September 1947, the secretary of state for external affairs, Louis St Laurent, spoke at the UN General Assembly expressing concern about the “veto privilege,” and expressed the hope—aimed at the Soviet [164] Union—that “no member of the Security Council will flout clearly-expressed world opinion by obstinately presenting change,” thereby putting the very existence of the organization in danger.⁷ But St Laurent also used the General Assembly to float an idea that grew out of Canadian concern over the incapacity of the new Security Council to work effectively. He noted that states concerned about the maintenance of peace “will not, and can not, accept indefinitely an unaltered council ... which, so many feel, has become frozen in futility and divided by dissension.”⁸ Those states, St Laurent noted, may seek safety and security by forming “an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for a greater measure of national security.”⁹ While Canada hoped that such a development would not be necessary, St Laurent said, it would push for such an association under the self-defence provisions of if it became necessary.

James Eayrs has described this as “the most important initiative by Canada in world affairs” since W.A. Riddell’s intervention at the League of Nations in 1935.¹⁰ It floated the idea of a mutual security pact that would be consistent with the UN Charter, would provide security for Western states, but, most importantly, would not push the Soviet Union and its allies to leave the UN, thus preserving it as a universal international organization. In John English’s characterization, St Laurent’s speech was an important catalyst for the creation of the North Atlantic alliance: while other Western states had been mooted the idea of a collective security arrangement in the face of Soviet expansionism, the Canadian articulation of the idea at the UN General Assembly moved the project forward.¹¹

St Laurent’s use of the General Assembly podium in 1947 was a good example of the

⁷ UN General Assembly, 2nd Session, *Official Records, 83rd Plenary Meeting*, 18 September 1947, 63–66 (<http://undocs.org/A/PV.83>); also Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947–1949* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 32.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, vol. 4: *Growing Up Allied* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1980), 18.

¹¹ John English, *The Worldly Years: Life of Lester Pearson, 1949–1972* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2011), chap. 1; Lester B. Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson*, vol. 2: *1948–1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 40–41.

realist pole in Canadian foreign policy: an attempt to shift the political strategic environment in Canadian interests. By contrast, the use of the General Assembly by the Progressive Conservative government of John G. Diefenbaker, prime minister from 1957 to 1963, was an example of the emergence of the “visionary” inclination identified by Gotlieb.

As Trevor Lloyd has noted, Diefenbaker was “clearly attracted by the United Nations and the opportunities it offered for taking up a position as a world statesman.”¹² Shortly after taking office in June 1957, Diefenbaker took the opportunity to address the General Assembly. Because the 1957 election campaign had featured efforts by the Progressive Conservatives to criticize the United Nations for [165] its role in the humiliation of Britain during Suez Crisis the previous year,¹³ Diefenbaker’s speech to the General Assembly on 23 September sought to provide reassurance to the global community that the new government was as committed to the UN as the Liberals had been: “So far as Canada is concerned, support of the United Nations is the cornerstone of its foreign policy.”¹⁴

The following year, Canada’s secretary of state for external affairs, Howard Green, delivered an address to the General Assembly focusing on the importance of nuclear disarmament and a reduction in tensions between East and West. That speech, propelled by the expansion of Soviet nuclear tests and , laid the groundwork for a sustained push by the Canadian government in multilateral institutions for a new global regime in nuclear armaments.¹⁵ While seeking to involve Canada in a new round of arms control negotiations might have been driven by hard-headed *Realpolitik* calculations of Canadian national interests, there is little doubt that the address to the General Assembly also reflected what has been called Green’s “magnificent obsession” with arms control and nuclear disarmament.¹⁶

If Green’s pursuit of disarmament initiatives had some elements of romanticism, Diefenbaker’s address to the Fifteenth Session of the UN General Assembly on 26 September 1960 was an example of Canadian foreign policy romanticism in full bloom. The Canadian speech to the 1960 session of the General Assembly was supposed to have been given by Howard Green, the secretary of state for external affairs. However, when he learned that a number of heads of government, including Nikita Khrushchev, leader of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), would be attending, Diefenbaker decided at the last minute that he would give the Canadian speech.¹⁷ The speech that had been drafted by the Department of External Affairs for Green reflected the widely-held view in the Department—shared by the minister himself—that success on the disarmament file required a diplomatic approach to the Soviet Union that put an emphasis on accommodating Khrushchev.

¹² Trevor Lloyd, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. 10: 1957–1959 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 132.

¹³ For example, John Meisel, *The Canadian General Election of 1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 58.

¹⁴ Quoted in Costas Melakopides, *Pragmatic Idealism: Canadian Foreign Policy, 1945–1995* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 58.

¹⁵ For a full account of Canada and the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, see Albert Legault and Michel Fortmann, *A Diplomacy of Hope: Canada and Disarmament, 1945–1988* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 170–94.

¹⁶ Eric Bergbusch and Michael D. Stevenson, “Howard Green, Public Opinion and the Politics of Disarmament,” in *Architects and Innovators: Building the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*, eds. Greg Donaghy and Kim Richard Nossal (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 194.

¹⁷ Jamie Glazov, *Canadian Policy toward Khrushchev’s Soviet Union* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 98–105.

Diefenbaker, by contrast, wanted to give a speech that strongly attacked Khrushchev and the Soviet Union, in particular for its domination of the “captive peoples” in Eastern Europe, and incorporation of the Baltic states and Ukraine into the Soviet Union. The prime minister’s memoirs indicate his frustration with External Affairs, whose various drafts “failed to contain the things I had told them I wanted to speak about.” Finally, he told them that “I do not want any more of the pussyfooting or dilly-dallying that has [166] characterized Canadian external affairs in recent years. You will prepare what I want.”¹⁸ The resulting speech to the General Assembly, according to Legault and Fortmann, “threw fuel on the fire.”¹⁹ It was a hard-hitting denunciation of the Soviet Union and of Nikita Khrushchev personally. Khrushchev had addressed the General Assembly three days earlier, delivering a long and strident speech that denounced the West, called for the ouster of the Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, and the removal of the UN from New York, and the “complete and final elimination of colonial regimes.”²⁰ In response, Diefenbaker outlined the processes of decolonization, noting that some 600 million people in more than thirty countries had been freed from the yoke of colonialism since the end of the Second World War. Then Diefenbaker asked: “How many human beings have been liberated by the USSR?”²¹ He pointed to the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and other East European peoples, and demanded that Khrushchev “give to those nations under his domination the right to free elections.”²² Diefenbaker regarded it as the most important speech he made on foreign policy in his six years in power, but its effects were primarily domestic, as Basil Robinson points out.²³ While Diefenbaker was widely applauded in Canada, particularly by the diasporas of those “captive peoples” on whose behalf he had spoken at the UN, the speech itself was a symbolic denunciation that did little to advance Canadian interests in securing Soviet support for other agenda items.

When Lester B. Pearson and the Liberals came to power after the April 1963 elections, the focus of Canadian diplomacy at the UN changed. But the new government was no less attracted by the idea of using the General Assembly as a pulpit for Canadian ideas. There is no better example than Pearson’s first address to the General Assembly as prime minister. His speech on 19 September 1963 sought to put out for global consideration the favoured Canadian ideas about global governance of that era.²⁴ Pearson touched on a number of concerns, but most

¹⁸ John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker*, vol. 2: *The Years of Achievement: 1956–1962* (Toronto: Signet, 1976), 107. His External Affairs liaison, H. Basil Robinson, notes that the department “gave him what we judged to be the best advice in the circumstances. At the time he did not reject that advice out of hand. He simply insisted on our helping him to find dramatic language in which to attack Khrushchev, with particular reference to Soviet domination of Ukraine and the Baltic states.” H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 153.

¹⁹ Legault and Fortmann, *Diplomacy of Hope*, 191.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, 15th Session, *Official Records, 869th Meeting*, 23 September 1960, paras. 94–307 (<http://undocs.org/A/PV.869>).

²¹ UN General Assembly, 15th Session, *Official Records, 871st Meeting*, 26 September 1960, paras. 194, 197 (<http://undocs.org/A/PV.871>); also, Diefenbaker, *One Canada*, 110.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, 151, 155; for the reaction of other leaders to the speech, see Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. 27: 1960, doc. 100.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, 18th Session, *Official Records, 1208th Meeting*, 19 September 1963 (<http://undocs.org/A/PV.1208>); the speech is reproduced in Lester B. Pearson, *Words and Occasions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 212–19.

important was his proposals regarding peacekeeping. The speech was given in the shadow of the UN intervention in the Congo, and Pearson focused on the role of UN peacekeeping in contemporary interstate conflict. Dismissing the objections of those governments who saw UN peacekeeping as illegal and those governments who were “cynical, doubtful or indifferent,” Pearson spoke out in defence of the creation of what in essence would be a standing UN peacekeeping force.²⁵ He noted that Canada maintained trained [167] peacekeeping forces that could be “placed at the disposal of the United Nations on short notice anywhere in the world,”²⁶ and pointed to the creation by the Scandinavian states of a composite Nordic contingent that could be deployed for UN duties. Pearson also laid out a number of proposals for reform and change of the UN itself. Reflecting the considerable changes in the membership of the UN that had been brought about by the rapid decolonization of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Pearson was an early proponent of the reform of the Security Council, arguing that it was time to expand the Council and change its functions so that it could more effectively pursue the overarching mission of the UN—“the keeping of the peace.” Finally, Pearson concluded with a call for an improvement in the “atmosphere” in which global problems were tackled, noting that while the UN was not the only means of fostering international collaboration, “the United Nations alone serves us all.”²⁷

Pearson’s address to the 1963 Assembly was, in his own description, “a typical Canadian UN speech.”²⁸ It reflected the overarching concern of governments of this era with systemic peace—a key component of the dominant idea of internationalism²⁹—and an attempt to preserve the role of the UN as a key actor in the maintenance of systemic peace. But we can see in Pearson’s efforts to push a UN standby force—a proposal that he had first bruited in 1957—even in the face of considerable opposition at the UN,³⁰ an example of the romantic inclination at work.

Pearson’s hopes for a more active UN peacekeeping role to which Canada could contribute was precisely the kind of foreign policy objective that Pierre Elliott Trudeau found problematic. When Trudeau succeeded Pearson as Liberal leader—and thus prime minister—in 1968, he embarked on a sustained critique of what he called the “helpful fixing” that was so associated with Canadian foreign policy during the Pearson era.³¹ In time, however, Trudeau would embrace much of the middle-power approach to global politics that he had so robustly criticized in 1968. And while in the first ten years of his prime ministership he chose not to speak at the General Assembly plenary sessions,³² he would eventually seek to use the General

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 213.

²⁹ For a discussion, see Kim Richard Nossal, Stéphane Roussel and Stéphane Paquin, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 4th ed. (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), chap. 5; also Heather A. Smith and Claire Turenne Sjolander, eds., *Canada in the World: Internationalism in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³⁰ See the discussion in Charlotte S.M. Girard, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. 13: 1963–1965 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1980), 316–17.

³¹ J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), esp. chap. 1.

³² Stevenson, “Canada and the United Nations,” 153; English, *Just Watch Me*, 380. Trudeau served as a member of the Canadian delegation to the 1966 UN General Assembly. As prime minister, he paid official

Assembly podium to articulate his proposals for global political change.

The issue that Trudeau chose to push at the UN was nuclear weapons. Trudeau had always been “horrified” by nuclear weapons. His memoirs note that he had consistently written of the “mindless [168] horror of nuclear war,” and that he had demonstrated against nuclear weapons as both a student and a professor.³³ Indeed, as Greg Donaghy reminds us, Trudeau deeply cherished his reputation as an anti-nuclear activist.³⁴ Indeed, he had been deeply critical of Pearson’s 1963 decision to accept nuclear weapons for the Canadian Armed Forces.³⁵ As prime minister, he moved to reverse that decision (though it was not until 1984 that all nuclear weapons would be removed from Canadian soil³⁶). India’s decision in May 1974 to explode a nuclear device using plutonium widely believed to have been supplied by Canada as part of a program to assist Indian nuclear power generation “renewed” his concern about the spread of nuclear weapons.³⁷ At the 1975 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, Trudeau argued that nuclear weapons were “evil” and that every effort should be made to reduce and eliminate them.³⁸ President Jimmy Carter, who came to power in 1977, shared Trudeau’s concerns about nuclear proliferation, and encouraged him to speak out against nuclear weapons.³⁹ In the spring of 1978, Trudeau decided to give a major speech advocating a comprehensive set of measures that would reverse nuclear proliferation. The venue he chose for the speech was the General Assembly, which was holding a special session on disarmament.

The speech, delivered on 26 May 1978, put forward a comprehensive proposal for the overall reduction of nuclear weapons.⁴⁰ Boasting that Canada was “the first nuclear armed country to have chosen to divest itself of nuclear weapons,” Trudeau outlined a comprehensive proposal for moving on the nuclear arms race, proposing to “lower our sights to the more practical aim of making progress toward a disarmed world by building it brick by brick.”⁴¹ His speech tackled both vertical and horizontal proliferation. Trudeau outlined the four steps he was

visits to Secretary-General U Thant on 11 November 1969, and Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim on 21 March 1978.

³³ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 332.

³⁴ Greg Donaghy, “‘The Ghost of Peace’: Pierre Trudeau’s Search for Peace, 1982-1984,” *Peace Research* 39, nos. 1–2 (2007): 39.

³⁵ See Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, 7: in the political journal he edited, *Cité Libre*, Trudeau called Pearson and his cabinet “idiots.” Within two years, Trudeau would join the Liberal party, secure election, and be appointed Pearson’s parliamentary secretary.

³⁶ John Clearwater, *Canadian Nuclear Weapons: The Untold Story of Canada’s Cold War Arsenal* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1998); Duane Bratt, *The Politics of CANDU Exports* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 58–59.

³⁷ Trudeau, *Memoirs*, 333.

³⁸ Ivan Head and Pierre Trudeau, *The Canadian Way: Shaping Canada’s Foreign Policy, 1968–1984* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 126.

³⁹ John English, *Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1968–2000* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2009), 376–77.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, 10th Special Session, *Official Records, 9th Meeting*, 26 May 1978 (A/S-10/PV.27); the speech is reproduced in Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *Lifting the Shadow of War*, ed. C. David Crenna (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987), 27–36.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

proposing to “suffocate” the negative dynamic of the nuclear stand-off—by “depriving the arms race of the oxygen on which it feeds.”⁴² First, he proposed a comprehensive ban on testing in order to halt the development on new nuclear explosive devices. Second, he argued for a complete ban on the flight-testing on all new strategic delivery systems. Third, he proposed a prohibition on all fissionable material for weapons systems. Finally, he suggested the negotiation of a multilateral agreement to limit—and then reduce—military spending on new nuclear weapons systems. While, as John English notes,⁴³ Trudeau’s speech reflected the views of President Jimmy Carter, and while Trudeau returned to [169] some of the disarmament themes in his “peace mission” of 1983–84,⁴⁴ the disarmament proposals articulated in 1978 can be seen as visionary and highly idealistic. As Trudeau himself admitted later, at the end of his peace mission in February 1984, “Let it be said of Canada and of Canadians ... that we have lived up to our ideals; and that we have done what we could to lift the shadow of war.”⁴⁵

Brian Mulroney also used the General Assembly podium to push his concern about the deteriorating situation in South Africa. The response of Western countries to the outbreak of violence in apartheid South Africa in 1984–85 had fractured the West. On the one hand, the United States administration of Ronald Reagan and the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom firmly opposed to the use of sanctions as a means of bringing apartheid to an end. On the other hand, smaller Western countries such as Australia and Canada were pushing the large powers hard to reconsider their opposition to sanctions. Mulroney had decided that fighting apartheid would be one of his highest foreign policy priorities. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Nassau, 16–22 October 1985, Mulroney had a serious confrontation with Thatcher over Britain’s opposition to sanctions.⁴⁶ A day later, on 23 October, Mulroney spoke at a special General Assembly session commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the UN. It was his first address to the UN General Assembly, but he decided to “pull no punches” in laying out the Canadian position on the use of sanctions as a tool for bringing apartheid to an end. Not only did he indicate that Canada was ready to invoke total sanctions if there were no progress in the dismantling of apartheid. But he restored a sentence that officials in the Department of External Affairs had wanted removed from the prime minister’s text: “If there is no progress in the dismantling of apartheid, relations with South Africa may have to be severed absolutely.”⁴⁷ The effect on the General Assembly was electric, according to Stephen Lewis, Canada’s ambassador to the UN: “You have to have been in the General Assembly to appreciate what happened when those words were uttered. I was at the UN for four glorious years. I had never seen anything like it before, and I never saw anything like it afterwards. It was an extraordinary moment. It was, for all the African delegations, a moment of

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ English, *Just Watch Me*, 377.

⁴⁴ On the peace mission, see Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, 363–76; English, *Just Watch Me*, 593–602.

⁴⁵ Trudeau, *Memoirs*, 341.

⁴⁶ Brian Mulroney, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007), 402–404.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 406.

hope.”⁴⁸ Mulroney was mobbed by delegates eager to shake his hand and congratulate him for laying out a visionary position on apartheid.⁴⁹

[170] It should be noted that neither Trudeau nor Mulroney spoke often at the United Nations. In his sixteen years in office, Trudeau appeared just twice, in 1978 and in June 1982, when he continued to press his disarmament agenda.⁵⁰ Between 1984 and 1993, Mulroney spoke to the General Assembly three times: in 1985, 1988, and 1990.⁵¹ By contrast, in his ten years in office, 1993–2003, Chrétien addressed the General Assembly on five occasions: in 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002 and 2003, and participated in a Security Council special debate on peacekeeping in September 2000 during Canada’s term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 1999–2000.⁵² In addition, during the Chrétien years, every foreign minister spoke to the General Assembly: André Ouellet in 1994 and 1995, Lloyd Axworthy every year from 1996 to 2000, John Manley in 2001 and Bill Graham in 2002.

Such consistent participation reflected the strong support for the United Nations of the Chrétien government. The Liberals came to office in 1993 having promised during the election campaign that Canada would be more active in seeking to improve the effectiveness of the UN. “A Liberal government will bring the full weight and reputation of Canada to bear in gaining international support for a United Nations Charter review,” the Liberal Party’s “Red Book” stated. “Canada’s strong legacy of support for the UN and the reputation we have built there give us a unique opportunity to help lead this effort.”⁵³ In power, the Chrétien government sought to play an activist role. Chrétien’s first foreign minister, André Ouellet, was a “UN enthusiast.”⁵⁴ His successor, Lloyd Axworthy, was also an enthusiast, and saw the General Assembly as an important forum in world politics. The hall, he wrote in his memoirs, “always filled me with a mixture of awe and reverence; it is as close as we have come to a world forum for decisions affecting the grand sweep of peace, security and well-being.”⁵⁵

It should not be surprising, therefore, that during this period, the Chrétien government should regard the UN General Assembly as a forum for pressing Canadian ideas about global

⁴⁸ Michael Valpy, “Brian Mulroney and Stephen Lewis on principled leadership in foreign affairs,” *CIGI Online*, 15 April 2014.

⁴⁹ Mulroney, *Memoirs*, 406–407; also Linda Freeman, *The Ambiguous Champion: Canada and South Africa in the Trudeau and Mulroney Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 133.

⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, 12th Special Session, *Official Records, 18th Meeting*, 18 June 1982 (<http://undocs.org/A/S-12/PV.18>).

⁵¹ UN General Assembly, 40th Session, *Official Records, 47th Meeting*, 23 October 1985 (<http://undocs.org/A/40/PV.47>); 43rd Session, *Official Records, 11th Meeting*, 29 September 1988 (<http://undocs.org/A/43/PV.11>); 45th Session, *Official Records, 14th Meeting*, 1 October 1990 (<http://undocs.org/A/45/PV.14>).

⁵² UN Security Council, 55th Year, 4194th Meeting, *Provisional*, 7 September 2000 (<http://undocs.org/S/PV.4194>).

⁵³ Liberal Party of Canada, *Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada* (Ottawa, 1993), 108–109, archived at http://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformes/can1993lib_plt_en_12072011_131100.pdf

⁵⁴ Michael Pearson, “Humanizing the UN Security Council,” in *Canada Among Nations 2001: The Axworthy Legacy*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson, Norman Hillmer and Maureen Appel Molot (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 131.

⁵⁵ Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World: Canada’s Global Future* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2003), 241.

politics. And indeed, we can see a pattern of the ideas being articulated. True to the promises of the “Red Book,” the Chrétien government pushed consistently for the improvement of the UN and its operations, particularly the Security Council. Part of this was a reminder to other countries to pay their UN dues. This was stressed in Ouellet’s first speech to the General Assembly in 1994,⁵⁶ repeated in Chrétien’s speech in 1995,⁵⁷ and repeated regularly thereafter. And while Chrétien’s first address [171]—given just days before the 30 October 1995 Québec referendum—was directed primarily to a Canadian audience,⁵⁸ the tendency of Chrétien and his foreign ministers was to sound a number of consistent themes over the years that were directed at a global audience. Chrétien, Ouellet and in particular Lloyd Axworthy used their appearances at the UN to urge global acceptance of key Canadian proposals. Ouellet first raised the issue of landmines in his 1994 address, foreshadowing the active pursuit of a global landmines ban by Axworthy in 1996. Chrétien invariably included those policy initiatives of his foreign ministers. For example, in his last speech before he retired in 2003, Chrétien pushed hard the conclusions of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty that his government had sponsored.⁵⁹

Axworthy’s activism in foreign policy—his championing of a landmines ban, his support for the creation of the International Criminal Court, his concern over those affected by war, his push for a rethinking of state sovereignty—is well reflected in the five addresses he delivered before the UN General Assembly.⁶⁰ The romantic nature of his quest is nicely revealed in the conclusion to his last address, delivered before his retirement from politics in 2000. In a speech that reiterated his encouragement that the members of the UN embrace a “people-centred approach to international relations,” and pitched both the new International Criminal Court and the International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty, Axworthy pleaded with his listeners work “to ensure that this system we have built does not surrender to the cynics who offer no alternatives, or to the game players who paralyse the transcendent purposes of the United Nations for simple transitory diplomatic points.”⁶¹ Taken together, Axworthy’s five speeches to the General Assembly from 1996 to 2000, taken together, have an exhortatory quality. One can readily see why Fen Hampson and Dean Oliver would characterize his approach as “pulpit

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, 49th Session, *Official Records, 10th Meeting*, 29 September 1994 (<http://undocs.org/A/49/PV.10>).

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, 50th Session, *Official Records, 36th Meeting*, 22 October 1995 (<http://undocs.org/A/50/PV.36>).

⁵⁸ As Chrétien said, in French: “For although Canadians sometimes forget it, the highest hope of the global community is to achieve what we in Canada have achieved for ourselves. A means of living together in peace and understanding. Not an answer to every problem, but a means to pursue those answers together with respect, tolerance, accommodation and compromise.” *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ UN General Assembly, 58th Session, *Official Records, 8th Meeting*, 23 September 2003 (<http://undocs.org/A/58/PV.8>); video: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/canaeng030923.htm>.

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, 51st Session, *Official Records, 7th Meeting*, 24 September 1996 (<http://undocs.org/A/51/PV.7>); 52nd Session, *Official Records, 12th Meeting*, 25 September 1997 (<http://undocs.org/A/52/PV.12>); 53rd Session, *Official Records, 15th Meeting*, 25 September 1998 (<http://undocs.org/A/53/PV.15>); 54th Session, *Official Records, 10th Meeting*, 23 September 1999 (<http://undocs.org/A/54/PV.10>); 55th Session, *Official Records, 15th Meeting*, 14 September 2000 (<http://undocs.org/A/55/PV.15>). See also Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy at the 51st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 24–26, 1996,” <http://dfait-aecci.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.b2960886E/1>.

⁶¹ UN General Assembly, 55th Session, *Official Records, 15th Meeting*, 14 September 2000 (<http://undocs.org/A/55/PV.15>).

diplomacy,” but, confronted with the accusation that he was using the podium of the General Assembly to preach a different politics, it is not at all clear that Axworthy would have a different response to that of Theodore Roosevelt quoted above.

The Pulpit in Contemporary Perspective

What is important about Canada’s use of the General Assembly as a bully pulpit is that even a government that openly disdained the UN [172] was ineluctably drawn to using it as a pulpit from which to pursue a romantic agenda in the sense that Gotlieb used it.

The Conservative government of Stephen Harper that was in power from February 2006 until November 2015 made no secret of its scepticism about the UN as an international institution.⁶² That scepticism was on display from the outset, when Harper addressed the General Assembly in 2006 and spoke openly about the failings of the UN as an institution and his expectation that the UN needed to become more accountable and more effective.⁶³ Harper did not return to the General Assembly for another four years, and his absence was held up as indicative of his government’s attitude towards the UN. For example, when he chose to miss Obama’s address to the UN General Assembly in 2009 in order to attend an event at the research and development arm of Tim Hortons in Oakville, he was criticized for making a “donut run” rather than be at the UN.⁶⁴

Following Canada’s failure to secure election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2010—the only time since 1946, when Canada lost to Australia in the elections for the very first Security Council, that a Canadian candidacy had been unsuccessful—Harper’s attitude towards the United Nations clearly soured even further: for two years in a row, he decided to openly snub the UN. Unlike the “donut run” in 2009, when he chose to be in southern Ontario, in both 2012 and 2013 Harper purposely travelled to New York during the general debate, when heads of state and government normally address the General Assembly, but pointedly refused to go to the UN.⁶⁵

And a new attack trope began to be used by Conservative ministers. At a Conservative convention in 2011, Harper claimed that his government had a purpose in global affairs: “And that purpose is no longer just to go along and get along with everyone else’s agenda. It is no longer to please every dictator with a vote at the United Nations.”⁶⁶ And pointedly he added that “I confess that I don’t know why past attempts to do so were ever thought to be in Canada’s national interest.”⁶⁷ The line “Canada no longer goes along just to get along” quickly became a mantra, repeated by both the prime minister and John Baird, his foreign minister from 2011 to

⁶² For example, Louise Fréchette, “Canada at the United Nations: A Shadow of Its Former Self,” in *Canada Among Nations: 2009–2010: As Others See Us*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson and Paul Heinbecker (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 265–74.

⁶³ UN General Assembly, 61st Session, *Official Records, 14th Meeting*, 21 September 2006 (<http://undocs.org/A/61/PV.14>); archived on the Prime Minister’s website: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2006/09/21/address-prime-minister-61st-opening-session-united-nations-general-assembly>.

⁶⁴ Steve Chase, “Harper makes donut run,” *Globe and Mail*, 22 September 2009.

⁶⁵ Tom Parry, “Stephen Harper accepts World Statesman of the Year award,” *CBC News*, 27 September 2012; Lee Berthiaume, “Despite being in New York, Harper will shun UN podium again,” *National Post*, 20 September 2013.

⁶⁶ Laura Payton, “Harper’s speech fires up convention crowd,” *CBC News*, 10 June 2011; “Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2011 convention speech,” Ottawa, 16 [sic: 10] June 2011, <http://www.conservative.ca/prime-minister-stephen-harpers-2011-convention-speech/>.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

2015 (who, it might be noted, openly derided the UN as nothing more than a “gabfest for dictators”⁶⁸). Indeed, it was repeated so often that Robert Fowler, a former Canadian ambassador to the UN, claimed that the mantra [173] was tiresome and smug and that it was causing Canada’s international reputation irreparable harm.⁶⁹ But behind the mantra lay a deeper disaffection. As Fen Osler Hampson put it in 2012, when Harper was in New York when the General Assembly was in session but chose not to attend: “Whatever lukewarm enthusiasm he had for the United Nations, I think he now views it as a cold tub of bath water and he’s not about to jump into it.”⁷⁰

However, while the Conservative government clearly derided the UN, and while Harper may well have regarded it as a cold tub of bath water, both the prime minister and Baird were drawn to the UN General Assembly. Baird addressed the General Assembly in 2011, 2012 and 2013,⁷¹ and Stephen Harper addressed the General Assembly in 2014.

Baird’s speeches in 2011, 2012 and 2013 remain a telling reflection of the Harper government’s romantic approach to Canadian foreign policy.⁷² For its much-touted “principled foreign policy” was mainly rhetorical. Jeffrey Simpson derided it as “bullhorn diplomacy.”⁷³ Joe Clark—Progressive Conservative prime minister in 1979–80, Mulroney’s external affairs minister from 1984 to 1991, and a trenchant critic of the Harper Conservatives—liked to say that under Harper, Canada was the country that “lectures and leaves.”⁷⁴ That is certainly a fitting characterization of Baird’s addresses to the General Assembly. Baird used the podium to lay out the essence of Canadian foreign policy under the Conservatives: that the evil in the world had to be confronted (and that what the West did at Munich in 1938 remained an apposite reminder of that crucial truth); that Canada would no longer “go along just to get along,” and certainly not to “please every dictator with a vote at the United Nations”; that Canada would actively work to protect the freedoms of religious minorities and the human rights of women and young girls; that Canada would work hard to battle extremism; that Canada supported Israel (which, for deeply partisan reasons, he invariably referred to as the “Jewish state”); and that Canada would work to bring the benefits of the market to the world through free trade. He openly called out countries where religious persecution was occurring, with the clear, though unspoken, implication that this was because of the lack of willingness of the state to halt it: Egypt, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Syria. And because Baird himself divided the world into “white hats” and “black hats” [174]—Canada’s friends and Canada’s enemies—he was not at all hesitant to openly attack “black hats” by name—in particular Iran and North Korea.

⁶⁸ Brooke Jeffrey, *Dismantling Canada: Stephen Harper’s New Conservative Agenda* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), 241.

⁶⁹ Mike Blanchfield, “UN official praises Canada’s stand on Iran,” *Canadian Press*, 30 October 2014.

⁷⁰ Bruce Cheadle, “Silence speaks volumes as Harper snubs UN,” *Canadian Press*, 27 September 2012, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/2012/09/silence-speaks-volumes-harper-snubs-un>.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, 66th Session, *Official Records, 26th Meeting*, 26 September 2011 (<http://undocs.org/A/66/PV.26>); 67th Session, *Official Records, 19th Meeting*, 1 October 2012 (<http://undocs.org/A/67/PV.19>); 68th Session, *Official Records, 21st Meeting*, 30 September 2013 (<http://undocs.org/A/68/PV.21>).

⁷² See Kim Richard Nossal, “Kicking It Old School: Romanticism with Conservative Characteristics,” in Robert Murray, ed., *Multilateralism as State Strategy: Seeking Order in an Anarchic Society* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, forthcoming 2016).

⁷³ Jeffrey Simpson, “The trouble with bullhorn diplomacy,” *Globe and Mail*, 2 August 2014.

⁷⁴ Campbell Clark, “Joe Clark’s new book: Canada is the country that ‘lectures and leaves,’” *Globe and Mail*, 1 November 2013.

But Baird also used the General Assembly podium to deliver sustained attacks on the UN itself. He liked to pointedly remind the delegates that the UN was about people, not states, and that in his view the UN spent far too much time and energy on itself and not enough on those it was supposed to serve. The billions who are hungry or lack potable water, he was fond of saying, do not care how many members sit on the Security Council. More fundamentally, Baird argued that the UN had lost sight of what he called the UN's "Founding Principles": maintaining international peace and security, preventing threats to peace, stopping aggression, respecting equal rights and self-determination of peoples, strengthening universal peace, and promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. But these purposes were being "debased" when Iran was given leadership positions in the UN, when blatant abusers of women's rights were welcomed to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and when a regime that illegally transferred weapons was made president of the disarmament conference.

In short, Baird appeared to take significant delight in calling the hypocrisy of the United Nations, in naming the "dictators with votes," in blasting the institution for its self-serving and self-centred practices, and more generally in getting up the nose of the many "black hats" represented in the General Assembly. And if this took Canada "out of the game," to use Paul Heinbecker's characterization,⁷⁵ so be it. In this view, Canadian interests were not negatively affected.

By contrast, when Harper chose to return to address the General Assembly in 2014, there was no evidence at all of Baird's "lecture-and-leave" tendencies. There were no snarky references to dictators with votes, or naming of "black hats." On the contrary: Harper gave what Lester Pearson might have described as a "typical Canadian UN speech."⁷⁶ Harper was careful to acknowledge Canada's long history of support for the UN; he was careful and measured in outlining some of Canada's key objectives in global politics—noting in particular the importance of free trade for the generation of wealth and the benefits that this would bring to all peoples. But the main focus of his address was to generate support for the maternal, newborn, and child [175] health initiative. He encouraged all states to reproduce the success of the 2010 G-20 summit, which raised \$7.5 billion, and painted a vision of a set of new partnerships with the goal of preventing the deaths of thousands of children from readily preventable causes. He urged the Assembly to ensure that maternal, newborn, and child health remained a "clear and top priority" in the post-2015 development agenda. He ended by invoking the original 1942 declaration of the United Nations, noting that in such a world "there can be prosperity for the impoverished, justice for the weak and, for the desperate, that most precious of all things, hope."⁷⁷

The contrast between Harper's—and Baird's—earlier treatment of the UN and the prime minister's 2014 address could not be more marked. But the different honey-and-vinegar approaches taken by the Conservative government at the General Assembly from 2011 to 2015 was a reminder that one does not have to be a strong supporter of the United Nations to be attracted by the opportunity to use the podium as a pulpit.

Conclusion

The sketches in this chapter are of necessity illustrative rather than comprehensive. But they are intended to demonstrate the degree to which Canadian leaders have been attracted by the General

⁷⁵ Paul Heinbecker, *Getting Back in the Game: A Foreign Policy Playbook for Canada* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2010).

⁷⁶ Pearson, *Words and Occasions*, 213.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, 69th Session, *Official Records, 10th Meeting, 25 September 2014* (<http://undocs.org/A/69/PV.11>); video: <http://webtv.un.org/search/canada-general-debate-69th-session/3807454776001>; archived on the Prime Minister's website: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2014/09/25/pm-addresses-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-city>.

Assembly podium as a way to articulate and amplify the visionary inclinations that all Canadian governments have demonstrated in foreign policy. Some of the attraction lies in the domestic political payoff that an outing at the General Assembly podium can bring. Clearly this was a consideration in Diefenbaker's speech in 1960, Chrétien's speech in 1995, or Baird's speeches in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Baird's speeches in particular can be seen as little more than domestic politicking, since taking gratuitous shots at "black hats" and "dictators with votes" could serve no other useful purpose. Certainly Baird's hectoring had no effect on those in the hall. As Omer Aziz has noted archly, the Harper government's approach did not make "an inch of difference to the United Nations. But it ... made Canada irrelevant in world affairs."⁷⁸ But what Aziz might have noted is that Baird's bluntness in fact resonated well with many ordinary Canadians puzzled by the hypocrisy of global politics.

However, the survey in this chapter suggests that to dismiss these speeches as motivated purely by domestic politics would be to miss [176] the clear motivation that many Canadian leaders have had in trying to effect political change at a systemic level. Certainly we could not understand St Laurent's advocacy of a Western alliance in 1947 or Pearson's advocacy of a UN standing force in 1963 or Trudeau's "nuclear suffocation" speech in 1978 or Mulroney's dramatic speech in 1985 or Axworthy's efforts to advance human security in the 1990s or Harper's advocacy on behalf of maternal, newborn, and child health as anything other than an effort to change the behaviour of other governments and perhaps the attitudes of other people. To be sure, many of the policies being advocated were invariably at a broad and indeed visionary level. But that is precisely the attraction of the General Assembly podium—as a global bully pulpit.

[Notes 176–82]

⁷⁸ Omer Aziz, "Canada is missing in action at the United Nations," *Globe and Mail*, 12 August 2015, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/canada-is-missing-in-action-at-the-united-nations/article25940757/>.