

It is a pleasure on many levels to be here today: to be in Halifax, the city that largely shaped and still feeds my imagination; to be at King's and Dalhousie,¹ which tried to discipline my mind; and to be speaking in this lecture series memorializing the legendary O.D. Skelton.

Being at King's reminds me that you educated one of the finest diplomats of the Skelton era, the witty and literate Haligonian, Charles Ritchie. In his justly famous diaries, Ritchie wrote in the late fifties:

I could never understand the mistrust and alarm with which some diplomats viewed the press, for in the two-way relationship between diplomat and journalist, the diplomat often has quite as much to gain as the journalist.

But, in those days, to the fabulously well-connected Ritchie, "journalist" meant the likes of Walter Lippman and James Reston—men whose minds were tuned to all the subtleties of statecraft, confidants of presidents and secretaries of state, journalists who knew as well as any diplomat which fork to use when dining at the captain's table on the ship of state.

I doubt that Ritchie would find the same sympathy and intellectual nourishment—although he would certainly find some amusement—in the media scrum diplomats contend with today.

The word *scrum* is interesting. As far as I know, it is a term unique in Canadian government-media relations. With its connotations of sweat, disorder and bloody knees, it suggests official distaste for transactions with the fourth estate—and for fourth estate, read television, which some see as Visigoths assaulting the gentle vineyards and sacred cloisters of the foreign-policy establishment.

If they feel that way, Canadian officials are not alone in their dismay.

When the United States tumbled into Somalia, George Kennan, the revered scholar-diplomat, was appalled. It was a "dreadful error of American policy," he wrote, caused primarily by an emotional reaction to "the exposure of the Somalia situation by the American media, above all television."

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