

**THE POLITICS OF CANADA'S NUCLEAR POLICY,
1957-1963**

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**A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, Graduate Department of History, in the University of Toronto.**

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Abstract

Scholars have portrayed John G. Diefenbaker as an indecisive leader who procrastinated over whether to accept nuclear weapons for Canada. However, it is an inadequate characterisation because it explains little about his behaviour. This dissertation seeks to explain why Diefenbaker was reluctant, but willing, to accept nuclear warheads. It argues that electoral considerations, not national security, governed his formulation of nuclear policy from 1957 to 1963. Concerns about electoral expediency meant that two things governed his formulation of policy: the state of public support and the position of parliamentary opposition.

This was a period of transition for protest groups in Canada as organisations moved from protest to more extensive efforts to influence government policy, something anti-nuclear organisations exemplified. This dissertation traces the origins and activities of Canada's three most prominent anti-nuclear organisations: the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Voice of Women. How these organisations tried to convince Diefenbaker that they represented the views of the majority and why they failed are major elements of this thesis.

Diefenbaker also worried about parliamentary opposition. Lester B. Pearson was particularly important in this regard. The Liberal leader's Nobel peace prize gave him added credibility when it came to matters of peace, and the prize and Pearson's repeated reference to it on the campaign trails only added to Diefenbaker's fears that the issue would be used by the Liberals for political gain.

Despite these very real considerations, Diefenbaker was solely to blame for the political difficulties he faced on this issue. Had he moved forward decisively, he would have preceded the rise of the anti-nuclear movement. If he had accepted nuclear weapons in the early days of his majority mandate there would have been little opportunity for political opponents to criticise the government for indecision or inaction. Ultimately, Diefenbaker's fixation on electoral support turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Acknowledgements

A thesis is only as good as its research. First rate archival support is crucial, and I was fortunate enough to have tremendous assistance at many of the archives I visited. Of particular note are Kathy Garay at McMaster University, Joan Champ and R. Bruce Shepard at the Diefenbaker Canada Center in Saskatoon, and Tim Cook, Paul Marsden, and Loretta Barber at the National Archives in Ottawa.

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Introduction

John G. Diefenbaker has been portrayed as indecisive when it came to the formulation of Canada's nuclear policy. However, this is an inadequate portrait as it illustrates very little about why he behaved as he did. Preoccupied with maintaining his political support, Diefenbaker was reluctant to do anything that might jeopardise his position as prime minister. This turned out to be true regardless of whether he had a minority or a majority in Parliament. This dissertation seeks to explain why Diefenbaker was reluctant, but willing, to accept nuclear warheads for Canada's armed forces. It argues that electoral considerations, not national security, governed his formulation of policy in this area. For Diefenbaker, deliberations centred on how to make nuclear policy palatable politically. They did not focus on whether to acquire nuclear weapons. Because of his concerns about electoral expediency, Diefenbaker kept two things in mind when he formulated his government's nuclear policy: the state of public support and the position of the opposition in Parliament.

Critics have argued that Diefenbaker was unduly swayed by his correspondence. This assertion is only partly correct. Far more Canadians supported acquisition than did not, but initially there was a high percentage of the population that was undecided about whether this was the right course of action. Diefenbaker might have filed away letters from ordinary Canadians, but he understood that anti-nuclear correspondence did not represent the general condition of public opinion. He knew that most Canadians wanted the government

to accept nuclear weapons, but his correspondence illustrated something else.

Nuclear policy was something that required delicate handling. And anti-nuclear correspondence represented the potential volatility of public opinion on the subject.

It was clear that Diefenbaker was conscious of the concerns raised by ordinary Canadians. As a self-styled populist, this was to be expected. But most who wrote to Diefenbaker did so as part of an organised campaign to ban the bomb. As a result, to understand how anti-nuclear activists set out to influence policy, one must examine the organisations that were created in response to the government's deliberations about nuclear stockpiles. The late 1950s was a period of transition for protest groups in Canada as organisations moved from simple protest to more elaborate efforts to persuade the government to pursue a specific policy. The anti-nuclear organisations of the early 1960s exemplify this time of transformation. As a result, this dissertation examines how Canada's three most prominent anti-nuclear organisations – the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Voice of Women – tried to convince Diefenbaker that Canadians wanted his government to reject nuclear weapons. It also outlines why these organisations ultimately failed to achieve their objective: a nuclear-free Canada.

Diefenbaker had more to worry about than the burgeoning anti-nuclear movement; there was also Liberal leader Lester Pearson to consider. The Nobel prize that Pearson won for his efforts to settle the Suez canal crisis (as well as his extensive experience in international affairs) gave the former minister of external affairs great credibility when it came to matters of peace. The prize also added to

Diefenbaker's fears that Pearson would use the government's acceptance of nuclear weapons for political gain.

Regardless of Pearson's opposition to nuclear weapons and the peace movement's efforts, Diefenbaker was to blame for the political difficulties he faced on this issue. Had he moved forward decisively in 1958 or 1959, at the same time that he accepted Bomarc missiles and cancelled the Avro Arrow, he would have preceded the rise of the anti-nuclear movement. It was Diefenbaker's public hesitation that gave the movement time to organise and to undertake activities designed to persuade the government to reject nuclear weapons. In this regard, Diefenbaker's fixation on public support turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more he worried about his electoral fortunes, the further he slipped in opinion polls.

Diefenbaker's overarching concern was the political feasibility of defence policy, a virtual obsession that was not entirely surprising for one who had failed so many times in the political arena. This thesis begins with an examination of the atmosphere surrounding the Conservative victory in June 1957. Almost immediately, the government faced a defence dilemma: whether to accept plans for an integrated North American Air Defence scheme, negotiated by the Liberals. The acceptance of NORAD had been delayed by the election, but the Liberals had fully expected to approve the plan just as surely as they had planned to win another majority in the election. Diefenbaker's decision to approve NORAD, made very quickly, was not the only time that he was willing to act swiftly; it was simply one of the few times that he was willing to make his views known publicly.

The second chapter deals with the first year of Diefenbaker's majority government, focusing on the conclusion of NORAD, the acceptance of the Bomarc, and cancellation of the Avro Arrow. Diefenbaker had deferred these three issues until he secured his majority with an eye toward maintaining electoral support. With an enormous majority, Diefenbaker could rest easy in the knowledge that his political position was protected. However, this did not occur. Instead, within weeks of his historic victory, he raised concerns about public support and Pearson's stand on the acquisition of nuclear weapons. These twin concerns remained guiding factors for Diefenbaker when pondering nuclear policy until his defeat in 1963. Regardless, through 1958 and 1959 it became clear that the government was willing to accept nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker implied as much to Parliament when he announced the cancellation of the Arrow.

Chapter Three examines the continuities in defence policy following the death of the Minister of External Affairs, Sidney Smith. In May, Canada's ambassador in Washington was given directions to undertake negotiations with the Americans. Nuclear policy continued to move forward even after Smith's replacement, Howard Green, became minister in June. Green, who became a great supporter of disarmament, did not change the direction of Canada's nuclear policy in the period immediately following his appointment. This chapter demonstrates that he not only failed to alter the course of nuclear policy, but helped to further some of the decisions made prior to his appointment. Minor complications occurred as Green began to question these decisions by late 1959, but an agreement between the two countries was nonetheless expected with little trouble. During this period,

1959 and 1960, Pearson's position was also a growing source of concern for Diefenbaker. The Liberal leader was an outspoken opponent of nuclear acquisition, and Diefenbaker worried that he would make the issue into a matter of politics rather than national security. His fears were absolutely justified. In spite of all the promise, nuclear negotiations were on hold, temporarily, by the spring of 1960. Throughout the period, Diefenbaker continued to worry about public support for nuclear weapons, though it did little to prevent negotiations between the two countries. This concern was also unwarranted for the time being.

The origin of the anti-nuclear movement is the subject of Chapter Four, which begins with an overview of the Canadian peace movement from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War. But the nuclear age brought with it an entirely new set of circumstances for individuals concerned about peace and disarmament. The rise of the three most influential disarmament groups in Canada is at the centre of this chapter, beginning with the creation of Mary Van Stolk's Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards (CCCRH). Student organisations and women's participation are also illustrated by an examination of the origins of the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND) and the Voice of Women (VOW). The chapter concludes by comparing and contrasting the three organisations, as well as noting the similarities and differences between the anti-nuclear groups and the peace groups of the pre-atomic era.

The context of Canada's nuclear policy changed significantly in late 1960, the subject of Chapter Five. In October, Douglas Harkness replaced George Pearkes as Canada's minister of national defence. Harkness was as committed to the

acquisition of nuclear weapons as Green was dedicated to disarmament by that time. Within a month of the appointment, John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon in the American presidential election. Together, Kennedy and Harkness had a major impact on Canada's nuclear policy as both sought to push Diefenbaker to move beyond a general willingness to accept nuclear warheads for Canada's armed forces toward the specifics of an agreement. In this regard, Diefenbaker's encounters with the new American president were a significant influence on the formulation of policy. Three items worked together to damage the relationship between the two leaders as a result of Kennedy's visit to Ottawa. The president's statement in Parliament went expressly against Diefenbaker's request that he not pressure the Canadian government to join the Organization of American States. Then there was a recovered American document. Finally, there was Kennedy's lengthy discussion with Pearson over dinner at the American ambassador's residence. American officials thought, after the meetings in February and May, that Diefenbaker was on side when it came to arming Canada with nuclear weapons. By all accounts he promised American officials that Canada's acquisition of nuclear warheads was only a matter of time. Although he raised concerns about the level of public support for nuclear stockpiles in Canada, Diefenbaker seemed ready and willing to move forward. This sentiment set the stage for the nuclear negotiations that followed.

The election of June 1962 was the focus of Diefenbaker's energies as early as 1961, and it was within this context that nuclear policy was conducted over the period that followed Kennedy's visit to Ottawa. Chapter Six outlines that

Diefenbaker, despite his outrage about the Rostow memo, was willing to proceed with nuclear negotiations. Though he was preoccupied with the coming election, there was nothing in mid-1961 to indicate that nuclear weapons would damage Diefenbaker's political position. The negotiations that followed in August and September indicate that this was so. But just as the two countries were on the verge of reaching an agreement, Diefenbaker backed away, suddenly believing that there was the potential for political harm if he concluded an agreement. The question remains as to why this occurred. This chapter examines three incidents during late September and early October that help to explain Diefenbaker's hesitation. The first was a leak to the media confirming the existence of negotiations. Then came Kennedy's address to the United Nations about the importance of non-proliferation and disarmament. Finally, the peace movement presented Diefenbaker with a mass anti-nuclear petition. The chapter argues that it was the final of these three events that convinced the Conservative leader that nuclear policy was a dangerous subject politically and that an agreement would have to wait until after the election. As a result, by the end of October, the negotiations that had once seemed so promising were once again on hold, where they stayed for the next year, despite Diefenbaker's victory at the polls in June 1962.

Chapter Seven illustrates how the anti-nuclear movement mobilised from 1960 to 1962 to convince Diefenbaker that it was in his political interest to reject nuclear weapons. In early 1960, anti-nuclear groups still focused their efforts on basic issues of organisation, deciding to lobby the government by presenting briefs

and writing letters. But by the spring of 1961 these tactics began to change. The CCCRH led the way by organising an enormous national petition designed to persuade Diefenbaker that thousands of Canadians opposed his plan to acquire nuclear weapons. Regarded as a huge success, the petition was supposed to be a stepping stone to bigger and better things for the movement. Like the prime minister, the movement kept its focus on the upcoming campaign, hoping to make nuclear weapons a key issue. However, anti-nuclear groups failed to achieve their objectives. This chapter examines why the movement achieved great success with its national petition, but failed to accomplish similar results in the 1962 campaign just six months later.

Where disarmament groups failed to raise nuclear weapons to the level of national concern, international circumstances intervened in the fall of 1962. Chapter Eight examines how the Cuban missile crisis achieved in a few short days what the anti-nuclear movement had for worked years to accomplish. The October crisis made everyone aware of the perils of nuclear warheads, but with surprising results. This final chapter argues that the Cuban missile crisis was what broke the stalemate and resulted in significant changes to Canada's nuclear policy. It led Diefenbaker to resume nuclear negotiations with the Americans, just as it persuaded Pearson to state his willingness to accept nuclear warheads if elected prime minister. There were clear political considerations that influenced both leaders to pursue an agreement with the Americans. Pearson's statement of January 12, 1963 finished what the Cuban missile crisis started, setting off a series of political crises that led to the downfall of Diefenbaker's minority government in

Parliament and subsequent defeat at the polls in April. With Pearson's election, nuclear weapons were bound for Canada. The anti-nuclear movement was notable in its absence during this most intense period of debate, demonstrating its inability to control the nuclear debate let alone determine its outcome.

A Note About Sources:

There is an excellent collection of papers pertaining to the peace movement at the William Ready Archives at McMaster University in Hamilton, which includes the papers of the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards/Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament/ Students United for Peace Action. These archives also house the Canadian Peace Congress papers, which though outside the scope of this thesis, are a wonderful resource for those interested in the Canadian peace movement, particularly during the Vietnam era.

This thesis was completed without access to documents on nuclear policy from either the Department of National Defence or the Department of External Affairs. I was actively discouraged from continuing my quest for materials from these record groups when I applied for permission to see them. I was told that the documents I had requested were closed for the foreseeable future and that most of the information I would find was available in published form elsewhere. As well, these restricted documents would add nothing new to what was already known about Canada's nuclear policy during this period. With all due respect, I disagree. Although this thesis is about the politics of nuclear policy, and argues that political considerations governed the debate about whether Canada should accept or reject

nuclear warheads, an examination of the various documents recounting the nuclear negotiations of this period would only have added to this study.¹ I was fortunate to find rich resources in the collections of H.B. Robinson in Ottawa and John G. Diefenbaker in Saskatoon which contained detailed files and reference materials on this subject. Without those collections this thesis would not have been possible.

With that, this thesis turns to 1957 and the Conservative party's return to government for the first time since 1935.

¹ As a graduate student, I had neither the time nor the money (and I was told that it would cost a great deal of money) to review all the documents I had requested. I was also told that the review would not likely result in the opening of any documents.

Chapter One: The Conservative Interregnum

The irony of political longevity is electoral alienation, and never was this more true than the 1957 election. The election marked the end of an era as the governing Liberals, in power for twenty two years, were defeated by John G. Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservative party. Few anticipated the results of the political contest in June 1957. The Liberal party did not expect to suffer defeat at the hands of Diefenbaker, the new leader of the Conservative party and prairie populist, known for his fire and brimstone style of delivery. Nor did the Conservatives, despite their inspired leadership, expect to defeat the well entrenched government party. Although nuclear weapons and defence policy were not prominent issues in the 1957 federal election, one must look to that election to find the origins of what became the nuclear controversy in Canada in the years that followed.

This chapter outlines the political atmosphere in Canada in 1957, and how it led to the election of the first Conservative government since the Great Depression. It then provides the context for Canada's defence policy in the late 1950s, followed by an outline of defence and nuclear policy under the new government. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of the role of defence and foreign policy in politics in 1957 and 1958, a period that ended with the election of the biggest majority government in Canadian history.¹

¹ To that time. The Diefenbaker majority of 1958, at the time of writing, is second only to Brian Mulroney's majority in 1984. In that contest, the Liberals were similarly reduced, but to an even more dismal 40 seats than the 49 in 1958.

The road to victory was paved with defeat for Diefenbaker. Indeed, he failed to secure elected office five times; federally in 1925 and 1926, provincially in 1929 and 1939, and municipally in 1933. It seemed that the sixth time proved to be the charm and Diefenbaker finally won elected office in the federal election of 1940. But election to Parliament did not end the string of defeats, as Diefenbaker ran unsuccessfully for the party leadership in 1942 and 1948. It was not until 1956, when he was 59 and had been on the Opposition benches for sixteen years, that Diefenbaker became leader. Within two years, Diefenbaker won a minority government becoming Canada's thirteenth prime minister, a job he had coveted since childhood. What does it say about Diefenbaker's personality that he was so determined to secure an elected position that he was willing to suffer so much defeat in the process? He was resolute and stubborn, but successive failures underscored the importance of victory once attained.

Diefenbaker's preoccupation with political self-preservation was apparent from the moment he formed his first government. With a minority in Parliament, Diefenbaker was unwilling to consider potentially unpopular policies or controversial legislation. It is here that Canada's nuclear policy becomes relevant. Political viability was always a factor for Diefenbaker, a man who had struggled for a lifetime to secure his place in the halls of power. Diefenbaker seems to have personified the "Tory Syndrome," a term developed by Perlin to describe the divisive nature of leadership in a party ordinarily relegated to opposition.²

² Perlin argues that a prolonged period in opposition led to instability within the Conservative Party's leadership structure, something typified by Diefenbaker. In essence, he argues that it is difficult to develop and maintain a stable party organisation, with the leader at its helm, when a party is

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By the time of the 1957 election, the Conservatives, despite their new leader, did not appear to pose much of a threat to the governing Liberals. A Gallup Poll in February of that year showed a plurality of Canadians still supported the Liberals.³ When the election was called in mid-April, the Liberals were even higher at 49% support with the Conservatives trailing at 32%.⁴ In mid-May, campaign staff were reassured that Prime Minister St. Laurent was going to be returned to office with a majority.⁵ Cabinet ministers like J.W. Pickersgill agreed.⁶ C.G. Power, a Quebec Liberal from the Mackenzie King era (now a senator), also expected victory, and estimated the Liberals would win with 142 seats in Parliament.⁷ Ultimately, many Liberals agreed with Pickersgill that the lofty rhetoric of a vapid John Diefenbaker was no match for the solid record of the St. Laurent government.⁸ Even

regularly in opposition, thus unable to partake in the spoils of power which also serve as the glue that holds a party together. There is a certain desperation in the determination to maintain a position of power once attained. This was as true of the Conservatives as it was of Diefenbaker. George C. Perlin, The Tory Syndrome: Leadership Politics in the Progressive Conservative Party (Montreal-Kingston, 1980), 1-9.

³ At the national level, the Liberals led with 44% support, with the Conservatives trailing nearly twenty points behind at 25% support. The CCF and Social Credit barely registered with 8% and 7% respectively. A similar pattern is evident when one examines regional support; in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and the West, the Liberals outpaced the Conservatives each and every time. Gallup Poll, February 1957, Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 415, File: The Canadian Liberal, 1957-1961, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

⁴ Dick Spencer, Trumpets and Drums: John Diefenbaker on the Campaign Trail (Vancouver & Toronto, 1994), 28.

⁵ Kidd, "Memorandum to All Campaign Staff," 16 May 1957, H.E. Kidd Papers, Volume 5, File No. 16 Memoranda 1957 election, May-June 1957, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

⁶ J.W. Pickersgill, Seeing Canada Whole: A Memoir, (Toronto, 1994), 474.

⁷ J.L. Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation, (Toronto, 1986), 26.

⁸ Pickersgill, Memoirs, 474.

Diefenbaker's own aides did not expect victory, anticipating that Diefenbaker would win between 75 and 111 seats.⁹ Despite these encouraging figures, the Liberals were vulnerable to attack. With more than two decades in office, the party appeared to be tired and arrogant, and the twelve months prior to the 1957 election were difficult ones for the party. Two foreign policy controversies, the pipeline debate and the Suez canal crisis, caused the government particular trouble, and were major factors in their electoral defeat.

The fiasco surrounding the Trans-Canada Pipeline in 1956 has been aptly described as a black moment in Parliament.¹⁰ In 1951, Parliament granted a charter to Trans-Canada Pipelines Limited, an American subsidiary, to build an all Canadian gas pipeline from Alberta to Montreal. By 1956, the project had come to a standstill. It could not proceed until Parliament created a crown corporation in order to pay for the portion of the pipeline that ran, expensively, through northern Ontario.¹¹ In order to begin construction in 1956, the government had to pass the bill through parliament by June 7. Having introduced the motion in May, the Liberals left themselves little time. And, with opposition filibusters, the St. Laurent government felt it had little choice but to introduce closure.¹² As well, by 1956 fear of American economic influence in Canadian industry

⁹ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 26.

¹⁰ John English, The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson 1949-1972, (Toronto, 1992), 157. Gordon Churchill also commented that it was a "black day in Canada's history." Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 14.

¹¹ William Kilbourn and Robert Bothwell, C.D. Howe: A Biography, (Toronto, 1979), 303-4.

¹² Closure requires that discussion on a given bill be completed within a day, prohibiting adjournment and thus a filibuster. The government's predicament was that closure had not been used since 1932, when the Conservatives used it to pass the Unemployment and Farm Relief Continuance Bill, an act William Lyon Mackenzie King called "autocratic power to the nth degree." What the Liberals now contemplated was even worse than what R.B. Bennett had done some two dozen years earlier, as they proposed to use

was on the rise, and American control of Canadian resources with the pipeline was an example of this on-going threat. Opposition parties criticised the government for its arrogance and many Canadians agreed.

The Liberals passed the pipeline bill, but not without undermining their credibility with the electorate. The same was true of the government's response to the Suez Canal crisis later in the year. While historians criticise the government's handling of pipeline debate, they are far kinder in treating Canada's role in the Suez crisis. The Liberal government was torn; while St. Laurent agreed with American condemnation of the invasion, he also wanted to find a negotiated settlement in order to preserve both Commonwealth and NATO unity. Lester B. Pearson, the secretary of state for external affairs, helped to resolve the crisis by creating the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which was sent to Egypt to keep the peace. Ironically, while Pearson's actions won accolades abroad, there was condemnation at home. The crisis is remembered popularly as a high point in Canadian diplomacy, represented by Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize. However, this celebration is based on nostalgia, not the sentiments of 1956, as Canadians were deeply divided over the government's handling of the crisis; more Canadians rejected the government's position than supported it.¹³

The Conservative party reflected the views of the plurality, and criticised the government's refusal to support the British effort, arguing that Canada had betrayed

closure to pass the bill through each and every stage: resolution, second reading, committee, and third reading. This had never before happened in Canadian parliamentary history. See English, Worldly Years, 156 and Hugh G. Thorburn, "Parliament and Policy-Making," The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, vol. XXIII no. 4 (November 1957).

¹³ According to Gallup, Canadians were divided, with 43% supporting the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, and 40% opposing it. Dale Thomson, Louis St. Laurent Canadian, (Toronto, 1967), 483.

both Britain and the empire.¹⁴ That the plurality of Canadians opposed the Liberal response and feared severing ties with Britain illustrated that the bond between Canada and the United Kingdom was far stronger in 1956 than ordinarily recognised.

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Despite the problems the Liberals created for themselves, victory in 1957 did not belong to the Progressive Conservatives, but to John Diefenbaker. Diefenbaker and Liberal arrogance were the focal points in an advertising campaign devised by Dalton Camp and Allister Grosart. Both Camp and Grosart had backgrounds in advertising and public relations. Camp, who had been a Liberal in his student days, earned his most important political experience by helping to organise Robert Stanfield's campaign for premier in Nova Scotia in 1956. Grosart was Diefenbaker's National Director, and a former journalist. He had worked for the Toronto Star in the early 1930s before forming the Canadian Publicity Bureau in 1932, Canada's second public relations firm. Grosart had political experience, running George Drew's leadership campaign in 1948, one that was waged and won against Diefenbaker.¹⁵ Although he was known to carry a grudge, and was reluctant to trust past adversaries, Diefenbaker seemed to allow Grosart a fair amount of leeway when it came to running the 1957 campaign.¹⁶

¹⁴ English, The Worldly Years, 141-142

¹⁵ Marketing, Ottawa Sun, 27 June 1958, Allister Grosart Papers, Volume 8, File 13: Conservative Campaign Manager, Clippings: 1936-1974, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁶ For example, Grosart decided to use the Bible as the basis of the Conservative's campaign focus on vision: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Ibid.

Camp was responsible for making Diefenbaker the Conservative party's showpiece, as personality not policy was the focus of the Tory campaign.¹⁷ This turned out to be a wise decision as the Conservative leader's splendid performance on the campaign trails was a major factor in his party's electoral success. With eyes flashing and voice booming, Diefenbaker could deliver a stump speech like few others; what mattered on the hustings was the style not the content. He loved "mainstreeting," talking to average Canadians in order to get a feel for the locals and where they stood. For Diefenbaker, mainstreeting was an opportunity to see how his proposals and policies were accepted by the general public. Diefenbaker's fondness for campaigning and mainstreeting also masked one of his great insecurities. Despite campaign literature to the contrary, Diefenbaker was not a "natural winner,"¹⁸ and he always worried about the level of his support, both nationally and locally.¹⁹ But this concern was more than mere politics, as Diefenbaker viewed himself as a grassroots politician and defender of the downtrodden. Campaign literature focused on the leader's folksy image, and drew attention to Diefenbaker as a different kind of politician, a man of the people, with "the common touch....Everywhere he goes ordinary men and women seek him out to shake his hand."²⁰

¹⁷ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 22.

¹⁸ "We Can Win with John," n.d., Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 371, File: Election 1957, Advertising.

¹⁹ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 26.

²⁰ "We Can Win with John," n.d., Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 371, File: Election 1957, Advertising.

Party organisers also stressed the government's arrogance in office, an image created by its handling of the pipeline debate and Suez crisis. A guide distributed to all Conservative candidates urged them to focus on this sentiment. It noted, "Statism, totalitarianism, One-Party government, Cabinet dictatorship...is the creature, not of historic Canadian Liberalism, but of the present Liberal government, too long in office, contemptuous of Parliament, and far removed from the people of Canada."²¹ By way of contrast, pamphlets emphasised Diefenbaker's "high principles" and his ability to "restore decency and democracy to public office in Ottawa."²²

Foreign affairs provided Conservative organisers with an ideal opportunity to merge their focus on Diefenbaker and Liberal arrogance. The Liberals, "have been inept, arrogant and injudicious in dealing with our traditional friends and allies abroad," one pamphlet noted, "in so doing they have lost valuable markets for Canadian farm products, disrupted traditional Commonwealth ties, and raised unfavourable trade balances to the highest levels in history."²³ Literature also commented on Diefenbaker's personal interest in external relations, describing him as "an expert on foreign affairs through his work at the United Nations, NATO and elsewhere."²⁴ Canada's relations with the United States, and membership in NATO and the UN received a cursory nod, but Conservative literature emphasised the importance of ties to Britain and the Commonwealth. One brochure reminded Canadians that the Conservatives

²¹ "General Guide to Candidates," n.d., *Ibid.*, File: Election - Canada, Memoranda.

²² "We Can Win with John," n.d., *Ibid.*, File: Election 1957 - Advertising.

²³ "General Guide to Candidates," n.d., *Ibid.*, File: Election - Canada, Memoranda.

²⁴ "We Can Win with John," n.d., *Ibid.*, Volume 371, File: Election 1957 - Advertising.

"resent the British people being derisively condemned as 'supermen',²⁵ a reference to St. Laurent's comment in Parliament during the crisis that "the era when the supermen of Europe could govern the whole world is coming pretty close to an end,"²⁶ and was intended to renew concerns that the Liberals handled everything, from the pipeline debate to relations with Great Britain, with a heavy-handedness that was detrimental to Canadian interests.

Canadians were willing to regard Diefenbaker as a credible option to St. Laurent and his party, and voted accordingly. Much like the Conservative Party's campaign which focused on the merits of Diefenbaker, the Liberal Party had based its platform on St. Laurent and his achievements in office. But St. Laurent was not up to the task of carrying an election in 1957; he was 75 and ready for retirement. And, after years in office, various segments of the electorate had been alienated. Whether it was C.D. Howe's handling of the pipeline debate, Pearson and St. Laurent's dealings at the UN during the Suez crisis, or finance minister Walter Harris' somewhat stingy offerings in the area of old age pensions in his pre-election budget, the Liberals had done plenty of things to make Canadians think twice about returning the Government Party to office for the sixth time since 1935.

Canadians might have thought twice about re-electing the Liberal Party, but the choice was not clear for everyone, something reflected in the election results. In a parliamentary system it is always possible that the party with the greatest number of votes does not always have the greatest number of seats in the House of

²⁵ "One Canada and Canada First," n.d., Ibid.

²⁶ Thomson, Louis St. Laurent Canadian, 486.

Commons. This was the case in 1957. On June 10, 1957, the Liberals won 43% of the popular vote compared with the Conservatives at 39%. However, the popular vote did not translate into parliamentary representation, and the Conservatives secured a minority government with 112 seats, an increase from only 51 in 1953. The Liberals were reduced to 106 MPs, and the remaining seats in the House were allocated to the CCF with 25, Social Credit with 19, and four Independents.²⁷

Some Liberals, shocked by the results, encouraged St. Laurent to fight for his position as prime minister. This was certainly the fear of some Conservatives.²⁸ But St. Laurent, who had considered resigning as party leader at various times since the early 1950s, was relieved to be done with governing Canada.²⁹ And, with the defeat of prominent cabinet ministers like Howe and Harris, he had no interest in clinging to power. Governor General Vincent Massey was equally relieved that St. Laurent decided to vacate 24 Sussex without a fuss, fearing a repeat of King's performance in 1926.³⁰ St. Laurent was no more interested in remaining party leader than he was prime minister, and announced his retirement from politics in September.

While the Liberals planned their leadership convention for January 1958, the Conservatives busied themselves with running the country. First came the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 518.

²⁸ Douglas Harkness to Arthur Beaumont, 13 June 1957, Douglas S. Harkness Papers, Volume 64, File: Election 1957 (2), National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

²⁹ St. Laurent stayed in politics far longer than anyone had expected when he arrived in Ottawa in 1941 to become Mackenzie King's minister of justice. St. Laurent agreed to serve in cabinet on the condition that he be allowed to return to private life after the war. In 1945, he was persuaded to remain in Ottawa, and a year later he became minister of external affairs. Ultimately, St. Laurent decided to remaining in politics becoming leader of the Liberal party and prime minister in 1948.

³⁰ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 27.

congratulations from the party faithful who had waited in the wings for more than two decades, as well as speculation of a future majority. There would be no majority if the Conservatives could not demonstrate to Canadians that they were capable of governing. There was a great deal for the government to do during its first weeks in office. What was to be done with government offices? Cabinet committees? What about government secrets? There was much to learn, and little time in which to learn it. After years on the benches of opposition, the transition from opposition to government was a difficult one.

Diefenbaker's personality made the transition even more difficult. The new prime minister was a deeply suspicious man, conscious of personal slights, both real and imagined. Having failed so often to secure elected office, power when finally achieved meant everything. With so many past failures, there were also plenty of political enemies. This made forming a cabinet a difficult task and Diefenbaker resigned himself to the fact that he would have to include many of his opponents in the body that was meant to be his closest advisers. They included Davie Fulton, Donald Fleming, George Nowlan, J.M. Macdonnell, and Leon Balcer, all of whom had opposed Diefenbaker at the most recent leadership convention. A comment made to Ellen Fairclough, also in cabinet, and another who did not support his leadership bid in 1956, summarised Diefenbaker's sentiments: "I have to form a cabinet," he told her, "and it begins to look as though I shall have to form it largely of my enemies."³¹

³¹ ibid., 28.

Diefenbaker's cabinet was innovative. He appointed the first woman to cabinet, Fairclough, as secretary of state. He also appointed the first Ukrainian, Michael Starr, to lead the Department of Labour. But Balcer, appointed solicitor general, was the lone minister from Quebec, and in a junior position at that. Breaking with tradition also meant that Diefenbaker refused to appoint a Quebec lieutenant, making Balcer's efforts to rally support in the province that much more difficult. Other cabinet appointments showed a certain amount of spite on Diefenbaker's part. Fleming, who wanted external affairs, ended up with finance. Diefenbaker decided to act as his own secretary of state for external affairs for the time being. Howard Green, the transport critic in opposition, became minister of public works and acting minister of defence production. Douglas Harkness was appointed to northern affairs and natural resources. George Pearkes became minister of national defence. Two of these appointments, Green and Harkness, were important because of their future implications. Green later became minister of external affairs, while Harkness became minister of national defence. Their early presence meant that both were members of cabinet during the entire nuclear debate, and whether they took part in the discussion or not, they attended many of the cabinet meetings in which nuclear issues were discussed.

Not everyone was pleased about the change of government. Many within the civil service were concerned about the new regime. After years of one government, there was a certain level of comfort between the Liberals and the civil service. It was not that the civil service was sympathetic to the Liberal party per se; rather, it disliked the change, and was concerned about the possibility that some might

question the way things were done.³² Officials in the Department of External Affairs were especially concerned about the incoming government. One diplomat, passing through New York on his way to a posting just after the election seemed to sum up the sentiment, "But the Canadian people just can't do this to us."³³ Diefenbaker reciprocated the sentiment as he suspiciously regarded members of the department as "Pearsonalities."³⁴

Both Diefenbaker and the department had valid concerns. It was natural to be leery of an institution whose undersecretary had gone on to become its minister. Worse still, that minister, Lester B. Pearson, was poised to become the next leader of the Liberal party. When Pearson knew more about a matter of foreign affairs than he should have known (or more than Diefenbaker thought he should have known), it was easy to think that it was because one of the "Pearsonalities," friends like Norman Robertson or Pearson's own son (a career diplomat), had divulged confidential information. It was easy to forget that Pearson had been in the department, in various capacities, longer than the Liberals had been in power under King and St. Laurent. He certainly did not need broken confidences to know about matters of foreign affairs, having been in the thick of external policy until his party's

³² Thomas Delworth interview with author May 18, 1999.

³³ Author unknown, Memorandum, 8 August 1957, John G. Diefenbaker Papers, Diefenbaker Centre Canada, Saskatoon, Volume 2, File: MG 01/XII/A/19 Cabinet Documents, August 1957-1959.

³⁴ John Hilliker, "The Politicians and the "Pearsonalities": The Diefenbaker Government and the Conduct of Canadian External Relations." Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers (1984): 152-67. Reproduced in J.L. Granatstein (ed.), Canadian Foreign Policy: Historical Readings, Revised edition, (Toronto, 1993), 223-239.

defeat. Diefenbaker's concerns were not manifestations of paranoia but his inexperience and insecurity.

The department's concerns were equally understandable. There was an ease of communication between the DEA and its minister. Aside from his own experience as a diplomat, Pearson had occupied the post for almost nine years. Now the department had to adapt to a new minister and a new style of politician. Jules Léger, the undersecretary of external affairs, complained that he did not yet know how Diefenbaker functioned, what his interests were, how he absorbed information, and how much information was required.³⁵ Department officials needed to know this kind of seemingly trivial information in order to prepare the most appropriate briefing materials for their new political boss.

Despite these concerns not everyone was worried about the havoc Diefenbaker could wreak. For instance, John Holmes at External Affairs regarded the prime minister as "considerate, attentive, and quick to absorb the broad lines of an issue."³⁶ As well, R.B. Bryce, the clerk of the Privy Council, was enormously helpful to Diefenbaker. He was a great asset who was forthright in his opinions and advice.³⁷ An engineer by early training, Bryce had also studied economics at Cambridge and Harvard. He joined the Department of Finance in 1938, where he remained until 1954 when he replaced J.W. Pickersgill as secretary to cabinet and clerk of the Privy Council. Bryce was more than an intelligent adviser to

³⁵ H. Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs, (Toronto, 1989), 7-8.

³⁶ Ibid., 34.

³⁷ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 29-30.

Diefenbaker; he also served as a bridge between the prime minister and the civil service, trying to reassure one about the intentions and concerns of the other.

Diefenbaker appreciated Bryce's contribution, and once remarked, "I couldn't have carried on without him."³⁸

* * * * *

Diefenbaker had little time to prepare for his first experience in the conduct of foreign relations. Within days of coming to power he left for his first Commonwealth Conference. Upon his return to Canada on July 7, the Tory leader committed his first foreign policy gaffe. Ending his trip to Great Britain on a high note, Diefenbaker pledged to a group of reporters that he would divert 15% of Canada's trade with the United States to Great Britain. The remark was off the cuff and the civil service was taken aback. They had not been consulted about the viability of the proposal or the proposed figure.³⁹ There was no way to funnel 15% of Canada's trade away from the United States and toward Britain. Diefenbaker's enthusiasm betrayed his inexperience, and that inexperience quickly got him into more trouble.

If Diefenbaker admired Britain and the Commonwealth, he was less enthusiastic about relations with the United States. Yet the relationship that developed between Diefenbaker and the president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, was a warm and genuine one, and this helped to distract from the fact that the two countries had to deal with difficult issues in a tense international context during this

³⁸ J.L. Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68, (Toronto, 1981), 324

³⁹ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 14.

time. However, he did not feel the same way about Eisenhower's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles.

Diefenbaker regarded Dulles with suspicion and found him to be cold.⁴⁰

While many people disliked Dulles, Diefenbaker disliked him for what he stood for as much as for his personality. Many have argued that Diefenbaker was anti-American, but his attitude was more complicated than that, perhaps best described by H.B. Robinson, who acted as the liaison between the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of External Affairs, as "anti-establishmentarianism." Dulles embodied all the elements of the American establishment that Diefenbaker feared and loathed. "There was a certain 'caste' of American," Robinson recalled, "highly educated, professionally secure, and socially well-connected, whose attitude and style he thought betrayed an insensitivity or indifference to the interests of others, including...Canadians."⁴¹ Educated at Princeton, the secretary of state has been called the most accomplished individual to hold that post since John Quincy Adams.⁴² He seemed bred for his position: his maternal grandfather was John W. Foster, Benjamin Harrison's secretary of state and his uncle was Robert Lansing, Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state during World War One. Dulles' own experience in foreign affairs was formidable prior to his appointment, and in this regard, he had more in common with Pearson than with Diefenbaker. Acting as his

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴² Richard H. Immerman (ed.), John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War, (Princeton, 1990), 17.

grandfather's assistant, Dulles had attended the Second Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907. He also participated in the Versailles talks following the First World War. Although Dulles became an attorney, he continued to be involved in foreign affairs, advising government officials during the 1940s. He was part of the American Delegation at the founding conference of the United Nations at San Francisco, and attended meetings of the U.N. General Assembly in the years that followed. He also participated in Council of Foreign Ministers meetings after 1945, and helped to negotiate a peace settlement with Japan in 1950. These experiences and pedigree placed Dulles firmly within the Establishment that made Diefenbaker so uncomfortable. That sentiment, anti-establishmentarianism, was difficult to convey through political rhetoric, and was often mistaken for anti-Americanism.

Relations with the United States were the subject of immediate concern within days of Diefenbaker's coming to office as he turned his attention to the proposed air defence agreement between the two countries. The immediate post-war period was a time of rapid scientific and technological change in terms of weaponry. In 1945 the Americans detonated the first atomic bomb, followed four years later by the Soviet Union and the British three years after that. Weapons of mass destruction became even more hazardous when the United States exploded the first thermonuclear bomb, or hydrogen bomb, in 1952, an achievement that only added fuel to the fire of the growing nuclear arms race. The Soviets kept pace, and exploded their own thermonuclear device a year later, with the British doing the same in 1957.

Nuclear weapons changed political rhetoric as much as they changed the face of military conflict. Eisenhower was the first president with a solid understanding of nuclear weapons. He had been the first Strategic Allied Commander in Europe under NATO, and, as Bundy has commented, "There is no better or harder way to learn the paradoxes of nuclear weaponry."⁴³ With Eisenhower and the first Republican administration since the Great Depression came a change in strategic doctrine. The Republicans were concerned about fiscal restraint, and this was readily apparent in Eisenhower's approval of the "New Look" and a policy of "massive retaliation." The former was introduced quietly at the end of 1953, the latter publicly at the beginning of 1954 by Dulles. Both required that nuclear weapons play the dominant role in defending the West from Soviet attack. The New Look meant that nuclear weapons were to be treated as weapons like any other, and the Strategic Air Command was appointed the major deterrent force for the U.S. military. Massive retaliation, at its most simplistic, meant, as Dulles explained, "the basic decision was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing."⁴⁴ The secretary of state made this announcement at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on January 12, 1954, and it led to confusion both in the U.S. and abroad; Canadian

⁴³ McGeorge Bundy, Danger and Survival, (New York, 1988), 237.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 256.

officials were as puzzled about the statement as anyone, leading Pearson (at that time Canada's minister of external affairs) to ask for clarification.⁴⁵

This was also a period of transition for weapons systems. The manned bomber was thought to be something that would soon to be a thing of the past, and delivery systems grew in importance. So did intercontinental and intermediate range ballistic missiles. By the end of 1955, the Americans had two ICBM and two IRBM projects in the works, with a submarine program, the Polaris, close behind. This was the atmosphere and the context of the proposal to integrate North American air defence command, one of several contentious defence decisions that Diefenbaker had inherited from the Liberals.

It has often been argued that Diefenbaker accepted the NORAD agreement without understanding what it meant for Canada and Canadian sovereignty.⁴⁶ After returning from the Commonwealth Conference, Diefenbaker turned his attention to preparations for his first meeting with Dulles, scheduled for the end of July. Although economic matters were the focus of talks, the visit was particularly important because of the proposed North American Air Defence Agreement and disarmament talks.⁴⁷ The Americans had been promised a response to their NORAD proposal by June 15. But the election on June 10 and a new government

⁴⁵ Jon B. McLin, Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963: The Problems of a Middle Power in Alliance, (Baltimore, 1967), 24-25.

⁴⁶ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 105.

⁴⁷ Robinson noted that Dulles was not very concerned about Diefenbaker's recent proposal to divert trade away from the United States towards Great Britain. According to Robinson, Dulles viewed this as a matter of Canadian policy, and something about which the Canadians could inform the Americans when all had been settled. Diefenbaker's World, 15-16.

made it impossible to meet the promised deadline.⁴⁸ Indeed, a memo outlining the process and representation of External Affairs officials on defence committees was not even presented to the minister (still Diefenbaker), until two days after the deadline.⁴⁹

Many authors have detailed the NORAD negotiations, and the agreement was the logical culmination of defence co-operation between the two countries that began in 1940 with the Ogdensburg Agreement.⁵⁰ Procedurally, the agreement should have been approved first by the cabinet defence committee (CDC) and cabinet before it was announced, and Diefenbaker has been harshly criticised for failing to do this.⁵¹ Such a committee did not yet exist, and time was of the essence. Instead, the chairman of the chiefs of staff, General Charles Foulkes, in conjunction with Léger and Bryce, supported the proposal prior to the re-creation of the CDC in order to expedite matters. All three agreed that NORAD should move forward, and the defence minister presented the proposal to Diefenbaker on July 24, securing his approval.⁵²

⁴⁸ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 103.

⁴⁹ "List of Department of External Affairs Representations on Defence Bodies," 17 June 1957, H.B. Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File: 1.3 April 1957 to August 28, 1957, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Note that this memo indicates the list of representations on defence bodies had not been updated since 1954 and was thus more than due for such revision and presentation to the prime minister and his cabinet.

⁵⁰ See McLin, Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963, Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, and Joseph T. Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States, and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958, (Vancouver, 1987).

⁵¹ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 103.

⁵² Ibid., 104.

Cabinet did not discuss NORAD and its implications until July 31 when it dealt with the appointment of Air Marshal C. Roy Slemon as deputy commander. Then as now Diefenbaker was criticised for how he handled approval of NORAD, with critics highlighting his procedural bungling and rapid decision as a sure sign of the government's ineptitude and inexperience in matters of foreign policy. This assessment is not altogether fair for a number of reasons. The major criticism implies that Diefenbaker did not even understand the proper procedures by which a defence matter was adopted by cabinet; without the CDC in place there could be no responsible assessment of NORAD and its implications. To address this concern, the CDC's composition is relevant.

The cabinet defence committee included the prime minister, minister and associate minister of national defence, secretary of state for external affairs, as well as ministers of finance, defence production, justice, and health and welfare. Members of the civil service included the secretary to the cabinet, undersecretary of external affairs, deputy minister of national defence, chair of the chiefs of staff, chief of the naval staff, chief of the general staff, chief of the air staff, and chair of the Defence Research Board.⁵³

For the purposes of policy formulation, the prime minister, the ministers of external affairs, national defence, and finance, as well as the undersecretary of external affairs, clerk of the Privy Council, and the chair of the joint chiefs of staff were the most important. In the event of a contentious issue, other members would

⁵³ "List of Department of External Affairs Representations on Defence Bodies," 17 June 1957, Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File: 1.3 April 1957 to August 28, 1957.

most likely defer to their superiors and the elected officials. In the case of the NORAD consultations, it was Foulkes who continued to support the agreement after the Liberals were defeated, and he dealt with Léger and Bryce. Together, they agreed to discuss the matter with Pearkes who then spoke to the prime minister.⁵⁴ Thus, although the CDC was not formally constituted, many of its key members were consulted about NORAD prior to Diefenbaker's approval. The assertion that the prime minister made the decision by himself, without benefit of outside information, is an exaggeration.

The argument is also made that the Department of External Affairs was not adequately consulted about the agreement.⁵⁵ Yet Foulkes consulted with Léger in the early days of the Diefenbaker government. If department officials were not apprised of the pending agreement this was Léger's fault, not Diefenbaker's. Furthermore, that officials did not know the details is not surprising when one considers that Diefenbaker approved an informal agreement with details yet to be settled. Members of the Department of External Affairs had been involved with the preliminary discussions on continental integration, talks that had begun well before the Liberals were defeated. An agreement had been close at hand in the spring, with the issue on the agenda of the March 15 meeting of the CDC. But it was removed from the agenda before the meeting, and formal approval of the agreement was suspended pending the outcome of the federal election, which the Liberals

⁵⁴ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 103-104.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 105.

called on April 6.⁵⁶ When the Liberals later responded that the agreement had not been formally introduced to the CDC or cabinet, it was true but disingenuous as they intended to approve the agreement after the election, expecting to win another majority mandate.⁵⁷

Final approval of the diplomatic notes on the North American Air Defence Agreement was delayed by Diefenbaker's insistence that Canada secure, in writing, a guarantee that Canadian forces would be consulted before NORAD forces were ordered on alert. The language associated with this insistence was the cause of much debate, and meant that NORAD was not approved until after Diefenbaker was returned to office with a majority in 1958. Diefenbaker's concern was genuine. Who would not want guaranteed consultation before committing troops to military action? In Canada, this was a perennial concern, whether dealing with the British or the Americans. Another element of Diefenbaker's concern was political. He knew that American economic influence could inflame public opinion, and he feared the same was true of defence issues.⁵⁸ He remembered the outcry after the pipeline debate, only part of which resulted from the manner in which the debate was handled. It was not anti-American to promote Canada first; and in this case, it did not fit Diefenbaker's brand of political nationalism to ignore it.

There seems to be some confusion as to what Diefenbaker agreed to in late July 1957. It was an "informal understanding" between the two countries, in which

⁵⁶ McLin, Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 39-41.

⁵⁷ Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs, 111.

⁵⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 7 July 1958, RG 2, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

the military was originally allowed to work out the arrangement.⁵⁹ With time and criticism, however, Diefenbaker was convinced to undertake formal negotiations with the Americans to allow an exchange of diplomatic notes. These talks took place from the fall of 1957 to the spring of 1958. Essentially, Diefenbaker agreed to negotiations with the Americans on the possibility of an integrated North American air defence; he did not agree to the terms of that air defence. Until the agreement was accepted on May 12, 1958 Diefenbaker was concerned about consultation, a subject omitted in the original terms but included in the final version.⁶⁰ This was not an insignificant change. And while it is tempting to assert that Diefenbaker's willingness to pursue negotiations meant that an air defence agreement was a foregone conclusion, this is an unwise assumption. With Diefenbaker, an agreement was not final until it was signed.

* * * *

Parliament did not resume until mid-October. In the interim, St. Laurent announced his retirement, and the Liberals planned their leadership convention for January. The Progressive Conservative government continued to work on its

⁵⁹ Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs, 109.

⁶⁰ Cabinet Conclusions, 11 April 1958, Paragraphs 4-7. Note in particular that Sidney Smith notes "that the terms of reference could not become effective until the note was negotiated. The prime minister [absent from this meeting] had seen the note and agreed that a draft of this general nature might be taken up with the US authorities."

During the final discussions on NORAD in May 1958, there were problems once again with the language used in the official notes. In particular, Diefenbaker had concerns about the implications of the language used to describe the link between NORAD and NATO. Canada wanted the link between NATO and NORAD made more explicit, while the Americans feared that such a link could inspire unwelcome interference on the part of other NATO countries, presumably France. Ibid., 8 May 1958, Paragraphs 4-6.

legislative agenda and efforts to shape Canada's foreign and defence policies. On September 14, Diefenbaker finally appointed a secretary of state for external affairs, announcing that Dr. Sidney Smith, president of the University of Toronto, would join Parliament after a by-election in October. Smith had little political experience, though he had considered running for the party's leadership in 1942. He was a university administrator, not an expert in foreign relations, and the appointment came as a genuine surprise to the media and Department of External Affairs alike.⁶¹

Most welcomed Smith's appointment, but he did not live up to expectations. Diefenbaker and Smith got along quite well, but did not understand one another. Diefenbaker failed to comprehend that Smith was not a partisan Tory, just as the new minister did not appreciate the prime minister's devotion to the politics of parliamentary life.⁶² Smith never developed a close relationship with Diefenbaker, and that made the working relationship between the two men an awkward one at times.⁶³ With little background in foreign relations, Smith also had a difficult task in coming to terms with the day-to-day operations and issues of the department. This was made worse by Smith's joining the government once the policy and procedure wheels were already in motion. While Diefenbaker and his government set about the business of government, Smith worked on winning election to Parliament.

As Smith campaigned, the government decided to reassess Canada's defence expenditures. By 1957 the defence budget was more than what the Tories

⁶¹ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 37.

⁶² Delworth interview with the author May 18, 1999.

⁶³ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 37.

thought Canada could afford. Cost was a priority for the new government, and this was apparent at a cabinet defence committee meeting in mid-September. Nuclear weapons entered the discussion generally as a cost-saving measure, a point on which the Departments of External Affairs and Defence could agree.⁶⁴ The defence budget had to be reduced and a number of proposals were considered. The most obvious target was the Avro Arrow.⁶⁵

On Pearkes' recommendation, the CDC decided to trim the defence budget by reducing the university officer training program and cancelling the CF-100 and related Sparrow engine program.⁶⁶ Cancelling the Sparrow meant additional costs to the ever-growing Arrow budget, an issue discussed at great length during the meeting. The expense of the interceptor was especially important since it was clear that there was no demand in other countries; the Americans and the British might have encouraged the Canadians to continue the CF-105, but neither was prepared to provide a market to help offset the costs of production.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Undersecretary of State for External Affairs to Chair, Chiefs of Staff, 6 September 1957, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File 8.1. This letter indicates that External Affairs officials, including Jules Léger, were willing to begin "interdepartmental discussions on nuclear weapons" with a particular emphasis on the issue of control, in this case civilian control rather than any kind of "national" or military control.

⁶⁵ The proposals included reducing the number of reserve and auxiliary forces, as well as some officer training programmes offered at many Canadian universities. Other options included the transfer of various activities from National Defence to other Departments; for instance, the RCAF stations at Whitehorse, Churchill and Goose Bay could be turned over to the Department of Transport, while the Northwest Highway System could be moved over to the care and control of Public Works. CDC Minutes, 115th Meeting, 19 September 1957, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

The Arrow's future seemed even more uncertain when the Soviets launched *Sputnik* on October 4, signalling to the world the dawning of the missile age, an era in which an aircraft like the Arrow, designed to intercept manned bombers, would become obsolete. Despite this uncertainty, the Arrow won a reprieve from cabinet at the end of October. The economic implications of the Arrow's cancellation and the resulting political fall-out were major factors in this decision. The Arrow's manufacturing base was in Ontario, a province crucial to the party's success in 1957.⁶⁸ With an election possible at any time, Diefenbaker was in no position to alienate voters in and around Toronto. Thus, the decision was made to continue work on the Arrow for another twelve months, with 29 pre-production aircraft ordered, as well as further development of the Iroquois engine.⁶⁹ At best this was a stop-gap measure, designed to keep the Conservatives out of trouble in Ontario until after the next election; at worst, it was justification for a strategy of procrastination that Diefenbaker continued even after he secured his majority.

The debate about whether Canada should acquire nuclear weapons was beginning to appear as the subject of some concern around the time of the *Sputnik* launch and Smith's election to Parliament. As cabinet considered the Arrow's fate in October, there was also speculation about a possible request from Eisenhower to allow nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. The prime minister wanted to discuss the possibility in cabinet, but Bryce assured him that such a discussion was

⁶⁸ E.A. Goodman, Life of the Party: The Memoirs of Eddie Goodman, (Toronto, 1988), 54, 79, 80, 85. Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999.

⁶⁹ Cabinet Conclusions, 29 October 1957.

unnecessary. The matter was not an urgent one, and a decision could certainly be put off for the time being. Bryce did not suggest that the prime minister avoid a discussion about nuclear weapons in cabinet because he thought it would be controversial; indeed, he regarded the proposal as surprisingly straightforward. The Americans were in the midst of talks about whether to upgrade the aircraft and weapons used by the U.S. Air Force at Goose Bay, particularly whether to update the warhead to the MB-1 rocket armed with a nuclear tip. The Canadian government had already authorised U.S. forces to carry the MB-1, armed with nuclear warheads, in Canadian air space. As far as Bryce was concerned, there was little difference between allowing nuclear carriage over Canadian territory, and permitting the same thing at an American base, even if that base was on Canadian soil. Regardless, the change would not occur until 1958 or 1959, plenty of time to discuss any related concerns.⁷⁰

Nuclear matters also surfaced within the context of NATO as Canadian officials prepared for the alliance's Paris summit in December. Nuclear matters had been a source of concern for some time at the Department of External Affairs. In preparation for Dulles' visit with Diefenbaker at the end of July, the DEA had outlined the problems associated with nuclear stockpiles in NATO. Smaller powers

⁷⁰ Bryce to the Prime Minister, "Cabinet item - atomic weapons at Goose Bay," 3 October 1957, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG/01/XII/A/52 Defence - Nuclear Weapons - Goose Bay, 1957.

in the alliance had been pressuring the Americans for access to the weapons, but the Americans were only slowly coming to see the merits of this proposal.⁷¹

Experts speculated that a nuclear NATO would increase European security, and anticipated no problems with Canadian forces participating in this capacity. By every indication, there would be few complications in negotiating a nuclear presence with the various NATO allies, though this was not an immediate concern as the RCAF was not yet interested in adopting tactical nuclear weapons for its forces.⁷² But there was precedent to consider. If American forces in Europe were permitted to have nuclear weapons on foreign soil through NATO would U.S. forces expect the same treatment on their bases in Canada? Agreements with European allies had considered the possibility of nuclear weapons on NATO bases, but there was no similar reference in agreements governing American bases in Canada. The lease agreements for these bases had been concluded during the Second World War when nuclear weapons were not an issue.⁷³

Far from sparking controversy, the possibility of nuclear weapons in NATO had two unexpected benefits in the area of disarmament and defence budgets. By the middle of 1957, disarmament talks were underway in London without any end in sight. Officials argued that the mere possibility of stockpiles in NATO might make more palatable the outright rejection of nuclear weapons production and national

⁷¹ A.R. Crepault to Diefenbaker, "NATO Stockpiling of Nuclear Weapons," 26 July 1957, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.1 Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1957-1958.

⁷² Ibid. The brief used France and Belgium as examples of airfields that would require little effort by way of negotiation on behalf of NATO forces. If only Department officials had known the problems that Charles de Gaulle would cause when he returned to office in 1958.

⁷³ Ibid.

possession.⁷⁴ In terms of cost, the timing could not have been better. There were signs of a slight economic downturn in Canada, and the Conservatives had promised that Canadian would get more for their defence dollar than they had under the Liberals.⁷⁵ When it came to nuclear weapons, a single NATO stockpile was more cost effective than individual nuclear arsenals throughout Europe.⁷⁶ Few could object to a proposal that encouraged greater security and fiscal responsibility in a single stroke.

Despite the positives, there were also some problems to consider, and External Affairs officials also outlined the potential pitfalls for Canada in the event of NATO stockpiles. The foremost concern was control; who would control the use of these stockpiled weapons and in what context? Canadian officials were firm in their assertion that no single NATO member should have unilateral authority to use nuclear weapons, including the United States. Instead, they proposed a system of checks and balances that foreshadowed the two key system that lay at the heart of the Anglo-American nuclear agreement in mid-1958.⁷⁷ The main concern was control, not whether NATO should have nuclear weapons, or if Canadian forces should play in a nuclear role in the North Atlantic alliance.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Leading Planks in Progressive Conservative Party Platform in 1957 General Election As Interpreted by Donald M. Fleming (Toronto-Eglinton)," n.d., Donald M. Fleming Papers, Volume 41, File: 1957 Election - Policy: Manifestos, Memos, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

⁷⁶ Crepault to Diefenbaker, "NATO Stockpiling of Nuclear Weapons," 26 July 1957, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.1 Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1957-1958.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

This was the context for General Lauris Norstad's meeting with the CDC in the middle of November. The Supreme Allied Commander of NATO called late 1957, "one of the most critical periods since the end of World War II."⁷⁸ In 1956, Norstad had proposed to add nuclear weapons to NATO's arsenal, and the Paris Summit in December 1957 was an opportunity to deal with these developments, and there was great concern that recent defence reductions might undermine the alliance.⁷⁹ Members of NATO continued to express reservations about nuclear stockpiles within the alliance, though these worries were not the same as those of the Canadian officials. In fact, most NATO members had concerns that were completely different from those of the Canadians. While Canadian officials worried about issues of control, the smaller members of NATO feared that the Americans, as the alliance's atomic guarantors, would be reluctant to intervene in a European crisis. There was no guarantee that a European threat would be significant enough to risk war with the Soviet Union. Would the Americans really get involved, for instance, to save Berlin? A possible solution was an amendment to the U.S. Atomic Energy Act. Advocates proposed the Act be changed to allow the Americans to lend nuclear weapons to allies. More generally, economic considerations were as much of a factor for the Europeans as they were for the Canadians. Most members lacked the funds needed to increase conventional forces, and certainly could not

⁷⁸ CDC Minutes, 13 November 1957, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁷⁹ ibid.

afford to purchase nuclear weapons outright. All these things combined to make the newer tactical weapons an attractive option for the European members of NATO.⁸⁰

The Summit might have been a good opportunity to clarify NATO's policy, but preparations for the meeting got the new minister into some trouble in Canada. In early December, Smith commented that the meeting in Paris was about "increasing our deterrent forces against aggression."⁸¹ He was forced to clarify his statement, and quickly conceded that this did not necessarily mean nuclear weapons for Canadian forces at home or abroad. In an address before the External Affairs Committee, the minister took great pains to distinguish between Canada's policy and NATO's policy.⁸² He remarked that while the government supported nuclear weapons in NATO, this was restricted to the European members of the alliance. Canada did not need them.⁸³

While Smith reassured the external affairs committee that the government was not interested in nuclear weapons, by the beginning of 1958 it was clear that the Americans had other ideas. The NATO Summit had turned out to be a disorganised affair, with the final American proposals arriving in Ottawa just days before the last briefing papers were finished. Reflecting earlier concerns about the economic implications of defence commitments, Diefenbaker had spoken about the cost of tactical nuclear weapons for member countries, as well as the potential

⁸⁰ Permanent Representative of Canada to the North Atlantic Council and OEEC to Secretary of State for External Affairs, "The Present Position of NATO," 15 October 1957, Ibid.

⁸¹ 3 December 1957, Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File: 1.7 December 1957.

⁸² Statement to External Affairs Committee, 5 December 1957, Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

political consequences of stockpiles in Europe.⁸⁴ Regardless, on January 10, 1958 Pearkes raised nuclear weapons for discussion in cabinet. As anticipated in the fall, the United States government had approached the Canadian government about the possibility of nuclear stockpiles in Canada for the armed forces of both countries. The approach took the form of "exploratory discussions at the military level" and "would in no way whatsoever bind the government when it came to making future decisions of substance on these matters."⁸⁵

The proposed talks were preliminary, but indicated that the government, while not bound to conclude them, was interested in storing weapons in Canada. Much like the NORAD talks, the outcome was not guaranteed, but it was a significant first step toward Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker's willingness to consider nuclear negotiations in early 1958 is important. With a minority government political popularity was still a concern for Diefenbaker, something highlighted by the discussion surrounding the Arrow. That Diefenbaker was considering nuclear weapons at this time underscores that he did not think the subject was contentious, and did not believe it would undermine his chances for a majority in the next election. In January 1958 the prospect of nuclear weapons was not yet a political liability, and it was an issue that could be dealt with in the future, well after the next election, which the Conservatives expected to win with a sizeable majority.

⁸⁴ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 31.

⁸⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 10 January 1958, Paragraphs 17 and 18.

There was little discussion about the nuclear proposal, and cabinet approved talks with the Americans about the possibility of stockpiling nuclear weapons at the American base in Goose Bay on January 13. Neither Harkness nor Green (nor any other member of cabinet, for that matter) contributed to the discussion on nuclear weapons. That Harkness said nothing is not surprising. Given his position as minister of agriculture, one would not expect him to be involved in nuclear issues, or have concerns beyond a personal nature, which he was not likely to have shared formally with the rest of cabinet. However, Green was not merely the minister of public works, but the former acting minister for defence production, which put him in the midst of the nuclear debate because of the potential implications for defence production. January 1958 would have been the perfect opportunity for anyone, particularly Green, to voice concerns about the basic merits of these talks, but no one raised any formal objections. This was not an endorsement of nuclear weapons for Canada, but it suggests that there was no obvious opposition or division within cabinet on the subject.⁸⁶

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As the Progressive Conservatives set about governing, the Liberals were rebuilding their party. Many Liberals reconciled themselves quickly to defeat in 1957 because they regarded it as little more than a temporary measure. They blamed it on their tenure in office: the Party had been in power too long and

⁸⁶ Pearkes to CDC, 10 February 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

defeat by way of minority government was a reasonably painless remedy.⁸⁷ Implicit in the assessment was the thought that the election results were an aberration. When Canadians saw the error of their ways, they would return the Liberals with another majority. Others remarked that the election results reflected a well-being in Canada; for the electorate to hand over the reigns of power to the Conservative party meant that Canadians felt confident about their future. Proponents of this explanation regarded it as change for the sake of change. Times were good, governing was easy, and anyone, even Diefenbaker, would do.⁸⁸

A less common view, but a more realistic one, was concern. Defeat was a sign that something was wrong with the party and its organisation, and the party's electoral fortunes would not change unless the Liberals reassessed their policy and structure.⁸⁹ Proponents of this view looked for similarities between the 1957 election and others. The more optimistic among them compared the results with those of 1926, the more pragmatic saw similarities with the 1930 campaign when King was defeated soundly by R.B. Bennett.⁹⁰ The latter comparison was far more

⁸⁷ J.W. Stambaugh to Kidd, 12 June 1957, Kidd Papers, Volume 5, File 19: Defeat of 1957, Correspondence, 1957-58.

⁸⁸ Ibid., and H.J. MacDonald to Kidd, 17 June 1957, Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Grant Deachman to Kidd, 21 June 1957, Ibid.

Those who compared 1926 to 1957 actually thought of the 1925 results, in which William Lyon Mackenzie King won a plurality of the votes against Arthur Meighen, while the Conservatives won the greatest number of seats in the House of Commons. King refused to turn over the government to Meighen in 1925, and when a scandal hit the Liberal government in 1926, King sought dissolution of the House from Governor General Lord Byng in order to avoid a vote of non-confidence, which he was sure to lose. Byng refused to grant the order, and turned to Arthur Meighen and the Conservatives to form the government. Meighen's government lasted mere days. As a result, the issue brought before Canadians was not the scandal that led to King's initial defeat, but the constitutionality of Byng's refusal to dissolve Parliament upon King's request. In fact, Byng acted well

appropriate. Although the 1957 election resulted in a minority government where the 1930 campaign had ended in a majority, there were similar reasons for the results. In both cases, Canadians were tired of a Liberal government that seemed out of touch with issues that concerned ordinary citizens and the results reflected the electorate's desire for change.⁹¹

Liberals considered this "new era" as they mobilised for the Leadership Convention in January 1958. Duncan MacTavish, the president of the National Liberal Federation, and J.W. Pickersgill, a Newfoundland MP and former minister, decided that the convention would follow the lines established in 1948 when St. Laurent succeeded Mackenzie King. Pearson was the clear favourite as the convention approached, especially when he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the Suez canal crisis. Paul Martin and Walter Harris also entered the race, but Pearson was the obvious choice for most. He had the profile and the prestige required to help reinvigorate the party and return it to power.

On the surface Pearson seemed to be the ideal candidate. After the June defeat, the National Liberal Federation had drawn up a set of criteria by which to measure the next Liberal leader. First on the list were provincial and religious origins: a Protestant from Ontario was preferred.⁹² This put Martin at a disadvantage; a Roman Catholic from Ontario (with a large number of

within his constitutional powers as governor general, but that mattered little to Canadians as they returned Mackenzie King and his Liberal Party to office with the first majority government since the First World War.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "Some Observations on How to Improve the Present Position of the Liberal Party," 21 September 1957, Ibid.

Francophones in his riding) was not who party organisers had in mind for the next leader. And leadership was going to be important in the next election. Diefenbaker was both his party's greatest strength and biggest target, and leadership had been a great weakness for the Liberals in the previous campaign. The next Liberal leader had to be ready to go on the offensive quickly, attacking the prime minister and his government. The party hoped to deflect public attention away from Diefenbaker and his recent achievements toward the Liberal Party, Liberalism, and the new leader. As for foreign affairs, this was a weakness for Diefenbaker as far as the Liberals were concerned. As a result, the new leader was advised to focus on Diefenbaker's views on Britain and the United States, sentiments that were regarded as an obstacle for the Conservatives in Quebec, and a subject that Pearson was well-placed to use to his advantage.⁹³

Pearson was elected leader of the Liberal party on January 16, 1958. And while he seemed to be the ideal man, many Liberals probably wondered about their choice for leader in the days that followed. Four days after becoming leader, Pearson introduced a motion in the House of Commons that had serious consequences for both his political credibility and his party's electoral fortunes. The government had introduced a motion of supply, which was an ideal opportunity for the Opposition to include amendments criticising the government's conduct. This meant that it was considered to be a motion of confidence in the government. Pickersgill informed Pearson of this opportunity, and together they wrote an

⁹³ Ibid.

amendment and speech moving confidence in the government.⁹⁴ The motion essentially called the Conservatives incompetent, concluding that the government should be turned over to the Liberals. It was an arrogant thing to do, and more importantly, it gave Diefenbaker the opportunity to demolish Pearson in response. Diefenbaker attacked the Liberal leader and the motion for almost two hours, or, as he liked to describe it, "I operated on him without anaesthetic."⁹⁵

In addition to verbally drumming Pearson, Diefenbaker also revealed the existence of a confidential economic report entitled, "The Canadian Economic Outlook for 1957." It had been produced by the Finance Department for St. Laurent's government the previous March, and predicted an economic downturn. This report made it impossible for the Liberals to blame Canada's economic woes on the Conservatives, as Diefenbaker took the wind out of Pearson's sails. Instead of turning over the government to Pearson, Diefenbaker called an election.

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For the time being, nuclear matters were not high on the list of the government's priorities.⁹⁶ Diefenbaker's government had only agreed to preliminary

⁹⁴ Pickersgill insisted that he never wanted the motion to end in the government's defeat, and argued that it was designed specifically so that the smaller parties in the House of Commons (the CCF and Social Credit) would not support it. J.W. Pickersgill, The Road Back by a Liberal in Opposition, (Toronto, 1986), 17.

⁹⁵ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 49.

⁹⁶ While the government prepared for its second election campaign in less than twelve months, defence production and construction of refuelling sites for the United States Air Force at Canadian bases were discussed. The real concern was about the possibilities for production as the economy declined. Diefenbaker's government was willing to continue with the proposed refuelling sites, agreed to under the previous government, provided that Canadians received the jobs that were to result from such an agreement. That, it seems, was the extent of defence discussions in the waning days of Diefenbaker's minority government. See Cabinet Conclusions, 22 January 1958, Paragraphs 6-8, and 24 January 1958, Paragraph 1.

discussions on the possibility of stockpiling nuclear weapons in Canada prior to the 1958 federal election. In a memorandum for the cabinet defence committee in early February, Pearkes urged the government to allow the stationing of nuclear weapons at the existing facilities in Goose Bay. He argued that stockpiles at Goose Bay would strengthen the defensive position of the Strategic Air Command by providing a greater second strike capability. Weapons at Goose Bay were for defensive not offensive purposes, a difference that meant a great deal to politicians and military officials. Retaliatory capabilities were in keeping with the strategic doctrine of deterrence, as well as Canada's commitment to both regional security and NATO. As well, Canada was not being asked to fill a role unmet by other allies as the Americans had similar stockpiles in Great Britain, Spain, North Africa, and the Pacific. Furthermore, nuclear weapons at Goose Bay would not require a major increase in the number of American personnel at the base or an additional risk to Canadian security, perhaps the most important aspects of the proposal for nationalists in Diefenbaker's cabinet.⁹⁷ But, despite these talks, the nuclear issue was a low priority for the government and was reflected in its election materials.

Diefenbaker decided to conduct a "whistle-stop" campaign, along the lines of Eisenhower's presidential campaign in 1952.⁹⁸ The Conservatives were more prepared for the 1958 campaign than they had been for the 1957 contest. Instead of a campaign built almost exclusively around Diefenbaker, Conservative election

⁹⁷ Pearkes to CDC, Top Secret, 10 February 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁹⁸ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 50.

pamphlets now emphasised the leader's accomplishments in government. As well, the Tories re-emphasised the subject which had won them so much support in the previous election: Liberal arrogance. It was a particularly appropriate tactic after Pearson's motion in Parliament. Diefenbaker's opening rally in Winnipeg was filled with attacks on the Liberals, and Pearson suffered the brunt of the prime minister's blows. He focused on the non-confidence motion, mocking the leader of the Opposition: "Pearson must have had help drafting that motion," he railed, "Could one person, without assistance, have produced anything so stupid?"⁹⁹ Over the next six weeks Diefenbaker never missed an opportunity to remind Canadians of Pearson's motion.

The Conservatives were also better organised for the 1958 election than before. A booklet entitled "Advertising and Publicity Hints for Candidates," was a marked contrast with earlier efforts. It stressed that all politics was local; the election was about "265 by-elections," not a single national campaign, signalling a recognition of the importance of local organisation. There were lots of ideas for local advertising, all designed to highlight the importance of a majority mandate and the ties between the local candidate and the prime minister.¹⁰⁰

The emphasis was similarly local in terms of policy. Old age pensions, building grants, housing loans, labour legislation and the like were top priorities.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ "Advertising and Publicity Hints for Candidates," n.d., Fleming Papers, Volume 44, File: 1958 Campaign (3).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Volume 45, File: 1958 Election, Speeches.

External affairs and national defence ranked sixth on the list of eight policy areas, though party literature highlighted Diefenbaker's "knowledge" and "credibility" in these areas.¹⁰² As in 1957, pamphlets emphasised Diefenbaker's experience in international affairs, and special attention was paid to his decision to serve briefly as his own minister of external affairs. More generally, literature stressed the government's view of Canada's place in the world: firmly within the North Atlantic triangle. Diefenbaker's involvement in the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, Canada's role in the United Nations (and UNEF despite earlier opposition), were all noted. The only reference to nuclear weapons was the government's support for disarmament and vague references to the general abolition of nuclear weapons. There was nothing to reflect the government's contemplation of nuclear stockpiles.¹⁰³

The Conservatives realised that excessive attention to foreign affairs might give Pearson the advantage. Organisers initially urged candidates to avoid attacks on the Liberal leader's experience "and particularly any reference to any prizes that he may have won."¹⁰⁴ Such references would only serve to remind Canadians of Pearson's expertise in this area, something organisers preferred to avoid. In mid-March, however, the strategy changed. The Globe and Mail compared the foreign policies of the two parties, and applauded Diefenbaker's efforts to make foreign

¹⁰² "Talking Points for Progressive Conservative Speakers and Workers, General Election 1958, Confidential," n.d., ibid., Volume 44, File: 1958 Election - National Campaign Headquarters (4).

¹⁰³ ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Grosart to Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Assistants, 24 February 1958, ibid., File: 1958 Election - National Campaign Headquarters (3).

relations a bipartisan affair. "Above everything else in this campaign," Diefenbaker had told a Hamilton audience, "I am trying to assure the public there is no cleavage between the parties on the question of foreign affairs and peace."¹⁰⁵ By contrast, the Globe criticised the Liberal party's use of the slogan "Pearson for Peace." Canadian foreign policy should be the subject of consensus, the editorial noted, as had been the case from the declaration of war in 1939 to the deployment of troops to UNEF.¹⁰⁶ It was a selective recollection of the debates surrounding both Suez and World War Two, but the point was clear. Liberals organisers tried to portray Pearson as someone above the political fray, but "Pearson for peace" did nothing to enhance this image.

Tory organisers seized this point, and sent out a memorandum to all Ontario candidates on March 19 in which the "Pearson for Peace" slogan was portrayed as election propaganda. Candidates were urged to attack Paul Martin for his proposal that the Canadian automobile industry start making missiles as a means of job creation.¹⁰⁷ Pearson also undermined his image as the leader for peace when he promised to fill to capacity Camp Gagetown and to re-open Camp Utopia while he was touring New Brunswick.¹⁰⁸

Despite these attacks, Liberal strategists knew that foreign affairs was Pearson's strong suit and emphasised his experience in campaign literature. "This

¹⁰⁵ "Campaign Circular No. 5," 14 March 1958, Ibid., File: 1958 Election - National Campaign Headquarters (1).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Globe and Mail excerpt from 12 March 1958.

¹⁰⁷ Godfrey Barrass to all Ontario Candidates, "Peace, Pearson and Missiles," 19 March 1958, Ibid.,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

is the man," one pamphlet read, "whose sure, skilled hand is needed now to guide Canada out of this period of difficulty and doubt. He is the man of peace, the man of action who in times of emergency comes through with positive workable solutions."¹⁰⁹ "The Pearson Story," repeatedly mentioned the peace prize, even though Pearson denied that reference to the prize was an appeal for votes. The pamphlet commented, "He asks no votes for the Liberal Party on that account. Nevertheless, the personal qualities that won it are the precise qualities needed in a great Canadian prime minister at a time of crisis."¹¹⁰ For emphasis, the concluding statement appeared below a photograph of a Liberal rally, with Pearson centre stage, in front of a sea of "Peace Prosperity Pearson" signs.¹¹¹

The Liberals called for "less politics more statesmanship,"¹¹² but their behaviour during the campaign set a tone that was anything but. Furthermore, efforts to portray Pearson as apolitical missed the fundamental purpose of the Opposition in a parliamentary system, to criticise government policy, while creating an unrealistic expectation of the party's behaviour in office. It tried to make the point that "Pearson the statesman" was above politics. Pearson, it suggested,

¹⁰⁹ "The Pearson Story February 1958," Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7927, Volume 302, File MG 01/VI/(335 Wpg S) The House of Commons - Members of the House - Winnipeg South Constituency, 1958-1962.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

would be different; he would not sling-mud at the government, he would not "play politics."¹¹³

Aside from celebrating its leader, the Liberal party tried to deal with bread and butter issues like a tax reduction in order to stimulate the economy. The Conservatives responded by arguing that that the proposals were disingenuous; if the Liberal leader truly supported a tax reduction, he and his Party should have promoted it during their previous time in office. Now it seemed to be little more than electoral expediency. The second approach was to label Pearson as a politician lacking in originality, leading a party devoid of ideas, playing catch up to the governing Tories. Along this line, the Conservatives paid particular attention to the Liberal tax policy. A brief designed to help Tory candidates focus their criticisms of the Liberal platform had five full pages of commentary on taxation, while other issues, such as old age assistance, housing, and economic development received only a single page each.¹¹⁴

Pearson could not match Diefenbaker's oratorical style. The Liberal leader could mingle on the world stage, in the back corridors of the United Nations, but with average Canadians, Pearson's image held little appeal. Pearson simply could not reach out to the average Canadian. He could not rally support on the hustings, and he made only a modest impression on Canadians who witnessed his efforts at

¹¹³ See various surveys and correspondences in the files of T.W. Kent Papers, Volume 2, 1988 Accrual, Queen's University Archives. This was something that contemporary surveys stressed. Pearson was ultimately criticised for failing to live up to this promise to do things differently by the early 1960s.

¹¹⁴ W.R. Brunt to all Candidates and Campaign Officials, "A Commentary on the Liberal Party's Policy Statement," 7 March 1958, Fleming Papers, Volume 44, File: 1958 Election - Campaign Material (1).

political rallies. A Conservative aide who attended the rallies noted, "I didn't blame the farmer who sat next to me popping Crackerjack clusters into his mouth and slowly, with eyes closed, mechanically chewing and chewing. There wasn't much else to do."¹¹⁵

The 1958 election resulted in a massive majority for the Progressive Conservatives. Out of a possible 265 seats in the House of Commons, the Conservatives won a staggering 208. After travelling some 21,000 miles in six weeks, delivering more than 100 speeches along the way, Diefenbaker felt entitled to take credit for the victory.¹¹⁶ Diefenbaker had asked Canadians to "Follow John." They did. In droves. The CCF won 8 seats, while Social Credit lost every riding in which it ran a candidate. Major figures from all parties were defeated. The CCF lost M.J. Coldwell and Stanley Knowles, and Social Credit lost its party leader, Solon Low. The Liberals were hit even harder. Only five ministers from the St. Laurent years survived the storm: Pearson, Martin, Pickersgill, Lionel Chevrier, and Jean Lesage. At worst, the Liberals had expected to win between 100 and 80 seats.¹¹⁷ No one had anticipated the Canadian electorate would return a meagre 49 Liberals to Parliament. If Canadians were uncertain about which path to choose in 1957, their intentions were abundantly clear eight months later. In 1958, Canadians elected Diefenbaker to the greatest majority to date in Canadian politics.

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¹¹⁵ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 54.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹¹⁷ Pickersgill, The Road Back, 24.

What could Canadians expect from the new Diefenbaker government, with its overwhelming majority? In many respects, the majority proved to be a mixed blessing for Diefenbaker and his party. On the one hand, it was a reward for a job well done with a minority government in 1957, a welcome change after Liberal complacency. But the reward also raised expectations that the Conservatives would perform vigorously. Canadians expected at least three or four years of good, active government. The majority was also a curse for Diefenbaker. Given his previous electoral and political struggles, he knew that his party's standing (and his own) had nowhere to go but down. He knew that contentious issues like NORAD and the Arrow had been shelved only temporarily for the sake of electoral support. Now, with those issues pressing and a huge majority, he had to act. The majority also gave Diefenbaker time to dither, which he did with great frequency, particularly in matters of foreign and defence policy. Like Mackenzie King before him, Diefenbaker believed that there was little reason to act when a decision could be made another day. But Diefenbaker lacked King's political skill and luck, and "another day" was often only around the corner. It is within this context that Diefenbaker and his government conducted foreign and defence policy in the early days of their majority government.

Chapter Two: The Conservatives and Defence Policy 1958-1959.

Governing with a majority did not come naturally to one as insecure as John Diefenbaker. As in 1957, cabinet was comprised of Diefenbaker's challengers, if not his enemies. Colleagues noted that Diefenbaker's attitude toward his caucus changed after March 1958, as he turned away from the kind of consultation that made him popular with his MPs after the 1957 election. As one Conservative MP commented, "Caucuses became John Diefenbaker telling of his readings from Mackenzie King. At every caucus, we were regaled with something from Mackenzie King, who had become for some reason or other that nobody could quite understand, John's great hero."¹

Diefenbaker believed that Canadians had elected him, not the Conservative party, and he was essentially correct in this assessment. But with his new-found majority, Diefenbaker spent more time worrying about public opinion and public perceptions of his government than consulting with either cabinet or caucus. This preoccupation with maintaining electoral popularity led Diefenbaker to launch what Donald Fleming called a "perpetual campaign."² As Diefenbaker's biographer concluded, "Victory made him more isolated, more vulnerable, less able to share leadership with his cabinet team, and more dependent on what he could read in the winds of public taste."³

¹ Denis Smith, Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker, (Toronto, 1995), 285.

² Donald Fleming, So Very Near: the Political Memoirs of the Honourable Donald M. Fleming, Volume One, (Toronto, 1985), 457-458.

³ Smith, Rogue Tory, 286.

The prime minister came to worry so much about electoral support that he began to dwell on the importance of unsolicited letters on any number of subjects. As journalist Peter C. Newman recalled, Diefenbaker put great stock in the value of letters from average Canadians: "Dief regarded his mail as an extremely important political listening-post. It was filed away by subject-matter, with a geographical cross-index, so that the PM could quickly obtain a sampling of public opinion on any important issue."⁴ This was particularly important when it came to potentially controversial issues of national defence including the cancellation of the Avro Arrow and the acquisition of nuclear weapons. It was not that Diefenbaker had an unsophisticated understanding of public opinion. He understood the difference between scientific polling and unsolicited letters of support or opposition. It was simply that correspondence from ordinary Canadians helped to point out contentious issues and possible political vulnerabilities. He realised that the anti-nuclear movement was loud, not large. But when dealing with an issue in which public opinion could be fluid, noise mattered more than numbers.

This chapter examines Diefenbaker's formulation of defence policy during the first year of his majority government by looking at three major decisions. A crucial meeting of the cabinet defence committee at the end of April established the framework for Canada's nuclear policy under Diefenbaker. The North American Air Defence Command agreement between Canada and the United States was

⁴ Peter C. Newman, Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years, (Toronto, 1963), 86. This might be somewhat exaggerated, but the sentiment was correct. At the Diefenbaker Centre Canada in Saskatoon, much of the prime minister's correspondence with average Canadians is filed with the collected reference materials, lending credibility to Newman's assertion. However, the entire

concluded in May, and included new obligations and expectations for continental defence. The government also decided to accept Bomarc missiles. With the Bomarc came another consideration: whether Canada would or should acquire nuclear weapons. As a result there were lengthy discussions in cabinet about the liabilities and benefits of nuclear weapons. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the Avro Arrow and its cancellation, Diefenbaker's third major defence decision of the period. On all three issues, Diefenbaker and his cabinet tried to balance defence priorities with fiscal prudence and political popularity, with the latter becoming more important than the former over the course of the year.

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The foundation of Diefenbaker's nuclear policy was laid at a CDC meeting in late April, within weeks of his landslide victory. While the committee discussed a variety of issues that day, the bulk of the meeting focused on the merits of nuclear stockpiles. Cost was a factor with some of the other proposals, but not with nuclear weapons.⁵ Presentations were made by Charles Foulkes, chairman of the chiefs of staff, Pearkes, and Smith. Foulkes and Pearkes spoke in favour of nuclear weapons while Smith was less enthusiastic, though not opposed to the proposition. This

collection of letters was filed in an enormous card catalogue system, filed alphabetically by surname not subject matter.

⁵ Issues discussed that day included Canada's role in NATO, progress in the NORAD negotiations, and a proposed ballistic missile early warning system. In terms of cost, the Americans agreed to assume responsibility for the expense and logistics of laying the required cable underneath Canadian territorial waters under the proposed early warning system. Although there was some discussion as to whether the Canadian government should make plans to purchase that cable from the Americans, in order to make the warning system a true joint venture, there was no way that Diefenbaker's government could afford the financial expenditure in 1958, or anytime in the foreseeable future. An important benefit from the agreement was that Canadian contractors and companies were to be used wherever possible during the construction of the Canadian portion of the system.

division between the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence was a permanent and growing one, and a constant factor in the formulation of nuclear policy.

Military representatives emphasised that the weapons proposed for Goose Bay played a defensive role in the western nuclear deterrent. The base would be on a par with American bases in Britain, Spain, North Africa, and the Pacific, all of which had nuclear weapons to aid the second strike capability of the United States.⁶ Goose Bay was not, and would not become, a permanent base, or a base from which an initial attack could or would be launched. Military officials did not anticipate an American request for permission to store nuclear weapons at any other Canadian bases, nor was there any change in legislation required to allow for the transfer and storage of nuclear weapons at the base. Stockpiles at Goose Bay were part of a larger proposal in which Canada would acquire nuclear weapons for its forces, and the proposal was based on talks with American officials in late 1957 and early 1958. The talks had covered a range of nuclear possibilities from the Bomarc in Canada and MB-1 rockets for the Royal Canadian Air Force, to nuclear weapons at leased bases like Goose Bay and Argentina.⁷ As with the NORAD proposal in July 1957, Foulkes emphasised that St. Laurent's government had authorised the creation of nuclear storage facilities at Goose Bay in 1951. By

⁶ CDC Minutes, 28 April 1958, Paragraph 13, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁷ Ibid., Paragraph 14.

implication, storage facilities were sufficient to indicate that the Liberals would have agreed to allow nuclear stockpiles if only the Americans had asked.⁸

The minister of external affairs and prime minister worried about the possible precedent set by this proposal. Both worried about the implications of nuclear weapons stored in Canada. Smith in particular worried about issues of control, and urged that Canadian officials pursue an agreement with the Americans on the same terms as the British, who had secured a veto over the use of nuclear weapons stored in Britain.

The prime minister expressed two concerns about stockpiles at Goose Bay, both revolving around whether it would be feasible politically for the government to permit storage of nuclear weapons on Canadian territory. Diefenbaker worried about Pearson and whether he should approach the Liberal leader about the prospect of nuclear stockpiles at Goose Bay. More general was his concern about public opinion. Diefenbaker fretted about the possible divide that could follow a decision to allow nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. He noted, "public opinion in the UK was divided on the issue and it would be unfortunate if conditions were created which would lead to a similar division in this country."⁹

Diefenbaker's potential opposition to nuclear weapons stemmed from his fear that this was a decision that could undermine his political support; there was no philosophical objection to acquiring nuclear weapons. This focus on public opinion underscored Diefenbaker's insecurities despite his enormous majority. With 208

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., Paragraph 16.

seats in the House of Commons, Diefenbaker did not need Pearson to support the introduction of nuclear weapons. Even if Pearson criticised the prime minister as a war-monger or slave to American pressure for accepting nuclear weapons, a distinct possibility, time was on Diefenbaker's side. This discussion came only weeks into his majority mandate, hardly a threat to his tenure in office, and plenty of time for any public opposition to subside. Diefenbaker's concern about popular opinion was also far ahead of public sentiment. The first Canadian anti-nuclear groups did not form until later in the year, and most were concerned about nuclear fallout not acquisition. But Diefenbaker's concerns had the makings of a self-fulfilled prophecy. Diefenbaker worried about opposition to nuclear weapons, but his procrastination only gave opposition an opportunity to form and flourish during that time.

The discussion that followed illustrated that the issue was not contentious even though no decision was reached on nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. All members of NATO, with the exception of Norway and Denmark, had "agreed in principle to the storage of nuclear weapons on their territory," although Germany and Great Britain were the only members to allow storage to date.¹⁰ There was also a certain amount of caution expressed about the value of a veto; while the Americans could guarantee a veto for Canadian officials, it was unlikely that it could or would be utilised in the event of an emergency. If many questioned whether consultation would be forthcoming in a crisis, it was even more doubtful that the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 17 (b).

Americans would allow another country to limit its military response in an emergency situation.¹¹ But the decision to accept or reject nuclear stockpiles at Goose Bay was not a pressing one. International tensions seemed to be waning, removing the urgency that had accompanied the first American approach in December 1957. As a result, the CDC decided to delay making a decision until the Americans asked again to store nuclear weapons at Goose Bay.¹²

Cabinet picked up where the CDC left off on nuclear weapons the following day, April 29. The cabinet discussion focused almost exclusively on Pearson's position and prospects for a Canadian veto. Diefenbaker elaborated on his concerns about Pearson that he raised the day before at the CDC. He did not seek permission to accept nuclear weapons or reassurance that it was the correct decision. Instead, he wanted to make sure that the Liberal leader would not make nuclear weapons into a political issue, something the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize could use to his immediate political advantage in the House of Commons and on the hustings in the future.¹³ Having campaigned as the "man for peace," Pearson's reaction was not an unreasonable concern for Diefenbaker, even if the Liberal leader had been part of the government which had approved nuclear installations at Goose Bay.

Cabinet also discussed possible arrangements with the Americans to govern control of nuclear stockpiles. Smith proposed the British arrangement as a possible

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 17 (c).

¹² *Ibid.*, Paragraph 17 (e).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 29 April 1958, Paragraph 9.

model. Ideally, there would be joint control of American weapons stationed in Canada.¹⁴ Pearkes contributed to the discussion only by noting the various kinds of missiles the Americans might ask to store in Canada.¹⁵ The discussion that followed was brief with the most contentious comment about Pearson, not nuclear weapons. The Liberals had not, in recent memory, approached the Conservatives on an issue of national defence or external affairs, one minister reminded everyone. There seemed to be little point in doing so now, unless the government had already made a decision one way or the another.¹⁶ It was one thing to inform the Leader of the Opposition about forthcoming policy, it was quite another to appear to ask him for advice. Despite the general lack of controversy associated with this first major discussion of nuclear weapons, cabinet did not act. The subject had been raised for information purposes only, and a decision could wait for another day.¹⁷

Although Diefenbaker worried about public opinion, he had little reason to fear opposition in the early days of his majority. The prime minister received a great deal of nuclear-related mail in the spring of 1958, but it focused on the perils of nuclear tests, not stockpiles. With this focus, it necessarily turned on matters outside Canada, involving Soviet and American nuclear testing. Most correspondence urged the prime minister to make use of Canada's special

¹⁴ Ibid., Paragraph 11.

¹⁵ Pearkes noted three types of missiles. There were air-to-air missiles, armed with an atomic warhead, designed for continental defence; atomic bombs carried by SAC for defensive purposes or retaliation; and finally, nuclear weapons for use by either the Canadian or American navy against submarines. Ibid., Paragraph 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., Paragraph 12.

relationship with the United States to encourage suspension of testing. Diefenbaker was also encouraged to use Canada's "international reputation" to promote a global test ban. Nowhere was there concern about nuclear weapons in Canada.¹⁸ Yet Diefenbaker had reason to worry about the volume of correspondence on the subject. It did not take much to imagine that those who were inspired to oppose nuclear testing would also quickly put pen to paper to criticise even rumours of nuclear weapons in Canada. The very existence of letters related to nuclear matters helped to underscore the potential controversy that could accompany nuclear talks.

A similar potential for controversy existed for the Diefenbaker government as it reached the final stages of negotiations for NORAD.¹⁹ Within days of the federal election, the government had resumed consideration of the proposed agreement. The North American Air Defence Command involved problems of style, not substance. The final draft note had been sent to Washington in early April, and cabinet discussed it in Diefenbaker's absence on April 11. Pearkes and Smith handled the discussion which revolved around scenarios in which Canadian forces would be engaged under NORAD. In Diefenbaker's absence, Green ran the meeting in his capacity as acting prime minister. Despite Green's guidance, there was no discussion about the implications of joint North American air defence and whether Canada would be forced to acquire nuclear weapons in the process. There

¹⁷ Ibid., Paragraph 13.

¹⁸ For example see Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7811, File: MG 01/VI/154 Defence Research - Atomic Research, 1957-1963.

¹⁹ For the more technical aspects of the NORAD negotiations as well as the Canadian-American military discussions that preceded them, see Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs and McLin, Canada's Changing Defense, 1957-1963.

was nothing to indicate that cabinet had any major questions or concerns about NORAD in fact or in principle.²⁰

The proposed NORAD agreement was absent from the cabinet agenda until May 8. In the interim, negotiations had progressed quickly. By the end of April the two governments had reached an agreement on bilateral alert declarations. All that remained were issues of ministerial consultation and NORAD's role within NATO.²¹ The Americans were willing to accept annual consultations between the two governments, and understood when their Canadian counterparts underscored "widespread public interest" in alerts and carriage of nuclear weapons over Canadian territory.²² These issues were raised at the May 8 cabinet meeting. Diefenbaker was present this time and led the discussion. His comments indicated that he had a clear understanding of the implications of combined air defence. He worried that "two proposed revisions could create problems in Parliament," and both involved the link between NATO and NORAD. First, he was concerned about the "reporting link between NORAD and NATO." The Americans did not want NORAD to have anything to do with NATO, never mind have NATO serve as a co-ordinating body for the North American command. The amended wording reflected this concern. Diefenbaker also worried about the Note's preamble. The original Canadian proposal specified the importance of the link between NORAD and

²⁰ Cabinet Conclusions, 11 April 1958, Paragraphs 4-7.

²¹ CDC Minutes, 28 April 1958, Paragraphs 28-29, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

²² ibid.

NATO, but the amended American note made "the link...less direct than Canada would like to see." However reluctant, Diefenbaker recognised that American officials feared NATO "interference" in North America.²³ From the Canadian point of view, a linkage between NORAD and NATO would serve as a multilateral counterweight to the bilateral defence agreement in political terms, if not in fact.

The suggested changes caused problems for Diefenbaker primarily because of their potential political consequences. Although the Canadian chiefs of staff supported the changes, Diefenbaker feared problems in Parliament. Once again, he worried about Pearson's response to NORAD in the House of Commons. He knew that the Liberal leader had been involved in the initial negotiations, and worried that he might accuse the prime minister of neglecting Canada's national interest. But Diefenbaker was alone in his concern about Pearson's position. Cabinet was divided on the subject of the new wording; some regarded the differences in wording as irrelevant, but others pointed out that the proposed changes were so different from what the Conservatives had already said about NORAD that the government would be open to criticism.²⁴

The divisions were moot because a new draft agreement had already been prepared after receipt of the American wording, and was being readied for transmission to Washington as cabinet discussed the matter. Cabinet's only decision on May 8 was to wait for a response from Washington.²⁵ Within days,

²³ Cabinet Conclusions, 8 May 1958, Paragraph 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 6.

everything was resolved. Midway through a cabinet meeting on May 10, Robinson passed Diefenbaker a note indicating that agreement had been reached on the outstanding consultation provision. However, "the question of *arrangements* for ministerial consultation between the United States and Canada on defence matters is still being negotiated."²⁶ Diefenbaker and his cabinet had their guarantee that there would be civilian control over NORAD and joint ministerial consultation in some capacity. Cabinet quickly approved the agreement, such as it was.²⁷

The NORAD Notes were exchanged May 12, 1958, and introduced in the House of Commons a week later. The Opposition responded quickly, calling for a formal debate and parliamentary approval. As Jockel noted, opposition parties were not interested in a debate on the substance or merit of the agreement, and seemed more inclined to embarrass the government.²⁸ The decision to submit the NORAD Agreement to Parliament for approval came only after Diefenbaker considered the ramifications of this action. He worried that a debate on NORAD might set a precedent requiring that any future military arrangement be submitted to Parliament for its approval.²⁹ Cabinet believed the submission would set a precedent, but thought it was worth it. There was also the matter of approval to consider. The Conservatives controlled the House, but the Liberals still had a

²⁶ Robinson to Prime Minister (in Cabinet), 10 May 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File: 1.12 May 1958. Italics added for emphasis.

²⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 10 May 1958, Paragraph 7-9.

²⁸ Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs. 117.

²⁹ Cabinet Conclusions, 20 May 1958, Paragraphs 2-4.

majority in the Senate. Diefenbaker did not consider rejection likely, but nonetheless raised it as a point of some concern.³⁰

The NORAD debate took place from June 10 to June 19. Despite American statements to the contrary, Diefenbaker tried to make the connection between the North American agreement and NATO. Pearson was quick to counter the assertion, citing the transcript of NATO Secretary General Paul-Henri Spaak's recent press conference in which he had emphasised that "NORAD is not under the command of NATO."³¹ Diefenbaker was reluctant to concede the point, and turned his focus to the symbolism of NORAD within the context of NATO. NORAD, he argued,

represents the extension of the principles of NATO to the North American continent, in that it makes provision for the joining together of free nations within the context of NATO and for the purposes of NATO. Without discussing the connection between NORAD and NATO I wish to say that I believe, whether it is part of NATO or not, it does strengthen NATO, which is all that matters.³²

While MPs debated NORAD in the House of Commons, Diefenbaker and his government were coming to terms with Canada's role in stockpiles and nuclear testing. In the midst of the final negotiations for NORAD, the Americans had renewed their request for permission to store nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. But they took the request one step further, asking if they could "hold discussions on integrating atomic capabilities for continental air defence." At a meeting in early May, the CDC decided to postpone a decision on both matters "pending further

³⁰ Ibid., 27 May 1958, Paragraphs 21-22.

³¹ Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs, 117. See also House of Commons, Debates, 10 June 1958.

³² Ibid., See also House of Commons, Debates, 19 June 1958.

consideration of the various matters involved in it." Diefenbaker led the discussion in cabinet on May 8, with Pearkes, Green, and Harkness in attendance. Smith, who had expressed some reservations about nuclear weapons a week earlier, was absent. The discussion was brief and devoid of opposition; there was no discussion of the proposal's merits, and no resistance to the proposed "discussions on integrating atomic capabilities for continental air defence."³³ Regardless, cabinet, like the CDC before, postponed making a decision. Before making up his mind to pursue negotiations with the Americans, Diefenbaker wanted to talk to Eisenhower and Pearson.³⁴ So much for not consulting with the Leader of the Opposition. Notwithstanding the lack of decision, the American request was a step forward in Canada's nuclear policy. It was the first suggestion that Canada acquire nuclear weapons for its own bases, and not merely give permission for the Americans to stockpile them on Canadian territory.

Nuclear testing was a far more contentious subject than stockpiling. It was also a more pressing issue, something Diefenbaker knew from his correspondence. In early June, Eisenhower notified the Canadian government of a proposed meeting of experts on nuclear testing. Khrushchev had suggested that experts participate from the United States, Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and India. Canada was not included in the list. However, the president wondered if Canadian officials wanted to participate in the proposed conference given their previous involvement in nuclear matters. The State Department was a

³³ Cabinet Conclusions, 8 May 1958.

³⁴ Ibid., Paragraph 21.

reluctant supporter of the president's proposal, fearing that a request to include Canada might encourage the Soviets to request that China be added to the list, thereby delaying or postponing indefinitely the conference.³⁵ Diefenbaker was adamant that Canada should participate in any talks involving nuclear tests, arguing that "it would be unfair to leave Canada out."³⁶ Cabinet agreed. Although the conference came to naught, there was progress in the effort to ban nuclear tests. In August Eisenhower announced a moratorium to take effect in November, after the final scheduled tests.

Matters of defence could not be considered in the summer of 1958 without reference to the economy and government finances. Though relations were very good on a personal level between Diefenbaker and Eisenhower, there was trouble brewing in the defence relationship between the two countries. By the summer of 1958, with NORAD approved, there was more at stake than ministerial consultation. Eisenhower came to Ottawa that summer, and when Smith met with Dulles on July 10, the possibility of shared defence production figured prominently in talks. Canadian officials complained that the country was overburdened by its share of continental defence; as Canadian involvement in North American defence increased, so did the costs. The Avro Arrow had cost the government \$250 million in development and was expected to cost another \$530 million by 1961.³⁷ The

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 June 1958, Paragraph 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 24.

³⁷ This meant that the government would have spent \$780 million on the Arrow by the time it was ready to intercept manned bombers.

semi-automatic ground environment system (SAGE), designed to aid in Canadian air defence, cost \$150 million. The Bomarc missile, expected to complement the manned bomber and complete the North American Bomarc defence network, cost \$200 million and extended continental defence 250 miles to the north. There was also increased radar coverage, with various monitoring systems like the Pinetree System, DEW Line, and Mid-Canada Line.³⁸

Canadian officials proposed a solution reminiscent of so many defence dealings with the United States since 1939. Instead of mutual aid, something Smith opposed, officials proposed a plan for joint production of defence materials, as well as cost-sharing for development and production.³⁹ Pearkes argued that NORAD brought with it plenty of co-operation operationally, but now was the time for "co-operation in production." One suggestion was that the United States air squadrons at Harmon Field and Goose Bay agree to use the CF-105, thereby reducing the costs of production.⁴⁰ Pearkes also appealed to past cost-sharing agreements, specifically the construction of the Pinetree, Dew and Mid-Canada Lines. He explained to Dulles:

We are reaching the stage where it is not possible to develop or produce complicated weapons purely for Canadian use. Furthermore, it is imperative that we should be able to maintain and repair all weapons that are used on Canadian soil. Finally, it is necessary to

³⁸ Department of National Defence, "Aide Memoire for Discussions with the US Secretary of State on Canada's Defence Problems," 10 July 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File: 1.14.

³⁹ Robinson Notes on Meeting Between Dulles and Smith, 10 July 1958, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Recall that in September 1957 Canadian officials realised that there was no potential market for the Arrow in the United States or Great Britain. That said, it never hurt to try again.

maintain our defence industrial facilities for availability in the event of an emergency.⁴¹

Dulles was sympathetic. He understood the costs of post-war defence, noting that the Americans were also concerned about such problems. "The cost of modern weapons," Dulles remarked, "is almost fantastic. Last week the Secretary of Defence indicated the mounting costs by comparing a World War II plane at \$100,000 with a modern plane at approximately \$5 million."⁴²

The appeal to the Americans for a joint defence production sharing agreement underscored the economic constraints within which defence policy was formulated. No one expressed philosophical concerns about weapons of mass destruction. Both Robertson and Green were present for these talks in which Canadian officials essentially told the secretary of state, the architect of "massive retaliation," that Canada could not afford the most modern, and thus most destructive, in military accoutrement unless the Americans offered a compromise. Neither Robertson nor Green ever pointed out to cabinet that the most modern missiles, including Bomarcs, were likely too expensive for the Canadian budget. Aside from any moral objections the two men might have had about nuclear weapons, the financial consideration was a legitimate avenue of concern, and provided a graceful way to reject acquisition of the weapons.⁴³

⁴¹ Robinson Notes on Meeting Between Dulles and Smith, 10 July 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 1, File 1.14.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Philosophical objections aside, when Mackenzie King's government pondered Canada's post-war defence policy, Howe rejected nuclear weapons as too expensive and thus a non-issue. This was as true for the sake of development as it was for production.

Robertson and Green were not alone in their apparent willingness to have Canada acquire nuclear weapons. By the summer of 1958 it seemed to be a matter of time, and the right kind of cost-sharing agreement with the Americans, before nuclear weapons came to Canada. The legitimacy of the nuclear option seemed to grow as Bryce lent his support to the cause. He offered advice to the prime minister on a number of defence related issues that shaped the last half of 1958, especially the Arrow and the Bomarc missile. He recommended that the government continue the Arrow, despite its growing costs and eventual obsolescence.⁴⁴ He was also convinced of the Bomarc's viability, and encouraged Diefenbaker to accept two bases in and around Ottawa. He viewed the Bomarc as a supplement to, not a replacement for, the Arrow; as far as he was concerned, acquisition of the Bomarc was not related to the cancellation of the CF-105. This was not a naive acceptance of the Bomarc, or its role in defending North America. He realised that the bases were situated to defend the U.S., not Canada. Finally, there was the nuclear component, which was relevant to discussions of the Bomarc and the Arrow. Bryce urged the prime minister to accept the MB-1 nuclear missile in place of the Sparrow and Astra components of the Arrow. "This will minimize great technical risks and possible delays," and, Bryce noted pragmatically, "save money at the critically important time, and should not cause serious political difficulties."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Bryce to the Prime Minister, "Air Defence Decisions," 31 July 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 - Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Economically and politically feasible, nuclear weapons were a key element in the decision to accept Bomarc bases in Canada. Bryce made this clear to Diefenbaker. The clerk of the Privy Council was straightforward in his advice to the prime minister, particularly about the potential consequences of accepting nuclear weapons. He did not refer to Canada's role in disarmament talks or efforts to secure international control mechanism for nuclear weapons. Economic feasibility was a fundamental concern for Canadian officials in matters of continental defence and nuclear weapons offered many benefits to this end. These benefits were also expected to be politically acceptable to Canadians. While some have argued that the nuclear component of the Bomarc missile was overlooked by cabinet and the prime minister in their haste to deal with the growing crisis surrounding the Arrow, this does not appear to be accurate.⁴⁶

If, in mid-1958 nuclear weapons were politically acceptable to Canadians, it was not as straightforward diplomatically. Nuclear warheads were not for sale from the Americans as U.S. law prohibited the sale of nuclear weapons to other countries. In an age of fiscal restraint, this was just as well as far as the Canadians were concerned. However, the real issue was not cost, but custody and control. If Canadians could not buy warheads from the United States, then they would have to borrow or lease them. This kind of arrangement would present Canadian officials with a predicament. Since the Second World War, Canadian officials had been adamant about participating in allied assistance as partners with, not subordinates

⁴⁶ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question and the Political Crisis Which Arose from It in January and February 1963," August 1963, 2, Harkness Papers, Volume 57, File: "The Nuclear Question."

to, the Americans. During the war, it had been vital to Canadian officials that their country contribute to the war effort, not receive American aid, and this was achieved with the Hyde Park Declaration in 1941. The same kinds of concerns were prevalent with the round of defence production sharing talks that Smith proposed to Dulles in July 1958. Again, the situation was outlined clearly to the prime minister. Nuclear negotiations presented Canadian officials with a marked "departure in Canadian policy" and "if followed by other steps could lead to a clearly dependent position for Canada and its forces."⁴⁷

Throughout August, the cabinet defence committee dealt with issues of economics and the changing conditions of continental air defence. At the beginning of the month cabinet had approved two recommendations of the CDC which involved considerable expenditures for the government. The first was the extension of the Pinetree radar line, and the other was the implementation of the SAGE program in Canada.⁴⁸ Smith was also beginning to change his position on the acceptability and necessity of nuclear weapons. Now he argued that the Soviet threat, both real and potential, outweighed budgetary constraints.⁴⁹ No one worried that the Soviets would out-number American bombers, but the same was not true of missiles. Worse still, missiles when coupled with the bombers made for a dual

⁴⁷ Bryce to the Prime Minister, "Air Defence Decisions," 31 July 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 - Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

⁴⁸ The Pinetree line included five radar stations, as well as 39 intermediate gap-filler stations, between the radar stations, and was expected to cost \$87 million. The SAGE system was projected to cost \$107 million, with the Americans paying for two computers worth almost half the expected cost, leaving the Canadians to pay \$54 million. Cabinet Conclusions, 1 August 1958, Paragraph 15.

⁴⁹ Department of External Affairs Memorandum to the CDC, "Continental Air Defence - Foreign Policy Implications," 14 August 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

threat, one that required North America to defend itself "against every possible attack."⁵⁰ As a result, Canada had a responsibility to share in North American defence. This meant there were only two options available for the government: the Conservatives could increase the defence budget or Canada could accept, for the first time, mutual aid from the United States. Smith recommended the latter. He argued that Canadian sovereignty had already been diminished by joining alliances such as NATO and NORAD, but the true test of a nation's sovereignty was whether a country could defend itself. Any defence arrangement with the Americans that provided for greater Canadian security was "not an unreasonable diminution of sovereignty."⁵¹ The terms of the arrangement were important, as Smith warned that equity was crucial to influence. Sovereignty would be maintained if Canada paid its fair share of defence costs.

In this light, nuclear weapons seemed to be a foregone conclusion, even a necessity. Although the Bomarc could be armed with a non-nuclear warhead, the minister of external affairs saw little reason "to install such a costly weapon system and fail to take advantage of its best capabilities."⁵² As well, with joint air defence, Canadian forces in NORAD would be working side-by-side with their American counterparts, who were armed with nuclear weapons. Smith appealed to public opinion, although that opinion served a different purpose than his reference to potential divisions in late April. He argued, "If no provision is made for the similar

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

equipment of Canadian forces there might be unfavourable public reaction in Canada.⁵³ Now, it seemed, public opinion demanded nuclear weapons. Gone was Smith's earlier hesitation, as he encouraged the government to allow nuclear stockpiles at Goose Bay. U.S. law was no longer an obstacle either, as Smith once again promoted a Canadian veto, much like the British had secured in their agreement with the Americans.⁵⁴

In the fall of 1958, everything the Diefenbaker government did seemed to point toward the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In September, the government made two decisions that changed Canada's nuclear policy. First, cabinet approved Bomarc bases in Canada.⁵⁵ Then, Diefenbaker announced revisions to Canada's defence policy that reflected the impending demise of the Avro Arrow. It was not that Diefenbaker had been undecided about the CF-105; all evidence suggests that it was a matter of when and not if the project would be cancelled. Timing was of crucial importance, and it appears that part of the plan in allowing the development (but not production) of the Arrow and the Iroquois engine to continue until the end of March was Diefenbaker's desire to secure a cost-sharing agreement with the

⁵² ibid.

⁵³ ibid.

⁵⁴ The Anglo-American agreement noted: "The United States Government shall provide nuclear warheads for the missiles transferred to the United Kingdom Government pursuant to this Agreement. All nuclear warheads so provided shall remain in full United States ownership, custody and control in accordance with the United States law.

The decision to launch these missiles will be a matter for joint decision by the two Governments. Any such joint decisions will be made in the light of the circumstances at the time and having regard to the undertaking the two Governments have assumed in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. ibid.

⁵⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 8 September 1958, Paragraph 11.

Americans for the purchase of the Bomarc and the F-106, the American interceptor that was inferior to the Arrow, but far more affordable. At the same time, cabinet agreed to end the Astra and Sparrow programmes.⁵⁶

At the beginning of October the government seemed to move closer to acquiring nuclear weapons when it approved the procurement of a battery of Lacrosse surface-to-surface guided missile systems. In cabinet, the prime minister elaborated on the Army's request for tactical weapons in order to modernise its forces. The generally accepted image of Diefenbaker is that he failed to understand the implications of the Bomarc missile or any other nuclear warhead. But discussions surrounding the Lacrosse question this assumption. Diefenbaker explained, "The Lacrosse...appeared to be the most suitable system available. Since it was essential to provide this type of support for the brigade group in Europe, the minimum quantity necessary was one battery of four launchers and twelve missiles."⁵⁷ Cabinet agreed with the prime minister.

The Department of External Affairs recognised the changes to Canada's defence policy. Members of the department had started to express reservations about the prospects of Canadian forces acquiring nuclear weapons in mid-April, while NATO was in the midst of its deliberations over stockpiles in Europe.⁵⁸ Léger

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 September 1958.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 October 1958, Paragraph 6-9.

⁵⁸ Pearkes had attended a NATO Defence Ministers' conference in mid-April. NATO's newly adopted strategy, MC-70, "Minimum Essential Force Requirements 1958-63," the focus of which was a "strong shield" using "modern weapons," formed the bulk of discussion. He reported that talks were underway with interested members of the alliance, though no formal action would occur until talks and reports were complete. "Report on NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting, 15-17 April, 1958," 23 April 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/45 Defence - CDC, 1957-1959.

wrote to Robertson, Canada's ambassador to the United States, to express his apprehensions about the growing clamour for nuclear weapons within NATO. Tactical nuclear weapons were a particularly distressing prospect. He urged the promotion of disarmament over nuclear negotiations, stressing that political considerations had to rein in the military's enthusiasm for nuclear warheads.⁵⁹ Robertson agreed.⁶⁰

By October, members of the department were even more concerned about the developments in defence policy. In a letter to Foulkes, Léger continued to stress the importance of political control, and urged that military and civilian authorities work together on the negotiations. He was most concerned about who would control nuclear weapons in Canada; he could accept NATO control in Europe, but did not support NORAD control in North America. The NORAD commander was an American, and he refused to see the Canadians in a subordinate position. However, this was not a firm stand. If nothing else was possible, Léger was willing to concede NORAD control, but he insisted that there be joint control over the use of the weapons. Joint control was the minimum requirement for an agreement as far as he was concerned.⁶¹ Léger's comments to Foulkes outlined the department's fundamental concern: control. This concern was

⁵⁹ Jules Léger [JMB] to Norman Robertson, c.c. Charles Ritchie, 17 April 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.1 Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1957-1958.

⁶⁰ See Granatstein, A Man of Influence, 336-338. Granatstein cites Robertson's growing opposition to nuclear weapons from late 1958 to early 1959, definitely in full force by the time Green became minister in June 1959.

⁶¹ Léger to Charles Foulkes, 7 October 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.2 Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1957-1958.

repeated time and again over the course of the negotiations between the two countries. But Léger's note of caution regarding joint negotiations was also a consideration as the military was only too willing to rush ahead of the civilians in their negotiations for nuclear weapons.

Deliberations within the government culminated on October 15 when cabinet agreed to allow negotiations with the Americans for nuclear weapons. There were three conditions:

- a) that a minimum of other persons be informed of them;
- b) that as much freedom as possible be obtained for Canadian use of these weapons; and,
- c) that every effort be made to ensure that the Canadian government or its designated representatives would also have to authorize the use of these weapons in or over Canada by American as well as by Canadian forces.⁶²

Control was the only point of discussion.⁶³ No one questioned the merits of nuclear stockpiles in Canada. As Fleming recalled, "no final conclusion was reached on the storage of defensive nuclear weapons in Canada, but only details remained to be discussed."⁶⁴

Fleming's statement missed the nuance of cabinet's decision. It might have appeared that the government was ready to embark on a nuclear role in NATO and NORAD without second thoughts, but the cabinet record was a bit more tentative:

The minister recommended that agreement in principle be given to investigate with the U.S. authorities, SACEUR, and Commander-in-Chief NORAD, the possibilities of negotiating agreements for the

⁶² Cabinet Conclusions, 15 October 1958, Paragraph 35.

⁶³ Note that Green attended this meeting of Cabinet on 15 October 1958.

⁶⁴ Donald Fleming, So Very Near, Volume Two, (Toronto, 1985), 18.

disposition of nuclear warheads as he had outlined. If agreements were ultimately negotiated, they would be submitted to cabinet for final approval.⁶⁵

With words like "investigate" and "possibilities" nuclear weapons were not a foregone conclusion. However, even if one could not automatically assume that the Diefenbaker government was about to accept nuclear weapons for Canadian forces, it seemed more likely than not. Moreover, the cabinet conclusion did little to prevent some ministers from believing that a nuclear role was only a matter of time.

Possible reservations aside, the three cabinet conditions guided the debate within the civil service and the government. External Affairs responded to the decision by outlining where its opinions differed with those of National Defence, again emphasising the importance of political control. The department hoped joint control would allow Canadian officials to dampen American enthusiasm should there come a time when U.S. officials considered using nuclear weapons. There was also Diefenbaker's concern about public opinion. If Canadian officials had to be consulted before use, this would likely make nuclear weapons more acceptable to the electorate.⁶⁶

While External Affairs considered the political acceptability of nuclear weapons, National Defence questioned the military viability of Canadian custody and control. Defence officials argued that time did not permit the luxury of sovereignty. In their view, the formula that was likely to apply to NATO should apply

⁶⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 15 October 1958, Paragraph 33.

⁶⁶ Memorandum for File, "Acquisition and Storage of Defensive Nuclear Weapons and Warheads," 17 October 1958, Attachment: McCardle Memorandum for Minister, 15 October 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

to NORAD. This posed problems as the NATO talks had stalled by the end of 1958, in large part because the French had demanded greater national control over nuclear warheads stationed in France. The differences between the two departments represented "the classic dilemma" of nuclear weapons, one that Diefenbaker noted carefully: national security versus national sovereignty.⁶⁷

External Affairs suggested a strategy of delay. This would give the department time to devise its own plan for control, in an effort to stave off criticism from National Defence. This was the first priority. It did not mean that military officials should not begin discussions with their American counterparts. It did mean that they should wait until the NATO talks were resolved before anything was finalised. The department also considered the implications for SAC nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. While the military urged separate discussions and agreements to govern different situations, External Affairs suggested a general agreement that had sufficient breadth to encompass both strategic and tactical weapons.⁶⁸

External Affairs officials began to work on their own proposal to deal with the matter of control, although the new undersecretary, Norman Robertson, seemed reluctant to accept that Canada required nuclear weapons.⁶⁹ NATO was particularly

⁶⁷ Memorandum for File, "Acquisition and Storage of Defensive Nuclear Weapons and Warheads," 17 October 1958, *Ibid.* This passage is highlighted by Diefenbaker in the margin of the memo.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Diefenbaker also highlighted this passage in the margin of the memorandum.

⁶⁹ Robertson to Chairman, Chiefs of Staff and Secretary to the Cabinet, "Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons," 20 October 1958, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File 8.2: Nuclear Weapons 1957-1958. Given Robertson's opposition to nuclear weapons, it is ironic that Cabinet approved his appointment

germane, and a survey of the British, French, and Italian positions offered guidance to Canadian officials. In Britain, the Americans provided nuclear warheads, but missiles could not be launched without a joint decision by the two governments. This was political control, if not necessarily "practical control." France was an entirely different situation, with the French demanding control of both launching mechanisms and warheads stored on their territory. The proposals to deal with this situation were elaborate and not likely to lead to an agreement any time soon. The Italian situation was akin to that of Britain and the other NATO nations (aside from France) in that a joint decision was required before nuclear weapons could be launched from Italian soil. A significant difference between the British and Italian situations was that the former were on the verge of building their own bombs, whereas the Italians had no such prospects.⁷⁰

By the first week in November, External Affairs finally had its own proposal to govern control. The department now agreed with National Defence that a veto would be pointless, despite Smith's suggestion to the contrary. An attack on North America would activate NORAD, and an emergency situation would make a veto moot.⁷¹ Given this scenario, fighting for a veto hardly seemed worth the effort. Foregoing a veto might have made practical sense, but it posed potential problems in terms of public opinion. External Affairs anticipated this, and urged Diefenbaker

as undersecretary of external affairs the very day it decided to undertake formal negotiations with the United States to acquire nuclear weapons. Cabinet Conclusions, 15 October 1958.

⁷⁰ DL (1) Division for File, "Control of Nuclear Weapons," 7 November 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

to be forthright with the Canadian people about the situation. However, there seemed to be no way around the fact that ultimate control rested with the president not the prime minister or even Parliament. Despite this possible difficulty, the department did not expect any political harm to befall the government. Canadians had accepted continental air defence with NORAD, and the department's nuclear proposal seemed to be a logical extension. Nuclear weapons were like any other weapon controlled by NORAD and its command.⁷²

• * * *

As Christmas 1958 approached, Diefenbaker faced difficult decisions about Canada's defence policy. While the prime minister toured the Commonwealth in late 1958, cabinet discussed the coming exploratory talks with the Americans. Despite the efforts of External Affairs, there was no formal Canadian proposal for custody and control, and this was problematic. Regardless, Pearkes argued that the real issue was whether Canadian forces should be properly equipped for their obligations. He also realised that the president, according to American law, was the final arbiter of use when it came to nuclear weapons. Much like the veto, it seemed like a waste of time to demand joint control and custody.⁷³ Although the cabinet discussion on nuclear weapons was brief, there were signs of some concern. One minister commented on the apparent futility of the debate: "whatever the government decided would be criticised. A good many Canadians would not want the weapons stored here for use by Canadian or U.S. forces under any

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Cabinet Conclusions, 9 December 1958, Paragraph 5.

circumstances."⁷⁴ Despite its lack of enthusiasm for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, cabinet approved the defence minister's proposal to undertake discussions with the Americans at the Canada-United States Ministerial Committee in Paris.⁷⁵ Pearkes went to Paris to discuss stockpiling nuclear weapons with the Americans, and each side agreed to re-draft the agreement on acquisition.⁷⁶

During this time cabinet also contemplated whether Diefenbaker should announce that negotiations were underway with the Americans, as well as how the talks might influence the government's support for disarmament. The two seemed to present a contradiction in policy. In fact, it was the informal beginning of a two pronged approach to nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker preferred disarmament, but doubted the potential for an agreement. It was unlikely that the Soviets would support a western disarmament proposal, and the government's decision to enter negotiations with the Americans was a means of maintaining Canadian security in the inevitability that the disarmament talks broke down. The Americans were willing to accept this strategy, and did not seem to be in any hurry to secure an agreement; it was sufficient that talks were underway.⁷⁷ On the Canadian side, it was important that the Americans were willing to enter into a defence production sharing agreement to offset the exorbitant cost of these modern weapons.⁷⁸ With that,

⁷⁴ Ibid., Paragraph 6(f).

⁷⁵ Ibid., Paragraph 7.

⁷⁶ Robertson to Minister (in Cabinet), "Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons," 22 December 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

⁷⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 22 December 1958, Paragraph 42.

cabinet agreed the government would make a statement early in the new year outlining the talks on acquisition and nuclear stockpiling in Canada.⁷⁹

Early in the new year turned out to be late February. On February 20, 1959 Diefenbaker announced his government's intent to pursue an agreement with the United States for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. But this statement was overshadowed by the prime minister's other announcement, that the Avro Arrow had been cancelled. Diefenbaker's statement in the Commons was the culmination of six months of deliberation on the fate of the CF-105. In mid-August, the CDC had recommended its termination.⁸⁰ As estimated costs climbed to \$2 billion, the Arrow's expense was a primary factor behind this decision. There was no hope of selling the interceptor abroad, and thus no possible way to off-set the rising costs.⁸¹ There were also nagging concerns about the Arrow's relevance. With *Sputnik*, it seemed to be just a matter of time before the world was dominated by missiles rather than bombers. Many feared that the Arrow interceptor would be obsolete within a few years given the rapidly changing technology.⁸² Furthermore, the Arrow might have been a technical innovation, but it was also replaceable, as Defence Staff were more than happy to accept the Bomarc as a substitute.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Paragraphs 44-46.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 50.

⁸⁰ CDC Minutes, 15 and 21 August 1958.

⁸¹ Cabinet Conclusions, 28 August 1958, Paragraphs 14-16.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Paragraph 15.

Discussion about the Arrow rarely focused on defence policy, with the exception of occasional references to the pace at which Soviet strategy might change.⁸³ Although the Bomarc might be a suitable replacement for the Arrow, it could not provide the same number of Canadian jobs as the CF-105 had. This was a major factor in the decision to delay cancellation. Just as important was the finance minister's assessment that keeping the Arrow would require a tax increase for Canadians.⁸⁴

Diefenbaker knew, as did the rest of the cabinet, that the project made little financial sense. He also knew that the Arrow was going to be obsolete, most likely by the time it was produced. There was simply no point to continuing the project. But the prospect of enormous job losses in the Toronto area, an area that was important to the Tories, was a concern. As Fleming remarked, "There was no time that was the right time for a decision like this one...it would be better to cancel now than be faced with a final shut down of the plants three or four years hence."⁸⁵ Hundreds of millions of dollars would have been wasted by 1962 or 1963, just as a federal election was looming. Although the Arrow's economic feasibility was the government's primary concern, political liability was a close second. Ultimately, the government hoped, "the Canadian public would give credit to the government in the

⁸³ Some questioned whether it was wise to abandon an interceptor when it was unlikely that the Soviets would move to a defence strategy that involved only missiles.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 16.

⁸⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 7 September 1958, Paragraph 44.

long run for good housekeeping and it appeared that on defence and on sound economic grounds it was good housekeeping to discontinue the programme now."⁸⁶

Bryce agreed with the decision to cancel the Arrow, and offered his own advice as far as the politics of termination were concerned. If the Canadians agreed to purchase some aircraft from the United States, this might put them in a better position to ask for concessions from the Americans in terms of defence production. Most important, though, was the issue of timing. Bryce encouraged the prime minister to contextualise the decision to cancel the Arrow:

I think it should help in putting across this difficult decision to the public and perhaps help somewhat in deterring the Russians, if we could announce at the same time our decision to make arrangements to use nuclear defensive weapons in Canada, though not to produce them.⁸⁷

This point calls into question the assertion that the Bomarc's nuclear capacity was lost in the Arrow debate. Bryce was aware of it, made sure that Diefenbaker was equally informed, and even viewed it as an asset when it came to announcing the cancellation of the CF-105. By the end of 1958 everyone knew that the Arrow would be cancelled, even though a formal decision had not yet been made. In late December the defence minister remarked to cabinet that he understood that development of the Arrow would end by late March 1959; no one disagreed with his assessment.⁸⁸ By the end of February, Diefenbaker could wait no longer to announce the end of the Arrow.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 45.

⁸⁷ Bryce to Diefenbaker, "The 105 Problem," 5 September 1958, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

Diefenbaker's statement on February 20 also satisfied the pledge he made to cabinet to announce the government's nuclear talks with the Eisenhower administration. The prime minister's statement on nuclear weapons is worth noting in full because of his repeated reference to it. He stated,

The full potential of these defensive weapons is achieved only when they are armed with nuclear warheads. The government is, therefore, examining with the United States government questions connected with the acquisition of nuclear warheads for Bomarc and other defensive weapons for use by the Canadian forces in Canada, and the storage of warheads in Canada. Problems connected with the arming of the Canadian brigade in Europe with short range nuclear weapons for NATO's defence tasks are also being studied.

We are confident that we shall be able to reach formal agreement with the United States on appropriate means to serve the common objective. *It will of course be some time before these weapons will be available for use by Canadian forces.* The government, as soon as it is in a position to do so, will inform the House, within the limits of security, of the general terms of understanding which are reached between the two governments on this subject.⁸⁸

Diefenbaker softened his stance by emphasising that Canada would not produce nuclear weapons, but "we must reluctantly admit the need in present circumstances for nuclear weapons of a defensive character."⁸⁹

The Globe and Mail headline after the Arrow's cancellation read, "Drop Arrow; 13,800 idle." A secondary headline noted the decision's real importance, "Canadians to Get Nuclear Weapons."⁹¹ The announcement inspired volumes of mail from Canadians opposed to the cancellation. Yet most were concerned about

⁸⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 22 December 1958, Paragraphs 25-26.

⁸⁹ House of Commons, Debates, 20 February 1959, 1223. Italics added for emphasis.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Globe and Mail, 21 February 1959.

the economic consequences of the Arrow's termination, not the possibility of nuclear weapons in Canada.⁹² However, there was a small portion of the correspondence that recognised Diefenbaker's announcement for what it was: an explicit statement of nuclear intent. This small percentage of the prime minister's mail had an importance that far outweighed its numbers. Organised efforts to promote a nuclear-free Canada did not yet exist, but Diefenbaker realised that anti-Bomarc letters like those from David Gauthier at the University of Toronto marked the beginning of a new headache. This was the beginning of the first efforts to organise Canadians to oppose nuclear weapons. Although the decision to move forward with the Bomarc was made in September 1958, it was the Arrow's cancellation in February 1959 that drew Canadians' attentions to the fact that the government was considering whether to acquire nuclear weapons. Indeed, for many, it must have looked as if the government had already made its decision to proceed.

If Diefenbaker worried about the political consequences of acquisition in April 1958, after his government won a landslide majority, Gauthier's letter of March 10, almost a year later, only heightened these fears. Gauthier also included a petition circulated at the University of Toronto that indicated that the young lecturer in philosophy was not at alone in his views.⁹³ Newspapers took notice of Diefenbaker's announcement, and not just Canadian papers like the Globe and

⁹² Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 1, File: MG 01/XII/A/11 Avro Arrow - Letters, 1959. It should be noted that not all the mail received by Diefenbaker on this issue was negative; some Canadians applauded Diefenbaker's decision, agreeing with the government that the CF-105 was simply too expensive to produce for the Canadian Forces.

⁹³ Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 82, File: MG 01/XII/D/47 Defence Research - Atomic Research, Atomic Armament, 1959-61.

Mail. The New York Times printed a story on Canada's willingness to accept nuclear weapons on March 8.⁹⁴ External Affairs officials suggested that Diefenbaker respond to queries about the article by stating that it was not wrong so much as it was "inaccurate."⁹⁵ The government was advised to stress that the February 20 statement indicated that the government did not intend to acquire nuclear warheads in the immediate future, that the negotiations would be complicated, and that the government would provide information when it could.⁹⁶ It was neither a ringing endorsement nor an outright rejection of nuclear weapons, and left the government with room to manoeuvre.

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On St. Patrick's day, a mere week after the latest Arrow-related troubles, Sidney Smith died. Although Smith failed to meet the expectations of some, he was finally getting accustomed to his portfolio when he died.⁹⁷ Just as Diefenbaker and his cabinet were on the verge of a significant decision, one of the most important posts in the government fell vacant unexpectedly. The acquisition of nuclear weapons seemed likely at some point in the future, with only the details of an agreement outstanding. Diefenbaker filled the void temporarily, but while the prime

⁹⁴ Jack Raymond, "U.S., Canada Near Atom Arms Pact - Ottawa Will Have an Equal Vote on Use of Weapons Based in Dominion," New York Times, 8 March 1959, Lester B. Pearson Papers, Volume 114, File: National Defence - Nuclear Weapons Storage in Canada, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

⁹⁵ House of Commons, Debates, 10 March 1959, 1775.

⁹⁶ Douglas LePan (signed by Robertson) to the Minister, 10 March 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 104, File: MG 01/XII/F/100 Defence - Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons, n.d., 1959-1963.

⁹⁷ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 91. Delworth interview with author May 18, 1999.

minister was clearly intrigued by foreign affairs, he seemed to have little talent for the position. There was simply too much to learn in such a short period of time. Robinson noted, "it became necessary to consult with him on roughly ten times as many decisions as had been normal when Smith was in office,"⁹⁸ a reflection of the issues involved with the portfolio more than the prime minister's ineptitudes. After all, Diefenbaker had served as the foreign affairs critic in opposition. In the months between Smith's death in March and the appointment of his replacement, Howard Green, in June Canada's nuclear policy sharpened in focus. This period of transition is the subject of the following chapter.

⁹⁸ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 91.

Chapter Three: Howard Green and Defence Policy 1959-1960

Sidney Smith's death in March 1959 came as a shock to Diefenbaker and his government. His successor, Howard Green, was appointed in June shortly after the government agreed to begin formal negotiations with the United States to acquire nuclear weapons. More dove than hawk, Green was an unlikely candidate to lead Canada toward the nuclear club. Why, then, did Diefenbaker appoint him to such an important portfolio, at such a crucial moment? What was his influence on nuclear policy? These questions are important to this chapter which examines a critical period, from the spring of 1959 to the autumn of 1960, in the formulation of Canada's nuclear policy.

Diefenbaker continued to worry about public opposition to nuclear weapons as well as the Liberal party's nuclear policy. Diefenbaker had been criticised for cancelling the Avro Arrow, and did not want to incur the wrath of voters on another defence issue. Although it was the right decision, terminating the Arrow was difficult politically in light of its potential economic impact. The loss of 14,000 jobs in a vote-rich area like Toronto is as significant today as it was some forty years ago. The prime minister was also concerned about Pearson and the position he might take on nuclear weapons. Pearson opposed Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons, and Diefenbaker continued to fear that his moral authority on the subject would convince Canadians to reject them as well. These concerns were not new, but Diefenbaker remained preoccupied with both through 1959 and 1960 despite his parliamentary majority.

The international situation and the pace of technological change gave Diefenbaker room to manoeuvre. Although Khrushchev continued to threaten western interests in Berlin, Soviet threats in West Germany were not new, and nothing indicated that outright war was imminent. As well, in the midst of the shift from manned bombers to ICBMs no one could be certain how long it would take for the Soviets to change their weapons systems. It seemed unlikely that the Soviets would abandon manned bombers altogether, meaning that the threat to North America was a mixed one for the time being. There was no pressing international crisis that demanded an immediate decision on nuclear weapons and thus no need to make a decision that was bound to upset at least some Canadians.¹

Critics have argued that Diefenbaker's greatest weakness as a leader was his indecisiveness and point to the nuclear debate to illustrate this flaw.² But to label Diefenbaker as indecisive explains nothing. More helpful is an effort to explain why Diefenbaker behaved as he did. The prime minister was not indecisive as much as he was a poor strategist. He knew that procrastination had served William Lyon Mackenzie King well and hoped he could use the same kind of strategy of delay to his own advantage.³ While King might have been a sound

¹ Minister of National Defence to the Prime Minister, 6 January 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/VI/R/95.

² Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 102.

³ See comment from Richard Bell about Diefenbaker's use of King as a role model, Smith, Rogue Tory, 285. Historians generally applaud William Lyon Mackenzie King's ability to delay an contentious decision until it was absolutely necessary. For instance, King did everything possible to avoid conscription until 1944. It was then evident that he had tried everything possible to avoid enacting such an unpopular policy, convincing many Canadians (not just Francophones) that he had tried everything to avoid implementing such a controversial measure. As a result, many regard King as a thoughtful yet pragmatic politician, who put his country before his own political interests.

political role-model, the situation with nuclear weapons was entirely different from conscription. There was no evidence to suggest that nuclear weapons threatened national unity as conscription did; there was, however, growing evidence that they, like conscription in both world wars, might prove to undermine political support. Diefenbaker thought a strategy of 'not necessarily nuclear weapons, but nuclear weapons if necessary' might persuade Canadians who opposed nuclear acquisition that he had no other option to safeguard national security. Disarmament was the preference but not entirely realistic in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Promoting disarmament as a first option, with nuclear acquisition as a fail-safe, seemed like a sensible plan. Delay was a political calculation, not a matter of outright indecision.

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In the spring of 1959 cabinet approved initial talks with the Americans for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Members agreed to use the existing Anglo-American agreement as a model. The agreement formed only the basis for talks as there were two key differences between the circumstances in Canada and Britain. Canada was not entitled to "classified information concerning atomic weapons" because, unlike the British, the government did not intend to produce or develop nuclear weapons. There was also no provision for Canada to acquire "a complete submarine nuclear propulsion plant, together with spare parts and the fuel elements required to operate this plant."⁴ Aside from these two points, the Canadian-

⁴ Robertson to the Prime Minister, "Draft Bilateral Agreement with the United States on Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Military Defence Purposes," 22 April 1959, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.8 Nuclear Policy 1959. Noted in Bryce's handwriting across the top of this document is "Looks OK we better get ahead with it. B." and "approved by PM file PCO RBB 29/4."

American agreement would be the same as the one between Britain and the U.S., whether it involved "classification policies," "responsibility for the use of information, material, equipment and devices, conditions and guarantees," "patents," or "definitions."⁵

The cabinet defence committee authorised these negotiations on April 22, and cabinet followed a few weeks later.⁶ Diefenbaker chaired the cabinet meeting that approved negotiations. Green had not yet been appointed to his new portfolio, but attended the meeting just the same. No discussion accompanied approval of the talks, and the only record was brief:

The cabinet agreed that the Canadian ambassador in Washington be authorised to sign the agreement negotiated with the United States for co-operation on the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes.⁷

Words to this effect were telegraphed to the Canadian Embassy in Washington, and Diefenbaker signed the ambassador's official note authorising the talks on May 22.⁸ This concluded more than six months of deliberation on the subject, and indicated that Diefenbaker and his government did far more than consider the acquisition of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. As Robinson noted, "the questions for

⁵ Author unknown, "Comparison of United States-United Kingdom Agreement with Proposed Canadian Agreement," n.d., Ibid.

⁶ CDC Minutes, 22 April 1959, Paragraphs 1-4, Ibid.

⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 13 May 1959, Paragraph 9, Order in Council 1959-578.

⁸ Robertson to the Prime Minister, "Instrument of Full Power to sign Canada-USA Agreement on the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes," May 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7811, File: Mg 01/VI/154 Defence Research - Atomic Research, 1957-1963.

discussion with the Americans and the NATO authorities in 1958 and 1959 had mostly to do with the how and the when rather than with the whether or the why."⁹

This was the status of nuclear policy when Green became secretary of state for external affairs at the beginning of June. Unlike his predecessor, Green had experience in both Parliament and cabinet. First elected to the House of Commons in 1935 representing Vancouver South (later Vancouver Quadra), Green had spent even longer on the opposition benches than Diefenbaker. Although he had not supported Diefenbaker in his various attempts to win the party's leadership, he was still a close and trusted colleague. Diefenbaker wrote fondly of Green in his memoirs, which was not how he treated most of his cabinet ministers.¹⁰ The two shared a desk in the House of Commons, and in Diefenbaker's absence, Green often served as acting prime minister. In terms of cabinet experience, Green was appointed minister of public works in 1957, as well as acting minister of defence production until the majority in 1958, when Raymond O'Hurley succeeded him. As a result, not only did Green have cabinet experience, but he was a member of cabinet when major decisions were made about nuclear policy, present at most of the meetings in which these decisions were made.

Green's greatest attributes were his political experience and close relationship with the prime minister. But there were also some major problems with his appointment. Green knew very little about international relations. Born in 1895,

⁹ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 107.

¹⁰ John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: The Years of Achievement 1957 to 1962, Volume 2, (Toronto, 1976), 123.

Green had served in England and France during the First World War. He did not leave North America again until he was appointed minister of external affairs.

Green did not have a broad view of the world, though his perception of Canada was more expansive. Born and raised in British Columbia, Green had spent time in central Canada, receiving his Bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto in 1915, and his law degree from Osgoode Hall after the War.

Diefenbaker's confidence in Green was apparent to the Department of External Affairs, and meant that the relationship between the department and the prime minister was better than under Smith. Green had immediate access to the prime minister, and they met frequently to discuss matters, a privilege reserved for only a few cabinet members. Robinson captured the hope the appointment inspired within the department: "Green's appointment opened up opportunities of influence which had simply not existed since Pearson's departure two years before."¹¹ He might have offered access to the prime minister that the department had not had since the days of Pearson and St. Laurent, but this was where the similarities ended. His was a naive view of Canada's role in the world, its responsibilities, and obligations.¹² He seemed overwhelmed in his new position, and his regular (and lengthy) letters to his mother indicate that he was somewhat star-struck.¹³

¹¹ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 98.

¹² Dr. Maxwell Yalden recalls meetings in which Green would read various U.N. disarmament resolutions out loud and ask, "what's wrong with that?" External Affairs officials then had to explain to the minister that as a member of NATO and NORAD, it was impossible for Canada to promote a neutral position in terms of western defence. Maxwell Yalden interview with author April 13, 1999.

¹³ Howard Green Papers, Volume 18, MSS 1060, Vancouver Municipal Archives.

Green's arrival at the Department of External Affairs coincided with the undersecretary's growing discomfort that Canada might play a nuclear role in Europe and North America. Robertson was increasingly concerned about the prospects of Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. He worried about nuclear proliferation and believed that Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons would only add to the problem. In this regard, he found an unexpected ally in Green. There had been nothing to suggest that Green would become an active proponent of disarmament. And while Diefenbaker did not know about Green's changing views on nuclear weapons,¹⁴ Robertson made his feelings on the subject clear to the prime minister. Prior to Green's appointment the undersecretary had sent to Diefenbaker a copy of an article in which the author argued the futility of nuclear weapons and the merits of unilateral nuclear disarmament in conjunction with increased conventional preparedness on the part of the Western alliance.¹⁵ Diefenbaker read the article and disagreed with it.¹⁶ Nonetheless, he was fully apprised of Robertson's view on the subject.

If Robertson was increasingly opposed to nuclear weapons in Canada, the views of the rest of the department are more difficult to assess. Robertson and his supporters were unwilling to allow their growing anti-nuclear bias to be reflected in

¹⁴ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 109.

¹⁵ Ibid., 108. The article was prepared by Christopher Hollis and appeared in The Spectator. Robertson to Diefenbaker, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File 8.8: Nuclear Policy, 1959.

¹⁶ Robertson did not have the prime minister's complete confidence. Robinson attributed this distrust to the fact that Norman Robertson denied Diefenbaker a diplomatic passport in 1945. Diefenbaker attended the UN's founding conference in San Francisco, and applied to the Department of External Affairs for a diplomatic passport. Robertson, at the request of Mackenzie King, refused Diefenbaker's request. Diefenbaker held quite a grudge. Ibid., 101.

their briefing materials.¹⁷ However, one member of the department remarked that most accepted that Canada had to acquire nuclear weapons, but also realised over time that the minister was a disarmament enthusiast, and that disarmament would take priority as long as he remained at External Affairs.¹⁸ Despite the divisions within External Affairs, as the debate over nuclear weapons grew, the positions of the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence grew more disparate and intransigent. Regardless, cabinet approved talks with the Americans for the acquisition of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. With this in mind, it is important to underscore that Canada's nuclear policy did not change in the days following Green's appointment.¹⁹

In mid-June, it was American policy that was the source of concern. Canadian officials feared that a change was imminent when Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 12 with a new "master plan" for air defence. Pearkes and others worried that the Americans were going to withdraw funding for the Bomarc system, reducing its prominence in North American defence. McElroy reassured Canadian officials that the "new American position regarding air defence would in no way affect the defence of the North American continent so far as Canada is concerned," and that

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fn 4, 107.

¹⁸ Yalden interview with author April 13, 1999.

¹⁹ Howard Green had little initial influence over nuclear policy. It took time for him to realise that Norman Robertson had similar misgivings about nuclear weapons, and memoranda written in this period, from the summer to late fall of 1959, do not reflect either individual's growing interest in disarmament. For instance, see Robertson to the Minister, "Re-Equipment of the Canadian Air Division," 2 July 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

"the Defense Department's plans embraced the deployment of Bomarc weapons systems on both coasts and across the northern perimeter of the United States and included the Canadian Bomarc sites as integral parts of the entire system."²⁰

Consultation was the key to why Canadian officials were so concerned about the possible change.²¹ It was at the heart of the issue. More than anything else, Canadian politicians feared the appearance of a nuclear diktat. This was linked to the repeated concerns about care and control. If Canadians did not control the release of weapons on their own territory then national sovereignty was in jeopardy. The Tories had accused the Liberals of having too close a relationship with the Americans and they could not afford to appear the same way. By mid-1959 the concern was not so much that Canada would have to accept nuclear weapons but the terms under which acquisition would occur. Canadian officials accepted that nuclear weapons were necessary, and concerns centred on details like care, control, and national sovereignty, not nuclear proliferation in principle.

One of the reasons for Green's initial silence on nuclear matters was a lack of knowledge. Green had a lot to learn about external affairs. Over the course of the summer he was briefed on a variety of subjects, including nuclear weapons within NATO and NORAD. For example, Léger penned an eighteen page review of NATO-related issues for the new minister which emphasised the growing debate on nuclear stockpiles within the alliance. He reiterated information already submitted

²⁰ Pearkes to the Prime Minister, 15 June 1959, ibid.

²¹ ibid.

to Green, focusing on the custodial issues related to the American offer of IRBMs to members of NATO. A problem with the arrangement was that custodial rights remained with the United States; in the event of an emergency, the weapons would be released to the appropriate NATO commander, not to the local (i.e. national) government or the national forces directly. The same provisions applied to tactical nuclear weapons. Given the repeated emphasis on the importance of care and control, there can be little doubt that the provision was problematic. Aside from these challenges, Léger reminded the minister that Canada still played an important role in NATO, and speculated that the Canadians might be able to help devise a means of control for nuclear weapons within the alliance.²²

Despite the political preference for a multilateral approach, Canadian officials had greater flexibility with NORAD than with NATO. This was apparent in the summer of 1959 as negotiations to secure nuclear weapons for Canadian forces continued with the United States. Progress was made to the point that Pearkes recommended to the CDC that it approve the American request to stockpile nuclear weapons at Goose Bay and Harmon Field for use of the USAF squadrons under NORAD command. It was an approval in principle only, as the details were yet to be determined.²³ The CDC agreed with the minister and approved the recommendations on August 4, with a concluding note of caution that "United States authorities should be informed of the need for avoiding publicity on the matter at the

²² Léger to the Minister, 15 July 1959, *ibid.*

²³ Pearkes to CDC, "Storage of Defensive Nuclear Weapons at Bases in Labrador and Newfoundland for the use of United States Air Force Squadrons," 24 July 1959, *ibid.*

present time."²⁴ When he had announced the negotiations to Parliament in February, Diefenbaker promised to keep the House informed of progress. But by mid-1959 he was more concerned about maintaining secrecy than notifying Parliament.

The negotiations quickly ran into trouble as a result of another matter of joint defence. At the end of August, cabinet learned about the American air defence exercise code-named "Sky Hawk." The exercise, scheduled for October 4, was to test NORAD's abilities to respond to a Soviet attack on North America. But before it could test NORAD's defences, Sky Hawk needed to win the approval of the Canadian cabinet, which was greatly concerned about the exercise. There were questions about timing (coming as it did on the heels of Khrushchev's visit to the U.S.), the need to ground Canadian civilian air traffic for six hours, and, most importantly, consultation. Cabinet concluded that it was not an "appropriate time" for such a display of force.²⁵

Diefenbaker's reaction to the Sky Hawk incident illustrated several recurring concerns. Consultation was again at the forefront. The exercise did not appear on the cabinet agenda until August 26. Pearkes first discussed the exercise with American officials in early August, but military authorities had been talking about it since May.²⁶ At the meeting in late August, Pearkes presented the proposal, one he thought was reasonable. Diefenbaker disagreed. The lack of consultation was

²⁴ CDC Minutes, 125th Meeting, 4 August 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 26 August 1959, Paragraphs 9-12.

²⁶ Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967*, 110.

what likely bothered him most. It was not the exercise itself but the manner in which U.S. military officials went about planning it. One can only imagine the testiness in the prime minister's voice as he asked how a "major air defence exercise involving the grounding of civil aircraft had been approved without a cabinet decision."²⁷ Pearkes could not provide a satisfactory answer, and the general impression was that the military, both Canadian and American, planned the exercise without bothering to consult with their civilian masters.²⁸ The following day cabinet approved a draft memorandum to be sent to the U.S. government rejecting the proposed exercise.²⁹ The Americans formally cancelled the exercise two weeks later on September 15.

Nuclear proponents were not helped by the fact that nuclear weapons followed the Sky Hawk debacle on the agenda at the August 26 cabinet meeting. Pearkes recommended that cabinet permit the USAF to store nuclear weapons at Goose Bay and Harmon Field, just as the CDC had proposed at the beginning of the month. He stressed the importance of joint control; storage facilities and

²⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 26 August 1959, Paragraph 9.

²⁸ This is Granatstein's interpretation. Canada 1957-1967, 110-111. One cabinet member noted during the discussion that followed Pearkes' proposal that External Affairs officials found out about Sky Hawk through the Canadian Embassy in Washington, and that even Eisenhower had only recently been informed of the exercise. Cabinet Conclusions, 26 August 1959, Paragraph 11.

²⁹ Ibid., 27 August 1959, Paragraphs 3-5. Discussions on Sky Hawk continued in cabinet until September 11. American Ambassador Richard Wigglesworth met with Diefenbaker to discuss the matter, but the prime minister refused to re-consider the decision. Eisenhower then sent a note to Diefenbaker asking that Canada agree to the request. Again, Diefenbaker refused, citing the particularly unusual circumstances of grounding civilian flights during the period. Diefenbaker seemed to indicate that the removal of this condition would secure Canadian support for the exercise. Frustrated, the Americans ultimately gave up. An overriding fear, it would seem, was that the exercise would call public attention to the subject of defence and the Soviet threat, something which Diefenbaker hoped could be down-played during the period of declining East-West tensions during the early autumn of 1959.

security would be American responsibility, but removal from storage and use would be subject to joint approval. And while American officials were not enthusiastic about joint approval for removal, permission was already required for American nuclear flights over Canada. Joint approval for removal and use, in this light, did not seem to pose much of an obstacle. Ultimately, cabinet concluded that the ministers of national defence and external affairs should work together to prepare a draft agreement taking issues of joint responsibility into account.³⁰ Given the lack of consultation on Sky Hawk, there is little wonder that cabinet was so concerned about joint responsibility when it came to nuclear weapons. If American officials forgot to consult the Canadians about a defence exercise using Canadian forces, no one could be certain that consultation would precede the use of jointly held nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, nuclear weapons was not an issue of controversy at these meetings in mid-1959. Furthermore, though Green attended these meetings, no one rejected the idea of stockpiles or even expressed any concerns about nuclear weapons in principle. The only point of contention, and a mild one at that, involved security. Even then, Green was only concerned about joint security on Canadian bases; the Americans could be solely responsible for security on the bases they leased from Canada as far as he was concerned. Diefenbaker indicated his interest in the subject, but cabinet agreed to postpone a decision until the prime minister and minister of defence had the opportunity to discuss the matter in greater detail.³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 26 August 1959, Paragraphs 13-15.

³¹ Ibid., 11 September 1959, Paragraphs 24-27.

On September 22 cabinet approved the text of a Canadian proposal to allow nuclear weapons at Goose Bay and Harmon Field. Although Green did not attend, he had helped to prepare the note in conjunction with Pearkes and Diefenbaker.³² His views were well stated in August and September, at both CDC and cabinet meetings. The only reluctance Green ever expressed at this time involved care and control, not the merits of acquisition.³³ It is possible that Green promoted joint control knowing that this would impede negotiations with the Americans. However, it is also unlikely. Green was still learning about his portfolio in the early autumn of 1959. Furthermore, Green's papers indicate that he was willing to accept an agreement with the United States provided that Canadian officials were involved in whether and when nuclear weapons were released from Canadian territory.³⁴

In the fall of 1959 Green's views on nuclear weapons and disarmament were becoming more refined. He was influenced by his experience at the United Nations General Assembly, where he introduced a disarmament proposal, as well as the views of his wife, a scientist, who educated him about the perils of nuclear fallout.³⁵ This set the stage for the Canada-United States Cabinet Committee on Joint Defence meeting at Camp David in November. As officials prepared for the meeting, the complexities of storage were readily apparent. Alliance obligations

³² Ibid., 22 September 1959.

³³ See CDC Minutes, 4 August 1959 and Cabinet Conclusions, 26 August and 11 September 1959.

³⁴ Perhaps Green's persistent emphasis on joint custody and control was interpreted as outright opposition. Given his naiveté on matters of disarmament talks, it is entirely possible that Green really believed that disarmament was an option, and that if it proved to be impossible to secure some kind of agreement, nuclear weapons were acceptable. See Green Papers. Volume 18. Vancouver.

³⁵ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 111.

complicated the Canadian position. Under a continental defence arrangement, nuclear weapons could be acquired under a reasonably straightforward bilateral agreement that guaranteed joint control and custody of the warheads. Such an agreement would suffice for Goose Bay and Harmon Field. The North Atlantic alliance was different. The Americans had also asked to station weapons at Argentia, a U.S. Naval Base which American naval forces used under the control of the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic. As a base used in NATO operations, there were multilateral implications to consider. Nuclear warheads stationed in NATO could be classified as offensive rather than the defensive ones that were destined for Goose Bay and Harmon Field. Though Canadian officials were confident that an agreement could be reached to govern the storage of weapons at Argentia, there were also precedents to consider. The Canadians could not accept one arrangement for NORAD and another for NATO. The situation also posed difficulties for the Americans, who had the rest of the North Atlantic alliance to consider; if the Canadians received special consideration in NATO because of their position in NORAD, the European allies might demand the same treatment.³⁶ This fear of precedent was a major reason for the American refusal to allow a formal link between NORAD and NATO. Canadian proponents of nuclear weapons were

³⁶ Author unknown, "Storage of Nuclear Weapons in Canada," 29 October 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2 and Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy 1959.

For example, if the Canadians demanded joint control in North America, would the Germans or the French demand the same arrangement for Canadian NATO forces stationed on their territory? This problem was developed in greater detail in "Defence Questions for Discussions," *ibid.*

beginning to see that an agreement might not be as easy to negotiate as they once thought.

Briefing papers prepared for the November meeting highlighted the potential problems with Canada's nuclear policy. Successive drafts stressed the importance of the Canadian-American relationship, joint co-operation and consultation in matters of defence, as well as civilian control. They underscored Canadian opposition to nuclear proliferation, a position they shared with the Americans. Both, for instance, opposed the efforts of individual nations like France to produce their own nuclear weapons. The French situation was different from the Canadian. The Diefenbaker government wanted to acquire nuclear warheads in partnership with the Americans, they did not want to produce them or own them outright. There was no proliferation because no nuclear "secrets" were needed to allow joint control.³⁷ However, there was the potential for controversy and contradiction in the area of disarmament. A paragraph at the end of the briefing notes commented on Canada's role in disarmament talks. It focused on the consequences of the arms race, especially the "political and economic problems involved in sustaining a modern military programme indefinitely." But the reference to disarmament was also pragmatic and acknowledged the problems of trying to secure an agreement with the Soviets.³⁸ What briefing documents ignored was the potential difficulties

³⁷ Department of External Affairs, "Canada-United States Defence Questions," 22 October 1959, Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy 1959.

³⁸ Bryce, "Defence Questions for Discussions," 4 November 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2 and Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy, 1959.

Canada might face internationally in its disarmament efforts if the government were to accept nuclear weapons for its own forces.³⁹

The Bomarc missile was also omitted from the briefing documents. Nuclear negotiations in 1958 and 1959 had centred on whether Canada would allow SAC squadrons at Goose Bay and Harmon Field to have nuclear weapons.⁴⁰ They had little to do with nuclear warheads for the Bomarc anti-aircraft missile accepted in September 1958. Although there was an assumption that nuclear tips would be ordered to accompany the missiles, it was never stated formally. The briefing papers for Camp David revealed the first hint that this might be more complicated than initially anticipated. Final notes referred to the new possibility of intercontinental ballistic missiles, though officials concluded that the Americans were not interested in stationing ICBMs in Canada, at least not yet.⁴¹ The reference to ICBMs surprised Diefenbaker, who noted it in his copy of the briefing papers.⁴² While there was an enormous difference between an anti-aircraft nuclear missile like the Bomarc and an ICBM, the reference to intercontinental missiles must have made Diefenbaker wonder what else was being left to the last minute.

³⁹ This concern was noted in earlier documents on nuclear weapons. Nevertheless External Affairs officials recommended that the government allow nuclear weapons at Goose Bay. See Department of External Affairs, "Storage of Nuclear Weapons in Canada," 29 October 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2 and Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy 1959.

⁴⁰ The warhead in question was the MB-1.

⁴¹ Bryce, "Defence Questions for Discussions," 4 November 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2 and Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy, 1959.

⁴² Ibid.

Although cabinet discussion on the preparation for the Camp David meetings have been heavily censored for reasons of "national security,"⁴³ there is little that cannot be determined from the briefing papers provided by the Department of External Affairs. The department was willing to endorse the storage of nuclear weapons at Goose Bay and Harmon Field and there was no opposition expressed in cabinet. Diefenbaker's only concern was consultation, and this he took to be a shortcoming of the military (both Canadian and American), not the United States government.⁴⁴

There was also some disagreement over the potential for success in the area of disarmament talks. Diefenbaker did not expect much progress, while Green was more optimistic. He argued that prospects were good because everyone was "frightened over the future." He continued that NATO and General Norstad supported disarmament, as did Khrushchev and the Soviet Union. He even went so far as to argue that Canada "was in a good position to use [its] influence, which was what the U.K. hoped we would do, and make an important contribution. The only people who were being really intransigent were certain elements in the Pentagon."⁴⁵ This November exchange was the first expressed difference of opinion in cabinet

⁴³ There is extensive excising of the Cabinet Conclusions, 6 November 1959 resulting from s. 15(1) and s. 13(1)(a) of the Access to Information Act.

⁴⁴ Cabinet Conclusions, 6 November 1959, Paragraph 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Paragraph 3.

over the merits of disarmament.⁴⁶ In the end cabinet decided to wait until after Camp David to pass judgement on the prospects for disarmament.⁴⁷

The meeting of the Canada-United States Ministerial Committee on Joint Defence was an informative one. It provided an opportunity to air some grievances and determine the American position on a number of issues. Like Diefenbaker, American officials were not optimistic about the prospects of disarmament, though a general overview of Khrushchev's recent visit to the United States indicated that international tensions were on the decline.⁴⁸ Officials also discussed the cancelled Sky Hawk exercise and agreed to keep civilian authorities abreast of future plans for air defence exercises, scheduling another for sometime in 1960. A great deal of time was spent on the possibility of storing nuclear weapons in Canada, with attention to the differences between nuclear weapons in Europe and North America, as well as the distinction between Canadian bases and American bases on Canadian territory.⁴⁹ The draft note that had been sent to the Americans in early October outlining the Canadian position on Goose Bay and Harmon Field had been returned to officials just prior to the meeting at Camp David, which meant there had been insufficient time to prepare a detailed response for presentation. Regardless,

⁴⁶ Again, given the activities of censors, it is difficult to determine what was related to disarmament, but it was clearly something deemed a threat to national security.

⁴⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 6 November 1959, Paragraph 4.

⁴⁸ Khrushchev proposed to remove the deadline he had imposed to settle the situation in Berlin, and promised to use "only peaceful means to settle international disputes." This pledge to use peaceful means did not extend to Taiwan, which was a cause for concern given the recent problems over the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "Report on the Meeting of the Canada-United States Ministerial Committee on Joint Defence, 8-9 November 1959," Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy, 1959.

the Canadians had some concerns about the American proposal. The substitution of the word "custody" for "ownership" was problematic, as were modifications to the provisions governing joint responsibility for security and use. Canadian officials rejected even the most modest delegation of authority for use. As the Canadian chair argued, use of nuclear weapons was clearly a matter of "high policy" and should be subject to use only after consultation with the highest civilian authorities in both governments.⁵⁰

The Americans understood Canadian concerns, but they still had to find language that met the requirements of U.S. law while allowing NORAD to act quickly in the event of an emergency. They were genuinely puzzled by the concerns surrounding the use of "custody," and noted that prime minister Diefenbaker had said about as much in his February 20 statement to Parliament when he argued, "we consider that it is expedient that ownership and custody of the nuclear warheads should remain with the United States."⁵¹ Yet by November 1959, this no longer seemed to be the position of the Canadian government.

Minor disagreements aside, both governments left Camp David satisfied that language could be found to permit American weapons in Canada. There was never any doubt that nuclear weapons were destined for Canada. In cabinet, Pearkes summarised very clearly the conclusions of the meeting. Plain and simple, the Americans held out little hope for disarmament, despite Khrushchev's rhetoric. Disarmament was not even a remote possibility unless the West continued to

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

bolster its position with a strong deterrent.⁵² The minister also recounted the committee's conclusions on nuclear stockpiles. The government agreed in principle to store defensive nuclear weapons in Canada, but pointed out that the details of such an arrangement were yet to be determined and would take time. Pearkes assured cabinet that the Americans were so eager to store nuclear weapons at Goose Bay that the Canadian government could virtually dictate its own conditions.⁵³ This was an enormous over-statement.

The discussion that followed the minister's report was brief, centring on nuclear weapons and future air defence exercises. One minister pointed out that public reaction was opposed to the storage of nuclear weapons of any sort in Canada: "The publicity given to the statements made about storage of weapons in Canada had resulted in a immediate reaction and confirmed that Canadians did not welcome the prospect of these weapons being here at all."⁵⁴ Green was not present at this meeting, so at the very least, the minister of external affairs was not responsible for the comment. External Affairs officials were also lukewarm to the idea of nuclear weapons, but resigned themselves to the likelihood of stockpiles at Goose Bay and Harmon Field.⁵⁵ Although it is difficult to ascertain whether the

⁵² Cabinet Conclusions, 10 November 1959, Paragraph 7.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Paragraph 8.

⁵⁵ A Department memorandum, from the end of October, concluded, "After trying to weigh the balance of arguments for and against the approval of this request, we believe the government should give its approval to the storage of SAC weapons at Goose Bay, under appropriate conditions." See "Storage of Nuclear Weapons in Canada," 29 October 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2 and Robinson Papers, Volume 8, File: 8.10 Nuclear Policy 1959.

prime minister made the comment about public reaction, the discussions in late autumn 1959 resurrected many of Diefenbaker's old fears about nuclear weapons: public opposition and Pearson's position on the subject. It was clear that the public's acceptance of nuclear weapons remained a preoccupation for the prime minister.

* * * *

Lester Pearson had plenty of experience with disarmament and nuclear weapons. He had been ambassador to the United States during the Second World War when Canada was involved in the Manhattan Project that led to the first atomic bomb, though he learned of the bomb's existence with the rest of the world in August 1945. He was still in Washington when Igor Gouzenko broke the news to Mackenzie King's government that there was a Soviet espionage ring in Canada, bent on learning the secrets of the atomic bomb. As the Gouzenko matter progressed, becoming the subject of public scrutiny in February 1946, Pearson remained involved. By the time he became undersecretary of external affairs in September 1946, Canada had joined the first international effort to control nuclear weapons at the U.N. as a member of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. When Pearson moved from the diplomatic to the political world in 1948 to become the secretary of state for external affairs, Canada was still firmly entrenched in the world of disarmament and nuclear control. With this background, Pearson was more aware than most of the intricacies associated with nuclear

proliferation and disarmament. He supported efforts to control nuclear weapons, but did not believe the West could negotiate with the Soviets.⁵⁶

As Liberal leader, Pearson was best known for his experience abroad and statesman-like qualities. Yet external affairs and defence policy played only a minor role in the initial efforts to reinvigorate the Liberal party following its 1958 electoral defeat. These two policy areas began to take on greater prominence as the government's position on nuclear weapons grew more convoluted. Diefenbaker's concerns about Pearson's position on nuclear weapons was quickly confirmed by the Liberal leader's criticisms of the government's nuclear policy. That Pearson supported the American position in matters of western defence and deterrence did not necessarily mean that he thought Canada should acquire nuclear weapons from the U.S. By late 1959 Pearson opposed the government's nuclear policy regarding NORAD, NATO, and the Bomarc missile.

Just as the Department of External Affairs was concerned about custody and control, so was Pearson. He argued that if Canadian forces were to acquire nuclear warheads, they should have full custody and control of them. In this regard, nuclear warheads were weapons like any other. However, it was not a "narrow" interpretation of national sovereignty. As evidence, Pearson proposed that nuclear stockpiles in NATO be subject to collective rather than national control. Whether Canada should acquire nuclear weapons (and Pearson believed that Canada

⁵⁶ See Joseph Levitt, Pearson and Canada's Role in Nuclear Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations, 1945-1957, (Montreal-Kingston, 1993) for an overview of Canada's (with Pearson leading the way) involvement in U.N. disarmament conferences during the period preceding Pearson's leadership of the Liberal party.

should not accept them) was a separate issue from matters of custody and control as far as Pearson was concerned.⁵⁷

The Department of External Affairs opposed each of Pearson's criticisms. Officials noted that warheads under NORAD remained in American custody only until the president released them for use, at which time control was subject to joint co-operation according to the North American agreement. The logical extension of Pearson's proposal, they argued, was full Canadian custody and control, which would "set a dangerous precedent" if not in North American then in NATO because members would want the same arrangement. This was something the Americans (and the Canadians) opposed. National sovereignty was also threatened by Pearson's proposal. According to the government's plan, Canadian military personnel (not Americans on Canadian bases as officials determined would be the implication of Pearson's proposal) would fire nuclear weapons according to NORAD procedure. External Affairs regarded this as a much better guarantee of sovereignty than Pearson's plan.⁵⁸

Department officials were equally unhappy about Pearson's proposal for NATO, which they regarded as impractical. The Americans had insisted on their control of stockpiles in Europe and were unlikely to allow the Council to make the decision about whether to use American nuclear weapons. Furthermore, a Council decision required unanimous consent, limiting NATO's ability to respond

⁵⁷ Pearson, "Statement on Control and Ownership of Tactical and Defensive Nuclear Weapons," 27 January 1960, Pearson Papers, Volume 114, File: National Defence - Storage of Nuclear Weapons in Canada.

immediately to an emergency. While Pearson had argued that there should be no limits imposed on NATO's ability to respond to an unprovoked attack, the cumbersome procedure he proposed seemed to entail precisely the kind of constraint he wanted to avoid.⁵⁹

Finally, journalists and department officials took issue with Pearson's assessment that the Bomarc constituted lend-lease aid. The system had been accepted for the purposes of continental defence, and both countries shared the cost with one-third paid by the Canadians, and two-thirds paid by the Americans. This was the same formula as the Liberals had used to finance the Pinetree radar installations.⁶⁰ It certainly did not constitute lend-lease assistance.

Pearson's proposals illustrated the challenges posed by nuclear policy in the late 1950s and the Opposition's reluctance to pursue a defence policy based on consensus. By late 1959 the Department of External Affairs realised that nuclear policy was going to be a contentious topic in the coming months and braced itself for the onslaught of criticism. The Liberal party's nuclear policy gave Diefenbaker every justification to fear that Pearson would treat the government's pursuit of nuclear weapons as a political issue rather than as a matter of national security.

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⁵⁸ Robertson to the Minister, "Canadian Defence Policy - Position of the Leader of the Opposition," 2 December 1959, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Despite cabinet's increased interest in disarmament by the end of 1959, nuclear negotiations continued with the Americans,⁶¹ and Diefenbaker prepared to make a statement to Parliament outlining the talks at the beginning of 1960.⁶² Thus, while Diefenbaker was clearly concerned about Pearson's response, it was not yet an impediment to nuclear negotiations. And, in the House of Commons, the prime minister emphasised the government's focus on consultation and control:

I want to make it abundantly clear that nuclear weapons will not be used by the Canadian forces except as the Canadian government decides and in the manner approved by the Canadian government. Canada retains its full freedom of choice and decision.⁶³

The prime minister meant well, but his rhetoric missed the mark. Parkes had to clarify the statement, commenting that any nuclear weapons in Canada belonged to the United States until released for use, at which point Canadian forces would control "sole use and direction of use of those weapons."⁶⁴ This statement was not entirely correct either. The most that Canadian officials had asked for was shared care and control; sole Canadian care and control, even after a joint agreement to release and then use nuclear weapons, was out of the question. Parkes seemed to have changed the government's policy. And while officials were still optimistic

⁶¹ Cabinet Conclusions, 30 December 1959, Paragraphs 1-3.

⁶² Author unknown, "Nuclear Weapons for Canadian Forces," (Draft), 14 January 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 104, File: MG 01/XII/F/100.

⁶³ House of Commons, Debates, 18 January 1960, 73. A draft statement was much more forthright, noting "We hope that before many years have passed there will be a sufficient further relaxation of tensions, and sufficient progress made in disarmament, that it will not be necessary to keep these nuclear weapons on our bases. Until that time they will, when we complete the arrangements with the United States, strengthen our joint defences against aggression. "Nuclear Weapons for Canadian Forces," Ibid.

⁶⁴ House of Commons, Debates, 20 January 1960, 133.

about achieving an agreement, the negotiations were becoming more complicated. It now seemed likely that separate agreements would be required to govern each situation, whether it was NORAD, NATO, or the Bomarc missile, rather than the package proposed earlier.⁶⁵ Of the three, the Bomarc caused the most problems for the government in January 1960.

The Bomarc system was designed to accept either conventional or nuclear tipped missiles, and the government had purchased the latter. In early 1960 contracts for constructing the bases at North Bay and La Macaza were just being finalised. No one expected the Bomarc missile to arrive in Canada before mid-1961, and the missiles would not be operational until the following spring. Nuclear negotiations had so far been part of a long-range plan with every step taking time. For instance, the Bomarc bases had been accepted in September 1958, but there was no agreement in place to outline who paid for what until July 1959 when the Americans agreed to pay for the required "technical equipment" while the Canadians agreed to pay for the actual construction of the bases. Time had not been of the essence before when dealing with the Bomarc, and there was nothing to suggest that the pace of the proceedings had changed.⁶⁶

The Opposition clamoured for a defence review, and the Bomarc only added fuel to the fire. Although the government failed to appoint a special committee on defence as Pearson had requested, it did strike a special committee on defence

⁶⁵ Minister of National Defence to the Prime Minister, "Acquisition and Control of Atomic Weapons," 11 January 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 10, File: MG 01/XIV/D/26.2. and Volume 3, File: MG 01/VI/R/94.

expenditures. As the name suggests, the committee looked only at defence expenditures, not policy, and was not what Pearson had in mind. The defence minister attended most of the committee's 30 sessions, but there was no debate or detail about the future of Canadian defence policy.⁶⁷ Within this context the Bomarc became quite controversial. By February 1960 it had failed six test flights, and with each failure the media and opposition criticised the government's decision to acquire what seemed to be a flop.⁶⁸ Although the Bomarc finally met with success in mid-April, which Pearkes announced to Parliament, by late April Congress wanted to cancel funding for the missile system. This would have greatly alleviated Diefenbaker's nuclear problems, at least in North America.

In the spring of 1960 international tensions seemed to be waning as President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev planned to meet in Paris in mid-May. In the previous year, progress had been made toward a possible test ban agreement with a treaty prohibiting all but underground nuclear tests.⁶⁹ The Canadian government had great hopes for the coming summit, particularly in conjunction with the disarmament talks recently renewed in Geneva. With the Soviets back at the negotiating table, disarmament seemed tenable rather than naive.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Minister of National Defence to the Prime Minister, 6 January 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/VI/R/95.

⁶⁷ Richard Preston, Canada In World Affairs. Volume XI: 1959-1961, (Toronto, 1965), 51-55.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 57-59.

⁶⁹ Bundy, Danger and Survival, 333.

⁷⁰ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 131.

Diefenbaker was not as sanguine about disarmament as his minister of external affairs. He later enthused about Green's U.N. efforts to promote disarmament, but he did not share his minister's optimism at the time. In particular, Diefenbaker realised that the Soviets had an advantage in terms of public relations, a concern he noted to Robinson before a cabinet meeting in late January. He grew "depressed...when he saw the same old ideas and language being trotted out."⁷¹ The Western governments lacked anything new to offer to the debate, and in this he included his own Department of External Affairs. The western insistence on "adequate safeguards and controls" made for cumbersome negotiations, and made it impossible for the West to come out with some kind of sweeping statement on unilateral disarmament, a problem the Soviets did not face.⁷² As a result, despite the growing calm in international relations, Diefenbaker did not think that sentiment could be translated into tangible progress on the disarmament front.

"The Spirit of Camp David" and all hopes for a nuclear test ban treaty at the Paris summit ended when the Soviets shot down Gary Powers and his U-2 plane. The U-2 incident only added to tensions over Berlin. The incident was a public relations disaster for Eisenhower and the Americans, just as it was a triumph for Khrushchev and the Soviets. Not only did the Americans initially hesitate to explain the Powers mission, but the Soviets had Powers, who survived the crash, the wrecked U-2 plane, and film footage of the entire event. Though Eisenhower

⁷¹ Note for File: Disarmament, 25 January 1960, Robinson Papers, Volume 2, File 2.16: January 1960.

⁷² Ibid.

ultimately accepted responsibility for allowing the flight, Khrushchev responded by threatening to cancel the summit if the American president did not apologise. Eisenhower refused, and the Paris summit was over before it really began.⁷³

There were consequences to the U-2 affair, and Canada's nuclear policy felt them. With the summit cancelled and East-West tensions on the rise again for the foreseeable future, Congress had little choice but to reinstate funding for the Bomarc. This was crucial to Canada's acquisition of the system because, as Pearkes had noted a year earlier, if the Americans cancelled the Bomarc, Canada would have little choice but to do the same.⁷⁴ Ultimately, the U-2 affair kept the Bomarc missile alive and well.⁷⁵ Had Congress remained firm and cancelled the Bomarc, Diefenbaker would not have had to deal with the problems surrounding the missile sites in North Bay and La Macaza. But eliminating the Bomarc would not have solved Diefenbaker's nuclear problems altogether. Harmon Field, Goose Bay, Argentia, and Canadian forces in NATO all remained, as did the likelihood of a nuclear replacement for the Bomarc. At best, terminating the Bomarc would have

⁷³ For a detailed account of the U-2 incident, see Michael R. Beschloss, May-Day: Eisenhower, Khrushchev and the U-2 Affair, (New York, 1986).

⁷⁴ House of Commons, Debates, 8 June 1959.

⁷⁵ Eisenhower to Diefenbaker, 29 June 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 7, File: MG 01/XII/A/232 Diefenbaker Correspondence (VIP) to Eisenhower, 1957-1961.

Eisenhower wrote, "Dear John, I thought that you would like to know that the conferees appointed by the House of Representatives and the Senate to consider appropriations for the Defense budget have recommended the appropriation of \$244 million of the \$294 million which had been requested by the Executive Branch for the Bomarc-B missile program.

While this is, of course, not final since further legislative action must be taken, I hope that you will be as pleased as I was to know of this favorable development for the further improvement of continental defense. With warm regard, sincerely, Ike."

This note does not indicate any concern on Diefenbaker's part about the coming of the Bomarc missile, something which the prime minister would likely have noted to the president.

given Diefenbaker more time, not a solution to a growing problem. More difficult than the reinstatement of the Bomarc was the outpouring of concern that followed the U-2 incident, an outcry that led to the creation of an anti-nuclear pressure group called the Voice of Women, discussed in the next chapter.

In the wake of the U-2 affair, nuclear negotiations were no longer as important as they once were. In March, NATO had suspended nuclear talks pending the outcome of the summit. The same was true of negotiations between Canada and the United States. Nevertheless the Canadian government still agreed in principle to nuclear stockpiles at Goose Bay and Harmon Field for use by U.S. interceptors under NORAD. There was also still the possibility of storing larger weapons for use by SAC forces at Goose Bay.⁷⁶ When Diefenbaker met with Eisenhower in Washington in early June, nuclear issues were not at the forefront, and were raised only in private.⁷⁷ The prime minister stressed to the president that Canada could not accept nuclear weapons "unless we exercise joint control" like the British. Eisenhower did not encourage the prime minister, noting that a solution was unlikely to be found in the final months of his administration. Yet he was hopeful that a suitable arrangement could be found in the near future that did not promote nuclear proliferation in its efforts to satisfy Canadian concerns.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Robinson to the Prime Minister, "Conversation with Eisenhower," 2 June 1960, Robinson Papers, Volume 3, File: 3.8 June 1960.

⁷⁷ (As dictated by Bryce to Robinson) "Prime Minister's Visit to Washington: Matters Discussed, June 3, 1960," 7 June 1960 (Revised June 17, 1960), Robinson Papers, Volume 3, File: 3.8 June 1960.

⁷⁸ "Prime Minister's Conversation with President Eisenhower, June 3, 1960," 9 June 1960, ibid.

While formal talks had been suspended, cabinet continued to debate the merits of nuclear weapons that summer. No conclusion was reached. Diefenbaker reiterated the government's position in Parliament, emphasising that there had been negotiations but no agreement, and that the minimum requirement was joint control.⁷⁹ These statements did little to help clarify policy. While the prime minister asserted that his position was entirely consistent with his statements in February 1959 and January 1960, his comments in Parliament were not as clear as he claimed. Now he spoke of the difficulties imposed by U.S. law, especially that American ownership was mandated by the Atomic Energy Act. He also spoke more frequently in favour of disarmament efforts.⁸⁰ Soon, even the minister of defence appeared to be uncertain about the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Pearkes noted that the government had purchased systems that required nuclear weapons, "but the decision as to the acquisition of the nuclear warheads depends on circumstances which might develop sometime in the future."⁸¹ By mid-1960 it seemed that "when" had been replaced with "if" when it came to nuclear weapons in Canada.

By this time, aides had started to realise the importance Diefenbaker placed on correspondence from Canadians when it came to nuclear policy. It was this correspondence that was beginning to temper Diefenbaker's willingness to accept

⁷⁹ House of Commons, Debates, 22 June 1960, 5239. See also 4 July 1960, 5653.

⁸⁰ House of Commons, Debates, 14 July 1960, 6271-72. Robinson noted that at the beginning of July Diefenbaker asked Bryce and the Department of External Affairs to prepare a response to Pearson's criticisms for the House of Commons which could be used as a "holding statement." The end result was a statement that leaned slightly more toward disarmament (and Green's position) than before. This was not what Bryce had in mind. Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 144.

⁸¹ House of Commons, Debates, 4 August 1960, 7557.

nuclear weapons. In late July the influx was such that he asked the Department of External Affairs to draft a form letter that could be sent in response. As Robinson recalled, "His mood seemed genuinely puzzled as to the relative strength of the pro and anti-nuclear arguments. His reliance on views expressed in public correspondence, even crackpot letters, to quote a member of his staff, was 'phenomenal'."⁸²

Canadian officials made the prime minister's growing concerns about public opinion known to their American counterparts when the Permanent Joint Board on Defence met at Camp Gagetown, New Brunswick at the end of August. At the PJBD meeting, the American chair, Dr. John Hannah, urged the Canadians to accept the U.S. request to allow stockpiles at Goose Bay and Harmon Field. He also expressed some anxiety about further delays. D.L. Wilgress, the Canadian chair, responded by singling out the political problems that the prospect of nuclear weapons created. "The questions of storage of nuclear weapons in Canada for United States forces and of acquisition of nuclear weapons by Canadian forces," he emphasised, "had given rise to serious political problems for the Canadian government."⁸³ Wilgress promised to recount the importance of securing an agreement for USAF bases, but refused to provide a guarantee that an agreement would be forthcoming any time soon. Diefenbaker's preoccupation with public

⁸² Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. 144.

⁸³ Permanent Joint Board on Defence Canada-United States, "Journal of Discussions and Decisions for the Meeting Held at Camp Gagetown," August 1960, 9, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 2, File: MG 01/VI/R/47 104 Secret Defence - Permanent Joint Board.

opinion was beginning to have an impact on Canada's nuclear policy, a policy that just six months earlier had seemed so certain.

• * * *

Public support was not Diefenbaker's only concern when it came to nuclear weapons in mid-1960. The prime minister continued to worry about Pearson's attacks on government policy. And with good reason. Liberals hosted a "thinker's conference" at Kingston, Ontario, held from September 6 to 10. Modelled after Vincent Massey's Port Hope conference in 1933, it was not necessarily designed to introduce new ideas to the party, though organisers hoped to attract new members with the belief that they would help to reinvigorate the party.⁸⁴ The conference was not an official party event, but few regarded it as anything but a partisan affair.

Domestic issues dominated the conference,⁸⁵ and of the eleven papers presented only two involved foreign affairs.⁸⁶ Still, defence policy and nuclear issues were discussed as a result of the paper presented by James Eayrs of the University of Toronto entitled, "Defending the Realm: A National Security Policy for

⁸⁴ Kent pointed out that the electoral platform for the 1962 election was based on the 1958 leadership convention, not the Kingston Conference. T.W. Kent, A Public Purpose: an Experience of Liberal Opposition and Canadian Government, (Kingston & Montreal, 1988), 79.

⁸⁵ For example: Maurice Lamontagne, "Growth, Price Stability and the Problems of Unemployment;" Claude Morin, "Canadian Social Security: Problems and Perspectives;" William Mahoney, "The Aims of Organized Labour;" J. Wendell Macleod, "Basic Issues in Hospital and Medical Care Insurance;" W. Gibbins, "Prairie Grain Problems;" David L. MacFarlane, "Fair Shares for Agriculture;" A. Andras, "Some Comments on Unemployment Insurance;" Monteath Douglas, "Old Age Security;" Alan Jarvis, "The Environment;" Michael Barkway, "How Independent Can We Be?"; and André Laurendeau, "The Development of Canadian Values and Our Cultural Heritage." Kent Papers, Volume 6, Files: Study Conference on National Problems, Kingston, September 1960 (3) and (4).

⁸⁶ James Eayrs, "Defending the Realm: A National Security Policy for Canada in the 1960s" and Harry Johnson, "External Economic Relations." Both papers encouraged the Canadian government to work toward greater co-operation with the Americans, which went against the grain of the prevailing tone of anti-Americanism. See R.M. MacIntosh, "The Kingston Conference September 1960," 4 October 1960, ibid., File: Study Conference (1) Kingston 1960.

Canada in the 1960s." Eayrs' analysis was one of the more contentious papers presented at the conference. He proposed that Canada integrate its defence entirely with the United States, and advocated defensive nuclear weapons for Canadian forces both at home and abroad. He even urged that the Americans be allowed to decide the kind of missiles Canada should acquire and where they should be put. As for issues of control, he encouraged the government to continue its pursuit of an agreement for joint control. Eayrs was so convinced of the necessity of nuclear weapons that he preferred to allow full American control than to give up nuclear weapons altogether if an agreement could not be reached.⁸⁷

Eayrs also considered the "moral impact" of renouncing nuclear weapons, and criticised this approach in terms of government policy. While it was perfectly acceptable for individuals to reject the acquisition of nuclear weapons, it was irresponsible for a government to do the same. He disagreed with the view that the government's refusal to accept nuclear weapons would give Canadian officials the moral authority to lead the fight against nuclear proliferation. He argued,

It is highly unrealistic to forego the deterrent and defensive advantages of acquiring nuclear weapons in the expectation that atomic abnegation will help ward off the coming era of nuclear plenty. Such a policy, however praiseworthy its intention, will no more achieve its purpose than would an old-age pensioner, alone in a society of barrow-boys and speculators, who gives up sugar in his tea to help fight inflation.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ James Eayrs, "Defending the Realm" Kingston Conference. Ibid., File: Study Conference Kingston, 1960 (4). Many of the ideas presented at this conference appeared in Eayrs' later work, Northern Approaches: Canada and the Search for Peace, (Toronto, 1961).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Liberals had not supported this position in the past,⁸⁹ and did not change their views as a result of Eayrs' presentation. Opposition to nuclear weapons continued to be the position of the party and its leader.

* * * *

Through 1959, despite the appointment of Green and efforts of Robertson, Diefenbaker seemed firmly convinced of the merits of nuclear weapons for Canada's armed forces. Everything Diefenbaker said and did indicated as much. This position continued into 1960 when it began to undergo a slight modification with disarmament becoming, at least publicly, more prominent. Privately, Diefenbaker held out little hope for the current round of disarmament talks, something underscored by the U-2 affair. Despite the growing international tensions, Diefenbaker continued to believe that he had time; time to reach an agreement, not to make the decision. As far as most were concerned, the decision had already been made.

Throughout the period, Diefenbaker worried about the political consequences of defence policy. Pearson's opposition was a concern, but it did not convince him to refrain from nuclear negotiations. Nor did Green's growing enthusiasm for disarmament dissuade Diefenbaker from pursuing the acquisition of nuclear warheads. Rather, it was public opposition that made Diefenbaker reconsider his public statements on the subject.

⁸⁹ Paul Hellyer, the Liberal party's defence critic, spoke out against nuclear weapons in the House of Commons on 4 August 1960. Pearson did the same the following day. House of Commons, Debates, 4 August 1960, 7566-68, 7562 and 5 August 1960, 7606, 7610-11.

Eayrs' promotion of nuclear weapons at the Kingston Conference highlighted the growing division in Canada over nuclear weapons. The Liberal party rejected Eayrs' call to arms, but more Canadians than not agreed with the professor's suggestion. But Diefenbaker still worried about public opposition, and Pearson was a threat in this regard for two reasons. In addition to the Liberal leader's recognised talents in international affairs, Pearson personally opposed the acquisition of nuclear weapons and sympathised with the anti-nuclear movement. Pearson also offered Canadians opposed to nuclear weapons a viable alternative to the CCF (and later the New Democratic Party). The Kingston Conference resulted in a higher profile for the party and its leader, and was regarded as a huge success for the Liberals. It also meant that Diefenbaker had every reason to worry about Pearson and his party. And the prime minister's growing anti-nuclear correspondence indicated that nuclear weapons was a highly contentious issue, a vulnerability that could be exploited for political gain. It was this growing schism in public support that anti-nuclear activists worked to use to their advantage to convince the government to reject a nuclear role for Canada. The following chapter discusses the rise of the anti-nuclear movement in Canada from its origins in 1958 through 1960 when each of the three most prominent organisations had its foundations clearly laid.

Chapter Four: Origins of the Anti-Nuclear Movement in Canada, 1958-1960

The peace movement in Canada was not unique to the atomic age. In the late nineteenth century, the movement was comprised of religious groups and social reformers; Quakers, Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors on the one hand, suffragists and proponents of temperance on the other. Typically, peace was simply one of many pursuits for reform-minded individuals. Politically, the peace movement of Victorian and Edwardian Canada was progressive and evangelical; it was not yet socialist or leftward leaning. This chapter outlines briefly a history of the peace movement in Canada. Then, it discusses the rise of the Canadian anti-nuclear movement focusing on the three most important groups: the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Voice of Women. It also assesses how the peace movement made the transition from protest to pressure in its efforts to persuade the Diefenbaker government to forego nuclear weapons for Canada's armed forces. Finally, the chapter ends with an analysis of the similarities and differences among the three groups, as well as a comparison of the post-nuclear era peace movement with its pre-atomic counterpart.

* * * *

The popularity of the peace movement in Canada has ebbed and flowed according to the state of international affairs. This was as true in the late 1950s as it was in the late nineteenth century. Prior to the Boer War, the movement was reasonably popular. But the war forced sympathisers to choose between pacifism

and imperialism, and the latter emerged victorious.¹ After the war, the movement rose again, culminating in the creation of the first national non-religious peace organisation in Canada, the Canadian Peace and Arbitration Society. Despite the lack of religious affiliation, the CPAS won support from Canadian churches, particularly the Presbyterians and the Methodists.² The movement suffered another setback when Canada entered the First World War. Prior to 1914 liberal pacifists had promoted peace through international arbitration. But the war proved that this was no longer possible and many abandoned the movement in support of the war-effort. Despite the dip in popularity, the movement survived World War One thanks to its radical core, led by the Society of Friends, an organisation of Quakers. Radical feminists also did their part, forming the Canadian Women's Peace Party, which became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom after 1918.

The Great War marked a transition for the movement as it turned from social reform to embrace causes and supporters of the political left. The Society of Friends embraced a Marxist interpretation of the causes of conflict, viewing economic factors as the root of all war.³ When the radical core broadened its appeal in the interwar years, it included social reformers with a left-wing bent, especially after the Winnipeg General Strike when Labour began to join the cause.

¹ Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War - Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945, (Toronto, 1987), 23-24.

² Ibid., 32. Given the early support of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches for the peace movement, it is not surprising that the United Church of Canada (in which members of the two churches came together) was a staunch ally of the anti-nuclear movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

³ Ibid., 20-21, 58, 89.

However, there were also moderates who returned to the movement, supporting peace through organisations like the League of Nations Society, designed to educate, not pressure or challenge. Thus, while the movement was again broadly based by the late 1920s, it was not yet a challenge to the government or its policies. This did not occur until the Great Depression.⁴

By the early 1930s the Depression had led pacifist organisations to ally themselves with groups seeking economic reform. Radicalism within the movement continued to flourish, as one of the more radical Christian pacifist organisations, known in Britain and the United States since World War One, came to Canada in 1930: the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The movement's support for socialism became even more pronounced after the founding of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in 1932. Yet the breadth of support for the peace movement in the early 1930s was short-lived. With one international crisis after another, support for the movement declined in the mid-1930s, a decline that was exacerbated by tensions within the movement over fascism. While the most radical socialists were the first to oppose fascism, others were not as willing to condemn the German and Italian regimes; thus, a crisis like Spanish Civil War was highly divisive.⁵ By 1939, the Canadian peace movement was, once again, quite weak.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 161-162.

When Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939 radicals opposed all war. As with the First World War, they continued to form the core of the movement. Unlike World War One, the Fellowship of Reconciliation took the lead, not the Society of Friends. Opposition to the war took a pragmatic form as the core that remained worked not to oppose Canada's involvement in the war but to ensure that pacifists would not be forced to participate in a military capacity. As a result, peace activists sought only two concessions from the government: extension of conscientious-objector status to include more than religiously-based opposition to the war and alternatives for pacifists who were conscripted for home service. They won on both counts.⁶ However, the end of the Second World War brought with it a huge set-back for the peace movement in Canada.

With the atomic age came the Cold War and greater suspicion than ever before of all things communist and left-wing. Many of the first proponents of nuclear disarmament were Marxists, and accusations that organisations were little more than communist dupes undermined both their credibility and their ability to influence. The most radical of the early post-war peace groups was the Canadian Peace Congress founded by James Endicott in December 1948. Endicott was a United church minister and missionary. At the December meeting there were almost 400 in attendance, with representatives from churches, unions, youth groups, women's organisations, and ethnic associations.⁷ From the beginning, there were

⁶ Ibid., 224-256.

⁷ "Brief History," n.d., Canadian Peace Congress Papers, Volume 3, File 3: Toronto Association for Peace, 1955-1973, The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Canada.

questions about Endicott's sympathies. Despite his claims to the contrary, Endicott and members of his organisation were regarded as a band of fellow-travellers.⁸ As a result, the views and opinions of the CPC and other early anti-nuclear groups were easily discounted by most political leaders.

• * • *

The Canadian peace movement began to change in 1958 as people began to fear the consequences of nuclear testing and radioactive fallout. This "new generation" of peace groups, dedicated to opposing all things nuclear, was different in that members did more than protest. Members of these groups were determined to influence the government to reject nuclear weapons for Canada's armed forces. The transition from protest movement to pressure group is one of the things that makes these organisations so interesting to study. Before discussing the origins and efforts of the three most prominent anti-nuclear groups, it is necessary to discuss how political actors can be influenced.

Organisations and individuals can influence government policy in a number of ways. They can appeal to logic, using information to outline their position and why they believe it is superior to that of the government. The submission of informative briefs is a tactic that makes use of this technique. If the organisation includes experts in a given field, scientists when dealing with nuclear matters, for example, the authority or expertise of the group can be used to persuade politicians. There are also personal contacts to consider. Members of an organisation who are

⁸ Socknat, Witness Against War, 295. See also Stephen Endicott, Endicott: Rebel Out of China, (Toronto, 1980), 264-265.

acquainted with government officials can appeal to personal connections or friendship to influence the political process. These are the more positive means of influence. More negative are the tactics designed not merely to persuade but to pressure the government to adopt a specific policy. In this vein, groups can influence by coercion or threat of negative consequences if a particular policy is not followed.⁹ The ultimate pressure tactic is to threaten to make a particular policy the subject of a campaign designed to undermine public confidence in the government, thereby hurting its political viability. The anti-nuclear movement used each of these tactics with varying degrees of success.

Anti-nuclear groups sought to inform the government of the dangers of radioactive fallout and the perils of nuclear proliferation with the regular submission of briefs. They also sought a credible membership base in order to persuade government leaders that notables from all walks of life agreed with the movement's opposition to nuclear weapons and the like. But the movement's most persuasive tactic was the threat of political ruin if the government adopted nuclear weapons. Through petitions, letter writing campaigns, and public demonstrations, anti-nuclear groups sought to persuade the government that they represented a large portion of the Canadian electorate. And, most importantly, that they could rally the public to oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons to the electoral detriment of Diefenbaker.

⁹ Edward Banfield, Political Influence: A New Theory of Urban Politics, (New York, 1961), 4-5.

Diefenbaker's leadership was the primary reason that the government was susceptible to pressure on this subject at this time. He had always worried about maintaining public support for his government, and paid attention to any group that was able to convince him that his political tenure was threatened because of his stand on a given policy.¹⁰ He did not necessarily alter his position to suit every group that criticised his policies, but he certainly paid attention to their concerns. Diefenbaker's preoccupation with political support was a weakness of leadership that the anti-nuclear movement tried to exploit to its own advantage.

The anti-nuclear movement was not the only factor to influence Diefenbaker's nuclear policy from 1958 to 1960, but it was a significant one. In addition, Pearson and Green led Diefenbaker to think twice about accepting nuclear warheads. Diefenbaker might have thought twice, but it did not change his mind. As the previous chapter demonstrated, Green was not very influential in the period immediately following his appointment as minister of external affairs. The same was true of the Liberal leader. Both opposed Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons, but Diefenbaker did not regard their opposition as an insurmountable obstacle and continued to negotiate with the Americans. Indeed, it was not until mid-1960 (well after he knew the views of Green and Pearson) that Diefenbaker began to modify his public position to include the importance of disarmament talks and to suggest that Canada would acquire nuclear weapons only if the talks failed. Neither

¹⁰ Goodman recalled several occasions when Diefenbaker met with individuals who did not necessarily agree with his position on an issue. However, Diefenbaker was still able to leave them with the impression that he did agree with them by the end of the meeting. This was one of Diefenbaker's greatest attributes, but also an enormous flaw in terms of leadership. Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999.

Pearson nor Green was able to persuade Diefenbaker to adopt this more moderate public position, but the growing tide of opposition to nuclear weapons expressed by the peace groups was.

What follows is an assessment of the anti-nuclear movement in Canada from its origins in 1958 to the government's first modification of its nuclear policy in mid-1960. For several reasons, the discussion highlights the rise of only three anti-nuclear groups, the Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Voice of Women. These groups were different from their pacifist predecessors in that they opposed policies related to nuclear weapons, from testing to acquisition, not war more generally. Abolition of war was not the anti-nuclear movement's primary objective, though there were definitely pacifists among their supporters. In terms of membership, the anti-nuclear movement secured support from traditional pacifist sectors, the Society of Friends and churches for example. However, the movement had greater breadth and diversity than its forerunners. As was often the case in a time of peace, the political spectrum was represented in the movement, not only radicals or socialists. In fact, most were concerned about the inclusion of the political left. Credibility was a major consideration for two of the three groups, which meant an aversion to anything that could taint the group with even a hint of red. Leaders did their best to exclude communists if not altogether, then at least from positions of prominence. Despite these efforts, the movement was plagued by accusations of communist sympathies. Nonetheless, with the shift from protest to pressure, leaders were

conscious of the movement's credibility and accepted that even the perception of communist infiltration would undermine their ability to influence the formulation of government policy. Finally, these three groups differed from other peace groups in that they were formed specifically to deal with Canada's nuclear policy, whether it was to persuade the government to promote a nuclear test ban, study the effects of radioactive fallout, or reject nuclear weapons for the armed forces. This narrow focus was a clear break with the traditional peace movement in Canada. But this single devotion to opposing all things nuclear had wide appeal. As a result, the movement attracted many supporters who were new to the idea of political action and protest.

* • • *

Mary Van Stolk created the Edmonton Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards in late 1958, the first Canadian organisation founded specifically to deal with nuclear issues. Van Stolk was the powerhouse behind the early CCCRH's growth and organisation, a "sparkplug" according to one Maclean's columnist.¹¹ Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she was a housewife in her late twenties. Van Stolk was introduced to the anti-nuclear movement by her husband, Jan Van Stolk, a Dutch doctor who had worked with Albert Schweitzer at his clinic in Lambaréné, Africa. Schweitzer had won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952 and had always opposed nuclear weapons. Although he was a well known figure around the world, Schweitzer had only recently been enlisted to support the anti-nuclear

¹¹ David Lewis Stein, "Beginner's guide to the Canadian nuclear disarmers," Maclean's, 7 October 1961, 10.

movement by Norman Cousins, editor of Saturday Review and a leading activist with the American group SANE.¹² The Van Stolks had moved to Edmonton, Alberta when Dr. Van Stolk took a job in the Department of Psychiatry at the city's University Hospital.

Van Stolk had lofty ambitions and did not settle for dealing with nuclear matters locally. She spent months creating a national counterpart to her local group. In early 1959, Van Stolk consulted with SANE in New York City where Cousins was especially helpful. SANE also assisted Van Stolk with organisational questions as well as educational and promotional literature, collections which were necessary for an organisation like CCCRH that was determined to influence and to educate the general public as well as politicians.¹³ Van Stolk returned from New York to hold the Edmonton committee's first meeting on April 15. Thirty five people attended the gathering and they decided on a list of prominent Canadians to approach about joining the new National Committee. These men and women wanted to raise awareness and educate the public about the perils of fallout.¹⁴ Concerns about fall-out were common in the late 1950s. Around the world anti-nuclear groups were urging governments to conduct more scientific research into

¹² Lawrence S. Wittner, The Struggle Against the Bomb Volume Two - Resisting the Bomb 1954-1970: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, (Stanford, 1997), 32-33.

¹³ CCND Papers, Volume 4, File 1: Correspondence - Mary Van Stolk, The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Canada.

¹⁴ Christine Ball and Barbara Roberts suggest that Van Stolk's Edmonton Committee was a mother's group. This is an overstatement. See Roberts, Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics, (Toronto, 1989), 296 and Ball, VOW: The Early Years, Ph.D. Dissertation, (OISE, The University of Toronto, 1994), 2.

the consequences of fallout.¹⁵ The Edmonton group reflected this concern, and members were more focused on the hazards associated with radioactive fall-out as a result of nuclear testing than whether Canada would or should acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁶

In the months that followed, Van Stolk travelled across Canada, as well as to Los Angeles and New York to meet with more members of SANE. At the end of May, she met with H.L. Keenleyside in New York. Contact with Keenleyside was one of Van Stolk's most important initiatives during this time. She convinced him that given the international situation, with a meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev pending, late 1959 was the perfect time to address the issue of radioactive fallout.¹⁷ An historian by training, Keenleyside was a former diplomat who had joined the Department of External Affairs in 1928, and seemed to be an ideal candidate to lead the National Committee.¹⁸ In the years that followed, he served in Japan and on the Permanent Joint Board on Defence. In 1947, Keenleyside left the foreign service to become the deputy minister of Mines and

¹⁵ Mary Van Stolk to Robert Walker, 10 August 1959, CCND Papers, Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine. See also Volume 4, File 1 Mary Van Stolk - Correspondence and several files in Volume 14 which contain a large quantity of materials and correspondence between the CCCRH/CCND and SANE.

¹⁶ "Press Release - CCCRH Manifesto," February 1960, CCND Papers, Volume 1, File 1. See also "History of the Edmonton Committee," September 1960, *ibid.*, Volume 8, File 1 and Stein, "A Beginner's Guide to Canada's Nuclear Disarmers," Maclean's, 7 October 1961.

¹⁷ Van Stolk to H.L. Keenleyside, 19 September 1959, CCND Papers, Volume 4, File 1: Correspondence - Mary Van Stolk.

¹⁸ On the surface Keenleyside seemed like the ideal given his extensive international experience and involvement in various aspects of government policy formulation. However, his attempts to solicit a personal reaction from Diefenbaker were not as successful as they were with Pearson, which did the organisation little good given that organisers were trying to influence the prime minister, not the leader of the opposition.

Resources. Three years later he became the director general of the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, where he remained until 1958. Van Stolk spoke with him when he was in the midst of moving from New York to British Columbia to become Chairman of the B.C. Power Commission. Keenleyside agreed to work with the National Committee in July, and agreed to serve as provisional chairman a few months later.¹⁹ He played a large role in determining the Committee's organisation and even its name, suggesting that Van Stolk change it from the Canadian Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy to the Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards.²⁰

During the spring and summer of 1959, hundreds of letters and circulars were distributed to increase awareness of nuclear fallout in Canada. At the same time local committees appeared in Montreal and Saskatoon.²¹ Local organisations were not what one would consider to be branches. They did not take instruction from the national office after its creation, although they later participated in activities devised at the national level. Van Stolk was serious about her mission and governed her committee accordingly, with formal operating procedures, by-laws and a board of directors.²² The task of national expansion was made more difficult by Van Stolk's decision to adhere to a policy of membership by invitation only.²³

¹⁹ "Report of the National Executive Secretary, Second Annual Meeting," March 1961, CCND Papers, Volume 4, File 3: Mary Van Stolk as National Executive Secretary, CCCRH.

²⁰ Van Stolk to Walker, 10 August 1959, *Ibid.*, Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine. This was also the suggestion of the existing Montreal Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards.

²¹ "Report of the National Executive Secretary, Second Annual Meeting," March 1961, *Ibid.*, Volume 4, File 3: Van Stolk - National Executive Secretary, CCCRH.

²² CCCRH By-Laws, *Ibid.*, Volume 1, File 1.

When the National Committee was announced in February 1960, it was a small, elite group of supporters numbering 45.²⁴ The size and structure were of no concern to Van Stolk because she believed that effectiveness was linked to the quality of her organisation's supporters, not the number of members she could attract.²⁵ If one could be guilty by association when it came to communist infiltration, then Van Stolk hoped that the same would be true of credibility. A list of credible supporters would bestow the same thing on the organisation. In this regard she followed the lead of SANE and the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which counted high-profile supporters among its members, like Harry Belafonte and Steve Allen in the former, Bertrand Russell in the latter. Despite this basic similarity, SANE was more moderate and a much greater influence on Van Stolk and the CCCRH than its British counterpart. The CCCRH followed SANE's introductory tactics; the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy came to prominence in mid-1957 with an advertisement in the New York Times which included a list of 48 prominent Americans who urged the government to end nuclear testing. SANE's creators had hoped to attract a broad-base of support, and quickly expanded its activities to general disarmament.²⁶ By way of contrast, the British CND was more vocal, more radical, and more inclined toward public protest than SANE. Founded in January 1958, the British campaign included a large number of

²³ Van Stolk to Walker, 10 August 1959, ibid., Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine.

²⁴ "Press Release - CCCRH Manifesto," February 1960, ibid., Volume 1, File 1.

²⁵ Van Stolk to Walker, 10 August 1959, ibid., Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine.

²⁶ Wittner, Resisting the Bomb, 52-54.

students and radicals. The British CND did not support civil disobedience, though it did advocate unilateral disarmament which was considered to be a rather radical proposition. That said, many members were active in demonstrations and protests against the bomb.²⁷ This kind of activity did not appeal to Van Stolk, who was far more inspired by the moderation of the American approach than the brashness of the British activists.

SANE was a more attractive model to Van Stolk than the British CND because of its emphasis on credibility. This was Van Stolk's first priority when it came to national expansion. Many regarded the existing peace movement as a band of communist sympathisers and she knew that this reputation undermined its ability to influence nuclear policy. She also worried about credibility in terms of public support. If Canadians assumed that campaigns and pamphlets were little more than communist propaganda few would pay attention.²⁸ And, if the electorate could not be won over to the cause, there would be no impetus for the government to incorporate the views of the anti-nuclear movement in its formulation of nuclear policy. A preoccupation with credibility led Van Stolk to allow membership on the National Committee by invitation only. She went to great lengths to enforce this policy, ensuring that only those with impeccable non-communist credentials were allowed to join. When all was said and done, Van Stolk accomplished the task.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 49-51.

²⁸ Van Stolk to Walker, 10 August 1959, CCND Papers, Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine.

The National Committee included an impressive list of supporters from all segments of Canadian society. There was nation-wide support from university faculty, from a variety of disciplines, with the sciences particularly well represented.²⁹ University administrators who endorsed the Committee were even more impressive, as a number of university presidents and deans offered their support.³⁰ Select members of the judiciary also supported Van Stolk's efforts.³¹ Given the traditional support of religious groups for the peace movement in Canada, it was not surprising that Protestant clerics supported the CCCRH.³² What was not

²⁹ From the University of Alberta were D.B. Scott from the Department of Physics, and Dr. J. Weijer, who was a Research Professor in Genetics and Plant Breeding. There was Gordin Kaplan from the Department of Physiology at Dalhousie. Perhaps the university with the greatest faculty representation was the University of Toronto, with Drs. C.H. Best and D.G. Baker, both of the Banting and Best Department of Medical Research. On the humanities side was Frank Scott from the Faculty of Law at McGill, B.S. Keirstead from Political Economy at the University of Toronto, and Milton Gregg from the University of Western Ontario.

There was also great support among administration at the departmental level in universities, again with particular attention from the sciences, as evidenced by the signatures of Dr. John F. McCreary, the Dean of Medicine at the University of British Columbia; Dr. Pierre Dansereau, the Dean of Science at Université de Montreal; and Dr. H.G. Dion, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at McGill. Ibid., Volume 1, File 1.

³⁰ Dr. Claude Bissell, the President of the University of Toronto; Dr. N.A.M. MacKenzie, the President of the University of British Columbia; Dr. Hugh H. Saunderson, the President of the University of Manitoba. Ibid.

³¹ Justice Ivan C. Rand, who later became the founding Dean of Law at the University of Western Ontario, supported the National Committee of the CCCRH. Manitoba was represented by the Honourable Mr. Justice Ralph Maybank, from the Court of the Queen's Bench. Finally, there was also the Honourable J.T. Thorson, President of the Exchequer Court of Canada in Ottawa, who later became quite an outspoken member of the National Committee. Ibid.

³² Support was forthcoming from the Archbishop of Edmonton, the Most Rev. J.H. MacDonald. The Rev. W.C. Smalley, who was the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Western Canada supported the CCCRH as did the Very Rev. Professor James S. Thomson, of McGill, a former Moderator of the United Church of Canada. There was also the support of Reverend Leonard F. Hatfield, the General Secretary of the Council for Social Service in the Anglican Church, Toronto. Ibid.

as traditional was that support cut across religious denominations as much as it spanned the country.³³

There were also a number of prominent Canadians who were more difficult to categorise, many of whom were from sectors not traditionally associated with the peace movement. For instance, Henry Borden, the president of Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Co., Ltd. and the nephew of Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden, supported the CCCRH, as did A.E. Grauer, chairman and president of British Columbia Electric Co. Ltd. in Vancouver. More typical was the support offered by the labour movement, particularly Dr. Eugene Forsey, Director of Research at the Canadian Labour Congress, whom Prime Minister Diefenbaker greatly admired, and Claude Jodoin, the President of the Canadian Labour Congress.³⁴ Yousef Karsh, a highly respected Canadian portraitist, and Hugh MacLennan, one of Canada's best-known authors, also supported the National Committee.

Many members of the Canadian press sympathised with Van Stolk's Committee. The associate editor of the Toronto Daily Star, Robert Nielsen, agreed to endorse the National Committee. There was also support from some unlikely

³³ Christians were not the only religious supporters of the CCCRH. The Canadian Jewish Congress was well represented by Saul Hayes, Executive Vice President of the organisation. *Ibid.* Socknat emphasises that the early Canadian peace movement was predominantly Christian. Socknat, Witness Against War, 2-5.

³⁴ Forsey wrote that Diefenbaker "had said that his door was always open to me, and it was (I was careful to appear at it as rarely as possible)." He considered Diefenbaker a "friend," and indicated that Diefenbaker had invited him to join cabinet in 1957. Forsey seems to have kept his contact with Diefenbaker to matters involving the Canadian Labour Congress, not the CCCRH. In Forsey's case, nuclear weapons, the CCCRH, and nuclear disarmament did not warrant an index reference in his memoirs. Eugene Forsey, A Life on the Fringe: The Memoirs of Eugene Forsey, (Toronto, 1990), 86, 113-14.

quarters like John Bassett, a well-known member of the Progressive Conservative party as well as the chairman and publisher of the Toronto Telegram. Oakley Dalgleish, editor and publisher of the Globe and Mail, rounded out the Toronto print media. There was also editorial support in Quebec, as Jean-Louis Gagnon, chief editor of La Press, and André Laurendeau, editor in chief of Le Devoir, endorsed the Committee.³⁵ Many of Maclean's editorial staff agreed with Van Stolk's objectives, and others wrote a series of well-placed articles featuring the newly-minted organisation.³⁶ However, when Van Stolk asked Maclean's editor Blair Fraser if he would allow the magazine to promote the CCCRH and its concerns, Fraser's response was forthright:

from time to time Maclean's magazine has taken an editorial position against the use of nuclear weapons by Canadian forces...However, we cannot undertake to put Maclean's at the disposal of any cause, however worthy, and whether we ourselves happen to agree with it or not...If any member of or any spokesman for your National Committee can come up with a fresh, challenging, interesting presentation of a familiar point of view, we shall be delighted to buy it. Otherwise, not...[W]e try not to let our judgment of any article be influenced by our sympathy with the writer's point of view.³⁷

Van Stolk's list of high-profile supporters virtually guaranteed that political leaders in Ottawa would notice the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, and was a typical tactic employed to influence decision-makers.³⁸ The key to the success of this approach was to make sure that the list of supporters alone

³⁵ CCND Papers, Volume 1, File 1.

³⁶ Selected correspondence from 1959 to 1963, ibid., Volume 25, File 19: Maclean's Magazine.

³⁷ Blair Fraser to Van Stolk, 4 December 1960, ibid.

³⁸ Banfield, Political Influence, 4-5.

would be influential enough to persuade Diefenbaker to do something about nuclear fall-out and, by extension, to reject nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. The list included Canadians from across the country, which was important; for instance, the prime minister was not likely to have been influenced by a list of supporters from Bay Street. In essence, Van Stolk's approach was an attempt to secure influence based on individual credibility and contact.³⁹ To this end, Keenleyside tried to do this in his personal approach to Diefenbaker in late January 1960. He noted:

Our statement praises your government for steps already taken and expresses the hope that Canada will do even more to pursue its announced objectives in connection with nuclear testing and related matters. I believe that you will find our views acceptable and that the evidence our Committee provides of deep and strong Canadian feeling on this subject may sustain the hands of our representatives in their negotiations with other powers.

May I take this opportunity to tell you how gratified I have been – and I am sure that this view is shared by a vast majority of informed Canadians – by the international policies pursued by your government? I believe that by concentrating on essentials and refusing to be diverted from adherence to principle by influence from Washington – or elsewhere – you are doing what is best for Canada and for the future of all peoples.⁴⁰

Despite these efforts, it is important to emphasise that there was not necessarily a correlation between the list of high-profile Canadians and their ability to influence the prime minister. Just because this was a credible group that included experts in some areas did not mean that Diefenbaker was willing to listen to their views on radioactive fallout and nuclear weapons. For example, while Keenleyside took the

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Keenleyside to Diefenbaker, 20 January 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: 154.5 Conf. Defence Research - Atomic Research - Radioactive Fallout - Confidential, 1960 VI/R/96. Italics added for emphasis.

time to write to Diefenbaker in his capacity as provisional chairman of the National Committee, the prime minister did not reciprocate with the same degree of attention. Diefenbaker neither wrote nor signed the response to Keenleyside. That task fell to one of Diefenbaker's assistants, Gowan Guest, whose response was a standard letter of acknowledgement: "Mr. Diefenbaker appreciated your courtesy in giving him this information and wanted me to assure you that he had noted carefully the contents of your letter and the statement."⁴¹ Nor did Keenleyside warrant a special reference file for his correspondence.⁴² Actions speak louder than words and there is little to indicate that Diefenbaker's policy was influenced by Keenleyside's letter of January 1960 or the announcement of the National Committee the following month. The government continued to negotiate with the Americans for nuclear weapons. The CCCRH had an office up and running by January 1960, and its correspondence with supporters increased exponentially, but the organisation was not yet able to influence Diefenbaker's nuclear policy.⁴³

* * * * *

The prime minister's nuclear policy was also unpopular on university campuses across the country. In February 1959, David Gauthier, a lecturer in the Philosophy Department at the University of Toronto, wrote to the student

⁴¹ Gowan Guest to Keenleyside, 9 February 1960, *ibid.*

⁴² This is clear from the finding aid for Diefenbaker's personal papers. He kept correspondence files for everyone from "VIP's like Eisenhower, Nixon, Macmillan, and Kennedy to journalists like Blair Fraser and political figures like Eugene Forsey. Keenleyside is not in the list of separate files.

⁴³ "Report of National Executive Secretary, Second Annual Meeting," March 1961, CCND Papers, Volume 4, File 3.

newspaper, the Varsity, to protest the government's decision to cancel the Avro Arrow and accept the Bomarc missile.⁴⁴ He took more concrete action the following month when he helped to organise a petition urging the prime minister to cancel the Bomarc, which garnered approximately 70 faculty signatures.⁴⁵ Six months later, faculty and students co-sponsored another petition to the prime minister that led to a meeting in mid-December.⁴⁶ At the same time, some faculty members who were encouraged by the response to the petition decided to help interested students form their own organisation dedicated to fighting Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons.⁴⁷ There the Toronto student movement stood until February 1960.

During this time, students in Montreal were also busy organising themselves to oppose the Bomb. Despite the earlier activity in Toronto, the first formal Canadian student organisation opposed to nuclear weapons was the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND) created in November 1959 by a group of students from the three Montreal area universities. They took their inspiration from the British ban-the-bombers and the Aldermaston march in

⁴⁴ "History of the Ban the Bomb Movement by Douglas Campbell," n.d., CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File 10: CUCND Toronto Office 1960-61, Correspondence & Miscellaneous, The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Canada.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, File: 313.312 D-U-University Representatives-Control of Nuclear Weapons - Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - University Representatives - Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1960.

⁴⁷ "History of the Ban the Bomb Movement by Douglas Campbell," n.d., CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File 10: CUCND Toronto Office 1960-61, Correspondence & Miscellaneous.

1958,⁴⁸ and their first formal activity was an anti-nuclear petition that they delivered to the prime minister on Christmas Day. It contained 1100 signatures and was delivered by some 80 members of CUCND.⁴⁹

However, while the prime minister knew about the petition, he seemed to pay little attention to it. Protests from students were far less important than appeals from faculty. The petition might have had 1100 signatures, but they were from students with no political power. The university movement also suffered from a lack of credibility. Well-known communists and radicals ran the Montreal organisation, which meant that their views were easily ignored. There was nothing in the petition that would influence Diefenbaker or threaten his political position. There was simply no way that such an organisation was going to influence the prime minister to oppose nuclear weapons.

Credibility was a far bigger concern for the Toronto organisation than its Montreal counterpart. The Toronto students were also far less radical. In February 1960 the Student Peace Union was created at the University of Toronto. Norman Johnson, one of the Toronto participants in the faculty-student petition, organised the meeting at University College that led to the creation of SPU. Although the student anti-nuclear movement was more influenced by the British campaign than the American effort, the students named their group after a like-minded organisation

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. See also Gary Moffatt, History of the Canadian Peace Movement until 1969, (St. Catharines, 1969), 147.

at the University of Chicago.⁵⁰ The initial membership, seven, represented various elements of the student left from communists to socialists. Over time, as the membership base broadened, the SPU became the Students for Peace and then CUCND at the University of Toronto. The transition took a matter of months, and over time a moderate pacifist core came to dominate the organisation. Early members of the Toronto organisation were impressed by CUCND in Montreal, particularly its Christmas petition, and decided to join forces to protest the proposed Bomarc base in North Bay.

This broadening of the student movement was typical of the peace movement in Canada. The same was true of the inclusion of the political left and decision to demonstrate against the government's nuclear policy. Public protest was the purpose behind their May demonstration at the Bomarc missile base in North Bay. By the spring of 1960, the student anti-nuclear movement was growing slowly but steadily. There were many student groups across the country that opposed nuclear weapons, though much like the CCCRH, it would be an exaggeration to consider them "branches" of a larger organisation. In Quebec there were organisations at Bishop's, Laval, MacDonald College, McGill, Sir George Williams, and the Universities of Montreal and Sherbrooke. In Ontario, the University of Toronto had the biggest collection of activists, but other universities such as Carleton, McMaster, Queen's, and the University of Western Ontario also had anti-nuclear groups. The Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia also had

⁵⁰ "History of the Ban the Bomb Movement by Douglas Campbell," n.d., CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File 10: CUCND Toronto Office 1960-61, Correspondence & Miscellaneous.

small but growing organisations.⁵¹ Despite this national representation, and the potential for a great show of force in North Bay, the Toronto and Montreal organisations led the movement.

It is worth noting the differences between the two largest student anti-nuclear organisations. Toronto had the largest membership (which, at its height, numbered between 100 and 120 members⁵²), but the Montreal group was the more vocal. However, Toronto, in spite of its larger numbers, was actually more typical of the student anti-nuclear movement than its Montreal counterpart. The Toronto group included a range of the political spectrum, with pacifists alongside communists. Many in the Toronto organisation joined simply because it seemed to be the right thing to do or the cause of the moment. By contrast, CUCND Montreal was dominated by ideologues, particularly communists, Marxists and Trotskyists which did little to enhance its credibility. Although Montreal's first activity, the Christmas petition, included an impressive number of signatures, many members were more interested in discussing the writings of revolutionaries than undertaking action at the grassroots level to promote disarmament. When it came to policy, both groups obviously opposed nuclear weapons, but the Toronto branch supported Canada's involvement in NATO and NORAD (at least initially) whereas students in Montreal wanted Canada to withdraw from both in order to pursue a neutral foreign policy. Ultimately, while the Toronto branch could be considered a group of pacifists and

⁵¹ "Member Universities of CUCND," Spring 1960, ibid.

⁵² Ian Gentles interview with author June 7, 1999.

activists, the Montreal group was a collection of ideologues-of-the-moment who preferred to contemplate the ways of revolution without engaging in much activity.

The North Bay protest was modelled after the protest that accompanied CUCND's Christmas petition. In early May, activists from Toronto joined forces with students from Montreal and Ottawa.⁵³ The protest helped to cement ties and boost morale among members, but did little to win support from the people of North Bay.⁵⁴ As a later project confirmed, residents of North Bay stood to benefit economically from the NORAD station, giving them few reasons to oppose the Bomarc.⁵⁵ North Bay residents barely noticed the anti-nuclear activists, and the protests made little impact on parliamentarians in Ottawa. The lack of local enthusiasm for disarmament disappointed the students. Members had hoped that outraged locals would take political action, whether it was writing letters to local MPs or joining the peace movement. Students understood that local action could influence Diefenbaker only if it mobilised a large number to oppose government policy; the government might not bother listening to a group of university students, but a large segment of the electorate was another matter altogether. If the reaction to the Bomarc protest was any indication, the movement had a long way to go before their local efforts translated into political influence.

⁵³ CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 7, File: Early CUCND - Policy Statement, etc.

⁵⁴ Moffat, "North Bay Project," (n.d.), CCND Papers, Volume 23, File 4: TCND Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1962-1964.

⁵⁵ See CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 8, Files: Summer Projects; SUPA Summer Projects in the Community 1965 and Volume 9, Files: North Bay Project Correspondence 1964-65 (Art Pape), North Bay Project Politics, Interviews, etc.; North Bay Project Preliminary Reports; North Bay Project: prospectus, memo, newsletter; SUPA papers: North Bay Project (Liora Proctor); North Bay Project:

The North Bay protest was just the beginning as far as the anti-nuclear campaign was concerned. By the end of May, the movement was invigorated by international crisis: the U-2 affair. Two reactions to the U-2 incident had an impact on Canadian nuclear policy. Congress reinstated funding for the Bomarc missile program as a result of the crisis, as noted above. But many Canadians viewed the crisis differently, and saw it as a call to mobilise against nuclear weapons. The day after Khrushchev stormed out of the Paris summit, the Toronto Daily Star's Lotta Dempsey wrote about the crisis:

Like most women, I see the Summit in terms of my own family, my small house and garden, my quiet street and neighbors, who are now all out retraining vines, putting in plants and painting. I cannot but believe that, wherever it is spring, and wherever there is love and beauty and decency, women are trying to do the same thing. And they are greatly afraid.⁵⁶

Arguing that "the men surely have made a mess of things...if only the women could get together, perhaps they could do better," Dempsey struck a chord with Canadian women, and her column received great support.⁵⁷ A few days later, she wrote about the common bond shared by women the world over: "I have never met a woman

Contacts & Interview List; North Bay Project: Depth Interviews, Odds and Ends; North Bay Project: Economics Committee.

⁵⁶ Although Dempsey's columns inspired the creation of the Voice of Women it is difficult to determine the impact of the VOW on the noted columnist. There is only the briefest reference to the VOW in her memoirs. There is but a single line devoted to the VOW, and it does not mention the role she played in its creation. There is slightly more in the biography of Dempsey written by her daughter-in-law. See Lotta Dempsey, No Life for a Lady, (Don Mills, 1976), 100 and Carolyn Davis Fisher, The Lady Was a Star, (Toronto, 1995), 50. Dempsey seems to have stayed involved in the fight to ban nuclear weapons, even if not always officially, as she was a sponsor for the Benjamin Spock lecture in May 1964 in Toronto. See CCND Papers, Volume 24, File 6: TCND - Dr. Benjamin Spock Lecture. Dempsey, "Women's Section," Private Line, Toronto Daily Star, 17 May 1960.

⁵⁷ Kay Macpherson, When In Doubt, Do Both: The Times of My Life, (Toronto, 1994), 90. Also Dempsey, Toronto Daily Star.

anywhere who did not hate fighting and killing, and the loss of husbands and the terrible tragedy of children dead, maimed or left homeless and hungry. Here lies our strength. In some way women the world over must refuse to allow this thing to happen."⁵⁸ These pleas on behalf of women and the family were not unique to the nuclear era – opposition to war was a traditional "motherhood issue" among radical feminists and pacifists – but it was as effective as a rallying cry in 1960 as in years past for women from all walks of life across the country.

At the end of May, Dempsey announced the creation of a new women's organisation focused on disarmament and international peace.⁵⁹ Once again, the response from women was tremendous. Hundreds of women wrote letters of support to Dempsey. Letters were also sent to Josephine Davis after she appeared on a segment of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "Frontpage Challenge."⁶⁰ Letters in response emphasised the positive role that women could play in the pursuit of peace and disarmament. Most stressed the responsibility of women as wives and mothers to protect their families whether against war or nuclear weapons.⁶¹

Josephine Davis and Helen Tucker did for the Voice of Women what Mary Van Stolk did for the CCCRH. Tucker became the VOW's first president and has been described as, "dynamic, tireless, and infuriating, a quite extraordinary

⁵⁸ Dempsey, Toronto Daily Star, 21 May 1960.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 30 May 1960.

⁶⁰ Voice of Women Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation of VOW, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

⁶¹ Ibid.

woman...Her persistence and toughness irritated many people, but she got things done, often over odds that would intimidate lesser mortals like us, and she had a remarkable list of achievements about which she would be the first to blow her own trumpet."⁶² She was something of a professional organiser, involved with adult education through the YWCA, UNESCO, and other UN organisations.⁶³ Tucker, like Van Stolk, was American by birth, coming to Canada in the late 1930s.⁶⁴ Her previous experience in mixed sex peace associations made her determined that women would be treated as first class citizens in her own organisation.⁶⁵

It was Tucker who involved Davis in the Voice of Women. The two women met at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South Peel. Davis was a teacher by training, and an atheist by belief.⁶⁶ Born in Britain, she came to Canada in 1953, and was married to a prominent journalist, Fred Davis, who worked for the CBC. Tucker was helping to organise a rally sponsored by the Toronto Campaign for Disarmament (the Toronto wing of the CCCRH) at Massey Hall, and persuaded Davis to participate.⁶⁷ Although there were other founding members of the VOW,

⁶² Macpherson, When In Doubt, Do Both, 92-93.

⁶³ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 96.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 86. For a treatment of women's traditional role within the peace movement, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Peace-making Women: Canada 1919-1939," Women and Peace, Ruth Roach Pierson (ed.), (London, 1987) 178.

⁶⁶ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 92.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 100.

Tucker and Davis were the organising force behind the group, with Dempsey helping to raise awareness with her newspaper column.⁶⁸

The founding committee of the VOW met in early June and called itself the Women's Committee for Peace. Founders hoped to gather together as many women as possible to help educate members about other cultures through contact with those other areas of the world. They hoped that contact would lead to international co-operation and later peace.⁶⁹ The emphasis was on personal contact at the grass-roots levels, which was considered unique within the movement.⁷⁰ This first meeting laid the groundwork for the activities the VOW pursued in its first years of activity, including an international peace year, pen-pals for peace scheme, and international travel.⁷¹

With name and objectives in hand, the VOW made its informal debut at the Massey Hall rally. The rally was the first public appearance for a number of anti-nuclear groups, including the Toronto branches of CUCND and the CCCRH. Ostensibly held to raise awareness about the horrors of nuclear weapons and war, the rally was a major opportunity for participants to recruit new members to their organisations. Van Stolk's concerns about selective membership were circumvented because it was the Toronto branch, not the National Committee, of the

⁶⁸ Josephine Davis to Maryon Pearson, 12 June 1960, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

⁶⁹ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 105-107.

⁷⁰ Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," Beyond the Vote, fn 42, 307. Roberts echoes sentiments expressed by Moffatt in History of the Canadian Peace Movement.

⁷¹ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 87.

CCCRH that participated in the rally. Regardless, this kind of recruitment set a precedent, one that was sure to be followed with greater frequency in the months that followed, even if it went against Van Stolk's first principles.

The VOW, despite its informal appearance at the rally, still had much work to do before its first formal meeting at the end of July in Toronto. The organising committee focused its efforts on Ottawa and Parliament Hill, and members decided to seek advice from the leaders they wanted to influence. They wanted to know what political leaders thought about everything from their proposals for disarmament to their very existence as an organisation.⁷² The presentation was also an attempt to determine the attitudes of the people they would have to convert to their cause. This was a different tactic from the one used by the CCCRH. Where Van Stolk hoped that a list of credible, high-profile supporters would influence the government to oppose nuclear weapons and raise awareness among the general public, Davis hoped that personal contact, a face-to-face meeting, with political leaders would be the first step in persuading them to support their position. The VOW also had a marked advantage over the CCCRH in one important area: numbers. While Van Stolk hoped that selectivity was the key to influence, Davis and Tucker realised the importance of mass appeal.

On June 15, Davis and several others met with Diefenbaker, Green, Pearson, and Hazen Argue, the leader of the CCF. The women received a warm welcome

⁷² ibid., 118.

and the audience seemed receptive to their views.⁷³ The Liberal leader, as Diefenbaker had feared, was a natural ally of the peace movement. Pearson sympathised with the movement publicly and privately.⁷⁴ Similarly, the anti-nuclear movement regarded Pearson as a reliable supporter and treated him accordingly. He received regular mailings from anti-nuclear organisations, as did Diefenbaker.⁷⁵ For instance, when VOW stated its opposition to nuclear weapons in Canada, Davis wrote Pearson a letter of explanation:

Since we are opposed to the whole concept of a nuclear war, and since we feel that the further spread of nuclear weapons increases the possibility of a nuclear war, we feel fully justified in taking a stand on this basis. We hope that our action meets with your approval and the coming debate on defence appropriations will reflect some measure of public opinion on this most critical issue.⁷⁶

Disarmament activists took a different tone with the Liberal leader in their letters than they did with the prime minister. Frequently, they cited the Nobel Peace Prize as evidence that he had the credentials necessary to stop nuclear testing or bring about disarmament.⁷⁷ While the movement liked Pearson in early 1960, the Liberal leader was less enthusiastic. He sympathised with the VOW's objectives, but had

⁷³ The Voice of Women maintained this practice of personal contact, keeping MPs and party leaders apprised of the organisation's activities by regularly sending them copies of memoranda and newsletters. The personal papers of various political figures from the period include copies of VOW briefs, newsletters, and bulletins. For instance, see Diefenbaker, Pearson, and Green Papers. There are no VOW pamphlets in the Harkness Papers.

⁷⁴ "Report of the National Executive Secretary, Second Annual Meeting," March 1961, CCND Papers, Volume 4, File 3: Van Stolk - National Executive Secretary, CCCRH.

⁷⁵ Pearson Papers, Volume 4, File: 154.1 Nuclear Tests.

⁷⁶ Davis to Maryon Pearson, 3 August 1960, Pearson Papers, Volume 91, File: External Affairs: Voice of Women Part Two.

⁷⁷ See *Ibid.*, Volume 4, File 154.1 Nuclear Tests From January 20, 1958.

some concerns about the tactics of some of the organisation's leaders. For instance, when he learned that women within the VOW were upset about Davis' propensity to proceed without consultation, he encouraged her to slow down.⁷⁸ Davis ignored this advice, but others did not.

Despite some of his reservations, Pearson was more than willing to support his wife's decision to lend her name to the Voice of Women as an honorary sponsor. Like the CCCRH, the VOW sought high-profile supporters to act as honorary members. Organisers hoped that these women would give the organisation credibility and political influence. The women approached a number of female politicians as well as wives of politicians. One of their most enthusiastic early supporters was Maryon Pearson. She wrote:

I am indeed interested in Voice of Women. I think it's a most imaginative and worthwhile project and I believe that if women really set their minds and hearts on a project, they can achieve wonders.

If we women of the West could succeed in reaching the women on the other side of the "curtain" – i.e. Russia and China – with no political overtones, but only as mothers of young children whose lives or well-being are at stake under this terrible threat of atomic fall-out, not to mention bombs, I think we could start a chain reaction toward peace instead of war. Anyhow, it is certainly well worth a try.

I am sure many mothers (and grandmothers) in Canada feel helpless and horror-struck under the terrible threat that hangs over us, and would be anxious and enthusiastic to do what they could to stop it.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ A.E. Thompson to Mary Macdonald, 19 July 1960, *Ibid.*, Volume 91, File: External Affairs - Voice of Women Part Two.

⁷⁹ Maryon Pearson to VOW, 30 July 1960, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

With this kind of response, VOW organisers felt they could count on both Pearsons to support their crusade.

If the women of VOW regarded Pearson as an advocate, they were more cautious in their views of Diefenbaker. The prime minister was pleasant enough when organisers presented their ideas to him in June 1960. By late 1959 Diefenbaker had started to receive anti-nuclear correspondence from groups affiliated with labour, churches, and the universities in conjunction with notices from the ever-growing anti-nuclear movement. By mid-1960 Diefenbaker's mail regularly contained letters from individuals and organisations opposed to Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Any organised opposition to nuclear weapons only confirmed Diefenbaker's existing concerns about the state of public opinion.⁸⁰ Although Diefenbaker kept material from the VOW on file, it is unlikely that he sympathised with their overarching objective, which was to keep nuclear weapons out of Canada. While he supported efforts to abolish nuclear weapons theoretically, he did not regard this as a practical solution and was unwilling to renounce nuclear weapons for Canadian forces.

Diefenbaker's views of the anti-nuclear movement – like Pearson's – seemed to have been reflected in his wife's support for the disarmament activists. Mrs. Diefenbaker, like Mrs. Pearson, was approached by the VOW to endorse the organisation. However, unlike Maryon Pearson, Olive Diefenbaker refused. She told organisers that she agreed with their overall objectives, but would not add her

⁸⁰ Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7813, File: 174 Defence Expenditure - Weapons, Ammunition, Explosives, Missiles, 1958-1963. See also Microfilm 7811 for additional letters from this period.

name to the list of honorary sponsors because of the potential for controversy. "Suppose, for example," she wrote, "that you want to support some stand that the governments [sic] taking – or that you want to do exactly the opposite. Inevitably my name would be associated with my husband's and in either case it would be prejudicial....I am honoured indeed that you should think of me, but I do think that you will be better off without me."⁸¹ Mrs. Diefenbaker's statement reflected her husband's fears about public sentiment.

More than anything, Diefenbaker regarded the VOW with concern. He worried about the organisation's ability to influence public opinion. The VOW was an organisation of highly credible women; most were not radical feminists, and they could not be easily dismissed as communist sympathisers. They wore hats and gloves when they met with officials, the very model of ladylike behaviour in 1960. It was this credibility that Diefenbaker feared. Credible opposition to nuclear weapons might persuade undecided Canadians to oppose nuclear stockpiles and the government along with them.

Despite these hesitations, Diefenbaker did not allow the VOW to influence policy formulation in any tangible way in the summer of 1960. The prime minister might have worried about the VOW's ability to influence public opinion, but he did not change his statements in the House of Commons as a result. On June 22, the

⁸¹ Olive Diefenbaker to Davis, 8 August 1960, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963. VOW did not have much success recruiting supporters from the Conservative Party. They approached Diefenbaker's Minister of Citizenship, Ellen Fairclough, the first female cabinet minister. However, Fairclough refused to allow her name to stand as an honorary supporter of the group. Indeed, VOW and the nuclear debate do not warrant a single entry in her memoirs, *Saturday's Child*, see also Fairclough to Davis, 26 July 1960, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

day he received a letter from Davis thanking him for meeting with organisers, he restated his position on nuclear weapons in Parliament: "There have been discussions with the United States government regarding the possible conditions under which nuclear weapons for jet interceptors might be stored in United States leased bases in Canada," he told the Commons. Yet there was still hope for the peace movement as he concluded that, "no agreement has been arrived at."⁸²

Although Diefenbaker's statements in the summer of 1960 included new references to the importance the government placed on disarmament talks, this was not a ringing endorsement of the anti-nuclear movement and its objectives.

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On July 28, 1960, the Voice of Women was formally constituted, concluding the initial phase of development for the anti-nuclear movement in Canada. The three organisations highlighted in this chapter had more in common with one another than not. But there were some striking differences in focus, membership, and purpose, just as there were several differences between the anti-nuclear movement and the peace movement that preceded it.

The most obvious different between the pre- and post-nuclear peace movement in Canada was the latter's focus on nuclear weapons and related issues. This was both a broad and narrow focus; broad in the sense that it included all things nuclear, but narrow in that it was a much more refined emphasis than earlier groups which had opposed war very generally. Subject matter more than anything else was connected to membership, which was surprisingly mainstream and

⁸² House of Commons, Debates, 22 June 1960, 5239.

broadly-based. While the pre-nuclear peace movement was the traditional domain of the political left and various churches, this was not the case with anti-nuclear groups. Though traditional pacifists, both religious and secular, played a key role in the formation and continuation of anti-nuclear groups, they were not the only members. Consider that traditional peace groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Society of Friends were active at the same time as the anti-nuclear groups, and often assisted with activities. There was still a need for groups dedicated specifically, even exclusively, to promoting the abolition of the bomb. Anti-nuclear groups developed to fill what can only be described as a void left by the more traditional pacifist organisations in the nuclear age. These new groups meant that new members were attracted to the peace movement. The movement's expansion in times of peace was not unusual; what was exceptional was the wide range of people attracted to protest against the spread of nuclear weapons and their tactics to encourage the government to do the same.

The anti-nuclear movement was designed to influence in ways that were different from the earlier organisations, whose members preferred to demonstrate their displeasure rather than lobby the government for change. Conventional peace groups were designed to protest; anti-nuclear groups were created to persuade and pressure. The question remained to determine the best method to influence nuclear policy, and this was where the three major anti-nuclear groups differed.

The Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards was the most traditional of the three in its efforts to influence. Van Stolk hoped that the list of 45

prominent Canadians who endorsed her National Committee would be sufficient to persuade Diefenbaker to promote disarmament, oppose proliferation, and encourage global control of all things nuclear. The group targeted legislators and the legislative process. Although the CCCRH was also created to educate the public and raise general awareness about the hazards associated with radiation, this objective was secondary behind efforts to influence government policy. Efforts to rally widespread support were only to underscore the position of the National Committee, not to provide political leaders with a sense of public sentiment or threaten political consequences. Most supporters of the CCCRH were not traditional pacifists, and simply wanted something to be done to stop radioactive fallout and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. That this organisation was specifically not in favour of pacifism was only an asset in terms of its credibility since pacifist organisations were so often dismissed by politicians as hopelessly idealistic. This personal approach to government influence would work only if Diefenbaker was particularly susceptible to persuasion through personal contact. Unfortunately for the CCCRH, there is little to indicate that this was the case.

The Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament took a different tactic from the CCCRH. Student groups were less focused on legislative influence per se, and were more interested in public demonstration than persuasion. In this regard they were similar to the older generation of peace groups. Their efforts to influence were based on coercion through negative publicity and the appearance of mass (albeit student) support. CUCND's Christmas petition was an attempt to show widespread opposition to nuclear weapons, but 1100 signatures

from university students meant little in the grand scheme of things. Because the student groups relied so heavily on demonstration, they needed to be vocal and numerous. In order to secure numbers, student activists could not afford to be as selective about their supporters as Van Stolk was with the CCCRH. This led to the inclusion of radical students, and left CUCND vulnerable to charges that the organisation was filled with communists which undermined its overall credibility. Credibility was much less important because students did not hope to persuade the government but to shame it into submission. CUCND did not try to educate and raise awareness the way that the CCCRH did, and thus credibility with the general public was not as important to more radical members. What student organisers initially overlooked was the fact that a lack of credibility meant that policy makers, and the prime minister in particular, were able to dismiss student concerns without so much as a second thought about the consequences.

Finally, the Voice of Women had more in common with the CCCRH than CUCND. Organisers included a list of prominent honorary supporters, just like the National Committee, but had an enormous advantage over the CCCRH in terms of its membership. Although the VOW was an organisation led by elites, just as the CCCRH was and to a lesser extent CUCND, it quickly developed a mass following. By the time organisers visited Diefenbaker in June 1960, less than a month after the decision was made to create a women's organisation for disarmament, there were literally hundreds of women who had written to express their interest and support. Any woman who supported the VOW Declaration, the organisation's purpose and

plans, and paid a \$2 annual fee, could become a member.⁸³ Unlike CUCND and CCCRH, which had local groups affiliated with a central organisation, the VOW developed branches. Van Stolk's decision to keep the National Committee an organisation by invitation only in order to maintain credibility actually undermined the organisation's ability to influence nuclear policy.⁸⁴ The VOW suffered slightly in terms of credibility because of its more open membership policy. Organisers were conscious of the importance of public perception, but the VOW was far less concerned about excluding communists than the CCCRH was. In the end, organisers decided not to exclude communists from anything but the highest profile positions within the VOW.⁸⁵ In an era of red-baiting, credibility with the general public was not related to communists in high profile positions, but whether they existed at all within an organisation. If credibility was the key to influence, then both CUCND and the VOW organisers faced serious obstacles as a result of their decision to permit communists and radicals to join their organisations. However, if influence rested not on credibility, but the ability to mobilise mass support, then the larger membership bases of CUCND and the VOW were a definite asset with which the CCCRH, regardless of its list of supporters, could not compete. How the

⁸³ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 206.

⁸⁴ F.C. and Valerie Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

⁸⁵ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 244-246.

government and the opposition responded to these organisations and their efforts to influence policy in late 1960 through mid-1961 is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five: First Encounters, Lasting Impressions

The last quarter of 1960 was a time of great change. In October, Douglas S. Harkness became the minister of national defence. The following month, John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States. With a new minister and a new president, things were bound to change for the government's defence policy. And not necessarily for the better. Both Harkness and Kennedy were more determined than their predecessors to see nuclear negotiations to their logical conclusion, and this chapter traces their efforts from the end of 1960 to the middle of 1961.

Uncertainty characterised the period as Diefenbaker met with the new president twice in less than six months. Canada's nuclear status figured prominently in both meetings. During these two encounters the prime minister referred time and again to the growing influence of the anti-nuclear movement in Canada as well as Pearson's position on the subject. These concerns had plagued Diefenbaker since 1958 and were only exacerbated during the period examined in this chapter.

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In October 1960 Pearkes left cabinet to become lieutenant governor of British Columbia. By then, Pearkes was inextricably associated with the government's problematic defence policy, or, as some critics argued, lack of policy.¹ Pearkes' departure left a void in cabinet at a time when it was about to become a more active portfolio. Green was now quite devoted to disarmament, something which

intensified the growing rift between the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence over nuclear weapons. Proponents of disarmament within the government feared the resumption of nuclear negotiations as their mere existence might jeopardise prospects for a disarmament agreement.² Diefenbaker chose Harkness to succeed Pearkes. Harkness was 57 when he became minister of defence, and brought both military and political experience to the position. A former schoolteacher and farmer from Alberta, Harkness represented a variety of ridings in the Calgary area after he was first elected to Parliament in 1945. He had served in the Second World War and quickly embraced his new position. The appointment also marked a continuity in nuclear policy in a way that Green's appointment had not. Green opposed nuclear weapons where Smith had been ambivalent about them; Harkness, like Pearkes, thought Canadian forces should have nuclear weapons.

When Harkness became minister, he believed that it was only a matter of time before Canada acquired nuclear weapons.³ Cabinet had already decided to pursue negotiations with the United States, and he saw no reason for this to change. But Green was becoming more strident in his opposition to nuclear weapons, and argued that an agreement with the Americans was unnecessary until the systems requiring nuclear warheads actually arrived in Canada. As Harkness

¹ Preston, Canada In World Affairs, 68.

² Ibid.

³ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question," 1, Harkness Papers, Volume 57, File: The Nuclear Arms Question and the Political Crisis Which Arose From It In January and February, 1963.

later wrote, "To have accepted this position would really have meant that an agreement would never have been signed until a general war had broken out."⁴

Realising that Green might interfere with nuclear negotiations, Harkness approached the prime minister to determine his views on the subject as well as the status of Canada's nuclear policy. He was pleased to learn that Diefenbaker agreed that Canada should proceed with talks. But Diefenbaker also believed that there was time to negotiate an agreement since Canadian forces did not yet have the systems requiring warheads. As well, he was reluctant to conclude an agreement immediately because it would likely undermine Green's disarmament work.⁵ As a result, Harkness took the time to develop and clarify what quickly became the government's standard response to queries about its nuclear policy. He wrote, "While disarmament negotiations are going on, prudence and good sense dictate that preparations have to continue to be made in case no agreement is arrived at." More importantly, "these weapons will not be used except as the Canadian government decides and in the manner approved by the Canadian government."⁶ The government implied that disarmament was only a theoretical means to avoid nuclear weapons; given the current condition of disarmament talks an agreement was unlikely, and thus nuclear weapons were necessary. The prospects for disarmament, regardless of how unlikely, bought time for Diefenbaker,

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶ Harkness to Diefenbaker, 17 November 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 104, File: MG 01/XII/F/100 Defence - Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons, n.d., 1959-1963.

and allowed Canadians to see that the government was working to do everything possible to avoid nuclear weapons.

Harkness was not alone in promoting negotiations. Bryce also encouraged Diefenbaker to renew talks in order to acquire the warheads. He suggested that Canadian forces begin to prepare for acquisition, which included training soldiers as much as it did preparing sites. He supported SAC weapons for Harmon Field and Goose Bay, and expected an agreement would be reached shortly in NATO. Bryce did not dismiss disarmament, emphasising that Canadian nuclear weapons would naturally be subject to any and all future disarmament agreements.⁷

While Bryce and Harkness worked to convince Diefenbaker to renew negotiations, Green and Robertson continued to promote disarmament. Publicly, the government tried to minimise nuclear negotiations; privately, it seemed to be on the verge of an important decision. Green illustrated this in his response to a round of questions in the House of Commons at the end of November. He minimised the significance of nuclear talks, reminding Parliament that NATO had yet to conclude an agreement on stockpiles and referring to Diefenbaker's earlier statements in the House regarding warheads in Canada, which he did not refute.⁸

In early December Green was as determined to promote disarmament in the cabinet defence committee as he was in Parliament. Robertson had encouraged

⁷ Bryce to Robertson and Miller, "Recommendations on nuclear weapons," 30 November 1960, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File: 9.3.

⁸ Robertson to the Minister, 28 November 1960. Green Papers (Ottawa), Volume 8, File: 13 External Affairs Debate - memoranda, reports, notes, clippings, November 1960. Robertson cited House of Commons, Debates, 19 January 1959; 20 February 1959; 18 January 1960; 9 February 1960; 4 July 1960; and 14 July 1960.

him to stress the symbolism of nuclear stockpiles at Goose Bay. It was a slippery slope; once Canada accepted any nuclear warheads the government would be forced to accept all others. Furthermore, the very existence of negotiations implied tacit approval and as such the talks had to be stopped. There was also public opinion to consider. Once Canadians knew that negotiations were underway, he warned his minister, they would criticise the government for denying that its nuclear policy had changed, when clearly it had.⁹ Robertson's preparations yielded few results as Green made little progress in his efforts to convince the CDC to suspend negotiations until disarmament prospects had been exhausted.

It was no surprise that the minister was unable to persuade his colleagues to suspend talks at the CDC meeting or at cabinet a day later. Green's plea took place within the context of an Irish disarmament resolution in the United Nations. Among its provisions was a pledge that non-nuclear nations would neither manufacture nor acquire nuclear weapons. Cabinet supported the resolution's general sentiments, but could not endorse it in its entirety for obvious reasons. As a result cabinet agreed that the Canadian representative would abstain from voting on the Irish proposal.¹⁰ However, the government's position changed a few days later when cabinet decided to recommend amendments to the Irish proposal. Instead of a ban on the spread of nuclear weapons, the ban would exist only as long as there was

⁹ Department of National Defence to CDC, "Memorandum on Nuclear Weapons," 5 December 1960, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File: 9.3. See also Green Papers (Ottawa), Volume 10, File 5.

¹⁰ Cabinet Conclusions, 1 December 1960.

"no significant progress in this field in the immediate future," at which point the ban would be reassessed.¹¹

These meetings in December underscored some of the problems facing the government as several major decisions were made during this time that related to Canada's nuclear policy. All agreed that Diefenbaker would be the sole spokesman for nuclear policy in the government to the extent that anyone who spoke on the subject had to use his wording to describe nuclear policy so as not to cause confusion or contradictions. Cabinet also recognised that the government had agreed in late 1957 to provide nuclear weapons for its forces in NATO. As a result, preparations for the acquisition of all the nuclear-related hardware were to continue as planned. Cabinet also reached two conclusions about talks with the Americans. Nuclear weapons were now an all or nothing proposition; a package agreement covering NORAD, NATO, and the Bomarc was all that would suffice. Consequently the government decided to postpone approving the request for storage in Newfoundland until a general agreement had been reached. Cabinet also agreed to resume talks with the Americans for nuclear weapons, "as soon as they can usefully be undertaken but the acceptance of joint control is to be a basic principle."¹² This meeting seemed to be a turning point in nuclear deliberations. All

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1960. When discussing the proposal with officials at External Affairs, Green read the Resolution aloud, and asked, "What's wrong with that?" Officials explained to the Minister that as a member of NATO and NORAD, it was impossible for Canada to vote in favour of a resolution calling for non-nuclear nations (like Canada for the time being) not to acquire nuclear weapons. It seems that Green had not considered this problem prior to the meeting. Yalden interview with author April 13, 1999.

¹² Cabinet Conclusions, 6 December 1960.

that remained was to make sure that "joint control" was secured and an agreement would surely follow.

The emphasis on joint control highlights that Diefenbaker blamed the Americans for his dilemma. "The only reason we haven't nuclear weapons," he told his secretary in late December, "is because the U.S. won't let us."¹³ This was a reference to the restrictions imposed by the U.S. Atomic Energy Act, and the American refusal to bend to consider Canadian demands for joint custody and control. That Diefenbaker wanted nuclear weapons for Canada was clear; all that remained were the terms upon which they would be acquired. Thus, by early 1961 neither public opinion nor Green was the primary source of delay; they might have compounded some of Diefenbaker's concerns, but they did not yet preclude an agreement. Rather, the Americans, under Eisenhower's leadership, were to blame. Nuclear negotiations were a small but present sore spot between the two countries even before Kennedy came to power.¹⁴

As Diefenbaker prepared for the new year, nuclear policy remained static, including Green's opposition. In January, Bryce had offered to speak to Robertson, whom he regarded correctly as one of the major forces behind Green's intransigence. He also offered the prime minister some astute political advice on the subject of nuclear weapons. Bryce's strategy was to deal with nuclear weapons

¹³ Diefenbaker, "Memorandum - Office of the Prime Minister," 27 December 1960, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 70, File: MG 01/XII/C/342 Pound, M.R. - Political, 1957-1963.

¹⁴ Traditionally, the Kennedy-Diefenbaker relationship, with all its trials and tribulations, is credited as a factor of overwhelming significance in the delay to acquire nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. However, this comment indicates the prime minister's exasperation on the subject well before Kennedy's inauguration as the 35th President of the United States.

quickly and decisively, thereby decreasing the potential political liability of the issue. He encouraged Diefenbaker to make a clear, concise statement in favour of nuclear weapons. Instead of minimising involvement in disarmament talks or opposition to proliferation, he should state simply that the various Canadian initiatives were no longer enough. To defer acceptance until after an election, he argued, would make the decision that much more political, leaving Diefenbaker open to criticism that he had neglected national security for the sake of electoral expediency. Furthermore, a forthright statement in the House of Commons would have the added benefit of forcing the Liberals to clarify their own nuclear policy, which seemed to be as ambiguous as the government's. Bryce assured the prime minister that Canadians would support nuclear stockpiles if it was explained that they were necessary for national security. With great pragmatism, he reminded Diefenbaker that votes were not an issue; those who opposed nuclear weapons were unlikely to support the Conservatives anyway. Nuclear opponents would vote for the newly formed NDP or Pearson because he had won the peace prize.¹⁵ Besides, Bryce concluded, the weapons the government planned to acquire would likely be a temporary measure given the rapidity of technological change.¹⁶ Although Diefenbaker agreed with Bryce he did not take his clerk's advice about making a forthright statement on nuclear weapons.

¹⁵ Bryce to the Prime Minister, "Nuclear weapons policy statement," 8 January 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 104, File: MG 01/XII/F/100 Defence Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons 1959-1963.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Nevertheless, by early 1961, the pro-nuclear forces within cabinet had persuaded the prime minister to follow its lead.¹⁷ Until cabinet approved otherwise, Canada's nuclear policy remained as explained in the House of Commons on February 20, 1959.¹⁸ And while Green focused on disarmament, Diefenbaker anticipated his first meeting with Kennedy and looked forward to determining how willing the administration was to allow joint control.¹⁹ Though there was a difference of opinion in cabinet, it was not an equal division, and Canadian public opinion reflected the imbalance. At one meeting, Harkness pointed out that a current poll found that 46% of Canadians supported nuclear weapons for Canada's armed forces, 20% opposed them, and the remaining 34% were undecided.²⁰ With such a large segment of the population undecided, the 46% in favour of nuclear weapons was little comfort to Diefenbaker. Such a large percentage of undecided opinion also lent credence to Diefenbaker's concern that polls did not adequately represent the potential impact of anti-nuclear influence. With more than a third of Canadians undecided about whether the government should acquire nuclear weapons, it was not unreasonable for Diefenbaker to worry about the possible increase in opposition as a result of the anti-nuclear movement's efforts. There was

¹⁷ For a contrasting point of view, see Erika Simpson, "New Ways of Thinking about Nuclear Weapons and Canada's Defence Policy," The Diefenbaker Legacy: Canadian Politics, Law and Society Since 1957, Donald C. Story and R. Bruce Shepard (eds.), (Regina, 1998), 27-42. Simpson argued that Green and his supporters had control of cabinet nuclear policy by mid-1960.

¹⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 14 February 1961, Paragraphs 31-32.

¹⁹ Ibid., Paragraph 32.

²⁰ Ibid., Paragraph 33. At a cabinet meeting on February 17, it was revealed that this opinion poll was conducted by the CBC. At this particular meeting some members argued that a recent Gallup Poll "produced diametrically opposite results." (Paragraphs 1-2). This was not correct. The poll produced almost identical results. Fn 64 below.

simply no way for Diefenbaker to know what damage could be done to his political position.

In response to criticism that the government lacked a defence policy, Diefenbaker took Bryce's advice, and suggested making a statement like the one he made two years earlier. There was growing awareness and interest in disarmament talks, which were scheduled to resume in Geneva in early March, and Diefenbaker thought that they "had weakened the public appreciation of the need to have nuclear weapons available,"²¹ comparing the situation to that of Great Britain from 1935 to 1938 as the British prepared for war against Hitler.²² He drew a distinction between public opinion and public protest, but noted the increase in his correspondence from Canadians opposed to nuclear weapons. However, he was well aware that most would write only to express opposition, not support.²³ What Diefenbaker failed to appreciate was that much of his anti-nuclear mail was not spontaneous; it was the beginnings of an organised campaign from the anti-nuclear movement.²⁴

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1961, Paragraph 1.

²² Given Diefenbaker's reverence for Mackenzie King, it is entirely possible that he thought that he could use the international situation in 1960-1961 to make the same point as King had made before World War Two. If King had been able to persuade Canadians that he had no other choice but to go to war in 1939 after the failure of appeasement, perhaps the same would hold true for Diefenbaker in the early 1960s. Once disarmament talks broke down irrevocably, then Canadians would be convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt (presumably even those opposed to nuclear warheads) that the government had done everything possible to avoid acquisition before finally accepting them with the greatest reluctance. This notion probably seemed like a good idea at the time.

²³ Cabinet Conclusions, 17 February 1961, Paragraph 1.

²⁴ This is somewhat surprising given the amount of literature Diefenbaker received on various organisational drives, but the various groups, CCCRH, CUCND, and VOW, did not include membership lists, just organisational tactics, so unless members identified themselves,

The Department of External Affairs kept track of nuclear correspondence, and quickly produced a report in response to the defence minister's comments about public opinion. Surveying correspondence since January 1960, the department divided the letters into three categories: Canadians who wrote on their own behalf; petitions from individuals; and petitions from organisations. The department had received 3,797 letters in opposition to nuclear weapons. The first group contributed 307 letters, the second 301. The largest contributor, by far, was the third group, organisations, whose petitions contained some 3,189 names.²⁵ While the total numbers were important, it is also significant to look at when and in what number individual letters arrived at the department. The department received less than two letters per month in early 1960, which increased to double digits in June and July, the VOW's early period of organisation in the wake of the failed Paris summit. Numbers increased to the high twenties in August and September, another period of VOW activity when organisers urged all new members to write to Green to express their concerns. There was a reduction of correspondence to four letters in October, before an increase again in November through February, with numbers ranging from a low of 21 in January to a high of 43 in December. The total number of individual letters written to the department during the period of the survey

Diefenbaker's office staff would have no way of knowing whether theirs was an organised effort or not. Furthermore, information from External Affairs only confirmed Diefenbaker's concerns.

²⁵ J.M. Shoemaker to Ross Campbell, "Correspondence from the Public on Nuclear Weapons," 17 February 1961, Green Papers (Ottawa), Volume 10, File 12: Nuclear Weapons, Canadian Opposition to - correspondence, petitions, resolutions, 1961.

Note that the survey included only letters of opposition to nuclear weapons. Although few and far between, there are some letters in support of nuclear weapons found in the Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7812, File: 154.3 Defence Research - Atomic Research - Atomic Armament.

was 209.²⁶ This information did not change Diefenbaker's mind on the advisability or acceptability of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. Instead, it served to reinforce his existing belief that caution and secrecy were required in any negotiations with the Americans. Nuclear weapons had to be presented to Canadians as a final agreement offered at a time when Canadians believed that Diefenbaker had exhausted all disarmament possibilities before finally accepting the warheads only with the greatest reluctance. This was the condition of Canada's nuclear policy when Diefenbaker met with Kennedy in Washington on February 20.

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The American election results had disappointed Diefenbaker. He was fond of Nixon and had hoped that he would succeed Eisenhower.²⁷ Preferences aside, Diefenbaker had realised that relations would change regardless of who won the election. As Canada's ambassador in Washington stated, Diefenbaker knew that the election meant a loss of "a number of our best informed friends in office."²⁸ Within days of the election, officials had briefed the prime minister about the new president, described as "aggressive, shrewd and tough-minded." Canadian officials remarked that the narrowness of Kennedy's victory might serve to constrain

²⁶ Shoemaker to Campbell, "Correspondence from the Public on Nuclear Weapons," 17 February 1961, Green Papers (Ottawa), Volume 10, File 12: Nuclear Weapons, Canadian Opposition to - correspondence, petitions, resolutions, 1961.

²⁷ Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 9, File: MG 01/XII/A/306 Diefenbaker Correspondence (VIP) with Richard Nixon, 1958, 1961.

²⁸ A.D.P. Heeney, The things that are Caesar's, Brian Heeney (ed.). (Toronto, 1972), 169.

Kennedy's activities at home and abroad,²⁹ a position that Diefenbaker could certainly appreciate. When it came to relations with Canada, the new president was no expert. He had an honorary degree from the University of New Brunswick and had visited Canada a number of times, but had no real knowledge of relations between the two countries. Regardless, as officials went through the list of bilateral matters, few items seemed obviously problematic. Indeed, officials believed that very little would change with the new administration. Kennedy was expected to review NATO's nuclear policy as well as American defence and disarmament policies, but nothing indicated that nuclear weapons would be any more contentious under the Kennedy administration than they had been under Eisenhower.³⁰ Canadian officials were sorely mistaken. Kennedy's arrival in the White House brought a new set of circumstances to the nuclear debate as he was more determined than his predecessor to secure a nuclear agreement with Canada.

From the beginning, Diefenbaker was leery of the new president.³¹ When A.D.P. Heeney, Canada's ambassador in Washington, first met with incoming Secretary of State Dean Rusk, he was asked to "justify" Canada's special relationship with the United States. Rusk was concerned that the relationship might inspire jealousy among other American allies, though Heeney's response seemed to

²⁹ Robertson, "President-elect Kennedy," 10 November 1960, Robinson Papers, Volume 3, File: 3.13 November-December 1960.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Robinson noted in his diary, with great concern, that the prime minister, "has formed an irrational prejudice against Kennedy and Rusk which could be a serious portent." Diefenbaker's World, 168.

satisfy the new secretary of state.³² But the mere request to justify the relationship Canada enjoyed with the U.S. infuriated Diefenbaker.³³ The prime minister's final meeting with Eisenhower in January, one week after the Rusk interview, also did little to improve this initial impression. Eisenhower did not have a "high opinion" of the new government and, given Diefenbaker's respect for the outgoing president's opinions, the comment was bound to influence.³⁴

In addition to these early irritations, Kennedy and Diefenbaker had little in common. The president was a Harvard educated veteran of the Second World War, from a wealthy and prominent Boston family. The prime minister was from a different time and place; his was the Great War, and he was a small-town prairie lawyer to whom nothing had come easily. Yet both men were outsiders. Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic president, at a time when being an Irish Catholic was not an asset in national politics. Diefenbaker could understand this kind of prejudice, as he often referred to the suffering he endured as a result of his German ancestry.

The prime minister's competitive streak seemed to be responsible for the first meeting between the two leaders. After learning that the British prime minister was going to visit Kennedy in April, Diefenbaker announced to Parliament in early

³² Heeney to Green, "Report of Meeting with Rusk," 9 January 1961, A.D.P. Heeney Papers, Volume 1, File: US, Ambassador to Washington, 1961-1962, Correspondence, memoranda, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa. A solid and friendly relationship developed between Rusk and Heeney, not that it helped relations between the two leaders. See Heeney, The things that are Caesar's, 171-172.

³³ Diefenbaker, "Conversation with Arnold Heeney," 17 January 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 86, File: MG 01/XII/D/149 - Notes & Memos - Personal & Confidential - Typewritten, 1958-1963.

February that Macmillan was also invited to Ottawa. At the same time he added that he too wanted to meet with the new president, as soon as possible, and preferably before the coming Commonwealth Conference in March.³⁵ External Affairs officials were amazed; there was no inkling that Diefenbaker had been thinking about a visit to Washington, and they were taken off guard by his statement.³⁶ At short notice, Heeney was able to arrange a meeting between the two leaders for February 20.³⁷ The meeting was arranged as an informal one to discuss general impressions of international affairs and Canadian-American relations, as well as some finer points on NORAD and nuclear weapons.³⁸

Diefenbaker was advised that the new president would be thoroughly prepared for their first meeting, which proved to be an accurate assessment.³⁹ Kennedy's briefing materials for the February visit were as sweeping in scope as they were solid in their insights. The prime minister was described as "vigorous, self confident, and...shrewd," one who promoted Canadian nationalism "with

³⁴ Robinson, "Memo for Diary File, Prime Minister's Visit to Washington," 19 January 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.3: Eisenhower, January 1961 and Kennedy, February 1961.

³⁵ House of Commons, Debates, 2 February 1961.

³⁶ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 169.

³⁷ Heeney's memoirs are silent on his role in arranging this first meeting between Kennedy and Diefenbaker, although Robinson makes up for this omission in Ibid.

³⁸ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Possible Visit to Washington by Prime Minister," 3 February 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.3: Washington - Eisenhower, January 1961 and Kennedy, February 1961.

³⁹ Robertson, "President-elect Kennedy," 10 November 1960, Ibid., Volume 3, File: 3.13 November-December 1960.

evangelical fervor."⁴⁰ State Department officials underscored that Diefenbaker was prone to hyperbole, using nationalism as a political tool. Canadians, they warned the president, always feared American absorption, which was at the root of Diefenbaker's brand of nationalism.⁴¹ They were just as accurate in their assessments of Green's influence on Diefenbaker, noting that the secretary of state was an old and loyal colleague of the prime minister, zealous in his promotion of disarmament, but inexperienced in his current portfolio. His attitude toward foreign affairs was described as "almost pacifist" as well as "a naive and almost parochial approach to some international problems which was first attributed to his inexperience but which is now believed to be part of his basic personality."⁴² The administration also had serious reservations about Green's handling of disarmament. Green had proposed that a collection of non-nuclear nations assemble together in an ad hoc U.N. committee to determine how best to re-start disarmament talks. The Americans regarded these discussions as within the exclusive purview of the nuclear nations. This was but one example of Green's naiveté on the subject of nuclear weapons and disarmament, and officials felt that he was the biggest obstacle when it came to dealing with Diefenbaker and matters nuclear.⁴³

⁴⁰ "Diefenbaker, John (George)," December 1960, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Security 1961, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

⁴¹ Author unknown, "Memorandum for Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker," n.d., *Ibid.*

⁴² "Green, Howard (Charles)," December 1960, *Ibid.*

⁴³ Author unknown, "Memorandum for Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker," n.d., *Ibid.*

Briefing materials underscored Diefenbaker's preoccupation with public support. A federal election was anticipated in the next twelve to eighteen months and the Liberals led the Conservatives in the polls. Noted also was the small but vocal movement opposed to nuclear weapons that seemed to be growing. Kennedy might have won the presidency by a narrow margin, but there was little sympathy for Diefenbaker's concerns about support for nuclear policy. American officials blamed Diefenbaker for most opposition; his procrastination and inability (or unwillingness) to rally support for nuclear weapons in Canada was the only reason for public resistance as far as they were concerned. Diefenbaker was similarly blamed for allowing divisions within cabinet to get out of hand. In terms of continental defence, there was considerable concern that the Canadians, with their reluctance to increase defence expenditures, were spending their way into neutrality. After all, Canada was strategically located in the event of a crisis with the Soviets.⁴⁴

Advisers offered the president several possible tactics that he could use to influence Diefenbaker. Consultation was highlighted as an important means of persuading Diefenbaker to support an American position. Kennedy was also urged to deal with him directly on potentially contentious issues. The Canadians, briefing materials noted, "are favorably impressed when given friendly and intimate treatment by U.S. government officials."⁴⁵ On the subject of nuclear negotiations,

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Dean Rusk took time to make sure that the President knew how to pronounce Diefenbaker's name ("Deefen-BAKER" a memo indicated phonetically). Rusk to Kennedy, "Diefenbaker Visit, February 17, 1961," Ibid.

It is surprising to see the thoroughness of the preparation for a visit universally considered an "informal" one, expected to last several hours at most. That Kennedy was advised how to pronounce

the Americans were determined to reach an agreement. State Department officials suggested that Kennedy reassure Diefenbaker that joint control was feasible, and pointed to the Anglo-American arrangement as an example. At the very least he should ask the Canadian leader about the specifics required to reach an agreement. With this advice in mind, American officials still did not anticipate any obstacles to joint control of nuclear weapons, whether they were for Canadian use or storage in Newfoundland.⁴⁶

As accurate and insightful as the briefing papers were, they missed Diefenbaker's biggest weakness. Kennedy was apprised of Diefenbaker's landslide victory in 1958, and he alone was credited with the triumph. Similarly, his various leadership bids were noted, but the implications of his repeated political failures were not. As the dismissal of public opinion indicated, State Department officials failed to recognise the role political viability played in Diefenbaker's formulation of policy. Electoral success was all-important for Diefenbaker, especially with a federal election in the near future. Anything that made the government appear weak in the face of American pressure would achieve nothing. This was as true for nuclear policy as it was for other areas of Canadian-American relations. For all their insights into Diefenbaker's strengths and weaknesses, the briefing papers missed the most important element of his behaviour: the maintenance of his

Diefenbaker's name is significant in light of the prime minister's chagrin that Kennedy had bungled his name, "Diefen-bawker." See Knowlton Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker: The Feud that Helped Topple a Government, (Toronto, 1990), 108.

⁴⁶ Author unknown, "Memorandum for Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker," n.d., Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Security, 1961.

electoral position. Surely this would have tempered an assessment of Diefenbaker as a "self confident" leader.⁴⁷

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Diefenbaker's meeting with Kennedy on February 20 was relaxed and covered a range of issues. The Americans were represented by Kennedy, Rusk, and the former and future ambassador to Canada, Livingston Merchant. The Canadian contingent included the prime minister, Green, and Heeney. At the outset, both leaders expressed their desire to maintain close ties between the two countries. The Congo, South Africa, and Laos were mentioned for information purposes only, and when talks turned to China, there was a surprising level of agreement. Diefenbaker agreed that the Chinese were difficult to deal with, but relations had to be improved between China and the western bloc. He knew that Canada's trade with China was a potential source of conflict with the Americans, and he reassured Kennedy that it consisted solely of non-strategic goods, just like Canada's trade with other communist countries. Kennedy understood, and was even willing to consider the use of oil bunkers from U.S. subsidiaries to assist the sale of Canadian wheat to China. Trade was also a contentious subject when it came to Cuba. Diefenbaker explained that Canada did not allow American companies to ship goods to the Caribbean island via Canada. Indeed, the American embargo on Cuba had not resulted in a boom between Cuba and Canada;

⁴⁷ "Diefenbaker, John (George)," December 1960, Ibid.

despite the embargo, Canadian-Cuban trade was actually below levels permitted for American exports.⁴⁸

During lunch the two leaders discussed continental defence, including nuclear weapons and production. Kennedy had paid close attention to his briefing materials, and offered Diefenbaker various incentives to persuade him that the Canadians should take on greater responsibility for the defence of North America. Diefenbaker promised Kennedy that he wanted Canada to do its fair share, criticising those who wanted nothing more than a "bird-watching" role for Canada's armed forces. There was a caveat to this pledge for co-operation. Canada's continental commitment was contingent upon American co-operation in all areas of North American defence, including production. To this end, Diefenbaker took Kennedy's suggestion that the F-104G be built at a Canadian plant as a show of good faith.⁴⁹

On the subject of nuclear weapons and disarmament, Diefenbaker made his concerns clear. Once again, the president heeded the recommendations of his advisers and asked about the elements required to secure a nuclear agreement. Diefenbaker explained Canada's nuclear policy, and emphasised the importance of a comprehensive agreement based on joint control. In response, Kennedy proposed an arrangement similar to the Anglo-American double key system. This was precisely what Diefenbaker had sought, and the two leaders agreed to use this

⁴⁸ "Conversations Between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, February 20, 1961." Diefenbaker Papers, Interim Volume, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 (Restricted) Defence (Haslam) Part 2. See also Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.2 February 1961.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

as the basis for a draft agreement.⁵⁰ There were some further obstacles, however. Diefenbaker remarked that it was awkward to negotiate for nuclear stockpiles while promoting disarmament, pointing out that Canada would be able to accept nuclear weapons only when the talks broke down. Kennedy concurred in the importance of disarmament, noting his own enthusiasm for a test ban agreement.⁵¹ After much discussion, there were no clear-cut conclusions on disarmament, though it was unlikely that Kennedy entirely supported the Canadian position on nuclear weapons within this context.

Despite Diefenbaker's initial hesitation about Kennedy, the first meeting between the two leaders was an undeniable success. En route to the airport Diefenbaker announced that the meeting was "excellent."⁵² Robinson noted in a letter to an official at the Canadian Embassy in Washington that:

The prime minister was jubilant on the way back and told so many anecdotes that we had the greatest difficulty completing his statement for the House by the time we touched down at Uplands. In the event, he went off in his car to the House with only four of the six pages completed and the rest was followed on afterwards in a breathtaking dash through evening traffic. We got the last two pages on to his desk after he had risen to speak.⁵³

⁵⁰ Recall that this had been Sidney Smith's suggestion in 1958.

⁵¹ "Conversations Between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, February 20, 1961," Diefenbaker Papers, Interim Volume, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 (Restricted) Defence (Haslam) Part 2. See also Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.2 February 1961.

⁵² Heeney to Diefenbaker, 20 February 1961, Heeney Papers, Volume 1, File: U.S., Ambassador to Washington, 1961-1962, Correspondence, Memoranda.

⁵³ Robinson to Rae, 21 February 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.4: February 1961.

Diefenbaker now had a favourable impression of Kennedy and even Rusk. The care with which the president had obviously studied Canadian-American issues was particularly important to the prime minister.⁵⁴ About Diefenbaker's perceptions, Robinson noted: "The PM described the president as having great capacity, a farsighted judgement on international affairs, and an attractive human quality in private exchanges. The meeting began, in the PM's words, 'stiffly,' but it closed on a note of cordiality which to the many newspapermen and others in attendance was obviously unforced."⁵⁵

Given the later confrontation between Kennedy and Diefenbaker about Canada's nuclear commitment it is important to discuss in some detail the different perceptions of what was said on the subject. The prime minister was particularly pleased with his handling of nuclear matters, telling Robinson that he had emphasised the importance of joint custody, control and use, and had encouraged negotiations for Goose Bay, the Bomarc, and the Honest John. Diefenbaker also indicated that he had clarified his position on an agreement while in the midst of disarmament talks: "While disarmament was being pressed forward, no agreements would be signed but all the preliminaries in negotiation...would be completed so that there would be no holdup should the need arise."⁵⁶ In short, it seemed that the

⁵⁴ This assessment despite Diefenbaker's words to the contrary, although within the context of Kennedy's visit to Ottawa in May 1961: "I became increasingly aware that President Kennedy had no knowledge of Canada whatsoever. More important, he was activated by the belief that Canada owed so great a debt to the United States that nothing but continuing subservience could repay it." Diefenbaker: One Canada. The Years of Achievement, 171-172.

⁵⁵ Robinson to Undersecretary, 21 February 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.2: February 1961.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

government was willing to negotiate a nuclear arrangement just short of implementation, though it was significant that Diefenbaker made reference to "should" the need arise, not "when". From this it is difficult to determine whether Diefenbaker meant the conditional phrasing to apply to the acquisition of nuclear weapons or the circumstances surrounding that acquisition. Did it mean that he was undecided about nuclear negotiations or simply that he was uncertain about when disarmament talks would break down, thus leading to acquisition? It was more likely the latter than the former.

By and large, Diefenbaker's recollection of his discussion with Kennedy are similar to the Heeney and Robinson accounts.⁵⁷ Diefenbaker placed particular emphasis on a comprehensive arrangement: "We do not intend to enter into any of these agreements or arrangements piecemeal – the whole thing is a package."⁵⁸ When he recounted this meeting in his memoirs, Diefenbaker was even more decisive. "We agreed," he wrote, "that detailed arrangements on all aspects of this matter should be worked out and embodied in agreements ready for immediate execution *when conditions made it necessary*.... So far as I was able to judge... the new administration's policies on defence were not going to be fundamentally different from those of its predecessor."⁵⁹ But Diefenbaker's recollections about the meeting might have been somewhat clearer than was actually the case. For

⁵⁷ Diefenbaker, Notes of Kennedy Meeting, Robinson Papers, Volume 4, File 4.2: February 1961.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Diefenbaker, *The Years of Achievement*, 169. Italics in the original.

instance, he recalled the meeting as having occurred in January, not February. Diefenbaker's contemporary notes on the meeting were not as clear as the recollection in his memoirs, and were also subject to the usual hazards associated with the interpretation of a participant. As a result, it is almost impossible to determine the precision of the prime minister's statements to Kennedy.

It is just as important to assess how the Americans regarded the meeting as it is to examine the Canadian accounts of the prime minister's visit to Washington. Canadian accounts are similar to those written by American officials, but there was a major difference in emphasis; for example, the American account contains less on nuclear weapons and disarmament than its Canadian counterpart. As well, Diefenbaker might have been firm about a package agreement in his own mind, but that sentiment was not as clear to the Americans. Their account of the conversation noted, "In concluding this discussion [on nuclear weapons, particularly at Goose Bay and Harmon Field] the prime minister expressed the view that *all our defense arrangements, including both joint defense production sharing and nuclear storage problems, should be settled at the same time.*"⁶⁰ The Americans understood that Diefenbaker wanted a package agreement, but they broadened the scope of the package to include defence production, which does not appear to have been his intent.

Regardless of these differences in nuance, the Americans also considered the meeting to be a success. Kennedy did not anticipate any problems in dealing

⁶⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation," 20 February 1961, 418. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume XIII. Western Europe and Canada, (Washington, 1994), 1147. Italics for emphasis.

with Diefenbaker and thought that he would be a staunch ally when necessary.⁶¹ Perhaps because of the generally positive sentiments on both sides, the February meeting left a false impression on both men. Diefenbaker continued to believe that Kennedy would not pressure him to accept nuclear weapons, and Kennedy believed that Diefenbaker had promised to accept them in the near future. As the prime minister began to stall, the Kennedy administration grew more impatient. In the end, the initial encounter served only to heighten Washington's irritation with the Conservative government in Ottawa when negotiations progressed at a snail's pace.⁶²

When Diefenbaker returned to Canada he spoke to the House of Commons about the success of his trip to Washington and announced that Kennedy would reciprocate with a trip to Ottawa in the spring. This marked the high point in Canadian-American relations during the tenure of Diefenbaker and Kennedy. When he spoke to cabinet, Diefenbaker outlined his discussion with the president paying particular attention to nuclear weapons, stressing that Kennedy had understood the importance of a package agreement based on the two key system. Green, on the other hand, seemed to have attended a different meeting, emphasising the prospects for disarmament. Neither Kennedy nor Diefenbaker regarded an agreement as likely, but it served both their purposes to allow talks to continue. Green, however, did not understand this and stressed to cabinet that the Kennedy

⁶¹ Merchant to Kennedy, "Memorandum of Conversation," 8 March 1961, 419, FRUS, 1961-1963 Volume XIII, 1150.

⁶² Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 172.

administration simply wanted to re-evaluate American disarmament policy before getting involved in the current round of negotiations.⁶³

The minister of national defence had not attended the Washington talks and did not comment on Diefenbaker's discussion of nuclear policy. Instead, Harkness investigated public support for acquisition. Prior to Diefenbaker's trip to Washington, public opinion had been raised in cabinet as a potential concern regarding nuclear weapons. Some ministers argued that a CBC poll had found that 46% of Canadians supported acquisition of nuclear weapons, while 20% opposed possession. Others countered that a Gallup Poll produced entirely different results.⁶⁴ Harkness looked into it and reported the results of the most recent poll to the prime minister. Contrary to a point raised in cabinet (likely by Green), Harkness found that the most recent Gallup Poll, published in the Toronto Star in January, produced results similar to the CBC poll. The poll asked "Are you in favour of Canadian armed forces being equipped with nuclear weapons?" The result was 45% in favour, 21% opposed, and 34% undecided.⁶⁵ Given Green's relationship with Diefenbaker, he must have known about the prime minister's preoccupation with public support, which might help to explain why he was so willing to counter

⁶³ Cabinet Conclusions, 21 February 1961, Paragraphs 4-5.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 17 February 1961, Paragraphs 1-2. See Fn 20 above.

⁶⁵ Harkness to Diefenbaker, 23 February 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: 154 MG 01/VI/R/89 Conf. Defence Research - Atomic Research - Confidential. 1960-1961. The poll was conducted by Elliott-Haynes Ltd. (Market Research and Analysis), and was based on 1200 telephone calls to households in Halifax, Toronto, and Vancouver.

public opinion polls with a survey of correspondence, produced with the help of the Department of External Affairs.

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Prior to Kennedy's visit to Ottawa, Diefenbaker attended the Commonwealth Conference in London, one of the original reasons for requesting a meeting with Kennedy in February. South Africa was the subject of heated discussion and disagreement. Having recently voted to become a Republic, South Africa had to apply for readmission to the British Commonwealth. South Africa's membership was increasingly contentious, particularly among non-white members, because of the government's policy of apartheid. Diefenbaker, who was a strong proponent of civil liberties, sympathised with the newer members of the Commonwealth who opposed the policy. The Department of External Affairs was similarly preoccupied with the Commonwealth Conference. It was not until late April that the prime minister and department turned their attention to planning the president's visit.

In the intervening period Livingston Merchant, American ambassador to Canada from 1956 to 1958, was reappointed to the position. Merchant was pleased to be returning to Canada, and Canadian officials were equally content with his appointment.⁶⁶ He understood both Diefenbaker and the Canadian political situation, and was an excellent choice. Prior to his departure from Washington, Merchant met with Kennedy to discuss the various issues associated with his

⁶⁶ On Merchant's sentiments, see Livingston Merchant Oral History Interview. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts. On Canadian point of view, recall that Heeney learned from Dean Rusk in January 1961 that a highly-regarded official was slated for Ottawa, not some "political hack." Heeney was confident that Ottawa would get someone of Livingston Merchant's calibre; who would have thought it would turn out to be Merchant himself.

appointment. Kennedy wondered about the real reason for Diefenbaker's reluctance to conclude nuclear negotiations. Merchant warned him that nuclear issues were potential fodder for the opposition to criticise the government as excessively dependent on the Americans. As a result, defence agreements were best framed within the context of NATO, not NORAD. He also emphasised that despite Diefenbaker's parliamentary majority, he and his government were insecure politically. The ambassador reminded the president of the value of personal contact with the prime minister, adding that a personal note would only help a situation that required Canadian support. Kennedy seemed to understand, asking his new ambassador to tell him when that kind of approach was required.⁶⁷

Around this time, Diefenbaker's opinion of Kennedy began to change. The president's star began to fade after the Bay of Pigs fiasco mid-month. Inherited from the Eisenhower administration, the unfortunate mission had been designed to remove Cuban leader Fidel Castro from power. The plan entailed training a group of Cuban exiles to return to their native country to inspire locals to overthrow Castro's government. The plan was ill-conceived from the start and, when Kennedy withdrew air support, the landing turned into a disaster which tarnished the president's image among foreign leaders, including Diefenbaker.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Merchant to Kennedy, "Memorandum of Conversation," 8 March 1961, 419, FRUS, Volume XIII, 1961-1963, 1150-1.

⁶⁸ See Diefenbaker, The Years of Achievement, 169-170 for Diefenbaker's interpretation of the Bay of Pigs. Given the later hostility with which Diefenbaker regarded Kennedy, it is difficult to take seriously much of what he writes about their relationship, particularly the May 1961 visit to Ottawa.

When Kennedy arrived in Ottawa on May 16 he was once again well prepared for his meeting with Diefenbaker. American officials were increasingly concerned about Green's influence as a result of his increasingly intransigent position on disarmament, readily apparent at the NATO meeting in Oslo from May 8th to the 10th.⁶⁹ Then, on the flight home from Oslo, Green made matters worse by telling reporters that he would be happy to "mediate" between Cuba and the United States to settle their differences. American officials wasted no time calling Heeney to complain.⁷⁰ Green, not Diefenbaker, the State Department and administration believed, was the real obstacle in the conduct of Canada's foreign relations. They knew that no one had more influence with Diefenbaker than his minister of external affairs, particularly when it came to disarmament and nuclear weapons.⁷¹ This was something that Kennedy was urged to address with Diefenbaker in Ottawa.⁷²

Kennedy's primary objective in Ottawa was "to promote a frank and working relationship with prime minister Diefenbaker," and to "impress upon him and his government our views and policies on global problems."⁷³ More importantly, the

⁶⁹ Secretary of State to the Department of State, 14 May 1961, 420, FRUS, Volume XIII, 1961-1963, 152-53. Rusk noted "Green is obviously bemused by great peace-making role which Canada (obviously usefully) plays in such situations as Suez, Congo and other affairs on which they have been asked to participate. Be it said, Green's point of view seems to be supported by considerable amount of Canadian public opinion. Suggest Merchant brief President this situation prior conversation prime minister."

⁷⁰ State Department to American Consul in Geneva, cc American Embassy Ottawa, 12 May 1961, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (D).

⁷¹ National Intelligence Estimate Number 99-61, "Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy," 2 May 1961, Ibid.

⁷² American Embassy (Ottawa), No. 908, 15 May 1961 and Rusk to White House, 15 May 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 5/15/61-5/30/61.

⁷³ Battle, "President Kennedy's Visit to Ottawa May 16-18, 1961," 14 April 1961, Ibid. File: Canada - General 4/61-5/14/61.

president was determined to seek a solution to some of the more nagging bilateral problems, with defence-related issues at the top of the list.⁷⁴ In the days before the visit, Diefenbaker had asked Merchant not to broach the subject of nuclear weapons with the Department of External Affairs, promising to bring the matter before cabinet prior to Kennedy's arrival.⁷⁵ Merchant complied, Diefenbaker did not. Despite Diefenbaker's promise to accept nuclear weapons, few American officials expected results in this area. Advisors again made sure that the president was well aware of the importance Diefenbaker placed on public opinion and the growing tide of anti-nuclear sentiment in Canada. Briefs warned that an election call was imminent, and with a precarious position politically, nuclear weapons would be banished from the agenda for the near future. This point was made abundantly clear to Kennedy in various briefing papers.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, N.B. The portion of this memorandum related to defence issues is highlighted in the margin by Kennedy.

⁷⁵ American Embassy (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 893, 11 May 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.8: May 1961 (3). Merchant noted to Rusk, "Dept External Affairs was riddled with wishful thinkers who believed Soviets would be propitiated and disarmament prospects improved if only Canada did nothing to provoke Soviet Union such as accepting nuclear armaments. This he said was ridiculous but view strongly and widely held. Diefenbaker went on to say that cabinet must reach decision on this matter before much longer. *Intimation was clear his sympathies lie with us.*" [italics added for emphasis]

⁷⁶ National Intelligence Estimate Number 99-61, "Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy," Paragraphs 39-42, May 2, 1961, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa, 5/61 (D).

It is difficult to determine what precisely Kennedy's briefing notes stated about nuclear weapons talks with the Canadians for the simple reason that this particular section of the briefing papers has been excised, in all copies, for reasons of national security. See, for example: "Talking Paper," 12 May 1961, *Ibid.*, File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa, 5/61 (A) and File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa, 5/61 (B).

On the surface, President Kennedy's three day visit to Ottawa seemed to be as great a success as Diefenbaker's trip to Washington had been. Press reports of the visit glowed with enthusiasm for the president and first lady.⁷⁷ The media coverage was "extensive and universally friendly."⁷⁸ Enormous crowds of people turned out to see the president and Mrs. Kennedy. Embassy officials regarded the entire visit as a positive one, and informed the administration that Kennedy had made a "deep and favorable impression" on Diefenbaker and his advisers.⁷⁹ How wrong they were.

The two leaders talked about a range of issues when Kennedy came to Ottawa: Cuba, Canadian membership in the Organization of American States (OAS), development aid, the sale of aircraft, Southeast Asia, disarmament, NATO, and nuclear weapons. Cuba was important because Green's offer to mediate irritated U.S. officials, and Diefenbaker made it clear that neither he nor his minister wished to intervene in the dispute between the two governments. Canadians were simply not very interested in the Caribbean island, which led him to stress that public opinion would not support membership in the OAS, despite American suggestions to the contrary. In response, Kennedy promised to talk to Diefenbaker

⁷⁷ See, for instance, the account of the visit in Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1961, Saywell (ed.), (Toronto, 1962), 135-37.

⁷⁸ American Embassy (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, "Preliminary and Tentative Assessment of JFK Visit to Ottawa 16-18 May," 19 May 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 5/15/61-5/30/61.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

about any military intervention in Cuba "before such actually took place."⁸⁰ Note that the president promised to talk to the prime minister, but did not pledge to consult with him.

As for nuclear matters, the president and prime minister spoke about them within several contexts: NATO, Newfoundland, and continental defence. On each and every one, Diefenbaker raised the spectre of public opinion. Like other NATO members, he remarked, there had been a recent increase in anti-nuclear sentiment in Canada.⁸¹ He was worried about this opposition because it was not restricted to communists or radicals; it was broadly based, "including a very high percentage from mothers and wives."⁸² As a result of this breadth and credibility, he was reluctant to permit the acquisition of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces, at least for the time being. But, at the same time, he stressed that he thought that Canada's armed forces should have nuclear weapons, and expected acquisition in the future. However, it was "politically impossible today."⁸³ He was so worried about political support for nuclear weapons that he doubted he could even convince his own cabinet to accept them. That Diefenbaker expected to acquire nuclear weapons in the future was underscored by his pledge "to make an effort to change public

⁸⁰ Department of State, "Memoranda of Conversation, Trip to Ottawa, May 17, 1961 Subject: Disarmament," Ibid., File: Canada - General - Ottawa Trip 5/17/61. See also FRUS, Volume XIII, 1961-1963, Memo 421. OAS Membership also noted in Memo 422, 1153-1155. For the Canadian perspective, see "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa, 16-18 May 1961," Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.7: May 1961 (2).

⁸¹ Department of State, "Memoranda of Conversation, Trip to Ottawa, May 17, 1961. Subject: Disarmament," Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - Ottawa Trip 5/17/61.

⁸² Ibid., "Subject: NATO and Nuclear Weapons," See also FRUS, Volume XIII, 1961-1963, Memo 423, 1157-1158.

⁸³ Ibid.

opinion on this question this summer and fall."⁸⁴ Diefenbaker repeated the same concerns (and the same promise to convert public opposition) when the two leaders discussed the Bomarc and disarmament.⁸⁵

As far as the Bomarc was concerned, the prime minister argued that nuclear negotiations "had gone a long way. He did not think it would be too difficult to go a little further – but not just at the moment."⁸⁶ In response to Kennedy's query about public opinion's malleability, Diefenbaker again promised to work to convert public opposition. He worried about more than just the division in cabinet.⁸⁷ There was also the opposition he anticipated in Parliament.⁸⁸ But Kennedy rejected Diefenbaker's interpretation of public opinion, observing that "he could get a parade in Boston at any time on nuclear weapons, but it would not be serious." Diefenbaker countered, stating that "he did not normally trust the Gallup poll but that it revealed strong public feeling against nuclear weapons."⁸⁹ This was not true, and one suspects that the prime minister knew it. He continued, explaining that the "hope of disarmament" was at the root of anti-nuclear reaction,⁹⁰ remarking that

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Final Copy)," May 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.7: May 1961 (2).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Draft)," [Proofread and Corrected by Diefenbaker], May 1961, Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Final Copy)," May 1961, Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

there were various credible opponents of nuclear weapons.⁹¹ His anti-nuclear correspondence came from average Canadians, and "was not the lobby type of mail."⁹² Again, this was untrue, as an earlier report from the Department of External Affairs indicated. Diefenbaker likely realised that mail from apparently average citizens opposed to nuclear warheads was far more likely to persuade the president that there was a ground-swell of public opposition than correspondence from a group of committed activists.

Despite these references to public opposition, Diefenbaker was still willing to accept nuclear weapons, subject to the same provisions agreed to in February. Joint control was an absolute necessity, something all too clear when they discussed the proposed "SWAP" agreement in which Canada considered accepting the F-104G in exchange for the CL-44. The sticking point, once again, was whether it would carry a nuclear warhead. Diefenbaker wanted to accept the aircraft and then negotiate an agreement for the nuclear tips, but Kennedy refused. Merchant tried to convince the prime minister that strengthening continental security was required to justify placing orders for military materials outside the United States, but again Diefenbaker refused, arguing that such a condition would make it appear that the exchange was little more than an American diktat.⁹³ Kennedy tried another approach, appealing to national security. He made it clear to the prime minister there would be no time to retrieve warheads for use with the interceptors in the

⁹¹ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Draft)," [Proofread and Corrected by Diefenbaker], May 1961, "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Final Copy)," May 1961, *Ibid.*

⁹² "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Final Copy)," May 1961, *Ibid.*

event of an emergency, and offered, once again, an arrangement along the lines of the Anglo-American double key system.⁹⁴ The problem, it seemed, was not with acquisition in principle, but how to make it politically palatable as a federal election loomed.

Diefenbaker raised two important points that were subsequently excised from the Canadian account of the meeting: the importance of secrecy and the political implications of Pearson's position on nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker had suspended nuclear negotiations with Eisenhower when rumours of the talks appeared in the newspapers, and warned that he would not hesitate to do the same thing with Kennedy.⁹⁵ He wanted to be able to announce an agreement, not simply that negotiations were underway. He had tried the latter in the past, and the only response was an increase in the outpouring of anti-nuclear sentiment, something he was determined to avoid in the future.

Pearson, always a consideration when Diefenbaker contemplated nuclear weapons, was a factor that the prime minister raised in his talks with Kennedy.⁹⁶ In January 1961, Pearson had reaffirmed his opposition to nuclear weapons at the Liberal party's National Rally in Ottawa. The Rally had been called to launch the party's platform for the next federal election, anticipated in the near future. In terms of defence policy, the Liberals had focused on the importance of collective security

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Draft)," [Proofread and Corrected by Diefenbaker], May 1961, Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

and pledged to re-evaluate Canada's role in NATO. "Unilateral disarmament," the foreign policy brief read, "is not the solution to the problems of peace."⁹⁷ If the party's foreign policy did not contain much to concern Diefenbaker, its defence proposals did. The Liberals were now willing to accept nuclear weapons in NATO with the condition that they be subject to collective control (i.e. unanimous approval by NATO Council) and used for defensive purposes only. They criticised the government's involvement in NORAD, promising that they would withdraw from Canada's "present interceptor role...The Canadian role in such defence should be that of detection, identification and warning." Under no circumstances was the party willing to accept nuclear weapons on Canadian territory. This, Liberals argued, was tantamount to proliferation and would make Canada a nuclear nation thereby undermining its efforts to achieve a disarmament agreement.⁹⁸ In short, Pearson and the Liberal party rejected Diefenbaker's pursuit of nuclear weapons for Canada but accepted at least the possibility of a nuclear role in NATO.

By the time Kennedy met with Diefenbaker in Ottawa, the prime minister still worried that the Liberal leader would make Canada's nuclear policy into a political issue. And with good reason. Pearson of all people knew how difficult it was to achieve a genuine disarmament agreement with the Soviets, and Diefenbaker told Kennedy that the Liberal leader knew better than to oppose the government's

⁹⁷ "Foreign Policy," January 1961, Kent Papers, Volume 6, File: National Rally Text and Follow-Up, January 1961.

⁹⁸ "Defence Policy," Ibid.

nuclear policy.⁹⁹ Diefenbaker's admonition came as no surprise to the president. His own advisers had told him the same thing, and then some. "Even in matters where the government position has shifted in the last two years, e.g., in its increased reluctance to acquire nuclear weapons," intelligence estimates cautioned, "the Liberal Party position has moved in the same general direction and at roughly the same pace, partly through conviction, partly through domestic pressure. It is unlikely, therefore, that the return of the Liberal Party to power would occasion any sharp turns in Canadian policy."¹⁰⁰ American officials opposed the party's pledge to reduce Canada's role in NORAD, though they were more optimistic about the potential for nuclear weapons under NATO and stockpiles for U.S. forces in Newfoundland.¹⁰¹

State Department officials were no more enthusiastic about Pearson than they were about his party's nuclear policy. There was little to suggest that Pearson would be much of an improvement over Diefenbaker in the area of nuclear policy. Kennedy was reminded of Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize for his work at Suez and his vast experience in the conduct of foreign affairs, but American advisers were not impressed by his abilities as party leader. As a politician he was "clumsy" and his campaign skills "uncertain." American officials held him accountable for the party's poor showing in the 1958 election. Officials held Pearson equally responsible for

⁹⁹ "Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa (Draft)," [Proofread and Corrected by Diefenbaker], May 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.7: May 1961 (2).

¹⁰⁰ "Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy," Paragraph 28, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (D).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Paragraphs 40, 42.

his party's defence policies, agreeing with Diefenbaker's assessment that they were politically motivated. "In his search for political issues," they emphasised, "Pearson has flirted with propositions which are disturbing from a United States point of view....the public impression he has given has been encouraging to groups advocating neutralism and unilateral disarmament."¹⁰² He might have been the more personable of the two true political leaders in Ottawa, but Pearson was not much more palatable to the Americans than Diefenbaker in terms of nuclear policy.

Several problems stemmed from the visit that undermined the relationship between Kennedy and Diefenbaker. The first was the president's speech to Parliament. The next was the infamous Rostow Memo. Finally, there was Pearson's attendance at a dinner hosted by Merchant. Kennedy's speech was carefully crafted by his State Department advisors and Theodore White. Well aware of Canadian sensitivities, Kennedy's staff checked the speech to make sure that comments were warm, solicitous, and by no means provocative or aggressive. For instance, writers decided to modify a reference to an increase in NATO's conventional forces because they feared it might cause confusion within the alliance as many members clamoured for nuclear arrangements with the Americans.¹⁰³ The Americans also checked with the Canadian ambassador to make sure the speech contained nothing inappropriate; it was Heeney who approved the president's

¹⁰² "Pearson, Lester Bowles ("Mike")," May 1961, Ibid., File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa, 5/61 (C).

¹⁰³ Memorandum for Messrs. Rostow and Sorenson, Ibid., Volume 18, NSF, File: Canada - General - 4/61-5/14/61.

reference, mild though it was, to Canadian membership in the OAS.¹⁰⁴ Despite Heeney's best intentions, Diefenbaker was outraged by the reference, and later remarked: "I was not about to have Canada bullied into any course of action. This was the first of a number of occasions on which I had to explain to President Kennedy that Canada was not Massachusetts, or even Boston."¹⁰⁵ Although American officials concluded later that the "president's forthrightness startled but did not offend Canadians who have been given much to think about," they were wrong.¹⁰⁶

Diefenbaker's irritation over the OAS reference was heightened by the discovery of the Rostow Memo. On the evening of May 17, after discussions and the president's address to Parliament, a document entitled "What We Want From Ottawa" was discovered in the prime minister's office. Despite Diefenbaker's assertions to the contrary, Kennedy did not drop the memo into the wastepaper basket for the prime minister to find.¹⁰⁷ Rather, it was left behind accidentally. Nor was the reference to "pushing" the Canadians to increase their interest in Latin America, to join the OAS, to increase foreign aid, and to support the Americans at Geneva and on the ICC for Indochina meant to bully. And, despite Kennedy's determination to secure a nuclear agreement with Diefenbaker, nuclear weapons

¹⁰⁴ Secretary of State to the President, 13 May 1961, Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Diefenbaker, The Years of Achievement, 171.

¹⁰⁶ American Embassy (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 923, "Preliminary and Tentative Assessment of JFK Visit to Ottawa 16-18 May," 19 May 1961. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 5/15/61-5/30/61.

¹⁰⁷ Diefenbaker, The Years of Achievement, 183.

was not included as an issue on which to "push" the Canadians. Robinson's interpretation was that the memo was the same kind of document he routinely gave to Diefenbaker in order to stress or remind him of a particular point just before a meeting.¹⁰⁸ Diefenbaker did not see it this way. He refused to return the memo to the State Department (which would have been in accordance with diplomatic protocol) and raised it again in a discussion of the visit a couple of days later. Diefenbaker's fury over the word "push" had literally been underscored by the prime minister on his copy of the memo.¹⁰⁹

Kennedy's visit ended on a low note when the president engaged in a very long conversation with Pearson at a dinner hosted by the American ambassador. Diefenbaker had no way of knowing how the Americans regarded Pearson, and took the lengthy discussion between Kennedy and the Liberal leader as a personal snub.¹¹⁰ He could not have known that Kennedy was simply demonstrating his personal preference, not a political one.

The Ottawa visit certainly made a lasting impression on Kennedy. It was his first visit to a foreign country as president, and an occasion in which he re-injured his back at a ceremonial tree planting.¹¹¹ Kennedy left Ottawa and Canadian affairs to prepare for his highly anticipated Summit with Premier Khrushchev in Vienna,

¹⁰⁸ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 206.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson, "Memorandum for File," 31 May 1983, Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.7: May 1961 (2).

¹¹⁰ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 208.

¹¹¹ When he learned of the injury, Diefenbaker wrote a letter to Kennedy expressing his concern, as well as his regret, that it had been sustained in Ottawa. Diefenbaker to Kennedy, 8 June 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 5, File 5.7: May 1961 (2).

scheduled for early June. The Summit turned into a disaster for Kennedy. In a classic Cold War clash of words Khrushchev proved to be the more effective of the two men. The Soviet Premier chose the occasion to re-state his demands for Berlin. After the Summit, Khrushchev announced to the world that a peace treaty on the subject had to be signed in 1961, something he had told Kennedy privately during their meeting. This growing tension between East and West in the summer of 1961 provided the context for the next round of nuclear talks between Canada and the United States.

Chapter Six: Negotiating Nuclear Weapons and Federal Elections

After Diefenbaker's meeting with Kennedy, acquisition of nuclear weapons, once again, seemed to be only a matter of time. Yet no agreement was reached by the time the federal election was held in June 1962. And while nuclear weapons played virtually no role in the 1962 election, Diefenbaker's long-standing concern about public support for acquisition occupied his every action when it came to the formulation of nuclear policy after Kennedy's visit to Ottawa. This chapter begins with the results of the 1962 election and the role that nuclear weapons played in that contest. Ultimately, they were no match for more pressing economic concerns. However, this did not mean that Diefenbaker had not taken the political cost of acquisition into consideration when he thought about the election. He did. In order to examine the apparent change of attitude, this chapter will outline the evolution of nuclear policy in the twelve months that preceded the federal election.

The Canadian government concluded the SWAP agreement within weeks of Kennedy's visit and embarked on serious nuclear negotiations in August and September. But there was no agreement. By October 1961, nuclear negotiations were no more. And, with an election imminent, talks were suspended indefinitely. This chapter examines several factors that led to the suspension of negotiations: an article in Newsweek, Kennedy's speech to the United Nations, and the peace movement. It was the anti-nuclear movement's initiative in October 1961 that had a decisive impact on Diefenbaker's position. Throughout the period, from Kennedy's visit to the 1962 election, Diefenbaker's desire to arm Canadian forces with nuclear weapons never wavered. What changed was his perceptions of the political

feasibility of such a measure. The peace movement deserves much of the credit for this change, which is at the heart of this chapter.

* * * *

The Conservatives had their work cut out for them in 1962. The Liberals had every reason to be optimistic about their electoral fortunes because Diefenbaker was vulnerable. There was an economic downturn and high unemployment. He had mishandled the Avro Arrow and the Coyne Affair. And, of course, there was the general impression that the government was indecisive on defence policy. In addition to the government's shortcomings, the Liberals were counting on a new generation to return the party to power. Keith Davey, a 35 year old former radio executive, turned to polling data and the Kennedy campaign for inspiration.¹ Davey was joined by Walter Gordon, J.W. Pickersgill, Mitchell Sharp, Tom Kent, and Paul Hellyer in running the Liberal campaign. Pearson was not the central focus, and organisers emphasised two things: the Liberal "team," and the "solutions" the party offered to the various ills blamed on Diefenbaker. Advised by all-important polls that Canadians still liked Diefenbaker, campaign organisers warned that it would be disastrous to attack the prime minister or his government. As a result, the Liberals virtually ignored the government in favour of their own agenda.²

¹ Davey and other Liberal organisers were influenced by Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960, (Toronto, 1961), and took it as their strategic guide to electoral victory. See Walter Gray, "The Men behind the Political Machines," Globe Magazine, 10 March 1962, Grosart Papers, Volume 8, File 13: Conservative Campaign Manager, Clippings, 1936-1974.

² National Liberal Federation Papers, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Volume 686. Volume 687. Volume 688, Files: Correspondence and Memoranda (1) (2) (3). Volume 689, Files: National Office - General Correspondence, Elections 1962-1963, Election Campaign - General Correspondence, 1962, National Office - General Correspondence, Elections 1962-1963 (2). Volume

By contrast, the Conservative party's campaign focused on Diefenbaker and his record.³ As one campaign document emphasised, "John Diefenbaker has brought to the Conservative Party both leadership and policy. Pearson brought neither to the Liberals."⁴ Dalton Camp and Allister Grosart were the key organisers behind the government's re-election campaign. Camp was the party's future national president, and Grosart had been one of the architects behind the party's victories in 1957 and 1958. The emphasis on Diefenbaker had reaped huge rewards for the party in 1958, and officials hoped for the same in 1962. The question remained as to whether Canadians would do in 1962 as they had in 1958; most thought not. Party organisers likely took little comfort from the fact that the Conservative party's headquarters in Ottawa was a former brothel.⁵

The Liberals did not seize the opposition's role and criticise the government. Instead, they campaigned as if they were still the Government Party. By contrast, the Conservatives were never comfortable in power, and campaigned as the perennial party of opposition, seeming to forget their historic majority in Parliament and campaign focused on their achievements. There was also a decided difference in the way the parties approached the campaign. The Conservatives focused on the means by which they could convey their message to the Canadian people and

692, File: Election: Pre-campaign Strategy, 1961-1962. Volume 704, File: Campaign Bulletin, 1961-1962. See also Kent Papers, Volumes 1, 2, and 7 (1988 Accrual).

³ "Meeting of the National Campaign Committee 15-16 April 1962," Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 384, File: Election 1962 - National Campaign Committee.

⁴ "The Campaign Themes," n.d., *Ibid.*, Volume 387, File: Campaign Strategy - Memorandum - Election 1962.

had lots of advice on advertising strategies, basic campaign and rally techniques, but few documents on party policy. These were issues that were determined by a few select members of the party brought in to help run the election, not caucus or the party at large.⁶ The Liberals focused on both style and substance, and their campaign committee was gathered together by early 1961 to translate the policies produced by the National Rally of January into position papers for the coming election. The Liberals were very well organised, with campaign colleges for candidates and information on the finer points of running for election that put the Conservative practices to shame.⁷

Defence policy and nuclear weapons policy were not major issues for either party. The economy and unemployment preoccupied most electors.⁸ Nuclear policy, if it played any role in the election, highlighted the indecisive style of Diefenbaker's government, but even the Liberals made little use of it.

On June 18 the Conservatives won 116 seats, the Liberals 100, Social Credit 30, and the New Democrats 19. It was a staggering change from the election only four years earlier when the Tories swept to power with 208 seats. Diefenbaker continued to preside over the government, but it was deeply wounded. Dick Spencer argued that Diefenbaker was crushed by the opposition parties' mocking

⁵ Walter Gray, "The Men behind the Political Machines," Globe Magazine, 10 March 1962, Grosart Papers, Volume 8, File 13: Conservative Campaign Manager, Clippings, 1936-1974.

⁶ Goodman, Life of the Party, 94. This was actually a reference to the 1963 Annual General Meeting, but when I asked him about it, he indicated that this was how party policy was made generally. Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999.

⁷ "Campaign College for Candidates," n.d., Kent Papers (1994 Accrual), Volume 4, File: Government Briefs, Drafts, Reports, etc., 1957-1962.

references to "Diefenbucks" after the government devalued the Canadian dollar to 92.5 cents early in the campaign.⁹ Worse than the taunts, however, was the minority government. Diefenbaker embodied the party's victory in 1958, and everyone realised that he led the Tories' sweep into office. In 1962 much of his 1958 support vanished. He remained prime minister, but took the results badly, and went into a deep depression over the summer that followed. He cracked his ankle, and took time to nurse his broken bones and his damaged ego. Both the leader and his party needed time to collect themselves for the autumn session of Parliament, and, in all likelihood, prepare for another federal election before too long.

The results were equally upsetting to the Liberals.¹⁰ The party gained 51 seats, but there were major disappointments, particularly in Quebec. There, Social Credit made huge gains, winning 26 of the party's 30 seats, generally at the expense of the Liberals. The overall results were also disappointing. As late as June 9, Gallup had predicted a Liberal majority, indicating that the Liberals had a plurality of the popular vote across Canada, with 44% compared to the Tories at 36%. The Liberals also led the Tories in Ontario and Quebec, while the Conservatives continued their hold only in the western provinces.¹¹ The Liberals

⁸ See Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 384, File: Election 1962, Issues Survey.

⁹ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 66.

¹⁰ At the Pearson Centennial Conference in April 1997 many former Liberal MPs asserted that the Liberals had won the 1962 election by reducing Diefenbaker to a minority government. However, Paul Hellyer contradicted this point of view. Hellyer interview with author May 14, 1999.

¹¹ "Liberal Victory Planning Bulletin, No. 25," 8 June 1962, NLF Papers, Volume 689, File: National Office - General Correspondence, Elections 1962-1963.

had expected to win the 1962 campaign, and win big; organisers were stunned when they did not.¹²

* • * •

Nuclear policy might not have captured the attention of government leaders or the electorate during the 1962 campaign, but the same was not true of the weeks that followed Kennedy's visit to Ottawa in May 1961. The president's visit left a permanent mark on Canadian-American relations, and by extension, Canada's nuclear policy. Diefenbaker's discovery of the Rostow memo forever changed the prime minister's attitude toward Kennedy. However, Diefenbaker was still willing to deal with the Americans on nuclear matters. In the weeks that followed the visit, Canadian and American officials concluded the SWAP agreement. Having notified the Americans that the government would reject the triangular arrangement outright if nuclear weapons were required,¹³ Canadian officials were pleased when the Americans acquiesced.¹⁴ An agreement was signed between the two countries on June 15, allowing Canada to accept the F-101Bs without the nuclear tips, at least until arrangements were made to accept them generally as per Diefenbaker's request for a "package deal." It was a reasonably straightforward agreement.

¹² The Liberals might have been confident about their chances in 1962, but there were trends apparent with hindsight. In mid-April the Liberals had 45% of the popular vote, dropping one point by mid-May. A further decline came in June as the party dropped from 42% on June 6 to 38% on June 13. The final election result was 37% of the popular vote, which translated into 100 seats. The Conservatives were far more consistent. In April the party stood at 38%, dropping to 36% in mid-May and mid-June. The final result was 37.5% of the popular vote. See John Lamont to Kent and Davey, 25 June 1962, Kent Papers, Volume 2, File: July 1962.

¹³ Rostow to Kennedy, "Follow-Up from Canada," 22 May 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 5/15/61-5/30/61.

¹⁴ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 930, 23 May 1961, *Ibid.*

Canada agreed to operate, man, maintain, and finance 16 Pinetree line stations. In exchange, the Americans agreed to give Canada 66 F-101B interceptors, which were to be fitted with conventional warheads for the RCAF component of NORAD. As well, they agreed to purchase F-104Gs from Canada with their support equipment and spare parts. The total cost of the F-104G purchase was \$200 million, with the Americans paying \$150 million and the Canadians the balance. Deliveries were expected to start in mid-1963 and to continue at approximately 48 aircraft per year, until the \$200 million sum was spent.¹⁵ Although the F-101B required significant reconfiguration in order to use conventional weapons, the Americans were willing to accommodate. Canadian officials, however, made it clear to their American counterparts that this was unnecessary, presumably because they expected the government to reach an agreement with the Kennedy administration on the acquisition of nuclear weapons in the very near future.¹⁶

Merchant spoke to a number of Canadian officials at great length about this supposed probability. One conversation in particular stood out. At the end of May, the ambassador spoke with George Ignatieff, the assistant undersecretary of state for external affairs. Ignatieff had pleaded his minister's case. "Green is not soft-headed or pacifist-minded," the Canadian official emphasised, "but very clear on the matter of the Soviet threat and where Canada's basic interests lie." Merchant noted more general Canadian concerns:

¹⁵ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 1016, 12 June 1961, *Ibid.*, File: Canada - General - 6/61-9/61.

¹⁶ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 934, 24 May 1961 and Merchant to Secretary of State, No. 950, 28 May 1961, *Ibid.*, File: Canada - General - 5/15/61-5/30/61.

There is a general and curious confusion in Canadian thinking over the acceptance of defensive nuclear weapons in Canada under joint control but under US custody, and the problem of the proliferation of nuclear powers in the world. This, combined with a desire self-righteously to abjure a dirty weapon of warfare, and a failure to distinguish between the protection of our deterrent power as an essential element in that power and a futile defense of the US against nuclear attack with all the fallout dropping in their garden, renders most discussions of this subject peculiarly frustrating.¹⁷

The Kennedy administration expected that nuclear negotiations would be concluded as quickly and as easily as the SWAP agreement, but this assumption was misguided. Indeed, the only nuclear matter discussed in cabinet at this time was the triangular agreement.¹⁸ Soon after the SWAP deal, cabinet turned to the troubled situation in Berlin. In mid-1961 the Soviets were once again threatening to cut off western access to the city, located in the heart of East Germany. The threat necessarily resurrected the nuclear issue, and the lengthy discussion that followed highlighted the continuing division within cabinet, primarily between Green and Harkness. Diefenbaker proposed that, given the "present circumstances," Canada renew its negotiations with the Americans for the Newfoundland SAC bases.¹⁹ Although there were indications that he was coming to accept the inevitability of nuclear weapons,²⁰ Green argued that the Americans were preparing for nuclear

¹⁷ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, 31 May 1961, ibid.

¹⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 23 May 1961, Paragraphs 13-17. On June 8, 1961 cabinet approved the SWAP agreement.

¹⁹ Cabinet Conclusions, 24 July 1961, Paragraph 46.

²⁰ Notes Re: RBB Letter, 8 July 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 86, File: MG 01/XII/D/152 Nuclear Weapons - Kennedy Memo 1961.

war, and gave his most dramatic statement in opposition to Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons:

One must recognize how high the stakes were in nuclear war. It was an issue that might determine whether or not Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Vancouver and other Canadian cities might be blotted off the map. It was not just a question of losing some troops but rather one of the future of Canada and of civilization. If the present situation gave rise to a nuclear war, the United Kingdom might be blotted out entirely and most of Canada as well.²¹

Harkness had a different interpretation. He argued that the Bomarc, with its range of 400 to 500 miles, could not start a nuclear war, and rejected Green's assertion that acquiring nuclear warheads for this system would make Canada a nuclear power. He again stressed that an agreement with the Americans was necessary so that no time would be wasted in the event of an emergency.²² Most interesting was the prime minister's position. Diefenbaker agreed with Harkness that joint control of nuclear weapons did not constitute proliferation. He also recognised the difference between NORAD and NATO, but supported nuclear weapons for both North America and Europe. Green did not oppose Diefenbaker's proposal regarding SAC, but still opposed nuclear weapons for Canadian forces at home and abroad.²³ This debate, at the end of July 1961, illustrates the context in which the president contacted the prime minister in order to renew nuclear talks between the two countries.

²¹ Cabinet Conclusions, 24 July 1961, Paragraph 51.

²² *Ibid.*, Paragraph 55.

²³ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 53.

On August 3, Kennedy sent a letter to Diefenbaker asking to resume nuclear negotiations.²⁴ The Americans had every reason to expect that the approach would be well received. They knew from their visit to Ottawa that Diefenbaker wanted nuclear weapons and had promised to convince Canadians of their strategic importance. As well, the looming possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union over Berlin underscored the need for a strong western defence. Finally, they knew that more Canadians than not supported the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

This pro-nuclear sentiment (or at least not anti-nuclear) had been highlighted in mid-June when the CBC broadcast an episode of "Close Up" which asked the question, "Should We Join the Nuclear Club?" The moderator remarked that Canadian weapons systems all required nuclear weapons in order to achieve maximum effectiveness,²⁵ though the debate that followed included both advocates and opponents of acquisition. The latter included Lester Pearson, Hazen Argue, Rabbi Abraham Feinberg of the TCND, as well as General Macklin and H.L. Keenleyside of the CCCRH.²⁶ Summarising the sentiment of the broadcast, Merchant concluded that it accurately reflected Canadian opinion on the subject: "Program reflects continued growth Canadian nuclear weapons

²⁴ Bryce to the Prime Minister, 4 August 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 86, File: MG 01/XII/D/152 Nuclear Weapons - Kennedy Memo 1961. The letter was highly confidential with a request that the original be burned.

²⁵ These systems included the Bomarc at North Bay and La Macaza, the Honest John rocket used by the army in Europe, the F-104G and the F-101B both used by the RCAF in NORAD. The F-101B was approved only the day before the CBC broadcast.

²⁶ Each of the chosen anti-nuclear activists had been the subject of a previous report to Washington. Feinberg: Toronto Consul Despatch No. 76, 19 May 1961; Macklin: Vancouver Despatch, No. 241, 5 June 1961; and Keenleyside: Toronto Despatch No. 76, 30 March 1961. See Ottawa Embassy to Secretary of State, No. G-329, 17 June 27, 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 6/61-9/61.

controversy....[But]... program supports Embassy's opinion anti-nuclear sentiment in Canada much less than petitions and pickets lead some government leaders to believe.²⁷ The Kennedy administration realised that there was public opposition to nuclear weapons, but believed that it was not broadly based. Yet, widespread or not, American officials must also have realised the political complications that stemmed from a vocal protest, no matter how small.

This was the atmosphere in which nuclear negotiations were resumed. Despite impressions that Green was reluctantly coming around to the inevitability of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces,²⁸ Harkness believed that he was trying to stall the talks.²⁹ On August 11 the prime minister responded to the president's initiative, and asserted that he, Green, and Harkness, were going to "consider whatever decisions may have to be taken in order to initiate these discussions with your representatives."³⁰ Days later, in a speech to the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association in Halifax, Diefenbaker tried to promote the idea:

There are some in Canada who advocate we should withdraw from NATO in the event that nuclear weapons are made available for the possession and control of NATO. I believe that to follow that course would be dangerous to the survival of the forces of NATO that are there now, should war begin. And it would be dangerous for the

²⁷ Embassy (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. G-329, 27 June 1961, *Ibid.*

²⁸ Notes Re: RBB Letter, 8 July 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 86, File: MG 01/XII/D/152 Nuclear Weapons - Kennedy Memo 1961.

²⁹ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question...", 5-6, Harkness Papers, Volume 57. See also the string of correspondence between Green and Harkness from Robinson Papers, Volume 9 and Harkness Papers, Volumes 10 and 57.

³⁰ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 138, 15 August 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 20, File: Canada - Subjects: Diefenbaker Correspondence, 8/11/61-10/10/62. Includes text draft letter from Diefenbaker to Kennedy of August 11, 1961. Kennedy Library.

survival of freedom itself....Would you in 1961, faced by the overwhelming power of Soviet might in East Germany close to West Berlin with large divisions fully armed, would you place in the hands of those who guard the portals of freedom nothing but bows and arrows? They would stand against overwhelming power – it is as simple as that.³¹

Diefenbaker was disappointed by the media's weak response following this statement. As far as Diefenbaker was concerned, the address served to make a point. "In retrospect," Robinson later wrote, "I am reasonably certain that...the Halifax speech...was intended to be the first real public step in fulfilling his promise to Kennedy that he would try to move Canadian public opinion towards acceptance of nuclear weapons."³² But try as he might, Diefenbaker just did not seem to be able to get his message across to Canadians let alone "educate" the peace movement about the necessity of nuclear warheads.

Green also continued to pose problems for Diefenbaker. As tensions increased in Europe, pressure increased on the government to make a decision about whether Canadian forces in NATO would arm their Honest Johns with nuclear warheads. But Green seemed disinclined to assist the process any more than necessary. In late August he submitted a memo and draft proposal on nuclear stockpiles to cabinet that reflected his general reluctance. The proposals were standard in their emphasis on the importance of consultation; warheads would be used only after the Canadian government gave permission. But he proposed a new

³¹ See "Chronology of Government Statements Regarding Negotiations on Acquisition and Storage of Nuclear Weapons," n.d., *Progressive Conservative Papers*, Volume 421, File: Government Statements on Nuclear Weapons. See also *Diefenbaker Papers*, Volume 176, File: MG 01/VII/A/1646.2 Nuclear Weapons 1961-1962 Statements.

³² Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, 229-230.

security arrangement that was quite cumbersome. He proposed a double perimeter with the inner controlled by American personnel, the outer by Canadians. He took consultation to an extreme recommending that any movement of the weapons, for any reason, would require Canadian approval. Side agreements were also exceptionally complicated. Ordinarily, American officials negotiated agreements with theatre commanders and military representatives from the nation involved. The minister thought this was unacceptable and insisted that any subsequent arrangements involve government to government talks only.³³ Green's suggestions were complicated but perfectly in keeping with his previous emphasis on civilian control and government consultation.

Essentially, Green's plan meant three-tiered negotiations. The first involved a general agreement between Canada and the United States on the American provision of nuclear weapons. The second would be a set of more specific supplementary technical agreements involving the different weapons systems like the Bomarc and the Honest John. Each set of agreements would then be subject to ministerial approval. Once these two sets of agreements were concluded, the entire package would be presented to cabinet for its approval, "at which time the government would be in a position *to determine what action it wished to take.*"³⁴ At this time, Green was only willing to make a decision about whether to allow initial talks with the Americans. However, in his words, "the decision of the Canadian government to enter negotiations should not be interpreted to mean that Canada

³³ Cabinet Conclusions, 22 August 1961, Paragraph 9.

³⁴ Ibid.

had decided to acquire nuclear warheads but rather that it wished to place itself in a position to do so rapidly if at any time in the future such action should be deemed necessary.³⁵ Green was willing to allow an agreement for nuclear weapons that covered the terms of acquisition, but not to admit that the weapons were even necessary. No wonder Harkness thought Green obstinate.

Draft agreements were discussed at great length at subsequent meetings in late August and early September. One of Diefenbaker's overarching concerns was secrecy: "if negotiations were started with the U.S. the fact that they were taking place would almost certainly become known and would be interpreted as meaning that Canada had taken a decision in principle to obtain stockpiles of nuclear warheads for the Canadian forces. It was important that the remaining draft Schedules should be prepared for cabinet consideration without delay and that the negotiations should begin."³⁶ He was not concerned that the existence of negotiations would lead many to conclude that formal acquisition was a mere step away, but that there would be an outcry of opposition. That Diefenbaker did not oppose acquisition was clear when he indicated his willingness to meet with Kennedy personally in order to conclude the negotiations if necessary.³⁷

In the cabinet discussions that followed, members commented on the international situation and Canada's relative importance in world affairs. Others remarked on the pressing need for nuclear weapons; the Bomarc was scheduled to

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Cabinet Conclusions, 23 August 1961, Paragraph 8.

arrive in North Bay at the end of October and no conventional weapons could be used with the system. The discussion went on and on, repeating the same points made many times before. Public opinion was raised several times, usually within the context of polls, all of which indicated popular support for nuclear weapons in Canada.³⁸ Then, on August 31, the Soviets announced they would resume nuclear testing, a big disappointment for Green and other proponents of disarmament.³⁹

The nuclear issue was important to the government for more than just the international situation. In addition to the Berlin crisis, the government was preparing for a parliamentary debate on defence estimates in mid-September. Diefenbaker became increasingly insecure about whether he could carry his cabinet and caucus on nuclear weapons during this time, and surveyed both about their position on the merits of acquisition.⁴⁰ But the tide was starting to turn. Much of the propaganda advantage gained by the west in the wake of the Soviet resumption of nuclear testing was lost when the Americans announced that they had little choice but to do the same. In Parliament, the government narrowly avoided a contentious debate on the nuclear issue and emerged, as one observer put it, "bloody but unbowed."⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 22 August, 23 August, 25 August 1961.

³⁹ Ibid., 31 August 1961.

⁴⁰ See Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 Defence (Haslam) Part 2 (1961-1963).

⁴¹ Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1961, 155.

But Parliament was not the end of nuclear weapons. The issue would not go away. Newspapers began to speculate on a coming change in Canada's nuclear policy, while others demanded the government clarify its position. In mid-September cabinet agreed, and decided that Harkness would reiterate that Canadian policy was as it had been, the same as in February 1959 and January 1960.⁴² Despite the government's growing hesitation, the Americans continued to believe that Diefenbaker intended to accept nuclear weapons for Canada in the near future.⁴³

Two events in late September made Diefenbaker's decision to suspend nuclear talks that much easier. The first was a report in Newsweek about the talks between Kennedy and Diefenbaker. Diefenbaker and the Canadian government were in the last stages of negotiations, and an agreement was going through its final draft at the Department of External Affairs.⁴⁴ But the rumours recounted in Newsweek, subsequently repeated by various Canadian press outlets, put the prime minister in a difficult position. Harold Morrison of Canadian Press published an article on September 20 outlining the current state of nuclear negotiations between Canada and the United States with an amazing degree of accuracy. He cited an article that was to appear in the September 25 edition of Newsweek which

⁴² Cabinet Conclusions, 14 September 1961, Paragraphs 17-18.

⁴³ W. Armstrong (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 291, 15 September 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 6/61-9/61. Armstrong noted rumours that Green might be removed from his portfolio, although could not confirm that these were true, arguing that Green seemed more "realistic about the world situation" with "no signs of insecurity in office."

⁴⁴ D.B.D. to Bryce, "Draft of Proposed Agreement on Nuclear Warheads," 19 September 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Policy 1961.

speculated about Kennedy's role in promoting the current talks in cabinet. Then, the White House confirmed the rumours as true.⁴⁵ Nothing could be worse for Diefenbaker than the headline of the Montreal Gazette on the morning of September 20, "JFK Presses Canada on Nuclear Warheads." That headline said it all. It was almost impossible for Diefenbaker to accept nuclear weapons if it appeared that he was bowing to American pressure. He had warned Kennedy that he would suspend talks in the event of a leak to the media, and he quite obviously meant it.

Diefenbaker was defensive in his address to the House of Commons later that day. When asked about an agreement, he replied that none had been concluded. He added that, "speculation which has been going on in the last few weeks is based on nothing more than the views of those who, desiring one final stand to be taken, are not taking into full regard the international situation nor in the event that it should worsen, the welfare, the future and the safety of Canadians." He concluded by telling the House that it would learn about an agreement only after one was concluded. "In any stand it takes the government must ask for the support of the House. That does not mean, however, that the decision would first be tentatively placed before the House. That would be a denial of responsible government."⁴⁶ Gone, apparently, were Diefenbaker's earlier concerns about consulting with Pearson. Later in the day, on the CBC's "The Nation's Business,"

⁴⁵ Armstrong (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 316, 20 September 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 20, File: Canada - Subjects: Diefenbaker Correspondence, 01/20/61-8/10/61.

⁴⁶ House of Commons, Debates, September 20, 1961, 8596.

Diefenbaker again spoke about nuclear warheads within the context of the changing international climate. "The world situation has deteriorated rapidly during the recent months," he stated ominously. He emphasised Canada's leading role in disarmament and test ban talks, and addressed the recent speculation:

There will always be rumours and predictions as to what the government intends to do in its defence and other policies. Sometimes for political purposes they are started. Be not alarmed by such rumours. I can say this to you, that as always I shall be frank with you and give you the facts. There will always be criticism. When any course is decided upon in defence or other areas of international or national problems, I will take you, the Canadian people, into the confidence of the government.⁴⁷

Within days, U.S. officials realised the Newsweek piece was a mistake. Now they feared that only an explicit Soviet threat would enable the Canadians to accept nuclear weapons without appearing to succumb to American pressure.⁴⁸

If the Newsweek article was an error, it was one that was compounded by Kennedy's debut before the United Nations General Assembly on September 25. The president chose to focus on a "new" American disarmament policy which centred on non-proliferation, a statement and principle many praised.⁴⁹ Green must have been delighted. He had argued that nuclear weapons for Canadian forces would constitute membership in the nuclear club, and Kennedy's statement seemed

⁴⁷ Notes for Diefenbaker Speech, "The Nation's Business," 20 September 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 Defence (Haslam) Part 2 (1961-1963).

⁴⁸ Armstrong (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 327, 22 September 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 6/61-9/61.

⁴⁹ Michael Beschloss, The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960-1963, (New York, 1991), 315. Although Diefenbaker mentioned upcoming American disarmament proposals in his statement before the House of Commons on September 20, there is no indication that Kennedy discussed the proposals with him in advance of his U.N. address aside from references to a new policy during the May visit.

to suggest, in his view, the same. Nuclear talks, it seemed, were done. In response to a query about proliferation from Liberal MP Lionel Chevrier, Diefenbaker reiterated the government's support for disarmament, but failed to respond to the apparent contradiction between containing the nuclear club and accepting nuclear weapons from the United States, even if under joint control.⁵⁰ Of course, Kennedy's speech had not been directed at Canada but the Soviet Union in an effort to keep East and West Germany nuclear free. It might have encouraged Khrushchev to begin a dialogue with Kennedy, but it was disastrous for the nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and Canada.⁵¹

The final thing to convince Diefenbaker that nuclear policy was politically dangerous in the autumn of 1961 was a petition presented to him by the anti-nuclear movement on October 6.⁵² The petition attracted a great deal of attention, including a flattering article in Maclean's magazine that highlighted the efforts and personalities of the disarmament movement in Canada. A number of newspaper articles were written on the petition, reported to contain between 142,000 and

⁵⁰ House of Commons, Debates, 26 September 1961, 8903.

⁵¹ Beschloss, The Crisis Years, 316-326. See also Cabinet Conclusions, 27 September 1961. Paragraphs 5-6. One minister noted the Government's earlier concern that negotiations, which would inevitably leak out, would make it seem that the Government was willing to take nuclear weapons. With Kennedy's statement in the UN about American opposition to proliferation, this was no longer a concern. It is difficult to determine who made this statement, since Green was absent from cabinet that day.

⁵² The meeting with members of the CCCRH was raised in cabinet by the minister of justice, Davie Fulton. As minister responsible for the RCMP, Fulton presented the basics of the demonstration. The CCCRH planned a 73 hour protest, and the RCMP anticipated 500 to 800 demonstrators, as well as the presentation of the National Petition by Dr. Thomson. Fulton was the minister to whom RCMP officials reported communist activities within the anti-nuclear movement. The CCCRH was not among groups identified for concern. Cabinet Conclusions, 6 October 1961, Paragraphs 1-2.

180,000 signatures.⁵³ Activists triumphantly told reporters after meeting with the prime minister that Canada would not accept nuclear weapons unless there was a war.⁵⁴ However, Diefenbaker quickly reassured his advisers that this was not what he had said to the activists during their meeting. According to Diefenbaker, he told them that he supported Kennedy's U.N. statement and agreed that there should be no expansion of the nuclear club. When asked about the implications of this policy in terms of the Bomarc missiles, just arriving at North Bay, Diefenbaker responded that the missiles were ready for use should it be necessary. Asked again whether this meant that the missiles would be fitted with nuclear warheads, Diefenbaker declined to comment, and referred only to his earlier statements.⁵⁵

The prime minister's statements did little to clarify Canada's nuclear policy. When he spoke with Diefenbaker about his meeting with members of the anti-nuclear organisations, Robinson raised the possibility that the prime minister had not actually meant what he said about proliferation. But the prime minister argued that Kennedy's statement represented a change in American policy, and that "the public position now taken by the president had killed nuclear weapons in Canada...he said that more and more it was becoming clear that we would not be

⁵³ CCCRH records indicate 160,000 signatures, while The Canadian Annual Review of 1961, reports 142,000 names. 156. Later CCND documents put the figure at 180,000. CCND Papers, Volume 18, File 12: CCND Ottawa Delegation 16 April 1962: News Release. See also Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker, 141.

⁵⁴ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 6 October 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1961.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

having nuclear weapons in Canada unless there was war."⁵⁶ Robinson was horrified. He pointed out that the American disarmament plan included a provision whereby the United States could supply nuclear weapons to other countries as long as ownership remained with the U.S. As well, joint control was still possible under the American proposal. Unless the Americans gave up ownership completely, which was never part of the negotiations between the two countries, there was no way that warheads in Canada could constitute proliferation. Diefenbaker himself had used this argument in cabinet only weeks before, but now he rejected it, arguing that it was mere semantics and therefore unacceptable. He argued that the same concern applied to NATO; if Canadian forces had national control of the warheads, this constituted proliferation, even if the Americans continued to have ownership of them. There would be no proliferation in NATO, however, if NATO had control over the warheads.⁵⁷ The final point sounded suspiciously like Pearson's stand on nuclear weapons, one that Diefenbaker had criticised as a diminution of Canadian sovereignty. At any rate, Diefenbaker's position on nuclear weapons was never more confused than it was following his October 6 meeting with anti-nuclear groups.

This was not a temporary change of heart. Diefenbaker's decision to suspend negotiations on the grounds that Canada would not support nuclear proliferation was subsequently confirmed in a conversation he had with Bryce. All

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

that remained was to break the news to Harkness.⁵⁸ By mid-October, then, Canada's nuclear policy was on hold again and for the foreseeable future. With a federal election looming, there was no way that Diefenbaker was going to risk his political future on such a potentially controversial subject. Kennedy's actions, first the story in Newsweek and then his statement to the United Nations, marked the beginning of the end of the most promising nuclear negotiations between Canada and the United States. The anti-nuclear movement then sealed their fate. The national petition, with well over 100,000 signatures in opposition to nuclear warheads, made sure of this. Events in the coming months did nothing to alter Diefenbaker's conviction that nuclear acquisition was a dangerous subject politically. And, with assurances from Boeing that conventional warheads could be manufactured for the Bomarc, nuclear weapons no longer seemed to be necessary.⁵⁹ With differences between East and West apparently resolved in Berlin by the end of 1961, gone as well was the impetus for the latest round of talks.

Diefenbaker was willing to abandon the nuclear issue until after an election. As Bomarc missiles arrived at North Bay and La Macaza, and the Canadian army received its Honest John missiles in Europe, Harkness was not.⁶⁰ He continued to promote nuclear weapons in cabinet. The minister of defence pointed out that opinion polls demonstrated that it was not a political liability. Gallup polls revealed

⁵⁸ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 7 October 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1961.

⁵⁹ Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review 1961, 156-157. See also Cabinet Conclusions, 21 November 1961, Paragraphs 6-7.

⁶⁰ Cabinet Conclusions, Ibid., 30 November 1961, Paragraphs 29-30.

that 61% of Canadians supported nuclear weapons for Canadian forces, with only 31% opposed and 8% undecided.⁶¹ The number of undecided Canadians had dropped considerably since the last time the subject of public opinion had been raised in cabinet, with more of that support moving to bolster the number of those in favour of Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Encouraging as these numbers might have been, what Harkness failed to appreciate was that the nuclear debate was now, more than ever, about Canadian-American relations and Diefenbaker's determination to avoid even the suggestion that he could be bullied into submission by the United States government.⁶²

Harkness continued to insist privately on negotiations with the United States.⁶³ In public, the minister was more circumspect. When he spoke to the Air Industries and Transport Association in November, for instance, he noted that, "We must face the fact that we lie between the world's two greatest protagonists, and, if war comes, we will be in the middle of it whether we are neutralists, isolationists or active supporters of the West; and whether we are unarmed or are armed with conventional or nuclear weapons." He ended his address on a less ambiguous note: "the government is doing its utmost in the United Nations and other councils to find the key to arms control with security. Until our statesmen and those of other

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1961, Paragraph 29.

⁶² Diefenbaker received a copy of a speech by James Thorson of the CCCRH, given in Manitoba on November 5. Diefenbaker's copy of the speech includes underlined portions, particularly reports of pressure from Washington to accept nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker papers, Volume 176, File: MG 01/VII/A/1646.2 Nuclear Weapons, 1961-1962.

⁶³ Harkness to Green, 19 December 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy. See also Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

nations can find the key, we can best serve the cause of democratic nations by assuming our share of the responsibility for preserving the peace."⁶⁴ When he was asked about what this meant for the Bomarc, Harkness replied that the government did not need to make a decision yet because the bases in North Bay and La Macaza were still not operational.⁶⁵

American officials were surprised by what they viewed as a change in Canada's nuclear policy. Kennedy was completely taken aback. Embassy officials in Ottawa feared that public opinion in Canada might shift because of the president's UN statement unless an American official clarified that the "nuclear club" referred only to nations with independent control of nuclear weapons, which was clearly not the case with Canada. Although they warned the president that Diefenbaker had to let passions calm,⁶⁶ senior officials in the Embassy were still optimistic that Harkness could influence Diefenbaker to make nuclear weapons a priority.⁶⁷ That American officials worried about the state of public support for acquisition underscores that Diefenbaker's fears were not necessarily unfounded or unwarranted.

Kennedy was perturbed when the matter had not been settled by November and asked the ambassador to find out what was wrong. Merchant explained that he

⁶⁴ Harkness, "Address to the Air Industries and Transport Association," 1 November 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 Defence (Haslam) Part Two 1961-1963.

⁶⁵ Ottawa Citizen, 3 November 1961.

⁶⁶ Linville (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 386, 7 October 1961, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 10/61-01/62.

⁶⁷ Armstrong (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. 406, 12 October 1961, ibid.

too did not understand Diefenbaker's position, and warned that a settlement was unlikely before the coming election.⁶⁸ The ambassador's suspicion was subsequently confirmed in a conversation with Robertson, who claimed to be unaware of the status of nuclear talks.⁶⁹ The president's military aide, Major General C.V. Clifton, echoed Kennedy's concerns when he spoke with Heeney's military attaché, Colonel H.W. Sterne, at a party. The president had felt that relations with the prime minister were quite good and was genuinely confused. The visit to Ottawa had gone well and he could not understand the lack of contact between the two governments. He realised that something was wrong, but had no idea what it was. Heeney, who had no knowledge of the Rostow memo, suspected that the source of the problem was the Newsweek report, and remarked that this was Kennedy's way of apologising for the administration's confirmation of the leak. He had attended the meetings when Kennedy was in Ottawa, and knew the premium that Diefenbaker placed on secrecy. "I suppose," he wrote, "that Mr. Kennedy was taking this roundabout way to reassure you of his desire for the continuance of a personal relationship to which I feel sure he does attach a great importance."⁷⁰ Though the prime minister later reassured Merchant that he intended to resurrect the talks in cabinet, nothing was done. As a result, Merchant

⁶⁸ Merchant to Kennedy, 10 November 1961, ibid.

⁶⁹ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, No. A-196, 22 November 1961, ibid.

⁷⁰ Heeney (Washington) to Diefenbaker, 3 November 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 Defence (Haslam) Part Two 1961-1963.

continued to warn the White House to expect no progress in this area because of Diefenbaker's preoccupation with public opinion and the division in his cabinet.⁷¹

Heeney's words did little to comfort Diefenbaker's bruised ego. The Rostow memo and leak to Newsweek combined to undermine Diefenbaker's faith in Kennedy. The Rostow memo hurt Diefenbaker's pride, but the leak went specifically against the prime minister's explicit request for secrecy on the subject of nuclear negotiations. Kennedy knew the importance Diefenbaker placed on secrecy, and yet White House officials confirmed the existence of talks knowing that Canadian opinion was divided, opposition vocal, and the prime minister on the cusp of an election campaign. There is no question that Diefenbaker was overly sensitive, but it was compounded by Kennedy's disregard for the Canadian leader's electoral priorities. With the coming election and Diefenbaker's fear that the opposition would portray him as subservient to the Americans, nuclear talks were impossible until after the election.

Aside from Liberal sniping and anti-nuclear protests, it was easy for the government to defer all matters nuclear for the time being. Negotiations in NATO were going nowhere. As 1961 ended, the prospect of nuclear warheads did not seem any more promising in NATO than in Canada. At its meeting in early December, NATO was preoccupied with other matters. Khrushchev and his involvement in Berlin remained a source of great concern for members of the alliance. The Berlin wall, erected in August, had seemed to stabilise the situation, but the North Atlantic alliance was divided over what policy to pursue. The alliance,

⁷¹ Embassy (Ottawa) to State Department, No. 519, FRUS, Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1163-64.

excluding France, wanted to maintain NATO's military strength while promoting negotiations with the Soviets whenever possible. The French disagreed, and did not want NATO to negotiate with Khrushchev as long as the Soviet Union was a threat to the West.⁷² When Green presented the NATO situation to cabinet, his concluding comments about Canada's role in the alliance it helped to found were not encouraging. "Canada," he remarked, "now amounted to very little in the NATO picture."⁷³

By early 1962 nuclear weapons were simply not a primary concern for most Canadians, as a February Gallup Poll indicated. If anything, the electorate regarded acquisition positively, not negatively.⁷⁴ Still, Diefenbaker had to reconsider his government's nuclear policy before he could turn his attention to an election. He had to make sure that the government's defence policy appeared clear and decisive in response to Opposition accusations to the contrary; Diefenbaker wanted to demonstrate that his policy was not indecisive, but flexible and adaptable to changing needs.⁷⁵ A response along these lines was behind his request to the Department of External Affairs to find out about the defence programs of other nations, and how they dealt with technical innovation. But instead of focusing on developing technology, department officials argued that the west's evolving

⁷² Cabinet Conclusions, 18 December 1961, Paragraphs 5-12.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 11.

⁷⁴ Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, "Ranking of Issues Facing Canada Today, February 1962." NLF Papers, Volume 757, File: Political Surveys and Presentations (1).

⁷⁵ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Prime Minister's Request for Information on Defence Matters," 10 January 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1962.

strategic doctrine made it impossible to make decisions pertaining to Canada's own national defence.⁷⁶ Needless to say, the response from the civil servants did not help Diefenbaker.

Regardless, Diefenbaker did his best to clarify nuclear policy to Parliament in late January. Once again, Diefenbaker reiterated his February 1959 statement. "We made our enunciation of policy as far back as 1959 clearly, definitely and absolutely," he stated. "Since that time we have continued in that policy, and when the debate takes place on international affairs we shall deal with this matter and point out at the same time the tremendous cleavage and schism which exists on this subject within the ranks of the opposition despite the fact that in this regard the advertising represents the Liberals as having the answer."⁷⁷ Paul Martin refused to accept the prime minister's statement, accusing the government of concluding a secret agreement with Kennedy during his visit in May. Once again Diefenbaker wondered whether the Americans had leaked confidential information, this time to the Liberals, even though Merchant promised him that they were not to blame.⁷⁸ Given previous indiscretions, it was not an unreasonable concern.

⁷⁶ Robinson to the Prime Minister, 16 January 1962, Ibid.

⁷⁷ House of Commons, Debates, 22 January 1962, 65.

⁷⁸ Embassy (Ottawa) to State Department, No. 873, 8 March 1962, FRUS, Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1168-69. Merchant noted that during his conversation with Diefenbaker, the prime minister indicated that he was certain Martin had received his information from the Canadian civil service, not American sources, despite his expressed concerns to the contrary. Perhaps he was correct. Pearson learned of the exchange between Diefenbaker and Kennedy through Douglas LePan, and Pearson passed on the information to Martin. LePan to Pearson, 21 February 1962 and Pearson to LePan, 28 February 1962, Pearson Papers, Volume 49, File: 802.2 Nuclear Policy Part One.

While there was no "secret agreement" for the use of American warheads in the event of an emergency, Diefenbaker's nuclear policy was starting to shift; though he still placed a high priority on disarmament, he also stated that Canadian systems would have nuclear warheads in the event of an emergency.⁷⁹ Despite this pledge to act in a crisis, there was no formal arrangement between Canada and the United States to make this more than a theoretical possibility. And there was no impending agreement or even the possibility that talks would be resumed prior to the election. Diefenbaker was using the United States to his political advantage, blaming the Americans for failing to allow joint control of nuclear weapons.⁸⁰ It might have been true under Eisenhower, but not Kennedy. Joint control was always a viable option as far as the Kennedy administration was concerned, but Diefenbaker hoped that blaming the Americans would reap great benefits at the ballot box.

While nuclear negotiations took a back-seat to electioneering in the spring of 1962, the same was not true of Canadian-American relations. Despite Kennedy's approach to Diefenbaker in November, the prime minister's resentment toward the president only grew. There were several incidents that spring that contributed to this sentiment: a White House dinner for Nobel Prize winners, revelations about the Rostow memo, and a new ambassador in Washington. All three occurred at a time

⁷⁹ See, for instance, Edmonton news conference, 24 February 1962, Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 421, File: Government Statements on Nuclear Weapons, March 1962. As well, see House of Commons, Debates, 26 February 1962, 1250-51. Robinson Papers, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 27 February 1962, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy.

⁸⁰ Robinson, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 27 February 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy.

when Diefenbaker's electoral fortunes were on the decline. A Gallup Poll conducted in May showed the Liberals leading the Conservatives 45% to 38%, with the Liberals ahead of the Tories in every area of the country except the western provinces.⁸¹

Diefenbaker had been informed of Kennedy's decision to invite American Nobel Prize winners to dinner in early April, and he knew that the invitation was also extended to other Nobel Prize winners in the western hemisphere. The result was that Pearson was invited to attend a White House dinner during the election campaign, something Diefenbaker worried he could use to great effect politically.⁸² The prime minister was livid. He thought that Kennedy wanted the Liberals to win the spring election, and that he was meddling in the Canadian campaign. Nothing could be further from the truth; Kennedy preferred Pearson to Diefenbaker personally, but the Liberal party's nuclear policy was no more palatable to American officials than Diefenbaker's.⁸³ As far as the Americans were concerned, Diefenbaker was likely to be returned to office and was willing to negotiate after the election was over. But the lengthy dinner conversation between Kennedy and Pearson, reported in the Canadian press, infuriated the prime minister, reducing

⁸¹ "Liberal Victory Planning Bulletin, No. 25," 8 June 1962, NLF Papers, Volume 689, File: National Office - General Correspondence, Elections 1962-1963.

⁸² Robinson to Diefenbaker, 4 April 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 6, File 6.1: April 1962.

⁸³ "Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy," Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Kennedy Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (D).

even further the chances that he would be willing to renew negotiations if he won the election.⁸⁴

Diefenbaker's irritation with Kennedy was evident when Merchant scheduled his final meeting with the prime minister. Although the meeting was scheduled to last a brief fifteen minutes, Diefenbaker ranted and raved in "what can be only described as a tirade," for almost two hours.⁸⁵ Robinson had warned Merchant, who was returning to Washington, that the prime minister was furious about Kennedy's conversation with the Liberal leader, harping on the "political capital" of such a discussion. Merchant tried to reassure him that there was nothing sinister about Kennedy's invitation to Pearson. Nor was there anything untoward about the president's conversation with the Liberal leader about matters of foreign affairs with a visitor so obviously distinguished in that area.⁸⁶ Diefenbaker would not be cajoled, and accused the president of meddling in the election. He even went so far as to threaten to make Canadian-American relations a campaign issue. Then Diefenbaker did the unthinkable. He warned that he was going to reveal the existence and contents of the Rostow memorandum, promising to use it to prove that only he would guarantee that the Americans did not dominate Canada.⁸⁷ Merchant was taken aback; it was the first he had heard of the memo, and the prime

⁸⁴ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 268-269.

⁸⁵ Merchant to George Ball, 5 May 1962, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - Rostow Memorandum 5/16/61 and Related Material 5/61-5/63.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

minister's behaviour greatly disturbed him, though he attributed much of the outburst to campaign fatigue.⁸⁸

The memo caused Merchant the most anxiety. He told Diefenbaker that the document was likely an unofficial memo advising the president on foreign affairs, and warned that revelations about the memo would have negative consequences only for him as people would wonder how he had come to possess a confidential document and why it had not been returned. In spite of the prime minister's histrionics, Merchant felt that he had convinced him not to use the memo in any capacity during the campaign.⁸⁹ But he was not absolutely certain, and advised the White House "that we take out any available insurance against the worst."⁹⁰ Discussions followed in Washington about how best to deal with their irate northern neighbour.

The ambassador urged that the president contrive a reason to meet with Diefenbaker, in some neutral location so that any public perception of American interference could be laid to rest. No proposal should be released until there was agreement between the two men on the subject in private. Though he hoped this would be sufficient to mend relations between the two leaders, there were no guarantees. "Needless to say," he concluded, "I am distressed to bring this problem to your and the president's attention. Its implications are so serious, however, as, in my judgment, to require the president's consideration and prompt effort to forestall

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Merchant to Ball, 5 May 1962, Ibid.

what could be a very damaging development in relations between Canada and the United States."⁹¹

McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy's national security advisor, quickly responded. He told the ambassador to speak to Diefenbaker personally, and to make sure that he understood it would be unwise to do anything that could be construed as a threat to the U.S. regarding the memo. It was a personal paper not to be used for political purposes. Bundy underscored that the Americans had their own set of records of the conversations between Diefenbaker and Kennedy, and there was not even a hint of pressure in these documents. Even the mere suggestion that the memo might be made public would have a negative impact on the administration's perceptions of Diefenbaker and his government. Kennedy was willing to disregard Diefenbaker's temper tantrum, attributing it to the typical strains of an election. Merchant was encouraged to "show real sympathy with Diefenbaker on this one point."⁹² This information was communicated to the American embassy in Ottawa the same day.⁹³

Because Diefenbaker was busy campaigning Merchant did not see him until a week later, on May 12. He conveyed the gist of Bundy's advice, stressing that there would be incalculable harm done to Canadian-American relations if the prime minister tried to use the Rostow memo to inflame anti-American sentiment for political purposes. Diefenbaker told the outgoing ambassador that he had decided

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Bundy to Ball, 8 May 1962, Ibid.

against using the memo, and pledged to inform him if he changed his mind.

Merchant concluded: "Notwithstanding fact PM nervous and in my judgment on verge of exhaustion, I believe storm has passed and that chances are now minimal that he will embark on all-out anti-American line using reference memo in process. At end of conversation we both lowered our voices and with complimentary close he bade me warm good night."⁹⁴ With that, the Rostow memo was put to rest.

Personnel changes did little to smooth the ruffled feathers between the two countries. In February, Diefenbaker had decided to replace Heeney with Charles Ritchie as Canada's ambassador to the United States. Ritchie, who was Canada's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, took over the post in mid-May, right in the middle of the election campaign. However, Heeney left Washington at the end of April, leaving a vacancy at an important time, particularly since there was no ambassador in Ottawa. He had been an able intermediary between the two governments, softening some of the sharper edges in many of Diefenbaker's statements.

Ritchie arrived during a difficult period. Although the president realised that the Conservative government was preoccupied with its election campaign, he nonetheless took the opportunity to press Ritchie on several issues when he presented his diplomatic credentials. Kennedy had spoken to Heeney about the possibility of a meeting between the two leaders after the election, on the advice of

⁹³ Acting Secretary of State to Embassy (Ottawa), No. 1081, 8 May 1962, ibid.

⁹⁴ Merchant (Ottawa) to Secretary and Undersecretary of State, 13 May 1962, ibid.

Merchant, to talk about nuclear negotiations.⁹⁵ Not surprisingly, nuclear weapons remained at the top of the list of things to discuss with the new ambassador in mid-May even if the president and his officials were clearly impatient with Diefenbaker and his government on the subject.⁹⁶ Kennedy was more than happy to allow joint control over the use of nuclear weapons, all that remained was for Diefenbaker (or Pearson, depending on the June 18 results) to approve the agreement in cabinet.⁹⁷

A change closer to home also had an impact on the prime minister.

Robinson was anxious to move on to more interesting (and less stressful and volatile) working conditions, and he accompanied Ritchie to Washington. Robinson was keenly aware of the deterioration in Canadian-American relations, and wanted to help remedy the situation.⁹⁸ It was a significant loss for Diefenbaker.

* * * * *

Diefenbaker took the results of the 1962 election personally, a difficult thing to avoid given the party's concentration on its leader during the campaign. But the prime minister's ego had to wait as a monetary crisis followed just days after the election. An austerity program was announced on June 23, with surcharges on

⁹⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation, Canadian Ambassador's Farewell Call," 17 April 1962, 432, FRUS, Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1170-71.

⁹⁶ During the campaign Canadian and American representatives of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence met at Fort Benning, Georgia where the Americans expressed their continued concern about the non-nuclear status of the Bomarc missile. "Permanent Joint Board on Defence, April 30-May 3, 1962," 3-4. Also D.L. Wilgress to Bryce, 11 May 1962 and Bryce to Wilgress 14 May 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1962.

⁹⁷ Author unknown, "Possible Points for Discussion with the new Ambassador of Canada," Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - Security 1962.

⁹⁸ Robinson, "Conversations with Ambassador Merchant and Mr. Armstrong of American Embassy, May 9, 1962," Robinson Papers, Volume 6, File 6.2: May-August, 1962.

imports, \$250 million reduction in government expenditures, and loans from the United States and Great Britain (as well as the IMF) to help bolster the dollar and Canada's foreign exchange reserves. Diefenbaker's fortunes continued to dwindle, and moved to include his personal life. In July, Senator William Brunt, one of Diefenbaker's few close friends, died in a car accident. Diefenbaker had just recently offered his friend the speakership of the Senate, and the news of his death hurt Diefenbaker as much as his electoral setback.

With a minority government, Diefenbaker had to worry about more than just the next election. He also had to consider his new cabinet. There were also concerns about Diefenbaker's leadership. In early 1962, well before the election, Grosart had gathered party organisers together in Montreal to talk about the coming campaign.⁹⁹ These worries only grew after the June results, and Diefenbaker was well aware of the rumblings. As Dick Spencer noted,

He became ever more suspicious of the dark financial interests that played behind his back and were always a little beyond his comprehension and certainly beyond his trust. He was filled with mistrust and uncertainty. He heard whispers of betrayal in every wind that blew. For a time he lost the capacity for friendship and comradeship and the creativity of his earlier years in politics.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, Diefenbaker formed a new cabinet containing many old faces. The election had presented Diefenbaker with an ideal opportunity to resolve the nuclear issue with a cabinet shuffle. He chose to leave the two most contentious positions unchanged; Harkness and Green remained in their respective portfolios.

⁹⁹ Smith, Rogue Tory, 430.

¹⁰⁰ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 66.

Winning a minority government in the summer of 1962 was one of Diefenbaker's worst fears, likely a close second to outright defeat. In many ways, the results were a self-fulfilling prophecy for the prime minister. Diefenbaker had been virtually paralysed since 1958, within weeks of winning his majority government, by concerns of electoral rejection. Potentially controversial decisions had to be avoided at all costs until the political future was secure. But one did not get more secure than 208 seats in Parliament. Indeed, with such a majority, Diefenbaker had nowhere to go but down.

Nuclear weapons per se had little to do with the outcome of the 1962 election; they ranked well down the list of concerns for most Canadians. Regardless, Diefenbaker still viewed nuclear policy as potentially controversial. The question remains, however, as to why this was the case. In the autumn of 1961 Diefenbaker seemed poised to accept nuclear warheads; an agreement was in the final stages at the Department of External Affairs. Clearly nuclear weapons were not so controversial that Diefenbaker was not prepared to negotiate. He was. He had surveyed both his cabinet and caucus, and both supported the acquisition of nuclear weapons, just like average Canadians did. Then, a series of events ended the talks. The leak to Newsweek, Kennedy's statement to the United Nations, and finally, the anti-nuclear movement's national petition. It was the petition that was the final straw.

With well over 100,000 signatures, the petition underscored to Diefenbaker the political dangers of nuclear weapons. He disregarded Bryce's earlier advice that disarmament activists were more likely to vote for the Liberals or the NDP

instead of him, and worried about the weight of opinion. Thus, even though nuclear policy was not an issue in the campaign, the state of public support for the acquisition of nuclear warheads was a constant concern for Diefenbaker. This much was made clear, time and again, to the Americans. The national petition was the anti-nuclear movement's greatest success, and with such strong support, organisers viewed it as the beginning of a mass campaign to persuade the government to reject nuclear weapons. This mass movement failed to materialise. The next chapter examines the anti-nuclear movement's efforts to organise the national petition as well as its attempts to raise nuclear acquisition to the level of a national issue. It will explain why the petition was, in many respects, an end to the movement rather than a beginning of something bigger and better.

Chapter Seven: The Anti-Nuclear Movement 1961-1962

Diefenbaker had commented repeatedly on the state of public opinion during Kennedy's visit to Ottawa. While Gallup and other polling organisations regularly indicated that more Canadians than not supported the acquisition of nuclear weapons, Diefenbaker remained concerned that the public would not support his decision to accept warheads from the Americans. The question remains as to why the prime minister was still so preoccupied with public support on this subject. The answer lies in an examination of the anti-nuclear movement during this period, from early 1961 to the middle of 1962, and its efforts to influence the Conservative leader to reject a nuclear role for Canada. Quite simply, the disarmament activists were able to persuade Diefenbaker that acquiring nuclear weapons was not a wise decision politically.

This chapter traces the activities of the three major anti-nuclear organisations from the beginning of 1961, when there were renewed accusations of communist infiltration, through mid-year as they worked together to convince political leaders that they represented mass opposition and Canadians really did oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons. These efforts culminated in the presentation of an enormous national petition to Diefenbaker in October. Activists regarded it as a major success and hoped to use the petition as a springboard for the coming federal election. As political parties prepared for the next election, so too did disarmament groups. They tried to make nuclear weapons a prominent issue in the 1962 campaign but, as the previous chapter indicated, failed. The chapter concludes with an explanation as to why such a vocal collection of organisations could not bring

nuclear weapons to the attention of Canadians in the midst of an electoral campaign, as well as the consequences that followed.

* * * * *

Diefenbaker's focus on public opinion during Kennedy's visit to Ottawa stemmed from the anti-nuclear movement's increased level of activity from January to May. Groups raised awareness by drawing greater public attention to themselves, not all of which was positive. Defence minister Harkness called the anti-nuclear movement "pacifist, neutralist and dangerous,"¹ while others insisted that the movement was little more than a communist front. These allegations had been levelled regularly against the Canadian peace movements, even before the existence of anti-nuclear groups. The charges, then as now, had been more or less accurate depending on the group involved. For instance, CUCND had been plagued by well-founded accusations of communist infiltration since its inception, particularly in reference to the Montreal group.² Even the more moderate Toronto organisation allowed well-known communists like Danny Goldstick, one of the founders of the student anti-nuclear campaign at the University of Toronto, to remain active in the group. The same allegations, however, were not as accurate when it came to the Voice of Women and the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards.

¹ Harkness to Jenny Coldman, 8 February 1961, Harkness Papers, Volume 27, File No. 42-66, Transportation and Testing of Atomic Weapons, 1961.

This letter is typical of the response Harkness received following his comments at the end of January. See also VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

² Dimitri Roussopoulos to Mike Rowan, 13 February 1961, CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File 6: CUCND Correspondence Toronto 1960-61.

The CCCRH did not fall victim to red-baiting in large part because of Van Stolk's efforts to maintain her restrictive membership policy. The same was not true of the VOW. Although organisers of the Voice of Women realised the importance of a communist-free image, the lengths to which they went to prevent communist membership were minimal. They decided to prevent known communists from occupying high-profile positions within the organisation, but not to exclude them altogether. The policy hurt the organisation, and by early 1961 it had done nothing to help stave off hostile allegations. In January, these accusations were published in Marjorie Lamb's "Alert Service" newsletter. The "Alert Service" was created in 1957 to provide assistance to Hungarian refugees in Canada, and was a list of communist organisations and individuals.³ The list was updated periodically, and in early 1961 the Voice of Women appeared in the circular. Lamb did not single out individual members, but named the organisation in its entirety. The circular was not the end of the rumours either. The allegation was subsequently repeated and the organisation condemned by the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE). The IODE was a women's organisation founded in 1900 to promote imperialism in Canada. Their activities were often at odds with other women's peace groups, such as the WILPF, in that they promoted imperialism, not pacifism.⁴ This was as true in 1961 as it had been during the First and Second World Wars. As such, it came as no surprise when the IODE endorsed Lamb's accusations at its annual meeting in

³ Marjorie Lamb, "The Promise and the Peril: A Question of Balance, Address to the Lions Club of Toronto (Central) King Edward Hotel," 25 June 1964, Walter Gordon Papers, Volume 6, File: Communism (3), National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Calgary in February.⁵ As a credible, if conservative, organisation with the weight of longevity behind it, the IODE's opposition while not out of character nonetheless hurt VOW's efforts to become a national women's organisation that represented the views of women from across the political spectrum.

There were also slowly growing rifts within the organisation as rumours spread that the government was on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons. Divisions appeared as members tried to determine the organisation's policy on acquisition as well as the best strategy to persuade the government to pursue disarmament instead of nuclear stockpiles. More radical members suggested that the organisation step up its efforts through public protest. Coupled with the hint of communist infiltration, the suggestion led to a mass exodus on the part of honorary sponsors.⁶ The departure of these highly credible women undermined the public credibility of VOW. Many of the departing sponsors had been caught off guard by the thought that the VOW was contemplating public action to demonstrate their opposition to government policy. Perhaps the sponsors had agreed to support the organisation as long as it was seen, not heard; it was one thing to support a women's organisation dedicated to peace and disarmament, it was quite another to be involved with a group that took seemingly radical measures to denounce the government. Still, not all honorary sponsors abandoned the organisation; the Pearsons, mother and daughter, continued to support the group.

⁴ Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," 290.

⁵ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 179.

⁶ ibid., 453-455.

The CCCRH had yet to experience the same kind of difference of opinion as the Voice of Women. As a result, it was free to focus its efforts on raising public awareness. Just the same, there was a major change in the organisation's leadership. In March, the headquarters of the CCCRH moved officially from Edmonton to Toronto. In the process, F.C. Hunnius succeeded Van Stolk as Executive Secretary of the National Committee. Hunnius had been born in Estonia in 1926, and had emigrated from Germany in 1949. He was one of the original members of the Montreal student group, which he joined in 1959 at Sir George Williams where he was pursuing his B.A. on a part-time basis. He continued his involvement in the movement when he came to Toronto to pursue a Master's degree in political science. Hunnius' first-hand experience with war led him to promote disarmament and pacifism as the only practical response to international tensions.⁷ Hunnius' anti-nuclear origins might have stemmed from the Montreal organisation, but he was far more moderate than many of his fellow disarmament activists and definitely no communist.⁸ An excellent organiser, Hunnius served as a bridge between the CCCRH and the CUCND in his new position, which also signalled a new direction for the organisation. Although Van Stolk later became the vice-chairman of the CCCRH, her influence began to wane within the organisation that she had founded. There was another change of leadership when Keenleyside stepped down as provisional chairman in July. He was replaced by Dr. James S.

⁷ Stein, "Beginner's guide to the Canadian nuclear disarmers," Macleans, 7 October 1961. Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

⁸ Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

Thomson, who had been the moderator of the United Church of Canada, a dean of Divinity and professor of philosophy of religion at McGill, a former president of the University of Saskatchewan, as well as president of the board of directors for the CBC and United Nations Club of Canada.⁹ Thomson certainly had impressive credentials, but Keenleyside had been better placed to deal with government officials.¹⁰ As well, Thomson was not overly-enthusiastic about his new position in the organisation. His reluctance stemmed from a variety of sources, his teaching and church commitments, a recent illness, and his age.¹¹ Because of these things Thomson refused to get involved in the day-to-day business of the CCCRH, acting more as a figurehead than as a leader.¹² Although both Van Stolk and Keenleyside remained involved in the CCCRH and continued to support the cause, their departure marked a decided change in attitude within the organisation. Both had believed in the importance of elite influence through personal contact with credible representatives of the organisation. This particular strategy of influence, a foundation of the CCCRH, was beginning to change by the spring of 1961.

⁹ CCND Papers, Volume 3, File 9: Correspondence Thomson, Rev James (Honorary Chair, 1961-62).

¹⁰ Keenleyside might have been better placed to deal with government officials, but there is nothing to indicate that he was very successful at it. CCND Papers, Volume 2, File 13: Correspondence H.L. Keenleyside, includes various letters to and from public officials, including Diefenbaker and Green. Keenleyside's relationship with Green seemed to be much less formal than his relationship with Diefenbaker. If there were problems with Keenleyside's influence, Thomson was unlikely to have been much more effective.

¹¹ Thomson was seventy.

¹² Thomson to Hunnius, 2 August 1961, CCND Papers, Volume 3, File 9.

In the wake of reports that the government was about to conclude an agreement for nuclear weapons, despite organisational changes, the Executive decided to take action. If personal appeals to Diefenbaker had proven futile in the past, then another tactic was needed. CCCRH organisers decided that they would try to influence Diefenbaker with an appeal to his greatest concern: political support. From this sentiment the national petition was born. In an effort to raise awareness about the pending nuclear crisis facing Canadians, a nation-wide anti-nuclear petition was launched. The VOW had considered a petition a year earlier to endorse a World Peace Year,¹³ but this was the first anti-nuclear petition organised by the new generation of activists.¹⁴ In contrast to the one proposed by the VOW, the national petition was targeted more narrowly and meant only to influence the government to oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The petition, which CUCND and VOW also promoted and endorsed, concluded that:

We the undersigned oppose the spread of nuclear weapons to any country or military alliance not now possessing them. We petition the Canadian government to reject nuclear weapons for the armed forces of Canada and to prohibit their installation on Canadian soil.¹⁵

¹³ Davis to Senators Fergusson, Irvine, Inman, Jodoin; Maryon Pearson; Olive Diefenbaker & Ellen Fairclough, 3 September 1960, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

¹⁴ The Canadian Peace Congress circulated an anti-nuclear petition in 1950 and claimed to have collected between 200,000 and 500,000 Canadian signatures. Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," 294. Endicott, Endicott Rebel Out of China, 388 Fn 11, 16 and Canadian Peace Congress Papers. The Department of External Affairs kept a record on the Canadian Peace Congress and their petition, which eventually merged with the global "Stockholm Appeal." However, that the records of this petition were kept in a file marked "The Communist Peace Movement," file 10833-A-40 says it all. This was not a credible petition to the Canadian government, nor did it come at a time when the government was seriously contemplating the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

¹⁵ CCND Papers, Volume 19, File 11: National Petition 1961, Subject Matter.

There was widespread support for the petition within the anti-nuclear community, but the CCCRH led the way, undertaking the organisational essentials to make the petition a reality. It was designed as a national campaign, but the Toronto group did most of the work.¹⁶ Members assembled petition kits that included suggestions to help supporters collect as many signatures as possible. Volunteers were encouraged to seek signatures in every conceivable location from shopping centres to street corners, church gatherings to union meetings. These situations provided the ideal opportunity to raise awareness and in the process, to collect signatures demonstrating to the government the widespread opposition to nuclear weapons in Canada.¹⁷

The original deadline for the petition was June 15,¹⁸ but the campaign was extended over the summer in order to gather more support. By mid-June the petition had 28,921 signatures from all parts of the country; British Columbia led the way with 14,614, followed by Ontario with 9,471, Saskatchewan at 1,817, Quebec with 1,176, Manitoba at 780, Alberta at 711, and the Atlantic provinces with 352 signatures.¹⁹ This was after Kennedy's visit and around the time that the government concluded the SWAP agreement. Though organisers already considered it to be a success, the campaign for petitions was extended when the

¹⁶ "Branch Memoranda" and "Suggestions for Petitioners," n.d., CCND Papers, Volume 19, File 8: National Petition, 1961. As well, see Files 9 through 13.

¹⁷ "Suggestions for Petitioners," *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, File 8: National Petition 1961, Branch Memos.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, File 9: National Petition, Branch Correspondence.

minister of defence implied that there was still time to make a difference.²⁰ Amid the rumours of nuclear negotiations, Harkness indicated that the government still had time to make a decision about nuclear warheads because NATO had still not resolved the issue, and the government might have to wait until the North Atlantic talks were concluded. Furthermore, the Bomarc bases in North Bay and La Macaza, originally scheduled to open in the autumn of 1961, were running behind and were now not expected to be operational until early 1962. The delay provided the anti-nuclear movement with hope and a window of opportunity that organisers planned to use to their full advantage.²¹

Organisers regarded credibility as a key component of the petition; without it, the petition, no matter how large, would not persuade Diefenbaker to reject nuclear weapons. But credibility counted as much with the public as it did with the government. The public had to be won over to the crusade against the Bomb, and organisers believed that high-profile supporters were crucial to this endeavour. They encouraged volunteers to draw attention to high-profile sponsors in the hope that their mere presence would inspire ordinary Canadians to add their signature in opposition to nuclear weapons.²² In spite of these efforts, the petition highlighted one of the major problems the CCCRH faced in 1961: declining elite support. Credible supporters lent authority to the organisation, which was vital in terms of influence because in Van Stolk's formulation, the ability to persuade was connected

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Suggestions for Petitioners," Ibid., and File 10: Original Signers of the 1961 National Petition.

to credible personal contact, not numbers. The strategy seemed to be a plausible one when she announced the National Committee in February 1960, and the same approach was used by organisers of the national petition, who also secured 45 honorary sponsors. The decline in elite support was readily apparent, however. Only 20 sponsors had been original supporters of the National Committee.²³ Several notable omissions were John Bassett, Eugene Forsey, Claude Bissell, Henry Borden, and Oakley Dalgleish. The omissions suggest two possible explanations. First was a general organisational problem with the CCCRH. Given the time and trouble that Van Stolk had gone through to gather together supporters originally, one would have expected that every effort would have been made to keep them involved in the activities of the CCCRH. But this did not occur after the original flourish of activity. Van Stolk realised the importance of credible signatories to assist in the launch of her organisation, but she failed to recognise that these high-profile supporters had to be kept involved in the movement. The other explanation is that many of the original supporters did not support the organisation's change of focus. Recall that the original mandate of the CCCRH involved concern about radioactive fallout, not opposition to nuclear weapons. Although one seemed

²³ *Ibid.* Some of these include Brock Chisholm, Pierre Dansereau, Dr. H.C. Dion, H.A. Dyde, Jean Louis Gagnon, Saul Hayes, J. Gordin Kaplan, Yousuf Karsh, H.L. Keenleyside, Walter C. Koerner, Andre Laurendeau, J.H. MacDonald, Hugh McLennan, Robert Nielsen, Ivan Rand, W.C. Smalley, Mary Van Stolk, James S. Thomson, J.T. Thorson, and Dr. J. Weijer.

There were also some notable additions to the list of supporters, none of whom added the credibility that Van Stolk sought. Additions to the list included Helen Tucker from VOW, Dimitri Roussopoulos from CUCND, Rabbi Abraham Feinberg from the Toronto CND, as well as Pierre Trudeau, then a law professor and journalist in Quebec. Certainly the first three names would have attracted attention from those within the anti-nuclear movement, but each raised concerns with politicians about their communist sympathies.

like a logical extension of the other, it was entirely possible to oppose nuclear testing, but not the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In some instances, it is possible that this made the difference between support in 1959 and 1961. Ultimately, the honorary supporters of the 1961 national petition, intended to create interest and inspire confidence in the organisation and its cause, were a collection of far less notable Canadians than the group assembled to launch the Committee in early 1960.

The petition also reflected a desire to move toward a more broadly-based organisation. It was no coincidence that the shift occurred at the same time that Hunnius took over many of Van Stolk's organisational activities. The two had different visions about the best way to influence government policy. Where Van Stolk hoped the weight of influence would be measured by credibility and profile, Hunnius looked to volume. There was a clear difference in approach between the two, and the petition marked a definite change in the organisation's efforts to influence.

The anti-nuclear movement worked diligently on the petition over the summer. Despite its co-operation and support, however, the VOW was still dealing with some basic organisational issues that summer. The VOW's first annual meeting was held in June and culminated in a vote to oppose nuclear weapons officially. During the first year of activity, the women had been a group dedicated to the promotion of peace. Now, the group was devoted to opposing the bomb. This too was a great shift in focus. The first general meeting was held primarily to deal with matters of organisation, but when it came to issues of policy, nuclear weapons

proved by far to be the most contentious subject of discussion. A range of opinion was represented. Some members opposed nuclear weapons only in principle and refused to criticise nations that already had them. Others wanted to oppose proliferation formally. Still others opposed proliferation only in principle, and were reluctant to condemn current or future members of the nuclear club. Many women argued passionately against war, but this did not necessarily translate into opposition to nuclear weapons. Several of the VOW's more cautious members focused on the organisation's educational role and argued that VOW was supposed to educate and inform, not take public stands on specific issues.²⁴ Ultimately, the women reached a compromise. They agreed to the following statement on nuclear weapons: "The Voice of Women/La Voix des Femmes opposes the acquisition of nuclear weapons by any country not now possessing them, because the spread of nuclear weapons would increase the danger of nuclear war, accidentally or otherwise, and increase the difficulty of achieving disarmament."²⁵ It was not as strong a statement as the more radical members wanted, but it had to suffice. The debate within the VOW highlighted an obvious problem. The growing organisation included women from every position on the political spectrum and the common bond of gender, even in the early days of the group, was insufficient to compensate for disagreements over fundamental matters of policy.

By September 1961, the VOW was well organised and eager to proceed in its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons at least on the surface.

²⁴ VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: 1st Annual Meeting, Proceedings, 1961.

²⁵ Ibid.

Mid-month, executive members were appalled by the coverage of, and attendance at, the defence estimates debate in Parliament, with only 90 of 264 members of Parliament present. As a result, the president of the VOW, Helen Tucker, urged members to undertake their own individual campaigns to increase awareness of the coming nuclear crisis. She encouraged women to find out for themselves what had been said in the House of Commons. She also reminded them of the importance of public opinion, particularly since so many MPs knew so little about any given subject, especially nuclear weapons. The effort to influence was two-fold. First, it was necessary to support MPs who opposed nuclear weapons. It was important to demonstrate to them that average Canadians, who would also support their position, were listening. Second, Tucker hoped that letters from members of the VOW would force MPs to reflect on what ordinary Canadians thought of nuclear weapons. Clearly quantity mattered. Tucker reminded members that letters helped political parties to determine the state of public opinion: "every party at its monthly caucus counts the letters it receives and makes an analysis of public opinion."²⁶ In conjunction with individual efforts, the executive decided to meet with all the party leaders, particularly the prime minister, to discuss the future of Canada's nuclear policy.

²⁶ "Special News Bulletin a Letter from the President September 1961," VOW Papers, Volume 5, File: Radiation Hazards and Fall-Out [5-1].

The VOW approached the government on September 17 to set up a meeting with various officials in order to present their anti-nuclear brief.²⁷ A meeting with Diefenbaker was scheduled for September 25, the same day as Kennedy's speech to the U.N. and days after the rumoured nuclear negotiations were reported in Newsweek. The meeting was anti-climactic for everyone involved. The women submitted their brief to the prime minister, and Diefenbaker responded by listing the government's disarmament initiatives and support for a nuclear test ban. He remarked that the government had been working diligently in this area, but did little to address the women's questions about Canada and nuclear proliferation. Two things came out of the meeting. Diefenbaker was moderately interested in the VOW's proposed "World Peace Year," an idea that he forwarded to the Department of External Affairs for its opinion.²⁸ He also commented on the public's perceptions of the women's organisation, informing organisers that there was a Soviet group using the same name.²⁹ The women were shocked and concerned. This was the last thing they wanted to hear in the wake of Lamb's accusations earlier in the year that theirs was a communist organisation.³⁰ Though Diefenbaker kept a copy of the

²⁷ VOW to Diefenbaker, 17 September 1961, Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

²⁸ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Meeting with VOW," (Based on notes by John Diefenbaker), 5 October 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1961. Also Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

²⁹ This came from a comment made in the House of Commons on September 23.

³⁰ Robinson to Undersecretary, "Meeting with VOW," (Based on notes by John Diefenbaker), 5 October 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1961. Also Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government

brief for his records (alongside the rest of the material sent by the Voice of Women over the years), there is no evidence to suggest that the meeting made a decisive impact on his nuclear policy. The brief was long on rhetoric, short on new information. When one considers that Diefenbaker's preoccupation at this time was whether acquisition of nuclear weapons would undermine his political support, a brief submitted by a small group of women was unlikely to convince him that there would be dire political consequences if he decided to accept nuclear weapons.

The same was not true of a petition. Diefenbaker's next encounter with the anti-nuclear movement was October 6 when the CCCRH presented its national petition to the government. The national petition marked the high point for the anti-nuclear movement. Having planned the petition and accompanying demonstration for months, the CCCRH and others were quite pleased with the results.³¹ After his meeting with the prime minister, Thomson triumphantly told reporters that the government would not acquire nuclear weapons unless there was a war, and that

Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

Concerns were raised by various sources that VOW was a communist front. This concern was raised by both credible and less than credible sources. For instance, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, a credible Canadian women's organisation, made reference to this at their annual meeting. See also 30 May 1961, Calgary Herald clipping included in this PMO File. The same article notes that the source of this information was Marjorie Lamb's "Alert Service." There is no indication that Diefenbaker or his cabinet were concerned that the VOW was a Communist Front. See Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 3, File: MG 01/XII/A/38 - Communist Party - Front Groups, Secret, 1960-1961 [395.1].

³¹ CUCND was responsible for organising and participating in the 73 hour demonstration/vigil on Parliament Hill while the CCCRH was responsible for delivering the petition to the prime minister.

Diefenbaker had pledged his support for Kennedy's U.N. statement against nuclear proliferation.³²

Ultimately, the number of signatures on the petition was open to interpretation, with anywhere from 140,000 to 180,000 names.³³ Regardless of the precise number, it made an impact on Diefenbaker, certainly more so than CUCND's demonstration at the same time or the VOW's brief. The petition was the culmination of activity for approximately 30 local organisations each affiliated with the National Committee in one capacity or another, reflecting the evolving membership structure of the group by the middle of 1961. Not only were there efforts to attract mass support for the petition, but there was a growing desire to transform the organisation itself. By the time the petition was delivered, there were 11 local groups formally affiliated with the CCCRH, 6 that were negotiating a similar arrangement, and a number of others that were not part of the official organisation but took part in most of its programs and activities while able to claim independence from a head office.³⁴ Again, this was a clear reflection of the change in direction from Van Stolk to Hunnius, who hoped to transform the organisation from a small, elite group to one that was membership-based. As Hunnius later indicated, the transition was only partly voluntary; if the CCCRH had not become such an

³² Robinson to Undersecretary, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 6 October 1961, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.1: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1961.

³³ CCCRH records indicate 160,000 signatures, while The Canadian Annual Review of 1961, reports 142,000 names, 156. Later CCND documents put the figure at 180,000. CCND Papers, Volume 18, File 12: CCND Ottawa Delegation 16 April 1962: News Release. See also Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker, 141.

³⁴ Stein, "Beginner's Guide to the Canadian nuclear disarmers." Maclean's, 7 October 1961.

organisation, another would have been created, competing for relatively scarce resources and support.³⁵

As part of this desire to become more broadly-based, members debated whether to change the name of the CCCRH to more accurately reflect its opposition to nuclear weapons. They also began to consider joining forces with the university campaign as a means of expanding general membership more quickly. The debate began in the autumn of 1961, just as the petition efforts were winding down, and culminated in February 1962 at the organisation's annual meeting. Though not completely without controversy, most members supported both measures. While some favoured the inclusion of "survival" or "peace" in the new name,³⁶ more typical was the response from Margaret Hanley, of the Calgary Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards. She wrote, "We favour uniting with CUCND. We would like to see our name changed to 'Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.' This expresses what we see as our main purpose, and unites us with the campaign in Great Britain."³⁷ This statement captured what many regarded as the main purpose of the merger and name change.

Members of the committee were not the only ones to see the connection between their movement and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Great Britain. CUCND, when it approached the CCCRH about the possibility of amalgamating the two groups, emphasised this connection to the British movement,

³⁵ Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

³⁶ William J. Smith to CCCRH Executive, 19 December 1961, CCND Papers, Volume 1, File 2: Correspondence Regarding Name of Organisation.

as well as the importance of a united front in the effort to fight nuclear weapons.³⁸

Tucker, now an active member of both the CCCRH and VOW, also wrote in favour of the name change, noting that it better reflected the international nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons as well as ties to the organisation's British counterpart.³⁹

This focus on the connection between the Canadian and British anti-nuclear movements was another significant shift in attitudes from the early days of the CCCRH. When Van Stolk first organised the Committee, she was far more influenced by SANE in the United States, turning to the British organisation more for literature and public relations materials than for any other purpose. But the name change made an explicit connection between the Canadian and British movements, one that many members regarded positively. This link was a clear break with Van Stolk's original intentions. The birth of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament meant the explicit recognition of different issues and different means of participation for many activists.⁴⁰

Amid this enthusiasm for uniting the anti-nuclear campaigns there were some who worried about the consequences of closer collaboration. Foremost among this group was Eugene Forsey. Unlike many members of the CCCRH, Forsey did not

³⁷ Margaret Hanley to CCCRH Executive, 20 February 1962, *Ibid.*

³⁸ Author unknown, "Memorandum to all Executive Members, the Board of Directors, and all National Members of the CCCRH," 7 December 1961, *Ibid.* This memo includes reference to a letter to the CCCRH from CUCND discussing these issues.

³⁹ Helen Tucker to CCCRH Executive, 20 December 1961, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

regard ties to the British movement as an asset. He also opposed closer ties to CUCND: "The little I have seen and heard of [CUCND's] activities has not predisposed me in their favour."⁴¹ Forsey preferred the CCCRH's method of lobbying and persuading politicians to change policy over the CUCND's rather noisy demonstrations. If he supported the original objectives of the CCCRH, namely to raise awareness and educate the public about the perils of radioactive fallout, then the public protests of CUCND were unlikely to hold much appeal.⁴² For instance, CUCND's picket of Parliament over the Thanksgiving weekend was not designed to impress Members of Parliament, most of whom were home in their ridings for the holiday, but to secure press coverage of CUCND's activities.⁴³

Forsey was also concerned about the allegations of communist infiltration that continued to plague CUCND. A noted socialist, Forsey had seen the havoc that communists could wreak through his involvement in various Canadian labour organisations.⁴⁴ In the autumn of 1961 there were divisions within the student movement as a result of two issues: neutrality and Soviet nuclear tests. The communists were in the thick of both. CUCND decided to promote Canadian withdrawal from NATO only if the alliance decided to accept nuclear stockpiles,⁴⁵

⁴¹ Forsey to CCCRH Executive, 12 December 1961, *Ibid.*

⁴² Forsey to Keenleyside, n.d. [N.B. in response to sponsorship queries sent out late 1959 and early 1960], CCND Papers, Volume 2, File 13: Hugh Keenleyside Correspondence, 1961-1962.

⁴³ *The Varsity*, 10 October 1961. Roussopoulos was the source of this information, according to *The Varsity*. SUPA Papers, Volume 7, File: CUCND Documents.

⁴⁴ Forsey, *A Life on the Fringe*, 77-8.

⁴⁵ Rowan to Roussopoulos, 16 August 1961, CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File: Toronto CUCND Correspondence 1961.

but a radical contingent still favoured a neutral stance. The Soviet resumption of nuclear testing was even more divisive. The core pacifists in CUCND abhorred the resumption of any testing, but the communists sympathised with the Soviet action, regarding it as a defensive measure that was justified in the face of western aggression.⁴⁶ In Toronto, Goldstick and other communists refused to condemn the Soviet tests, which led the branch to expel Goldstick from the organisation in November. Ostensibly because he refused to condemn the Soviets for resuming nuclear testing, Goldstick was actually expelled from CUCND because of the negative publicity he had created.⁴⁷ Small wonder that Forsey was not inclined to support a closer relationship between the CCCRH and CUCND, even if the student organisation could add another 4000 members to the anti-nuclear movement.⁴⁸ Despite Forsey's strenuous objections, the majority ruled. Besides, there seemed to be no other option but to pool both members and resources.

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The CCND was not alone in the divisions it faced over tactics. The Voice of Women continued to experience problems as it moved to mobilise against the government's nuclear policy in late 1961 and early 1962. Representatives of the VOW had delivered their brief to Diefenbaker at the end of September, and urged members to inundate the government with letters opposing nuclear weapons for Canada. Unbeknownst to organisers, this letter writing campaign was of far greater

⁴⁶ Gentles interview with author June 7, 1999.

⁴⁷ Roussopoulos to Dorothy Thompson, 19 November 1961, CUCND-SUPA Papers, Volume 1, File: Toronto CUCND Correspondence 1961.

value than the brief. It was also the VOW's first major project. The next significant effort came in the spring of 1962 when a group of approximately 300 women from Montreal travelled by train to Ottawa to present another anti-nuclear brief to the prime minister.⁴⁹ The group's size was impressive, though not overly so, especially not compared to the roughly 150,000 signatures on the national petition. The women stressed their maternal responsibilities to protect their families and their children.⁵⁰ They supported Green's opposition to the resumption of nuclear testing by the United States, as well as the Swedish Resolution at the UN which proposed the creation of a Non-Nuclear Club. Although Canadian officials supported the Swedish proposal, the brief encouraged the government to take the measure one step further and promise to join the club.⁵¹

The brief in March 1962 signalled another shift for the VOW. It was a move away from planning and organising toward concerted action to influence public officials. The brief appealed to the standard elements of maternal feminism: reason, the importance of family, and the role of women as mothers. This alone made it different from the petitions submitted by mixed-sex groups. But, just like its first brief submitted six months earlier, the March appeal contained little to persuade Diefenbaker to think that the VOW represented a large segment of the Canadian population. As a tactical approach, the brief was not nearly as influential with

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, File: Inter-Branch memo, 15 September 1961 Federal Conference of CUCND.

⁴⁹ "Brief to Prime Minister 7 March 1962." VOW Papers, Volume 7, File: VOW Briefs and Statements, 1962 [7-9].

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Diefenbaker as a petition, which was tangible proof that thousands of Canadians opposed the acquisition of nuclear weapons. However, by the spring of 1962 it was a moot point. With the election just weeks away, it did not really matter that there were not scores of signatures attached in a show of support. Diefenbaker had already made up his mind that nuclear weapons carried political consequences. This much was clear from the petition delivered in October.

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Anti-nuclear groups saw the coming election as a great opportunity to make nuclear weapons a dominant concern of Canadians. They failed. The movement was hindered by growing divisions, lack of support, and a weak overall strategy. Yet the movement's tactics are noteworthy in that they illustrated a great deal about the politics of pressure, and the malleability of public opinion on this particular issue. Anti-nuclear groups understood that Diefenbaker was vulnerable politically, and hoped to capitalise on these insecurities in the 1962 election. If Diefenbaker would not bend to the demands of disarmers in spite of demonstrations and briefs, then perhaps he would listen to the electorate. The national petition was inspirational on this front. The petition had aroused interest in the media, and disarmament activists hoped that they would be able to maintain that interest, thereby turning nuclear weapons into a campaign issue.⁵²

Despite the best of intentions, the odds were against anti-nuclear groups. They suffered from a lack of planning. Where the Liberals and the Conservatives

⁵² "Report on the Presentation of the National Petition to the Prime Minister," n.d., CCND Papers, Volume 18, File 1: Third Annual Conference, February 26-27, 1962.

had kept an eye toward the next election since 1958, the peace movement was slower to come around to the idea of campaign planning. This reluctance was compounded by a lack of funds. Never a wealthy organisation, the CCCRH was in desperate financial straits by the end of 1961. Thomson wrote to Pearson (among others) to ask for money.⁵³ This financial concern was also a factor that contributed to the CCCRH's decision to co-operate more closely with CUCND. Financial concerns similarly plagued CUCND and the VOW. For the good of the anti-nuclear movement, disarmament groups like CCND, CUCND, and VOW agreed to co-ordinate their efforts to raise awareness during the election campaign.

In April, Hunnius prepared an assessment of each party's nuclear policy. The NDP, Social Credit, and Communist Party of Canada earned high marks for their opposition to nuclear weapons for Canadian forces.⁵⁴ The Conservative and Liberal policies were more difficult to analyse. The division within Diefenbaker's cabinet was readily apparent to all, but Hunnius was more critical of the government's indecision than its possible willingness to accept warheads.⁵⁵ He felt that the Liberals were equally opportunistic, and wrote: "Mr. Pearson has changed his tune so often that the picture is unclear."⁵⁶ The Liberals opposed nuclear

⁵³ Mary Macdonald to James Thomson, 26 September 1961, ibid., Volume 3, File 9. This letter acknowledges receipt of request for assistance to finance the CCCRH. Also letters from early October 1961 from Thomson to Beland Honderich and B.K. Thall at the Toronto Daily Star requesting financial assistance for the CCCRH.

⁵⁴ Hunnius to Hugh Brock, 2 April 1962, CCND Papers, Volume 18, File 3: Easter Demonstration 1962.

⁵⁵ ibid.

⁵⁶ ibid.

weapons under existing conditions, but would not rule out stockpiles for use in NATO. Essentially, neither one of the two major parties offered the movement much hope, and organisers realised that they had much to do as the election drew near. Even more difficult was the discovery that while many in the media had been interested in the national petition, this attention did not translate into support for the movement's opposition to nuclear weapons. Indeed, most of the English Canadian press supported acquisition, not the position of the peace movement.⁵⁷

Activists devised a strategy that worked for the period leading up to the campaign as well as for the campaign itself. First, organisers decided to approach sitting MPs before the House adjourned. Once the campaign was underway, disarmers would expand their efforts to approach each candidate. This was modelled after the Danish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which had met with some success.⁵⁸ Some of the CCND's more prominent members were determined to meet personally with the various party leaders, and Thomson wrote to various parliamentarians requesting an interview.⁵⁹ Ultimately, a meeting was scheduled for April 16, held in conjunction with a series of demonstrations across the country in honour of Easter and a day before the election was announced in Parliament.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

⁵⁹ These members included Justice Thorson, J.R. Kidd, Eugene Forsey, Claude Jodoin, Yousuf Karsh, Major General W.H.S. Macklin, and Josie Quart. Hunnius to Stig Harvor, 29 March 1962, CCND Papers, Volume 18. File 3: Easter Demonstration 1962. Thomson to various MPs and Senators, n.d. Ibid., File 13: Letters to MPs, Senators, Ottawa Delegation, April 1962.

CCND members believed their meeting with parliamentarians was a success.⁶⁰ The appeal was not a national effort, representing only the core of anti-nuclear support as the delegation was comprised of executive members from the Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto offices.⁶¹ It was also a predominantly Anglophone affair; despite representation from Montreal, few Francophones participated. There had been efforts to include high profile French Canadians, but nothing came of it. Organisers proposed Thérèse Casgrain, the future president of VOW and New Democratic candidate for Parliament, as well as Pierre Trudeau for the delegation.⁶² Only Casgrain accepted the offer.

If the make-up of the delegation was problematic, so were the parliamentarians with whom the activists met. Diefenbaker could not spare time away from election preparations, and sent Green in his place. Delegates appreciated Green's support, but there was little point in preaching to the converted. For the same reason, it was no great loss when the delegation could not meet with NDP leader T.C. Douglas, who was an ardent opponent of nuclear weapons and reassuring figuring for the movement.⁶³ The leaders of the Liberal and Social Credit parties also met with delegates, though they were not nearly as supportive as the New Democrats.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ "CCND Ottawa Delegation Schedule April 16," n.d., Ibid., File 14: Ottawa Delegation April 1962, Presentation of Policy to Prime Minister.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ General Message from T.C. Douglas, 3 April 1962, Ibid.,

⁶⁴ "CCND Ottawa Delegation Schedule April 16," Ibid.

Delegates were well prepared for their meetings with MPs in April 1962, and peppered parliamentarians with a host of defence-related questions. Queries ran the gambit from opinions on the DEW Line to multilateral disarmament and test ban discussions. They also asked about Canada's role in NORAD and NATO, as well as whether Canadian forces should have nuclear weapons.⁶⁵ Activists saw these questions as a dress rehearsal for the coming election. As such, the response was not really as important as the process of contacting and interviewing politicians. The lobby was an exercise in public relations, with an eye toward raising the movement's profile on Parliament Hill as well as among the general public. Indeed, one of the problems with the April lobby was timing. With the election call only a few days away, there was little time to remedy any problems of approach that might have been discovered. But the CCND was satisfied with its efforts, and did not change any of its proposals.

Once the election was called, the movement turned its attentions, as planned, toward candidates. And although activists realised the importance of simultaneously raising awareness at the grassroots level (i.e. the electorate), the focus during the campaign was at the level of candidates. The strategy was well-intentioned but problematic as the movement was too small to carry out such an enormous endeavour. Communication with each candidate, from each party, in each riding, required tremendous resources in terms of manpower and finances. Even in Ontario, with the greatest number of supporters and volunteers, disarmers

⁶⁵ "Questions Lobbyists Should Ask MPs." *Ibid.*

could muster only a weak effort. Organisers quickly learned that it was one thing to co-ordinate a letter-writing campaign or petition drive, it was quite another to raise a tertiary issue to the level of significance required to merit notice in a federal campaign where more pressing concerns predominated. The movement as a whole, never mind the individual groups like the CCND, CUCND, and VOW, was simply not up to the task of dealing with stakes as high as a federal election campaign. Ultimately, two things undermined the peace movement's efforts in the 1962 campaign: a lack of volunteers and the wrong issue.

To better illustrate the consequences of the shortage of volunteers, one need only look at how the CCND dealt with Ontario ridings. Essentially, four branches – Toronto, Ottawa, London, and Welland – ran the province's anti-nuclear lobby. The Toronto CCND, the largest in the province (and the country, for that matter), was responsible for 40 ridings including all the ridings in Toronto and York, as well as all ridings north of Toronto, spanning the province from Grey County to Algoma.⁶⁶ Toronto members had to deal not only with a large number of ridings, but the vast territory they covered. The Ottawa CCND had helped to organise the April parliamentary lobby, as well as its own region of 19 ridings.⁶⁷ The London CCND,

⁶⁶ Toronto and York ridings: Broadview, Danforth, Davenport, Eglinton, Greenwood, High Park, Parkdale, Rosedale, St. Paul's, Spadina, Trinity, York Centre, York East, York Humber, York North, York-Scarborough, York South, York West.

The remainder of Ontario included: Algoma East and West, Bruce, Durham, Fort William, Grey North, Grey-Bruce, Halton, Huron, Kenora-Rainy River, Nickel Belt, Nipissing, Ontario, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Peel, Port Arthur, Prince Edward-Lennox, Simcoe East and North, Sudbury, Timmins, and Victoria. "Ridings Divided Among Branches," 10 May 1962, *Ibid.*, File 18: Election 1962 - Ontario Ridings Branch Assignments.

⁶⁷ Carleton, Cochrane, Glengarry-Prescott, Grenville-Dundas, Hastings South, Hastings Frontenac, Kingston, Lanark, Leeds, Ottawa East and West, Perth, Peterborough, Renfrew North & South, Russell, Stormont, Temiskaming, and Northumberland. *Ibid.*

with a small but solid core, was responsible for 15 ridings, from Windsor to Kitchener-Waterloo.⁶⁸ The Welland branch was responsible for a more manageable 11 ridings in and around the city, from Brantford to Niagara Falls, including Hamilton.⁶⁹ Eighty five ridings, with three to four candidates in each, meant that volunteers had to contact between 255 and 340 people.

Not only was the movement spread too thin, but there was not much time. The election was called April 17, but organisational memoranda and candidate lists were not available to the branches until the second week of May.⁷⁰ This meant that the movement had four weeks to contact roughly 300 people. This was not solely the fault of the CCND, as both the NDP and Social Credit took their time in nominating candidates. It was also understandable that organisers wanted to wait for complete lists before distributing them. But such a delay cost the movement valuable time; partial lists could have been updated during the campaign, and volunteers could have started to contact candidates. Instead, the movement had nothing to work with for the first few weeks. The problem with lists also illustrated some of the organisational problems within the anti-nuclear movement at the most basic level which influenced the movement's ability to lobby candidates. The movement had known that a federal election was coming but was still caught unprepared for the campaign when it was announced.

⁶⁸ Dufferin-Simcoe; Elgin Essex East, South, and West; Kent; Lambton-Kent; Lambton West; London; Middlesex East and West; Norfolk; Oxford; Waterloo North and South. ibid.

⁶⁹ Brantford; Brant-Haldimand; Hamilton East, South and West; Lincoln; Niagara Falls; Welland; Wentworth; Wellington Huron; and Wellington South. ibid.

⁷⁰ ibid.

The movement used tactics during the campaign similar to the April lobby right down to the questionnaire used by volunteers.⁷¹ Generally, the movement had little luck in raising the profile of the nuclear issue. A prime example of this failure involves Toronto, first with the candidacy of John Bassett for the Progressive Conservatives, and then with the entire riding of Eglinton. Organisers quickly realised their efforts were not producing the desired results. "We have already interviewed a few candidates (including Basset [sic])," one organiser bemoaned, "and the ignorance on the part of the candidates has been appalling. We are afraid that detailed questions would result in candidates not replying at all."⁷² Bassett ran for the Conservatives in the Toronto riding of Spadina. The publisher of the Toronto Telegram, Bassett was one of the original sponsors of the CCCRH's National Committee. If the CCND could not educate its own supporters, it had little hope of raising awareness among the general public, particularly since the economy was the priority for most Canadians. This underscored one of the CCND's major problems, namely its inability to keep early high-profile supporters involved in its day-to-day operations. Bassett was the kind of sponsor the CCND could have used in the 1962 election: a candidate for the governing party, access to the prime minister, and editorial control of a major Toronto newspaper. These were the kinds of things that might have helped the peace movement in the 1962 campaign.

⁷¹ "Questionnaire for 1962 Election Campaign," Ibid., File 15: Questionnaire to all candidates, election 1962, drafts and correspondence.

⁷² Hunnius to David Gauthier, 1 May 1962, Ibid., File 16: Guide, Statement, Questionnaire - MP candidates, 1962.

Although the overwhelming number of respondents to the disarmament movement's questionnaire supported its general objective, nuclear weapons did not become a major issue during the campaign. And while manpower shortages were an obvious impediment, the greater obstacle was the issue itself. A brief examination of the Toronto riding of Eglinton highlights the relative lack of importance of the nuclear issue.

Eglinton provided a potential opportunity for the peace movement. The contest that followed, however, illustrated many of the problems associated with the peace movement's efforts in 1962. Eglinton was the riding of Diefenbaker's minister of finance, Donald Fleming. Fleming had longevity on his side: the Member of Parliament for Eglinton since 1945, he had won the riding with a resounding victory in 1958, more than 18,000 votes ahead of his closest rival. Despite Fleming's popularity and stature, his was a vulnerable riding. His profile within the government was a double-edged sword. As minister of finance, he was an obvious target during a period of economic uncertainty. As well, Toronto was no longer the Conservative strong-hold it had been in 1957 and 1958. Fleming's position regularly took him out of the riding as he campaigned across the country and ran cabinet meetings in the prime minister's absence. As a result, he was unable to campaign in the riding with the same frequency as his opponents.⁷³

The contest in Eglinton generated interest within the media and academic circles when the Liberals chose Mitchell Sharp, who had risen to prominence within

⁷³ Fleming, So Very Near, Volume 2, 502-503.

the party by organising the Kingston Conference, as their candidate.⁷⁴ Not as well known as Fleming, Sharp was nonetheless expected to make it a close, and thus exciting, contest. He was part of Pearson's advertised "team," coveted by other Toronto-area ridings, who chose to run in Eglinton because he opposed the government's handling of the economy and thought there was no better way to express his position than to run against the finance minister.⁷⁵

The New Democratic party nominated an anti-nuclear candidate, David Gauthier, the thirty year old lecturer in philosophy who had been an anti-nuclear activist since the late 1950s. NDP organisers had been uncertain as to whether they would even run a candidate in Eglinton fearing the party would siphon votes away from Sharp and thus contribute to Fleming's re-election. Some speculated that the party decided to nominate a candidate, even if the riding was a lost cause, when Sharp refused to "make a deal" with them.⁷⁶ More likely was that the 1962 election was the first national campaign for the NDP since its transformation from the CCF in 1961. Party organisers wanted to make sure that the new party did better than its predecessor and provided a national alternative to the Liberals and the Conservatives with candidates in as many ridings as possible.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Mitchell Sharp, Which Reminds Me..., (Toronto, 1994), 94-95.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 95.

⁷⁶ Denis Smith, "The Campaign in Eglinton," John Meisel (editor) Papers on the 1962 election: Fifteen Papers on the Canadian General Election of 1962, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964, 73. This fact is noted in Smith's article on the campaign, but there is no mention of the NDP offer to Sharp in his own recollections. To be fair, there are no references to Social Credit or the NDP in Sharp's account of the campaign, but this does not mean that the suggestion the NDP was willing to sit-out the race if concessions were won from Sharp is groundless.

⁷⁷ Smith, "The Campaign in Eglinton," 73.

If the NDP wanted a candidate for the sake of making a strong showing, Gauthier had other reasons for accepting the nomination. He wanted to expand his efforts to ban the bomb.⁷⁸ He had been involved in some of the pre-election efforts to ready the peace movement for the upcoming campaign,⁷⁹ but preparing for a lobbying effort and running for elected office were two entirely different things. Gauthier was at a disadvantage in Eglinton for a number of reasons. For all intents and purposes, Gauthier was an unknown. Nominated in the middle of May, Gauthier lost valuable time raising his profile within the riding, already a difficult task given the presence of Fleming and Sharp. Gauthier also lacked manpower and money. There were not the scores of volunteers who inundated the Sharp and Fleming campaigns.⁸⁰ The provincial party paid Gauthier's deposit, and his entire campaign budget was \$1500.⁸¹ This was no match for the \$25,000 in expenses declared by the Liberal and Conservative candidates.⁸²

That the two leading candidates in Eglinton made their mark in matters of economics helped to underscore the biggest problem the anti-nuclear movement faced during the campaign. In Eglinton and elsewhere, the 1962 campaign focused on the economy, and little could be done to supplant it with other issues.⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Gauthier to Hunnius, 24 April 1962, Hunnius to Gauthier, 1 May 1962, Ibid., File 16: Guide, Statement, Questionnaire - MP candidates, 1962.

⁸⁰ Smith, "The Campaign in Eglinton," 83.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Brian Land, Eglinton, (Toronto, 1965), 139.

⁸³ Ibid., 59.

Although he talked briefly about the NDP's economic and social welfare policies, Gauthier focused his campaign on the perils of nuclear weapons.⁸⁴ But neither nuclear weapons nor the NDP mattered in the riding.⁸⁵ In the end, Fleming defeated Sharp by a margin of 760 votes, with a count of 18,648 to 17,888.⁸⁶ Gauthier won 4,113 votes which could have changed the outcome if even one quarter of them had gone to Sharp.⁸⁷ Although it is impossible to say that any or all of Gauthier's votes would have gone to the Liberal candidate, it is more likely that they would have gone to Sharp than to Fleming.

Perhaps one of the more interesting things about Eglinton was the weak presence of the anti-nuclear movement. On the surface the movement could not have asked for a better race in which to make its point and voice its concerns. Eglinton had national exposure, prominent candidates, and a close race. These elements provided the peace movement with an opportunity for action and exposure, but it was one that was all but missed. The weak presence of the movement was most apparent when one considers the lack of volunteers available for Gauthier's campaign. It was a campaign essentially conducted by four people.⁸⁸ Where were the estimated 1,000 anti-nuclear supporters who had marched en

⁸⁴ Smith, "Campaign in Eglinton," 83.

⁸⁵ Fleming, Volume 2, 504.

⁸⁶ Land, Eglinton, 135.

⁸⁷ Smith, "Campaign in Eglinton," 85.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 83.

masse just weeks earlier in the Easter Peace March?⁸⁹ The answer is that supporters had divided loyalties. Many anti-nuclear supporters, particularly the more active ones, were also New Democrats. Many people who would have helped out with an anti-nuclear campaign devoted their energies to working with NDP candidates, and while the party opposed nuclear weapons, not all of its candidates were devoted anti-nuclear activists. As well, not all anti-nuclear activists were New Democrats; there were those who traditionally supported the Liberals or the Conservatives and had no intention of doing anything different in the 1962 election. Still other disarmament activists were involved with another campaign, one waged by the Canadian Peace Research Institute.⁹⁰ Students, who were regarded as a numerical asset when the CCCRH became the CCND earlier in the year and agreed to a formal affiliation with CUCND, were unavailable because they had either left Toronto or were too busy with summer jobs.⁹¹ There was also too much ground to cover. The Toronto CCND had 40 ridings to cover, many requiring extensive travel. Contact with each candidate necessarily limited the amount of time activists could spend campaigning for candidates who opposed nuclear weapons. Finally, despite

⁸⁹ Organisers estimated that 2,000 attended the rally that followed the march. *Ibid.*, File 3: Easter Demonstration 1962.

⁹⁰ The CPRI was created by Norman Alcock in November 1961 to act as a research institute for nuclear issues. See John Paul and Jerome Laulich, *In Your Opinion. Volume 1. Leaders' and Voters' Attitudes on Defence and Disarmament*, (Toronto, 1963).

One prime example of this phenomenon was the VOW's Josephine Davis. She wrote letters and worked on behalf of the CPRI during the campaign rather than for the CCND or VOW. Other members of the VOW also worked for the CPRI to raise money during the spring of 1962 rather than the CCND election campaign designed by Hunnius. Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7969, Volume 418, File: MG 01/V1/601.68 - Social Welfare - Associations, Clubs and Societies - Women's Organizations - Voice of Women. 1961-1963.

⁹¹ Gentles interview with author June 7, 1999. Hunnius interview with author April 15, 1999.

the lack of funds and volunteers, the most difficult obstacle to overcome was the fact that the electorate was concerned about the economy and unemployment, not nuclear weapons. That was one hurdle that the CCND simply could not overcome. There was a focus that ignored the issues already at hand. More volunteers and better organisation might have raised the profile of nuclear weapons as an issue, but it was unlikely that they could transform it into a primary concern for Canadians.

The peace movement was understandably disappointed with the June results, and spent the summer and early autumn contemplating its future efforts to influence policy. For many, the movement's failure to transform nuclear weapons into a prominent election issue signalled a need to return to tactical basics. Hunnius proposed a number of improvements to educate the public and expand the membership base.⁹² Many proposals were straightforward and dealt with the kind of issues one might ordinarily contemplate during the initial development of an organisation. At the top of the list of priorities was an education and recruitment drive to span the first six months of 1963.⁹³ To increase the movement's profile generally (and the CCND's specifically) Hunnius suggested that the British movement be used as a model. The British CND used a "Peace Caravan," a bus donated by a wealthy supporter and converted for the purposes of campaigning with loudspeakers, that travelled all over England raising awareness about the crusade

⁹² Hunnius to Board of Directors, "Proposals for consideration at the meeting of the board of directors," 22 September 1962, CCND Papers, Volume 1, File 5.

⁹³ ibid.

to ban nuclear weapons.⁹⁴ Hunnius thought the same kind of thing could be used quite effectively in Canada.

The Peace Caravan proposal highlighted some of the changes that had occurred within the CCND over the previous six months. The Canadian campaign was moving toward its more active (and more radical) British counterpart in its approach to raising awareness, something that Van Stolk had opposed from the start. Gone were the days of selective recruitment and a personal invitation to join the CCCRH. The CCND and others realised that their election efforts were hurt by the lack of volunteers and this proposal (among others) was designed to help redress the problem. On a more practical level, more members meant more branches, and more branches meant more money, an ongoing concern for the CCND's Executive. Another tactic to attract more members was the decision to approach unions.⁹⁵ While the NDP had opposed nuclear weapons from its inception, the CCND's growing interest in union support was new and helped to accentuate the movement's natural shift to the political left. While the Canadian peace movement traditionally occupied this role, it was an important difference from the early CCCRH, which Van Stolk had sought to keep in the centre of the political spectrum and as bi-partisan (or multi-partisan) as possible.

At its meeting in September, the CCND's Board of Directors accepted the proposals to rework and reinvigorate the organisation.⁹⁶ The CCND and CUCND

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ CCND Papers, Volume 1, File 5.

endorsed the recruitment drive and awareness campaign that was to culminate in a visit to Ottawa in early November, where they would meet with new members of Parliament. The VOW also planned to present another brief to Diefenbaker in November, and had similarly spent the summer trying to reconceptualise its efforts to influence the process of policy formulation. But as the anti-nuclear movement prepared for its Ottawa Lobby, the world came close to a nuclear confrontation and the Canadian anti-nuclear movement was forever changed. The next chapter deals with how the world came to the brink of nuclear war, and how Canada's nuclear policy changed as a result.

Chapter Eight: To the Brink and Beyond - How the Cuban Missile Crisis Changed Canada's Nuclear Policy

By the fall of 1962, Canadian political parties had decided that nuclear policy was best left to outside circumstances, and fate was happy to oblige with the Cuban missile crisis in October. After a certain amount of introspection over the summer, both major parties settled into a holding pattern in anticipation of the next election. The crisis over Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba upset these plans, and both parties were forced to reassess their defence policies with surprising results. Khrushchev blinked and the Cuban missile crisis was over; Diefenbaker did the same and resumed nuclear negotiations with the Americans at the end of October. Pearson, meanwhile, was coming to terms with nuclear weapons in a way that shocked many of his supporters.

The missile crisis was the beginning of the end of the Liberal party's nuclear ambiguity, as Pearson and his advisers began to consider whether Canada was obliged to acquire nuclear weapons. By January 1963 the answer was affirmative, and this chapter traces how the Liberal leader came to change his party's nuclear policy so dramatically. It also outlines the reaction of the peace movement to both the Conservative and Liberal changes. The chapter concludes with the federal election that followed Diefenbaker's defeat in the House of Commons, a defeat caused by the government's vacillation over nuclear policy. Whether Canada should acquire nuclear weapons was central to the election campaign that followed.

Most Canadians were caught unaware and unprepared when the Cuban missile crisis occurred. The peace movement was equally surprised. It had just

embarked on a new campaign to raise awareness and recruit new members. The Conservatives, now a minority government, had just returned to the nation's business. There was little on the legislative agenda, and while one eye was kept on the House, the other was on plans for the next election. The Liberals were similarly preoccupied with domestic politics, not defence policy. Such was the Canadian political landscape at the time of the missile crisis.

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On October 16, McGeorge Bundy notified President Kennedy that there were Soviet missile sites in Cuba. The president had been concerned about the possibility of missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from Florida, all autumn. He had recently warned Khrushchev publicly that the United States would treat Soviet missiles stationed on the Caribbean island as a threat to American security.¹ Kennedy also had his own political concerns to consider. There were mid-term elections that fall, and Republicans were using Kennedy's shortcomings in dealing with Cuba as a campaign issue. Canada had continued to pursue relations with Castro's regime despite the American embargo, and this served as another source of irritation for the president when it came to dealing with Diefenbaker.²

It was not the situation in Cuba as much as Kennedy's reaction to the crisis that infuriated Diefenbaker. He was already wary of the president, and the missile crisis confirmed his worst fears. He had always worried the Americans would not consult Canadian officials in the event of an emergency, despite reassurances of

¹ Bundy, Danger and Survival, 392-393.

² Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 284.

joint control and release for nuclear warheads. The Kennedy administration's handling of the Cuban crisis seemed to prove to Diefenbaker that his concerns were legitimate.

Kennedy and his advisers waited almost a week before informing American allies of the growing problem in Cuba. Canada, like the others, was left virtually in the dark. Despite tensions at the highest political level, however, Canadian-American relations were on steady terms in the autumn of 1962. Officials and institutions from each country continued to get along well with one another (regardless of the tensions between political leaders) and officers from External Affairs occasionally met with American intelligence officials. They did so on the weekend of October 20 where they learned of the evolving crisis, information which they passed on to Robertson and Bryce. Bryce, in turn, kept the prime minister apprised of developments. On October 22, he notified Diefenbaker that Merchant was coming to Ottawa with important news. By the time Merchant spoke to the prime minister late Monday afternoon, Diefenbaker had already known about the trouble in Cuba for about 24 hours. To add insult to perceived injury, the former ambassador brought word of the American position, not an invitation to consult with the president about the actions the allies might take to prevent the Soviets from deploying their missiles. Diefenbaker's reaction was entirely in character given his long held concerns about allied co-operation and consultation.³

³ Ibid., 285.

The prime minister mishandled the Canadian response to the missile crisis, though there were reasonable explanations for his behaviour. First, Diefenbaker was angered that Kennedy did not consult him about the response to the crisis.⁴ Even when dealing with Eisenhower, Diefenbaker had worried about American consultation and he was correct to worry about American reluctance to consult with its northern neighbour in an emergency. The Cuban crisis illustrated clearly that the Americans, in times of trouble, presented their allies with a plan for action not an invitation to consult. From the United States perspective this was not a snub to its allies. Rather, in an emergency, by its very definition, the Americans responded before consulting. That was the price leaders, whether de Gaulle or Diefenbaker, paid for being allied with – and protected by – the United States. That said, Canada was not only an ally in NATO but NORAD as well. Surely that should have counted for something extra. Diefenbaker and other Canadian officials seemed to think so.

Merchant met with Diefenbaker, Harkness and Green. Air chief marshal Frank Miller, Bryce, and Robertson had also been expected to attend but did not. Merchant, who had yet to be replaced at the American embassy in Ottawa,⁵ was

⁴ Kennedy had every reason to expect that this would be Diefenbaker's reaction. See briefing notes from Diefenbaker visit to Washington as well as Kennedy visit to Ottawa. The prime minister's sensitivities are oft-noted.

⁵ Kennedy approached Erwin Griswold, the dean of Harvard Law School, about the post in Ottawa, but he refused it. Griswold to Kennedy, 1 August 1962, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - General, 1962.

A new American ambassador, Walton Butterworth, did not arrive in Ottawa until the middle of December. Butterworth had served in Ottawa in 1932. His position prior to Ottawa in 1962 was American Representative to the European Communities, which he held from late 1959. Butterworth presented his credentials December 11, 1962. His final note in the report of his initial conversation with Diefenbaker was simply that the prime minister did not raise the subject of nuclear weapons negotiations. See No. 442. Embassy Ottawa to Department of State, 17 December 1962. No. 797, FRUS. Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1191-92.

accompanied by two intelligence officers. He had been an excellent ambassador, and understood Diefenbaker as much as anyone. His presence in Ottawa was the kind of valuable contact that was missing during the crisis. Yet regardless of his solid relationship with Merchant, Diefenbaker was upset that he had not been genuinely consulted and likely convinced himself that it was an insult for the Kennedy administration to send only a retired ambassador to deliver such an important message.⁶

When Merchant read the president's statement to the Canadians, Diefenbaker objected to only a single sentence, which was ultimately changed to his satisfaction.⁷ Diefenbaker seemed to believe the evidence brought to his attention and told Merchant that Canada would honour its NATO and NORAD obligations if the U.S. were attacked by missiles stationed in Cuba.⁸ It is not clear whether Diefenbaker meant that Canada would support the United States only if the country was attacked (not merely threatened), or if this was a blanket reassurance for American officials. He also told the former ambassador that he would not make a statement until the next day.

Diefenbaker originally intended to wait until the 23rd to make a statement to the House of Commons. At Pearson's suggestion, he changed his mind and addressed Parliament immediately following the president's broadcast. The prime minister did not have a complete text when he spoke before the House of Commons

⁶ Robinson Diefenbaker's World, 285-286. Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker, 184.

⁷ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 8, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

that evening. His notes included only a handful of points: "A sombre and challenging speech" (Kennedy's, not his own), "offensive IRBMs in Cuba constitute a threat against all Canadian cities," and finally, "Have a group of 'neutral' nations perhaps 8 non aligned members of 18 Nations Disarmament Committee conduct an on site inspection to ascertain if offensive nuclear weapons are installed."⁹

Diefenbaker spoke eloquently to the Canadian people:

The reason that I agreed to the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition was to ask Canadians as well as free men everywhere in the world not to panic at this time. This is a time for calmness. It is a time for the banishment of those things that sometimes separate us. Above all, it is a time when each of us must endeavour to do his part to assure the preservation of peace not only in this hemisphere but everywhere in the world. The existence of these bases or launching pads is not defensive but offensive. The determination of Canadians will be that the United Nations should be charged at the earliest possible moment with this serious problem.¹⁰

Diefenbaker's promise to Merchant that he would not speak to Canadians until the following day had appeared to be genuine, but Pearson's intervention persuaded him to do otherwise. He disliked Pearson, but trusted his views on foreign affairs. He also likely worried that Pearson might make a statement if he did not.

Diefenbaker's proposed U.N. fact-finding mission seemed to call into question Kennedy's allegations that there were Soviet missile sites in Cuba.¹¹

However, the proposal was not Diefenbaker's; it actually originated in the

⁸ *ibid.*, 9.

⁹ Notes for Parliament - Cuban Missile Crisis Debate, 22 October 1962, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 56, File: MG 01/XII/C/120 Cuba 1960-1962.

¹⁰ House of Commons, *Debates*, 22 October 1962.

¹¹ Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967*, 115.

Department of External Affairs. Both Robertson and Green supported a United Nations approach to solving the crisis, and the former encouraged the latter to follow this line as he prepared for an appearance on the CBC dealing with the crisis on October 24. The undersecretary argued that the introduction of an "international element" might persuade the Soviets to withdraw or cease shipments of warheads to Cuba, thereby removing the need for the American naval blockade. He worried that world opinion, currently in support of the president's actions, might not hold, noting that some western nations were already beginning to question the American response, with allusions to the role that domestic politics in the U.S. might be playing in the crisis.¹² Even after it was apparent that the Americans opposed the proposal, Robertson continued to promote the idea to Green. Perceptions that the Canadians were less than enthusiastic about endorsing the American blockade were only strengthened by Green's presentation to the CBC when the minister portrayed the government's position as one of obligation not conviction.¹³

Cabinet discussed the situation in Cuba at great length the day after Kennedy's address. As Diefenbaker had readied himself for his statement in the Commons the night before, Miller informed Harkness that American forces had moved to DEFCON-3 and asked that Canadian forces do the same. Harkness was willing, but Miller argued that he did not yet have the authority to implement such a measure. The new War Book, which gave the minister of defence the authority to

¹² Robertson to the Minister, "Cuba," 24 October 1962, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 56, File: MG 01/XII/C/120 Cuba 1960-1962.

¹³ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. 289.

order troops on alert, had not yet been approved by cabinet.¹⁴ As a result, Harkness decided to talk to Diefenbaker.¹⁵ He had managed to convince Green that the situation warranted the alert, but Diefenbaker refused to approve the measure, deferring to cabinet. In spite of the prime minister's expressed opposition, the minister of defence decided to put Canadian forces on full alert, even if it was not formally declared.¹⁶ This was where the matter stood when cabinet discussed it on October 23. Some ministers favoured immediate action; others supported a more cautious approach.¹⁷ Harkness later argued that cabinet would have agreed to his proposed alert if not for Diefenbaker, who had argued that an alert would incite panic. He preferred to take a "wait and see" approach. Harkness later criticised Diefenbaker's behaviour during the crisis, uncharitably attributing it to "a pathological hatred of taking a hard decision."¹⁸ After the meeting, Harkness met with defence staff and ordered them to implement the required measures for alert status. While no personnel were allowed to go on leave, none were recalled from leave either. Essentially, it was an alert in all but formal declaration. The minister convinced Diefenbaker to hold another cabinet meeting the next morning, believing that cabinet would acquiesce to his request. Again Diefenbaker rejected the alert

¹⁴ Harkness raised the War Book in cabinet 23 October 1962, and cabinet referred the matter to the CDC, "urgently," to examine the proposed revisions. When the subject was revisited at a meeting on the 25th, Diefenbaker emphasised that "no action was to be taken to put Canadian forces on an Alert footing without his approval." Cabinet Conclusions, 23 October 1962, Paragraph 2.

¹⁵ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 9, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 23 October 1962, Paragraphs 7-10.

¹⁸ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 11, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

after another heated exchange with the defence minister. It was only after the meeting, when Harkness learned that U.S. Forces had stepped up their alert to DEFCON-2, that Diefenbaker was finally willing to act.¹⁹ Within days, the crisis came to a climax. Diefenbaker addressed the Commons on October 25 to assure the Americans that Canada stood by their side in support of the quarantine. And, when Kennedy addressed the nation again on Sunday, October 28, the world was relieved to hear that Khrushchev had finally agreed to keep nuclear warheads out of Cuba.²⁰

The Cuban missile crisis, more than anything else, had a decisive impact on the formulation of Canada's nuclear policy. Prior to the crisis, the Canadians had informed the United States that they intended to support a proposal by the 18 Nation Disarmament Conference to the U.N. General Assembly that called for an unverified moratorium on nuclear tests. Kennedy was unhappy with this position and told Diefenbaker so in a letter dated October 18, two days after the president learned about the Soviet build-up in Cuba, but several days before the prime minister was informed of the situation.²¹ In the meantime, Harkness had continued his efforts to persuade cabinet to resume nuclear negotiations with the Americans.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13. Did Diefenbaker know what his Minister of Defence was doing? Some of his closest advisers believed that he did; Bryce, for instance, was convinced that Diefenbaker had turned a blind eye and preferred to allow an informal alert over a formal one. As Robinson wrote, "Not much escaped the Diefenbaker antennae." *Diefenbaker's World*, 288.

²⁰ In exchange for the Soviet action in Cuba the Americans agreed to withdraw Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

²¹ State Department to Embassy (Ottawa), 18 October 1962, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 20, File: Canada - Subjects: Diefenbaker Correspondence, 10/11/62-10/21/62.

Nuclear talks had been on hold until October 1962, just before revelations about Cuba. Early in the month, Harkness had tried in cabinet to resurrect the talks. On the day that Kennedy learned of missiles sites in Cuba, cabinet had been prepared to discuss the nuclear dilemma yet again. In a file memorandum, Robinson recalled a conversation with Green's assistant that seemed to reflect the growing desire to renew negotiations:

Ross Campbell said on the telephone today that nuclear weapons policy is becoming a more active item in cabinet. He gave me to understand that a National Defence memorandum was now on the cabinet agenda and that it related particularly to armaments for the F-104Gs [SWAP Agreement] to be delivered to the RCAF in Europe. Some thought is also being given to nuclear weapons for continental defence and in this sector the minister claims to have the PM's support for the idea of standby arrangements which would provide for weapons being held in the US for transfer on short notice to Canada in the event of an emergency. What will happen to all this cannot yet be foreseen but Campbell expected that decisions, or at least cabinet discussion, could be expected shortly.²²

Two days later, Lester Pearson asked Diefenbaker about the future of nuclear policy in the House of Commons, and the prime minister stalled for time.²³

Campbell's comments to Robinson revealed a new element in Canada's nuclear policy; Diefenbaker was willing to conclude arrangements for nuclear weapons, but the warheads themselves would be stored outside Canada. This proposal meant that the government could honestly state that there were no nuclear weapons on Canadian soil.

²² Robinson, "Nuclear Weapons Policy," 16 October 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1962.

²³ House of Commons, Debates, 18 October 1962.

The Cuban missile crisis broke the nuclear stalemate in cabinet. On October 30, two days after Kennedy proclaimed victory in Cuba, cabinet approved the resumption of negotiations. With Cuba so fresh in his mind, even Green was convinced that Canada needed an agreement on nuclear weapons. However, there was a single, but important, caveat. Previous negotiations had focused on the provision of nuclear warheads for various theatres of use: NORAD, NATO, and Newfoundland. Now, the minister supported an agreement to cover emergency situations only. Still adamantly opposed to nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, Green proposed that Canadian officials negotiate agreements whereby nuclear warheads were "earmarked" for Canadian forces, but kept on American soil, promoting "standby" agreements for Canadian forces in NORAD and NATO. An interdepartmental group, with members from the Departments of External Affairs, National Defence, and Finance, would draft the agreements for cabinet. After cabinet approval, the drafts would be sent to the U.S. Embassy to lay the foundation of a nuclear arrangement.²⁴ Only then would talks resume.

Harkness was not enthusiastic about Green's proposal, but it was better than nothing. Cabinet agreed, approving talks based on Green's proposal on October 30. For his part, Diefenbaker again insisted that the talks be kept secret failing which he would suspend them as he had done in past.²⁵ With that, the negotiating team of Harkness, Green, and Gordon Churchill got to work.

²⁴ Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, "Provision of Nuclear Warheads," 26 October 1962, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 Defence (Haslam) Part 2.

²⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 30 October 1962, Paragraph 37.

Arrangements for NATO were reasonably straightforward. NORAD negotiations were more complex. With only two to three hours notice of an attack on North America, it was essential that weapons arrive in Canada within two hours. This two hour window of opportunity called into question the feasibility of Green's proposal to keep Canadian warheads on American soil. As Harkness later noted,

It was quite apparent that any such plan was impractical and far too costly, and the only purpose it would serve would be to enable the Canadian government to say no nuclear weapons were being held on Canadian soil. This, however, appeared to be Howard Green's chief objective and he insisted going over the times, men involved, and all the other details at great length, evidently with the hope of convincing himself and others that it was a workable scheme.²⁶

At the same time, Harkness tried to convince Diefenbaker to approve the NATO proposal. The prime minister refused, once again insisting on a complete nuclear package.²⁷

If the Americans had hoped that Diefenbaker would be more willing to make a decision on nuclear weapons after an election, they were disappointed. The Americans still wanted to negotiate a nuclear agreement with Canadian officials despite the potential political consequences of such negotiations for the Canadian government.²⁸ With a minority government, Diefenbaker was even more concerned about the political feasibility of nuclear weapons and thus less inclined to negotiate with the Americans. During the weeks following the missile crisis, Diefenbaker

²⁶ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 15, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

²⁷ Ibid., 16.

²⁸ Robert McNamara generously suggested that he and Harkness discuss nuclear weapons at the NATO Ministers' Meeting in mid-December in Paris. McNamara to Harkness, 8 November 1962, Ibid., File: The Nuclear Arms Crisis, Reference 1961-1963.

continued to fret about the political implications of acquiring nuclear weapons. He raised the subject in cabinet several times, and contemplated making the next election into a de facto referendum on the subject. While most ministers did not want to make nuclear weapons the sole issue of the next election, they were willing to see acquisition be one of several major points in the platform. Green and a few others, however, were adamantly opposed to this proposal.²⁹ Bryce, as before, reassured the prime minister that Green's views were not widely held, and argued that, in the wake of missile crisis, Canadians were more supportive than ever before of the government's plans to accept nuclear weapons.³⁰ However legitimate Diefenbaker's concerns about public support were, Harkness had nothing but contempt for these political considerations, suggesting that the prime minister was more concerned about partisan politics than national security.³¹ There was a great deal to this criticism. But with a minority government, who could blame him?

There were consequences to Diefenbaker's behaviour during the missile crisis. The crisis destroyed the remaining remnants of his credibility within the Kennedy administration. Over lunch in early December, Merchant responded to Robinson's assertions that Diefenbaker was concerned about the administration's lack of consultation, remarking that the prime minister's statement to the House on October 22 "surprised and disappointed me" as did Green's CBC interview two days later. Robinson defended Diefenbaker, pointing out that Kennedy had put him in an

²⁹ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 16-17, *Ibid.*

³⁰ Bryce, "Lessons of the Cuban Crisis," 20 November 1962, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.4: Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1962.

awkward position by presenting him with an accomplished fact. The former ambassador rejected this explanation, noting that if anyone should have been upset with the president's lack of prior information and consultation it was the British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, "who had comparably short advance notice." Merchant continued: "I said I didn't think Canada had earned, by its actions and by certain non-actions, the right to the extreme intimacy of relations which had existed in years past." Furthermore, it was not feasible to expect broad consultation when secrecy was of the utmost importance. In an international crisis, secrecy took priority over consultation. It was evident that Diefenbaker's actions during the Cuban crisis worsened existing tensions with the Americans, tensions that had resulted from the failure to reach an agreement on nuclear weapons and the trouble Diefenbaker had caused over the Rostow Memo.³²

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Diefenbaker had reason to worry about public opinion in October 1962. He was only months into a minority government, and his political insecurity was exacerbated by appeals from the anti-nuclear movement. Surprisingly, the missile crisis did not have a major impact on Canada's disarmament groups. Before the crisis, the VOW, CCND, and CUCND had each scheduled meetings with government officials to follow up their previous electoral efforts and to launch a new

³¹ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 17, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

³² Merchant to Rusk and Ball, No. 441, n.d., FRUS. Volume XIII 1961-1963., 1190-1191.

round of lobbying.³³ During the crisis, groups sent a flurry of telegrams to Diefenbaker and other leaders urging them to "do the right thing" and reject all things nuclear for Canada.³⁴ But anti-nuclear groups did not take full advantage of the crisis. It was an opportunity to convince Canadians generally that the world had been brought to the brink of nuclear confrontation, a danger completely dependent upon mass nuclear holdings and thus entirely avoidable. Instead, anti-nuclear groups chose to direct their attentions to the highest levels of government and to try to persuade them of the perils presented by nuclear weapons. This was the wrong tactic. Nothing had changed about the danger of nuclear weapons in the wake of the missile crisis, so it was unlikely that this kind of appeal to logic would have influenced the prime minister's behaviour. Indeed, given Diefenbaker's political position, the only thing that might have changed his mind was a sign that a large number of Canadians opposed nuclear weapons. It would have capitalised on Diefenbaker's existing concerns about political support and the consequences of nuclear acquisition. For this, a petition like the one presented to the government a year earlier, not a brief, was the ideal strategy. In the end, anti-nuclear groups

³³ M.J. Deacey to Thérèse Casgrain, 12 October 1962. See also Claude Gauthier to Diefenbaker regarding Casgrain and VOW, 11 October 1962. In what was described to Diefenbaker as an "annual event," Gauthier relayed Casgrain's request for a meeting with Diefenbaker on November 1, promising to bring with her between 250 and 300 members of the VOW. Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, Volume 234, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

³⁴ The Diefenbaker Papers and Lester B. Pearson Papers are filled with letters from the anti-nuclear movement, as well as from average Canadians regarding the Cuban missile crisis.

presented nothing new to convince Diefenbaker to reject nuclear weapons.³⁵ While most anti-nuclear activists regarded Cuba as a self-evident explanation as to why nuclear weapons had no place in the Canadian arsenal, the briefs submitted by VOW and CCND-CUCND, as in the past, were insufficient to persuade the prime minister that there was a clear reason to forego nuclear warheads.³⁶

The Voice of Women's brief was delivered by a large group of women who gathered together on a "Peace Train" into Ottawa at the beginning of November. The brief contained their standard message, urging the government to reject a nuclear role in order to maintain Canada's international reputation as a leader in disarmament. But for all that was routine, there were some new points in the VOW brief. The women urged the government to promote a test ban agreement. They also suggested that Canada withdraw from any agreement that might require the acquisition of nuclear weapons, a less than subtle reference to the obligations of NORAD and NATO.³⁷ Yet the VOW missed an ideal opportunity to expand upon the fears created by the missile crisis. Indeed, there were only minor references to it.³⁸ The brief had been written before the crisis, and the modest reference was explained away by the organisers as a matter of timing. The women who had written the brief simply did not have time to include more fully a discussion of the

³⁵ Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, Volume 234, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

³⁶ Casgrain to Diefenbaker, 29 October 1962, *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*, See also Brief to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 1 November 1962, VOW Papers, Volume 7, File: VOW Briefs and Statements, 1962 [7-9].

³⁸ *ibid.*

missile crisis and its implications.³⁹ True though it was, it was also a poor excuse. There were only a handful of women involved in writing the brief, which could have easily been amended to include more on the lessons of the crisis if the authors had so chosen.

More important than the Peace Train's ability to influence government policy was the impact the event had on the organisation. As with the presentation of their petition in March, the women of VOW met with Green. But the gathering was more confrontational than the last, and the activists appeared to be more radical than the women who had attended previous meetings.⁴⁰ Appearances were not deceiving, as many of the women in attendance were from the Ottawa branch, which was considered to be more radical than many other VOW offices. The press also noted the change in tone, as one journalist remarked that the VOW had a new belligerency about it.⁴¹

One of the VOW's founders, Josephine Davis, also noticed. The women's behaviour upset her. She thought they had been too aggressive and thought it was inappropriate to push Green to take an explicit stand opposing nuclear weapons. The women did not know that Green had agreed with the government's decision two days earlier to renew nuclear talks with the Americans, but his refusal to take a

³⁹ Casgrain to Diefenbaker, 29 October 1962, Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7895, Volume 234, File: 313.312 D-V - Voice of Women Federal Government Executive - The Prime Minister of Canada - Requests and Appeals - Interviews - Delegations - Voice of Women. 1960-1962.

⁴⁰ Ball, VOW: The Early Years, 478. See also VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - Davis, 1962.

⁴¹ Ibid., Charles Lynch, "Green Given 'Hard Time'," Calgary Herald, 2 November 1962.

clear stand infuriated the women. Davis, on the other hand, thought the women had been rude and combative, and decided to do something about it.⁴²

Davis contacted the VOW's general membership by sending a letter to every member. Included was a questionnaire about the organisation's style and substance.⁴³ She feared that the organisation's radical core was going to dominate activities, and that the VOW was about to embark on a programme of civil disobedience in its efforts to promote disarmament.⁴⁴ Judging by some of the responses to her questionnaire, her assumption was correct.⁴⁵ The more radical members of the VOW saw the merits of civil disobedience in order to persuade politicians to oppose nuclear weapons in Canada. If the logic of non-proliferation was not enough, perhaps public shame would suffice. Not all members agreed, but many of the more active members did. Thus, by the end of 1962 the problems that had been brewing beneath the surface since the organisation's inception finally bubbled over. The VOW was deeply divided.

Although many women agreed with Davis' opposition to civil disobedience,⁴⁶ there was almost unanimous concern about the tactics she had used to address the general membership.⁴⁷ The constitution of the organisation established policy, and changes were made through resolutions adopted at the annual general meeting.

⁴² VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - Davis, 1962.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Davis to Casgrain, 20 November 1962, Ibid.

⁴⁵ Peggy Hope Simpson to Davis, 24 November 1962, Ibid.

⁴⁶ VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - Davis, 1962.

Concerns were to be addressed directly to the Executive, which was responsible for determining the required course of action.⁴⁸ There were procedures for making recommendations to the executive and Davis circumvented them. By late 1962 Davis was no longer on the Executive and should not have expressed her concerns directly to the general membership.⁴⁹ The VOW, both Executive and general membership, took little time to reject Davis' position.⁵⁰ This incident was the organisation's first major crisis and left the VOW with questions about strategy and tactics for its future endeavours.

The Voice of Women was not alone in its inability to promote disarmament following the missile crisis. It was also a problem for the CCND and CUCND. The two groups organised a meeting with parliamentarians on November 8.⁵¹ As in the past, they planned to meet with politicians, but this time, they hoped that the missile crisis would inspire anti-nuclear supporters to join in their march on Parliament Hill. This did not occur. Despite the fear raised by the crisis, ordinary Canadians were not motivated to support the movement. Even members of the CCND and CUCND were far more inclined to offer financial support than to make the trip to Ottawa. Those who volunteered their time came predominantly from the Toronto branch, making the effort much less national in scope (and less impressive) than the petition

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Casgrain to General Membership, 7 January 1963, Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Quebec Voix des Femmes to Casgrain, 22 November 1962, Ibid.

⁵¹ CCND Papers, Volume 19, File 2: 1962 Ottawa Lobby: replies, lobbyists.

in 1961.⁵² It was one thing to sign a petition or send money, it was quite another to make the trek to Ottawa to support the cause. That anti-nuclear organisations had difficulties mobilising support for a protest against nuclear weapons seemed to confirm Bryce's comment to the prime minister that Canadians would support (or at least not oppose) the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

While the VOW met only with party leaders, the CCND-CUCND lobby was more broadly based, seeing anyone who was willing to meet with them. New Democratic members were obvious supporters, but MPs from other parties were much less inclined. Many were more than willing to meet with the activists, but few supported their stand on nuclear policy. The Liberal caucus, for instance, agreed to meet with lobbyists even though most members opposed their position.⁵³ Ultimately, the CCND met with 90 MPs, including several cabinet ministers.⁵⁴ However, the CCND-CUCND brief, much like its VOW counterpart, contained nothing that would have influenced those already in favour of nuclear weapons to change their position.

Unlike the VOW, the CCND and CUCND did not emerge from their November lobby divided. As Thomson reported, "We are pleased to report that the lobby was both realistically effective and financially successful....We were encouraged and gratified by the sympathetic reception every Member of Parliament

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Paul Martin to CCND, 23 October 1962, Ibid., File 3 MP's replies to lobby. Paul Hellyer, Damn The Torpedoes: My Fight to Unify Canada's armed Forces, (Toronto, 1990), 25.

⁵⁴ Thomson to CCND and CUCND Membership, 26 November 1962, CCND Papers, Volume 19, File 1: Replies and Donations for Ottawa Lobby 1962.

gave us. Thus, we are more than ever confirmed in our belief that Canada must, can and will take greater initiative for world peace."⁵⁵ The assessment was a mistaken one, compounded by some major organisational problems surrounding the lobby that undermined its ability to influence the direction of Canada's nuclear policy.

When organisers wrote to request interviews with MPs they soon realised that many members would be absent from Ottawa for the scheduled visit.⁵⁶ The United Nations General Assembly in New York, a NATO conference in Paris, and a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary conference in Lagos, Nigeria all kept Members of Parliament otherwise occupied.⁵⁷ Many MPs interested in defence, disarmament, and foreign affairs attended these meetings, and were thus unable to meet with delegates from the CCND and CUCND. The result was that activists might have met with 90 MPs, some more enthusiastic than others, but they did not meet with those who had any influence on the development of nuclear policy. There was also no point in preaching to the converted. By the time organisers realised their error, they apparently felt that it was too late to change the date of the Lobby, and went ahead as planned.

Thus, by the beginning of 1963 the largest anti-nuclear group, the Voice of Women, was disorganised and demoralised. Morale was high within the CCND and CUCND, but they were in the midst of a six month campaign to rejuvenate their

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ CCND Papers, Volume 19, Files 1 and 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., File 1: Replies.

membership base and raise awareness. The three groups were focused on internal matters because many organisers believed that they could not pressure the government to oppose nuclear weapons without better organisation and greater numbers. In this regard, their concerns were completely justified. None of the groups was in the position to wage an all-out campaign against nuclear weapons or get involved in another election, and yet this was precisely where they were headed.

* * * *

If the government moved forward in its negotiations with the Americans for nuclear weapons, and the Cuban crisis caused the anti-nuclear movement to re-examine its efforts and policies, similar self-reflection was apparent within the Liberal Party. The reassessment of Liberal defence policy culminated in a speech given by Pearson in Scarborough on January 12, 1963 in which he pledged to accept nuclear weapons if elected prime minister. The speech marked the end of a period of transition, one that began at the end of October. Paul Hellyer, the party's defence critic, played a key role in the change of policy. Hellyer had missed the CCND's November lobby because he was in Paris attending the NATO Parliamentary Conference. It was this conference that changed his views on nuclear weapons, and ultimately, the party's policy. Hellyer recalled the profound impact the visit had on his perceptions of Canada's defence policy.

It had been seven years since I had attended one [a NATO Parliamentary Conference], and the contrast upset me deeply. In 1955, Canadian airmen had been on top of the world because their

souped-up F-86 Sabre aircraft could fly rings around the Americans. Now the government was refusing to arm the F-104s it had purchased for the strike role, and pilots were so ashamed they avoided bars frequented by their NATO colleagues.⁵⁸

He was also influenced by meetings with the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, General Lauris Norstad, and George Ignatieff, Canada's ambassador to the alliance. Norstad showed Hellyer, in confidence, maps and battle plans that included Canadian forces. He warned Hellyer that Canadian forces formed a major component of his battle plans but that they were currently unreliable without nuclear warheads. Hellyer's meeting with Ignatieff revealed similar frustrations. Ignatieff indicated that the NATO Council was losing patience with the Canadian government and that there had been some talk of the Council passing a resolution noting these concerns, though NATO officials had been persuaded to put the motion on hold. Hellyer was never told how far these deliberations went, or how real the threat was, but clearly the Americans were not the only ones annoyed by Diefenbaker's procrastination.⁵⁹ Hellyer's discussions with both men led him to conclude that Canada had no choice but to accept nuclear weapons.⁶⁰

Upon his return from Paris, Hellyer wrote a memo to Pearson. He also reported his conclusions to caucus, which seemed more impressed with the proposal than Pearson was. Hellyer argued that Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons in Europe would not alter the balance of peace, nor would it hinder

⁵⁸ Hellyer, Damn the Torpedoes, 24.

⁵⁹ Hellyer interview with author May 14, 1999.

⁶⁰ Hellyer, Damn the Torpedoes, 20.

disarmament talks. And if Canada accepted nuclear weapons for its NATO forces, there was no reason to refrain from accepting them in Canada for NORAD forces. For Hellyer it was a matter of honour and obligation, not nuclear weapons. "I have not changed my opinion about the usefulness of the Bomarc missile, but if there is one thing that is more useless than an armed Bomarc it is an unarmed Bomarc," he wrote.⁶¹ Hellyer also considered the political consequences of reversing the party's nuclear policy.

The great majority of the Canadian people would want their country to fulfil its obligations. We are on sound ground in the fact that we have consistently recommended a different course at a time when a different choice was feasible. Now, however, our choice is limited by the circumstances. Furthermore, we are not bound by the present circumstances for all time. If we wished to play a different role this could be negotiated and implemented over a period of years in a responsible way. Now, however, we must uphold the honour and integrity of our word as a nation.⁶²

Hellyer also met privately with Pearson but "saw no indication he was about to change his mind."⁶³ It took time for the Liberal leader to change his mind, and when he did, Hellyer was out of the country.⁶⁴ According to Hellyer, Pearson finally made up his mind about the policy change on New Year's Day 1963.⁶⁵ But others are not as certain that he had made up his mind to accept nuclear weapons at this

⁶¹ Hellyer, "Following the NATO Parliamentary Conference held in Paris, November 1962," 29 November 1962, Pearson Papers, Volume 55, File: NATO Parliamentary Conference.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hellyer, Damn the Torpedoes, 25.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 25-26. Hellyer had been outspoken about his support for nuclear weapons, urging the government to conclude an agreement with the Americans that would allow for warheads in the event of an emergency in a speech in Walkerton on December 8. Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1962, Saywell (ed.), (Toronto, 1963), 144.

⁶⁵ Hellyer, Damn the Torpedoes, 25. Pickersgill, The Road Back, 181-184.

time. At the end of December, John Gellner delivered a brief on defence recommendations to Hellyer at his request.⁶⁶ Gellner wrote, "I now believe that we should make good on our commitments to NORAD and NATO until we can change them through renegotiation. I still believe, of course, that the sooner we start renegotiating them the better."⁶⁷ The Gellner brief was circulated to various Liberal advisers, including Pickersgill, Gordon, Drury, and Kent.⁶⁸

Pickersgill made the most detailed response. He admitted that he was not very interested in defence policy aside from its potential political implications. As such, he regarded the style of the issue as being as important as its substance, and urged Pearson to be decisive above all else. "The public condemns the government for vacillation," Pickersgill wrote:

but those who notice us say we are just as bad. You have already decided what our position must be on existing commitments and there was no dissent in caucus. But let it be said simply and decisively and without any qualifications about trying to get out of it. That I regard as vital. I think it almost as important to put this nuclear weapon issue in the perspective of our total political defence commitment and to make it clear that Canada is not and will not ever become a nuclear power on its own; that our commitment relates exclusively to our position in an alliance for the defence of the free world and that our position in the alliance, which we had a large part in forming, depends upon the confidence of the allies, particularly the US, in our loyalty and our reliability.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ John Gellner to Hellyer, 21 December 1962, Pearson Papers, Volume 49, File 806.2: Nuclear Policy Part 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Pearson Papers, Volume 49, File 806.2: Nuclear Policy, Part 1.

⁶⁹ Pickersgill, "Defence Policy," 3 January 1963, Ibid.

Pickersgill advised extreme caution when speaking about defence policy, arguing that "this is the one subject on which a wrong course could sink our prospects without a trace."⁷⁰

Pickersgill wrote his memo to Pearson on January 3, just before he went to Paris. He returned to Ottawa on January 14, two days after Pearson announced that he would acquire nuclear weapons for Canada if the Liberals were elected. Pickersgill later recalled that Hellyer "told me that neither he nor Gordon learned of Pearson's change of view until Pearson made his speech at Scarborough on 12 January. My notes to Pearson on January 2 and 3 make it apparent that Pearson has already indicated to me that he had decided what our position must be on the existing commitments. I was, therefore, not trying to change his mind, but merely to get him to express his position clearly and without qualification."⁷¹

Richard O'Hagan, Pearson's press secretary and adviser, also sent a memo to the Liberal Leader. It leaves some room for doubt about whether Pearson had decided definitively to accept nuclear weapons. "It is obvious of course that in elementary political terms the whole question revolves on nuclear weapons, simply and starkly. Will we accept them, and on what basis? I agree entirely with Jack that the answer you give the country must be a model of simplicity and decisiveness, even – and I say this advisedly – at the risk of some oversimplification. We will be hailed or censured not on the subsidiary refinements, however important they may be, but on the central position we adopt, or at least

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Pickersgill, The Road Back, 183.

what that position appears to be."⁷² Note that O'Hagan wrote, "will" we accept nuclear weapons, not "when" we accept them. It is an important distinction.

O'Hagan's memo was written on January 7 and Pickersgill's notes on January 2 and 3. This seems like an insignificant difference, but it is not. On January 3, General Norstad visited Canada as part of his farewell tour. In response to a question from a reporter, Norstad indicated that Canada was not living up to its commitments in NATO, just as he had told Hellyer in November.⁷³ This was another factor that contributed to Pearson's decision to accept nuclear weapons.⁷⁴

Where Hellyer and others encouraged Pearson to make a statement in favour of nuclear weapons, Kent opposed it. Indeed, he referred to the decision in his memoirs as "the nuclear error."⁷⁵ By late 1962 Kent was an indispensable adviser to Pearson on various subjects as well as the Liberal leader's chief speechwriter.⁷⁶ He had helped plan the party's strategy for the 1962 election and was ready to do the same for the next campaign. After the missile crisis, Pearson almost made a speech proposing that smaller countries like Canada take the lead in efforts to reduce tensions in potential areas of conflict like Berlin and Cuba, but the idea came to naught. Pearson, immediately following the crisis, was not convinced

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1963, Saywell (ed.), (Toronto, 1964), 284-285.

⁷⁴ Kent, A Public Purpose, 189.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 187.

⁷⁶ See Kent Papers, Volumes 1, 2, 6, and 7 for examples of Kent's involvement in the transformation of proposals into policy.

that accepting nuclear weapons was the answer.⁷⁷ Kent thought the opposition should push the government to clarify its nuclear policy and believed that Diefenbaker would ultimately accept nuclear weapons; he did not want Pearson to take the initiative to accept them for Canadian forces.⁷⁸

Kent helped Pearson with the Scarborough speech, drafting notes on January 7, the same day as the O'Hagan memo and several days after Pickersgill's notes, taking both into consideration. The draft focused on the importance of a full and frank discussion of defence policy. He proposed a select committee on defence policy, something Pearson had recommended in the days following the missile crisis. Opposition parties knew surprisingly little about the state of Canada's defence policy because of the government's lack of candour, and Pearson had hoped that a special committee would help to expose the commitments made by Diefenbaker. Kent's draft also emphasised that Diefenbaker had accepted responsibilities in NATO and NORAD, but had failed to honour them. However, the draft hinted that these were not commitments carved in stone. Rather than focus on Canada's nuclear obligations, the draft urged the expansion of conventional forces, recalling that the missile crisis had been resolved with conventional, not nuclear, forces. Kent concluded the draft by emphasising that nuclear weapons were not a "moral issue" but an aspect of collective security and obligations to an alliance.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Kent, A Public Purpose, 188.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 189.

⁷⁹ Kent, "Defence Note," 7 January 1963, Kent Papers, Volume 2 Series 1, File: T.W. Kent, Correspondence, January - February 1963 (1).

The draft was not the straightforward statement envisioned by Pickersgill and O'Hagan. Kent's memoirs give the impression that there was little change between the draft notes on January 7 and the speech that Pearson gave on January 12, 1963. This is not the case. Pearson announced his change of policy to the Scarborough Liberal Riding Association on January 12, 1963. He proposed to reassess Canada's defence policy and outlined what he thought were Diefenbaker's commitments to NATO and NORAD. He also criticised the government's failure to equip weapons with their required nuclear warheads. Pearson was precise about the acceptance of those commitments and pledged to accept nuclear weapons for Canadian forces in NATO and NORAD along the lines of the Anglo-American agreement which had served so many times as a model for negotiations between Canadian and American officials. As Pearson argued, this meant that "a U.S. finger would be in the trigger; but a Canadian finger would be on the safety catch."⁸⁰ He also echoed Kent's words in favour of a build-up of conventional forces. However, Pearson only promised to honour current commitments and was willing to consider renegotiating those obligations.⁸¹

In his memoirs, Pearson attributed his change of policy to the Cuban missile crisis and Hellyer's memo following his visit to Europe. He also noted that recent polls showed the Liberals well ahead of the Conservatives.⁸² Another poll also

⁸⁰ Lester B. Pearson, "On Canadian Defence Policy," Words and Occasions, (Toronto, 1970), 203-4.

⁸¹ Ibid., 204.

⁸² Lester B. Pearson, Memoirs: Volume 3, (Toronto, 1975), 70-71.

showed that the Liberals were ahead of the governing Tories, 47% to 32%.⁸³

Furthermore, Gallup showed that 54% of Canadians believed Canadian forces should have nuclear weapons, compared with 32% opposed, and 14% undecided.⁸⁴

Despite the Cuban crisis, this poll was not a significant change from one taken in March 1962, which indicated that 56.5% of Canadians wanted Canada to accept nuclear arms, compared with 34% opposed, and 9.1 undecided.⁸⁵ This was not much of a difference, so why did it have an impact on Pearson in January 1963 and not in March 1962?

Recall Davey's enthusiasm for polls. Pearson and the Liberals had used Kennedy's pollster, Lou Harris, for the previous election. Despite the poor results, Davey and other organisers decided to keep using Harris and his firm, Penetration Research Ltd. A study entitled, "A Survey of the Political Climate of Ontario and Quebec" arrived in the Liberal party offices on January 10, 1963, and there is evidence to suggest that both Kent and Gordon saw the study's results and recommendations.⁸⁶ This poll was likely the final factor to influence Pearson's decision to accept nuclear weapons. The survey praised the Liberals for their clear and concise criticisms of Diefenbaker's government, but raised concerns about the

⁸³ Saywell, "Parliament and Politics," Canadian Annual Review for 1963, 34.

⁸⁴ Embassy (Ottawa) to Department of State A-572, 28 December 1962, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 10/62-1/63. See also Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1962, Saywell (ed.), (Toronto, 1963), 149.

⁸⁵ Camp, "Telex Poll," 2 March 1962, Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 176, File: MG 01/VII/A/1646.2 Nuclear Weapons, 1961-1962.

⁸⁶ "Penetration Survey," 15-16, Kent Papers, Volume 2, File: T.W. Kent, Correspondence, January - February 1963 (1). See also Gordon Papers, Volume 19, File 12.

tone of the criticism in the House of Commons, which had the tendency to make the party and its leader appear more intent on obstruction than constructive participation in debate.⁸⁷ The surprise came in the area of issues. Where nuclear weapons did not register as a significant concern in Penetration's September 1962 poll, it was the number one issue concerning Canadians at the beginning of 1963. In Ontario, 70% favoured nuclear weapons, in Quebec there was 58% support.⁸⁸ Ontario was crucial to a Liberal victory in the next election and the province's views on nuclear weapons were important for this reason. The authors of the survey reported,

we can say that inexorably, Canadian public opinion is likely to move even more in favor of nuclear arms. Thus, we cannot but conclude that the Liberals take a firm position in behalf of this defence posture, usurp the field, and draw the issue sharp and clear with the Tories. The attack can continue and gain be derived from it even should Diefenbaker go along with the Liberal position. For the Liberals can claim that the government has been dragging its feet, has been slow and ineffectual in this important area.⁸⁹

Penetration concluded that two issues would win the Liberals a majority: portable old age pensions and nuclear weapons.⁹⁰ This kind of conclusion, with those kinds of numbers, was important to a party that had lost the previous election. It was also important to a leader like Pearson to find a winning issue in order to retain his

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

position at the helm of the party.⁹¹ The survey findings were precisely what the party wanted to hear, particularly after organisers decided to push for an early election and to exploit public opinion in the party's favour.⁹² However, Kent was adamant that Pearson accepted nuclear weapons only out of a sense of honour, not political expediency.⁹³ The evidence suggests otherwise. English noted a conversation between Pearson and Denis Smith in 1972 when the Liberal leader recalled that his nuclear statement "was when I really became a politician."⁹⁴ The results of the Penetration survey only add to speculation that political considerations influenced Pearson's decision. Indeed, they seem to have been the deciding factor.

The response to Pearson's statement was swift from all sectors. The press generally supported the Liberal leader's statement as did the party, with some notable exceptions.⁹⁵ The Tories were just days away from their annual meeting and many viewed the Liberal leader's statement as an opportunity to convince

⁹¹ Kent noted that there were rumblings in December 1962 that Robert Winters should replace Pearson as leader. A Public Purpose, 184. Hellyer echoed this sentiments in an interview with the author on May 14, 1999.

⁹² Kent, A Public Purpose, 186.

⁹³ Kent wrote, "Mike took the position he did because he was utterly dedicated to the co-operation of the Western nations as a group; he could not bear the thought of Canada failing to carry out an agreement with them....he was completely sincere in believing that in these matters there should be as little partisanship as possible. He was no more capable of taking the position he did as a matter of political calculation than he was of murdering his mother." ibid., 192. When questioned about the possible role of political polling in this decision, Kent re-stated that it had nothing to do with Pearson's decision to accept nuclear weapons. Kent letter to author March 27, 1999.

⁹⁴ English, The Worldly Years, 262.

⁹⁵ Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1963, 287-288. Pierre Trudeau, expected to stand for election under the Liberal banner in the next election, harshly criticised Pearson, calling him the "unfrosted Prince of peace" and sat out the 1963 campaign. Another future Liberal notable, Lloyd Axworthy, wrote to express his disappointment. Pearson Papers, Volume 50, File 806.2: Nuclear Policy, Part 4.

Diefenbaker to accept nuclear weapons. The Americans were also pleased to see that Pearson was now on side.⁹⁶ At the other end of the spectrum the anti-nuclear movement in Canada was horrified by Pearson's address, and felt abandoned by a politician whom they regarded as sympathetic to their objectives. As one activist recalled, it was the "blackest betrayal."⁹⁷ The outpouring of outrage was such that Mary Macdonald, Pearson's assistant, produced a form letter in response to the complaints the office received in the days following the nuclear statement.⁹⁸ In somewhat understated terms, Pearson recalled in his memoirs, "some very bitter letters were sent to me, accusing me of shameless immorality."⁹⁹ While the anti-nuclear forces made their views known to Pearson, they also turned to Diefenbaker, embracing him for his "decisive" opposition to nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁰

Not all Tories were as happy about Diefenbaker's stance as the peace movement was. When Pearson made his statement the House had not yet returned from its Christmas break. Between January 12 and Parliament's return on January 21, the Conservatives held their annual general meeting where Diefenbaker's leadership and the party's nuclear position were discussed in great detail.¹⁰¹ The

⁹⁶ Butterworth (Ottawa), "Pearson's Nuclear Statement," No. 897, 14 January 1963, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 10/62-1/63.

⁹⁷ Gentles interview with author June 7, 1999.

⁹⁸ There was both a long and short form letter to use in response to the outpouring of opposition to Pearson's decision. Pearson Papers, Volume 51, File 806.2: Nuclear Policy.

⁹⁹ Pearson, Memoirs, Volume 3, 71. See also Ibid., Volume 50, Files 806.2 Parts 2-5.

¹⁰⁰ Diefenbaker Papers, Microfilm 7969, Volume 418, File: MG 01/V1/601.68 - Social Welfare - Associations, Clubs and Societies - Women's Organizations - Voice of Women. 1961-1963.

¹⁰¹ The resolution committee received a number of submissions supporting nuclear weapons in Canada, but Diefenbaker, fearing a non-confidence vote within the party, pressured the chairman of

government was on the verge of self-destruction, with Harkness leading the charge. When E.A. Goodman, a leading Conservative organiser and chair of the policy resolution committee for the 1963 annual general meeting, found out from Flora Macdonald, the Conservative party's secretary, that Pearson was going to announce a change in the party's nuclear policy, he went to see Diefenbaker. The prime minister was incredulous that Pearson could make this kind of change, remarking that it would undermine the Liberal leader's credibility. Goodman disagreed, pointing out that the Liberals were only promising to fulfil the obligations undertaken by the Conservatives.¹⁰² The differences between Goodman and Diefenbaker reflected the party's growing dissatisfaction with its leader on the nuclear issue.

Many leading Conservatives pushed the prime minister to follow Pearson's example, but they failed to understand that the very fact that the Liberal leader had accepted nuclear weapons made it impossible for Diefenbaker to do the same. Diefenbaker had worried about Pearson's reaction to nuclear weapons from early 1958 because he was afraid that the Liberal leader would attack the government if it accepted nuclear weapons. He never anticipated that Pearson would accept nuclear weapons before the government did. Worse, Diefenbaker was in the midst of negotiations with the Americans, and had even considered making the acquisition

the committee, E.A. Goodman, not to introduce the resulting resolution on nuclear weapons. Goodman ultimately agreed. See Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 20-22, Harkness Papers, Volume 57. Also Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999.

¹⁰² Goodman, Life of the Party, 95-99. Goodman recalled that Diefenbaker, when told of Pearson's change in policy, shouted with glee, "we've got him now!" Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999.

of nuclear weapons a major issue in the coming election campaign. By allowing Pearson to make the first clear statement in favour of nuclear weapons, Diefenbaker had backed himself into a corner. If, in the past, Diefenbaker feared succumbing to American pressure for nuclear weapons, he certainly could not turn around and appear to follow Pearson's lead. Now there was little choice for Diefenbaker but to take the exact opposite position of the Liberals. That was precisely what he did.

At the annual general meeting, Diefenbaker opposed the introduction of a resolution in favour of nuclear weapons and did all in his power to prevent its acceptance. The party had accepted suggestions for resolutions from riding associations for the 1963 annual meeting, and the missile crisis put nuclear weapons on the agenda of the annual general meeting. Pearson's Scarborough speech made the subject even more urgent.¹⁰³ Diefenbaker, however, refused to see it this way. Initially, he advised Goodman that he would accept the resolution only if Green agreed to it. To win Green's support Goodman modified the resolution, giving the government more time to negotiate with the Americans. Green agreed, but Diefenbaker refused again to allow the resolution. The prime minister went so far as to prohibit Macdonald from reproducing the resolutions so that they would not be available for delegates. When Goodman retaliated by scheduling a press conference prior to the meeting in order to announce the resolutions, Diefenbaker and Grosart re-scheduled the speaking order so that the prime minister spoke first. Ultimately, the nuclear resolution was introduced in modified form, with

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 94-95. See Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 292, Files P.C.S.F. Annual Meeting - 1963; Annual Meeting, 1963 Resolutions (1); Annual Meeting, 1963 Resolutions (2); Annual Meeting, 1963 Resolutions (3).

an amendment asking that the government consider the resolution instead of the party membership at the annual meeting.¹⁰⁴ This essentially ended all debate on the subject. Goodman was good-humoured about his defeat, and when asked if he would resign, remarked that if the defence minister could live with the party's nuclear policy, so could he.¹⁰⁵

Diefenbaker continued to delay making a statement about the government's nuclear policy until the House resumed sitting. More and more Conservative ministers had sided with Harkness over Green, but Diefenbaker refused to budge. When Pearson had made his statement, Harkness thought the matter would be settled and that the government would proceed apace with concluding an agreement for nuclear weapons. He was mistaken. In fact, in cabinet talks the day before the House returned, Diefenbaker proposed to delay making a decision on nuclear weapons, once again, until after the anticipated election.¹⁰⁶

Diefenbaker finally decided to "set the record straight" with a statement in Parliament on January 25. However, there were a number of cabinet meetings to determine what that record would be. On January 22, Diefenbaker created a sub-committee comprised of Harkness, Green, Churchill, and Donald Fleming to examine the subject. With the exception of Fleming, these were the men who had been charged with drafting the nuclear agreements following the missile crisis.

¹⁰⁴ Goodman, Life of the Party, 99-101.

¹⁰⁵ Goodman interview with author April 8, 1999. Goodman was true to his word and resigned from the party on February 5, 1963 when defence minister Harkness also resigned his position.

¹⁰⁶ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 23-4, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

After much wrangling, primarily between Harkness and Green, the sub-committee agreed unanimously to continue negotiations with the Americans covering NORAD and NATO. But when the committee took the proposal to Diefenbaker, he refused to accept it. Cabinet ultimately supported the report on the 24th, but Diefenbaker once again rejected it. Harkness finally felt that he had no choice but to resign from cabinet, though members persuaded him to wait until after Diefenbaker's statement to Parliament, in the hope that his public statement would address his concerns.¹⁰⁷ It did not.

In many respects Diefenbaker's statement on the 25th was his most obtuse on the subject. It was all things to all people and anything but a model of clarity. The end of the statement included a rough rendition of the report to cabinet, which Harkness interpreted as a motion in his favour. Others, particularly the press, viewed it as a statement sympathetic to Green. As a result, the minister of defence felt that he had no choice but to "clarify" the prime minister's statement, and he did so on January 28.¹⁰⁸

If Harkness was disappointed by the prime minister's statement on the 25th, the State Department was livid. Negotiations with the Americans had stalled once again in late December, and Pearson's Scarborough speech provided no incentive for the State Department to resume talks.¹⁰⁹ In his statement of the 25th,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰⁸ Harkness, "Statement in House of Commons," 28 January 1963, Ibid., File: The Nuclear Arms Question - Background Correspondence, 1963.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson to Campbell, 23 January 1963, Robinson Papers, Volume 9, File 9.6: Nuclear Weapons - Policy and Negotiations, January 1-April 30, 1963.

Diefenbaker revealed that the Canadians were in negotiations with the Americans for nuclear weapons "if and when" they were needed. But the talks had been secret, and no one had bothered to clear the revelation with the State Department. The embassy in Ottawa suggested that the department issue its own clarification, and George Ball, the undersecretary of state, agreed. He said Diefenbaker was trying, "to stop if possible, and at least to slow down, the momentum towards a clarification of Canadian defense policy which began as a popular movement after the Cuban crisis, and which reached a high point in Liberal leader Pearson's speech earlier this month, in which he unequivocally called for Canada to adopt nuclear weapons for its forces."¹¹⁰ State Department officials knew that they had to live with Diefenbaker for the time being, but they miscalculated when they asserted that a press release clarifying the prime minister's statement would inspire "respect" from Diefenbaker.¹¹¹ Nothing could have been further from the truth. Diefenbaker had raised concerns in his statement to the House about the recent talks between Macmillan and Kennedy at Nassau, implying that Canada could not accept nuclear weapons, even under joint authority, without expanding the nuclear club. The State Department press release of January 30 disagreed with this assertion. As far as negotiations following the missile crisis were concerned, the State Department stated that there were no satisfactory arrangements put forth as of yet by the Canadians. As for Nassau, the talks between the president and prime minister did not present an obstacle to nuclear weapons in Canada, nor did Canadian

¹¹⁰ Tyler to Ball, 29 January 1963, No. 443, FRUS. Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1193.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

acquisition entail nuclear proliferation.¹¹² In essence, the press release called Diefenbaker a liar.

The press release enraged Diefenbaker. He met with cabinet the following day, and recommended dissolving Parliament in order to wage an election campaign based solely on anti-Americanism. Harkness and other ministers vehemently opposed this tactic and cabinet decided to issue a protest to the United States instead.¹¹³ Green was greatly disturbed by the press release, noting that they were in the midst of negotiations for nuclear weapons "in good faith," and that he could not understand why the State Department would do something that would so obviously undermine these efforts. More sinister was his concern about Pearson's role in the press release; he wondered whether there was any coincidence to the fact that Pearson had made an about face in policy just a couple of weeks earlier. This, to Green, was tantamount to American interference.¹¹⁴ In both Parliament and the Canadian press, criticism of the press release was tempered by a sense that the government's policy had been so unclear that the American response was at least understandable, even if it was not appreciated.¹¹⁵ Although the Canadian Embassy in Washington was informed that the State Department press release was phrased in such a manner so as not to prevent

¹¹² Department of State, "Press Release No. 59 – United States and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons," 30 January 1963, No. 444, FRUS, Volume XIII 1961-1963, 1195-96.

¹¹³ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 46, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

¹¹⁴ Collection of typed and handwritten notes, Green Papers (Vancouver), Volume 18, File 10: Canadian-US Relations Re: Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1963.

¹¹⁵ Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1963, 295-297.

further nuclear talks, it was clear that they were over for the foreseeable future.¹¹⁶

The Americans had to wait for a new government. But first, Diefenbaker's government had to fall.

Diefenbaker obliged on February 5. The government and party were in turmoil in the days after Pearson's statement, and Diefenbaker's fortunes went from bad to worse after his statement in the Commons at the end of January and the State Department "correction" that followed. Diefenbaker threatened to focus the election on anti-Americanism as many times as Harkness threatened to resign from cabinet. The defence minister kept his oft repeated promise, and resigned from cabinet on February 3.¹¹⁷ He later speculated that cabinet had missed the opportunity to save itself from Diefenbaker at a meeting on the 3rd when it refused to accept the prime minister's resignation. "The failure to get rid of Diefenbaker at this time was a failure in human courage," the former minister recalled,

If the majority who felt this was necessary had been prepared to face the situation, I think there is no doubt he would have resigned. Instead, they hesitated and drew back when they found all ministers would not agree. If even five or six had stood firm and put in their resignations, I am sure it would have forced Dief out.¹¹⁸

Instead, Diefenbaker's government was defeated in the House on February 5 and Parliament was dissolved for an election on the 6th. The turmoil continued when George Hees and Pierre Sévigny followed Harkness out of cabinet on February 9.

¹¹⁶ Robertson to the Prime Minister, 30 January 1963, Green Papers (Vancouver), Volume 18, File 10: Canadian-US Relations Re: Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1963. Vancouver.

¹¹⁷ The resignation actually took effect on February 4.

¹¹⁸ Harkness, "The Nuclear Arms Question..." 56, Harkness Papers, Volume 57.

Diefenbaker now had to face the electorate with a fragmented cabinet and a divided party. He lost others during the 1963 campaign. Davie Fulton decided to seek the Conservative leadership in his home province of British Columbia and did not run. Donald Fleming left politics altogether. Hees, having resigned from cabinet, spent much of the campaign skiing in Europe.¹¹⁹

Diefenbaker began the 1963 election campaign on February 28. Nuclear weapons was the dominant issue, but Diefenbaker refused to believe that his cabinet was divided, or that his government had fallen, because of his defence policy.¹²⁰ For his part, Diefenbaker initially shied away from the nuclear issue. It was only when Pearson began to equivocate on his nuclear pledge that the prime minister's position took shape. Over the course of the campaign the Liberal leader began to emphasise more and more renegotiation rather than acquisition. As Pearson waffled, Diefenbaker continued to criticise the Liberal position. Liberal strategists had warned Pearson that he had to stand firm in his commitment to nuclear weapons; any modification of policy, real or perceived, would be attacked by the opposition parties as weakness.¹²¹ And that was precisely what Diefenbaker did. By the beginning of March Diefenbaker saw that Pearson was on the defensive about his new policy, and he moved in for the attack. A Conservative pamphlet targeted Pearson's apparent indecision with the line, "Lester Pearson and Nuclear

¹¹⁹ Spencer, Trumpets and Drums, 81.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹²¹ Mary Macdonald to Pearson, "Nuclear Defence Policy," 18 January 1963, Pearson Papers, Volume 50, File 806.2, Part 3. See also Davey to Pearson, Gordon and Kent, 31 January 1963, NLF Papers, Volume 689, File: National Office - General Correspondence, Elections 1962-1963.

Warheads - a Riot of Indecision." It chronicled what the Conservatives regarded as the Liberal party's flip-flop on weapons policy, complete with a caricature of Pearson in various contorted stages of the twist.¹²²

The Liberals were vulnerable on other fronts too. Liberal strategists expanded on the use of gimmicks from the previous campaign. There were homing pigeons, an Election Colouring Book, and a Truth Squad. Each was a disaster, hurting the party far more than it helped. The homing pigeons got lost.¹²³ The colouring book, inspired by a similar novelty in Kennedy's 1960 campaign, was a good example of the blunders.¹²⁴ A line drawing and text tried to capture Diefenbaker's indecisiveness. "This is a Prime Minister./ He is at breakfast./ Should he have orange juice or a grapefruit?/ It is a hard decision./ He dreads decisions./ Perhaps he will never have breakfast./ Colour him hungry." And this on nuclear weapons: "This is a Canadian fighter pilot./ He flies for NATO./ All the other NATO pilots have planes that fight good./ The Canadian pilot doesn't./ Colour him highly embarrassed."¹²⁵ It was a bit funny, but also cruel, and not everyone shared the Liberal party's sense of humour.¹²⁶

¹²² "Lester Pearson and Nuclear Warheads - A Riot of Indecision," Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 17, File: MG 01/XIV/E/222 (Haslam) Defence Part Two.

¹²³ English, The Worldly Years, 292.

¹²⁴ Alex Mogelon to NLF, 16 August 1960, NLF Papers, Volume 702, File: Comics, 1960. Marketing, 2 October 1959, Ibid. Ganes Production was the only company to produce promotional and educational comic books in Canada. "The Election Colouring Book 1963" was ultimately ordered from CAMPOL Enterprises in Montreal in March. Keith Davey bought 50,000 colouring books for \$2,500 bought in early March.

¹²⁵ "The Election Colouring Book 1963," NLF Papers, Volume 704, File: Colouring Book, Election 1963.

¹²⁶ English, The Worldly Years, 292.

The Truth Squad also backfired. It reminded voters that Diefenbaker was faster on his feet than Pearson. Where Pearson would have been mortified and hurt by hecklers, Diefenbaker was in his element. He quickly turned the Truth Squad (comprised of Judy LaMarsh, Jack Macbeth, and Fred Belaire) against the Liberals by putting it on display.¹²⁷ He set up a table and chair for LaMarsh to make her notes in full view of an assembled crowd of Conservative supporters; a very public embarrassment for a would-be government. Announced March 12, the Truth Squad performed on the 15th, and was scrapped two days later. Davey told Pearson that many people opposed Diefenbaker but were also "desperately searching for reasons why not to vote Liberal. Unfortunately, a great many of our key people seem to think we have provided such a reason with our Truth Squad."¹²⁸

The Tories had more than Liberal antics to use to their advantage. In mid-February Newsweek, the source of the leak that helped to undermine nuclear talks in September 1961, was at it again. The magazine's editor was a friend of Kennedy, which did little to endear the publication to Diefenbaker. The prime minister's jowled grimace graced the cover of the February 18 edition, and, as English wrote, "the story was nastier than the cover."¹²⁹ It included the following description of the prime minister:

¹²⁷ Davey, "Press Release," 12 March 1963, NLF Papers, Volume 694, File: Memos from Keith Davey to Provincial Campaign Chairmen & Communications Chairmen, 1963.

¹²⁸ Davey, "Third Report," 15 March 1963, Ibid., Volume 698, File: Reports to Hon. L.B. Pearson From Keith Davey, 1963 Election. See also Ibid., Volume 696, File: Truth Squad 1963.

¹²⁹ English, The Worldly Years, 264. Interestingly, the cover photo of John Diefenbaker is less flattering on the cover of Smith's, Rogue Tory, than the 1963 edition of Newsweek, which likely says

Diefenbaker in full oratorical flight is a sight not soon to be forgotten: then the India-rubber features twist and contort in grotesque and gargoyle-like grimaces; beneath the electric gray V of the hairline, the eyebrows beat up and down like bats' wings; the agate-blue eyes blaze forth cold fire. Elderly female Tory supporters find Diefenbaker's face rugged, kind, pleasant, and even soothing; his enemies insist that it is sufficient grounds for barring Tory rallies to children under 16.¹³⁰

The Newsweek piece might have ridiculed Diefenbaker, but it also gave him ammunition to use in his allegations of American interference, regardless of what was said to the contrary by staff at the magazine.¹³¹ Whatever its intent, Newsweek cast a pall over the campaign, one that Diefenbaker could have exploited even further had he learned of Kennedy's offer to assist the Liberals during the campaign. When Pearson learned of the offer, which came in mid-March, he responded, "For God's sake, tell the president to keep his mouth shut."¹³² There were also renewed concerns about the Rostow memo, rumours of which surfaced in the Canadian press.¹³³ In the wake of these rumours, there was also a fraudulent letter from the

more about standards and expectations at the end of the 1990s than the same concerns in the 1960s.

¹³⁰ Newsweek, 18 February 1963, Progressive Conservative Papers, Volume 389, File: Election 1963 - Candidates, Memorandum.

¹³¹ Camp to Constituency Presidents, 13 February 1963, ibid. Camp to Don Watson, 14 February 1963, ibid., Volume 388, File: Election, 1963 - Camp, Dalton. See also "Relationship of Grahams to Kennedy," 13 February 1963, ibid., and Bradley Gundy to Camp, 13 February 13, 1963, ibid. Gundy wrote: "Newsweek's treatment of the PM is so grossly disrespectful that I am horrified. It seems incredible that a self-respecting journal would release anything so indecent and utterly lacking in moral fibre. For sheer insolence the piece excels anything I have read in a long while."

¹³² English, The Worldly Years, 264. The White House and the Pentagon obliged. See note in Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 113, File: Canada - General, 1963.

¹³³ Butterworth to State Department, 27 March 1963, ibid., NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - Rostow Memorandum. See also Newman, Renegade in Power, 266.

American ambassador congratulating Pearson for his stand on nuclear weapons.¹³⁴ Forgery or not, the letter must have sent shivers of concern through the Liberal team in light of Kennedy's earlier offer. Finally, there was Defense Secretary McNamara's testimony, released at the end of March in which he stated that the Bomarc missiles were valuable even if only to draw enemy fire to the north.¹³⁵ This gave Diefenbaker even more opportunities to mock the Liberals and their nuclear policy.

With this kind of battle it is little wonder that the 1963 campaign was a disappointment for all involved. The Liberals put on a brave face after the April 8 vote when they won 129 seats, three shy of a majority. The Tories were reduced to 95, the NDP to 17 and Social Credit to 24. The Liberals had started the campaign with an enormous lead in the polls, and anything short of a majority was a great disappointment. The impact of Pearson's nuclear policy is debatable: Kent argued that nuclear weapons were a key reason why the party failed to win a majority; Hellyer argued that it was the only reason the Liberals won even a minority government.¹³⁶

In the end, Pearson formed a minority government and the Liberals were back in power. For how long it would last, no one could be sure. One thing was

¹³⁴ Embassy (Ottawa) to Secretary of State, 7 April 1963, and Butterworth to Secretary of State, 8 April 1963, Kennedy Papers, POF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 4/1/63-4/10/63. See also Smith, Rogue Tory, 507-509.

¹³⁵ Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence," Canadian Annual Review for 1963, 23. Kennedy was upset that his secretary of defense would make such an impolitic statement, commenting to Newsweek's editor Bradlee: "Everyone ought to run for office. That's all there is to it." Benjamin C. Bradlee, Conversations with Kennedy, (New York, 1975), 162.

¹³⁶ Kent, A Public Purpose, 192. Hellyer interview with author May 14, 1999.

definite; Pearson had promised to accept nuclear weapons if elected, and now it was time for him to honour his own commitment. When the service vote was counted on April 13 a Liberal plurality was declared. The Diefenbaker government resigned four days later. Pearson became Canada's fourteenth prime minister on April 22, 1963, just one day before his 66th birthday. One of the few certainties for the new government and for Canadians was that nuclear weapons were coming to Canada at long last.

Conclusion

The 1963 election had a profound impact on Canada's nuclear policy and the anti-nuclear movement. This conclusion attempts to survey the implications of the election results with regard to both policy and the peace groups examined in this thesis. Despite his minority government, Pearson, unlike Diefenbaker, was willing to act on his pledge to acquire nuclear warheads. And, by the end of the year, they arrived in Canada. He was not as reliable when it came to his promise to renegotiate the commitments he had felt obliged to honour. This did not occur until ten years after he left office, under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau. In 1984, with little fuss, Canada became the first country to obtain and subsequently relinquish its jointly held nuclear arsenal. In the scheme of things, it was an anti-climactic conclusion to an issue that had divided Canadians and defeated a government.

The anti-nuclear movement viewed the 1963 election as its worst set-back to date. Not only had Pearson betrayed their confidence, but his election signalled an end to the nuclear ambiguity. Despite the results, groups continued to protest the acquisition of warheads, demonstrating at every opportunity to no avail. Ultimately, the results of the 1963 election marked the end of the anti-nuclear era for peace groups in Canada. Though activists continued to push the government to rescind its acceptance of nuclear weapons, many had already decided to move on to other causes. In this regard, there were two main trends apparent in the months after the 1963 election. First, anti-nuclear groups returned to the more traditional broadly-based activities of their pre-atomic counterparts. The second was also typical. Returning to their pacifist roots, many activists turned to the growing conflict in

Vietnam as their next mission. With these two trends, the anti-nuclear movement tried to transform itself in the wake of what can only be described as a crushing defeat. In the end, some groups were more successful in transforming themselves than others.

* * * *

The Liberals returned to power with a minority government in 1963. While the party under Pearson was not the mighty Government Party of Mackenzie King and St. Laurent, a minority was better than opposition. All the most prominent Liberals candidates were elected: Lester Pearson, Paul Martin, J.W. Pickersgill, Lionel Chevrier, Paul Hellyer, C.M. Drury, Walter Gordon, Mitchell Sharp, Maurice Lamontagne, Maurice Sauvé, and Judy LaMarsh. The Conservatives made it a close race, denying a majority to the Liberals, but they suffered great losses in the election. Ministers like Richard Bell, Ellen Fairclough, Raymond O'Hurley, and Howard Green were defeated. For all his efforts to promote disarmament, Green was not rewarded by the voters of Vancouver Quadra, who defeated the man who had represented them in Parliament since 1935. While Green was defeated by the local Liberal candidate, the minister on the other side of the nuclear debate did not suffer the same fate. The voters of Calgary reaffirmed their support for Harkness, returning the minister of defence to Parliament quite handily. Both outcomes met with American approval.¹ And, where Pearson's position as leader was now secure for the time being as a result of his victory, the opposite was true for Diefenbaker.

¹ William Brubeck to Bundy, "Outlook for New Canadian Government and Possible U.S. Tactics," 11 April 1963, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 4/11/63-5/3/63.

The 1963 results marked the beginning of the end of Diefenbaker's leadership, even if it took four more years for party members to remove him from his position.

Pearson's cabinet held great promise after the 1963 election, and commentators noted the array of talent.² Despite some consideration to the contrary, Walter Gordon became the minister of finance, not Mitchell Sharp. Gordon was an economic nationalist who had played an enormous role in the revitalisation of the party, while Sharp became the minister of trade and commerce. Veterans from the St. Laurent years assumed the two most challenging portfolios in the nuclear debate. Paul Martin succeeded Green as minister of external affairs, while Paul Hellyer replaced Harkness. Having influenced Pearson to accept nuclear weapons, Hellyer now had the opportunity to implement his recommendations.

The Americans were relieved to be done with Diefenbaker and were quite enthusiastic about the new Canadian government. They regarded nuclear weapons as the most contentious issue between the two countries.³ Despite their optimism, advisers cautioned the president to proceed slowly. However, Kennedy was far more willing to accommodate Pearson's political considerations than he had ever been when dealing with Diefenbaker. Where the president had taken little interest in Diefenbaker's concerns about public support for nuclear weapons, he was quite happy to allow Pearson to proceed at a pace that suited his own domestic needs. Nothing was going to be resolved automatically simply because of the change in

² English, Worldly Years, 267. Butterworth to Secretary of State, 22 April 1963, Ibid.

³ The Trade Expansion Act and Columbia River Treaty were the other two outstanding issues

government, but American officials now had every confidence that bilateral problems could be solved with relative ease.⁴

Pearson's first prime ministerial meeting with Kennedy was in mid-May. It was the Liberal leader's second foreign visit as prime minister, the first being a trip to London to meet with British Prime Minister Macmillan. The purpose of the visit, as far as the Americans were concerned, was to establish a solid relationship with the new government and the new prime minister. As well, they wanted to brief Pearson on the general direction of American policy on a variety of subjects. Kennedy was warned not to push the prime minister on any issue, particularly since Parliament had not yet met. The last thing the Americans wanted was to seem overly aggressive or on the other hand overly eager to reach an agreement on any of the outstanding issues.⁵

The first official meeting between the two men was anything but a formal occasion, and took place not in Washington but at the president's summer home in Hyannisport, Massachusetts. More important than the setting was the fact that it was an absolute success.⁶ The prime minister's ability to talk baseball with Kennedy and his advisers has become the stuff of legend. However, the president had been impressed with Pearson well before the visit. Pearson was the kind of

⁴ Brubeck to Bundy, "Outlook for New Canadian Government and Possible U.S. Tactics," 11 April 1963, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - 4/11/63-5/3/63.

⁵ "Visit of Prime Minister Pearson, May 10-11, 1963," 6 May 1963, *ibid.*, Volume 19, File: Canada - Subjects - Pearson Visit, Briefing Book, 5/63.

⁶ DLW to State Department, 11 May 1963, *ibid.*, File: Canada - Subject: Pearson Visit, 5/63 - 5/11/63-5/30/63.

person with whom Kennedy was naturally quite friendly.⁷ As well, the meeting was hardly a typical first encounter between national leaders. The two knew each other quite well by 1963, though both men took the meeting seriously as a first step toward mending the damage inflicted by Diefenbaker at the highest levels of the relationship between the two countries.

To everyone's relief, Pearson was willing to resolve the nuclear issue at the Hyannisport meeting. Kennedy had been briefed not to expect a formal agreement that weekend,⁸ but the Americans were willing to conclude one on the spot if that was what Pearson wanted.⁹ However, the prime minister lived up to expectation and the two leaders did not finalise a nuclear arrangement. The joint communiqué that followed the meeting was circumspect when it came to the subject:

The Prime Minister confirmed his government's intention to initiate discussions with the United States Government leading without delay towards the fulfilment of Canada's existing defense commitments in North America and Europe consistent with Canadian parliamentary procedures.¹⁰

Pearson was far more candid in private. He informed the Americans that the Canadian government intended to acquire nuclear warheads and that a draft agreement, based on the American proposals of the previous autumn, had already

⁷ English, Worldly Years, 269-270.

⁸ "Visit of Prime Minister Pearson, May 10-11, 1963," 6 May 1963, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 19, File: Canada - Subjects - Pearson Visit, Briefing Book, 5/63.

⁹ Legere commented, "Despite the apparently increasing unlikelihood of any hard and fast substantive agreements at Hyannisport, I have already taken with State and Defense and McHugh's office the initial steps of a contingency plan designed to carry a plane load of appropriate people to Hyannisport on Saturday morning on call and as necessary." Legere to Bundy, 7 May 1963, Ibid., File: Canada- Subjects - Pearson Visit, 5/6/63-5/10/63.

¹⁰ "Joint Communiqué Following Meeting Between President J.F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, Hyannis Port, Mass., May 10 and 11, 1963," Ibid.

been prepared in Ottawa. Some modifications had been made, he cautioned, but these were "largely matter of wording for domestic political reasons" and should be entirely acceptable to the American government.¹¹

There were also more embarrassing matters to discuss. In the final days of the 1963 campaign the Rostow memo had resurfaced. The resurrection of this issue led the president to consider how best to go about retrieving the offending document from the Canadian government. This was of particular importance after news of the memo surfaced in Canadian press reports at the end of March. Throughout the first week of April there was a flurry of activity on the subject as the White House braced itself for the onslaught, convinced that Diefenbaker was going to use the memo to his advantage as a last desperate attempt to secure re-election. American officials were prepared to deny that there was anything untoward about the memo. They had their own copy, and knew that its release would be unlikely to cause harm given its innocuous contents. But there were other concerns. There were repeated rumours that something had been scrawled in the margins, worries that were renewed after an article appeared in the Washington Post.¹² Although Merchant thought he had put these rumours to rest during the previous campaign, clearly this was not the case.

¹¹ DLW to State Department, 11 May 1963, Ibid., File: Canada - Subject: Pearson Visit, 5/63 - 5/11/63-5/30/63. "US-Canadian Nuclear Relations," 16 May 1963, Ibid., File: Canada - Subjects: Pearson Visit, 5/63 - Memorandum of Conversation.

¹² There are assorted telegrams from Butterworth to Bundy and vice versa on this subject in April 1963. Ibid., NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - Rostow Memorandum 5/16/61 and Related Material 5/61-5/63.

In early April, Kennedy had asked Benjamin Bradlee, the editor of Newsweek, if he had ever recounted to him the story about "the stolen document" which he called "the incident at the root of all U.S.-Canadian problems." When Bradlee replied in the negative, the president hesitated before deciding to give the magazine an exclusive on the story if Diefenbaker lost the election. True to his word, Kennedy delivered to Bradlee "a fat file" on April 10 that contained all the memoranda exchanged on the subject. It was no surprise that the story appeared around the same time in the Washington Post, owned by the same family as Newsweek. When Bradlee asked the president if he had written anything, let alone "S.O.B." in the margins, the president replied that he had not. Besides, Kennedy added, "At that time I didn't think Diefenbaker was a son of a bitch. (Pause, for effect) I thought he was a prick." The president wondered aloud why Diefenbaker "didn't do what any normal, friendly government would do...make a photostatic copy, and return the original."¹³ Presumably, then, the administration would not have had to agonise over whether to make a formal request to have the document returned so that it could see whether something derogatory had been scrawled across the document.¹⁴

¹³ Bradlee, Conversations with Kennedy, (New York, 1975), 167, 182-184. The original Rostow memo was never returned. It is located in the Diefenbaker Papers, Volume 88, File: MG 01/XII/D/204 - United States - Kennedy, 1957-68.

¹⁴ Angst about the document was exacerbated when there were sources within the Conservative party who confirmed that "there is at least one uncomplimentary reference" on the document. Butterworth, 6 April 1963. A formal request was considered days later. Bundy to Butterworth, 11 April 1963, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Volume 18, File: Canada - General - Rostow Memorandum 5/16/61 and Related Material 5/61-5/63. See also Memorandum for the Record, 9 May 1963, ibid., Volume 19, File: Canada - Subjects: Pearson Visit, 5/63 - Memorandum of Conversation.

Regardless of the difficulties the administration had experienced with Diefenbaker's government, relations between Kennedy and Pearson got off to a promising start with the prime minister's visit to Hyannisport. As he had promised, Pearson continued to promote nuclear negotiations, and by mid-July a final agreement was reached.¹⁵ Diplomatic notes were signed August 16, and four and a half months later, at long last, the first nuclear warheads entered Canada.¹⁶

* * * * *

Pearson's decision in January 1963 to accept nuclear weapons for Canada's armed forces hurt the anti-nuclear movement in Canada. Even more damaging was his victory at the polls the following spring. There were enormous consequences for each of the three major anti-nuclear groups examined in this thesis as the decision helped to transform them. In many respects, anti-nuclear organisations became more like the traditional pacifist organisations of the past.

There were several responses to Pearson's statement and victory. In the short-term, there was general disarray. Caught off guard completely, disarmament groups played only a minor role in the 1963 election. Despite the prominence of the nuclear issue in the campaign, anti-nuclear groups were notable only in the shadows. They mustered the occasional protest at a campaign stop or rally, but the movement was unprepared for anything more elaborate than a last-minute demonstration. Recall that the CCND had decided to pursue a six month plan to

¹⁵ See John Clearwater, Canadian Nuclear Weapons: The Untold Story of Canada's Cold War Arsenal, (Toronto, 1998), 33-43 for a detailed account of the political discussions in cabinet, the cabinet defence committee, and Parliament surrounding the final negotiations.

¹⁶ Ibid., Appendix for the full agreement.

reinvigorate the organisation and that the VOW was deeply divided about the tactics to use to persuade the government to reject nuclear weapons. Neither one was in any position to wage a national effort to fight the Liberals in the spring election. If the efforts of anti-nuclear activists in the 1962 campaign were a disappointment, then their only weak efforts the following year were devastating. Whether they were working to make nuclear policy an issue in 1962 or trying to encourage candidates to oppose warheads in 1963, anti-nuclear organisations failed miserably to achieve their objectives.

Pearson's announcement and election also had significant long-term implications for the movement. First, organisations became more radical. One of the major reasons for this was simply that many of the more moderate supporters abandoned the movement when they thought the battle to ban the bomb in Canada had been lost. As a result, only the most dedicated (and usually most fervent) members remained. Of those who remained, most were disillusioned by Pearson's betrayal. As such, the Liberal victory galvanised the movement to move even further to the left, away from the political mainstream in Canada. Always sceptical of the Conservatives, anti-nuclear groups could now add the Liberals to the list of untrustworthy political parties. There was no other party to turn to, for those still interested in the political process, but the N.D.P. As well, moderate measures held little hope for influence. Anti-nuclear groups had tried to write letters and briefs, but they had made very little impact. Perhaps, many activists thought, civil

disobedience and public demonstration would reap greater rewards. At this point, many viewed these more radical tactics as the only hope for influence.

Anti-nuclear organisations and activists also became more interested in domestic reform as a result of the Liberal party's decision to proceed with accepting nuclear weapons. In large part, this was an effort to maintain membership levels. There was little point to having an organisation unless it had a cause. With this turn to domestic issues like women's rights, Francophone rights, native rights, and urban reform, many organisations re-evaluated their principles and policies. Some emerged from the exercise stronger and more radical, others did not. In this regard, groups that survived came to resemble the pacifist organisations of the late nineteenth century which had viewed the promotion of peace as a component of a greater reform movement. The difference in 1963 was that despite the expansion of the movement to include more broadly-based concerns like domestic reform, they maintained their affiliation with the political left. This was true of each of the organisations examined in this thesis, though CUCND and the Voice of Women were the most willing and best suited to adapt to the new environment.

The Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament underwent a fundamental change in orientation between the spring of 1963 and the end of 1964. In late December 1964, student activists shed their affiliation with disarmament, embracing grassroots reform at the community level and renaming themselves Students United for Peace Action (SUPA). Initially, the transformation appeared to be a success. The summer of 1965 was dedicated to community projects to help the poor in cities across Canada. As well, members of SUPA did not abandon

pacifism altogether, and turned their attentions to mobilising students to protest against the war in Vietnam. Like CUCND, SUPA preferred protest to persuasion. This much was clear with the various anti-Vietnam rallies organised by the group. However, the summer of 1965 also marked the height of SUPA's activities and influence. Within months, SUPA started to disintegrate as an organisation. It carried on for another two years, in large part because its research materials were distributed to other left-wing organisations, but SUPA's days were numbered. In order to stave off complete destruction, members of SUPA tried to reorganise themselves once again. And in 1967 SUPA became the New Left Committee, which was heavily influenced by American student organisations, especially Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC). However, efforts to reconstruct the student movement in Canada reaped few rewards. The New Left Committee lasted only a year.

The Voice of Women had far more success than student activists in its efforts to move beyond the narrow confines of the nuclear question. The VOW was the first group to realise that its future lay elsewhere. At the end of January 1963, within days of Pearson's speech, the first letters from VOW members opposing the war in Vietnam arrived at the Department of External Affairs for Howard Green. The women urged Green to use Canada's position on the International Control Commission to promote peace in Vietnam and Indochina.¹⁷ This was only the first in a series of activities endorsed by the VOW in its efforts to encourage western

¹⁷ Winifred Hall to Green, 31 January 1963, VOW Papers, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - MPs, Formation 1960-1963.

nations to withdraw from the conflict. By 1964, the national office and membership of the Voice of Women formally embraced opposition to the Vietnam war.¹⁸ Their anti-war activities continued until the end of the conflict in the mid-1970s.

Pearson's decision to accept nuclear weapons had the most detrimental impact on the CCND. Never a strong organisation, the transformation from CCCRH to CCND left it vulnerable to another crisis. That crisis came with Pearson's announcement. In the midst of a membership campaign, the CCND was poorly organised and unable to make much of an impact on the 1963 campaign. After the election, there were efforts to organise a protest in Ottawa when NATO delegates met in May. There was also a parliamentary lobby in the fall, organised as a last ditch effort to convince the new government to abandon its pledge to acquire nuclear warheads. The venture failed.

Not only did CCND fail to have an impact on parliamentarians, but as an organisation, it suffered in the aftermath of the decision to accept nuclear weapons. Even before Pearson's announcement, the organisation had been moving further to the political left. After the speech, members debated whether the CCND should formally endorse a policy of neutrality, requiring Canada to withdraw from NORAD and NATO. Many members thought this was absurd, something they had opposed when CUCND proposed the same policy in 1961. But two years made an enormous difference in terms of membership, and the board of directors approved the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, File: Correspondence - General, 1967-1973 [much of which involves planning activities and demonstrations against the Vietnam War]. Volume 4, File: Nominations, Resolutions (Vietnam) 1972). Volume 24, File: Canadian Aid for Vietnam Civilians: Correspondence, 1971. Volume 32, File: Vietnam Women's Union.

measure in the autumn of 1963, with C.B. Macpherson, a left-wing political scientist at the University of Toronto, leading the charge. The Executive might have been pleased with the change in policy, but the membership at large was not as certain.

Numbers began to dwindle in the months that followed Pearson's electoral victory. That membership did not expand after Pearson's speech seemed to indicate that many Canadians, even earlier supporters of the CCCRH and CCND, agreed with the Liberal leader's stand or, at the very least, did not go out of their way to oppose it. The other problem was the basic composition of the organisation. More radical members abandoned the CCND, believing it was too slow to adapt to changing needs. These more active members found a home in the ever growing number of extreme organisations that sprung up in every city at what appeared to be every turn. This was particularly true when it came to those members who wanted to oppose the war in Vietnam.

The CCND was the major casualty of the Liberal party's return to power. Van Stolk's organisation, though it had transformed itself considerably since the early days of the CCCRH, was simply too moderate. Although it was the most credible anti-nuclear organisation, its overly selective membership policy never caught up to the needs of a mass movement. It was also not radical enough to suit the needs of the more active members, many of whom were pacifists opposed to Vietnam. As a result, many departed for more relevant organisations. Others left the peace movement altogether. Many supporters of the CCCRH and later CCND had been attracted to the ban the bomb campaign; they were not necessarily pacifists, and when the government decided to accept nuclear warheads, they felt that the battle

had been waged and lost. There was little else to do but to move on to other organisations or other concerns. The Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was a single issue organisation, and by the time organisers realised the importance of branching out, it was too late. In 1965, the headquarters of the CCND closed.

A. Paul Pross argues that the late 1950s and early 1960s was the end of an era in terms of group politics.¹⁹ By the late 1950s, organisations were beginning to change as they tried to influence government policy, and the anti-nuclear groups examined in this dissertation illustrate this transitional period. Although this was a period of great transformation, by 1963 the anti-nuclear organisations actually had to become more traditional in order to maintain their membership base. They had to expand their interests to include local issues and domestic reform. As well, the remaining pacifist core quite naturally chose to move from rejecting nuclear weapons to opposing the Vietnam war. These were things that Van Stolk, the founder of the anti-nuclear movement in Canada, disagreed with entirely. The CCCRH was never intended to be a pacifist organisation, nor was it created to deal with anything but a single issue: radiation hazards. As the issue evolved to focus on the acquisition of warheads, the fall-out resulting from nuclear testing was no longer a pressing concern for many. And so, once the nuclear issue was resolved in Canada, there was no reason for the CCND to exist. Either the organisation had to adapt – as had the VOW and CUCND – or come to an end. Given the origins of the group, it is no surprise that the latter was the result.

For all the anti-nuclear movement's efforts to persuade Diefenbaker to oppose nuclear warheads, there is little to suggest that organisers actively considered the best means to influence the prime minister's policy. They did not determine that political consequences were the best tactic to use to persuade Diefenbaker. As a result, there was much effort wasted on letter-writing campaigns, often using form letters that supporters simply had to sign and mail to MPs. A petition, something on the scale of the CCCRH's national petition in October 1961, was difficult to organise, but worth the effort. In the end, it was that petition which helped to convince Diefenbaker that there were political liabilities attached to the acquisition of nuclear warheads in the autumn of 1961. Unfortunately for anti-nuclear groups the impact of this approach went generally unnoticed by their organisers. With a minority government after the 1962 election, Diefenbaker realised that nuclear negotiations would have to wait until an international crisis could convince even the most vocal opponents of the merits of nuclear warheads. This was an unlikely scenario. Still, the Cuban missile crisis intervened, and led to renewed negotiations with the Americans at the end of October 1962. But the anti-nuclear movement was no more prepared to accept nuclear warheads for Canada's armed forces at the end of 1962 than at any other time. The Americans quickly grew frustrated by the talks because they seemed, yet again, not likely to amount to much. Then, Pearson announced his new nuclear policy. And so the stalemate was broken. The electorate now had a real choice when it came to nuclear policy in

¹⁹ A. Paul Pross, Group Politics and Public Policy, (Toronto, 1986), 22-23.

the election of 1963. For a number of reasons, not just nuclear policy, Canadians barely chose Pearson.

From the very beginning of the nuclear debate Diefenbaker worried about political consequences and public support. In the fullness of time it was a concern that was a self-fulfilling prophecy. It was Diefenbaker who was his own worst enemy, not Pearson, and not the peace movement. Despite his historic majority, he could not overcome his fear of political failure. But, with a track record like his, this was to be expected. Diefenbaker had viewed Mackenzie King as a political role model. But where King's strategy of delay reaped enormous political rewards, Diefenbaker's only convinced Canadians that he was incapable of making a difficult decision. Even though he had decided that Canada's armed forces should accept nuclear warheads, Diefenbaker was unable to translate this private decision into public action. Ultimately, he did much to create the climate in which the anti-nuclear movement was able to capitalise on his pre-existing political insecurities.

The irony of the situation was that Diefenbaker delayed the acquisition of nuclear warheads for purely political considerations, while Pearson accepted them for the very same reasons. But the same motivations led to dramatically different results. Ultimately, Pearson was far more accurate in judging the political consequences of accepting nuclear weapons than Diefenbaker ever was. The Tory Syndrome was no match for the Government Party. In the end, Diefenbaker was the architect of his own demise.

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