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Asa McKercher

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

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Galen Perras

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Serge Durflinger

Jeffrey Keshen

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

“Not easy, smooth, or automatic”: Canada-US relations, Canadian Nationalism, and American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963

Asa McKercher

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Abstract

An historical consensus has coalesced around the view that Canadian-American relations reached a nadir from 1961-1963. The argument is that due to differences of both personality and policy John Diefenbaker, Canada's Prime Minister, and US President John Kennedy loathed each other. Scholars have subsequently debated over who was more to blame for this, but their analyses have been incomplete because the American side has largely been ignored. As most, if not all, of the historians who have examined the Diefenbaker-Kennedy era have been Canadian, American archival sources have been used sparingly. Drawing upon the rich documentary collection in the US National Archives and the Kennedy Presidential Library, this thesis argues, in contrast to what many have contended, that US foreign policy was in fact quite complimentary towards Diefenbaker's government. This was primarily because American policy-makers were aware of the potent force of Canadian nationalism, which their experiences with Diefenbaker only confirmed.

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Introduction - *“Not easy, smooth, or automatic”: Canada-US relations, Canadian Nationalism, and American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*

Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker once referred to US President John F. Kennedy as “a boastful son of a bitch”; Kennedy thought Diefenbaker was “a prick”.¹ That these two men, whose time in office overlapped from January 1961 to April 1963, disliked each other is no great secret. Indeed, two historians have dubbed it a “Canadian cliché” to contrast “the confident, cosmopolitan, Harvard graduate who was president with the insecure, teetotaling, small-town Saskatchewan lawyer who was prime minister.”² It is no doubt also a truism that during the Kennedy-Diefenbaker years the relationship between the United States and Canada reached its lowest point in the twentieth century. The 1963 Canadian federal election was marked by charges both that the US had interfered in Canada’s domestic affairs and that Diefenbaker’s government was guilty of dangerous inaction which had weakened its alliance with the United States. Events over the years 1961-1963 - from the Cuban missile crisis, to Britain’s choice to join the European Common Market, to Canada’s indecision on whether to acquire defensive nuclear weapons - worried people on both sides of the border. As such, differences of both policy and personality divided Canada and the United States.

Historians have generally put the blame for this state of affairs on either Diefenbaker, Kennedy, or on both leaders. Those faulting the Canadian Prime Minister have charged that his Canadian nationalist populism and chronic procrastination had a damaging effect on Canada-US relations. The American President, meanwhile, has been credited with ignoring legitimate Canadian concerns about US policy, a result of his arrogant and imperious nature. More

¹ John Diefenbaker quoted in Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 11. John F. Kennedy quoted in Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2003), p. 389.

² John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies, Third Edition* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), p. 215.

convincingly, scholars have faulted both Diefenbaker and Kennedy although most are more critical of one of these leaders rather than the other. In any case, the focus of the historiography has largely been on the two men themselves, with discussion of policy differences thrown in for good measure. This focus is not a surprise given that the President and Prime Minister were such dynamic and polarising figures. Also dominating the historiography of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker relationship and Canada-US relations during this period have been analyses by Canadians. Americans, unsurprisingly, have ignored this topic with the result being that a thorough analysis of US foreign policy towards Canada during the Kennedy years has not been carried out. However, this has not necessarily affected the conclusions that have been drawn about bilateral relations from 1961-1963 as these run the gamut of praise and criticism for both sides.

The first critical study of Diefenbaker appeared immediately after his government's defeat in the 1963 election. *Renegade in Power* (1963), written by the journalist Peter C. Newman, established the widely held view that the Prime Minister was guilty during his time in office of "indecision and mismanagement" and of having "compromised so many convictions during his six years of power that he no longer seemed to have any clear idea himself of the kind of future he was offering his followers."³ Newman constructed a devastatingly critical view of a fumbling Prime Minister who was directly responsible for his Progressive Conservative Party's stunning fall from power and following in this vein was Peyton V. Lyon's *Canada in World Affairs, 1961-1963* (1968). Just as critical of the Prime Minister as Newman, Lyon observed that "Mr Diefenbaker's mounting resentment towards President Kennedy" was the "essential key" in comprehending why the stridently anti-Communist Prime Minister came to loathe an American

³ Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), p. xv.

President who shared this same conviction.⁴ On a host of issues, from the nuclear weapons file to Cuba, Lyon argued that Canada, or rather Diefenbaker himself, had proven to be a poor ally. In his view, “Mr Diefenbaker’s disastrous quarrel with Washington and the defeat of his government were not caused by his actions”. Instead Lyon concluded “it was his increasing inability to take action, or to give a rational explanation for delay, that became the despair of Canada’s closest allies and many of his own colleagues.”⁵

Meanwhile a number of scholars sought to defend the Prime Minister. The first of these, the philosopher George Grant, argued in *Lament for a Nation* (1965), that there had been a plot to get rid of Diefenbaker conceived by business interests, the Canadian Liberal Party and the US government. Viewing Canada as a “satellite country” of the US, Grant opined that “Kennedy had made clear that the United States was no longer going to take any nonsense from its allies” and that the Americans thus conspired to defeat the Progressive Conservatives.⁶ A more rigorous analysis came in two articles by the historian Jocelyn Maynard Ghent who, in contrast to Lyon, characterised Kennedy as having been the recalcitrant ally. In “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” (1979), Ghent attacked the Kennedy administration for neglecting Canada, and contrary to Lyon’s contentions, she argued that Diefenbaker had done everything that could have been expected of him. Not seeing things this way the Americans, Ghent contended, “wondered what had become of their steadfast ally, and Kennedy, with his administration, became even more certain that harmonious relations with Canada would only be possible once Diefenbaker was out of office.”⁷ In “Did He Fall or was He Pushed? The

⁴ Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. XII, 1961-1963. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 492.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶ George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000, originally published 1965), p. 46.

⁷ Jocelyn Maynard Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Pacific Historical Review* 48, no. 2 (May, 1979), p.183. A slightly different version of this article, with the same conclusions is Jocelyn Ghent-

Kennedy Administration and the Collapse of the Diefenbaker Government” (1979), Ghent followed Grant’s argument by examining the ongoing saga over whether Canada would acquire nuclear weapons. She then analysed subsequent efforts by the US government through “the interaction of the Canadian-American military and through the initiative of the ambassador in Ottawa” to push and help “bring about the collapse of the Diefenbaker government.”⁸ Ghent’s studies were highly critical of the Kennedy administration while defending Diefenbaker, who emerged as more or less entirely innocent from having done anything to harm Canada-US relations.

A more balanced series of studies appeared during the 1980s and 1990s. H. Basil Robinson, who during the Diefenbaker years served first as a Canadian Department of External Affairs (DEA) liaison to the Prime Minister and then in the Canadian Embassy in Washington, produced what is certainly the authoritative work on Diefenbaker’s foreign policy. Titled *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (1989), Robinson used his inside knowledge of events and archival documents to show the extent to which Diefenbaker’s concern for his domestic position had infused his foreign policy-making. As he put it, the Prime Minister’s “political priorities naturally influenced the process of decision-making in foreign affairs....When new situations arose in foreign affairs, his thoughts ran first to the tactics that should be used to handle them politically on the home front.”⁹ This is perhaps not a novel concern for the leader of a democratic country, or for any leader pursuing their nation’s interest, but to Robinson, Diefenbaker’s focus on the domestic clouded his judgement and put Canadian-American

Mallet and Don Munton, “Confronting Kennedy and the Missiles in Cuba, 1962,” in *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selecting Readings*, Don Munton and John Kirton eds. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1992), pp. 78-93.

⁸ Jocelyn Maynard Ghent, “Did He Fall or Was He Pushed? The Kennedy Administration and the Collapse of the Diefenbaker Government,” *International History Review* 1, no.2. (April 1979), p. 270.

⁹ H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 314.

relations on a worrying course, particularly since “with Kennedy in office, the supply of understanding and goodwill in the White House had quickly dwindled. And with Diefenbaker, so much was personal.”¹⁰ That Diefenbaker was a populist is no secret, and neither is the idea that domestic political concerns greatly affected his actions on the world stage. In their study of Canada’s Department of External Affairs, historians John Hilliker and Donald Barry made this point, arguing that when combined with Diefenbaker’s proclivity to procrastinate the “heightened political content of decision making” could “slow or confuse the government’s response to international crises.”¹¹

Two other studies took the same course as Robinson. The noted journalist Knowlton Nash, who covered Canada-US relations during the Kennedy-Diefenbaker era and so also had some close contact with the events in question, wrote *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (1990). He looked particularly at the personal relationship between the President and Prime Minister which he saw as being utterly disastrous, for as he contended, Kennedy and Diefenbaker were far too different in their personalities; as a result, “their differences were irreconcilable, their clash inevitable.”¹² Another leading source on Diefenbaker, the excellent biography, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (1995) by political scientist Denis Smith provides a fascinating portrait of the Prime Minister. Smith characterised Diefenbaker as a man prone to being “outrageous” and “disingenuous” when it came to relations with the Kennedy administration.¹³ Collectively Smith, Nash, and Robinson provided a more factual, balanced, and nuanced portrait of the former Prime Minister and his

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

¹¹ John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs, Volume 2: Coming of Age, 1946-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), p. 135.

¹² Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 11.

¹³ Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), p. 508.

relationship with the United States, but one where Diefenbaker was largely to blame for the degeneration of bilateral relations. Still, as Robinson argued “it takes two to build a disagreement....”¹⁴

Taking a slightly different course, historian J.L. Granatstein has offered a number of studies which are highly critical of Diefenbaker. Focusing largely on military matters, Granatstein also paid close attention to the development of Canadian nationalism and the related feeling of anti-Americanism which had a decisive influence on Diefenbaker’s decision-making. *Canada 1957-1967* (1986), was Granatstein’s initial attack on the Progressive Conservative Prime Minister. Calling the defence problem in the Canada-US relationship a “debacle and a largely unnecessary one” Granatstein cited the “true cause” of the problem as being the “character and make-up” of Diefenbaker, a man “prickly and sensitive, a leader who reacted sharply to pushing from Washington or from the Department of National Defence in Ottawa alike.”¹⁵ In “When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States” (1989), he developed this argument further although he made note of American pressure on Canada. Thus Granatstein concluded that in terms of Kennedy’s lasting imprint on Canada-US relations, the US President’s “legacy was likely a realization that Canada could be a difficult, hesitant partner, but one that could be made to do the ‘right’ thing.” For the Canadians meanwhile, “Kennedy was the first President in the postwar era to use American muscle to achieve his ends, and it left a lingering caution, a certainty that the United States could not be pushed too far.”¹⁶ Anti-Americanism in Canada was the subject of Granatstein’s subsequent study *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (1996), in which he argued that anti-American feelings were widespread in

¹⁴ Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 208.

¹⁵ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart: 1986), p. 102.

¹⁶ J.L. Granatstein, “When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States” In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 103.

Canada throughout the Diefenbaker-era and were used as a potent weapon by the PM. Hence “the Kennedy administration kept itself completely aware of the mood in Canada, one of the few times in this century that the White House watched Canadian anti-Americanism with concern.”¹⁷ While admitting that the Kennedy administration was guilty of a number of slights and blunders in its dealing with Canada, Granatstein was nonetheless highly critical of the Canadian Prime Minister for blindly following an anti-American course which paralysed his government’s decision-making and harmed his country’s relationship with its most important ally.

A number of additional studies took a line similar to Granatstein. Characterising Diefenbaker as a foreign-policy novice, the journalist Jamie Glazov, a doctoral student of Granatstein, analysed Canada-Soviet relations in *Canadian Policy Toward Khrushchev’s Soviet Union* (2002). Glazov’s conclusion was that “Diefenbaker’s pro-American disposition in the period from 1957 to 1961 would intensify Canada’s anticommunism, just as [his] anti-American posturing in the period from 1961 to 1963 would lead to a softer Canadian position in the Cold War.”¹⁸ Meanwhile Peter Haydon’s *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (1993), remains the only book-length study on the Canadian role during the crisis and is largely a study of military history and civil-military relations.¹⁹ Haydon found that Canada’s military had fully cooperated with the US military. Thus, the Americans could complain little about Canada’s military response during the crisis; it was in the political realm that a crisis in Canadian-American relations occurred and this was Diefenbaker’s fault. Distrustful of the Canadian military and wary of the Americans, Diefenbaker had harmed political relations with the US and weakened civil control over Canada’s armed forces.

¹⁷ J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 137.

¹⁸ Jamie Glazov, *Canadian Policy toward Khrushchev’s Soviet Union* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), p. 77.

¹⁹ Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993).

Canada's most authoritative Cold War historian, Robert Bothwell, produced a number of studies which were also critical of the Canadian Prime Minister, although these were framed in larger arguments either about the course of Canada-US relations or the wide scope of Canadian Cold War policy. As Bothwell observed in *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (1992), the Diefenbaker years were part of a broader "distancing between Canada and the United States, a remoteness that was different in kind from what had gone before."²⁰ Differences over global policies and changing perceptions of the Cold War world were developing so that "as the United States turned outward, Canada increasingly turned inward."²¹ In contrast to Nash, Bothwell's focus was less on the idiosyncrasies of the Diefenbaker-Kennedy relationship and more on the change in the way Canadians perceived themselves as fitting into the wider world. More recently, in *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984* (2007), he has taken a critical look at the proclivity of studies which have focused too much attention on Diefenbaker himself, writing that "The characteristic folly of Diefenbaker's tactic – personalizing differences between himself and his opponents, real and imaginary – has obscured the fact that there were real differences of policy and even strategy between his government and the Americans."²² The 1960s were marked by a moving apart of Canada and the United States, although these countries nevertheless remained, as another scholar put it, "tolerant allies".²³

As these examinations of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker period have been done almost exclusively by Canadians, perhaps unsurprisingly American sources and the American side of the issues have been largely ignored. Those who have examined the actions of the US

²⁰ Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 70.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²² Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), p. 168.

²³ See Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

government during the period have relied on a handful of documents from American archives as well as oral history accounts and interviews. Moreover the focus on the American side, when it exists, has mostly been confined to President Kennedy himself, a result perhaps of the hold that the deceased President's dynamic personality has had on those who have studied the Diefenbaker period to this point. In any event, the paucity of documents from American archives that have been used in the existing studies has led to an incomplete understanding of the American foreign policy towards Canada. Further, the focus on the Kennedy-Diefenbaker feud has clouded the role played by other US officials during these years. The rich collections at the US National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland and the archives at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston and Library and Archives Canada, provide valuable documentation of the perceptions and actions of American foreign policy-makers. One of the conclusions these documents lead to – that American diplomats came to share their President's distaste for the Canadian Prime Minister – is perhaps not revolutionary. It is nevertheless important in giving a fuller understanding of the depths to which Canadian-Americans relations had sunk to by 1963.

While Kennedy was the United States' chief executive, other Americans were responsible for implementing US foreign policy, from the day to day operations of the Ottawa Embassy and the Canada Desk at the State Department, to the occasional interventions by the National Security Council (NSC) on matters of great importance to the Administration. In the case of the former, US diplomats had a steady impact on the course that Canada-US relations took from 1961-1963 by interpreting Canadian actions for their superiors; in the case of the latter, decisions by National Security Council officials created huge waves. Studies to this point have either largely ignored these officials, or relegated them to a background and subsidiary role; the related

reluctance of scholars to examine American archival sources has understated the role of American diplomats and members of the Administration outside of the Oval Office and has missed key pieces of evidence in the reconstruction of the bilateral relationship. Namely, the evidence suggests that Diefenbaker was viewed as being as recalcitrant an ally as has always been suggested by analysts such as Lyon and Granatstein. This is not simply a case of everything old being new again, however, because American evidence also reveals that the Kennedy administration was a far more patient and helpful ally than has been argued. This was primarily because US diplomats were fully aware of the potency of Canadian nationalism and they took pains to emphasise this to the White House which in turn moderated American foreign policy on several bilateral issues. Indeed Canadian nationalism “was a staple of US Embassy reports from Ottawa back to Washington”²⁴ American diplomats were fully cognisant of the role that domestic concerns played in Diefenbaker’s decision-making, and knowing this US foreign policy towards Canada adjusted accordingly.

What were the aims of Kennedy’s foreign policy? At the root of his Administration’s thinking on foreign affairs was a concern with power. The pre-eminent Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis has written that Kennedy and his aides believed that power “was as much a function of perceptions as of hardware, position, or will: minute shifts in its distribution – or even the appearance of such shifts – could cause chain reactions of panic to sweep the world, with potentially devastating consequences.”²⁵ This concern with power meant that the Kennedy administration wanted to project an appearance of strength, for itself, its allies, and the ‘Free World’ in general. British historian Lawrence Freedman likewise has characterised Kennedy

²⁴ Robert Bothwell, “Canadian-American Relations: Old Fire, New Ice?”, *Canada Among Nations, 2004: Setting Priorities Straight*, eds, David Carment et al. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), p. 145.

²⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War, Revised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 200.

administration's rhetoric as "activist, confident and ambitious. With sufficient energy, imagination, intellect, and resources, few human problems were beyond solution."²⁶ None of this is novel to those who remember or who have studied the Kennedy era, but they are nonetheless important to re-emphasise and to keep in mind when studying Canada-US relations from 1961-1963. After all, by the time Kennedy took office in early 1961, Canada's Progressive Conservative government had been in power for almost four years, Canada's "rate of economic growth had slowed, unemployment was up, Diefenbaker's bombastic political style was becoming embarrassing, and his indecisive government was causing concern." In short, "Diefenbaker was starting to look like an anachronism."²⁷ The contrast between an anachronistic and dithering Prime Minister to the north and the vigorous President to the south explains why many Canadians were attracted to Kennedy, but it also helps clarify why Canada-US relations took a definite turn for the worse during the years 1961-1963. This was not just a factor in relations with the Canadian government. Freedman has observed that Kennedy's relationships with Harold Macmillan (Britain), Konrad Adenauer (West Germany), and Charles de Gaulle (France) were also not on the best footing for "at a time when Europe was ruled by old men, Kennedy's youth was in itself a challenge, as was his rapport with the public."²⁸ There was more though than the difference of personality and style.

Kennedy set the tone for the course he would follow in his inaugural address, given on 20 January, 1961. He spoke not only of the torch being passed to a new and younger generation of Americans but he "pledge[d] the loyalty of faithful friends" to "those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share." Yet he warned that "united, there is little we cannot do in a host

²⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 7.

²⁷ Bothwell, *Canada and the United States*, p. 79.

²⁸ Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, p. 277.

of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do - for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.”²⁹ Aiming to strengthen the conventional and nuclear capabilities of NATO, Kennedy also sought to encourage closer unity amongst Western European nations through liberalised trade and Britain’s entry into the European Economic Community. This so-called ‘Grand Design’ was meant “to bolster the American position by making Western Europe a unified, faithful helpmate.”³⁰ Canada, through its membership in NATO and its strong political and economic links to Europe, had a role to play in seeing this design come to fruition. Ominously, while “both Americans and Europeans favored ‘consultation’ on the issues of the Grand Design and the Cold War” there were differing views on what consultation actually meant. For the US government, ‘consultation’ meant that it “discussed issues with allies and informed them of them of its thinking....If, however, some of the allies remained unpersuaded, the Americans went ahead anyway.” To the Europeans, and Canadians, ‘consultation’ meant shared decision-making.³¹ Further, Diefenbaker and many of the members of his government held a fondness for Britain and the Commonwealth which, in their view, were threatened by the ‘Grand Design’.

The Kennedy Administration was focused on other parts of the world too. As the new President also noted in his inaugural address, “To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny.” He referred also to the need to lift poor nations out of poverty and to pursue an ‘alliance for progress’ in Latin American. The struggle

²⁹ John F. Kennedy, ‘Inaugural Address, 20 January, 1961’. Available on the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum website.

³⁰ Frank Costigliola, “The Pursuit of Atlantic Community: Nuclear Arms, Dollars, and Berlin”, In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 27.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

for the 'Third World' was indeed an important one for the Kennedy administration, and in particular the President himself often referred to Latin America as "the most dangerous area in the world".³² Yet due to a wariness of entangling themselves with the Americans, Canada had long been cautious of taking a greater role in the Western Hemisphere, particularly through membership in the Organization of American States. Cuba was also a matter of concern for the new President, and as one historian has convincingly argued, "Kennedy spent as much or more time on Cuba as on any other foreign policy problem."³³ Here, Canada was again a sceptical partner, thanks in part to its concern about American actions taken against Cuba's communist government, which Canadian officials abhorred for its ideological orientation but nonetheless wanted as a trading partner.³⁴

A unique problem also existed within the realm of Canada-US relations: the issue of when Canada would acquire nuclear weapons. On 20 February, 1959 Prime Minister Diefenbaker committed to acquire nuclear warheads for the BOMARC anti-aircraft missile system by stating in the House of Commons that the "full potential of these defensive weapons is achieved only when they are armed with nuclear warheads."³⁵ As well, Canada acquired Honest John missiles for its forces in Europe, and Canadian fighters stationed with NATO were committed to a 'strike-reconnaissance' role which required them to have tactical nuclear weapons. Yet the Canadian government was deeply divided on the issue, with Defence Minister

³² Kennedy quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area of the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 7.

³³ Thomas G. Paterson, "Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Fidel Castro" In *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 123. See also: *Idem.*, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³⁴ For a look at Canada's role in Latin America see: James Rochlin, *Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994). For an excellent study of Canadian-Cuba relations see: John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbor Policy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997).

³⁵ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (20 February, 1959), p. 1223.

Douglas Harkness strongly in favour of nuclear weapons and Foreign Minister Howard Green firmly opposed. So as Kennedy entered the White House in January 1961, Canada still had not taken possession of any warheads, an important point because as Peyton Lyon deftly observed “The question of nuclear ammunition for Canada’s armed forces provoked one of the stormiest controversies in the nation’s history. It weakened Canada’s standing in world affairs and brought relations between Ottawa and Washington to their lowest ebb in many decades.”³⁶

What then of Canada-US relations from 1961-1963? As Peyton Lyon wrote in his 1968 book, “The principal challenge in explaining Canadian policies ... is thus to determine why Mr Diefenbaker became awkward and unreliable from the American point of view, hesitant during the confrontation over missile sites on Cuba, and reluctant to arm the four weapons systems his government had acquired.”³⁷ The answer from the American perspective lay in the influence of Canadian nationalism and Prime Minister Diefenbaker’s concern for securing Canada’s sovereignty. In his otherwise masterly account of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker period, Robert Bothwell saw both the Canadian Prime Minister and the issue of Canadian nationalism as being, for the Americans, a “minor irritant” and “an abnormality”.³⁸ For example, Bothwell has downplayed the impact of disagreements over differing Canada-US policies towards Cuba as being simply a minor item belonging “in the unfathomable basket of ‘Canadian nationalism’ which was used in the period to explain any and all actions that Washington considered irrational or inexplicable.”³⁹ While the Americans certainly found Canada’s developing sense of nationalism irrational, they in no way saw this phenomenon as a minor problem. A standard point made in American briefing material throughout the period was that “*the primary problem*

³⁶ Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. XII, 1961-1963, p. 76.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

³⁸ Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion*, p. 177.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

in U.S.-Canadian relations lies in the evolving nationalist feeling and sensibilities of Canadians confronted with the over-shadowing power and influence of the U.S.”⁴⁰ As Bothwell attests, on the issues that divided Canada and the United States, Canadian nationalism was blamed; US officials saw the phenomenon, however, as *the* problem to be overcome or to be worked around as it was the cause of Canada’s opposition to certain American policies. This was the explanation, they felt, for Canada’s resistance to British entry into the EEC, for Canada’s delay in arming itself with nuclear weapons, for Canadian protectionist trade measures, and for Canada’s reluctance to take a wider role in Latin America. Further, it seemed to perfectly explain Diefenbaker’s own actions by making them fathomable. The point is important because US perceptions of Canadian nationalism informed the decisions made and actions taken by the Kennedy administration. Upon examination of the sources contained in US archives, there is no doubt that American officials saw Canadian nationalism as having a decisive influence on Canada’s actions; this perception in turn moderated US foreign policy towards Canada.

It is because of their awareness of the potency of Canadian nationalism that US policy-makers and diplomats took a patient approach in dealing with Canada and on a number of issues they even yielded their position when Canada’s nationalist sentiment arose. On others, the Americans showed extreme patience despite continuing Canadian procrastination. As with any relationship, US diplomats knew that constant work was required; by 1963, however, “The Americans, their patience tested to the limit ... finally lashed out against Diefenbaker, thereby confirming their demonic status.”⁴¹ Canadian-American relations entered a dark period, the root cause of which, for the Americans, was the Prime Minister and the force of Canadian nationalism that drove him.

⁴⁰ My emphasis. ‘Department of State Guidelines for Policy and Operations – Canada’, March 1962. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, National Security Files, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 2-62-3/62”.

⁴¹ Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?*, p. 144.

Chapter One – “*Canada and the United States have carefully maintained the good fences that help make them good neighbours*”: *From Eisenhower to Kennedy*.

While the Kennedy-Diefenbaker period has been viewed as one of the lowest points in Canadian-American relations, the Eisenhower-Diefenbaker era has been seen as one of the most benign. The era was not without its problems, however, and this included a growing concern amongst many Canadians regarding general US Cold War rhetoric and policy and increasing American economic intrusion into Canada.¹ However, these concerns seem to have been masked by close personal relations between President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Diefenbaker. In his memoirs Diefenbaker evoked his close, friendly relationship with President Dwight Eisenhower, who, Diefenbaker felt, had “an appreciation of Canada and Canadians” and was thus someone who he could work with.² Canadian nationalism and related feelings of anti-Americanism were certainly picked up by diplomats on both sides of the border. Arnold Heeney, the Canadian Ambassador to the United States from 1953-1957 and then again from 1959-1962, noted the change in Canadian attitudes that had taken place by the time of his second stint in Washington. In his memoirs he recalled

this ‘anti-Americanism’ as it was beginning to be called openly, was to dog my diplomatic footsteps throughout my whole second term. It penetrated into the highest quarters in government and into Parliament, the press, and the Canadian people. As the months went by I could not avoid the conclusion that many of my fellow countrymen tended to equate criticism of the United States with Canadian patriotism.³

¹ See J.L. Granatstein, “When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States” In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 86-7. Knowlton Nash has also emphasised the tensions that existed in the nevertheless cordial relationship; Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefined Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), Chapter 2. Unfortunately there is no good study of Canada-US relations during the Eisenhower-Diefenbaker years, nor is there a focused examination of the relationship between these two men.

² John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Two: The Years of Achievement, 1957-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 152.

³ A.D.P. Heeney, *The Things that are Caesar’s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 158.

Meanwhile as early as May 1958 in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Livingston Merchant, then the US Ambassador to Canada, had observed “Notwithstanding the basic soundness of present Canadian-United States relations, there is in this rapidly developing nation a growing consciousness of national destiny and nationalism.” This phenomenon “can result in difficulties if knowingly or unknowingly the United States or its representatives act in ways which appear to Canadians to infringe on their sovereignty” and so American officials needed to “be constantly attentive to this development, and continue to exercise great care in all aspects of relations with this country.”⁴

Anti-Americanism was an outgrowth of the nationalism that Merchant had discussed and, as Heeney had expressed, there was a sense by some Canadians that by the late summer and early autumn of 1960 anti-American feeling in Canada had reached a dangerous level. US diplomats shared some of this sentiment and spoke about the matter with their Canadian counterparts. One such discussion took place when Heeney met with Willis Armstrong, the US Deputy Chief of Mission in Ottawa, on 29 August, 1960. The two had a long talk about Canadian-American relations which highlighted much of the ill-will that seemed apparent to officials on both sides of the border. Both men agreed that economic relations were quite good and they agreed too, that problems lay in political-military affairs. Asserting there were some “rather irrational elements” within the Canadian government, Armstrong judged that “External Affairs Minister [Howard] Green did not like soldiers, weapons, or policemen, and ... that such an attitude made cooperation in the political-military field rather difficult”. While Heeney

⁴ *Review of Foreign Policy, 1958 – Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*, 16 May, 1958.

agreed, he cautioned that “in some cases the United States gave unwarranted provocation to people of Mr. Green’s turn of mind.”⁵

Heeney then turned to another topic, which was in fact the primary reason for his desire to speak to Armstrong: George Glazebrook, who had briefly served in the Canadian Embassy in Washington that summer, had reported “coolness” directed towards Canada by a number of US officials. Confirming this to be the case, Armstrong observed this phenomenon had resulted from several “revelatory” actions by Green which were causing “an increasing lack of patience in Washington”, but that this should not necessarily reflect on relations as a whole. Taking pains to stress that his government was not anti-American, Heeney admitted that Green “likes to pluck the odd tail feather from the eagle....” The meeting, a cordial one between two friends, ended on a point of agreement. Neither Richard Nixon nor John F. Kennedy, the two candidates in the US election, “would be likely to be as patient and tolerant of the inclination of the present Canadian Government to take a very long time to react on a number of problems....”⁶

This conversation shows several currents which were present in Canadian-American relations at this time: American concern over Canadian nationalist feeling as embodied by Howard Green; genuine Canadian anxiety over aspects of US Cold War policy; and lastly the importance placed by the US on resolving outstanding problems and American recognition of the slowness of Canadian deliberations on these matters. Heeney had a more substantive and worrying discussion about anti-American sentiment in Canada in the days following his talk with Armstrong. On 30 and 31 August, before departing for Washington, Heeney met with Prime

⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, 29 August, 1960. US National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, Maryland (NARA), Department of State Records, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Basic Policy-Canada”.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Minister Diefenbaker. After first engaging Heeney in a brief discussion of other matters, the Prime Minister expressed his belief that “anti-American sentiment was now worse than at any time in his lifetime or [Heeney’s].” As Diefenbaker put it, “popular criticism of the U.S. [was] growing into an ‘avalanche’.” He then listed four reasons for this development: the impression that the United States was ““pushing other people around””; fear of American militarism; the aggressiveness by US economic interests; and trade. Certainly aware of some concern and criticism, a shocked and alarmed Heeney had not known of its extent. The next day he and the Prime Minister resumed their conversation, with Diefenbaker showing Ambassador Heeney mail that he had received which reflected anti-American feelings. Their talk went on like this and ended with the Prime Minister instructing Heeney that upon his arrival in the US capital, he should discretely inform the Americans of Diefenbaker’s serious concern for the future of Canada-US relations.⁷

After arriving in Washington on 6 September, Heeney did just that. He arranged to meet with Livingston Merchant, the American Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and the former US Ambassador to Ottawa from 1956-1958. Over dinner with their wives at the Canadian Embassy on 13 September, Heeney briefed Merchant on the Prime Minister’s concerns about anti-Americanism in Canada before the two men turned to discuss Canadian-American relations more widely. While stating his own belief that Canadians were still friendly allies, Heeney took note of “discontent” revolving around two issues: “genuine anxiety at the possibility of nuclear war, and, in that context, worry, even distrust, over U.S. military intentions” as well as “the extent to which U.S. interests were acquiring ownership of key sectors

⁷ ‘Memorandum of Conversations with the Prime Minister in Ottawa, Tuesday, August 30, 1960, and Wednesday, August 31, 1960’, undated. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Arnold D.P. Heeney fonds, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “15”.

of the Canadian economy.” But Heeney also noted the latter problem was a result of private investment and not government policy, and that criticism of American national security policy certainly was not unique to Canadians. Merchant expressed his “deep concern” but was not surprised as both the US Embassy in Ottawa and the State Department had made similar conclusions. After some further discussion the American left, promising to bring the matter up with Secretary of State Christian Herter. He also suggested that he and Heeney should organise a meeting between Herter and Green during the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York City the following week.⁸

The Canadians agreed to a meeting, which was then set for 20 September. The day before this, Heeney and Green discussed Canada-US relations in Green’s New York hotel room. Heeney began by recounting his talks with the Prime Minister at the end of August. Green agreed with Diefenbaker that there was indeed “wide-spread criticism” of the US in Canada, criticism which stemmed, he thought, from “anxiety over nuclear war” or rather “distrust of U.S. military policy,” and “worries over American economic headway in Canada”. Of the two, Green described the first as being the more serious problem as the second was not the result of American policy but of Canada’s. However, Green thought Diefenbaker’s “estimate of the extent and depth of anti-Americanism in Canada was ‘exaggerated’” although he admitted the PM was more adept at assessing public opinion. Turning to the issue of nuclear weapons, Heeney expressed his “anxiety [which] derived from the fact that we continued to support the principle of joint North American defence with the U.S. but there was, or seemed to be, a gap between our professions and our performance.” This was a result of Canada not doing what was

⁸ ‘Memorandum of Conversation with the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs in Washington, Tuesday, September 13, 1960’, dated 14 September, 1960. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “15”.

necessary to protect the nuclear deterrent by acquiring its own defensive nuclear weapons. Disagreeing, Green stated that while he was in no way a neutralist, nevertheless he could not support Canada's acquiring nuclear weapons.⁹

At the Waldorf the next day, Green and Heeney met the American delegation of Secretary Herter, Under Secretary Merchant, and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Foy Kohler. Referring to "very disquieting reports about serious antipathy and antagonism toward the U.S. in Canada", Herter asked Green for his comments. The Minister of External Affairs replied that things were "not so bad" as the Americans thought since there was always some tension as a result of Canada being "a little country alongside a great neighbour faced with the question of how to avoid being dominated." Green then touched on two important issues that concerned Canada. First there was a "fundamental difference" between Canada and the US over policy towards the Soviet Union. This was due to Canadian worries over the belligerence of the Pentagon. Second, many Canadians were worried by increasing American control of the Canadian economy, although this matter, Green explained, did not directly involve the US government.¹⁰ The Canadian minister also stressed that Canada "had no desire to become another nuclear power." Still, Green thought that at the official level Canada-US relations were "as friendly and intimate" as could be; Herter agreed.¹¹ The men then discussed some general matters and left after some typical diplomatic pleasantries were exchanged.

⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 19 September, 1960 (document dated 23 September, 1960). LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file "15".

¹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, 20 September, 1960. NARA, Foreign Service Post Files, RG 84 Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-1961, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file "international political relations classified 1959-61 Canada-U.S."

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 20 September, 1960 (document dated 23 September, 1960). LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file "15".

After leaving Herter's suite, Green instructed Heeney to speak with Merchant in order to seek an assessment of how things had gone. Merchant "left [Heeney] in no doubt that the Secretary of State was genuinely disturbed." The Canadian Ambassador, meanwhile, made sure to draw Merchant's attention to "the central importance" of Green's opposition to nuclear weapons, a point which Merchant "seized the significance of".¹² Heeney later wrote the Prime Minister to report on the talks between Green and Herter and the issue of Canadian anti-Americanism, and to commend Diefenbaker for the address he had just made to the UN, a speech which had denounced Soviet aggression. Heeney also passed on Merchant's comment that the "splendid" speech was "like a breath of fresh air."¹³ However, despite Diefenbaker's strong public stance against the Soviets, the Americans still worried that he and the Canadian government were becoming more nationalistic, although this did not necessarily equate with anti-Americanism. So in the autumn of 1960, the US Embassy, alarmed by reports of growing anti-Americanism, asked its consulates to undertake a survey of Canadian opinions of the United States. This was primarily made in response to an article in *Maclean's* magazine by Peter C. Newman, entitled 'The Prime Minister's Election Role – the Paul Revere of Canada'. The survey was reassuring to the Americans for it confirmed Willis Armstrong's opinion that "there has not been any significant increase in anti-American sentiment in Canada."¹⁴ There was,

¹² Entry for 21 September in 'The Minister's Talk with the Secretary of State,' 23 September, 1960. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file "15".

¹³ Heeney to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 27 September, 1960. LAC, MG 30 E144 Vol.1, file "15". For Diefenbaker's speech see "'Peoples Want Peace, Not Propaganda,' Address by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker before the United Nations General Assembly, September 26, 1960". Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Statements and Speeches*, No. 60/32. The Prime Minister would later reflect on this speech as being "my most important single statement on Canadian external relations". John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Two: The Years of Achievement, 1957-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 121.

¹⁴ Willis Armstrong to Ivan White, 9 November, 1960 and Armstrong to Consul Generals, 23 September, 1960. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file "Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962".

however, a growing sense of Canadian nationalism, a phenomenon which a new American president would have to deal with.

John F. Kennedy had won an alarmingly close victory in the 8 November election. The young Democratic candidate and Senator for Massachusetts was now the President-elect and many Canadians worried what his relationship with their country would be like as it was, and remains, unclear how much exposure he had to Canada. What is clear is that on one legislative matter he had chosen to support broader bilateral interests over the parochial ones of his state's voters. During a vote in the Senate about the creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway, he had voted for the Seaway and against public opinion in his home state.¹⁵ Also, in 1957 he had made a speech, entitled 'Good Fences Make Good Neighbours', to a graduating class at the University of New Brunswick where he had received an honorary degree. Praising Diefenbaker on a number of occasions, Kennedy said, referring to lines from a poem by Robert Frost from which he drew the title of his address, that "Canada and the United States have carefully maintained the good fences that help make them good neighbours." Going on to discuss Canada's position between Britain and the US, he added:

Canada can neither be an extension of the Cornish coastline nor is she a mere northern vestibule to the United States. Canada has achieved a national strength and prestige which simply does not allow any portrayal of the country as an appendage of either Great Britain or the United States. To be sure, Canada has some special links with each of these two English-speaking nations, but it possesses most certainly a national destiny of its own to which it is well and timely to give foremost recognition.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Lawrence Martin, *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers* (Markham, ON: Paperjacks, 1983), p. 182-3.

¹⁶ 'Good Fences Make Good Neighbours', Address at the Convocation of the University of New Brunswick' 8 October, 1957. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKL), Pre-Presidential Papers, Series 12.1, Box 898.

His address portrayed some awareness of the growing feeling of Canadian nationalism and thirst for independence that existed in Canada following Diefenbaker's election in 1957. Additionally, late in the 1960 campaign, a study on Canada-US relations had been prepared for the Democrats. Perhaps not surprisingly this paper, completed by campaign consultant James R. Conant, blamed the growth of anti-Americanism in Canada on the policies of the Eisenhower administration, but whether Kennedy read it is unknown.¹⁷ By the time he became president, however, Kennedy was focused on broader horizons, from Latin America, to South East Asia and Europe; Canada was not at the top of his list of foreign policy issues. Yet taking into account his vote on the Seaway and his speech in New Brunswick, Kennedy seems to have had some appreciation of Canadian sensitivities and had showed that he was willing to accommodate Canada at some political cost to himself.

Following Kennedy's victory and in order to brief the new administration on Canadian-American relations, US diplomats prepared a number of papers in late 1960 and early 1961. These studies showed American concern over Canada's growing nationalist sentiments. The Ottawa Embassy drafted one such document, 'The Roots of Canadian-American Problems,' which was then sent to the State Department's Canada Desk to serve as a basis for its own report. The paper contained two sections: the first, a general analysis of the source of problems in bilateral relations; the second, an examination of specific problems. The first section is the more interesting of the two given how it portrayed Canada and for how US officials perceived what was motivating their northern neighbours. "The chief problem the United States faces in its relations with Canada", the report began, "lies in certain manifestations of Canadian nationalism

¹⁷ Undated paper, 'The Decline of American Prestige in Canada', and covering letter James R. Conant to Robert F. Kennedy, 1 November, 1960. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file "Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962".

which arise from the facts that (1) Canada is one-tenth the size of the United States, (2) most Canadians live within 150 miles of the border, and (3) Canada has no other close neighbours.” Geography had created a political problem as did the “dynamic and powerful economic, political, social, and cultural forces from the United States.” Therefore, “against this massive pressure, Canadian nationalists often become shrill in their advocacy of Canadian separateness.” This force was viewed as having an immense impact on the bilateral relationship, for as the paper noted, “Every issue or problem outlined [in the second section], whether short term or long term, must be analysed in terms of whether it will array the emotional and irrational nationalism of Canada against the United States (and against Canada’s own best interests) or whether it will not.” The authors noted that Canadian nationalism was a complex matter because it “rises and falls often without objective provocation” even in spite of American attempts to placate nationalists.¹⁸

Nationalist feeling was thus viewed by the Ottawa Embassy staff as an irrational and immutable factor which had to be dealt with in Canada-US relations. Still, despite it being irrational, the report cautioned that this “does not mean that we should cease trying to accommodate Canada in every reasonable way – failure to do so would bring far worse reactions.” Even though it offered a grim view of Canadian-American relations, the report concluded that “to leave it at this, however, would be unfair and incorrect....In their bones Canadians know they are a Western nation, loyal to their allies, faithful in their commitments

¹⁸ ‘The Roots of Canadian-American Problems’, December, 1960. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file “international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US”. Canadian officials in both the Washington Embassy and the Prime Minister’s Office were aware of the report’s conclusions regarding Canadian nationalism and also the sense that the US should seek to cooperate with Canada. See ‘Memorandum for the Ambassador’, Farquharson to Heeney, 1 December, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 3, file “13”.

and reasonable in a crisis.”¹⁹ Canada was portrayed by the Embassy staff as an ally but a temperamental one which might at times take positions contrary to US goals. This stance was perhaps not dissimilar from other allies, but the irrational factor, combined with the economic and military importance of Canada, made nationalism in that country so potentially dangerous. The US would simply have to be realistic in its dealings with the Canadians.

One of the diplomats who had drafted the Embassy paper reflected on its conclusions in a covering letter to the report. Willis Armstrong wrote of there being “no special point in listing problems that might develop in the next ten years, because we feel that Canadian reactions to them will be predictable on the basis of the situation described in the first part of the paper.”²⁰ Still, the second section of the study did list areas of concern in the trade, economic, and defence fields. ‘The Roots of Canadian-American Problems’ had a significant impact on the subsequent briefing paper that the State Department prepared for the incoming administration and its insights impressed Livingston Merchant enough that in 1962, with Canada-US relations becoming increasingly difficult, he recommended the President read the report as a way of explaining Canada’s actions.²¹

The State Department study, ‘Approach to Canadian-United States Relations’, echoed the Ottawa Embassy report’s interpretations and conclusions. It began with the observation that in regards to the state of US-Canada relations, “the major factors to be taken into account are the

¹⁹ ‘The Roots of Canadian-American Problems’, December, 1960. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file “international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US”.

²⁰ Armstrong to Milton Rewinkel, 30 December, 1960. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file “international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US”.

²¹ ‘The Roots of Canadian-American Problems’ attached to Tyler to McGhee, 9 March, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962”.

Canadian inferiority complex toward the United States, growing nationalism, the tendency to inject relations with the United States into Canadian domestic politics, and the Diefenbaker administration's impulse to exploit these matters to bolster its declining popularity." In words that would be echoed in future briefing notes, this paper identified "the essential element in problems involving Canada" as being "psychological." To deal with this problem, the paper advised that the course of US policy towards the Canadians should involve being "constantly attentive to the development of Canadian nationalism". In practical terms this meant the Americans should "continue to exercise great care and patience in all aspects of relations with that country....An assiduous effort should be made to respect and understand the viewpoints of our Canadian ally in spite of hypersensitivities which may at times be annoying to us."²²

As with the Embassy study, the State Department paper, sceptical of solutions, cautioned that the "psychological factors" would prevent any simple or specific executive or legislative actions from ameliorating the situation. At all times, though, the US "should try to see that Canadians are well-informed whenever possible before action is taken or public announcement made as to the nature of policies advocated by the United States." The paper did advocate for an early meeting between Kennedy and Diefenbaker because the bilateral relationship had "traditionally...depended to a considerable extent on a personal relationship at high levels." Additionally, the authors argued that the Canadian Prime Minister "is the type of personality who would react most adversely to any slight, real or fancied...." The paper did not simply advocate a passive role for the US. Rather, it argued that "while the U.S. attitude should continue to be one of seeking to give Canada special accommodation, we should not hesitate, if

²² 'Approach to Canadian-United States Relations', 9 January, 1961, and covering letter Rewinkel to Armstrong, 11 January, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file "international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US".

our policies are distorted or we are harassed or the occasion otherwise demands, to engage in firm and frank talk to restore perspective.”²³ In the main though, the State Department’s briefing memorandum for the incoming political appointed diplomats in the new Administration promoted a ‘go slow’ approach for Canada-US relations.

That US diplomats in both the Ottawa Embassy and at the State Department emphasised a conciliatory stance meant to placate Canadian nationalism was good because Canada’s Prime Minister was predisposed against Kennedy. In his memoirs, Diefenbaker remarked that while he was unsure of what the results of a Nixon win in 1960 would have meant for American politics, he felt sure “that the course of Canada-US relations would have been a happier one.”²⁴ This was not simple *post facto* retrospection; throughout 1960 the Prime Minister had expressed real doubts about the Democratic presidential candidate. For example, during his August 1960 discussion with Ambassador Heeney regarding anti-Americanism in Canada, the PM had stressed his “deep personal respect and friendship for Eisenhower – distaste for Kennedy and a favourable opinion of Nixon.” Heeney had mentioned an additional problem which was that throughout his career he had never encountered a more Canada-conscious administration in Washington than the Eisenhower Administration, a point on which Diefenbaker agreed. The problem then, as Heeney saw it, was that the incoming administration would be made up of people who had little experience with Canada and this could make them difficult to deal with.²⁵

²³ ‘Approach to Canadian-United States Relations’, 9 January, 1961, and covering letter Rewinkel to Armstrong, 11 January, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file “international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US”.

²⁴ John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Two: The Years of Achievement, 1957-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 166.

²⁵ ‘Memorandum of Conversations with the Prime Minister in Ottawa, Tuesday, August 30, 1960, and Wednesday, August 31, 1960’, undated. LAC MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “15”.

Diefenbaker's feelings with regards to Kennedy had not changed by the time the latter won the presidency. In a discussion with his liaison to the Department of External Affairs Basil Robinson on 9 November, the day after the US election, Diefenbaker castigated Kennedy as being “‘courageously rash’”, adding that the President-elect appeared intent on pursuing “an active policy which the Prime Minister feared might prove dangerous.” As Diefenbaker put it, “with Kennedy in control...we were closer to war than we had been before.”²⁶ Perhaps because of these feelings, the Prime Minister decided during this discussion to harden his position “against the idea” of cooperating with the recently declared US embargo against Cuba.²⁷ Robinson had to convince the Prime Minister to dispatch a message of congratulations to the President-elect as Diefenbaker had been reluctant to do so.²⁸ The message, dispatched on 9 November, contained congratulations and “good wishes” to Kennedy as he assumed “the heavy burdens of office.” Yet by 20 November no response had been received from the President-elect. This omission irritated Diefenbaker who asked Robinson to investigate the matter. Robinson telephoned Heeney in Washington to see if he could get things moving along; the following day Heeney reported back that a message was on its way. Diefenbaker nevertheless remained upset because the reply had resulted from Canadian prodding and the note, when it did arrive, had been dispatched from Washington, while Kennedy was in fact staying in Miami.²⁹ Diefenbaker's initial scepticism of the President-elect deepened as the year 1960 ended.

One of the first contacts between the Canadian government and the incoming Administration took place on 9 January, when Heeney met with Dean Rusk, who was set to

²⁶ Robinson to Heeney, 10 November, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 3, file “13”.

²⁷ ‘Cuba’, Memorandum for File, 9 November, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 3, file “13”. The embargo was put in place on 19 October.

²⁸ Robinson to Heeney, 10 November, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 3, file “13”.

²⁹ Diefenbaker to Kennedy, 9 November, 1960; and ‘Exchange of Messages with Senator Kennedy’, Memorandum for the Diary File, H. Basil Robinson, 22 November, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 3, file “13”.

become the new Secretary of State. The Canadian Ambassador, in a letter to the Prime Minister, characterised Rusk as being “a pretty impressive fellow” and expected him “to be a sympathetic but tough fellow to deal with.” As for the discussion, Rusk had referred to “the special relationship between Ottawa and Washington” and enquired how this relationship could be maintained and strengthened without offending other US allies. Heeney’s reply had been that he had never encountered any resentment to the relationship. At Rusk’s request, the Canadian Ambassador then brought up what he thought were the outstanding problems in Canada-US relations. Reflecting, perhaps, his discussion with Green in September 1960, Heeney related that there were problems in two areas: economics and defence. The former was more an internal problem for Canada. The latter stemmed from Canadian “misgivings” about some “manifestations” of US Cold War policy and, he suspected, American “reservations and worries” about the “wholeheartedness” of Canadian support for the United States. “Basically”, Heeney said, “these difficulties...had to do with the exceptionally complicated and critical questions of the control and use of nuclear weapons.” Rusk and Heeney carried on a discussion about their hopes for disarmament and the benefits of joint Canada-US meetings. When the incoming Secretary of State added that “the fact that he and his son customarily went to Canada to fish might provide occasions for informal conversations with Canadian officials”, Heeney thought such opportunities would be beneficial.³⁰ Thus he felt both “surprise and disappointment when [he] passed this suggestion on to Ottawa [and] it was dismissed as one more indication that the Americans thought of Canada only as a place for fishing and hunting.”³¹

³⁰ Heeney to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 9 January, 1961, and attached letter Heeney to Green, 9 January, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “16”.

³¹ A.D.P. Heeney, *The Things that are Caesar's* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 172.

Diefenbaker, inclined to holding a negative view of the incoming Administration, was unappreciative at this early attempt at building links with the new US government. Just days before that new Administration took power, Diefenbaker travelled to Washington to see off President Eisenhower. Arriving on the evening of 16 January, the Canadian Prime Minister met the American President the following day. At a small ceremony, the two men signed a treaty on water rights, after which they had a private conversation. Diefenbaker later revealed some of what had transpired during his discussion with Eisenhower, namely his own frustrations with the incoming Administration. Referring to Heeney's talk with Dean Rusk, the Prime Minister had told the outgoing President of his "irritation" with Rusk's belief that his exposure to Canada through fishing trips had provided him with an expert knowledge of the country. This was not what Rusk had in fact told Heeney, but Diefenbaker was clearly not prepared to give the incoming government a favourable review. Further, the Prime Minister told Eisenhower he "took exception" to the new Secretary of State's remark to Heeney "that too intimate relations between Washington and Ottawa might arouse suspicion or resentment among other allies of the United States."³² Diefenbaker also stated that he felt that Rusk's statement showed "superciliousness or condescension towards Canada."³³ It was clear that the Prime Minister was worried about the course Canada-US relations would take under the new Administration and as he later wrote Eisenhower, "the many evidences of your friendship to me will always be amongst the happiest of my memories. I felt that we were friends – and as friends could speak with

³² 'Prime Minister's Visit to Washington', Memorandum for Diary File, Robinson, 19 January, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file "February 1961".

³³ 'Re: Conversation with Arnold Heeney', Confidential Memorandum, 17 January, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file "February 1961".

frankness regarding the problems of our two countries.”³⁴ Diefenbaker’s sense of loss as Eisenhower left the Presidency was profound.

By the time John F. Kennedy took the oath of office on 20 January, 1961, he already had at least one foreign detractor. The Prime Minister’s startlingly negative opinion of the new president was based around the young American’s brash personality. Diefenbaker’s biographer Denis Smith has pointed to Diefenbaker’s jealousy over Kennedy’s wealthy background and general appeal which “had already generated enthusiasm in Canada which detracted from Diefenbaker’s own popularity.”³⁵ The Americans were certainly aware of Diefenbaker’s early opinion of Kennedy. In a letter to Merchant, Willis Armstrong noted how “the Prime Minister had been rather sceptical about the President because of his youth, and because he felt comfortable with Mr. Eisenhower, of whom he was extremely fond.”³⁶ US diplomats, in their briefing papers, had also observed that behind these personal matters lurked Canadian concern over sovereignty and independence. In Canada, Basil Robinson, the Prime Minister’s assistant on foreign affairs issues, observed that “For all the promise of the incoming team, there is no doubt that the absence of a personal relationship with the new President is going to introduce an incalculable factor into relations with the United States.” Robinson further wrote that “it is disturbing that the Prime Minister seems to have formed some rather unfavourable early impressions”. These impressions, he hoped, would soon be erased.³⁷

³⁴ Diefenbaker to Eisenhower, 26 February, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file “February, 1961”.

³⁵ Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), p. 378.

³⁶ Armstrong to Merchant, 8 February, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Ambassador Merchant”.

³⁷ Robinson to Heeney, 18 January, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “16”.

Chapter Two – “*Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder.*”: *Meeting the Neighbours.*

As John Kennedy took the oath of office on 20 January, Ambassador Heeney watched from a seat nearby. Heeney’s impression of the inauguration was that what he thought would be a boring affair “turned out to be history, or so it seemed to us that were there.” Kennedy had impressed him and as he put it in his diary, “Washington is in for a rapid change – which will be good”.¹ A few weeks later and perhaps following the advice that State Department officials had included in their briefing notes, the new President agreed to an early meeting with his Canadian counterpart. In the House of Commons on 2 February, the Prime Minister had responded to a planted question by suggesting that it would be good if he could meet the President before he himself was due to travel to a Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference.² Following this, Diefenbaker asked Heeney to contact the new Administration to see if it would be possible for him to meet Kennedy for an informal discussion. The Canadian Ambassador telephoned back to Ottawa on 5 February to report that the President would be ““very happy indeed”” to meet Diefenbaker. The White House proposed 20 February as the date for a working lunch, a suggestion the Canadians quickly accepted.³

Kennedy announced the meeting during a press conference at the State Department on 8 February. Mentioning Diefenbaker’s visit as the first point in his opening remarks, the President remarked to the gathered reporters “it is most important that harmonious relations exist between

¹ Diary entry for 22 January, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 2, file “29”.

² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (2 February, 1961), p. 1658.

³ ‘Possible Visit to Washington by Prime Minister’, Robinson to Under-Secretary of State, 3 February, 1961; and ‘Prime Minister’s Visit to Washington’, Robinson to Under-Secretary of State, 3 February, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file “February, 1961”. Basil Robinson later remarked that “it said a great deal for Heeney, and for the groundwork laid by Merchant, still undersecretary of state for political affairs in the State Department, that within three days of the first approach, Heeney was able to report that the president would be pleased to welcome the prime minister at an early date to be agreed.” H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 169.

two old friends, and therefore I am glad to have this chance to visit with the Prime Minister.”⁴ However, Kennedy erred by pronouncing ‘Diefenbaker’ as ‘Diefenbawker’, perhaps either as a result of his Bostonian accent or through the omission of his advisors who gave him the wrong pronunciation. Either way, the Prime Minister reportedly noticed this error and was so angered by it that he asked Basil Robinson whether he should lodge an official complaint.⁵ While no complaint was made, it is certain that US officials did not want the error to occur again. In a memorandum accompanying the President’s briefing notes for his meeting with the PM, Dean Rusk emphasised that the Prime Minister’s name was pronounced “Deefen-BAKER”.⁶

In spite of this apparent fuss, Diefenbaker recalled in his memoirs that his visit to the White House in February 1961 was “a pleasant occasion”; historians have generally disagreed, however.⁷ For example, historians John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall have argued that “from their first meeting, the two men held each other in hearty contempt.”⁸ Similarly, Kennedy advisor Arthur Schlesinger wrote in his study of the Kennedy administration that that the first meeting “had not proved a success. Diefenbaker, who felt at ease with Eisenhower, had been uneasy with the new President. Kennedy thought the Canadian insincere and did not like or trust him.”⁹ In actual fact the meeting appears to have been successful as the two leaders engaged in small talk as well as some substantive discussion. If one considers both the pessimistic

⁴ See ‘News Conference 3’, 8 February, 1961. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website.

⁵ Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), pp. 63-4. Kennedy’s mispronunciation has been used as evidence in labelling the relationship between Kennedy and Diefenbaker as having been a disaster from the start. Curiously, Robinson does not mention this; see Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 169.

⁶ ‘Prime Minister Diefenbaker’s Visit, February 20, 1961’ Memorandum for the President, 17 February, 1961. JFKL, President’s Office Files (POF), Series 9, Box 113, file “Canada, Security, 1961”.

⁷ John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Two: The Years of Achievement, 1957-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 168.

⁸ John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies, Third Edition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), p. 215.

⁹ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p.343.

preconceptions that Diefenbaker had formed prior to Kennedy taking office and the negative perceptions that American officials had towards the influence of Canadian nationalism, there is little doubt that the Kennedy-Diefenbaker meeting at the White House was a success.

The briefing memorandum that President Kennedy received for his meeting with the Prime Minister had a gloomy outlook reflecting the prior conclusions of 'The Roots of Canadian-American Problems' and 'Approach to Canadian-United States Relations'. It began with the observation that the "primary problem" faced by the US in its relations with Canada "lies in an evolving Canadian attitude of introspection and nationalism". American power "had long engendered a Canadian inferiority complex which is reflected in a sensitivity to any real or fancied slight to Canadian sovereignty." Hence the "essential element" in problems in the Canada-US relationship "tends to be psychological."¹⁰ These statements would form the basis for the United States position towards Canada in subsequent position papers and studies throughout the following year.

Kennedy's brief then went on to outline the development in Canadian nationalism since 1957 and the related rise of Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservative Party on this tide of nationalist feeling. The paper also highlighted that the Diefenbaker government faced the temptation of relying more and more upon nationalist rhetoric as a way of reversing its recent losses in popularity amongst Canadian voters. Still, the paper noted that "although much more self-assertive and insistent, the Canadian Government can be expected to continue the record of usually supporting the United States on very vital matters in broad international affairs." Such support could not, however, be taken for granted. Additionally, the President could expect to

¹⁰ 'Memorandum for Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker – Status and Atmosphere of U.S.-Canadian Relations', undated briefing paper and attached 'Prime Minister Diefenbaker's Visit, February 20, 1961' Memorandum for the President, 17 February, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1961".

hear “a variety of Canadian suggestions and initiatives, some of which will be most annoying to the U.S., but which will probably not be fundamentally damaging.”¹¹

Also, the briefing note advised that rising Canadian nationalism was not simple rhetoric nor was it confined to domestic politics. Rather, it might have a direct impact upon Canadian foreign policy which in turn could affect US security. One area where he was advised to be on guard was in defence matters. “In general”, the paper observed, “the Canadian Government has tended to attach less weight than we have to the need for ostensible military strength...and has been more inclined to worry over suggestions involving risks.” This outlook on the military combined with “the current Canadian attitude towards the U.S. complicates Canada’s own defense policies and tends to frustrate progress in areas of interest to the U.S. The outstanding example of this difficulty concerns nuclear weapons.” Canada was procrastinating on the nuclear issue, with no ostensible end in sight. Kennedy was counselled therefore, to inform Diefenbaker of the US hope that Canada would become a full partner in defending North America, and of the Americans’ willingness to work out an agreement which would satisfy the Canadians on the matter of joint control of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces in North America and Europe. The latter issue could act as a solution to Canada’s concerns over sovereignty because many Canadian officials were concerned about who would ultimately decide to use weapons stored in Canada. Turning to a more general attitude to adopt for the meeting, the paper commented “that Prime Minister Diefenbaker and other top officials are favourably impressed when given friendly and intimate treatment by U.S. Government officials.”¹²

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

This was precisely the approach that Kennedy pursued when Diefenbaker travelled to Washington. He and the Canadian PM met for discussions in the Oval Office and continued to talk over a working lunch in the Family Dining Room. Those also in attendance were Rusk, Merchant, Green, and Heeney. Merchant had recently been named Ambassador-designate to Canada and would be returning to Ottawa shortly to take up the post, a move that Diefenbaker thought “evoked universal approval everywhere in our country.”¹³ After some opening remarks on the importance of close bilateral relations and some discussion of matters in Africa and Southeast Asia, the leaders of Canada and the US turned to more substantive issues. Diefenbaker brought up trade with Cuba, a controversial topic given the American embargo of that Latin American country. While he made it clear that Canada’s policy was to trade with all nations, the Canadian Prime Minister noted that his government had restricted trade in strategic items and had forbidden the trans-shipment of American goods through Canada to Cuba. He added too that Canada was not trying to expand trade with Cuba, noting in fact that Canadian exports to Cuba were shrinking. The Prime Minister then extended an invitation to Kennedy to officially visit Canada and dismissed any notion that anti-Americanism existed in his country. Still, he informed the President “that it was perfectly true when Canada disagreed with the United States on policy it would not follow the United States’ lead.”¹⁴

This warning proved a good segue to the thorniest issue of the meeting: bunker oil for Canadian ships. Imperial Oil, a Canadian subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, had been asked by a shipping company to supply bunker oil for ships carrying wheat to China; the US

¹³ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (15 February, 1961), p. 2061.

¹⁴ ‘Visit of Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker’, Memorandum of Conversation, 20 February, 1961. JFKL, National Security Files (NSF), Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 1/61-3/61”. For the Canadian version of the minutes see ‘Conversations between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, the White House, Washington, February 20, 1961,’ dated 21 February, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file “February, 1961”.

Treasury Department's reaction to this suggestion was "cold". Kennedy admitted that the matter had come to his attention and that his initial decision was to authorise the sale of the bunker oil as long as the Canadian government submitted a request to the US. But noting that "Canadians could not understand the United States Government dictating the actions of a Canadian corporation", Diefenbaker proved unwilling to ask the US for permission on behalf of Imperial Oil. Ending the discussion for the moment, Kennedy relented by stating that his decision might have to be reconsidered and he asked an assistant to look into this and report back by the end of their lunch meeting.¹⁵

Turning to defence matters, Diefenbaker affirmed "the Government of Canada desires to cooperate in every way in joint defense of this continent." Kennedy mentioned his appreciation of this and the group moved on to lunch. While they were eating, the Prime Minister again invited the President to visit Canada, an invitation that Kennedy now agreed to. The men then returned to defence issues, specifically Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Asserting that a decision by his government was not expected soon because of ongoing disarmament initiatives internationally, the Canadian Prime Minister added there would have to be provisions in place for joint control and custody of any weapons acquired. When Kennedy asked if the US-UK agreements in this regard would serve as an acceptable model, Diefenbaker said they would.¹⁶ The President then discussed his own hopes for disarmament at length, and the Americans noted that the Canadians seemed satisfied with his knowledge and position on this matter. As the lunch was ending, the memorandum intended for Kennedy about bunker oil arrived. After

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ During a discussion with Arnold Heeney in November, 1960, Diefenbaker had expressed his concern about public opposition to Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons. However, he thought that Canada would nevertheless have to acquire the weapons "before long". The only reservation that Diefenbaker expressed was that there be "satisfactory arrangements for the joint control of their employment". See Heeney to Robertson, 22 November, 1960. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file "9".

reading it quickly, the President said that as long as the Canadian government asked Imperial Oil to supply the oil, he would ensure the US would take no adverse action to stop the process. Still, Kennedy was concerned that granting permission for Imperial Oil to make the sale would set a precedent for American companies seeking to trade with China.¹⁷ Diefenbaker, unsure of this arrangement, then directed Ambassador Heeney to look into the matter later.¹⁸ After lunch was over and the meeting broke up, Kennedy and Diefenbaker engaged in some small talk which reportedly involved a contentious discussion about the War of 1812 and some touchy boasting about the size of fish that the two men had caught. Things seemed cordial, though, and the President, seeking to ensure that the Prime Minister received a lot of notice from the gathered press, took Diefenbaker for a long walk around the White House to the Canadian leader's waiting car.¹⁹ The Prime Minister was then whisked away to his air plane which departed for Ottawa where Diefenbaker was set to deliver an address on his meeting in Washington to the House of Commons that evening.

The visit was a very successful one despite the differences over bunker oil and fish, or the assertions of some historians. Speaking with Harold Caccia, the British Ambassador in Washington, Heeney opined that Kennedy and Diefenbaker "had got on well together and that this was all to the good."²⁰ As the Prime Minister himself told Heeney, the meeting was "excellent" and "could not have gone better".²¹ Diefenbaker related similar feelings to Basil

¹⁷ See Memorandum for the President by Fred Dutton, 20 February, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, General, 1961".

¹⁸ 'Visit of Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker', Memorandum of Conversation, 20 February, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 1/61-3/61".

¹⁹ See Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, pp. 96-9

²⁰ Harold Caccia to F.R. Hoyer Millar, 21 February, 1961. The National Archives, FO 371/156494. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for locating this document for me.

²¹ Heeney to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 20 February, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file "16". British diplomats in Ottawa reported this sentiment back to Whitehall: see Ottawa Embassy to Commonwealth

Robinson. Reversing his previous opinion of Kennedy, the Prime Minister now praised him for having “a great capacity, a farsighted judgment on international affairs, and an attractive human quality in private exchanges.” He also revised his opinion of Dean Rusk, who had “very much impressed” Diefenbaker.²² Robinson characterised the Prime Minister as being “jubilant” upon his return to Ottawa. On the return flight, Diefenbaker “told so many anecdotes” that his officials “had the greatest difficulty in completing his statement for the House” by the time they arrived at Ottawa’s Uplands Airport.²³ In this address, finished at the last moment, the Prime Minister praised the new administration for “not only an attitude of the utmost friendliness but an obvious desire to assure the maintenance and continuance of the good relations which prevail between the United States and Canada.” Approving shouts were offered by Members of the House when Diefenbaker reported that Kennedy had accepted an invitation to visit Ottawa, and no doubt many MPs were impressed when the Prime Minister told them of the new President’s “ready desire to preserve the distinctive quality of the Canada-United States partnership, with each nation discharging its responsibility toward the attainment of the common purpose and without the sacrifice of sovereignty by either country.”²⁴

Diefenbaker seemed so electrified by his meeting with Kennedy that he later felt the need to suggest to American officials that if during his coming trip to Ottawa the President would express similar thoughts to the speech he had given in New Brunswick in 1957, “the results

Relations Office, No. 271, 22 February, 1961. TNA, FO 371/156494. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for locating this document for me.

²² Robinson to Under-Secretary of State, 21 February, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file “February 1961”. See also ‘PM’s Notes, Feb. 21, following visit to Wash,’ in *Ibid.*

²³ Robinson to Saul Rae, 21 February, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 4, file “February 1961”.

²⁴ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (20 February, 1961), p. 2220.

would be ‘wonderful.’”²⁵ In contrast to this, Kennedy has been portrayed as having disliked the Canadian leader from this first meeting. Journalist Knowlton Nash contended that Kennedy was less than impressed by Diefenbaker on a personal level; the President is alleged to have told his brother Robert that “‘I don’t want to see that boring son of a bitch again.’”²⁶ However, contemporaneous evidence suggests something different. President Kennedy mentioned to Livingston Merchant, prior to the latter’s departure for Ottawa as the new US Ambassador, that “he liked the Prime Minister and [had] gained the impression that on any really important issue he would be stoutly on our side.” Merchant had agreed with this observation but nevertheless cautioned the President to keep in mind that “Mr. Diefenbaker placed great store on a personal relationship” so “that whenever an issue of importance arose where we needed Canadian support, the most effective means of gaining it would be a personal note from him to the Prime Minister.”²⁷

A follow up to the discussion between the President and Prime Minister took place from 13-14 March with the annual meeting of the Joint US-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs. A ‘Scope and Objectives’ paper, prepared by the State Department for the US delegates, reiterated what had been stated in the President’s briefing paper for his meeting with Diefenbaker. Canadian “introspection and nationalism” were the stumbling blocks in Canada-US relations and the “essential element” in bilateral problems was the Canadian “inferiority complex”. In regards to economic matters, and reflecting concern for nationalism,

²⁵ Carlson to Armstrong, 27 February, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Ottawa 1961 (General)”. He had told this to Kennedy during their meeting as well: see ‘Visit of Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker’, Memorandum of Conversation, 20 February, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 1/61-3/61”.

²⁶ Kennedy quoted in Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 99.

²⁷ ‘Call on the President prior to departure for post’, Memorandum of Conversation, 8 March, 1961. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 1150.

the delegates were urged to stress the need by both countries to avoid protectionist measures. Further, the US “should encourage the Canadians to think in terms of a broad perspective which focuses major attention on problems of world-wide scope.”²⁸ The Kennedy administration, itself focused on wide-ranging policy goals, wanted their Canadian allies to do the same.

On the morning the conference began Kennedy addressed one of the broader issues that concerned him: development and the prevention of communist subversion in the Third World. In January, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had declared Soviet support for ‘wars of national liberation’. Kennedy responded to this, in part, in a speech on 13 March, in the East Room of the White House. He announced his intent for “all people of the hemisphere to join a new Alliance for Progress...a vast cooperative effort...to satisfy the basic needs of the American people for homes, work and land, health and schools...” In front of a large gathering of diplomats, reporters and Congressional leaders, the President stated “that we North Americans have not fully understood the urgency of the need to lift people from poverty and ignorance and despair.” Whether the reference to ‘North Americans’ was meant to include Canada or was a way of differentiating the US from South and Central America is unclear. The Administration’s thinking, though, was certainly to have Canada help “transform the American continent into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts -- a tribute to the power of the creative energies of free men and women -- an example to all the world that liberty and progress walk hand in hand.”²⁹ Walt Rostow, a deputy to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and an advocate of American efforts to combat communism in developing countries, had outlined to Kennedy the

²⁸ ‘Joint United States-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, Washington, March 13-14, 1961, Scope and Objectives’, 3 March, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 19, file “Canada, Subjects, Joint US-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs Meeting, 3/13/61-3/14/61”.

²⁹ ‘Address at a White House Reception for Members of Congress and for the Diplomatic Corps of the Latin American Republics’, 13 March, 1961. Available on-line at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website.

need to keep Canada informed and to encourage the Canadian government to take part in the Alliance for Progress.³⁰

Canada's delegates to the joint economic conference, who convened with their American counterparts that afternoon, were focused neither on hemispheric matters nor on broad goals. Rather, they were more concerned with what the Americans would see as being 'introspective' issues. Beyond discussing their common balance of payments problems and their shared concerns over various discriminatory trade restrictions and customs matters, the two delegations informed each other about more serious anxieties. The Canadians were especially concerned with the expansion of the European Economic Community to include Britain. Canada's Minister of Trade and Commerce, George Hees, reminded those present that it was important that arrangements made in Europe "would not seriously disturb Canadian trade and commercial relations with that area". His statement offered no hint about potential future Canadian concerns about what British entry into the EEC might do to harm the Commonwealth, but instead focused on what UK membership would do to Canada's economy. In an unrelated discussion, the Americans touched on future plans to introduce trade legislation in 1962 when current measures would expire. Seeking to reduce tariffs and expand trade, Dean Rusk made it clear that the Administration "'shall be in the fight of our lives next year'" in trying to combat protectionism amongst Congressional members. The implication was that the Canadians should resist any measures which would inflame American protectionists.³¹

³⁰ 'Draft of Crucial Portion of Foreign Aid Message', Memorandum for the President, 13 March, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 6, Box 64a, file "Rostow, Walt W., 3/61-5/61".

³¹ 'Joint United States-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, Washington, March 13-14, 1961. U.S. Record of Meeting', 22 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 19, file "Canada, Subject, Joint US-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs Meeting, 3/13/61-3/14/61".

Another point of discussion was the issue of oil bunkering and US Foreign Assets Control regulations. Kennedy and Diefenbaker had discussed oil bunkering and the problem remained unresolved. Donald Fleming, the Canadian Finance Minister, told the meeting of the intense public pressure coming to bear upon his government to protect Canadian sovereignty, adding “in a very serious tone of voice that he could not emphasize enough the depth of Canadian feeling on this matter.” George Ball, then the US Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, thanked Fleming for his “frank and vigorous comments” and invited the Under Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Fowler, to address the issue. Fowler offered an overview of the FAC regulations and the existing agreement between Canada and the US: where there had been an issue where the regulations might apply to a US subsidiary operating in Canada, informal consultation between the two governments had led to an exemption being granted by the American government. The important issue for the United States, Fowler said, was that a legal principle be recognised because the US could not give up legal jurisdiction over an American controlled company.³² Yet the Canadians’ concern was with ceding jurisdiction over a company operating in their country.

Canada’s reply came from Minister of Agriculture Alvin Hamilton. Telling the delegates that “Canada and the United States have different principles”, Hamilton opined that “this trade, for the United States, is trade with the enemy. Canada on the other hand, hopes to maintain useful contact with the Soviet bloc on the principle that as long as there is contact, talk and trade, there is no fighting.” He also played up the importance that “Canada must maintain a complete watchfulness that her sovereignty is not being impinged.” Ambassador Heeney, seeking to put things less stridently, added that while the American government had thus far done its best to

³² *Ibid.*

administer the law as flexibly as was permissible, this clearly did not satisfy Canadian concerns. Further, he stated that in the current case, some private discussions might be able to deal with this issue of oil bunkering in a satisfactory manner, but Canada, he cautioned, “cannot allow Canadian discussion of this question with U.S. authorities to give the impression of acquiescence in supposed U.S. rights over the operation of subsidiaries.” George Ball ended discussion of this matter and the meeting as well, by saying the US would keep these views in mind when it set about considering this, and expressed the hope that a satisfactory agreement could soon be worked out.³³ Over the coming weeks Ball dealt with Ambassador Heeney in trying to resolve the issue, but this proved difficult as the Canadians felt hemmed in by an increasingly nationalist and confrontational sentiment in their country. Still, the meeting had been a cordial one and a good first contact between officials on both sides. As Fleming reported back to his Cabinet colleagues, “it had been apparent that the new U.S. administration would like to improve relations with Canada.”³⁴

In Ottawa meanwhile, an American diplomat with considerable experience in Canada-US relations had arrived to assume the Ambassadorship. Livingston Merchant’s appointment – he had served in the same post from 1956-1958 – revealed President Kennedy’s wish to keep relations with Canada on a familiar and even course. Recording his first impressions upon being back in Canada in a letter to Ivan White, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Merchant acknowledged the warm sentiments that he had received, but cautioned that this reflected “an uneasy Canadian conscience.” In his view “anti-Americanism ha[d] gone wide and deep” but was, however, “on the turn”. This was a result of the realisation by both the Canadian

³³ ‘Joint United States-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, Washington, March 13-14, 1961. U.S. Record of Meeting’, 22 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 19, file “Canada, Subject, Joint US-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs Meeting, 3/13/61-3/14/61”.

³⁴ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 16 March, 1961’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6176.

government and the opposition parties that “anti-Americanism and talk of neutralism – talk which they positively have encouraged” had gone too far. Kennedy’s victory had been “of crucial importance” for as Merchant noted, “I have always believed that if they were allowed to register ninety per cent of all Canadians would be Democrats.” He informed White that because of this relations were in an upswing, but the experienced diplomat revealed a fear that “Diefenbaker will refuse to reach a decision on modern weapons for Canada until after the next [Canadian] election.”³⁵ That same day, Merchant also wrote to Kennedy and told him “It would be difficult to exaggerate the number of your admirers in Canada, and making this visit so early in your term, they feel, is the paying of a particular compliment.”³⁶

Additional confirmation that the arrival of the Kennedy administration seemed to herald a more positive era in Canadian-American relations came from other US diplomats. Rufus Smith, the Political Counsellor at the US Embassy in Ottawa, broached this topic while lunching with Lynn Stephens, the Chief of the African and Middle East Division in the Department of External Affairs. Regarding anti-Americanism, both men agreed that, as Stephens put it, “the pendulum was definitely swinging the other way”. They were in further agreement too that Kennedy was largely responsible for this. Stephens added that, as he had heard it, many within the Canadian government had become concerned with “the size of the anti-American genie they had let out of

³⁵ Merchant’s feeling that the nuclear weapons issue would be a source of dithering was because “Green’s influence is still strong.” Merchant to White, 4 April, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962”.

³⁶ Merchant to President Kennedy, 4 April, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 4/61-5/14/61.”

the bottle.”³⁷ This genie would begin to re-emerge in mid-April as American actions toward Cuba worried many in Canada.

On 17 April, 1961, American-backed Cuban exiles attempted to invade Cuba and overthrow Fidel Castro’s government. Originally planned by Eisenhower’s administration, this CIA operation saw over one thousand armed Cuban exiles land on a beach on the southern part of the island. Hemmed in by Castro’s troops and pounded by Cuban air planes and artillery, the invasion force barely managed to establish a beachhead before they soon surrendered. Kennedy had been unwilling to offer American military support for the operation but he nevertheless accepted responsibility. In a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors which he delivered on 20 April, Kennedy expressed support for efforts to overthrow the Cuban government. While cautioning that “Any unilateral American intervention, in the absence of an external attack upon ourselves or an ally, would have been contrary to our traditions and to our international obligations” he warned “let the record show that our restraint is not inexhaustible.” During the Bay of Pigs fiasco though, he had demonstrated poor judgment but had also shown restraint and this earned praise from the Canadian government.

In the House of Commons, on 19 April, Prime Minister Diefenbaker condemned the Cuban government for showing “manifestations of a dictatorship which are abhorrent to free men everywhere.” Without necessarily offering support for the invasion of the island, Diefenbaker nevertheless attacked communists in the country, charging that the island, “like so many small and defenceless countries, has become the focal point in the ideological contest which is progressively reaching into every corner of the world.” Further, Soviet support for the

³⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, 28 March, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962”.

Cuban government “revealed beyond doubt the extent to which international communism is prepared to go in consolidating its foothold in Cuba, a bridgehead from which the penetration of the whole of Latin American could be launched.”³⁸ Diefenbaker, a strong anti-communist, was staking out a tough position on Cuban, which seemed to be in contrast with the previously ambiguous position that the Canadian government had had towards the Cuban government since the successful 1959 revolution. Hence Merchant viewed this hard-hitting statement as a “welcome development.”³⁹

However, despite this public support for the American position, Diefenbaker retained some reservations about the failed CIA-sponsored invasion. Speaking to Ambassador Merchant on 24 April, Diefenbaker stated that he was worried “over where the United States goes from here.” Still, the Prime Minister took pains to express support for the United States. He informed Merchant that before delivering his statement to the House on 19 April, Cuba’s Ambassador had been called in to see him. Diefenbaker reported that he had told the Cuban that “there was one Cuban export with which the world and particularly Latin America could do without and that was the effort to export the Cuban revolution in the form which it has now taken.”⁴⁰ But prodded by Green and Under-Secretary Robertson, Diefenbaker spoke again with Merchant to express Canadian reservations about American policy towards Cuba. This discussion had been prompted by a Cuban message dispatched to Canada’s Ambassador in Havana, and other diplomats in the Cuban capital, which hinted at a Cuban desire to hold talks with the

³⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (19 April, 1961), p. 3795.

³⁹ Embtel 821: Merchant to Secretary of State, 20 April, 1961. NARA, RG 84 Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Cuba 1961”.

⁴⁰ Embtel G-252: Merchant to Secretary of State, 25 April, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Cuba Limited Distribution, 1959-1961”.

Americans.⁴¹ Diefenbaker did not mention this to American officials but he did urge caution in their dealings with Cuba. For instance while seeing off the President of Tunisia at the Uplands Airport in Ottawa on 3 May, the Prime Minister told Ambassador Merchant of his earnest hope that the US government would consult with Canada about any future drastic action against Cuba. Diefenbaker felt compelled to say this, he explained, as he had gone out on a limb by making his statement on 19 April against the advice of aides; thus should future consultation not occur, “he would personally be placed in [an] extremely difficult position.”⁴² He made this point again at a meeting with Merchant and several Canadian ministers on 8 May although he nevertheless also expressed his “admiration” for President Kennedy’s “restraint” in not overreacting to the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion.⁴³

Throughout these encounters with Merchant, Diefenbaker had offered hesitant support to the Americans over Cuba. In private, however, Diefenbaker expressed more serious reservations about American policy to his staff. On 26 April, he had told Basil Robinson that “he did not wish the United States Government to be left with the impression that they could count on Canadian support for anything foolish they might do with regard to Cuba.” The following day, the Prime Minister reiterated this, adding that “the Canadian Government would not be ‘tied up in’ any O[rganization of] A[merican] S[tates] moves in respect of Cuba.”⁴⁴ These concerns had been expressed to Ambassador Merchant, albeit in less strident language. It is interesting to note that in addition to the Prime Minister’s concerns about Cuba, he showed wariness toward the

⁴¹ ‘Proposed representations to the United States regarding the Cuban Invitation to Talk’, Robertson to Green, 28 April, 1961; ‘Proposed Interview with the United States Ambassador’, Memorandum to the Prime Minister, 28 April, 1961; and attached letter from President Osvaldo Dorticos of Cuba.

⁴² Embtel 863: Merchant to Secretary of State, 3 May, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Cuba 1961”.

⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation, 8 May, 1961, Prime Minister’s Office, Ottawa, Canada. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Cuba 1961”.

⁴⁴ Robinson to Under-Secretary Robertson. 27 April, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file “4”.

Organization of American States. This was in fact a long term Canadian concern, predating Diefenbaker but the issue of Canada joining the OAS would emerge as a major point of contention between Diefenbaker and Kennedy during the President's trip to Ottawa.

While American diplomats in Ottawa saw the Canadian Prime Minister as being largely supportive of the new US administration's position on Cuba, the Canadian Minister of External Affairs was quite another matter. On 12 May, the State Department called in Ambassador Heeney to express anxiety over an Associated Press story that had appeared that same day. According to the press report, Green had suggested that Canada would be willing to mediate in the dispute between Cuba and the United States. In what Heeney described as a statement made "with no element of sharpness or even criticism", the Americans emphasised that there was no room for any such mediation.⁴⁵ In carefully stressing that the report of Green's offer remained unconfirmed, Heeney told the US officials that even if it was true, Minister Green may not have meant 'mediation' in a technical sense, nor did such a policy "represent Canadian policy as he knew it."⁴⁶ However, the Canadian Ambassador did emphasise that "he did not wish to 'paper over' the general views of divergence between Canada and the United States [on Cuba] nor attempt to cover up the Canadian position"⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Washington to External, no. 1551, 13 May, 1961. LAC, MG 31, E83, Vol. 5, file "5". In his memoirs Heeney recalls that Green had made "an indiscreet remark" to several reporters; the story broke in Washington just as Heeney was dining with Arthur Schlesinger and other Administration officials, who questioned the Canadian Ambassador as to whether Canada had "put Castro and Kennedy on the same footing." See A.D.P. Heeney, *The Things that are Caesar's* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 178. See also Bowles to Rusk, 12 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61".

⁴⁶ Deptel 781: Bowles to American Embassy Ottawa, 13 May, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file "Cuba 1961".

⁴⁷ 'Canadian External Affairs Minister Green's Reported Statements Suggesting Mediation re Cuba', Memorandum of Conversation, 12 May, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file "OAS - (Organization of American States), 1960-63".

By this point Green had already complicated matters in a meeting with Secretary Rusk in Oslo, where the two men had gathered for a NATO conference. The Canadian Minister had “cautioned against US intervention in Cuba on [the] ground it would stir up [a] hornet’s nest,” but admitted that he saw “understandable differences” between the United States and Cuba.⁴⁸ Green made a statement during the conference that also worried the Americans. While Canada both “deplore[d] many of the practices of the Castro regime” and shared American concern “about the evidence of Castro’s increasing orientation toward the Soviet bloc”, Green had asserted that Canadians were still unsure if there was “conclusive proof of the complete adherence of Cuba to the Soviet bloc.” He also added that Canada hoped “that the possibility of negotiation would not be ruled out.”⁴⁹ These statements so startled Dean Rusk that he cabled Kennedy just prior to his trip to Ottawa to say “Believe it would be important for President to have frank talk with Prime Minister during Canadian visit about neutralist tendencies [in] Canadian policy especially as presented by Minister [of] External Affairs Green.”⁵⁰

The divergent position between Green and Rusk paralleled a number of perceived differences in Canadian and American foreign policy, which formed the subject of a May 1961 CIA study, ‘Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy’. The study, originally ordered by Eisenhower but not completed in time, examined the “new phase” in Canada-US relations, one “marked by Canadian sensitivity to the increasing Canadian dependence – cultural, economic, and military – upon the US and by a determination to pursue a more distinctly Canadian line in foreign policy.”

⁴⁸ Oslo 6: Rusk to American Embassy Ottawa, 10 May, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Cuba Limited Distribution, 1959-1961”.

⁴⁹ ‘Remarks on Cuba by the Secretary of State for External Affairs at the North Atlantic Council, Oslo, 8 May, 1961’. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Subject Files, 1960-1963, Box 34, file “Relations – Canada – Cuba, 1961”.

⁵⁰ Rusk to Kennedy, Secto 113, 14 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 5/15/61-5/30/61”.

While noting this uptick in Canadian nationalism “with its anti-American overtones”, the CIA analysts concluded that this had in no way seriously damaged the traditionally close US-Canada relationship. So while the possibility of differences over foreign, defence, and economic problems remained, “they are not expected to reach such proportions as to cause a major impairment of the present basically good relations with the US.” For instance on Cuba, the study noted that while the Canadian government could not be expected to follow a firmer US embargo, its trade with the Cubans was extremely small.⁵¹ Indeed that spring the Americans made an effort to ensure that differences over Cuban policy did not damage their relations with Canada.

Due to American steps to follow up on the failed Bay of Pigs operation Cuba remained an issue in Canada-US relations. One of these steps was to tighten the economic embargo against the island. In doing so, members of the Kennedy administration expected that they would have to impose the Trading with the Enemy Act to ensure that US companies would not trade with Cuba. This legislation, in theory, would prohibit American subsidiaries operating in Canada from selling goods to the Cubans, but as with the issue of oil bunkering, such a step could inflame Canadian anti-Americanism. A memorandum on the issue of furthering the embargo against Cuba, written by Foy Kohler and sent to Rusk prior to the Bay of Pigs, had argued that any application of the Trading with the Enemy Act should exempt Canada and that the transport of goods from Canada to Cuba passing through the United States should not be prohibited. Kohler took this position because of the view that “Diefenbaker reacts strongly to any suggestion of United States dictation over the actions or policies of corporations situated in Canada, or to any implication that the Canadian Government is expected willy-nilly to concur in United States

⁵¹ ‘Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy’, 2 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

policies.” Outlining the possibility that US restrictions on Canadian trade with Cuba would be met by anti-US trade legislation in Canada, Kohler concluded, “the question thus arises whether the extent of the harassment to the Castro regime which may be achieved by a blanket imposition of the controls would outweigh the resultant serious impact on United States-Canadian relations.”⁵² His position was that the focus on Cuba might distort relations with other countries which in the end were more important. In advocating this approach, Kohler was cognisant of Canadian nationalist sentiment, a point he emphasised. Written before the Bay of Pigs as a hypothetical, this memorandum was prescient for now the US was considering stronger economic measures against Cuba.

In considering its options, the Administration seemed to take Kohler’s advice to heart. After the Canada-US Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs meeting in Washington had ended on 14 March, George Hees, Canada’s Minister of Trade and Commerce, and Canada’s Finance Minister, Donald Fleming, had had a brief audience with President Kennedy.⁵³ The two Canadians promised to ensure that no strategic items would be shipped from Canada to Cuba and that no US goods would be transferred to Cuba through Canada. In turn Kennedy had guaranteed that as long as this was the case, the US would not apply the Trading with the Enemy Act against any Canadian companies. Now that the National Security Council was discussing an economic response to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, this promise to the Canadian ministers had to be taken into account. George Ball and Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon discussed the matter on 26 April, with Ball arguing that Canada should be excluded from any application of

⁵² ‘Further Economic Measures with Respect to Cuba’, Kohler to Secretary Rusk, 24 February, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 5, file “Cuban Export Ban, 1960-1962”.

⁵³ Donald Fleming, *So Very Near, Volume Two: The Summit Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 253.

the Trading with the Enemy Act. Dillon, on the other hand, felt that there was “no way that he [knew] of whereby we could legally give them an exemption and not give everybody else one.” If the regulations were applied to Canada, Ball countered, then “the President had better not go to Ottawa” for his visit.⁵⁴ Ball emphasised this point to Kennedy the next day, reminding the President “that he had in effect made a commitment to Fleming” that the Trading with the Enemy Act would not be applied to Canada.⁵⁵ An intelligence report produced days later noted the “extremely sensitive” nature of Canadians on such matters that had to be taken into account as these “involve not only the question of US business control in Canada but the imposition of the policy of one government within the territory of another.”⁵⁶

At this time Ambassador Heeney and the Canadian Embassy’s Economic Counsellor, Maurice Schwarzmann, were still trying to resolve the oil bunkering issue with the Americans. Meeting with Ivan White, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and Delmar Carlson, the Officer in Charge of Canadian Affairs in the State Department, the Canadian Ambassador spoke “bluntly” that Canada viewed the issue of bunkering oil as a purely internal matter. Referring to the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs meeting in March, he reminded the Americans that not only had the Canadian position been spelled out there, but this issue was now viewed as a “laboratory test case involving the proposition as to whether permitting Canadian industry to be foreign-owned was compatible with freedom of Canadian

⁵⁴ Telcon: Dillon, Ball. 2:40 p.m., 26 April, 1961. JFKL, George W. Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁵⁵ Telcon: Ball, Kohler. 27 April, 1961. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁵⁶ ‘Trends in Canadian Foreign Policy’, 2 May 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

political and economic policy.”⁵⁷ If this was found to not be the case, then the Americans risked facing a severe nationalist and protectionist backlash. American diplomats, particularly Ball, saw the linkage between oil bunkering and the imposition of the Trading with the Enemy Act over trade with Cuba. Therefore he discussed the matter with Heeney a few days later, with the Canadian Ambassador warning that “Diefenbaker would talk about nothing else to the President if we went ahead with this.”⁵⁸ The US government thus decided to issue a blanket waiver for US firms operating in Canada; this effectively dealt with both matters. This arrangement was met with approval by the Canadian Cabinet, particularly since it did not involve the need for Canada to apply for the waiver.⁵⁹ It was thus safe for Kennedy to go to Ottawa.

Canadian sensitivities were certainly on the minds of those in the State Department who prepared the briefing memorandum for the visit of President Kennedy and his wife to Ottawa, set for 16-18 May. This would be Kennedy’s first foreign trip, perhaps a nod to pleasing Canadians who are always sensitive on this point. In order to aid the Canada Desk in their task, the US Embassy in Ottawa passed along a number of observations. First, Canada was of vital importance given that it was the largest US export market, as well as its strategic geographical position, its “influence in world affairs to an extent not fully warranted by its size” and its impressive human and material wealth. The American goal then was to “assure [the] favorable disposition” of the Canadians towards the US. As the President personified the United States, this visit was the “best possible opportunity [to] achieve maximum impact on [the] government and people [of Canada]”. It was fortunate then that despite nationalist grumblings by some

⁵⁷ ‘Bunkering in Canadian Ports of Ship Transporting Canadian Grain to Communist China’, Memorandum of Conversation, 28 April, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 4/61-5/14/61.”

⁵⁸ Telcon: Ball, Dillon. 8 May, 1961. JFKL, George W. Ball, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁵⁹ See ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 9 May, 1961’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6176.

Canadians, Kennedy “had fired the imagination of many Canadians” and had generated only approval so far. What existed then, was a “superb opportunity” to advance US interests because “even those who resist American influence in Canada are now well impressed by the new administration and their criticism is muted.” The US diplomats in Ottawa envisaged a dual purpose for the visit: to consolidate pro-American feelings amongst the populace and to win over Diefenbaker and his Cabinet so that there could be “stronger adherence to our global policies”.⁶⁰

Kennedy’s State Department briefing memorandum began with the standard view that the problem in Canada-US relations stemmed from Canadians’ psychological “inferiority complex” and the growing “attitude of introspection and nationalism” in Canada. After providing an overview of these sentiments, the paper took a different turn from the gloomy briefing notes that had been prepared for the 20 February meeting and the Joint US-Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs in March. Echoing the cable from the Ottawa Embassy, this paper noted “an improved atmosphere” in Canada-US relations thanks to the President’s personality, the appointment of Merchant as ambassador, Diefenbaker’s visit to Ottawa, and the joint economic committee meeting. Canadian goodwill could be consolidated, the paper argued, by some successful public diplomacy and an attempt towards building a “frank working relationship” between Kennedy and Diefenbaker. Repeating in its entirety the Embassy’s observation that criticism was muted and that a “superb opportunity” now existed to advance US interests, the paper warned that this feeling could not be taken for granted. The authors also observed that “since anti-American sentiment in Canada comes and goes, often without any identifiable connection with what the United States in fact does”, it was impossible to completely do away

⁶⁰ Ottawa to State, no. 780, 12 April, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/61-5/14/61”.

with Canadian psychological concerns. Therefore, the only course of action “is one of steady and continuous effort.”⁶¹

In spite of the perennial psychological problem, the Americans felt that the positive atmosphere might yield tangible results. In a memorandum entitled ‘What we want from Canada Trip’, Walt Rostow outlined a few relatively minor goals. These were to “push” Canada towards: greater Canadian participation in Latin American affairs including entry into the Organization of American States; increasing Canada’s commitments to foreign aid; and supporting the International Control Commission monitoring groups in Laos and Vietnam.⁶² On the first matter, the President’s briefing papers noted that the US should support any increased Canadian role in the Western Hemisphere, even if Canada’s “position on a particular problem will not always coincide with that of the United States. The important point to us is to succeed in having Canada assume responsibilities in this strategic area.”⁶³ By the time that Kennedy travelled to Ottawa, his Administration had decided to push for Canadian entry into the OAS.

There had been a battle on this issue amongst American officials. Richard Goodwin, an advisor to Kennedy on Latin American affairs, had told the President of the increasing interest by Canadians in the Western Hemisphere and the need to urge Canada towards greater participation in this area of the world, particularly through joining the OAS.⁶⁴ Contradictory advice meanwhile, came from Kennedy’s military aide C.V. Clifton. Reporting to the President a conversation that he had had with a Canadian reporter with experience in Canada-US relations,

⁶¹ ‘President’s Trip to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961 – Scope Paper’, 2 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

⁶² ‘What we want from the Ottawa trip’, Rostow to President Kennedy, 16 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Material 5/61-5/63”.

⁶³ ‘President’s Trip to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961 – Canadian Relations with Latin America’, 2 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

⁶⁴ Memorandum for the President, Richard Goodwin to President Kennedy, 24 April, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, “Canada, General, 4/61-5/14/61”.

Clifton warned that the Canadians “would not like to be urged at this time to have Canada become a member of the OAS”.⁶⁵ Rufus Smith and Livingston Merchant were also reportedly against addressing the matter of Canada joining the OAS or at least were against Kennedy doing so publicly.⁶⁶ However, the matter was settled when Rostow had met with Arnold Heeney on 12 May to discuss the sorts of things that should be included in the President’s speech, one of which was to encourage Canada’s entry into the OAS. Heeney expressed his hope that Kennedy would “tactfully encourage” the Canadians to enter the organisation. Rostow, in writing the President, remarked pithily that Canada appeared ready to take a wider role in Latin America “on grounds other than ‘mediating’ between the U.S. and Cuba.”⁶⁷ Hence his suggestion that pushing Canada into the OAS was one of the things the Administration wanted out of its trip north. Further, given the sense by members of the diplomatic corps that there was an ‘improved atmosphere’ in Canada, there is little wonder that Administration officials thought that Canadians might be more receptive to joining the OAS than before.

In Canada there was much less receptivity than the Americans thought, at least amongst government officials. In addition to Diefenbaker’s dubious attitude towards the OAS due to the Bay of Pigs, Under-Secretary Norman Robertson felt that Canada should not go overboard in making commitments to the new US President. Two weeks before the visit, Robertson wrote a perceptive memorandum establishing the ‘theme’ for Kennedy’s trip to Ottawa. In his view the “theme which would be most appreciated would be one which offered some encouragement but which was generally pretty matter-of-fact.” Summing this up as “cooperation in mutual

⁶⁵ Clifton to President Kennedy, 8 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/61-5/14/61”.

⁶⁶ See Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 125.

⁶⁷ Rostow to President Kennedy, 13 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

respect””, Robertson felt that both cooperation and mutual respect would both be needed in great supply over the coming months. In addition he felt that this stance would seem far less artificial than an emotional one promising ““solidarity forever””. Further, the frank theme would be longer-lived in light of threatened misunderstandings and differences over a host of issues. Robertson thus wrote that “in the interests of future US-Canadian relations, and of [Canada’s] ability to have some influence on US decisions and policies...[Canada] should avoid appearing to go overboard at this stage.”⁶⁸ This was unfortunate from the American standpoint because what the United States wanted out of the trip was greater cooperation from Canada on various matters.

The trip began when on 16 May the Presidential plane touched down at Ottawa’s Uplands Air Force Base, where Diefenbaker was waiting to welcome the President and Ms. Kennedy to Canada. The two leaders briefly spoke to the press in both English and French, however, neither man was an elegant French-speaker, a point Kennedy made light of to Diefenbaker’s apparent anger.⁶⁹ The next morning the President and Diefenbaker met in the Prime Minister’s Office in Parliament’s East Block; on his way there Kennedy encountered huge crowds of Canadians who had come out to greet him. Besides the two leaders, those present for the meeting included Merchant, Heeney, Canadian Cabinet Secretary Robert Bryce, Basil Robinson, Walt Rostow and Ivan White. Robinson recalled in his memoirs that Kennedy “was clearly well briefed and sensitive to the Canadian outlook and concerns.”⁷⁰ After pleasantries were exchanged, the President discussed Cuba and the Western hemisphere, characterising this area as being one of his chief concerns, and he expressed his hope that Canada would expand its participation in Latin

⁶⁸ ‘Visit of President Kennedy: Theme’, Robertson, 3 May 1961. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 1, file “6”. It is unclear whether this memorandum was sent to Minister Green, but it is nevertheless insightful as it accurately summarised Canada’s position.

⁶⁹ See Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, pp. 107-8.

⁷⁰ Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 199.

American affairs. Diefenbaker referred to the press reports of Howard Green's mediation offer and emphasised that this statement had not been made, nor did he himself want to pursue mediation. The Prime Minister went on to say, however, "that he thought the Canadians were farther away today from membership in the Organization of American States than they had been previously." There was some further conversation of Latin American issues with Kennedy affirming that the US did not plan to intervene in Cuba, but that if such a decision had to be made he "would want to talk with the Prime Minister about any plans for military intervention before such actually took place."⁷¹

The President then asked Prime Minister Diefenbaker to reconsider Canada's position in regards to the Western hemisphere. Declining to address this matter, instead Diefenbaker brought up Canada's trade with Cuba. As he done during his meeting with Kennedy in February, the Prime Minister stressed that Canadian trade was only in non-strategic goods and that overall, it was diminishing. He also thanked the President for the way in which he had handled the bunker oil issue for Canadian ships carrying wheat to China. Kennedy requested again that Canada re-examine its position on the OAS and hoped the Canadians would send an observer to the Inter-American Economic and Social Council meeting in Montevideo in July.⁷² Refusing to

⁷¹ 'Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – Cuba and Latin America', Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Ottawa Trip 5/17/61 Memoranda of Conversation". The American minutes are in parts and are divided by topic. The Canadian record is in one part: see 'Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961. Meeting with the Prime Minister, May 17'. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file "7".

⁷² 'Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – Canada, the OAS and IA-ECOSOC', Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Ottawa Trip 5/17/61 Memoranda of Conversation".

commit to either appeal, Diefenbaker raised the matter of the United Kingdom's potential entry into the Common Market, noting his concern over what this might do to Canadian trade.⁷³

Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons was the focus of much of the rest of the chat. Referring to disarmament, Kennedy opined that while he was familiar with the views of pacifists, he believed that "the average person is reasonable. Canada is in the path of hazard and must accept defensive nuclear weapons."⁷⁴ Earlier in their discussion Diefenbaker had mentioned, in regards to the storage of nuclear weapons in Canada, that "at some point in the future this might be possible under some form of joint control", however it was "politically impossible today." The Prime Minister now added that he would probably not even be able to carry the Canadian Cabinet on the issue, let alone the public, thanks to "an upsurge" of anti-nuclear sentiment which was shared by a wide facet of Canadian society. In reporting to Washington on a discussion that he had had with the Prime Minister on 11 May, Ambassador Merchant had informed Washington that on the nuclear issue Diefenbaker was a "strong ally" as was Defence Minister Douglas Harkness. Those who opposed nuclear weapons for Canadian forces were, in the Prime Minister's opinion, more than just "Communists and bums"; such sentiments were widespread, but these people were "wishful thinkers". Due to this, Diefenbaker asked that the Americans allow him to massage public and Cabinet opinion on the matter.⁷⁵ He now repeated this to Kennedy, to whom he vowed "to make an effort to change public opinion on this question this

⁷³ 'Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – Common Market and Aid to Underdeveloped Areas', Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Ottawa Trip 5/17/61 Memoranda of Conversation".

⁷⁴ 'Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – Disarmament', Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Ottawa Trip 5/17/61 Memoranda of Conversation".

⁷⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 893, 11 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61".

summer and fall.”⁷⁶ The meeting broke up at just after noon and after a short lunch the President addressed the House of Commons.

While preparing for the Presidential visit, US officials had highlighted the importance of this speech. Rufus Smith and Livingston Merchant prepared a draft of the address, which was then forwarded on to the White House. In a memorandum sent to Kennedy speechwriter Ted Sorenson, Walt Rostow argued there were two main points that needed mention: the importance of development to Third World countries, and the need to strengthen the Atlantic Community. Emphasising these points would, he thought, help to blunt criticism that American “policy has become distorted by the Cuban and Laos situations....to the exclusion of the great issues of the Free World”. Rostow further advised that the general theme of the speech should be that “while the U.S. and Canada share many intimate ties and confront an array of special bilateral problems and possibilities, our relations will flourish as we work side by side on the great common problems of the Free World.”⁷⁷ The speech reflected such sentiments and included a memorable passage drawn from the Book of Common Prayer: “Those who God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” Interestingly, the State Department requested that this passage be removed because it implied a closer union between the US and Canada, a statement which would draw the ire of Canadian nationalists.⁷⁸ It was kept in, but in a nod to nationalist feeling, Rostow, after seeking input from Arnold Heeney, urged that the speech should also “reflect some sympathetic understanding of the Canadian fear that they are in danger of being overwhelmed by the economic and cultural power of the U.S.” Heeney had added that he hoped the speech “would

⁷⁶ ‘Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – NATO and Nuclear Weapons’, Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Ottawa Trip 5/17/61 Memoranda of Conversation”.

⁷⁷ Rostow to Sorensen, 3 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/61-5/14/61”.

⁷⁸ ‘Memorandum for Messrs. Rostow and Sorensen’, undated memorandum from Bureau of European Affairs. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/61-5/14/61”.

take the wind graciously out of the sails of those who feel Canada is a beleaguered country in danger of becoming an American province.”⁷⁹

Before a huge audience of Canadian parliamentarians and dignitaries, reporters and the local diplomatic corps, President Kennedy made a characteristically eloquent speech. Its most famous passage was the emotional statement that “Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder.” In a nod to Heeney’s plea that he show sympathy to Canadian nationalists Kennedy added:

We do not seek the unanimity that comes to those who water down all issues to the lowest common denominator -- or to those who conceal their differences behind fixed smiles -- or to those who measure unity by standards of popularity and affection, instead of trust and respect. We are allies. This is a partnership, not an empire. We are bound to have differences and disappointments -- and we are equally bound to bring them out into the open, to settle them where they can be settled, and to respect each other's views when they cannot be settled.

Turning to his own agenda, he also emphasised the role that Canada could play in the Western Hemisphere, a role which was “deserving of your talents and resources, as well as ours.” Noting that this would increase Canada’s responsibilities, Kennedy observed that “yours is not a nation that shrinks from responsibility.” Thus “all free members of the organization of American states would be both heartened and strengthened by any increase in your hemispheric role....Your country and mine are partners in North American affairs; can we not become partners in inter-American affairs?”⁸⁰ Apart from mentioning the OAS, Kennedy’s eloquent statements about Canada-US relations reflected the same sentiments that he had made in New Brunswick, four years before, in a speech which Diefenbaker had praised.

⁷⁹ Rostow to President Kennedy, 13 May, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “JFK Trip to Ottawa, 5/61”.

⁸⁰ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (17 May, 1961), p. 4962-5.

Following the parliamentary address, Ambassador Merchant hosted the President, Prime Minister and other dignitaries at a reception at his residence. This was apparently an awkward affair because during the dinner party, Kennedy spent an inordinate amount of time speaking with Canada's Opposition leader Lester Pearson, head of the Liberal Party. Willis Armstrong and Merchant were reportedly quite embarrassed, but felt that there was little they could do; Diefenbaker noticed also and was angered by it.⁸¹ The following morning, 18 May, the two leaders breakfasted before the President departed Ottawa and again Kennedy raised the matter of the OAS, and again he was rebuffed by Diefenbaker. Arnold Heeney accompanied the President back to Washington on the Presidential plane, and as he later recalled in an article, Kennedy invited he and his wife to sit with him and Mrs. Kennedy. The two men had a chat regarding some of the issues that had come up during the breakfast chat between the President and Prime Minister. In particular, noting the domestic "political problem involved in anything to do with nuclear weapons", Kennedy said he believed that Diefenbaker was "the best judge" of what could be done regarding this. The President, Heeney also reported, placed "great importance" on Canada becoming more involved in the Western Hemisphere, although Kennedy stressed that the Canadians need not join the OAS to do so. Responding to Heeney's comment that Canada "already belonged to a good many 'clubs'", the President had argued that Canada's "presence" would nonetheless be appreciated.⁸² Spurned by Diefenbaker on the OAS matter, Kennedy was taking a more realistic view of what might now be expected. In fact after receiving this report Diefenbaker telephoned Heeney to confirm that "there was no immediate likelihood" of Canada

⁸¹ See Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, pp. 126-8.

⁸² Heeney to Prime Minister, 18 May, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file "9". In his article Heeney recorded that he and Kennedy merely exchanged some pleasantries about the trip, that there was little other discussion and that the President spent the flight poring over papers. The memorandum he sent Diefenbaker disproves this recollection. See A.D.P. Heeney, "Washington Under Two Presidents: 1953-57, 1959-62", *International Journal*, 22 (Summer 1967), p. 508-9.

joining the OAS anytime soon.⁸³ However, the Canadian government did send an observer to attend the July meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council in Montevideo.

Was the President's trip to Ottawa a success? While Kennedy's visit may have succeeded from a public relations standpoint, in terms of policy objectives, there was far less achievement on the substantive issues that were discussed. Still, Diefenbaker had promised to seek to change Canadian opinion on nuclear weapons and the dispatch of an observer to the meeting in Montevideo was a positive sign in terms of further involvement by Canada in Latin America. Meanwhile arguments about personal clashes between Kennedy and Diefenbaker have been used to portray the President's trip as having been a disaster in the long term. Kennedy hurt his back during a tree planting ceremony and never quite recovered and so according to Bothwell, this incident "stayed with him like a nagging tooth. Presumably each twinge reminded him of Diefenbaker...."⁸⁴ Whether his nagging pain was lessened by an apologetic message from the Canadian leader is not clear.⁸⁵ The Canadian Prime Minister on the other hand, was affected "for reasons more usually found in the realm of psychology than in that of diplomacy."⁸⁶ As the American delegation had departed the Prime Minister's Office on 17 May, a copy of Rostow's memorandum 'What we want from Ottawa trip', was left behind.⁸⁷ For reasons which remain unknown, it was retained by the Prime Minister rather than returned to the US government as protocol demanded. This document, which advised the President to "push" the Canadians on several matters, might have influenced Diefenbaker's immediate resistance towards Canada

⁸³ Memorandum for File, Heeney, 22 May, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file "9".

⁸⁴ Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 80. For a discussion of Kennedy's back problem as a result of the trip to Ottawa see Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2003), p.397-8.

⁸⁵ Diefenbaker to Kennedy, 8 June, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file "7".

⁸⁶ Bothwell, *Canada and the United States*, p. 80.

⁸⁷ See 'What we want from the Ottawa trip', Rostow to President Kennedy, 16 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Material 5/61-5/63".

joining the OAS. Kennedy's repeated insistence on this during his talk with the Prime Minister and in his speech certainly looks like pushing. Nonetheless, Diefenbaker's possession of the memo came to be a problem in Canadian-American relations only in the following year when Diefenbaker chose to wield it as a weapon. During a Cabinet meeting on 23 May, Diefenbaker, without malice, echoed the contents of the Rostow memorandum when he informed his colleagues that one of the President's "primary objectives" had been to "persuade" the Canadian government to join the OAS.⁸⁸

Contemporary assessments of the Presidential visit were rosier than hindsight would suggest. In a letter written to his brother on the day Kennedy departed Ottawa and the day after the President had apparently offended Diefenbaker by spending so much time with Pearson, the Prime Minister wrote that he and Kennedy "got along very well together. The opinion I formed of him when I first met him – a brilliant intellect and a wide knowledge of world events – was not only borne out but intensified as a result of our discussions in the last two days."⁸⁹ Ambassador Heeney, in his own appraisal, added that there was little doubt "that the visit was most successful", and that both the President and the First Lady were "delighted with the visit."⁹⁰ One week after returning to Ottawa, Kennedy wrote to Diefenbaker to express his gratitude for the reception that he had received, noting how "much is always said about the special continental partnership of Canada and the United States, and its validity was impressed on me most forcibly during my trip to Ottawa."⁹¹

⁸⁸ LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6176, 'Cabinet Conclusions, 23 May, 1961'.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), p. 388.

⁹⁰ Heeney to Prime Minister, 18 May, 1961. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file "9".

⁹¹ President Kennedy to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 25 May, 1961. JFKL, White House Central Subject Files (WHCSF), Box 970, file "TR 3 5/17/61".

The US Embassy's report on the President's trip was also quite positive. While observing that by American standards the "size, warmth, and friendliness of crowds" in Ottawa were not unusual, by Canadian standards they were "extraordinary", "unprecedented" and were "more impressive even than [during the] Queen's last visit here." The press coverage was also positive. Taken together, these were "reassuring as [a] manifestation [of the] basic sense of [Canadian] identification with [the] US position in world affairs". The Embassy reported that they had heard of no real criticism of the President's address to the House of Commons, which was portrayed as "vigorous, eloquent, and thoughtful". Regarding the suggestion that Canada join the OAS, in no way was Kennedy seen to have been "exceeding bounds of right or propriety in so doing." In conclusion the Embassy found the trip successful. Indeed the "President's forthrightness startled but did not offend Canadians who have been given much to think about, [and] have had some of their complacency and smugness salubriously shaken."⁹² The Ottawa Embassy also prepared an in-depth analysis of reaction to the President's speech. This noted the generally positive responses to the speech and to Kennedy's suggestion that Canada join the OAS. The paper noted, though, that there was no huge outpouring of feeling on this matter and hence "little reason to believe Canadian decision to join OAS imminent." The Embassy thus recommended that officials from other OAS countries be contacted to encourage Canada to join; otherwise Diefenbaker's government would simply be motivated by its "habit of postponing all controversial decisions" and by its "consistent effort to avoid any adverse criticism, however weak or ill-founded."⁹³

⁹² The Embassy expected to "see a greater Canadian restraint in offering gratuitous advice unaccompanied by acceptance of responsibility." Ottawa to State, no. 923, 19 May, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 4/61-5/14/61".

⁹³ 'Interim Assessment Canadian Response President Kennedy's Implied Recommendation Canada Join OAS', Ottawa to State, no.G-309, 7 June, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 6/61-9/61".

The Ottawa Embassy's assessment of Kennedy address to Parliament had ignored some negative criticism of which Rufus Smith, the Ottawa Embassy's Political Counsellor, had been made aware. On 26 May, in a heated discussion regarding a number of differences between Canada and the US on international issues, the Canadian Assistant Under-Secretary, George Ignatieff, recalled to Smith how an eminent Canadian academic had harangued him for not protesting Kennedy's attempt to tell Canadians what they should do in world affairs. The Americans, Ignatieff cautioned, "should not underestimate Canadian sensitivities about appearing as an American satellite." Smith responded by arguing that Kennedy knew that there was a line that could not be crossed, that the President had not done so, and that the Embassy had heard only positive responses to the address. In regards to Ignatieff's latter point, Smith said that he "thought [he] had developed an appreciation of Canadian concerns in this regard, indeed a sympathy with such concerns."⁹⁴ The criticism of the lone academic, and Ignatieff's too, does not seem to have bothered Smith or the Embassy staff but it does show that some ill-will existed despite Kennedy's charming persona.

President Kennedy's insistence on the OAS matter may have upset the Prime Minister, especially in conjunction with the Rostow Memorandum. In his memoirs Heeney took the blame for having suggested to Walt Rostow that Kennedy should mention the OAS matter in his speech. He recalled, however, that for Diefenbaker and Green, the fact that Kennedy had been seen to push Canada on this matter came up only much later as a problem. At the time Heeney felt Kennedy's plea had been "couched in delicate, indeed flattering terms, calculated to avoid

⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, 26 May, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file "Nationalism, Neutralism and Anti-Americanism, 1960-1962". The 'eminent academic' whom Ignatieff referred to may have been his brother-in-law, George Grant, who would write *Lament for A Nation*, both a critical look at American influence in Canada and a spirited defence of Diefenbaker.

disturbing Canadian sensibilities.” Still, Heeney remarked that Diefenbaker and Green nevertheless ended up seeing this “as an example of pressure from Washington.”⁹⁵ Therefore it seems that Kennedy made an error in pushing the matter so hard in his talks with Diefenbaker and in his speech. A number of American officials expressed this belief to Canadians at certain times over the next two years and as Kennedy’s National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy would recall much later, “it may be one of our relatively milder perpetrations, but it is still annoying when Americans assume that what is good for them has to be good for everyone else on the continent”.⁹⁶ Yet given the sense amongst US officials that there was a receptive attitude in Canada, it is not surprising that Kennedy pushed so hard for Canada to join the OAS. As a primer for American Foreign Service Officers attested to, though, Canada and the US “see eye to eye on most basic political matters” but Canadians possessed a “passion for independence”.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Heeney, *The Things that are Caesar’s*, p. 175.

⁹⁶ Bundy uses the term ‘Alliance for Progress’ but he is actually referring to the OAS which he believes it was a mistake for Kennedy to have pushed for so strongly. McGeorge Bundy, “Canada, the Exceptionally Favored: An American Perspective”, *Friends So Different*, eds. Lansing Lamont and J. Duncan Edmonds (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1989), p. 236. For contemporary views on this see: ‘Views of Walt Rostow’, Ritchie to Robertson, 4 December, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “13”. This letter mentions how Rostow and other US officials, including Livingston Merchant, had expressed to Canadian diplomats their belief that Kennedy had made a ‘tactical mistake in urging us to accept OAS membership in his speech in Ottawa in May 1961’.

⁹⁷ Briefing Paper and covering letter, Delmar Carlson to Rufus Smith, 27 February, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, General Records, 1959-61, Box 2, file “Canada, 1959-61”.

Chapter Three – *“Whatever originates in the United States must be viewed with a cold eye”:
nuclear weapons and economic relations.*

Throughout the latter half of 1961 the State Department’s various country desks set about drafting new policy guidelines for the Kennedy administration’s use. Completed in March 1962, ‘Canada – Guidelines for Policy and Operations’ was the first of these studies to reach final form. The basic approach that the paper advised American policymakers to take was to:

seek to moderate or remove points of friction on economic, defense or foreign policy problems; to increase opportunities for consultations between high officials and for systematic governmental cooperation; [and] to deepen mutual understanding of the two countries’ economic and military interdependence.

In sum, the paper counselled that “ever present nationalist sensitivity requires that we should not take Canada for granted but treat it as a major and independent associate of the U.S.” As had become standard, the guidelines paper noted that “it is essential to realize that the most important element in problems involving Canada is psychological.” The factors associated with this condition were “the Canadian inferiority complex with respect to the U.S., growing Canadian nationalism, and the tendency to inject relations with the U.S. into Canadian domestic politics.” Above all, American officials were warned to “seek to avoid policies or actions which appear to Canadians to infringe on their sovereignty, or to take them unduly for granted, or to overlook their vital economic interests or their unique relationships with the U.S.” Nonetheless, the authors of the paper advocated that “at the same time, we should not hesitate, if our policies are distorted or misinterpreted, or if the occasion otherwise demands, to engage in firm and frank talks to restore mutual understanding or to protect our legitimate interests.”¹ ‘Canada –

¹ ‘Department of State Guidelines for Policy and Operations – Canada’, March 1962 and attached memorandum ‘Department of State Guidelines for Policy and Operations Concerning Canada’, L.D. Battle to McGeorge Bundy, 16 March, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 2/62-3/62”.

Guidelines for Policy and Operations' served as a shrewd reflection of American experiences with their Canadian allies over dealings on economic and defence matters in 1961.

A draft version of the guidelines paper had been circulated for comment in the autumn of 1961, and those diplomats who looked at it emphasised the importance of Canadian nationalism. Ambassador Merchant made several observations in this regard. "Nationalism in Canada" he wrote, "rises and falls without any particular reference to the actual issues and problems important in public discussion", it "tends to be intensified when economic conditions decline", and it "tends to increase during political crises or at election time." In a period when nationalism was on the rise he warned that "almost anything done or said by the United States will evoke a sharp response."² Merchant's comments influenced the paper's views on Canadian nationalism, and during late 1961 and early 1962 this problematic phenomenon flared up for the reasons he had highlighted.

The nuclear issue was one area where nationalist concerns had a dramatic influence on Canadian policy. The focus of a number of discussions between Canadian and American diplomats and the concerns raised by Canada's actions on the nuclear file were reflected in the conclusions drawn in the policy and guidelines paper. On 22 May, just days after Kennedy's trip, Rufus Smith met William Barton, the Chief of External Affairs's Defence Liaison (1) Division, the diplomatic office responsible for military cooperation, to discuss a number of matters. Smith expressed bewilderment that in light of Diefenbaker's huge majority in Parliament he appeared unwilling to make a decision on nuclear weapons until after some future election. Responding that Diefenbaker would desire a new mandate for so important a decision,

² Merchant to Milton Rewinkel, 5 December, 1961, and Rewinkel to Merchant, 17 November, 1961 and attached draft 'Canada – Department of State Guidelines for Policy and Operations', dated October 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224 (Old Box 40), file "international political rel classified 1959-61 Canada-US".

Barton predicted that Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons would therefore have to wait until after the next election, a poll which did not appear imminent and a point Barton would re-emphasise in other discussions with Smith in June and July.³ Barton, although the bearer of bad news, was in no way happy about this and Smith found that he was in fact quite supportive of the US position. For instance during their conversation in June, Barton blasted Howard Green and revealed that the Department of External Affairs had drawn up draft position papers for Canada to use in negotiating on the acquisition of nuclear weapons, papers which Defence Minister Douglas Harkness had approved. But as Barton caustically commented, these papers were "residing in Green's in-box".⁴ As historian J.L. Granatstein has observed, there was in fact a deliberate effort by Green and Under-Secretary Norman Robertson, to "stall the issue as long as possible."⁵ The domestic angle to the nuclear weapons issue in Canada, which Barton had emphasised, muddled things further.

Still, Diefenbaker had promised Kennedy during the President's visit to Ottawa that "he was going to try to bring about a change [in public opinion] in the late summer and fall".⁶ During a wide-ranging discussion in July 1961, Robert Bryce, the Clerk of the Privy Council and Cabinet Secretary, told Willis Armstrong that Diefenbaker had done nothing either publicly or privately to "improve the climate of opinion" about nuclear weapons. As this situation was clearly contrary to what the Prime Minister had promised the President, Bryce urged Armstrong

³ 'Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons by Canada', Memorandum of Conversation, 7 July, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961".

⁴ 'Current Canadian Position on Negotiations with U.S. on Nuclear Weapons Controls', Memorandum of Conversation, 14 June, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961".

⁵ J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-68* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 348.

⁶ 'Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961. Meeting with the Prime Minister, May 17, p. 10'. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file "7".

to have Ambassador Merchant bring this matter up with Diefenbaker.⁷ Whether or not Merchant influenced the Prime Minister is unclear, but by August the nuclear file finally showed some progress, thanks, it appears, to the crisis in Berlin.

The Berlin crisis dominated the late summer months. Prompted by a massive increase in the number of East Germans fleeing into West Germany, on 13 August, 1961, the East German government erected a highly defended security wall which divided Berlin in two. While Western governments were quick to denounce this move, they held differing views over what the next course of action should be. Would the Western governments offer concessions in order to ease tension or would they present a more forceful front? Arnold Heeney and Foy Kohler discussed the Berlin situation and the possible Western responses on 18 August. From the American's view it was clear that Canadian policies were in agreement with those of his own government: a firm stance should be taken but it must avoid being provocative.⁸ Minor differences over policy emerged five days later, however, when Heeney and Kohler dined with Escott Reid, the Canadian Ambassador to Bonn, and Bob Farquharson, the Minister Councillor to the Canadian Embassy in Washington. Kohler was joined by Secretary Rusk, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, and Charles Bohlen, Rusk's Special Assistant. Heeney had arranged the dinner as a way for Reid to broach the subject of accommodating the Soviet Union's position on Berlin. Diefenbaker had agreed to let him do this, but on the condition that Reid inform the

⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, 7 July, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file "Canada-US Limit Distribution 1959-1961".

⁸ 'Canadian Government's Views on Berlin Problem.', 22 August, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 5, file "Germany".

Americans that the matter of accommodation was Reid's own initiative and did not reflect Canadian policy.⁹

Over dinner then, Reid stressed that his government was "very anxious" for negotiations with the Soviets to commence in the near future, and Secretary Rusk agreed that negotiations should and indeed would commence soon. But significant disagreement arose over what these negotiations might accomplish. The Canadians took the general position that it was undesirable to simply 'stand firm' as the Americans wished to do, but the US officials took the view that Canada was failing to offer "realistic or specific suggestions as to alternatives". This position, the Americans observed, "closely approximated that of Great Britain". Still, the Canadians firmly back the US position that the Western military presence be maintained in Berlin, that continued Western access to the city be guaranteed, and that the political liberties of West Berliners be protected.¹⁰ Reid, though, recalled that he had found it "profoundly disturbing" that the Americans were hesitant to engage in informal talks with the Soviets.¹¹ As he had reported to Ottawa, he believed that "time is necessary" as were "patience and quiet, confidential, private exploratory talks" for "the negotiations with the Soviet Union must be tough but likewise unhurried and patient."¹²

The day after the dinner, McGeorge Bundy wrote to Heeney. Reassuring him that the US intended to negotiate, the US National Security Advisor wrote "on one point you are entitled to reassurances: if there is mileage in one or another of the notions [regarding negotiating] which

⁹ Escott Reid, *Radical Mandarin: The Memoirs of Escott Reid* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 312.

¹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, 'Canadian Views on Berlin Problem,' dated 24 August, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 5, file "Germany".

¹¹ Reid, *Radical Mandarin*, p. 313.

¹² 'Berlin', Memorandum by Escott Reid, 16 August, 1961. LAC, A.E. Ritchie fonds, MG 31 E44, Vol. 3, file "8".

we discussed, we plan to get it in whatever way we can.” Further, as Bundy put it, “the difference last night was not in purpose, but in estimates of the situation, and we should be very happy to be wrong.”¹³ Bundy’s note was doubly encouraging for Heeney, who was “deeply disturbed” that Reid had come away from the dinner with the conclusion that the Americans were completely unwilling to negotiate.¹⁴ Feeling this was not the case, Heeney was pleased by Bundy’s reassurance.

Canada firmly stood by the United States throughout the crisis, despite the concerns of some Canadian diplomats about where US policy was going. This included the dispatch of more troops to Canada’s NATO force in Europe, and the recruitment of more men into the Canadian military and into civil defence units.¹⁵ In the House of Commons meanwhile, the Prime Minister made a statement strongly condemning the Soviets for provoking a crisis over Berlin. “The ideals of democracy and peace”, Diefenbaker said, “can best be served at this hour by showing the Kremlin that we will not sit back and allow the world in which we believe to be swept aside by the acceptance of those things that deny every principle of freedom for which we stand.” Berlin, he explained, “had become the tangible symbol of global difference between communism and the forces of freedom.” Additionally he declared that Khrushchev could not be trusted, for

¹³ Bundy’s emphasis. Bundy to Heeney, 24 August, 1961; see also Heeney to Robertson, 28 August, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “16”.

¹⁴ Heeney to Robertson, 25 August, 1961; see also the two attached memoranda of conversation ‘Impressions of the Washington Approach to the Berlin Problem, 24 August, 1961’, and ‘Notes on conversation August 23 after dinner at the Canadian Embassy residence’, 24 August, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file “16”. Reid meanwhile felt that while Bundy might be willing to negotiate, Rusk, Bohlen and Kohler did not want to be guilty of what they saw to be appeasement; see Reid, *Radical Mandarin*, p. 317.

¹⁵ See Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (7 September, 1961), p. 8053-4; and J.L. Granatstein, “When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States” In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 93-4.

“one moment he is the smiling Khrushchev; the next moment he is engaged in his terror campaign.”¹⁶

These actions received a favourable review by the Americans. In a 13 September letter to Heeney, which was to be passed on to Green, Dean Rusk wrote that “Canada’s stand on matters which bear so much on the future of all of us, in these difficult times, is a source of real comfort to us in Washington.”¹⁷ Less than a week later, when Rusk and Green were in New York for the opening of the UN, the American Secretary of State “expressed gratitude for the Canadian contribution to discussion of Berlin solutions” and generally praised Canada’s actions during the Berlin crisis.¹⁸ Positive appraisals of Canadian policy by US officials at this time may have been enhanced by signs that Canada was finally preparing to begin negotiations about accepting nuclear weapons.

During a Cabinet meeting on 24 July Prime Minister Diefenbaker, while noting the growing tension in Berlin, felt the Canadian government should begin negotiations to accept nuclear devices. As he put it, “Canada should not act provocatively but the danger could not be postponed.” Green took a different approach, arguing that negotiations would indeed be provocative; Defence Minister Harkness, unsurprisingly, disagreed with his colleague.¹⁹ This seemingly irreconcilable split in the Cabinet was reflected in other discussions on Canada’s acquisition of nuclear weapons held on 22, 23 and 25 August, days when the situation in Berlin

¹⁶ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (11 September, 1961), p. 8169.

¹⁷ Rusk to Heeney, 13 September, 1961 and Tyler to Secretary Rusk, 11 September, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “External Affairs Minister, 1961-1962”.

¹⁸ See ‘Secretary’s Delegation to the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 19-24, 1961’, Memorandum of Conversation, 19 September, 1961, 4:00-5:30. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “External Affairs Minister, 1961-1962”.

¹⁹ LAC, RG 2, Privy Council Office, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6177, ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 24 July, 1961’

appeared darkest.²⁰ Still, while the Cabinet remained divided on this issue, tentative steps were taken with the Americans.

Against the backdrop of Berlin and the tough discussions in the Canadian Cabinet, Kennedy and Diefenbaker exchanged a number of letters dealing with Canada's acceptance of a nuclear role for the defence of North America and Europe. On 3 August, with pressure in Berlin building, Kennedy wrote the Canadian Prime Minister to say "that it would only be prudent to renew with vigour our efforts to conclude negotiations on the language of necessary agreements so that they may be complete and ready to hand if your Cabinet later makes the authorizing decision." Referring back to Diefenbaker's assurances in February and May that negotiations would soon commence, Kennedy acknowledged that "this is not an easy matter for you". However, he argued, the events in Berlin meant that the West should be able to negotiate from a position of strength and security.²¹ Presumably, a strongly defended North America would contribute to this effort. In his reply, Diefenbaker informed Kennedy that he had instructed Defence Minister Harkness to expedite final preparations for negotiations.²² Then, on 15 August, just as the Berlin crisis was peaking, Diefenbaker made an encouraging statement: "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 forces of NATO that are there now, should war begin. And it would be dangerous for the survival of freedom."²³

²⁰ See LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6177, 'Cabinet Conclusions, 22 August, 1961', 'Cabinet Conclusions, 23 August, 1961', and 'Cabinet Conclusions, 25 August, 1961'.

²¹ President Kennedy to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 3 August, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 20, file "Canada, Subjects, Diefenbaker, Correspondence 1/20/61-8/10/61".

²² Diefenbaker to Kennedy, 11 August, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1961".

²³ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Statements & Speeches*, 61/11.

There were signs of warm relations between the two leaders at this point. On 21 August 1961 Ambassador Merchant paid a brief call on the Prime Minister. He carried with him Diefenbaker's place card from his visit to Washington in February; the President wished for the Prime Minister to sign it so that Kennedy could add it to a collection he was amassing. Merchant, in a note back to the President accompanying the signed place card, thought it important to record his observation that Diefenbaker autographed it "with 'evident pleasure and alacrity.'"²⁴ Kennedy would respond in the new year by sending the Prime Minister an autographed collection of his speeches and statements; the Prime Minister would reply with kind words.²⁵

Meanwhile Rufus Smith was again meeting with Bill Barton, this time for a farewell discussion as Barton was leaving his position as head of Defence Liaison (1) to become the Deputy Chief of Canada's UN mission. Hopeful that the Kennedy-Diefenbaker correspondence was finally breaking "the log jam", Barton believed that substantive negotiations would soon commence. Smith received a confirmation of this when he spoke with Freeman Tovell, also of Defence Liaison (1). Yet while the Canadian government was prepared to enter into negotiations, Tovell noted that much of the Cabinet's deliberative time was being taken up with discussion of the Berlin situation.²⁶ Still, the American belief that there was finally movement by the Canadians on the nuclear issue continued into September. A review conducted by the US Embassy in Ottawa confirmed that among other positive signs, Diefenbaker and Harkness were

²⁴ Merchant to Evelyn Lincoln, 22 August, 1961. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, General, 1961".

²⁵ 'Letter from Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Ottawa to State, no. A-311, 21 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 2/62-3/62".

²⁶ 'U.S.-Canadian Negotiations on Nuclear Weapons', Memorandum of Conversation, 15 August, 1961. and 'Pending Negotiations on Nuclear Weapons' Memorandum of Conversation, 21 August, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961".

“obviously engaged in well-organized and Cabinet-approved public campaign, in and out of Parliament, which foreshadows decision to adopt weapons.” The Canadian Prime Minister seemed to be living up to his promises and the Embassy expected action by the Canadians within a week or two in setting down a draft agreement to begin negotiations.²⁷ On 14 September, Diefenbaker in fact wrote his brother to tell him “The world situation is terrible and people not knowing the situation are loud in their opposition to Canada having any nuclear defence. It is an ostrich-like philosophy which, while adhered to by many sensible people, is most beneficial to the Communists and of course receives their support.”²⁸ Hence Basil Robinson’s recollection in his memoirs that at this time it seemed as if Diefenbaker’s “improvisation” on the nuclear weapons issue was finally coming to an end.²⁹

However, just days after the Embassy’s review was dispatched to Washington a press leak scuttled the move towards negotiations. A brief story appeared in *Newsweek* magazine revealing the letters between Diefenbaker and Kennedy; worse, the article made it seem that Kennedy was pressuring the Canadian leader as it disclosed that “a straight-from-the-shoulder letter from JFK to Prime Minister Diefenbaker” was “expected to resolve the impasse” on nuclear weapons.³⁰ This was complicated when a White House source confirmed the correspondence to be true. On 19 September, Bob Farquharson, at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, called the State Department’s Canada Desk regarding a telephone conversation that had occurred earlier that day between Ambassador Heeney and White House Press Secretary

²⁷ Embtel 290, Armstrong to Secretary of State, 14 September, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961”.

²⁸ Quoted in Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), p. 416.

²⁹ H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 227.

³⁰ ‘The Periscope’, *Newsweek*, 25 September, 1961.

Pierre Salinger. Heeney had informed Salinger of Prime Minister Diefenbaker's hope that the Administration would decline making any comment on the leaked letter and that the US government "should sit tight". Farquharson also relayed that Diefenbaker had "hit the roof" when he learned about the leak because of the criticism he was receiving, and expected to receive, from the Opposition and anti-nuclear groups at home.³¹ The following day in the House of Commons, Diefenbaker was indeed asked by Liberal leader Lester Pearson whether there were secret negotiations. His response was "discussions with the United States on defence subjects are going on at all times and at various levels" but "no agreement has been arrived at between our countries with regard to nuclear weapons, and any rumour to the contrary has no foundation in fact."³² Diefenbaker also privately cited a recent address by Kennedy which had emphasised hopes for disarmament as being a reason to hold off on a decision. Basil Robinson, however, observed that this was most likely just a convenient cover for Diefenbaker's domestic concerns took priority.³³

The Ottawa Embassy's reaction to the press leak was understandably nervous. Willis Armstrong argued that the leak "cannot fail to be quite disturbing to Prime Minister and others in Canadian Government who are seeking [to] arrive at decision we want, and confirmation by White House spokesman of presidential letter to Prime Minister may be special factor in postponement or delay [of] decision." Revealing that he had been speaking with a senior Canadian official who had warned him of this, Armstrong confessed that the Embassy's previous telegram stating Canada would take action on the nuclear file within a week or two should be

³¹ Unsigned, handwritten note, 19 September, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961".

³² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (20 September, 1961), p. 8596.

³³ See Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, pp. 231-2.

withdrawn.³⁴ The changed sentiment amongst the Canadians was picked up in an Embassy report made in early October. Having interviewed several members of the Prime Minister's staff, the US Embassy found that the leak had compelled Diefenbaker to reverse his support for Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons for the time being.³⁵ Then in a discussion that December between Rufus Smith and Lynn Stephens, the new head of Defence Liaison (1) Division, Stephens revealed that important figures in Diefenbaker's government "including Howard Green, had been prepared earlier this fall to take the next step in negotiating the nuclear-weapons-control agreement." He added that "key people in External and elsewhere had been alerted to be ready to go to Washington for the purpose", but the leak had forced the deal to be "called off, or at least suspended".³⁶ As the October Embassy report had opined, since "it is important to US defense for Canada [to] have nuclear weapons, we must find way [to] promptly counteract trend now running against us."³⁷ The course followed by the Americans over the next few months was simply to lie low and let Diefenbaker's fury subside. The new US Administration had learned a valuable lesson: the Canadian Prime Minister was concerned both with his domestic political position and with avoiding the appearance of subservience to the United States.

³⁴ Embtel 317, Armstrong to Secretary of State, 20 September, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961".

³⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 386, 7 October, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 10/61-1/62".

³⁶ 'Canadian Position on Nuclear Weapons', Memorandum of Conversation, 21 December, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "U.S. & Canadian Policy re. Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1961". The Americans received the same information from D. Brown, the Executive Assistant to Defence Minister Douglas Harkness; see Ottawa to State, no. 327, 21 September, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 6/61-9/61".

³⁷ Ottawa to State, no. 386, 7 October, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 10/61-1/62".

There was also a sense that Diefenbaker was erratic and irrational. Meeting with Ambassador Merchant to discuss Canadian matters in November, President Kennedy “expressed himself as being completely unable to understand...Diefenbaker’s reasoning in the matter [of nuclear weapons].”³⁸ After all, the Kennedy White House itself often had to deal with press leaks. Upon returning to Ottawa, Merchant then broached this topic with the Prime Minister two weeks later, and found the Canadian leader intimating that a renewal of negotiations on the matter would not begin soon. Diefenbaker had warned that due to the leak, he and the Cabinet now found “it impossible...to appear to be acting under pressure from Washington.” Thus in his report back to Washington, Merchant believed that a Canadian decision on the matter was “improbable” because of the division on the issue between Green and Harkness and “the Prime Minister’s sensitivity to what he considers public opinion”.³⁹

Despite his misunderstandings with Diefenbaker or perhaps because of them, Kennedy sought to reach out to the Prime Minister in an attempt to maintain a relationship with him. On 30 October 1961, the Military Attaché at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, H.W. Sterne, was approached by C.V. Clifton, President Kennedy’s personal military aide. Clifton spoke in general terms about the President’s desire to maintain close relationships with other leaders, but that for some reason the “close personal contact with Mr. Diefenbaker was allowed to slip.” The American noted that while the relationship between the two leaders might have been taken for granted, Kennedy was “disturbed” that Diefenbaker had not contacted him for some time. “In any event”, noted Clifton, Kennedy “would like to re-establish their relationship because this is the way that he likes to work.” Relaying this to the Prime Minister, Heeney thought that the

³⁸ ‘Recent Developments in Canada’, Memorandum of Conversation, 10 November, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 10/61-1/62”.

³⁹ ‘Telegram From the Embassy in Canada to the Department of State’, 27 November, 1961. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 1163.

President might be trying to repair damage incurred by the press leak of his correspondence with Diefenbaker regarding the nuclear negotiations. Thus Canada's Ambassador reported that Kennedy "was taking this roundabout way to reassure [the Prime Minister] of his desire for the continuance of a personal relationship to which [Heeney felt] sure he does attach a great importance." Surprised by this as he recalled having written the last letter to Kennedy at the end of September, the Prime Minister stated his hope that a reason would soon be found to call upon the President.⁴⁰

Canada's reluctant attitude was the subject of a discussion on 21 November, between Willis Armstrong and Ed Ritchie, the DEA's Assistant Under-Secretary. It did not go well. For instance when Ritchie asserted that Washington seemed to be dissatisfied with Canada given the state of bilateral economic relations, Armstrong replied that in fact Washington's "unhappiness" derived from political and military issues. In particular, "the disinclination of Canada to make up its mind on nuclear weapons was unimpressive." The American diplomat stated his belief that "President Kennedy was baffled to understand" Canada's "reluctance...to be prepared to use the best possible weapons for defensive purposes." While he could see this point, Ritchie said that the US had to understand that the leak of Kennedy's letter to Diefenbaker had set things back, a point that Armstrong accepted. Ritchie then agreed with Armstrong's statement that "the United States had the right to expect Canada either to use nuclear weapons itself, or to let [the US] use Canadian facilities, simply because of the geography and the fact of the Alliance." In his notes of their conversation, Armstrong also stressed that Ritchie did not disagree with this argument that "Mr. Green's activities [regarding disarmament] were contributing to a weakening

⁴⁰ Heeney to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 3 November, 1961; and Diefenbaker to Heeney, 9 November, 1961. LAC, MG 30 E144, Vol. 1, file "16".

of the Alliance, although [Armstrong himself] conceded that Mr. Green would disagree with this view.”⁴¹ There seemed therefore, to be a disconnect between the two countries in terms of their objectives.

Armstrong was not alone in his negative opinions of Canadian policy, as there was evident ill feeling on this amongst US diplomats. In November 1961, in response to a request from Secretary Rusk, Delmar Carlson, the officer in charge of the State Department’s Canada Desk, produced a brief report ‘Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives’. Stressing that one Canadian goal was to seek good relations with the United States, Carlson highlighted “the emotional and more heralded aim of preserving and promoting a Canadian national identity.” Further, he observed that “Canada often tends to try to increase its influence in world affairs without increasing its commitments.”⁴² In a letter to Carlson regarding his study, Armstrong agreed with the papers conclusions, adding “we have often found the Canadians anxious to make suggestions to us about where we might make concessions on matters they do not consider vital to Canada. We have observed, however, that the Canadians are hard bargainers when it comes to yielding concessions on matters of direct concern to themselves.”⁴³ That December Carlson also produced a small study of Canada-US relations. Entitled ‘Canadian-United States Relations Background’, the report qualified the standard view of Canada’s psychological problem. On this, Carlson wrote “the essential element in problems involving Canada is a psychological dichotomy. On the one hand there is Canada’s wish to be known as truly separate and

⁴¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 21 November, 1961 and covering letter Armstrong to Schaetzel, 27 November, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Alpha Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file “Briefing Papers 1959-1962”

⁴² ‘Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives’, 8 November, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Canadian Foreign Policy, 1959-61”.

⁴³ Willis Armstrong to Delmar Carlson, 30 November, 1961. NARA, RG 84, Canada, Ottawa Embassy, Classified General Records, 1959-61, Box 224, file “Canadian Foreign Policy, 1959-61”.

independent and different....On the other hand, the Canadians desire and believe themselves entitled to a privileged relationship with the United States.” As a result, “our relations are not easy, smooth or automatic” but “they are generally good.” Carlson envisaged a special relationship of sorts, although not necessarily an entirely positive one from an American perspective for “in broad international affairs the Canadian Government almost invariably supports the U.S. on vital matters, although to attain this result it is necessary for us to consult the Canadians more frequently and in greater depth than would be expected normally.”⁴⁴

A few weeks before Carlson had written his study, Under Secretary George Ball met with Canadian Finance Minister Donald Fleming in Paris. In Fleming’s hotel room, the two discussed economic matters for over an hour, including Britain’s application to join the EEC. Fleming made sure to point out the problems that Canada believed would result from this and emphasised the importance of maintaining a strong Commonwealth. Leaving aside both these specific concerns, Ball relayed that the US was taking no specific efforts to influence Britain or the countries in the Common Market towards any sort of a decision, although Washington favoured British entry. After discussing trade matters more broadly, they concluded that the Joint US-Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs should meet in January.⁴⁵

The Common Market and liberalised trade were also important matters of discussion between Willis Armstrong and Ed Ritchie, and this was despite Armstrong’s assertion that Washington’s “unhappiness” with Canada stemmed from military matters and not economic ones. Suggesting “there was little comprehension in Washington of Canada’s economic problem

⁴⁴ ‘Canadian-United States Relations Background’, 18 December, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Alpha Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file “Briefing Papers 1959-1962”.

⁴⁵ ‘Notes on Conference with the Honourable George Ball, U.S. Under-Secretary of State on Wednesday, November 15, 1961, at Paris’. LAC, Donald Fleming fonds, MG 32 B39, Vol. 158, file “Memoirs, European Common Market, 1962 – notes, memos, telegrams, file 2”.

arising from the adherence of Great Britain to the Common Market”, Armstrong then delved into what he believed to be the Canadian position. This had, he thought, been outlined by Donald Fleming in a speech he had recently given in Windsor. Armstrong’s understanding was that Canada hoped that the US would liberalise its trade policies which would hopefully prompt the Common Market, and Britain, to do the same, thus making up for the loss of Commonwealth preferences. Confirming that this was indeed Canada’s policy, Ritchie admitted “it had been very inadequately and badly presented.” He also acknowledged that Canada’s “emotional reactions” to UK entry resulted from “apprehension over finding a small Canada sandwiched between the colossus of the United States and the colossus of the United Europe.”⁴⁶

Briefing papers prepared by the State Department for the US delegates to the Joint United States - Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs were aware of their apprehensive neighbour and therefore urged caution. One of these reports, containing basic information about Canada, stated that while good, “relations with Canada will continue to require unusual care and patience during the coming months when the Canadians are expected to be preparing for a national election.”⁴⁷ Expanding on this, a second paper thought that due to its faltering domestic popularity and troubled economy, “the Diefenbaker Administration is running scared.” It was thus recommended that the US delegates be sympathetic to Canadian concerns while encouraging the “Canadians to think in terms of [a] broad perspective...”, an implied reference to British entry into the European Common Market and US efforts towards expanding and freeing

⁴⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, 21 November, 1961 and covering letter Armstrong to Schaetzel, 27 November, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Alpha Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file “Briefing Papers 1959-1962”. Armstrong’s understanding of the speech was correct; see Donald Fleming, *So Very Near, Volume Two: The Summit Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), pp. 405-6.

⁴⁷ ‘Canada - Basic Information’, 5 January, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Records Relating to the Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, 1954-1962, Box 2, file “1962 Meeting”.

trade. The State Department hoped that the United States and Canada could work out a joint solution to both problems, as free trade could make up for any economic losses that the Canadians suffered from Britain joining the EEC. The drafters of the position paper observed, however, that Canada's course of action might be "inhibited by Canadian sensitivities, notably the inferiority complex towards the U.S., and by Canadian nationalism...."⁴⁸

Ambassador Heeney, in a series of messages written to Ottawa on 10 January discussed various aspects of American trade policy. In regards to UK entry into the EEC, he explained that the US had a "grand design" for a Europe united economically through the EEC and militarily through NATO. This political goal overrode any economic concerns, of which there were many. Stressed that Canada and the United States shared obvious differences over the issue of Commonwealth preferences, Heeney thought there was appreciation in Washington for the Canadian position, as "a good deal of thought has therefore been devoted here to possible ways for avoiding or mitigating the harmful trade consequences of Brit[ish] accession for Com[mon]we[a]lth countries."⁴⁹ In his second telegram, Heeney advised that the US wished to seek support from Canada particularly over the political motivations for British entry. But as the issue of Commonwealth preferences stood in the way of Canadian compliance, Heeney thought the Canadian delegates should emphasise this problem. He did urge his government to support broad tariff reductions, a matter where Canada and the US "see eye to eye."⁵⁰ This matter was the subject of the Canadian Ambassador's third and final telegram. After tracing American motivations and domestic hurdles, and recommending that Canada side with the US position on

⁴⁸ Scope and Objectives, 28 December, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Records Relating to the Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, 1954-1962, Box 2, file "1962 Meeting".

⁴⁹ Washington to External Refel 66, 10 January, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 7, file "10".

⁵⁰ Washington to External Refel 67, 10 January, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 7, file "10".

freer trade, Heeney argued for the importance of explicitly reminding the American delegates that whatever promise European unity held, Canada “will for many years continue to be the largest single trading partner for [the] USA” and therefore the “USA should have special regard and concern for [Canadian] trade interests.”⁵¹

On 11 January, the day after Heeney dispatched his reports and the day before the Joint Committee meeting convened, President Kennedy delivered his State of the Union message to Congress. Economic matters made up a large part of the speech and in this regard he spoke of “the greatest challenge of all” being “the growth of the European Common Market.” With Britain’s entry into the EEC, “there will arise across the Atlantic a trading partner behind a single external tariff similar to ours with an economy which nearly equals our own.” With the existing American trade legislation set to expire, Kennedy asked Congress whether the US would seize the initiative by passing a new trade law or would it wait for events to pass them by. Seeing this matter as being of the highest importance, Kennedy cautioned that “our decision could well affect the unity of the West, the course of the Cold War, and the economic growth of our Nation for a generation to come.” It was time for a decisive and innovative approach: a five year Trade Expansion Act which would gradually reduce and then eliminate many tariffs in the US and in the Common Market. Kennedy clearly saw this as being a cure-all: “If we move decisively, our factories and farms can increase their sales to their richest, fastest-growing market. Our exports

⁵¹ Washington to External Reftel 68, 10 January, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 7, file “10”. A paper prepared by the Department of Finance for Donald Fleming in October 1961 had cast the United States as being hell-bent on forcing Britain into the EEC for short-sighted political reasons which would be extremely detrimental to Canada and the Commonwealth. Heeney, in his dispatches, was far less shrill than this.

will increase. Our balance of payments position will improve. And we will have forged across the Atlantic a trading partnership with vast resources for freedom.”⁵²

The Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs met from 12-13 January, 1962 in Ottawa. As Secretary Rusk later noted, “In view [of the] sensitivity of Canadians and their current sense of frustration we felt U.S.-Canadian relations required ministerial confrontation.”⁵³ The Americans thus sent what Donald Fleming recalled as being “the strongest U.S. delegation ever to attend” the joint economic meeting.⁵⁴ Beyond discussions of the basic economic outlook of both countries, much of the conference was taken up with the issue of British entry into the Common Market. At the morning session on 12 January, George Ball outlined the US support of UK entry based on political reasons, while noting that there would be economic repercussions, notably for the Canadians who had “special problems...based on Canada’s history and trade connections with the U.K.” Stressing the US would face a number of difficulties too, Ball believed there would also be opportunities for both Canada and the United States. The Canadian delegation was divided on how to respond. On the one hand, Fleming, while acknowledging the political benefits of greater European unity, expressed concerns over Canada’s “enormous stake” in trade with Britain and Ottawa’s concern that the Commonwealth would be injured by UK entry. Still, Fleming observed that the matter of the Commonwealth, or specifically Commonwealth preferences, was really the sole area of disagreement between Canada and the US. At this point in the meeting, Howard Green intervened. Emphasising the “great danger” of UK entry which would reduce Britain’s voice

⁵² ‘State of the Union Address’, 11 January, 1962. Available on the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website.

⁵³ ‘Telegram From the Department of State to Embassy in Germany’, 15 January, 1962. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 1165.

⁵⁴ Donald Fleming, *So Very Near, Volume Two: The Summit Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 443.

and “would injure her role in the Commonwealth”, Green argued that Canada and the US should support the UK as the head of the Commonwealth. He also warned that “the United States will someday discover it has not gained politically from the U.K.’s accession to the Common Market.” The meeting subsequently degenerated into a standoff between Green and Ball, with the Canadian Foreign Minister eventually questioning whether the Americans desired an integrated North America. At this point, Fleming jovially asked whether the US “might wish to become the 11th province of Canada and a Commonwealth member”, and the meeting broke for lunch.⁵⁵ While the matter of Commonwealth preferences clearly was a point of contention between the two countries, the wider implications of UK entry were a major point of departure not only between Green and the Americans but also between Green and his colleague Fleming.

After lunch the discussion focused on Kennedy’s Trade Expansion Act. Ball spoke in glowing terms of the legislation which was “unlike any other trade bill presented to the Congress not only in style but also in terminology.” Referring to Canadian worries about Britain and the EEC, Ball opined that the bill could benefit Commonwealth countries and outlined the incredible opportunity that existed to create an environment favourable towards free trade. This he felt, “would lead to the benefits of comparative advantage, maximum efficiency and utilization of the entire free world’s resources. It would act as a magnet to the rest of the world.” Ball’s evident enthusiasm was not shared by the Canadian delegates. While Fleming supported the plan, he recalled in his memoirs that Green and Diefenbaker did not and that they forced him into taking

⁵⁵ ‘Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs - U.S. Record of Meeting,’ 12-13 January, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Records Relating to the Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, 1954-1962, Box 2, file “1962 Meeting”.

a sceptical position which left him “ashamed and humiliated”.⁵⁶ Thus Canada’s Finance Minister referred to his own support for free trade but revealed scepticism as to whether the legislation could pass through “the Congressional hurdle”. He informed the Americans that “many Canadians still remember the Hawley-Smoot tariff”, a piece of Congressional legislation which had crippled global trade during the Great Depression. Canada would thus be waiting “for positive proof that the U.S. intends to turn towards freer trade.”⁵⁷ This reference to Depression-era trade legislation was where the matter rested for the moment, but throughout the spring and summer of 1962, economic issues assumed a great importance in Canada-US relations.

The trade matter in particular perplexed the Americans because it seemed that Canada should support Kennedy’s trade bill. Donald Fleming’s speech in Windsor had been in support of freer trade and during a discussion in the House of Commons on the joint economic conference, Fleming, referring to the Trade Expansion Act, had explained that “the goals set forth by President Kennedy are identical with those pursued by the government of Canada. We are both seeking an expansion of trade on a multilateral non-discriminatory basis.” He then outlined the course that the US administration was on: “After the United States president has obtained the necessary powers from Congress, if he then pursues negotiations with the European economic community and if it then proposed that the scope of the discussions should be enlarged in order to include other countries”, Canada, he said, “would be extremely interested.”⁵⁸ Yet the Americans heard nothing further on this from their northern neighbours, especially from Diefenbaker, whose support mattered. During a frank discussion with several Canadian Cabinet

⁵⁶ Fleming, *So Very Near, Volume Two*, pp. 444-5. Knowlton Nash discusses the differing views between Green and Fleming; see See Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 149.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (24 January, 1962), p. 114.

members in February, Ambassador Merchant highlighted the “somewhat surprising unwillingness to give President Kennedy’s dramatic trade proposal the sort of support...it was entitled to in Canada’s own interest”. He had told the Canadians, “more in sorrow than anger [his] regret that [the] cumulative effect [of] recent Canadian actions and attitudes could result only in decline [of] Canada’s influence in Washington and in NATO”. Reporting subsequently to Washington, Merchant cited the expected Canadian election that year as one of the things preventing Canada’s government from making a decision as well as Diefenbaker’s predilection for making “periodic declarations of Ottawa’s independence from Washington.”⁵⁹

Canada’s attention was instead focused squarely on the Common Market and Britain. So over the summer of 1962 Canadian and American officials met to work through the problems Canada potentially faced should Britain enter the EEC. Robert Schaetzel of the State Department met with Canadian Embassy officials as well as Robert Bryce, several times in July and August, to offer advice and seek out possible solutions to ease Canadian concerns.⁶⁰ But for the Kennedy administration, freeing trade would be the best way to lessen any potential negative impact of the ‘grand design’ on Canada. This is not to say that Americans were ignorant of Canada’s concerns. For example, Willis Armstrong, in a letter to Walton Butterworth, then the US Ambassador in Brussels, expressed frustration with Canadian policy generally but took an appreciative approach to Canadian economic concerns. Asserting that the problem of Canada and UK entry into the Common Market was “more psychological than economic”, he believed that Canada was engaged in a “psychological balancing act” between Britain and the United

⁵⁹ ‘General Talk with Cabinet Members’, Ottawa to State, no. A-291, 8 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 2/62-3/62”.

⁶⁰ See Memorandum of Conversation, UK-Six Matters, 27 July, 1961; and Memorandum of Conversation, Various Canadian Matters, 11 August, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Office of Atlantic Political and Economic Affairs – Records Relating to United Kingdom Negotiations for Membership in the European Economic Community, 1961-1962, Box 3, file “L.1.c (3) UK-EEC Negotiations – Canadian Attitude, 1962”.

States, with Britain's turn towards Europe threatening to tip the balance towards the United States. As for economic matters, Armstrong observed that Canadians "feel a little lonesome, and in need of a few kind words". Thus, "as much as we may deplore their hesitations in defence matters, and in a number of political affairs, we are unlikely to gain by handling those questions in the same context as the economic ones, because Canadians are particularly schizophrenic as between these subjects."⁶¹ Meanwhile a position paper that Rusk received in August from the State Department noted the close cooperation between Canada and the US on overcoming the problems faced by the Canadian government. It also took note of Canada's genuine concerns regarding the fallout from UK entry and that Minister Green had "been doing his homework...and [could] be expected to consider various aspects of the question in a rational way." By contrast, the paper cautioned that Diefenbaker was expected to be "emotional, categorical, and uninformed" on the matter.⁶²

While Canadians were worried about the Common Market, the Americans became concerned with the fallout of the Canadian decision on 2 May, 1962 to fix the Canadian dollar at 92.5 cents US. This was followed by blanket import surcharges on goods coming into Canada, including those from the United States, levied on 24 June. This second measure, meant to be temporary, was an effort by the Canadians to decrease a substantial budget deficit, to combat a recent and rapid drop in Canada's foreign exchange reserves, and to remove a threat to the Canadian dollar. In regards to the faltering Canadian dollar, the US government sought to aid

⁶¹ Armstrong to Butterworth, 27 July, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Office of Atlantic Political and Economic Affairs – Records Relating to United Kingdom Negotiations for Membership in the European Economic Community, 1961-1962, Box 3, file "L.1.c (3) UK-EEC Negotiations – Canadian Attitude, 1962".

⁶² Secretary's Trip to Canada, Position Paper, UK-EEC Negotiations, 22 August, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Office of Atlantic Political and Economic Affairs – Records Relating to United Kingdom Negotiations for Membership in the European Economic Community, 1961-1962, Box 3, file "L.1.c (3) UK-EEC Negotiations – Canadian Attitude, 1962".

Canada through the International Monetary Fund and the Federal Reserve and by negotiating with the Bank of England in order to loan the Canadians money; in the end, 1.5 billion dollars was made available for this purpose. Louis Rasminsky, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, thanked Willis Armstrong for his government's help in shoring up the Canadian economy, but as he warned, the US should avoid using its aid as leverage in seeking a "payoff" on outstanding issues with Diefenbaker. In response, Armstrong explained that the US had no plans to do this and that "it obviously was not in our self interest to have the Canadian financial position deteriorate."⁶³ Observing that the Americans were certainly not overly altruistic in their decision to help Canada, Basil Robinson nonetheless recalled having been heartened because "despite policy disagreements between the governments and a growing personal rift between the leaders, it seemed that there was still a fund of goodwill for Canada in Washington."⁶⁴ The Kennedy administration was certainly unwilling to see Canada's economy implode yet the actions of the Canadian government incensed the Americans who looked upon the Canadian as being highly ungrateful.

As Canadian economic historian Bruce Muirhead has written, "Washington had done more than its share to help resurrect confidence in the Canadian dollar and economy, and was concerned when it seemed as if the Diefenbaker government intended to leave the import surcharges in place for up to one year."⁶⁵ The Canadian surcharges, which amounted to 5, 10, and 15 percent levies on imports of varying values, were seen by the Canadian government as a necessity meant to prevent its economy from collapsing. Historian Peyton Lyon has noted that

⁶³ 'Telegram From the Embassy in Canada to the Department of State', 28 June, 1962. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 1182.

⁶⁴ Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, p. 276.

⁶⁵ Bruce Muirhead, *Dancing Around the Elephant: Creating a Prosperous Canada in an Era of American Dominance, 1957-1973* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 43.

“The devaluation of the Canadian dollar and the emergency surcharges rescued the Canadian economy, partly at the expense of the American economy; however, these measures met with understanding and tolerance in Washington.”⁶⁶ Also taking the view that the US did not object to the import surcharges is historian Robert Bothwell.⁶⁷ In actual fact, Canada’s imposition of the surcharges greatly angered the US officials, including the President. The Americans’ perception was that the surcharges were protectionist measures and, as Muirhead argued, the long-term imposition of the measures only exacerbated the matter. As a briefing note for Secretary Rusk from the State Department observed, the surcharges violated Canadian commitments to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which allowed only for the imposition of import quotas, but not surcharges, as a means to temporarily reverse balance of payments problems. The surcharges were thus “a matter of greatest concern”.⁶⁸

On 21 June, just days before Canada levied the surcharges, George Ball had voiced apprehension to Treasury Secretary Dillon that the Canadians might take this step.⁶⁹ The following day Dillon called Ball back. Having been in touch with Donald Fleming, Dillon reported that Canada’s Finance Minister had informed him that surcharges were being considered but that, if imposed, they would be temporary.⁷⁰ A few days later, after a meeting between Bundy and the President, the National Security Advisor called Ball to discuss the matter. The President “wasn’t very happy” because his Trade Expansion Act was winding its

⁶⁶ Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. XII, 1961-1963. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 362.

⁶⁷ See Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 82.

⁶⁸ ‘Trade Problems with Canada,’ Griffith Johnson to Secretary Rusk, 23 August, 1962. NARA, RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 6, file “Secretary’s Trip to Canada, August 24, 1962”.

⁶⁹ Telcon: Dillon, Ball. 10:00 a.m., 21 June, 1962. JFKL, George W. Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁷⁰ Telcon: Dillon, Ball. 5:30 p.m., 22 June, 1962. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

way through Congress. Protectionist moves by Canada might scuttle the bill as protectionists in Congress could react badly to what the Canadians were doing. Bundy, however, was mollified somewhat when Ball recounted the details of the Dillon-Fleming exchange.⁷¹

American unease grew, though. Motivated by an “uncomfortable feeling that the Diefenbaker Government is being less than straightforward with us...” Ball wrote to Dillon on 3 July and expressed several concerns. He restated his understanding that the surcharges were to be temporary, that they would thus eventually be substituted by internal taxes, and that they were designed only to create revenue to balance the budget. But Ball then revealed that on 26 June Diefenbaker had made a speech which had made no reference to substitution of the surcharges; instead the Canadian Prime Minister had cited the surcharges as a way to reverse Canada’s trade deficit. Asserting that “this sounds like pure protectionism to me”, Ball thought this constituted a direct threat to the passage of the President’s Trade Expansion Act, a bill which he fiercely supported. Upset, Ball saw the Canadian surcharges as “a very dangerous precedent” and as being both “in direct violation of GATT” and “unworthy of a [sic] economically advanced country.” In sum, he deemed it “essential that we demonstrate that we intend to take a firm line with the Canadians.”⁷² The President, thinking the same way, instructed Ball “to be as tough as possible on the Canadians” in subsequent talks with them.⁷³ This was important because a GATT ministerial meeting was due to be held in July and at this meeting, it was expected that the Canadians would ask for a waiver on the surcharges to be applied until October.

⁷¹ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 11:05 a.m., 24 June, 1962. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁷² Ball to Dillon, 3 July, 1962, and Covering Letter, Carl Kaysen to President Kennedy, 6 July, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 7/62-9/62”.

⁷³ Kaysen to McGeorge Bundy, 6 July, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 7/62-9/62”.

Adopting this sterner tactic when he met with Ambassador Ritchie and other Canadian officials to discuss the import surcharges on 6 July, Ball charged that the Canadian move was poorly timed given the coming Congressional debate on the President's trade legislation. He also noted that the State Department was facing domestic criticism for not defending US interests. In his view, both the State and Treasury Departments had been led to believe that the Canadian government's move had been designed to improve its budgetary situation, that it would have only a limited impact on the Canadian trade deficit, and that the measures would be temporary. In light of Diefenbaker's speech, none of this seemed to be the case. Replying that the US was mistaken and that Ottawa had thought that it had made it quite clear that the goal of the legislation was to restrict imports, Ritchie added that the surcharges were to be permanent. The Canadian Ambassador requested that the US consent to this, at which point the meeting reached an impasse.⁷⁴

Reporting back to the President, Ball advised that due to "Diefenbaker's public statements – which clearly show that protectionist intentions of the Canadian action – I do not see how we could defend acquiescing in these measures beyond October." This was particularly true, in his view, given the domestic political situation involving the Administration's own trade bill.⁷⁵ Responding to Ball's report, President Kennedy noted the apparent misunderstanding between the Canadians and Americans over the goal of the surcharges. He therefore directed Ball and Dillon to look into the matter "rather than putting the shoe on Diefenbacher's [sic] foot

⁷⁴ 'GATT Waiver for Canadian Import Surcharges', Memorandum for the President, 8 July, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Executive Secretariat, Under Secretary of State, Records for Under Secretary of State George W. Ball, 1961-66, Box 20, file "Under Secretary Ball – 1962".

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

that it fits so well.”⁷⁶ Before issuing these instructions, Kennedy had examined Ball’s report with McGeorge Bundy, who apprised Ball of Kennedy’s thinking. As the written instructions would emphasise, Bundy told Ball that it was important for the Americans to figure out whether they had either been misled or had simply misunderstood what the Canadians had told them. As Kennedy had said it to him, ““Let’s not let the Canadians euchre us here; let’s be sure that they don’t get an argument that we misunderstood them, but that failure of communication was on their foot...”” In a reference to the fallout surrounding the Rostow Memorandum which the Americans now knew Diefenbaker possessed, Bundy sarcastically remarked that Ball should keep in mind “the President’s fondness for Diefenbaker and the reasons for it.”⁷⁷

Working with Secretary Dillon, Ball immediately sought to clarify what they had been told. The result was unhappy for the Americans who found that they had indeed been misled. It emerged that the Treasury Department had been “clearly” informed by Canadian officials that while the surcharges were a measure of last resort given immediate budgetary pressure, they would be replaced by tax measures and so would be temporary. Further, the Canadians had emphasised both their regret at the measures and their short-term nature. Ritchie’s statement to Ball therefore seemed inaccurate. Dillon and Ball also noted that the “sense of urgency to remove the surcharges earlier expressed to Treasury was decidedly softened in the later Canadian presentations”. As well, they predicted that “the surcharges will have a progressively corrosive effect in Canada and on U.S.-Canadian economic relations.” Hence the State and Treasury Departments would “use every opportunity to impress on the Canadians the need for the

⁷⁶ President Kennedy to the Secretary of the Treasury, 9 July, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 7/62-9/62”.

⁷⁷ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 12:50 p.m., 9 July, 1962. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

replacement of the surcharges by a suitable substitute” as soon as possible.⁷⁸ For the time being the Americans acquiesced to the surcharges and at the 12 July meeting of GATT officials, a decision was made to apply a waiver to the Canadian surcharges until October and the surcharges in fact remained in place until 1 April, 1963. The Americans were unwilling either to call the Canadians on their misleading statements or to take efforts to undermine the economy of an important ally by either withdrawing support for the Canadian dollar or levying their own surcharges. The President’s trade bill was undoubtedly a decisive factor in the Administration’s acquiescence because the Americans wished to avoid provoking protectionism which would scupper a major piece of legislation. Further, it was not in the US government’s interest to respond to the surcharges in a manner which could have undermined the Canadian economy which the US had just taken efforts to strengthen. Whatever the reasoning, the view by some historians that American acquiescence connoted approval of the measure does not stand.

On 17 July, the same day that Ball and Dillon wrote to the President regarding their investigation into the apparent misunderstandings between Canada and the US over the surcharges, Howard Green met Willis Armstrong to chat about Canadian-American relations. Green began by expressing “the most profound gratitude for US financial assistance and for the understanding attitude” shown by Dillon and Ball. Engaging Armstrong in a discussion regarding the outstanding problems between their two countries, Green and the American agreed that there were really only a few contentious topics. However, Green added that “it was important to maintain [a] public posture to effect that relations were good”, to which Armstrong replied “that this was desirable but should be accompanied by candor in diplomatic discussions

⁷⁸ ‘Understanding with Canada on Emergency Financial Program.’ Memorandum for the President, Ball and Dillon, 17 July, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Executive Secretariat, Under Secretary of State, Records for Under Secretary of State George W. Ball, 1961-66, Box 20, file “Under Secretary Ball – 1962”.

of unresolved problems and [by] some evidence of progress.” In response, Green said “he was sure that Canada had more troubles than anybody and that it needed American help.” Armstrong’s reply was that the US was willing to be helpful but that Canada must keep in mind that the United States had problems too.⁷⁹

Green’s statement regarding Canada’s problems prompted Charles Kiselyak, the Ottawa Embassy’s Second Secretary, to write a primer for diplomats dealing with Canada. The study, ‘Canada 1962. What is it and Where is it Going?’, began: “A tired and depressed Secretary of State for External Affairs recently told the Chargé that ‘surely Canada has more troubles than anybody.’ In terms of the health and affluence of his countrymen, Howard Green’s remark is patently ridiculous.” Kiselyak went on to write, “But there is enough truth – of a kind – in it to warrant inspection....It is not fear for the lives or welfare of his countrymen that elicited Green’s remark, but rather the deep and professional concern for the complex of ideas and institutions that is Canada.” The problem of course, was the nearby presence of the United States. This factor meant that “the politicians and others who lead Canada and who speak for and to it are, unlike the majority of their countrymen, much concerned with the definition and preservation of Canada as a unique nation” As Kiselyak observed, “this effort means necessarily that whatever originates in the United States must be viewed with a cold eye.”⁸⁰ As a summation of the experiences that Americans had with their Canadian allies on economic matters over the previous year, it was perfect. It also answered questions over why Canada was so hesitant to arm its weapons with nuclear warheads when those weapons were otherwise useless.

⁷⁹ Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.75, 17 July, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 7/62-9/62”.

⁸⁰ ‘Canada 1962. What is it and Where is it Going?’ and covering Airgram ‘Canada 1962. What is it and Where is it Going?’, Ottawa to State, no. A-272, 18 September, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 7/62-9/62.”

Chapter Four - *“Diefenbaker’s relation with the President is not likely ever to be the same”:
policies and personalities.*

In his year end look at Canadian-American relations in 1961, the head of the State Department’s Canada Desk, Delmar Carlson had written that in terms of defence issues “our major problem is the procrastination of the Diefenbaker Administration....”¹ The new year began with little movement on this file. During a discussion with Rufus Smith, Lynn Stephens, the head of Defence Liaison (1) Division, remarked that there was little chance of Diefenbaker moving on the nuclear issue either way, despite growing public criticism regarding his indecision. As Smith pointed out, Canadians who were both for and against nuclear weapons were growing increasingly critical of the government’s persistent dithering. Stephens indicated his understanding that “the Prime Minister was now thinking of making a public case in favor of continued indecision.”² Then on 26 February, Diefenbaker made a statement which more or less seemed to confirm Stephens’ prediction. In a brief announcement in the House of Commons the Prime Minister said that “in the event we should decide to make nuclear weapons available it would be necessary to have joint control on the part of Canada and the United States.” However, he then said that this was not possible “so long as the law of the United States is as it is at present....”³ US law did in fact allow joint control but not joint custody, a point Kennedy and Diefenbaker had discussed during their meeting in Washington in February 1961.

American reaction was thus negative. Merchant, in a message to Rusk written the day of the Prime Minister’s speech, cited the nuclear weapons issue as the “greatest single outstanding

¹ ‘Canadian-United States Relations Background’, 18 December, 1961. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs – Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs – Alpha Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file “Briefing Papers 1959-1962”.

² ‘Canadian Defence Policies – Nuclear Weapons; Nuclear Submarines; UN Congo Operation’, Memorandum of Conversation, 26 January, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canada – U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962”.

³ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (26 February, 1962), p. 1250-1.

problem” between the Canadians and Americans. He stated annoyance with elements within Canada’s government, particularly Howard Green, who were “opposed to dirtying Canadian hands and reputation” in spite of the fact that the Canadian military “have now taken delivery [of] substantial quantities [of] expensive military hardware which [is] next to useless without nuclear tips.”⁴ In a separate despatch Merchant specifically referred to the Prime Minister’s “dismaying” comment in the House of Commons as “an irresponsible treatment of a subject of vital importance to both Canada and the U.S” His estimation was that the Canadians were “farther than ever” from the position the Americans desired; this resulted from “compound ignorance of a complex subject, profound reluctance to face up to a disagreeable subject and an unfortunate propensity to point to the U.S. as an immovable stumbling block.”⁵ William Tyler, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, reiterated Merchant’s comments in a message to Rusk. He also asked the Secretary to keep these points firmly in mind as he prepared to meet with reporters.⁶

At his press conference on 1 March, Secretary Rusk was asked to comment on Diefenbaker’s statement. Explaining that the decision to acquire nuclear weapons for their own forces was one the Canadians had to make themselves, Rusk made clear that US policy and American law required that nuclear weapons made available to allied forces would remain in US custody both to ensure the security of the weapons and to prevent proliferation. As for the concerns the Prime Minister had expressed, Rusk said the administration was “willing to work out arrangements for joint control fully consistent with national sovereignty”, comments that

⁴ Ottawa to State, no. 807, 26 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 20, file “Canada, Subjects, Diefenbaker, Correspondence, 8/11/61-10/10/62”.

⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 823, 27 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/62-3/62”.

⁶ ‘Suggested Statement for Your Press Conference Today’, Tyler to Secretary of State, 1 March, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canada – U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962”.

appeared to challenge Diefenbaker.⁷ Despite this, reaction in Ottawa was swift and surprisingly positive. On the morning after Rusk's press conference, Ambassador Merchant called the Canada Desk to report that he had just spoken with the Prime Minister by phone. Diefenbaker, he felt, viewed the Secretary of State's comments as "very constructive" and thus "was pleased with the way [Rusk] had approached the matter of nuclear weapons".⁸

Merchant followed up on this in another conversation with the Prime Minister a few days later on 8 March. During a long discussion the US Ambassador referred to the fits and starts of the Canada-US negotiations on the nuclear issue going back to the Prime Minister's meeting with the President in February 1961, and asked when negotiations would begin again. He also reminded Diefenbaker of his own comments that the "absence [of] Canadian defensive nuclear armaments affected [the] security of [the] US and not Canada alone", adding too that the issue "remained [a] matter of continuing serious concern in Washington." The Prime Minister responded that talks could begin in a few weeks after the House of Commons finished with the defence budget. In reporting back to Washington, Merchant cautioned, "some new reason as in the past can, or course, always be conjured up but Prime Minister to me seemed more confident of his ability to carry through than on earlier occasions".⁹ A new reason arose, however. On 19 April the Canadian Parliament was dissolved and a long awaited election was set for 18 June. Progress towards resolving the outstanding nuclear issue, which slowed as pre-election jitters had grown, was put on hold indefinitely.

⁷ 'The Secretary's Press Conference, March 1, 1962'. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "Canada - U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962".

⁸ 'Prime Minister Diefenbaker's Reaction to the Secretary's Statement on Nuclear Weapons', Tyler to Secretary Rusk, 2 March, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "Canada - U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962"

⁹ Ottawa to State, no. 871, 8 March, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 2/62-3/62".

Meanwhile on 17 April Ambassador Heeney met with President Kennedy, the occasion being his farewell call as he was stepping down from his post. After feting Heeney at a luncheon at Blair House across from the White House, Kennedy presented the Ambassador with a signed photograph. These events had a dual aim: to thank Heeney for his second tour of duty in Washington; and to ensure that Heeney would “return to Canada with the best possible recollections” in order to maintain “an aura of harmonious relationship with the Canadian Government.”¹⁰ President Kennedy also used Heeney’s farewell call to emphasise his hope that following the upcoming Canadian election “there would be some forward movement...in the nuclear field, which was of great importance to the defense of Canada as well as the United States.”¹¹

Heeney’s replacement, Charles Ritchie, arrived in Washington on 28 April, 1962. Ritchie had to wait a number of weeks before he was able to present his credentials to President Kennedy and wondered in his diary whether the delay had been a deliberate message.¹² A briefing note to the President from the State Department’s Executive Secretary, preparing him for his initial meeting with Ritchie, advised Kennedy to mention the nuclear weapons issue as something that should be resolved as soon as possible after the Canadian election. Further, raising the matter would demonstrate to the new Ambassador that the President had a personal

¹⁰ ‘Photograph of President Kennedy for Ambassador Heeney,’ Rewinkel to Duke, 2 April, 1962, and ‘Farewell Lunch for Departing Canadian Ambassador’, Tyler to Duke, 19 March, 1962. NARA, RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Canadian Embassy in Washington, 1961-1962”.

¹¹ ‘Canadian Ambassador’s Farewell Call,’ Memorandum of Conversation, 17 April, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Canadian Embassy in Washington, 1961-1962”.

¹² Charles Ritchie, *Storm Signals: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1962-1971* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1983), p. 4.

interest in the outcome of this matter.¹³ Finally presenting his credentials to the President on 26 May, Ritchie recorded in his dairy that Kennedy's "reception of me, while perfectly civil, was, I thought, distinctly cool, and I came away with the impression that this reflected his attitude towards the Canadian government and particularly towards Mr. Diefenbaker. He seemed deliberately to be creating 'a distance.'" The Canadian Ambassador was so on edge during the meeting that when Kennedy shooed his young daughter Caroline from the Oval Office, Ritchie momentarily thought the President was in fact trying to shoo him out.¹⁴ The President may well have been demonstrating displeasure towards the Canadians thanks to his concern over the unresolved matter of nuclear weapons; he had also become aware of Diefenbaker's possession of the Rostow Memorandum and was none too pleased.

At this time in Ottawa, Rufus Smith was seeking clarification on the nuclear file with several Canadian contacts. Smith met with Bill Barton on 22 May just as Barton was leaving for New York to become Canada's Deputy Chief of Mission to the UN. As the former head of Defence Liaison (1), Barton and Smith had often spoken with each other, and the nuclear weapons issue had been a recurring topic of conversation for them. During their lunch on 22 May, the two men referred to a discussion they had had a year before, when Barton had predicted that Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons would have to wait until after the next federal elections. Now that Canada was in the throes of a national poll, Smith acknowledged Barton's prescience but was dismayed as he himself foresaw no resolution to this issue even after the

¹³ 'Possible Points for Discussion with the new Ambassador of Canada' and covering memorandum 'Presentation of Credentials by Canadian Ambassador Ritchie', L.D. Battle to Kenneth O'Donnell, 11 May, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1962".

¹⁴ Ritchie, *Storm Signals*, p. 6.

votes were cast. Although Barton agreed, this was not discouraging since “the matter was not vital and did not indicate Canada was not basically standing with the U.S.”¹⁵

Unconvinced, Smith sought out Ross Campbell, Howard Green’s Special Assistant from the Department of External Affairs, and on 23 May engaged him in what became a heated debate on the nuclear matter. This was because, as Smith argued, it was “incomprehensible...that Canada should eschew any association with nuclear warheads as a matter of principle” when it enjoyed the protection of the US nuclear deterrent. Campbell, on the other hand, was adamant that Canada could not “‘compromise’” its position. The American responded that Canada’s position was compromised due to its membership in the Western alliance, to which Campbell said “‘Oh, come now, you know that when the chips are down we’ll be with you.’” A fulminating Smith replied that “the chips were down”, a comment which decisively ended their conversation.¹⁶ Smith also lunched with Basil Robinson, who he informed that “the Canadian record on defence policy would colour all the dealings with US officials in Washington” and that amongst the Americans there was a sense of “puzzlement and a feeling that they have not been squarely dealt with”. As Robinson correctly detected, “this theme is too often repeated by US embassy officials to be a casual thought”.¹⁷

Just days before, Livingston Merchant, set to retire, travelled to the White House to make a farewell call upon the President. As Kennedy was closely watching the on-going Canadian election, he was keenly interested to hear Merchant’s thoughts on future Canada-US relations.

¹⁵ ‘USUN Cooperation with Canadian Delegation; External Affairs Personnel Shifts; U.S.-Canadian Defense Relations’, Memorandum of Conversation, 22 May, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 6, file “UN 1961-1962”.

¹⁶ Smith’s emphasis. Memorandum of Conversation, 23 May, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 1, file “Ottawa – Memorandum of Conversation”.

¹⁷ Diary entry for 29 May, in H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 271.

Merchant advised that after the election the new US Ambassador, who had not yet been picked, should engage in “a long, serious talk” with whoever was Prime Minister in order to “straighten out our continental defense relationship and secure a closer harmony of views on...a number of issues which had been troublesome in the past.” Doubtful of there being any real improvement in the bilateral relationship over the short term, as Merchant put it, the Canadians were coming to realise that “the power of Britain had declined so...that it no longer presented a refuge and a counter-poise to the power of the United States....we could expect to find Canada prickly and hypersensitive in the next few years whether under Tory or Liberal leadership.”¹⁸

On 8 May Merchant had submitted a personal analysis of the Canadian election. Concluding that “Canada after June 18 would be a stauncher, more consistent, and reliable ally and understanding friend with Mr. Diefenbaker back in power”, Merchant based his argument on the premise that “a workable but greatly reduced majority” would allow Diefenbaker “to form a more decisive and self-confident government”. The American Ambassador believed that Diefenbaker stood with the US on major issues but that this “has been so far imperfectly translated into policies, action, and public pronouncements”, a result of his “opposition thinking”.¹⁹ The paper’s overall conclusion is remarkable given that at the time it was written Merchant had already briefed the Administration about Diefenbaker’s threats to use the Rostow Memorandum, but the passage about ‘opposition thinking’ is telling in this regard. Also, Merchant’s analysis had failed to account for the possibility that Diefenbaker would only win a minority government. The Progressive Conservatives were reduced from holding the largest majority of seats to that point in Canadian electoral history to having a minority government

¹⁸ ‘Ambassador Merchant’s Farewell Call on the President’, Memorandum of Conversation, 25 May, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file “Briefing Papers 1959-1962”.

¹⁹ ‘Canadian Federal Election’, Ottawa to State, no. A-416, 8 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 4/62-5/16/61”.

reliant on the support of the Social Credit Party, another populist conservative party. US diplomats found these results depressing. This was not necessarily because Diefenbaker remained Prime Minister; rather, they feared Diefenbaker's "indecisiveness and partisan political motivations will be greatly increased." "Accordingly", one State Department official wrote, "there is no basis for us to expect anything very useful, constructive, or positive from Canada in this period and we will be fortunate if we can keep what we have from eroding." A resolution of the chief concern of the American government in regards to bilateral relations, Canadian acquisition of nuclear weapons, "had now receded out of sight for the foreseeable future."²⁰ The Rostow Memorandum complicated matters.

The Americans had become aware of Diefenbaker's possession of the Rostow Memorandum when he had threatened Merchant with the document in May 1962. The Canadian Prime Minister was outraged by the warm reception that Liberal Party leader Lester Pearson had received at a White House dinner for Nobel Prize Winners, held on 29 April. Pearson had called the Ottawa Embassy on 11 April, before the election writ had dropped, to confirm his attendance and to request a meeting with Kennedy. Merchant favoured such a meeting because Pearson was "making no public or private sense on defense matters particularly nuclear", and so it would therefore be a good chance for the charismatic President to sway his opinion. However, Merchant stressed that their private discussion "should be worked out with minimum publicity and preferably none lest Diefenbaker and company come to conclusion Pearson is receiving attention in Washington disproportionate to that shown them."²¹ These decisions had been made prior to the Canadian election being called, but Merchant's concerns also reflected an American

²⁰ 'Canadian Election Results,' Rewinkel to Tyler, 19 June, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 6, file "Visits to U.S., 1962".

²¹ Ottawa to State, no. 1030, 11 April, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 4/62-5/16/61".

appreciation of Diefenbaker's 'opposition thinking'. As the Americans were about to discover, while Kennedy had met with other opposition leaders, none were from a country with as prickly a leader as the Canadian Prime Minister.

Following Merchant's advice, Pearson and Kennedy met in the White House Residence before dinner for a private chat about a number of minor matters. While they most likely broached the topic of the Canadian election, Pearson stated that he and the President had been "“very very correct”".²² Despite meeting in private, Pearson was spotted leaving the Residence by several reporters. Meanwhile during the dinner, Kennedy made some characteristically charming comments. For instance, he called the gathering "“the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered at the White House – with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.”"²³ The President also jovially referred to a White House tradition when he told the gathered dinner guests that "“Mr Lester Pearson informed me that a Canadian newspaperman said yesterday that this is the President's 'Easter egg-head roll on the White House lawn'. I want to deny that.”"²⁴ The friendly rapport between Kennedy and Pearson, especially the former's praise of the latter, was noted in the press and subsequently in Ottawa. Merchant's worries about publicity were coming to pass.

As a senior Canadian official had warned the Americans, due to the election the "Prime Minister's sensitivity toward Washington visit of Pearson might have unfortunate consequences...."²⁵ The warning came too late; Diefenbaker was irate about Kennedy's reception of Pearson. Basil Robinson witnessed the Prime Minister go on "an ungoverned rant

²² Lester Pearson quoted in Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 157.

²³ President Kennedy quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁴ President Kennedy quoted in Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs, vol. XII, 1961-1963*. (Toronto: OUP, 1968), p. 500.

²⁵ Ottawa to State, no. A-427, 10 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 4/62-5/16/61".

about how they [the Americans] were out to get him” and “raved about Kennedy and Ball”.²⁶ Historian J.L. Granatstein has argued of this episode that “from the Prime Minister’s viewpoint, harassed and troubled by a sea of insurmountable problems and with the nuclear question becoming increasingly difficult to resolve, the American pressures must have seemed too much to bear.” Thus, “given Diefenbaker’s readiness to harbour and nurture slights, the grudge against Kennedy could only grow”.²⁷ The Americans discovered how upset the Prime Minister was a days after the White House dinner.

While meeting with Diefenbaker for two and a half hours on 4 May, Merchant was treated to what he described as a “tirade”. Basil Robinson had forewarned the US Ambassador that the Prime Minister “was in an extremely agitated frame of mind”, an accurate warning. While speaking with Merchant, Diefenbaker charged Kennedy with having intervened in the Canadian election and now Canada-US relations would now become the dominant campaign issue. In this regard the Prime Minister stated his intent to use a document that the President had left behind in Diefenbaker’s office to prove that the Americans were trying to push Canada around. Written by Walt Rostow and entitled ‘What we want from the Ottawa trip’, the document did use the word “push” to describe the US intent to have Canada join the OAS, take a greater role in Latin America, devote more money to foreign aid, and support US policy in southeast Asia.²⁸ Diefenbaker’s aim would thus be to present himself to the Canadian electorate as the only leader capable of protecting Canada from the United States.²⁹

²⁶ Diary entry for 4 May, in Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 267.

²⁷ J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-68* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 349.

²⁸ Contrary to what has been speculated by a number of contemporary people as well as historians, the memo in fact did not contain any notations referring to the Canadian Prime Minister was an ‘S.O.B.’. This is a fact confirmed by a number of sources including Diefenbaker himself, who in his memoirs, denied that there were notations and called this a “Liberal invention” designed to make him the butt of jokes. Also during a dinner conversation in May 1963 at Hyannis Port and with both Kennedy and the new Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson in attendance, Basil Robinson was asked whether he had seen the Rostow Memorandum. He replied that he

Merchant was understandably shocked. As he reiterated to Washington, Diefenbaker “was excited to a degree disturbing in a leader of an important country, and closer to hysteria than I have seen him, except on one other possible occasion”. Angered, the Ambassador told the Prime Minister that as Kennedy’s meeting with Pearson had simply been a social matter, “it was childish to assume that this constituted any effort or intent to intervene in Canadian domestic politics.” Switching to a more conciliatory approach, Merchant stated that Kennedy’s “respect for [Diefenbaker] was great, and our relations were good.” He made a further effort to calm the Prime Minister by arguing that the memorandum appeared to be a document meant for American eyes only and that it therefore “used phraseology which would be objectionable to a foreign government”. Warning Diefenbaker that should he reveal the document there would be “a serious backlash, if not in Canada, then certainly in the United States”, Merchant reminded the Prime Minister of his “heavy responsibility as an ally of the United States and as a member of the Free World coalition.” As he left the Prime Minister’s Office, the American Ambassador did not receive an assurance from the Prime Minister that the memorandum would not see the light of day but he did feel that by venting his anger at him Diefenbaker would now calm down. Still, he warned Washington that “given Canadian sensitivities, it is in our interest neither to intervene in Canadian domestic elections nor to give the appearance of doing so.”³⁰ For obvious reasons

had and that it did not have any handwritten notations upon it. Additionally, Robinson has reaffirmed this in a note filed in his archival fonds. In the note, dated 31 May, 1983, he wrote that he had just seen the original memo and that it did not have any handwriting on it other than Rostow’s original signature. Robinson also wrote that in his career he had seen two copies of the memo; on one of these the word ‘push’, appearing four times, had been underlined. As he noted “this, I am sure, reflected [Diefenbaker’s] irritation with the assumption on the part of the writer of the memorandum that Canada could be ‘pushed’ around....” See John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Two: The Years of Achievement, 1957-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 183; ‘Memorandum prepared by Mr. Rostow’, Memorandum of Conversation, 10 May, 1963. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “Canada, Security, 1963”; and ‘Rostow’, 31 May, 1983. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file “7”.

²⁹ Merchant to Ball, 5 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Materials 5/61-5/63”.

³⁰ Merchant to Ball, 5 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Materials 5/61-5/63”.

Merchant kept this information secret, reporting it only in a hand delivered letter to Under Secretary George Ball.

Ball immediately forwarded Merchant's report to McGeorge Bundy. The two discussed the issue by phone on 7 May. A possible way of resolving the situation, they felt, would be to have Kennedy meet Diefenbaker at the upcoming World's Fair in Seattle where he could then flatter the Prime Minister and give him the same type of publicity that Pearson had received. But deciding that this option was impractical, at this point they merely resolved to bring Merchant to Washington to consult with them personally.³¹ In the meantime Bundy discussed the issue with the President and then again spoke with Ball. Kennedy, Bundy reported, had been astonished that his meeting with Pearson had been questioned as he had previously met with opposition leaders from West Germany and the UK without complaint. Bundy's sense was thus that "Diefenbaker's relation with the President is not likely ever to be the same." They decided to leave the matter until the next day, 8 May, when Bundy submitted the President's formal instructions to Merchant through Ball.³²

Merchant arrived in Washington and met immediately with Ball who instructed him to speak again with Diefenbaker. He was to tell the Prime Minister that he had yet to say anything to Washington and was reluctant to do so. The Ambassador was also ordered to advise the Prime Minister that any use of the paper would be beyond the pale, while even the suggestion of its use "would have a bad effect in Washington". Diefenbaker was then to be reminded that the US and Canada each had a record of the meeting between the President and Prime Minister from the previous May, which clearly showed that "there was no improper pressure of any sort." In

³¹ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 6:30 p.m., 7 May, 1962; and Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 6:40 p.m., 7 May, 1962. JFKL, George W. Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file "Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63".

³² Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 7:40 p.m., 7 May, 1962. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file "Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63".

regards to Kennedy's meeting with Pearson, Merchant was to tell the Prime Minister that this was supposed to have been a private and off the record affair but that some reporters, having seen the Liberal leader in the White House Residence, had made an issue of it. On a positive note, since "the President recognizes the strains which are characteristic of political campaigns", Merchant was told to empathise with the Prime Minister on this point. Echoing his comment to Bundy from the day before, Kennedy made clear that he had "no intention of seeking a meeting with Diefenbaker in the near future."³³

Returning to Ottawa with these instructions, Merchant arranged through Basil Robinson to meet Diefenbaker. Robinson, who was being transferred to the Washington Embassy in mid-1962, was delighted to meet with the US Ambassador and did so on 9 May. While Robinson was under the impression that Merchant was merely hoping to offer him friendly advice on life in the American capital, and the Ambassador was very helpful in this regard, he had an ulterior motive. This was to speak "very frankly about the present state" of Canada-US relations and about his recent interview with the Prime Minister. Robinson described Merchant as being "very distressed" about the state of the bilateral relationship and about the possibility that Diefenbaker would adopt an anti-American platform in the election. Without revealing anything about the Rostow Memorandum, Merchant asked Robinson to make an appointment between himself and the Prime Minister for as soon as possible. Observing that the Ambassador was quite concerned, Robinson felt that Merchant had left him "in no doubt that he and a large number of people in influential positions in Washington are profoundly worried about the course which Canadian foreign policy has taken...." While US officials "fully understood the Canadian desire to retain power of independent action and initiative" Merchant had explained to Robinson that they were

³³ McGeorge Bundy to Ball, 8 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 4/62-5/16/61".

bothered by “the tendency which they found more and more prevalent for Canada to take initiatives without consultation on matters of direct concern to the United States.”³⁴

The Prime Minister and Merchant met on 12 May. Merchant explained both that he had not revealed Diefenbaker’s possession of the Rostow Memo to his superiors and that he himself had acquired a copy of the document which appeared quite “unexceptionable”. But nevertheless Merchant warned that revealing the memo would be “catastrophic” and would do “incalculable harm” to American attitudes toward Canada. Diefenbaker responded that he had no immediate plans to use the memorandum, but that if he did, he would let Washington know in advance by telephone. He then launched into an “emotional sidetrack on the US ‘trying to push’ Canada around”; when Merchant asked him what evidence he possessed to prove this, the Prime Minister calmed down and the meeting ended with the two men exchanging a few pleasantries. In reporting back to Washington, Merchant wrote “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.” As Merchant was due to retire, he made sure to inform Willis Armstrong about the situation in case it re-emerged while Armstrong was heading the Embassy in the interim period before a new ambassador arrived.³⁵ Certainly reflecting American apprehension with Canada on this and other issues, a new Ambassador did not arrive in Ottawa until December 1962. Also, while he never did use the Rostow Memorandum in the 1962 federal election, Diefenbaker retained it and

³⁴ Merchant’s comments about American concerns over Canadian policy were confirmed by Willis Armstrong, who had a subsequent discussion with Robinson about diplomatic life in Washington. ‘Conversations with Ambassador Merchant and Mr. Armstrong of the United States Embassy’, Draft Memorandum, 9 May, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “2”.

³⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 1164, 13 May, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Materials 5/61-5/63”. This thinking may have informed Merchant’s positive appraisal, written on 8 May and discussed above, in which he argued that a Diefenbaker victory in the election would allow Diefenbaker “to form a more decisive and self-confident government”.

for the remainder of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker period the memo hung over Canada-US relations like the Sword of Damocles.

In July, Merchant, now a private citizen, wrote a pessimistic report to George Ball about the Rostow Memo. Acknowledging that little could be done to secure the memorandum's return or its destruction, Merchant believed that over time the Prime Minister might realise "the enormity of his action" and so might get rid of the document. In the meantime, he recommended that the President "continue to maintain an attitude of coolness toward Mr. Diefenbaker and take no initiative to restore a more normal personal relationship with [him]". However, he also proposed that in order that Canada-US relations did not suffer, Secretary Rusk should make the effort to pursue "as close a relationship as possible with Howard Green." Ball passed this memorandum on to Bundy who discussed it with the President.³⁶ Whether Merchant's first recommendation was a decisive factor or whether it merely confirmed what Kennedy already felt is hard to say; that the President paid little attention to the Prime Minister after this is certain. The personal relationship between Kennedy and Diefenbaker was at this point thoroughly shattered. Viewed by the Administration as an unpredictable and unreliable ally, Diefenbaker was scorned by the Americans. This was unfortunate because a significant crisis over Cuba was about to break, showcasing the fissures in the bilateral relationship and driving a wedge between Canada and the United States

³⁶ Merchant to Ball, 11 July, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Materials 5/61-5/63".

Chapter Five – “*Complicated and far-reaching*”: *Canada-US Relations and Cuba, 1962*.

On 15 January, 1962, after finding out that he was to become the new Canadian Ambassador in Washington later that year, Charles Ritchie wrote in his diary “I need not worry about tedium in this new post; on the contrary, all the storm signals are out for foul weather between Washington and Ottawa. Relations between the two governments are bad and show signs of getting worse.” He noted that he had heard from both Canadians and Americans that Diefenbaker’s government was “extremely unpopular in Washington and that the Americans say that every communication they receive from us is a protest or complaint against them. Also, they are beginning to give us the cold shoulder and their reaction to any Canadian visitor is a snub.” While being critical of Canada’s tendency for “perpetual nattering at the Americans”, Ritchie also found fault with American officials, for although “the personal friendliness and informality are still there” he also noted that “they have developed a complete impermeability to advice, criticism, or comment of any kind, combined with the patient courtesy that one extends to the well-meaning irrelevance.” In his view, even though Canadians did not “make sufficient allowance for the world-wide responsibilities which the Americans carry on their shoulders”, the American “assumption of superiority, conscious or unconscious” was “peculiarly difficult for Canadians to swallow....”¹ In terms of Canadian-American differences over Cuba, Ritchie’s observations about Canada’s ‘perpetual nattering’ and the presumptions of the United States were spot on.

Related to this, a commonly held view is that Canada-US relations in the Kennedy-Diefenbaker era “reached their nadir during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.”² The

¹ Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1946-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 185-7.

² Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), p. 7.

American discovery of Soviet medium and intermediate range nuclear missiles sites in Cuba prompted the most intense crisis of the Cold War, but a crisis where it appeared that the Canadian government did not support its American ally. In his in-depth study of the Canadian military's role in the missile crisis, historian Peter Haydon concluded that while being "one of the lowest points in the relationship [between Canada and the US]", the missile crisis was "also an excellent example of how the relationship functions at completely different levels and in different ways." For while political differences marred Canada-US relations during the crisis, there was successful cooperation between the Canadian and American militaries.³ Jocelyn Maynard Ghent has maintained a similar line in her own study of the crisis in which she, like many scholars, attacks the Kennedy administration for having been a poor ally in neglecting to consult with Canada, the closest of its allies. Other historians meanwhile have attacked Diefenbaker for failing to respond to the missile threat, a failure which created a crisis in Canada-US relations within the wider missile crisis. Upon evaluation of the documentary record, both the Kennedy administration and Diefenbaker's government committed errors of omission throughout the missile crisis, and a definite political gulf existed between them. However, taking into account all of this evidence as well as the contours of Canada-US relations from January 1961 until October 1962 one comes to the conclusion that Kennedy's omissions were far more comprehensible than those of Diefenbaker.

Explaining why there were such disparate responses between Canada and the United States during the crisis has divided scholars ever since, and some have looked to the issue of Cuba itself. Ghent, for instance, has argued that "underlying Canadian-American interaction

³ Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993), pp. 65-6.

during the missile crisis were profoundly different perceptions of Fidel Castro's Cuba."⁴ Agreeing that "to an extent Canada's more relaxed attitude toward Cuba may certainly have influenced Diefenbaker's lack of urgency in the first few days of the crisis", journalist Jamie Glazov has added that "the prime minister's inaction emanated from grievances against the Americans".⁵ The personal factor is certainly important as were the differences over policy towards the Cuban government. Canada possessed what historians Peter McKenna and John Kirk have called a "special relationship" with Cuba during the Kennedy-Diefenbaker years.⁶ This undoubtedly affected the reactions of Diefenbaker and other members of the Canadian Cabinet about how to react to the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Despite its close ties with Washington, Ottawa maintained diplomatic and trade relations with Havana, often in the face of criticism from within the United States.

As McKenna and Kirk have also noted, "the official Canadian position on Cuba, contrary to the popular image projected in both Havana and Washington, revealed major differences of opinion with the Cuban government."⁷ When the Americans took steps to firmly isolate Cuba in the period from January to October 1962, Canadian policy to some extent seemed to follow suit. Canada's apparent actions to support the US embargo of that island won plaudits from the Kennedy administration which then softened its condemnations of the Canadians. Having come to realise that there was to be no change in Canada's fundamental position on Cuba, the American government resolved itself to live with this state of affairs particularly since Canada

⁴ Jocelyn Maynard Ghent, "Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Pacific Historical Review* 48, No. 2 (1979), p. 160. This point is also treated in James Rochlin, *Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), pp. 50-57 and 61-2.

⁵ Jamie Glazov, *Canadian Policy toward Khrushchev's Soviet Union* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁶ John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbor Policy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), Chapter Two.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

seemed more supportive than in the past. It is ironic to note then, that just as US officials believed they were finally getting Canada to take a more appreciative approach towards the Cubans, the missile crisis caused the Canadian government to retrench. The key in this seems to have been Diefenbaker himself, who remained unconvinced by the US stance on Cuba and who was, by October 1962, hostile towards the Kennedy administration.

In January 1962, a memorandum prepared by Under-Secretary Norman Robertson of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, for Howard Green offered a perfect summation of Canada's Cuban policy, one unsupportive of the American position. Acknowledging "the Communist commitments of the present Cuban regime in both its domestic and external policies", Robertson wrote that Canada did not consider this "ideological orientation" to provide sufficient grounds for breaking diplomatic relations. Further, the Canadian government had "reservations on the effectiveness and propriety of the use of armed force or economic sanctions against Cuba", both of which the Americans were pursuing. On the economic issue, the paper stressed that Canada's trade with Cuba was dropping and would continue to do so in the future. The Canadians, however, had no plans to embargo non-strategic goods, although Canada had prohibited trade in strategic items as well as American goods shipped to Cuba through Canada.⁸ Robertson's summation offered slim support for US policy.

American officials in Washington were aware of these sentiments. In a side discussion on 13 January with Canadian Finance Minister Donald Fleming at the US-Canadian Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, American Under Secretary of State George Ball told him that the US would seek to have the OAS expel Cuba during its conference at Punta del Este to be held later that month. Explaining that he "was not asking the Canadians to take a public

⁸ 'Memorandum for the Minister – The Cuban Question' by Norman Robertson, 11 January, 1962. LAC MG 32 B13, Vol. 7, file "10".

position”, Ball hoped that his government could count on Canada’s “cooperation to take all appropriate measures which would contribute to making the embargo effective.” By this he meant that the Americans wanted Canada’s government to ensure that no goods produced in the US were sold to Cuba via Canada. The Kennedy administration also hoped the Canadians would take every effort to see that strategic weapons did not make it to Cuba.⁹ A study produced in December 1961 by the Ottawa Embassy to brief delegates to the conference had observed “Canadian Govt now much clearer on facts of Cuban situation than last year, and will continue [to] assist US embargo on shipments [of] US goods.”¹⁰ This was more or less as much as Canada was willing to do, however, a point which rankled some within the Kennedy administration.

Indeed despite Ball’s diplomatic approach, at the end of January 1962 a Canadian press report appeared stating that during a brief stopover in Vancouver Arthur Schlesinger, Special Assistant to President Kennedy, had reportedly said ““Anything that supports Cuba threatens the prospects of democratic success in Latin American.”” This was viewed as an attack on Canada which, because of its trade with Cuba, could be charged with abetting Cuban revolutionary activities. The American Consul General to Vancouver, who was present with Schlesinger, reported that the latter’s comments had not singled out Canada, adding that Schlesinger had “specifically acknowledged that Canadian policy is of course matter for Canadian gov[ernmen]t to decide.”¹¹ In the House of Commons, Howard Green commented on the report, declaring “If it was made in the terms suggested, it is a most unusual and, I think, improper thing for an

⁹ ‘Trade Embargo on Cuba’, 13 January, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Records Relating to the Joint US – Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, 1954-1962, Box 2, file “1962 Meeting”.

¹⁰ Political Environment of US-Canadian Cabinet Committee Meeting, January 12-13, 1962’, Ottawa to State, no. A-232, 30 December, 1961. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 10/61-1/62.

¹¹ Ottawa to State, no. 708, 29 January, 1962. JFKL, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Collection, White House Files, Box 3a, file “Canada”.

official of another country to do.”¹² It certainly was, and Basil Robinson took note in his diary of the Prime Minister’s annoyance with Schlesinger’s “indiscreet remark”.¹³ Regardless of the Vancouver Consul General’s positive spin, the indiscretion reflected US frustration with Canada’s Cuban policy, and more broadly, with American efforts to contain Cuba.

During its meeting on 31 January, the Organization of American States declared that the Cuban government was incompatible with the inter-American system, and Cuba was excluded from participating in the organisation’s activities and programmes. The US government then expanded the existing embargo of trade with Cuba on 3 February. These actions were related to an effort called Operation Mongoose, organised at the highest levels of the US government, with the goal of isolating Cuba, destroying its economy, killing Fidel Castro, and promoting an internal revolt by the Cuban people against Castro’s government.¹⁴ The Kennedy administration believed that Canada could play a role in this effort. In a plan of action on the operation, its director, Brigadier General Walter Lansdale, wrote that the State Department should explore whether the Canadian government could “halt the diversion of vital items in the Cuban trade”, and that Canada, like other NATO allies, could “take steps to isolate Cuba from the West.”¹⁵

Walt Rostow, now Chairman of the State Department’s Policy Planning Committee, sought to get the ball rolling at the North Atlantic Council, where on 20 February, he argued for

¹² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (29 January, 1962), pp. 301-2.

¹³ Diary entry for 29 January, 1962 in H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 246.

¹⁴ On Mongoose see Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *‘One Hell of a Gamble’: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), Chapters 6, 7, and 8; Thomas G. Paterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 259-60; and *Idem.*, “Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Fidel Castro” In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 123-155.

¹⁵ ‘The Cuba Project’, Review of Operation Mongoose by Chief of Operations Lansdale, 18 January, 1962. *The Kennedys and Cuba: The Declassified Documentary History*, Revised Edition, ed. Mark J. White (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), p. 93.

the United States's NATO allies to strengthen COCOM restrictions against the Cubans.¹⁶ COCOM, or Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, was an international agreement amongst Western states and Japan to restrict exports to Soviet countries. The Americans hoped to expand its scope to include Cuba. Prime Minister Diefenbaker, however, had staked out Canada's position on this issue in a statement about the Punta del Este conference made in the House of Commons on 2 February. While saying that "naturally Canada is most desirous of co-operating at all times with friendly nations," the Prime Minister argued that "the decision as to the course Canada shall take should be made by Canada on the basis of policies which we believe are appropriate to Canada." Regarding exports to Cuba, he added "the Canadian government has not been permitting the export of arms to [Cuba] for more than two years, and in addition has not been allowing the export of strategic materials to Cuba."¹⁷ This was indeed the case, but throughout the winter, Canada faced criticism from the American government which wanted Canada's assurances that it was not undermining, even unknowingly, the US embargo.

Schlesinger's negative outburst was not the only negative US appraisal of Canada's Cuban policy. In an analysis of Canadian reaction to the Punta del Este meeting, Ambassador Merchant stressed the "sad fact" that although "Canadians [are] in favor [of] positive aspects US L[atin] A[merica] policy and applaud [the] Alliance for Progress they nevertheless believe our tactics in dealing with Cuba have been inept and shortsighted from [the] beginning." Further, as a result of the "heavily charged pre-election atmosphere" which made Canadian politicians reluctant to doing anything that "looks like subservience to US", he saw little prospect for

¹⁶ See Paterson, *Contesting Castro*, p. 259. See Diefenbaker's surprisingly accurate treatment of this in his memoirs: Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Three: The Tumultuous Years, 1962-1967* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 83-4.

¹⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (2 February, 1962), p. 479-80.

Canada bringing its policy in line with that of the American government.¹⁸ A policy difference over fundamental relations with Cuba was thus a fact which the US would realistically have to live with. However, Merchant saw no need to tolerate Canada openly criticising his country's policy, as the Prime Minister had implicitly done in his statement to the House of Commons. So during a discussion with several Canadian Cabinet ministers in early February, Merchant stressed that there was a decline in Canada's influence in Washington thanks in part to "ostentatious divergence" from American "policy towards Cuba".¹⁹

A more complimentary analysis came from William Tyler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, in a report for Secretary Rusk on Canadian trade policy. Tyler noted that Canada's relations with Cuba were essentially "similar to that of all NATO countries except the United States." Explaining this to be a result of Canada's general policy to trade with all countries, Tyler added that Canadians also possessed an "inexperience" with Latin America, doubts about the direction of US policy towards Cuba, and a desire to avoid giving the "appearance of subservience" to American policies. The latter, in his view, was "part of the mystique of the 'Canadian identity' and 'Pro-Canadianism', with which the Diefenbaker administration has tended to be associated". Tyler thus urged that during discussions with the Canadians the issue of American subsidiaries operating in Canada "should be clearly separated" from any talk of trade with Cuba. In his view, the Canadians had been taking positive steps in terms of trade and in regards to recognising Castro's government as being a threat. It was important therefore to avoid retrenchment by Canada over its concern for sovereignty.²⁰ A few

¹⁸ Ottawa to State, no. 728, 2 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, "Canada, General, 2/62-3/62".

¹⁹ 'General Talk with Cabinet Members', Ottawa to State, no. A-291, 8 February, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 2/62-3/62".

²⁰ Tyler to Secretary Rusk, 13 February, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 5, file "Cuban Export Ban, 1960-1962".

days later, on 16 February, Myer Feldman, Deputy Special Counsel to the President, advised Kennedy about applying the Trading with the Enemy Act to prevent the trans-shipment of Cuban goods through Canada or Mexico into the US. “The State Department”, Feldman noted, “feels that it would be a mistake to [do this] until they had an opportunity to seek the voluntary aid of Canada and Mexico in preventing this evasion of our laws.”²¹

That same day, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, accompanied by Delmar Carlson, the head of the Canada Desk at the State Department, requested to meet with Canada’s Ambassador to Washington Arnold Heeney, who brought with him Saul Rae, the Minister at the Canadian Embassy, and Maurice Schwarzmann, the Embassy’s Minister Counsellor. Stating that he wished to put aside the matter of Cuba as it pertained to US-Canada relations, Rusk told the Canadians that he instead wanted to discuss their government’s specific Cuban policy. Hoping that they could also “leave in abeyance the possible psychological difficulty in Canada of following U.S. policy,” Rusk was concerned with whether or not “Canada had carefully thought out its Cuban policy and taken into account all of the essential elements.” The Secretary of State then delivered a long lecture on the dangers that Cuba’s government posed to its people, to Latin America and to Western, and hence Canadian, interests. While acknowledging that Canada was taking significant steps to limit trade with Cuba in strategic goods, he hoped “that Canada will consider what its long-range interests really are on this issue and what steps on Canada’s part will fit those interests.” Heeney’s response was to emphasise that Canada held no sympathy or affection for Castro or his government, noting “the Castro regime is politically repugnant to everything that Canada stands for.” Appreciative of this, a nevertheless curt Rusk stated, despite his opening comment, that “as Canada looks at its interests with respect to the Cuban problem,

²¹ ‘Embargo upon imports from Cuba’, Memorandum for the President from Myer Feldman, 16 February, 1962. JFKL, WHCSF, Box 240, file “FO 3-3-1/CO 55 Cuba (Executive & General)”.

Canada would doubtless not wish to complete its analysis without taking into account the situation within the U.S. and Canadian-U.S. relations.” In order to aid the Canadians in possibly reassessing their dealings with Cuba, Rusk offered to supply Canada with increased intelligence on Cuban revolutionary activities throughout Latin America.²²

The Canadian government accepted Rusk’s offer, and contrary to Merchant’s earlier observations, American expectations were high. As William Tyler put it in a letter to Roger Hilsman, head of the State Department’s Intelligence and Research Bureau, “the Canadian Government has not yet completed a review of its attitude toward Cuba and I therefore cannot over-emphasize the importance of our making the most of this chance to influence Canadian Government opinion on this very serious subject.”²³ The Canadians were certainly aware of the importance that the US placed on the issue. On 20 February Diefenbaker read to his Cabinet a summation of Heeney’s talk with Rusk, a document that made clear that “There was now a greater awareness of the dangers of Communist developments in Cuba and the urgency of the situation among the Latin American countries than there was in Canada.” The Americans, Diefenbaker went on, “had concluded that Castro was a criminal” and “would welcome detailed discussions with Canada leading to a clear indication of how Canada appraises its relations with Cuba.”²⁴ The Cabinet took no specific action in regards to this, while Diefenbaker was himself angered by Rusk’s overtures to Heeney, calling it ““a hell of a colossal nerve.””²⁵

Still, the increased American interest in Canada’s policy towards Cuba prompted a re-examination of this issue by the Department of External Affairs. Howard Green, having become

²² ‘The Problem of Cuba in Relation to Canada’, Memorandum of Conversation, 16 February, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Cuba 1962-63”.

²³ Tyler to Hilsman, 2 March, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Canadian Cabinet, 1961/62”.

²⁴ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 20 February, 1962’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6192.

²⁵ Diefenbaker quoted in 20 February diary entry in Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 250.

concerned by Heeney's report of his talk with Rusk, was now worried by the current state of his country's relations with Cuba. As he told his assistant, Ross Campbell, it was of "the utmost importance that we cease treating the Cuban problem as simply one of trade or of relations with Cuba but rather as a highly sensitive issue in Canada/U.S. relations." Going on to say that while his position of being sceptical of American policy had made sense in the past, Green noted that this was no longer the case, as the Cubans were "getting progressively more communist-oriented" and were threatening their neighbours. He envisioned several steps to change Canadian policy vis-à-vis the United States, including: tightening the restrictions on goods traded with Cuba to incorporate things which might have even negligible strategic value; changing Cabinet views; and toning down any public statements on Canada's trade with Cuba to ensure they did not seem boastful. On this last point, Green revealed that the Prime Minister agreed with him that more discretion was needed. Rusk's discussions with Heeney therefore had a salutary effect as far as US policy was concerned for as Green told Campbell, Canada's Cuban policy was "'the most serious problem" in terms of Canadian-American relations because it "might do irreparable harm to our relations with the United States if we did not amend our policy". In fact, he worried that it "might even lead the United States to take retaliatory action against us in other fields.'" ²⁶ Thus he directed that the matter be studied by his department.

Green's sentiments were in fact watered down in the Department of External Affairs study authored by Under-Secretary Norman Robertson and completed on 8 March. Prompted by the recent Rusk-Heeney talks, by Rostow's statements in the North Atlantic Council, and by Howard Green's wish to have something to distribute to his Cabinet colleagues, Robertson's

²⁶ 'Cuba – Trade Policy', Campbell to Under-Secretary, 23 February, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file "18". Basil Robinson's diary entry for 21 February records that Green had urged Diefenbaker that they should seek to make "a somewhat less aggressive defence of existing government line" on Cuban policy; see Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, p. 251.

report began with the observation “the implications of our relations with Cuba, particularly in terms of U.S.-Canada relations, are complicated and far-reaching. Our policy had frequently been misunderstood and occasionally distorted both at home and abroad.” Noting the long-standing and effective Canadian practice of preventing both the trans-shipment of US goods and the sale of strategic goods to Cuba, Robertson concluded that Rostow’s emphasis on extending COCOM controls to Cuba was redundant as far as Canada was concerned.²⁷ Indeed, when Green presented Robertson’s report to the Cabinet on 10 April, the Canadian Ministers affirmed this view, agreeing that “no action need to be taken now on the U.S. request that the N.A.T.O. allies consider extending COCOM controls to Cuba.”²⁸ Returning to Robertson’s report, the Under-Secretary had observed that recent discussions between Canadian and American officials seemed to point to an expectation by the US government that Canada “would join them in a quarantine of Cuba” and would take other more vigorous steps against the Castro regime. These proposals worried Robertson as “such a drastic change in [Canada’s] position would probably be represented throughout Latin America as Canada ‘knuckling under’ to U.S. pressure.”²⁹

Although not wanting Canada to ‘knuckle under’, at the same time Robertson wanted to make “clear that our policy was not calculated essentially as a mere demonstration of independence for its own sake regardless of the merits of the case.” To “refute any inference that Canada was insensitive to the dangers involved in the spread of communism through the Caribbean”, he suggested: extending aid to more Caribbean countries; participating actively in the Alliance for Progress; and even Canadian membership in the OAS. There was also the possibility of arranging for more intelligence sharing and further cooperation on trade controls to

²⁷ ‘Relations with Cuba’, Memorandum for the Minister, 8 March, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file “19”.

²⁸ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 10 April, 1962’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6192.

²⁹ ‘Relations with Cuba’, Memorandum for the Minister, 8 March, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file “19”.

prevent any evasion of the existing regulations. As Canadian policy had been ‘misrepresented’ it was important to correct this. Hence, these efforts would allow time for a further and more fundamental re-examination of Canadian policy towards Cuba without giving the Americans the impression that Canada was procrastinating. In conclusion, Robertson advised that “consideration could be given to the kind of public statement which might improve our appearance in the United States without losing the political advantages for ourselves and other Western countries in a continuation of relations with Cuba.”³⁰ Just as Ambassador Merchant had predicted, there was to be no fundamental change in Canada’s Cuban policy. Yet in emphasising that Canada was already basically following COCOM controls, Robertson had made an important observation which was that Canadian policy already fit the US goal of isolating Cuba.

Also, while not exactly what Robertson had envisioned in terms of a salutary statement, on 1 April the Prime Minister’s Office expressed concern about trials then taking place in Cuba for the prisoners taken during the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Urging clemency for those on trial, Diefenbaker’s statement also asked that capital punishment not be used should any of the prisoners be found guilty. The US had played a role, for on 31 March, Willis Armstrong had spoken with officials in the PMO to appeal for Canada to take this course of action as the President was concerned for the prisoners’ well-being. Diefenbaker had been considering the release of a statement anyways, and so this was no great effort on his part. Basil Robinson, in his diary, wrote though, that the Prime Minister “clearly wants to make up for ground lost over Government’s policy on trade with Cuba.... this episode has been of some assistance in US-Canada context.”³¹ It was indeed by now a rare point of public agreement between Canada and the US on Cuba although, in a nod to not appearing to ‘knuckle under’, the PMO did request that

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Diary entry for 31 March, in Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 261.

the Americans take every effort to conceal the President's overture to them.³² Pleased that Canada was speaking out, the administration agreed. However, Kennedy did write Diefenbaker to express how "grateful" he was that the Canadian leader had spoken out on an issue on which the President had "a deep personal interest".³³

In terms of Canada's broader position on Cuba, as the year wore on the Americans offered additional words of praise and this was primarily because the Canadians seemed to be towing the American line in terms of COCOM. During a chat with Howard Green at the Athens NATO Ministerial Meeting on 3 May, 1962, Secretary Rusk emphasised American pleasure at Canada's position, particularly in regards to prohibiting trade in strategic goods.³⁴ A few days later, Ambassador Merchant discussed problems in Canadian-American relations with Basil Robinson, the latter observing that the Americans had adopted a softer line in statements regarding his government's policy on Cuba. This was helpful, Robinson believed, because it might dampen public and congressional criticism of Canadian trade with Cuba in non-strategic goods, criticism which menaced Canada's business interests in the United States. Merchant cautioned, though, that "people in Washington still need to be persuaded of the Canadian arguments."³⁵ Thus it seems that by the summer of 1962, a *modus vivendi* had been worked out: Canada would refrain from attacking US policy and would support the US embargo as best it

³² Ottawa to State, no. 971, 1 April, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General, 4/62-5/16/62". See also: Memorandum for the Under-Secretary, 24 March, 1962; Robinson to Latin American Division, 26 March, 1962; and Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 31 March, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 5, file "19".

³³ Kennedy to Diefenbaker, in State to Ottawa, no. 960, 1 April, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1962".

³⁴ United States Delegation to the Twenty-Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Athens, Greece, May 4-6, 1962, 'NATO Policy toward Cuba', Memorandum of Conversation, 3 May, 1962, 4:15 PM. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file "Cuba 1962-63".

³⁵ 'Conversations with Ambassador Merchant and Mr. Armstrong of the United States Embassy', Draft Memorandum, 9 May, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file "2".

could within the limits posed by its position toward Cuba; the American government, in turn, would avoid criticising Canadian-Cuban relations.

A State Department memorandum on this topic prepared at the end of May 1962 began with the standard observation that “the essential element in problems concerning Canada is psychological” and results from Canadian nationalist concerns. Recalling the discussion that Secretary Rusk had had with Heeney in the winter and then tracing the positive course of Canada’s policy towards Cuba, the author noted indications that “Canadian sentiment is becoming more sympathetic to the U.S. estimate of the Castro threat....” It was expected that this change in Canadian public opinion, combined with a renewed mandate for the Progressive Conservatives in the coming federal election, could mean that “Diefenbaker may feel freer to move toward our position.” Having a hopeful tone, the paper also warned that “any course of action other than persuasion such as obvious or heavy-handed pressures, especially if done publicly, would be counter-productive and might adversely affect” US interests.³⁶

American interests were also being served by the efforts of Canadian Embassy staff in Cuba. From Havana, Canadian Ambassador George Kidd passed on a wealth of information to Ottawa, some of which was shared with US and British officials.³⁷ For instance the Ottawa Embassy received a report regarding Kidd’s attempts to woo a pro-Castro Chilean diplomat visiting Havana. Commenting on this with approval, Rufus Smith added “as you know, we do not see entirely eye-to-eye with the Canadians as to the nature of the Castro regime, but I have

³⁶ ‘Briefing Memorandum, Canadian-U.S. Relations and Cuba,’ 23 May, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 5, file “Cuban Export Ban, 1960-1962”.

³⁷ While focused on US-UK intelligence sharing, the following work also touches on the Canadian element of this intelligence programme; James G. Hershberg, ‘Their Men in Havana: Anglo-American Intelligence Exchanges and the Cuban Crises, 1961-62’, *Intelligence and National Security* 15, no. 2 (2000), pp. 121-76.

always found George Kidd to be pretty sensible....”³⁸ In mid-August, Kidd dispatched a report to Ottawa on “widespread rumours in Havana that Soviet troops have been landed in Cuba.” Admitting that there were always rumours which he did not usually pass on to Ottawa as this would be a waste of time, Kidd argued that current information made it “reasonable to assume, however, that a fair number of Soviet military advisers are now working with the Cuban armed forces.”³⁹ These intelligence reports prompted Alfred Pick, head of the DEA’s Latin American Division, to express a fear to the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Américo Cruz, that “the Soviets would take control of Cuba, so that in addition to losing our sovereignty, we would then also constitute a threat to the Americas.”⁴⁰ Historians Peter McKenna and John M. Kirk have noted that Cruz was aware that Canada’s approach to relations with Cuba was “one of critical coexistence (with the emphasis on ‘critical’)” and that the Cuban government “should not delude itself about Canadian altruism, in no small measure because of the intense pressure that Washington continued to bring to bear on the Diefenbaker government.”⁴¹

In an examination of the recent Soviet arms build up on Cuba, written in mid-August, Robert Hurwitch, the State Department’s Officer in Charge of Cuban Affairs and a man deeply involved in Operation Mongoose, called attention to the fact that “Canada has managed quietly but effectively to maintain a close embargo over shipment of items to Cuba which originate in the US and over those which are under COCOM control.” He expressed the hope “that other NATO countries will reexamine their situation [to] ensure that they are doing at least this much

³⁸ Smith to Carlson, 26 July, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1963, Box 3, file “Cuba Quarantine 1962”.

³⁹ ‘Soviet Military and Economic Advisers for Cuba’, Havana to External, no. 401, 16 August, 1962. TNA, FO 371/162372. I am indebted to Lisa Perrella for copying this document for me. There was indeed a large influx of Soviet military specialists and personnel onto the island over the summer and autumn of 1962, see Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *‘One Hell of a Gamble’: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), Chapters 9 and 10.

⁴⁰ Cruz quoted in John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbor Policy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 62.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

to avoid assisting and strengthening economic and military potential of Cuban regime.”⁴² A few weeks later, in testimony before the combined US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Armed Services Committee, Secretary Rusk took a similar line. When asked what the administration’s policy was regarding continued trade with Cuba by Mexico and Canada, Rusk noted with sympathy that while the US government stressed to these countries the importance of restricting trade with the Cubans, “this is not something that they find easy to do within their own systems and their own political situation.” He believed, however, that “we have made, I think, considerable headway with the Canadians who have been, I think, more helpful than any other members of NATO.” In this regard he cited both Canada’s “rigorous measures to prevent, for example, re-export of American supplies through Canada” and the permission given by the Canadian government “to discourage Canadians with American affiliations to stay in the Cuban trade.”⁴³ The day before, in planning his testimony with the President, Rusk had spoken just as favourably of Canadian trade policy, although he added that Canada’s trade with Cuba was shrinking in part because of “action by Canada, partly because the Cubans haven’t got any dollars” to buy goods.⁴⁴ Under Secretary Ball echoed Rusk in his own testimony before the House Select Committee on Export Controls on 3 October. A memorandum he submitted to the Committee affirmed that “Canadian policy has been to prohibit the re-export to Cuba of U.S. origin goods and not allow the shipment from Canada to Cuba of arms or related equipment of military significance, or of goods of a ‘strategic’ COCOM character no matter what the origin.”

⁴² ‘Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom’, August 30, 1962. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. X (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), Document 396.

⁴³ ‘The World Situation’, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Armed Services, 5 September, 1962, p. 700. Digital National Security Archive, Document No. CC00348.

⁴⁴ ‘Meeting with Congressional Leadership on Cuba’, 4 September, 1962, 5:00-5:55 P.M. *The Presidential Recordings - John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises, Volume Two*, ed. Timothy Naftali and Philip Zelikow (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), p. 60

Observing that “while permitting trade in non-strategic commodities”, Ball revealed that the volume of Canadian trade with Cuba in 1962 had shrunk to pre-Castro levels.⁴⁵

These comments by Administration officials received favourable reviews by Ambassador Ritchie. In a cable to Ottawa written on 15 October, Ritchie observed, “We have as you know been relatively clear in recent months of direct criticism from the Admin on Cuba”. Citing the recent testimony by Rusk and Ball as proof of warmer relations over this issue, the Canadian Ambassador observed that the US government “would naturally welcome any further support or sympathy” from Canada. Further, “while concern about our general attitude lies not...far below the surface”, the Kennedy administration’s “heavy guns” were trained on other countries “whose cooperation would be more instrumental in intensifying the economic pressure on Castro.” Ritchie also passed on information regarding the administration’s efforts in “making a creditable attempt to maintain a public sense of perspective and restraint.” The American press and the Congress were another matter as neither expressed any understanding of Canadian concern, nor were they showing moderation in dealing with Cuba. Thus even though the “state of affairs is satisfactory as far as it goes”, Ritchie felt that public and political pressure on the administration meant that “it would, I think, be a mistake to take its continuance for granted.” Given the upcoming US congressional elections it was very important for the Canadian government to keep quiet on anything which might be perceived as criticism of US policy on Cuba for, as Ritchie opined, “ever shade of outside sympathy is noted, every sign of reluctance magnified and emotionally assessed.” Canada’s Ambassador was not advocating that the Canadians “should distort our own judgment vis-à-vis Cuba itself”; rather Canada “should bear in mind the benefits

⁴⁵ Ball to Paul Kitchen, Chairman, Select Committee on Export Controls, 8 October, 1962, Tab ‘B’. Digital National Security Archive, Document No. CC00546.

of doing what we can to encourage USA Admin in its attempts to assuage domestic pressures.”⁴⁶ By October 1962, the Americans had come to realise that there was to be no change in Canada’s fundamental position on Cuba, but they could live with this as Canadian policy seemed more supportive than in the past.

Meanwhile on 14 October an American U-2 reconnaissance plane photographed Soviet Medium Range Ballistic Missile and Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile launch sites being constructed in Cuba. Over the following week secret discussions were carried out by a small group of Kennedy administration officials dubbed the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, or Excomm. This group weighed various options, before settling on a decision to go public with the information, demand that the missiles be removed, and impose a naval blockade, dubbed a ‘quarantine’, which was meant to prevent further arms shipments and allow time for Moscow to deliberate on a response.⁴⁷ Kennedy planned to reveal the presence of the missiles in a televised address to the American people at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, 22 October. Meanwhile, diplomats were dispatched that day to brief the United States’ closest allies, which to this point had received no information on the crisis. To this end Livingston Merchant, then in retirement, went to Ottawa to brief the Canadian Prime Minister.

In the Cabinet Room in the East Block of Parliament Merchant, Ivan White of the US Embassy, and two CIA officials sat down with Diefenbaker, Defence Minister Douglas Harkness and Green at 5:00 PM, two hours before President Kennedy’s public address. The Americans found the Prime Minister “harassed and worried”; unbeknownst to them, Diefenbaker had

⁴⁶ ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, no. 2987, 15 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “11”.

⁴⁷ There is a vast literature on the missile crisis, but of particular use are: Don Munton and David A. Welch, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *‘One Hell of a Gamble’: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Chapter 9; and Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1997).

received some advance notice of the situation from two Canadian intelligence officers who had returned from Washington with a report that a crisis was brewing over Cuba.⁴⁸ Merchant opened his briefing by revealing the events in Cuba and the Kennedy-Excomm deliberations. Upon learning that Merchant had a draft of Kennedy's speech with him, Diefenbaker "brusquely" asked what its main points were. As Merchant read the speech, the Prime Minister advised that a reference to the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko as being "dishonest and dishonourable" should be removed. He also carefully scrutinised Merchant's presentation of the quarantine procedures and the intelligence information, and stated "'let us face facts; an election is on in the United States'". After Merchant denied that the President would play domestic politics with such an important issue, the note taker observed that the Prime Minister "whose attitude during the discussion and following the photographs had been gradually changing...swung around from his original scepticism bordering on antagonism to a more considered friendly and cooperative manner." Indeed, the blown-up U2 photos seemed to have swayed the Prime Minister considerably, and he thanked one of the US intelligence officials "on the clarity" of his briefing.⁴⁹

Regarding the two other Canadians present, Merchant found Green to be "less shocked and less vocal than would be expected" and saw Harkness as being "cheered by the decisiveness of the President's course of action". Returning to the PM, Merchant believed that at the conclusion of the meeting he "was sobered and upset but...his earlier doubts had been dissipated and in the end he would give strong support to the United States." As he observed, "it was

⁴⁸ See J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-68* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 352; and Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), p. 454.

⁴⁹ 'Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker to Deliver Copy of President Kennedy's Letter of October 22 on Cuban Situation', Memorandum of Conversation, 22 October, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 10/62-1/63."

interesting...that at no point, despite pointed questions, did [Diefenbaker] make a commitment in this regards.” It must be emphasised that this was not simply an interesting observation but also an important one. As the American delegation departed his office, the Prime Minister again advised Merchant that the characterisation of the Soviet Foreign Minister as ‘dishonest and dishonorable’ be removed. This, the American note taker recorded, “was the only thing in the President’s address to which [Diefenbaker] objected.”⁵⁰ Diefenbaker’s advice was relayed to Dean Rusk, accepted, and Kennedy’s address did not contain the attack on the Soviet official.

Broadcast at 7:00 PM to people around the world, the President offered words of warning to the Soviet and Cuban governments and made a pledge to be steadfast in defending the American people as well as people throughout the Western Hemisphere. Kennedy began by revealing that “unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites” were being constructed on Cuba, the purpose of which was “to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.” There were in fact two types of missile sites being constructed: those for medium range missiles and those for intermediate range missiles. While the medium range variety were capable of hitting targets within the southeast United States, Central America, and the Caribbean, the intermediate range missiles could strike “most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru.” Kennedy went on to warn that “this urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base - by the presence of these large, long range, and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction - constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas.” After recounting the clearly false assurances given to him by the Soviets that no offensive missiles would end up on Cuba, the President also emphasised that he had publicly warned in September that the United States would react adversely to the installation of non-

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

defensive weapons in Cuba. Adverse reaction, he revealed, was now to come in the form of a quarantine of the island in order to stop additional shipments of offensive weapons.⁵¹

Hours later in his own address, Diefenbaker echoed the President's "sombre and challenging" view, telling the House of Commons that "the construction of bases for the launching of offensive weapons...constitutes a threat to most of the cities of North America including our major cities in Canada." Stating that "the determination of Canada will be that the United Nations should be charged at the earliest possible moment with this serious problem", he proposed that should there be "a desire on the part of the U.S.S.R. to have facts", a group of non-aligned nations could conduct "an on-site inspection in Cuba to ascertain what the facts are". This effort, an "independent inspection" made through the UN, would both "provide an objective answer to what is going on in Cuba" and be "the only sure way that the world can secure the facts". Concluding that Canada's duty "is not to fan the flames of fear", Diefenbaker said that he was praying so "that those who have the responsibility of statesmanship will always have in mind the need for doing everything that can be done to assure peace."⁵² This was hardly a ringing endorsement of Kennedy's stance, especially when compared with the strong statement the Prime Minister had offered a little over a year before during the 1961 Berlin Crisis. What Kennedy had been hoping for from Diefenbaker was what he got from the other major members of NATO: unqualified support. Instead, America's closest ally looked at Kennedy with scepticism. Peter Haydon has correctly noted that "at this stage in the crisis Kennedy wanted Canadian support, not reservations. Diefenbaker's statement was thus a slap in the face for Kennedy."⁵³ Indeed, David Ormsby-Gore, the British Ambassador to Washington, recorded in a

⁵¹ 'Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba', 22 October, 1962. Available at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website.

⁵² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (22 October, 1962), pp. 805-6.

⁵³ Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 122.

note to Prime Minister Macmillan that Robert Kennedy had telephoned him on 22 October to report that “among their Allies the only half-hearted response to his actions that the President had received was from Canada.”⁵⁴

The suggestion to use the UN was fuelled, in part, by a memorandum that had been prepared in the Department of External Affairs earlier that day. The proposal referred to parallels between Suez and the present crisis, and implied that Diefenbaker could act through the UN to mediate the situation and perhaps win a Nobel Prize as Lester Pearson had done during the Suez Crisis. However, the DEA had not meant for the proposal to be made publicly; rather they had wanted Diefenbaker to bring it up with the Americans before Kennedy’s television address.⁵⁵ By proposing UN inspections in his address the Prime Minister had openly challenged the United States and although he had acknowledged the threat posed by the Soviet missiles, he seemed in fact to dispute the veracity of Kennedy’s claims.

One of Diefenbaker’s defenders has argued that the Prime Minister’s advocacy of United Nations involvement was commensurate with Canadian interests and past experiences. As Jocelyn Maynard Ghent asserted, “stressing the role that the UN might play...was not only the natural Canadian response but probably seemed the wisest and safest course for the time being.”⁵⁶ Certainly, the leaders of the other Canadian political parties, including Lester Pearson, were willing to support Diefenbaker’s position, although none of them had seen the evidence Merchant had provided to the Prime Minister. Ghent also wrote that Diefenbaker’s suggestion had resulted from a passage contained in Kennedy’s note to the Prime Minister, which Merchant had delivered, and which, according to the American noted taker, Diefenbaker had read

⁵⁴ Washington Telegram 2650 to Foreign Office, 23 October, 1962. TNA, PREM 11/3689. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for providing me with access to his account at the online Macmillan Cabinet Papers.

⁵⁵ Denis Smith prints most of the memorandum’s text. See Smith, *Rogue Tory*, pp. 454-5.

⁵⁶ Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p. 167.

“hastily”.⁵⁷ Like the Prime Minister, Ghent also seems to have read Kennedy’s message hastily as her claim stretches the facts. In addition to recounting much of what Merchant said in his briefing, Kennedy added in his note that he had directed the US representative to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, to present a resolution in the Security Council which would call “for the withdrawal of missile bases and other offensive weapons in Cuba under the supervision of United Nations observers.” “This”, the President wrote, “would make it possible for the United States to lift its quarantine.” Kennedy then urged the Prime Minister to instruct Canada’s UN delegation “to work actively with us and speak forthrightly in support of the above program in the United Nations”.⁵⁸ The President’s argument was for the Canadians to work with the US on an American resolution to seek the removal of the missiles rather than to push for the establishment of a fact-finding mission.

The following day, Diefenbaker felt it necessary to qualify and defend his remarks. In the morning Cabinet meeting he told his colleagues that the press had asked him whether there was any doubt about the missile sites. Although feeling that there “were, of course, political overtones in the American attitude” he, Green, and Harkness “had been convinced that there had been no exaggeration of the situation by the President of the United States.”⁵⁹ Then that afternoon he told the House of Commons that “lest there be any doubt about my meaning”, he had “not, of course, [been] casting any doubts on the facts of the situation as outlined by the President.” Going on to explain that “there is ample evidence that bases and equipment for the launching of offensive weapons have been constructed in Cuba”, Diefenbaker said that these

⁵⁷ ‘Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker to Deliver Copy of President Kennedy’s Letter of October 22 on Cuban Situation’, Memorandum of Conversation, 22 October, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.” Ghent’s argument can be found on *Idem.*, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p. 164.

⁵⁸ ‘Text of a Message to be delivered to Prime Minister Diefenbaker’, State to Ottawa, no. 496, 22 October, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “Canada, Security, 1962”.

⁵⁹ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 23 October, 1962, 10:30 A.M.’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6193.

“exist in sufficient quantities to threaten the security of this hemisphere.” He also acknowledged that while Kennedy’s plan had been to use a UN Security Council resolution to order the missiles’ removal, this effort would most likely fail due to the Soviet Union’s veto. Thus his purpose, which “was not intended to compete with any proposal of the United States” had been “to put in motion steps which could be taken in the United Nations general assembly” in the event that a Soviet veto was in fact made.⁶⁰ As Basil Robinson recalled, this statement was meant to give “the idea of a UN inquiry...a gloss more likely to appeal to the Americans.”⁶¹ Given his claims that the evidence was ‘ample’ and that there had been ‘no exaggeration’ of the situation by the President, one can conclude that Diefenbaker had initially blundered by emphasising the UN’s role, hence his efforts to defend himself in Cabinet and in Parliament.

Meanwhile in Washington, Charles Ritchie and Basil Robinson met with William Tyler, now Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, on the morning of 23 October. Their mission was to seek out information about the quarantine and to downplay concerns already expressed to them by the Canada Desk at the State Department about Diefenbaker’s statement of 22 October. Seeking to limit damage, they emphasised to Tyler “that [the] facts of [the] situation as outlined by [the] President were not questioned by [the Canadian Government].” Appreciating their explanation, Tyler stated that this description seemed to be more consistent with what Livingston Merchant had reported following his meeting with Diefenbaker, Green, and Harkness. He then conducted a small briefing for the two Canadian diplomats on the quarantine procedures which were to take effect at 10:00 A.M. the following day, 24 October.⁶² These and other discussions between Canadian and American diplomats, would seem to counter the argument made by Ghent that “There was to be no opportunity for the Canadians to offer their own view of the wisest

⁶⁰ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (23 October, 1962), p. 821.

⁶¹ Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 289.

⁶² ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, 3087, 23 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “11”.

response, or to be persuaded of the American one.” This was certainly not high-level ministerial discussions between the likes of Green and Rusk, but Ghent’s assertion that “The diplomatic channels were blocked...” does not stand.⁶³ Additionally, the meeting between Ritchie and Robinson and William Tyler, taking place before the quarantine had come into effect, would have been the perfect moment for Canada to plead its case for calm or to urge for UN inspections. Instead, these two Canadian diplomats spent their time apologising for their Prime Minister’s bungled support.

Were there grounds for Diefenbaker’s hesitation for another reason, namely that the US President had failed to properly consult with him prior to the crisis? Kennedy’s message to Diefenbaker, one of seven personal letters sent to heads of government on 22 October, concluded that “it is most important that we should all keep in close touch with each other, and I will do all I can to keep you fully informed of developments as I see them.”⁶⁴ But informing the Canadian government at this stage was all the Kennedy administration wished to do; Diefenbaker, on the other hand, expected the US to consult fully with Canada. In the view of J.L. Granatstein, the Prime Minister’s “extraordinary immobility” during the crisis resulted from “his congenital inability to make difficult decisions”, his distaste for Kennedy and for the President’s Cuban policy, and “his resentment that, in his view, the United States had not met its obligation under the NORAD agreement to consult Canada”.⁶⁵ NORAD, or the North American Air Defence Command, was an agreement concluded between Canada and the US to provide for the joint defence of North America. In the event of a crisis, the two governments were meant to consult

⁶³ Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p.183.

⁶⁴ ‘Text of a Message to be delivered to Prime Minister Diefenbaker’, State to Ottawa, no. 496, 22 October, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “Canada, Security, 1962”. For the other leaders that Kennedy wrote to see May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 214.

⁶⁵ J.L. Granatstein, “When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States”, In *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 96-7.

to formulate a response. Complicating the issue were differing understandings of what ‘consultation’ meant. Diefenbaker expected consultations at the highest level, while the Canadian and American militaries and the US government believed that lower level consultation would suffice.⁶⁶

The American military, in fact, requested that Canadian air defence units go on alert on 22 October.⁶⁷ The US had taken the military rather than the political route in seeking to have NORAD go on alert, and as the minutes of Merchant’s briefing of the Prime Minister that same day show, at no point did the former Ambassador make such a request of Diefenbaker.⁶⁸ This is in fact contrary to what the Prime Minister alleged in his memoirs.⁶⁹ Diefenbaker’s memoirs also contain an interesting recollection of a telephone exchange between the President and Prime Minister. According to Diefenbaker, the chat allegedly devolved into a shouting match between the two men over the issue of consultation.⁷⁰ It is highly suspect that such a phone call took place, however. No record of it exists in the White House telephone log or in the White House transcripts of the recordings taken during Cuban missile crisis. Indeed, such a remarkable event – a shouting match between allies during the tensest moment of the Cold War – is never mentioned by anyone on the American side in the existing documentary record. Basil Robinson has written that Diefenbaker’s secretary took notes of his side of the conversation but failed to

⁶⁶ Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 180-4. Joseph Jockel, the pre-eminent historian of NORAD, had observed that NORAD was in fact founded twice, once between the Canadian and American militaries in 1957 and then again between the Canadian and American governments in 1958. This confused arrangement led to differing views of the matter of consultation; see Joseph T. Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007: A History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), Introduction and Chapter 1.

⁶⁷ Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007*, p. 57.

⁶⁸ See ‘Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker to Deliver Copy of President Kennedy’s Letter of October 22 on Cuban Situation’, Memorandum of Conversation, 22 October, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

⁶⁹ John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Three: The Tumultuous Years, 1962-1967* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 82.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

cite them.⁷¹ Pending the discovery of American or Canadian evidence which might prove otherwise, it seems far more accurate to support Jocelyn Ghent's conclusion that the matter of the "telephone call may have been a case of confusing what should have happened with what did happen. Diefenbaker's pride would have made it difficult for him to admit that he was so poorly informed before the Merchant visit, or that the request for an alert was actually made through military channels."⁷²

The consultation issue is important because it appears to have been the major factor influencing Diefenbaker's thinking, rather than the differences on Cuba. Consultation was related to the Prime Minister's concern for Canadian sovereignty, because he seems to have felt, understandably, that he and the Cabinet should have been the ones to decide whether or not the military went alert. Peter Haydon has taken the view that Diefenbaker, failing to realise "that he was not the sole point of communication" between the Canadian and American governments, put undue expectations on being consulted. Further, had "he accepted Kennedy's rationale for unilateral action and the accompanying need for secrecy", the Prime Minister "might not have allowed himself to feel slighted when, in fact, Kennedy accorded him equal status with Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer."⁷³ On the other hand, Jocelyn Maynard Ghent has contested that "given the fact that Canada was the only country in the Western Hemisphere to share a close military alliance with the United States, consultation was imperative."⁷⁴ Supporting this view, historian Joseph Jockel has recently argued that the Canadian government "had a reasonable expectation to be consulted by Washington that had not been met." Instead,

⁷¹ Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, p. 288. Interestingly, Diefenbaker's memoirs placed the telephone call on 22 October, while Robinson wrote that it took place on 23 October. Knowlton Nash also places it on 23 October but his source for this seems to be Robinson; see Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), pp. 195-6.

⁷² Ghent, "Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis", p. 166.

⁷³ Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 186.

⁷⁴ Ghent, "Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis", p. 182.

by “simply informing Ottawa of the steps it was on the verge of taking, the Kennedy Administration had not been able to honour the pledges of consultation with Ottawa the US government had made in the NORAD agreement.” Further, “the failure to consult with Ottawa had not been because of a lack of time. No rapidly developing emergency had precluded consultation, nor were there fears of an immediate attack.”⁷⁵ Still, Haydon, noting that the bilateral defence relationship is an equal partnership, has questioned why “Diefenbaker did not initiate the consultation process himself.”⁷⁶ Indeed, Diefenbaker, having advanced notice of the crisis prior to Merchant’s briefing, could have taken the matter up with the Americans. Yet by October 1962, the Canadian Prime Minister had grown to deeply dislike the Kennedy administration, a feeling the Americans reciprocated.

Admitting that the US had indeed failed to consult with Canada, Jamie Glazov felt that there were good reasons for this. Secrecy was paramount for the Americans in crafting their response to the Soviet missile threat, a requirement which meant both that some members of Kennedy’s own Cabinet were unaware of the Excomm’s deliberations and none of the United States’s allies were consulted. This secretive approach was intended not only to catch the Soviets off guard, but to ensure that lengthy debate was avoided since time was a factor in getting the missiles removed before they were operational. Further, Glazov has written that “it remains a mystery how Diefenbaker could have expected the confidence of an ally whose basic trust he had violated, sometimes intentionally.”⁷⁷ This is quite convincing when one considers a number of events that had occurred over the previous few months which cast Diefenbaker in a less than positive light in American minds. Chief amongst these must have been his threats to use the Rostow Memorandum, which shredded his personal credibility with the White House.

⁷⁵ Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007*, p. 55.

⁷⁶ Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 189.

⁷⁷ Glazov, *Canadian Policy toward Khrushchev’s Soviet Union*, p. 147.

Also on two key policy questions, nuclear weapons and import surcharges, Diefenbaker had dithered and deceived his American allies. The latter issue was fresh in the minds of US officials as the surcharges were due to expire in October and in a message to the Prime Minister written on 18 October, Kennedy had asked for the surcharges to be removed.⁷⁸ So while Ghent has argued that “Indeed the President’s disdain for and contempt of the Prime Minister completely precluded the kind of communication Kennedy had with Macmillan”, there were in fact justifiable reasons for President Kennedy’s distrust of Diefenbaker.⁷⁹

An additional piece of evidence reveals additional American concern with the Canadian Prime Minister. On 20 October Kennedy sent a letter to Diefenbaker stating his “distress” over Canada’s decision to support a nuclear test-ban treaty containing no provisions for verification. At the time the UN General Assembly was deliberating on two resolutions: one, supported by the US and UK called for a comprehensive test-ban treaty with inspections; the other, supported by several neutral nations, was the one Canada seemed to support even though it lacked verification procedures. Writing from New York, the American representative to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, had warned that a “US-Canadian split on this issue [is] likely to attract public notice to our short run disadvantage and to obvious long-run disadvantage of both US and Canada.”⁸⁰ Thus in his letter to Diefenbaker the President argued that as the Soviets, who supported the latter resolution, would undoubtedly cheat, the American government would therefore not be supporting the unpolicied moratorium. Canada, if it voted for the second resolution, would be siding with the

⁷⁸ Kennedy to Diefenbaker, 18 October, 1962; Diefenbaker to Kennedy, 27 October, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, “Canada, General, 1962”. Willis Armstrong had discussed a draft of Kennedy’s message with Basil Robinson a few days before, and Robinson had urged him to leave any mention of the surcharges out. That the Americans left it in says something about their view of the Prime Minister; see ‘U.S. Draft Reply to Prime Minister’s Message to President Kennedy’, Memorandum by Robinson, 16 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “13”.

⁷⁹ Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p.183.

⁸⁰ New York to Secretary of State, no.1316, 17 October, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

Soviets against the United States.⁸¹ Kennedy feared that the Canadian Prime Minister had abandoned his previous policy of opposing unverified moratoriums on nuclear weapons. On 14 April, 1962, Diefenbaker had spoken out against trusting the Soviets on this matter. Four days later, Kennedy had told the Canadian Prime Minister that he was relieved to hear Diefenbaker's comment because "for some time I have had an uneasy feeling that perhaps the positions of our two countries were becoming increasingly disparate on the nuclear question."⁸² Now, in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, their positions did seem to differ. Thus Kennedy warned that Canada was taking a position which could "only damage, and damage seriously the Western position on an essential issue of Western security."⁸³

The American position on this issue was personally emphasised a few days later when Ambassador Ritchie spoke with Harlan Cleveland, the US Assistant Secretary for International Organizations. Cleveland took time to fully explain the American position, in particular clarifying that both Kennedy and Rusk had a "keen personal concern" and both "earnestly hoped that [the Canadian government] would in the circumstances appreciate and support USA refusal to accept any proposal which did not...provide for fully reliable inspection." In this regard Cleveland stated that the Administration's concern was a direct result of the Soviet Ambassador's denial on 18 October that there were missiles in Cuba, and he concluded by revealing that where Canada positioned itself was important because of the influence Canadians had on how both Western and neutral powers voted.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Kennedy to Diefenbaker, 20 October, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 11, file "2".

⁸² Kennedy to Diefenbaker, 13 April, 1962. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, "Canada, General, 1962".

⁸³ Kennedy to Diefenbaker, 20 October, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 11, file "2". Lord Amory, the British High Commissioner, emphasised the same point in a discussion with Green the day before. See 'Memorandum for the Minister,' 19 October, 1962, in *Ibid.* Also, see Armstrong to Diefenbaker, 15 April, 1962, *Ibid.*, for Kennedy's message of support to Diefenbaker for his stand against "unpoliced" test bans.

⁸⁴ 'Nuclear Testing', Washington to External, no. 3111, 24 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file "13".

Like Kennedy, Canadian Defence Minister Douglas Harkness had argued that the resolution for an uninspected moratorium would damage Canadian interests. This was not only because it could threaten US and hence Western security by undermining the nuclear deterrent, but Canada's support for the resolution could "place a major strain upon our diplomatic credit in Washington at a time when important Canadian interests are at stake in relations to the European Economic Community and other matters."⁸⁵ Harold Macmillan, the British Prime Minister, had also written Diefenbaker, although this message was regarding the missile crisis itself. Reporting on his correspondence with Kennedy, Macmillan told the Canadian leader that he had given the President his full support. The British PM worried that the crisis "may give the Russians an opportunity of exploiting differences of interest or at least of emphasis between the United States on the one hand and her American and European allies on the other." He cautioned that "we must above all try to avoid any splits in the Alliance of this kind." Diefenbaker was also informed of Macmillan's intention not to take any initiative under "present uncertain circumstances" unless the situation escalated beyond its "Caribbean context".⁸⁶ The message is important in the context of the Canadian decision-making, because the Canadian Cabinet relied on British policy as a guide.⁸⁷

The Cabinet was deeply divided over the issue of whether to put NORAD units on alert. Two emotional Cabinet meetings on the issue took place on 23 and 24 October. During the first, and despite both Diefenbaker's assertion that the facts presented by Kennedy in his address the previous evening "were as cited" and Harkness's impassioned pleas to put the Canadian military

⁸⁵ Harkness to Diefenbaker, 26 October, 1962. LAC, MG 32 B19 Vol.57, file "'The Nuclear Arms Question' Background Correspondence; Memoranda, etc."

⁸⁶ Commonwealth Relations Office to Ottawa, No.299, 23 October, 1962. TNA, PREM 11/3689. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for providing me with access to his account at the online Macmillan Cabinet Papers.

⁸⁷ See Ghent, "Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis", p.174; and Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, p. 287-8.

on alert, the Cabinet decided to delay “alerting the Canadian air defence forces [until] the reactions of other countries, particularly the U.K...had been ascertained.”⁸⁸ The Ministers did resolve, though, to put the Canadian Army on alert and agreed both to ban Soviet aircraft from Canadian airspace and to search aircraft arriving from other Soviet bloc countries.⁸⁹ In the meeting on 24 October Harkness pleaded for measures “to be taken to improve the posture of Canadian forces in case the international situation should deteriorate and war actually occur.” Again, the ministers were deeply divided. Some supported Harkness, others argued that a Canadian alert “might escalate the crisis”, while some, viewing the quarantine of Cuba as “questionable”, feared that the US military wanted to provoke a fight with the Soviets. Thus, the only decision made was to delay again.⁹⁰ However, Harkness saw Diefenbaker later that day with a report showing that the United States had moved to DEFCON 2, meaning the Americans were making immediate preparations for war. He urged the Prime Minister to do the same with Canada’s forces which would otherwise be out of sync. Despite having previously argued that only a Cabinet decision would suffice, Diefenbaker ordered Harkness to immediately prepare Canada’s military.⁹¹

Harkness, who since 22 October had been perplexed and worried by Diefenbaker’s refusal to put the Canadian military on the same alert status as the Americans, had already taken the extraordinary step of authorising this status himself. Canada’s military commanders complied with this secret order immediately. Thus while the Prime Minister and his government failed to live up to their NORAD commitment, the Canadian military and the Minister of Defence ensured that Canada would be ready in case hostilities broke out. As Canada’s military

⁸⁸ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 23 October, 1962, 10:30 A.M.’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6193.

⁸⁹ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 23 October, 1962, 10:30 A.M.’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6193.

⁹⁰ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 24 October, 1962, 9:30 A.M.’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6193.

⁹¹ Smith, *Rogue Tory*, p. 459.

had met its commitments, Peter Haydon has argued that criticism of Canada's government "should be that Canada did not meet the political requirements for the use of its forces in the crisis. Kennedy's requirement had been political: he wanted to show allied solidarity to the Soviets as part of his coercive diplomacy."⁹²

Meanwhile in a CBC television interview on 24 October, External Affairs Minister Green complicated things by defending Canada's position as well as that of the US. When asked whether the Americans were being hypocritical in their reaction to the emplacement of missiles in Cuba given that they had placed missiles around the USSR, Green said that the event "in Cuba is very different" as "it is obvious now that the Soviet Union has moved in secretly with these missiles, all the time proclaiming to the world that any missiles that the Cubans were getting were purely defensive... and now it turns out that that isn't the case." In response to a question about whether Canada had been consulted as opposed to having been simply informed, Green in effect defended US actions by stating "...the United States has a great many allies and I think that all of them as well, perhaps, as some other countries were informed. Now there was no opportunity to have consultations all around that group." Thus he said that while his government had wished to be consulted, "in this case...that was impossible...." Downplaying Diefenbaker's suggestion for a UN verification mission, Green argued that in the rush of activity this subject had come up in a hurried manner as a method of resolving the crisis; as such, it did not reflect Canadian doubts about the veracity of American intelligence. Green told his interviewers that "I don't think the Americans have any doubt whatever that we're standing beside them. Certainly there isn't any suggestion from the United States that they haven't had the fullest cooperation

⁹² Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 211.

and friendliness – the greatest friendliness from Canada.”⁹³ At no point, though, did Green state Canadian support for the quarantine measure. “Green”, as Peter Haydon observed, “did little to convince his interviewers or anyone watching the program that the government was acting responsibly in concert with the United States and other allies to solve the crisis.”⁹⁴ In Basil Robinson’s opinion, Green left many people with “the impression that Canada’s position was based more on the obligations of an ally than on a conviction that appropriate and legally defensible action was being taken.”⁹⁵

So on the morning of 25 October Green broached the subject of “whether Canada’s position with respect to the U.S. action was clear to the public” with the Cabinet. He explained that “there had been discussion on television and the Prime Minister had made a statement in the House, but the public did not appear to be sure whether Canada fully supported the U.S. action or whether it was neutral.” As the other ministers agreed that “this situation should be corrected”, they advised Diefenbaker to make a further statement in the House of Commons that day “outlining what steps Canada had taken already and clarifying Canada’s stand in support of the U.S. action.”⁹⁶ That afternoon the Prime Minister recounted the steps that Canada had taken to search Cuban-bound aircraft and revealed that Canadian NORAD units were on alert. He also attacked the Soviet Union, which “by its actions has reached out across the Atlantic to challenge the right of free men to live in peace in this hemisphere.”⁹⁷ Diefenbaker’s statement was cited in a 27 October editorial in the *Washington Post*, which praised Canada’s actions during the missile

⁹³ ‘Text of a Television Interview with the Secretary of State for External Affairs on the CBC, October 22, 1962’, LAC, MG 32 B13, Vol. 12, file “45”. Note that the transcript has the wrong date.

⁹⁴ Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 136.

⁹⁵ Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, p. 289.

⁹⁶ ‘Cabinet Conclusions, 25 October, 1962, 10:30 A.M.’. LAC, RG 2, PCO, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6193.

⁹⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (25 October, 1962), p. 911.

crisis: “‘whatever the outcome [to the crisis] it is deeply reassuring the no cool air is blowing from Canada.’”⁹⁸

Canada’s position during the crisis was discussed when Ambassador Ritchie and Basil Robinson called on Secretary Rusk on 26 October. Presented with a copy of Diefenbaker’s statement to the House of Commons from the day before, Rusk called it “very good.” Ritchie also handed over a memorandum of conversation between Howard Green and the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Américo Cruz, who had hinted that the Cubans would permit the missiles to be withdrawn if the US pledged to not invade the island. Thanking Ritchie for the information, Rusk stated that the US position was that it would not invade Cuba and that President Kennedy had been “urging calmness” towards Cuba over the previous few months until evidence of the missiles had come to light. Suggesting that Green could probe Cruz further, Rusk also requested that the Canadian Ambassador to Havana could seek out Castro with the “aim of implanting the view that Cuba cannot possibly win.” Both suggestions, Rusk said, would be greatly appreciated by the US. Referring as well to Diefenbaker’s statement of 22 October, Rusk noted that Canada’s proposal for a fact finding mission was viewed by the Americans as being impractical given that “the time factor in this whole Cuban situation is absolutely critical.”⁹⁹

The memorandum of conversation between Green and Ambassador Cruz made it quite clear that the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs was onside with the Americans. Green “emphasized and reiterated the grave threat to the security of the Americas, including Canada, of these missile bases. He insisted that the weapons were of an offensive character, and, one way or

⁹⁸ Quoted in Washington to External, no. 3176, 27 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “11”.

⁹⁹ ‘Cuban Situation’, Memorandum of Conversation, 26 October, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Cuba Quarantine, 1962”.

another, they had to go.”¹⁰⁰ Further, Green met the Cuban Ambassador again on 30 October. Seeking to convince the Cuban of the need to smooth the way for UN inspections that would ensure the missiles’ removal, Green defended Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, and Dean Rusk, calling them “men of moderation”. This conversation, like Green’s previous talk with the Cruz, was retold to the Americans.¹⁰¹ These efforts by Canadian diplomats, including Green, to show that they were on-side with the Americans, might indicate a guilty conscience and were perhaps an attempt to atone for the Prime Minister’s blunder and their own perception that their government has failed to ready NORAD units. Certainly Green, who earlier in the year had been worried by the divergence of opinion on Cuba between Ottawa and Washington, may have been concerned with the present situation.

The Canadians also played a very modest role in other aspect of the crisis. From Havana, Ambassador Kidd relayed information to the Department of External Affairs which in turn passed the intelligence on to the State Department.¹⁰² The Canadians also took a role in searching all aircraft flying from Eastern bloc countries to Cuba. An American analysis of the search procedures, concluding that they were “sufficiently detailed to ensure a measure of deterrence”, recommended that similar measures be used by countries in the Caribbean.¹⁰³ Both of these efforts were noticed by the Americans, who praised the Canadians for their aid.¹⁰⁴ Further, Canadian air and naval forces went on alert, and in the case of the latter, Canadian ships

¹⁰⁰ ‘Cuban Position on the Crisis’, Telegram from the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, to the Canadian Ambassador, Washington, D.C., October 25, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Cuba Quarantine, 1962”.

¹⁰¹ ‘Cuba’, Memorandum for the Ambassador by Robinson, 1 November, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “13”.

¹⁰² That December, President Kennedy would commend the Canadian Embassy staff; see ‘Bahamas Meetings – December 21-22, 1962. Specific points discussed with President Kennedy at Luncheon Meeting, December 21’. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “12”.

¹⁰³ ‘Canadian Search Procedures of Soviet Bloc Aircraft’, Gordon Knox to Burdett, 27 October, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, box 3, file “Cuba Quarantine 1962”.

¹⁰⁴ See ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, no. 3175, 29 October, 1962; and ‘Flights to Cuba by Soviet Bloc Aircraft’, Washington to External, no. 3116, 24 October, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “11”.

took on a role scouting for Soviet submarines in the North Atlantic which freed up US Navy vessels to take part in the quarantine of Cuba. Canada was thus the only country allied with the United States which took on an active military role during the missile crisis.¹⁰⁵

There was thus a fair amount of Canadian support of the United States, just not at the highest political level. Peyton Lyon has noted that much of the criticism that the Canadian government received for its actions or inactions during the missile crisis was domestic. “Many Canadians” he observed, “came to feel embarrassment over the government’s attitude during the crisis”. The embarrassing issues were “the initial reluctance to accept the American charges which had been implied by Mr Diefenbaker’s proposal of a neutral commission, the three day delay in offering unequivocal support and in announcing the alert of Canada’s component in NORAD, and the confused and ambiguous statements of Mr. Green.”¹⁰⁶ Ghent has agreed, observing that “Criticism of the government’s failure to declare an immediate alert and stand forthrightly beside the United States emerged in the aftermath of Green’s television appearance and accelerated as the crisis subsided.”¹⁰⁷ The crisis had abated when the Soviets decided on 27-28 October to withdraw the missiles. A week later Rufus Smith, of the US Embassy in Ottawa, met CBC journalist Robert Reford to discuss Canada’s response to the crisis. After Reford asked about reports of American unhappiness with Canadian actions or inactions, Smith stressed “the difference in assessing the value of specific actions and assessing the significance of tone, style, and timing of the public statements that accompany them.” Referring to an incident in 1960 when Canada’s Trade Minister George Hees had called Cubans ‘fine businessmen’, Smith said that “unfortunately” these type of statements tend “to be remembered by people, particularly

¹⁰⁵ See Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 155-175.

¹⁰⁶ Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, vol. XII, 1961-1963. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p.180.

editors, who may forget that in fact Canada has been more cooperative with [the US] trade embargo” than have other US allies.¹⁰⁸ Implicit in this was that both the Prime Minister’s 22 October statement and Green’s television interview would be remembered more than Canadian efforts in support of the US.

No mention of any disappointment with Canada’s response was made in any post-crisis discussions that Ambassador Ritchie carried out with various US officials.¹⁰⁹ As Jocelyn Ghent has asserted, the Americans “knew they had no grounds for complaint. The Kennedy administration was undoubtedly disappointed at the level of political response, but that response had exposed no weakness and posed no threat to national security interests.”¹¹⁰ A note of criticism did come on 3 December when Livingston Merchant informed Basil Robinson that the Prime Minister’s statement in the House of Commons on 22 October, and Green’s television interview two days later, had been disappointing. Robinson, who had raised with Merchant the PM’s dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation during the crisis, had to relent in agreeing when the former US Ambassador told him that he “didn’t think Canada had earned, by its actions and by certain non-actions, the right to an extreme intimacy of relations which had existed in years past.”¹¹¹

Additional or more strident criticism of the Canadians did not come from the United States most likely because they expected little of the Canadians. The Cuban missile crisis was a

¹⁰⁸ ‘Canadian Attitude Toward Cuban Crisis,’ Smith to File, 2 November, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Cuba Quarantine, 1962”.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance: Ambassador Ritchie’s discussions with Walt Rostow in ‘Views of Walt Rostow’, Ritchie to Robertson, 4 December, 1962; Ritchie’s discussions with Crimmins, the Director of the State Department’s Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs in ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, no. 3502, 29 November, 1962; Ritchie’s talks with Llewellyn Thompson, the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Kennedy confidante, in ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, no. 3537, 4 December, 1962; and Ritchie’s meeting with McGeorge Bundy in ‘Cuba’, Washington to External, no. 3563, 6 December, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file “13”.

¹¹⁰ Ghent, “Canada, the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, p.180.

¹¹¹ Merchant to Secretary Rusk and Undersecretary Ball, undated; and covering letter Brubeck to Ball, 10 December, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, Rostow Memorandum and Related Materials, 5/61-5/63”.

contest largely between the USSR and the US, so much so that Cuba itself barely figured into the diplomatic picture.¹¹² Canada, like every other country apart from the Soviet Union and United States, was irrelevant in the crisis. Further, due to the American understanding that NORAD consultations should be at the military level, the US government gave little thought to a role for Canada's government. Still, the Kennedy administration did send Merchant to brief the Canadians and the President wrote to Diefenbaker; both manoeuvres were in spite of "The hard fact...that Canada had ceased, even before the Cuban crisis, to be regarded as one of the most trusted allies of the United States."¹¹³ Diefenbaker's statement of 22 October only confirmed this, but the Canadian actions that did occur in support of the US, confirmed to Americans that Canada was nevertheless on-side. Still, there is a widely held view amongst scholars that Diefenbaker's lack of support for the US led the Kennedy administration to "delight in scheming to obtain vengeance for Diefenbaker's diplomatic cold shoulder."¹¹⁴ In February 1963, Diefenbaker's government collapsed and there were charges that the US government had engineered this, in part as a result of Canada's inaction during the missile crisis. While the Americans certainly played a role in Diefenbaker's downfall, the Prime Minister's hesitations in October 1962 were not cited by US officials as being what motivated them. Rather, the important issue was nuclear weapons and the complete and utter duplicity of Diefenbaker on this matter, thus underscoring the utter unimportance of Canada's hesitations in October 1962.

¹¹² See Jorge I. Domínguez, "The @#\$%& Missile Crisis: (Or What Was 'Cuban' about U.S. Decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis?)" *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 305-315.

¹¹³ Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ Kirk and McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations*, p. 62.

Chapter Six - *“We didn’t know how big a bomb we were setting off” – The US and the Collapse of Diefenbaker’s Government*

In a report written at the end of January 1963, Francis Linville, the American Embassy’s Economic Counsellor, analysed Canada’s inaction in regards to its economic problems. As he wrote, “Psychologically the present Government is no exception to the practice of delay and procrastination which have been a hall-mark of many Canadian governments. Moreover, its naturally hesitant nature has been reinforced by its political dependence upon opposition support for survival.”¹ While Linville’s observation applied to economic matters, it pertained equally as well to the outstanding issue in Canada-US relations: Canadian acceptance of nuclear weapons. Linville’s paper was finished the day before the State Department issued a press release seeking to clarify a statement that Prime Minister Diefenbaker had made to the House of Commons on 25 January. This statement, in which Diefenbaker seemed to stand simultaneously for and against having Canadian forces go nuclear, was the Prime Minister’s latest step in a long line of procrastination. For American diplomats and the Kennedy administration, it was also the last straw. Their patience with Diefenbaker’s government on this file, and their tolerance of Canada’s divergent position on a host of other issues, had come to an end. The result was a State Department press release attacking Diefenbaker, an act which has been called “the most flagrant direct interference in Canadian politics ever undertaken by the Americans or, for that matter, anyone else.”² While worried that their actions would unleash a torrent of anti-Americanism and Canadian nationalist outrage, US officials, who had long coddled Diefenbaker, felt compelled to act. In doing so, and contrary to the arguments of some, they merely hoped for a resolution of

¹ ‘Political-Economic Assessment – Canada’, Embassy, Ottawa to State, no. A-580, 29 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

² Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 15.

the nuclear question; their action, however, contributed to the downfall of the Progressive Conservatives in a non-confidence vote and then in the subsequent federal election.

A more confrontational American stance was signalled when Walton Butterworth, a long serving US diplomat, arrived in Ottawa to become the new American Ambassador in December 1962. Canadian historian J.L. Granatstein described Butterworth as “an experienced diplomat, a vigorous defender of his nation’s positions... [who] could be very rough in his advocacy.” Diefenbaker, Granatstein noted, “quickly came to despise the Ambassador” and referred to him disparagingly as ““Butterballs”” and ““Butterfingers””.³ The feeling was certainly mutual. Making his first call on the Prime Minister on 17 December, Butterworth engaged in a lengthy discussion with Diefenbaker on two issues: the Nassau meeting then taking place between Kennedy and Macmillan, and British entry into the Common Market. On the latter subject, Butterworth found the Prime Minister’s attitude “forthright”, and so he “thought it wise to meet directness with equal directness....” Still, as the American Ambassador wrote in his report of the conversation, things never got unfriendly. His initial impression of the Prime Minister, on the other hand, was not kind. “Although vigorous in speech and gesture,” Diefenbaker struck Butterworth “as being unwell and exhibit[ing] evident signs of palsy or perhaps Parkinson’s disease”; he added “I did not get the sense he knew very much about what he was talking.”⁴ The new Ambassador’s exasperated attitude reflected general American impatience with Canada, an impatience which was steadily increasing.

Towards the end of 1962 the US Embassy had noted a number of positive signs that seemed to indicate Canadian policy regarding the acquisition of nuclear weapons was shifting

³ J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 133.

⁴ Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.797, 17 December, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

away from the continued dithering of the two previous years. On 1 November, Howard Green approached the American Chargé d’Affaires, Ivan White, to inform him of the Canadian government’s willingness to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Canada and the storage of such weapons in Europe for Canada’s NATO forces. Green proposed that the warheads intended for use on the BOMARC missiles stationed in Canada be stored in the United States; only in an emergency would they be brought north. During a subsequent meeting, White and a team of Department of Defense (DOD) officials explained to Green, Canadian Defence Minister Douglas Harkness and Minister of Veterans Affairs Gordon Churchill that this setup would be ineffective. The weapons would have to be placed in Canada as time constraints would make installation during a crisis too slow to provide an effective defence and quite dangerous because of the risk of accidents. Following this briefing, American officials felt that they were close to an agreement which could satisfy both their “vital defense requirements” and “the Canadian Government’s domestic political considerations.” The Canada Desk thus advised Secretary Rusk that he should meet with Howard Green at the upcoming NATO summit in Paris in mid-December. Since Defense Secretary McNamara was already planning to meet Doug Harkness, Rusk and Green could join them. As the Canada Desk observed, “Green’s conversion is essential to final agreement by the Canadian Government. He will be particularly impressed by the fact that you think his presence is essential at this meeting.”⁵

Ensuring Green’s conversion was a major goal of US policy, and it seemed to be working. Over lunch on 23 November, Basil Robinson hinted to P.W. Kriebel, of the State Department’s Executive Secretariat, that a decision on nuclear weapons would soon be made at

⁵ ‘Bilateral Meeting in Paris December 14, 1962 with Canadian Ministers Green and Harkness,’ 29 November, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canada – U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962”. See also, ‘Nuclear Weapons Negotiations with Canada’, William Tyler to Secretary Rusk, 3 November, 1962, in *Ibid.*

very high levels of the Canadian government. Emphasising his hope that their talk would remain confidential, Robinson revealed, in reference to Green, that his government was “casting about for some means which would enable it to accept such weapons on Canadian soil without seeming to abandon its present position.”⁶ Two weeks later, White and the DOD officials met again with Green, Harkness and Churchill and came away with the impression that the Canadian Cabinet, including Green, was becoming more receptive to the idea of accepting nuclear weapons.⁷ Further, press reports in early December recounted that Green had made some statements seeming to point towards a change in policy. The Canadian minister was quoted as saying: “[Acquiring nuclear weapons] depends entirely in world conditions. Canada has to take her part in defending the free world. We don’t think Canada should be a neutralist country.”⁸

While these positive signs certainly pleased American officials, they did not amount to much. Green and Harkness met Rusk and McNamara for talks in Paris on 14 December, but nothing was settled. In his report on the discussions, Rusk noted that he and McNamara had informed the Canadians that Washington was “prepared to agree to anything which would accomplish the result intended and not be inefficient and thereby frustrate our purpose.” Justifying this position, Rusk argued that both he and the Defense Secretary shared a belief that “there is no point in moving away from where we are to something so contrived or complicated

⁶ ‘Luncheon Conversation with Basil Robinson, Deputy Chief of Mission, Canadian Embassy, 23 November, 1962,’ Kriebel to Carlson, 30 November, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Canadian Government, 1961-1962”.

⁷ Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.761, 5 December, 1962 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

⁸ ‘Green on Nuclear Weapons for Canada; Berlin; Cuba’, Consul General Vancouver to Ottawa Embassy, 5 December, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canada – U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962”.

as to merely make things more difficult.”⁹ Although the Canadian ministers were unwilling or unable to make a commitment and a month-long parliamentary recess, beginning on 21 December, put a resolution to the matter on hold, the initiative was not lost. On 26 December Ross Campbell informed the American Embassy in Ottawa that Canada’s government wished to continue negotiations. The Embassy reported Campbell’s emphasis that he had been instructed to deliver this message from Green “who appeared anxious to move ahead with the nuclear problem.”¹⁰ Indeed the National Security Council official charged with overseeing nuclear weapons noted Canada’s apparent movement on the issue with satisfaction.¹¹ This made later actions by the Canadian Government so hard for the US to either stomach or sanction.

Meanwhile, in the Bahamas, events with greater impact on global events were taking place. From 17 to 21 December 1962, President Kennedy met British Prime Minister Macmillan at Nassau for talks regarding British nuclear weapons. Britain’s government was concerned because it had expected to take control of American-built Skybolt missiles to be used on British bombers, in order to prolong the life of those aging airplanes. However, the Americans had signalled that they were unhappy with this arrangement. At Nassau the two sides concluded a special agreement to allow the United States to supply Polaris missiles to the United Kingdom for deployment on British submarines. The meeting was thus a success for the Americans and British, until the last day when an unexpected visitor arrived. Prime Minister Diefenbaker, alarmed that the leaders of UK and the US were meeting without him, travelled to Nassau and arrived in time for lunch on 21 December. Macmillan recalled that the President had been

⁹ Paris (Rusk) to State, no. Secto 23, 15 December, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 4, Box 225, file “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Canada 12/61-11/63 [Folder 1 of 4]”

¹⁰ Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.832, 26 December, 1962. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

¹¹ See ‘Nuclear support for Canadian Forces’, L.J. Legere to McGeorge Bundy, 20 December, 1962. JFKL, NSF, Series 4, Box 225, file “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Canada 12/61-11/63 [Folder 1 of 4]”

hoping to leave before Diefenbaker's arrival, but that he had persuaded Kennedy to stay.¹² There was therefore a chance for Kennedy and Diefenbaker to engage in a brief discussion during which the Canadian Prime Minister informed the President "that there were a number of matters [he] hoped [they] would have an opportunity to discuss soon in connection with the defence of North America and the provision of nuclear armed missiles for Canada."¹³ If this was an attempt to mollify Kennedy, it does not seem to have worked. The latter's distaste for Diefenbaker was certainly reflected in their brief audience. Taking the time to reassure Diefenbaker that there was no American objection to Canada's current trade with Cuba, Kennedy praised the helpful role played by the Canadian Embassy staff in Havana during the missile crisis. The President also made clear his high regard for Ambassador Butterworth.¹⁴ Kennedy was less than pleased by the meeting, and infamously said of his awkward lunch with the British and Canadian Prime Ministers, "There we sat like three whores at a christening."¹⁵

Prime Minister Diefenbaker had more fruitful talks with his British counterpart. The Canadian notes of Diefenbaker's discussions with the Macmillan on 21 December record Diefenbaker telling his British colleague of his concern with avoiding an "extension of the 'nuclear family'" and his hope of efforts towards disarmament. If disarmament failed and if "the situation might require it, it would be the Government's intention to arm Canadian forces in the way most suitable for modern warfare."¹⁶ Prime Minister Macmillan's own notes record that "Diefenbaker mentioned his long-standing difficulties with the United States over the provision of nuclear weapons for the forces engaged in the defence of North America." As the Canadian

¹² See Harold Macmillan, *At the End of the Day, 1961-1963* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 360-1.

¹³ 'Discussion with President Kennedy, Nassau, Bahamas – December 21, 1962', Memorandum by John Diefenbaker, 23 December, 1962. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file "12".

¹⁴ 'Bahamas Meetings – December 21-22, 1962. Specific points discussed with President Kennedy at Luncheon Meeting, December 21'. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file "12".

¹⁵ Kennedy quoted in Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 218.

¹⁶ 'Bahamas Meetings – December 21-22, 1962. Conversations with Prime Minister Macmillan P.M. Friday, December 21, 1962'. LAC, MG 31 E83, Vol. 6, file "12".

Prime Minister told Macmillan, "The opposition in Canada to storing nuclear weapons on Canadian soil remained as strong as ever." Diefenbaker admitted, though, "it was clearly wasteful and unsatisfactory that the Canadian Air Force should be deprived of these weapons or have to rely on weapons which were stored so far away that it would take hours to arm them in a crisis."¹⁷ In a few weeks time, Canada's Prime Minister would abandon this thinking and would plunge the country into a worrying row with the United States.

While the nuclear issue languished thanks to the parliamentary recess, a curious incident occurred in early January that brought the matter to the public's attention. American General Lauris Norstad, who was retiring from his post as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, travelled to each NATO capital to bid farewell. He arrived in Ottawa on 3 January. With the Prime Minister unable to greet him, Norstad met with Governor General Georges Vanier and then took part in a press conference with Air Marshall Frank Miller, Chairman of the Canadian Chiefs of Staff, and Pierre Sévigny, the Associate Defence Minister. This press conference has been regarded subsequently by Diefenbaker as part of a "supra-governmental" plot between the Canadian and American militaries to defeat his government.¹⁸ Norstad's programme had been organised by the Canadian military, and one of the organisers has admitted to having hoped that the press would raise the issue of nuclear weapons.¹⁹ However, whether the Americans intended for Norstad to purposefully intervene with the aim of embarrassing the Canadian government on the issue of nuclear weapons is unclear, especially given the lack of evidence to prove this. It is

¹⁷ 'Meeting Between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Prime Minister at Nassau on December 22, 1962, at 12:30 p.m.' TNA, PREM 11/4229 Prime Minister's Talks with President Kennedy and Mr. Diefenbaker in the Bahamas Dec.18-22, 1962. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for providing me with access to his account at the online Macmillan Cabinet Papers.

¹⁸ The term is drawn from Diefenbaker, *One Canada, Volume Three: The Tumultuous Years, 1962-1967* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 3. The argument is expanded upon in Jocelyn Maynard Ghent, "Did He Fall or Was He Pushed? The Kennedy Administration and the Collapse of the Diefenbaker Government," *International History Review* 1, no.2. (April 1979), pp. 246-270.

¹⁹ See Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 223.

certainly probable but US diplomats were aware, though, that statements made by Americans in Canada might be misinterpreted. In a memorandum regarding a speaking invitation extended to Kennedy's Special Representative on foreign affairs Chester Bowles, and in which he purported to be reflecting Butterworth's own views, Delmar Carlson wrote, "there is always the hazard that something a high-ranking U.S. official would say may be misconstrued and viewed as interference in Canadian affairs."²⁰ That is precisely what happened with General Norstad.

Opening the press conference with a prepared statement regarding general deficiencies in the NATO alliance, Norstad discussed the steps taken thus far to ameliorate them. During his seven years as the NATO military commander, he had spent much of his time trying to improve the Alliance's fighting capacity and cohesion.²¹ So it was natural then for Norstad to address this topic in his press conference, and he singled out Canada for the "tremendous progress" that it had made in strengthening NATO. It is in this context that reporters asked whether he had "always been satisfied with Canada's contribution to NATO even though it was non-nuclear all along?" Norstad replied that "Canada has been really quite outstanding in meeting its NATO commitments." Then queried whether the Canadian government had made a commitment to acquire tactical nuclear weapons for its fighter aircraft contingent in Europe, Norstad answered in the affirmative. He seemed hesitant on this, as he asked Air Marshall Miller to clarify and confirm the matter, which the Canadian did. But when a reporter asked "that if Canada does not accept nuclear weapons for these aeroplanes that she is not actually fulfilling her NATO commitments?", Norstad responded, "I believe that's right." The reporters returned again to whether Canada had made a commitment to acquire the nuclear weapons, with Norstad

²⁰ 'Montreal Canadian Club Invitation to Ambassador Bowles', 31 December, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Alpha-Numeric Files Relating to Canadian Affairs, 1957-1963, Box 4, file "Speeches, 1961-1963".

²¹ See Ralph Dietl, "Defence of the West: General Lauris Norstad, NATO Nuclear Forces and Transatlantic Relations 1956-1963," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 17 (2006), pp. 347-392.

answering as he had before.²² There could be no doubt about what the general was saying: Canada had made a commitment which it had yet to live up to.

With Parliament on break, there was no official reaction from the government until late that month. In an address to the House of Commons on 25 January, Diefenbaker argued that “some say you should take the advice of generals if they are eminent”; he disagreed.²³ Many Canadians did agree and Norstad’s comments embarrassed them. Hence the nuclear issue moved to the forefront of Canadian politics and public debate. As political scientist Howard Letner later concluded, “United States intervention...had a great deal to do with mobilization of the Canadian population.”²⁴ The US Embassy’s own contemporary reflections on the general’s press conference followed this line. As Butterworth observed “increased public discussion and improved understanding [of] nuclear issues have undoubtedly increased pressures on Diefenbaker government to find [a] way out of its present untenable position....”²⁵ This public pressure was matched by continuing negotiations between American and Canadian officials.²⁶

The importance of nuclear weapons as an issue in Canadian domestic politics was confirmed on 12 January. In a luncheon address that day, Lester Pearson announced a drastic change in Liberal Party policy regarding nuclear weapons. After discussing Canada’s obligations as a member of the Western alliance and as a partner with the United States in continental defence, Pearson blasted the Conservatives for failing to follow through on commitments made “in continental and collective defence which can only be carried out by

²² ‘Transcript of Press Conference by General Lauris Norstad, Retiring Supreme Commander, Europe, Held in Ottawa’, 3 January, 1963. LAC, MG 32 B19, Vol. 70, file “Nuclear Weapons Question - Part 2, 1959-1963”.

²³ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (25 January, 1963), p. 3127.

²⁴ Howard H. Letner, “Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Case of Canada and Nuclear Weapons”, *World Politics* 29, no. 1 (October, 1976), p. 42.

²⁵ Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.882, 9 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

²⁶ See Ottawa Embassy to Secretary of State, no. 890, 11 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.”

Canadian forces if nuclear warheads are available.” The Conservatives, he charged, “have refused to make the decision whether to alter the commitments or accept the warheads.”²⁷ Pearson, long an opponent of nuclear weapons, had switched his policy and the reasons he cited were similar to those offered by Norstad.

The Liberals’ shift on nuclear policy did not greatly surprise the Americans. Paul Hellyer, the Opposition Defence Critic, had invited Charles Kiselyak, the Second Secretary at the US Embassy in Ottawa to lunch on 23 November. Having then just returned from a ten day trip to Europe to meet with other NATO politicians and to visit with Canadian forces stationed overseas, Hellyer had become worried by the low morale of Canadian troops. He had also visited with Norstad who had outlined Canada’s failure to meet its commitments.²⁸ Thus, Hellyer informed Kiselyak that “Canada has made a pledge and now must live up to it and accept nuclear weapons. Eighty percent of my colleagues agree”. In Kiselyak’s view, the Liberal was “quite serious”.²⁹ This was in fact the case, and Hellyer’s influence on shaping the opinions of Pearson and other Liberals was important in prompting the party’s change in defence policy.³⁰ However, even though his stance was now in line with US interests, Kiselyak did not agree to Hellyer’s request that the American Embassy supply him with “whatever information propriety permits” regarding the commitments that the Diefenbaker government had made to the

²⁷ ‘Defence Policy’, Text of an address by the Honourable Lester B. Pearson, P.C., M.P., Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. Delivered at a luncheon meeting of York-Scarborough Liberal Association, Toronto, Ontario, 12 January, 1963. LAC, Lester Pearson fonds, MG 26 N6, Vol. 32, file “Defence – Liberal Policy Statements 1959-1963”.

²⁸ See Letner, “Foreign Policy Decision Making”, pp. 44-5.

²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 23 November, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canada – U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962”.

³⁰ See Letner, “Foreign Policy Decision Making”, pp. 33-39; and Ghent, “Did He Fall or was He Pushed?”, pp. 255-6.

Americans.³¹ Interestingly, Kiselyak was involved in an effort by the US Embassy in Ottawa to brief reporters on the nuclear weapons issue, in what was an attempt to affect public opinion. Gathering in his Ottawa home, Kiselyak would supply members of the press with 'Backgrounders', spaghetti, and beer.³² So although willing to ply reporters, Kiselyak was unwilling to cross a more significant line by giving inside information to an opposition member of a foreign country's parliament.

But while the Americans were not surprised, it seems that the Progressive Conservatives were. Jocelyn Maynard Ghent noted that "the timing of Pearson's announcement was exquisite, for the government was still reeling from the impact of Norstad's press conference."³³ Responding to Norstad and Pearson, a fierce battle raged in the Cabinet in order to force a decision on acquiring the warheads. An informal committee of several ministers was formed to examine whether or not a commitment to acquire the weapons had been made. Comprising Harkness, Green, Donald Fleming and Gordon Churchill, the committee concluded that Canada had an obligation to go nuclear. Diefenbaker was unmoved.³⁴

Thus the Prime Minister sought to defend his position from both external and internal criticism in an almost two hour speech delivered in the House of Commons on 25 January. Beginning by "saying that any suggestion that we have repudiated any undertaking by Canada internationally is false in substance and in fact", Diefenbaker described for the gathered MPs the recent negotiations that had taken place at Nassau between the Americans and British. The decisions made at Nassau, he argued, cast doubt on the role of the bomber threat, emphasised the

³¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 23 November, 1962. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "Canada - U.S. & Canadian Policy Acquisition & Control of Nuclear Weapons, 1962".

³² See Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 146.

³³ Ghent, "Did He Fall or was He Pushed?", p. 256.

³⁴ See Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, pp. 233-5.

primacy of nuclear missiles and hence signalled “a tremendous step – a change in the philosophy of defence; a change in the views of NATO.” Diefenbaker outlined several weapons systems that had been abandoned for being obsolete, and so implicitly argued that the BOMARC should be abandoned as well. As he put it, “every now and then some new white hope of rocketry goes into the scrap pile.” Conceding that Canada did have nuclear commitments, Diefenbaker revealed that secret negotiations were being carried out with the US and had “been going on quite forcibly for two months or more.” Then, referring to Norstad’s press conference, he also declared that his government “will maintain Canadian sovereignty, regardless of the pressures, of the views, or anyone visiting our country or otherwise. We will have a policy that remains flexible so as to meet changing conditions. We will do nothing to extend the nuclear family.”³⁵

At an informal gathering following the Prime Minister’s address, Douglas Harkness spoke with Ivan White, now the Embassy’s Minister, in an attempt to downplay Diefenbaker’s comments and to soothe possible American anger. White, appropriately taking a diplomatic approach, merely told the Defence Minister, in a reference to the PM’s disclosure of the negotiations, that it “was [an] unusual case [that a] top secret subject mov[ed] to classified in thirty-seconds.” Diefenbaker’s revelation must have rankled those US officials who recalled the Prime Minister’s own outrage at the White House press leak in September 1961 which had revealed negotiations between Washington and Ottawa. Informing White that Diefenbaker’s speech was the result of a compromise within the Cabinet, Harkness expressed his hope that negotiations could continue. The American replied that “at this juncture initiative rested with [the] Canadian Government.”³⁶ Three days later, at a press conference, Harkness tried to clarify

³⁵ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (25 January, 1963), pp. 3127-3136.

³⁶ Ottawa to State, no. 946, 26 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 4, Box 225, file “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Canada 12/61-11/63 [Folder 1 of 4]”.

the Prime Minister's comments, stating that they had in fact outlined "'a definite policy for the acquisition of nuclear arms.'"³⁷ This qualification did little to placate the Americans.

The assessment of the Prime Minister's speech by the Ottawa Embassy was understandably critical. Butterworth characterised it as a "masterpiece [of] deception and persuasion." Rather than being just another attempt at procrastination, Diefenbaker's statement was seen to be a "carefully prepared and thought out effort unilaterally to change Canada's defense relationship with us." He added, "If Diefenbaker gets away with this shabby performance he will only perpetuate present deficiencies in continental defense and may also create new ones in NATO. We would then face the critical years ahead with a half-hearted and irresponsible ally." Further, Butterworth viewed its deceptive and persuasive language as a threat because it seemed to be aimed at "destroying [the] clarity of national debate which was beginning to emerge in recent weeks...." There was also concern both that the Prime Minister was seeking to disavow his commitments and that he was casting himself as the "determined defender of Canadian sovereignty against [the] bogey of US domination." As the speech was "full of red herrings and non-sequiturs readily apparent to us but not likely to be recognized as such by most Canadians unless promptly challenged", Butterworth advocated that such action be taken. His justification was that the "Prime Minister himself has plunged the US into Canadian political arena in a fashion he knows we regard as close to vital." Action was therefore essential because "our experience with Diefenbaker and his cabinet last several years offers no hope that direct personal approach or normal diplomatic methods will achieve results we want." The American Ambassador further advocated that a public debate with Diefenbaker should be

³⁷ Harkness quoted in Ghent, "Did He Fall or was He Pushed?", p. 261.

avoided. Instead, the US “should set [the] record straight promptly with [an] official factual statement emanating from [a] civilian source.”³⁸

George Ball, after receiving Butterworth’s report, called William Tyler on 28 January to discuss possible courses of action. Tyler, also upset, echoed Ambassador Butterworth in arguing that they “should not let Diefenbaker’s statement of the situation under the negotiations stand”. Agreeing, Ball foresaw little or no dissent within the Administration, except perhaps from Kennedy himself. Revealing to Ball that he had been working in conjunction with Butterworth on a draft statement, Tyler emphasised that it was “explicitly in relation to Diefenbaker, but only to set the record straight as to the commitments, military justification, etc.” Ball approved of this effort and advised that Rufus Smith should be consulted.³⁹

Smith travelled from Ottawa to meet with Colonel L.J. Legere and Willis Armstrong on 29 January. Legere, an assistant to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Maxwell Taylor, was on loan to McGeorge Bundy, to aid the National Security Advisor in crafting US policy towards a proposed nuclear force for NATO. These three men, one from the Ottawa Embassy, one from the Canada Desk, and one from the NSC, set about crafting the response to Diefenbaker’s speech. Armstrong and Smith, who “had endured, once too often, what they judged to be Diefenbaker’s erratic buffoonery”, were in no mood to take the Prime Minister’s recent statement laying down.⁴⁰ A diplomatic note, they felt, would be insufficient; instead they agreed with Tyler and Butterworth and so settled on drafting “a routine Departmental press statement...” which would be coupled with an informal discussion between the State Department and the

³⁸ Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no.949, 27 January, 1963 (Three Sections). JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 10/62-1/63.” These cables show the importance of Butterworth’s role in setting the US on a course of publicly rebuking Diefenbaker, a point previously made in Ghent, “Did He Fall or was He Pushed?”, p. 262.

³⁹ Telcon: Tyler, Ball. 1:00 p.m., 28 January, 1963. JFKL, George W. Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁴⁰ Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 173.

Canadian Embassy in Washington. In reporting to Bundy, Legere observed that Smith and Armstrong, “the experts in the premises”, strongly favoured countering Diefenbaker’s “ridiculously contrived statement”. The two diplomats had told Legere that “they do not feel that this will inflame Diefenbaker into an anti-American outburst or that it will benefit his cause.” Rather, they emphasised “that Diefenbaker will pursue his own course regardless of what we say”. Thus in the opinion of two Americans with extensive experience in dealing with Canada, the Prime Minister himself was a problem. No matter what action they took, he would continue to be difficult. The goal they outlined during this meeting then, was “to keep the record straight with a few facts, which will afford ammunition to Diefenbaker’s opponents both within and without the Conservative Party.”⁴¹

That same day, Tyler spoke with Canadian Ambassador Ritchie. To prepare Tyler for this discussion, Willis Armstrong wrote a brief summary of the impact of the Nassau agreement. In his view this had nothing to do with Canada requisitioning nuclear weapons and he made note that Tyler might “wish to remind the Canadian Ambassador that the Nassau Declaration had nothing to do with Canadian forces or weapons systems, at least in the foreseeable future.” Finding the timing of Ritchie’s request for a meeting intriguing, Armstrong speculated as to whether he had got wind of a potential press release or merely suspected that some public reaction might be in the works.⁴² For his part, Ritchie had observed in his diary on 30 September, 1962, that regarding Canada’s position on acquiring nuclear weapons: “[the Americans] are exasperated by our attitude, but so far they are holding their hand. It remains to be seen how long they will resist the temptation to bring pressure upon us of a kind that might

⁴¹ ‘Proposed Press Statement on Canadian Nuclears’, Legere to McGeorge Bundy, 29 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 4, Box 225, file “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Canada 12/61-11/63 [Folder 1 of 4]”.

⁴² ‘Post-Nassau Developments in summary’, Armstrong to Tyler, 29 January, 1963. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “External Affairs Minister, 1961-1962”.

bring about a change of government.”⁴³ Now that American officials appeared ready to give into temptation the Ambassador urged the Administration to refrain from making a statement as it would have an “adverse effect” on Canada-US relations.⁴⁴

Undeterred, Tyler gave Ball a recommendation by Armstrong that the US should “clarify the record and sweep away the confusion which Diefenbaker’s statement can cause in Canadian minds”. Armstrong knew this policy had risks and he also recognised that “there is no assurance of an early election in Canada, and a Liberal victory in the next election is by no means certain.” This meant that the Diefenbaker government could end up as the Administration’s partner for the foreseeable future; thus, while the statement could harm relations, it was seen to be a necessary step because there were many matters “where we urgently need Canadian cooperation.” Concluding with the prediction that that statement “will inspire respect”, Armstrong urged Ball to approve the measure because “Mr. Diefenbaker will or will not decide to use an anti-American line, almost regardless of what we do, and the statement should not push him into any new actions injurious to us.”⁴⁵

On the following afternoon, 30 January, the day they intended to release the press statement, Ball took note of Armstrong’s arguments and then approved his memorandum and the attached draft of the press release. He then called Tyler. Surprisingly, Ball informed Tyler that he was about to phone Bundy because alerting the White House to their actions was important as “it might create a row”. Tyler, citing Armstrong’s opinion that “Diefenbaker likes to play these

⁴³ Charles Ritchie, *Storm Signals: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1962-1971* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1983), p. 23.

⁴⁴ Telcon: Tyler, Ball. 3:55 p.m., 29 January, 1963. JFKL, George W. Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁴⁵ ‘Proposed Press Statement on United States-Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons,’ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to the Under Secretary of State, 29 January, 1963. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 1150.

things”, thought the press release would not create a problem.⁴⁶ Unconvinced, Ball spoke with the National Security Advisor just before 5:00 P.M. This was a good move on Ball’s part because Bundy had been moving towards scrapping the whole plan.⁴⁷ Ball therefore reminded Bundy about their intentions to get a statement out, while warning that it might possibly create “a little flash back in Ottawa”. Bundy replied that he would warn the President but that they should go ahead as he was “quite sure this is the thing to do.”⁴⁸

At 5:30 PM, forty five minutes before the press release was issued, the US Embassy in Ottawa delivered several copies to the Department of External Affairs. In Washington, Basil Robinson, called into the State Department to meet with Willis Armstrong and Delmar Carlson, was given his own copy which he remarked as being ““very clear””. Armstrong informed him that he wished to note a number of things not included in the statement. First and foremost was that the nuclear issue “had been discussed, considered and negotiated over a period of four years and that each effort to resolve the problem had proved abortive but not for technical reasons.” Informing Robinson that the idea of transporting weapons into Canada once a crisis had started was not feasible and that the Nassau agreement was not relevant to the matter at hand, Armstrong argued that while it would be excusable to scrap weapons for being obsolete, it was inexcusable to do so for weapons that were obsolete simply because they had not been provided with the necessary armaments. Also cited as having forced Washington’s hand was the issue of Diefenbaker’s disclosure of secret negotiations, or as Armstrong put it, going “from ‘Top Secret’

⁴⁶ Telcon: Tyler, Ball. 4:30 p.m., 30 January, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

⁴⁷ ‘Canadian Chronology’, McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, 14 February, 1963. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file “Canada, Security, 1963”.

⁴⁸ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 4:55 p.m., 30 January, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

to 'Unclassified' within 30 seconds". This revelation in particular had sparked considerable press speculation which the press release was aimed at correcting.⁴⁹

At 6:15 PM, the State Department released the statement, entitled 'United States and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons'. Beginning with a description of the steps taken and commitments made by Canada regarding nuclear weapons to that point, the press release offered an overview of the BOMARC missile system and argued that without nuclear warheads the missile batteries were useless. Further, while neglecting to arm these weapons, "the Canadian Government has not as yet proposed any arrangement sufficiently practical to contribute effectively to North American defense." The statement also took exception to Diefenbaker's comments about the Nassau agreement, offered an overview of the continued threat of Soviet nuclear bombers, and noted that "an effective continental defense against this common threat is necessary." The press release ended with the observation that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Canadian forces would not mean an expansion of the nuclear club as formal custody would remain with the US. The final sentence, echoing Rusk's statement at a press conference in March 1962, words which Diefenbaker had praised, was that "joint control fully consistent with national sovereignty can be worked out...."⁵⁰ The US government had in effect called the Canadian Prime Minister a liar.

Unsurprisingly, many Canadians were shocked and outraged. The *Ottawa Journal* newspaper, for example, noted "To put it in the bluntest terms, the State Department publically called Prime Minister Diefenbaker a liar...Tempers were flaming. President Kennedy was being

⁴⁹ 'Press Statement on U.S. and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons' Memorandum of Conversation, 30 January, 1963. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem".

⁵⁰ 'United States and Canadian Negotiations Regarding Nuclear Weapons', Department of State for the Press, no. 59, 30 January, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 4, Box 225, file "NATO, Weapons, Cables, Canada 12/61-11/63 [Folder 1 of 4]"

called a 'bully'.....The immediate and general reaction was that Washington had gone too far.”⁵¹

In the House of Commons meanwhile, Diefenbaker told the gathered MPs that, “I find it difficult to understand such an extraordinary procedure...this action by the department of state of the United States is unprecedented, and I weigh my words when I say that it constitutes an unwarranted intrusion in Canadian affairs.” Acknowledging that his government “will, as always, honour its obligations” Diefenbaker would nevertheless “not be pushed around or accept external domination or interference” in making decisions. He also took the view that Pearson’s recent statements on the nuclear issue mirrored the press release, and insinuated that a plot was afoot. “Canada”, he warned, “is determined to remain a firm ally but that does not mean that she should be a satellite.”⁵²

Ball and Bundy spoke by phone that day, with Ball defending what had been done. When Bundy asked him whether “Diefenbaker was going to crack back at us”, Ball thought he might but that it would be hard for the Canadian Prime Minister to say much about US interference in Canadian affairs “since he is the one who put us in them by revealing the secret discussions in a political form and by distorting the record.” He also reiterated that “we can’t let these fellows get away with it.” However, Ball disclosed that he had spoken with Secretary Rusk who in turn had discussed the press release with Kennedy. The President, Ball told Bundy, had warned Rusk about “getting in too many fights in one week”, a reference to the decision by French President Charles de Gaulle to veto British entry into the EEC. Bundy’s replied that he should have notified Kennedy and so he offered to take the blame for the press release.⁵³

⁵¹ Quoted in Ghent, “Did He Fall or was He Pushed?”, p. 262.

⁵² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (31 January, 1963), p. 3289.

⁵³ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 10:00 a.m., 31 January, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

The President and Ball discussed the statement twice that evening. In their first conversation, Kennedy, referring to press accounts of anti-American reaction in Canada, asked Ball whether this had been Butterworth's "brilliant idea" and requested comments from the Ottawa Embassy. Ball told him that he would call William Tyler to see if there was a press roundup or something similar that he could pass on to the White House.⁵⁴ Calling back later, Ball reported that Butterworth could not be reached as he was giving a speech in New Orleans. Worried, Kennedy divulged a concern that Diefenbaker "might decide to call an election" as he "would like to be licked on this issue". Further, when Ball told him that Diefenbaker had said that he "wouldn't be 'pushed by America'", Kennedy urged calm, saying that they "would have to let that one go". Ball chose this moment to recount the reasons why he felt the statement was needed, namely that Diefenbaker had misrepresented both the bomber threat and the Nassau agreement and that he had revealed secret negotiations with the US. On the last point Kennedy remarked, "I guess he asked us to hold it in confidence, didn't he?" Turning to a statement that Rusk was set to make at a press conference the following day, Kennedy suggested taking the line that the press release was simply meant to clarify questions raised by Diefenbaker's 25 January speech. The President's approach was cautious although he did acknowledge that they had known that Diefenbaker "has always been running against us".⁵⁵ These discussions show, despite the claims by some, that Kennedy did not have a direct hand in the press release. As Jocelyn Maynard Ghent's concluded, "the one [American] policy-maker most assuredly, and

⁵⁴ Telcon: President, Ball. 7:30 p.m., 31 January, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file "Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63".

⁵⁵ Telcon: President, Ball. 9:00 p.m., 31 January, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file "Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63".

ironically, innocent of any attempt to force the collapse of the [Canadian] government was President Kennedy.”⁵⁶

Two days after the press release was issued, Secretary Rusk spoke at a morning press conference at the State Department. His statement on Canada-US relations had been drafted by McGeorge Bundy, who, as he had taken responsibility for crafting the original press release, wanted “to help play the ball out of the trap and on to the green.” Bundy felt that his draft “might turn away wrath from the fact that we made a statement, and draw attention to what we actually said in it.”⁵⁷ Impressed by this reasoning, the Secretary of State began by evoking the “strong tradition of fair play” between Canada and the US, countries with a “friendship [which] is too close for a misunderstanding of this sort.” While stating regret for any offence that may have been given, Rusk stuck to the position that “the need to make some clarifying statement arose from a situation not of our making.” Offering a run through of various matters that had become muddled by statements made in Canada, Rusk argued that this had necessitated a clarification by the US. He added too that the press release was in fact a positive move because diplomatic protest or private discussions might have appeared to constitute interference in Canadian affairs or might have implied criticism of specific people within the Canadian government. Rusk concluded his report by reiterating his regret, stating that the release was simply a factual clarification, and noting that the decision to acquire nuclear weapons was both difficult and one for Canadians to choose of their own free will.⁵⁸ Still, no apology was made.

⁵⁶ Ghent, “Did He Fall or was He Pushed?”, p. 268. Lawrence Martin believed that Kennedy had a hand in things and quotes Dean Rusk’s erroneous recollection that in terms of the memo, “I probably had a telephone call with Kennedy on it.” Lawrence Martin, *The Presidents and Prime Ministers. Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1982), p. 203.

⁵⁷ Bundy to Rusk, 1 February, 1963 and attached drafts of press conference statement. JFKL, NSK, Staff Files, Box 402, file “Chronological File, February 1963”.

⁵⁸ ‘Press Conference of Secretary of State Dean Rusk,’ 1 February, 1963, 11:00 a.m. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem”.

President Kennedy, concerned and interested in the situation in Canada, called William Tyler to enquire about press reaction from Canada and to specifically ask “whether Diefenbaker felt we had given him a sufficiently good issue for him to go to the country and run against the United States.” Tyler, in turn, spoke with Ambassador Butterworth who informed him that things were starting to settle down and “secondary reaction” was setting in.⁵⁹ A roundup of public and press opinion by the Ottawa Embassy concluded that “initial resentment at United States ‘intrusion’, as was to be expected, widespread but by no means universal.” In their cable to Washington, the Embassy staff perceived that a “Strong swing now clearly appearing in direction [of the] recognition [that the] facts [in] this overridingly important matter had to brought into [the] open and [that the] United States had long been patient and forbearing.”⁶⁰ McGeorge Bundy passed this report on to the President as part of the former’s ‘Weekend Reading’.⁶¹

The following day, Butterworth sent an expanded appraisal of the state of Canadian-American relations in the wake of the press release. Taking a long view of the problem, the Ambassador wrote “For past four or five years we have – doubtless correctly – tolerated essentially neurotic Canadian view of world and of Canadian role. We have done so in hope Canadians themselves would make gradual natural adjustment to more realistic understanding. For long period there were good grounds for hope this shift would occur relatively painlessly and without our help.” So as a result of “our patient tolerance of unrealistic Canadian view of external world [these] past half dozen years...our sudden dose of cold water naturally produced immediate cry of shock and outrage.” As in his assessment from the day before, Butterworth

⁵⁹ ‘Canadian Situation’, 2 February, 1963. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem”.

⁶⁰ Ottawa to State, no. 987, 2 February, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/63”.

⁶¹ ‘Additional Miscellaneous Weekend Reading’, McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, 2 February, 1963. JFKL, NSK, Staff Files, Box 402, file “Chronological File, February 1963”.

saw that this reaction was only immediate. Consequently he wrote that the “traditional psychopathic accusations of unwarranted US interference in domestic Canadian affairs” was subsiding, and Canadians now found that there were “hard realities” for them to confront. Although believing Diefenbaker was content to “carry on in [a] dream world” the Ambassador thought that the Canadian people on the other hand “will no longer accept irresponsible nonsense” from their political leaders.⁶²

This seems to have been the case and events in Canada moved with great speed. Harkness resigned in protest over Diefenbaker’s dithering on 3 February; this was followed by the resignations of Assistant Defence Minister Pierre Sévigny and Minister of Trade and Commerce George Hees six days later. Both Sévigny and Hees cited the Prime Minister’s anti-Americanism and indecision as the reasons for their move.⁶³ Meanwhile in the House of Commons a motion of non-confidence in Diefenbaker’s government had been passed on 5 February, and an election was called the following day. The Canadian government had collapsed and American actions seemingly brought this about. In none of the US documents produced before the press release was issued, however, was the intention of forcing Diefenbaker’s downfall discussed or mentioned. This only became a justification after the fact and as Robert Bothwell has argued, the Kennedy Administration did “have something to do with Diefenbaker’s departure, though it is important not to overload that fact.”⁶⁴

Indeed in a telegram drafted after the defeat of Diefenbaker’s government and the resignations of Sévigny and Hees, Butterworth used these events to justify the press release to his superiors in Washington. The Cabinet revolt, he felt, “would not have happened without

⁶² Ottawa to State, no. 990, 3 February, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/1/63-2/14/63”.

⁶³ See Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, pp. 270-1.

⁶⁴ Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 79.

catalytic help of Department's January 30 release which set in motion subsequent chain of events."⁶⁵ Bundy also justified the action in a memo to Kennedy in which he also accepted the blame. Apologising to the President for having made "an obvious error" by clearing the statement over the phone "without giving you a whack at it", Bundy nevertheless felt the statement had been necessary.⁶⁶ He submitted to Kennedy a memorandum defending this position. Titled the 'Canadian Chronology', the report consisted of a timeline of the Diefenbaker government's procrastination on the nuclear issue since 1961. This chronology of delay was offered as a justification for the public rebuke of the Canadian PM and contains a unsympathetic attack on the Prime Minister: "there is nothing in the man's record to lead anyone to believe that he would not have pursued a crooked course in his own self-interest right through to re-election...plucking the Eagle's tail feathers all along the way." Thus the course they had pursued was defended because "the prime fact to be evaluated is that the Diefenbaker government has fallen and three of his ministers have resigned."⁶⁷

Secretary Rusk took this stance during a Senate Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Canadian Affairs on 4 February. Both in his address to the hearing and in a report he submitted to the committee members Rusk outlined the history of the nuclear issue with Canada and the reasoning behind the issuing of the State Department's press release. Here, Rusk made it clear that he, his staff, and the Administration were acting to defend US interests. His report argued that the three year procrastination by the Diefenbaker government on the nuclear issue was done "largely for political reasons". This meant that despite the fact that the Canadians "agreed to

⁶⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 1039, 11 February, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 2/1/63-2/14/63".

⁶⁶ 'Canadian Chronology', McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, 14 February, 1963. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1963".

⁶⁷ 'Canadian Chronology, Legere to President Kennedy through McGeorge Bundy, 13 February, 1963; also see Legere's addendum to the chronology, 'Addition to "Canadian Chronology"', Legere to President Kennedy through McGeorge Bundy, 14 February, 1963. JFKL, POF, Series 9, Box 113, file "Canada, Security, 1963".

accept certain weapons systems which are totally or partially ineffective without nuclear armament”, Diefenbaker’s address to the House of Commons “indicated that additional reasons had been found to postpone further any decision on this important matter of effective armament for defense.” Furthermore, the Prime Minister’s statement had “brought into the debate U.S. policies, programs, and relationships.” Rusk thus averred to the committee that the Administration’s hand had been forced and that despite any immediate criticism the press release had resulted in “a strong swing...in the direction of appreciation that this over-ridingly important matter has firmly been brought into the open and recognition that the United States has long been patient and forbearing.”⁶⁸

Although many American officials felt they had been forced to act, they remained concerned with the fallout of their actions. While speaking with George Ball about a number of matters, Bundy referred to the press release, saying “we didn’t know how big a bomb we were setting off.”⁶⁹ Charles Ritchie thus observed what seemed to him to be a concerted good will campaign by Administration and State Department members who offered “many expressions of friendship towards Canada combined...with a certain apologetic nervousness of manner.” On 6 February, Ritchie encountered Rusk at a dinner at the home of the Luxembourg Ambassador. Referring to himself and Ritchie, the Secretary of State proposed a toast to Canadians and Americans ““getting together and settling their troubles.”” At another dinner at the New Zealand

⁶⁸ Dutton to Tyler, 5 February, 1963, and enclosures. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem”. During a State Department meeting on NATO matters on 8 March, Secretary Rusk vented his frustration over Canada’s stand on nuclear weapons. He informed those in attendance that the US “could not effectively accommodate the Canadians in their desire not to have nuclear weapons emplaced in Canadian territory, without degrading unacceptably the capabilities of the delivery systems involved.” Thus the US “could not accept fraudulent arrangements.” Rusk observed that “the real issues in this matter lay within Canada: several members of the government had resigned because of them.” See ‘NATO Nuclear Problems’, Memorandum of Conversation, 8 March, 1963. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “U.S.-Canada, Policy re. Acquisition Nuclear Weapons, 1963”.

⁶⁹ Telcon: Bundy, Ball. 12:20 p.m., 7 February, 1963. JFKL, Ball Papers, Series 1, Box 2, file “Canada, 4/26/61-11/8/63”.

Embassy on 19 February, Ritchie bumped into George Ball who went “out of his way to express friendship for Canada”; he heard similar statements from William Tyler and McGeorge Bundy. In reporting this to Ottawa, Ritchie wrote that “all these and other indications of an apologetic attitude do not add up, however, to any retraction of the United States position in substance on the issue under discussion...”⁷⁰ He was right. The Americans were hoping to show their affection for Canada, move past the press release, and improve the bilateral relationship.

Another element of containing the damage caused by the press release was an attempt by the Administration to ensure that no future public statements further damaged Canada-US relations. In his encounter with Rusk at the Luxembourg Ambassador’s residence, Ritchie had engaged him in a friendly but frank talk. Referring to a press conference the President was scheduled to hold the following day, the Canadian Ambassador advised Rusk that it would be best if Kennedy and other American officials avoided saying anything publicly “which might complicate the situation.” When Rusk replied that the President might have to answer certain questions, particularly any dealing with the Nassau agreement, Ritchie pressed the need to keep quiet; the Secretary of State eventually conceded that ““it may turn out that way.””⁷¹ Indeed it did. During the President’s 7 February press conference in the State Department auditorium, only one reporter brought up Diefenbaker and it was in the context of a question about the scepticism of some allies regarding what had been agreed to at Nassau; Kennedy’s reply made no mention of Diefenbaker or Canada.⁷² The President in fact wanted to keep things quiet and his enquiries about Canadian reaction show concern with anti-American sentiment in Canada.

⁷⁰ Ritchie to Robertson, 21 February, 1963. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file “14”.

⁷¹ Ritchie to Robertson, 7 February, 1963. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file “14”.

⁷² See ‘News Conference 48’, 7 February, 1963. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website.

As Robert Bothwell has correctly observed, “Kennedy followed the election closely; sensibly, he curbed his instinct to publicly support the Liberals.”⁷³

The Ottawa Embassy sent its own request up through the State Department that all elements of the US government should refrain from making any statements concerning Canada. William Tyler concurred in his own recommendation, noting “we have little to gain and lots to lose in making statements in an election period when some elements will be seeking to use almost any statement emanating from a United States Government source against our interests.”⁷⁴ Canadian diplomats, aware the Americans were taking this step, were sceptical. As Ritchie wrote in a report to Ottawa, “whether this advice will be heeded it is impossible to say, but a great deal will depend...on the kind of campaign it turns out to be. If anti-Americanism is not too prominent a feature, it may be reasonable to hope for restraint in the end.”⁷⁵

American hopes for the Canadian election were actually quite bright. One Embassy report opined that the “recent controversy over defense policy has served to bring [a] sense of reality back into public consciousness and should find reflection on political hustings.”⁷⁶ In early February Ivan White learned from separate conversations with three Tory MPs that many of their caucus members had concerns about anti-Americanism being used in the party’s campaign. In reporting this, White made a bold prediction that “the ghost of 1911 will be laid; we will have a workable relationship in defense matters; the Conservative party will be out of power, and US-Canadian relationships will be on a much sounder basis than during the past four years.” He was quite sure that despite concerns from within the State Department that the

⁷³ Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion*, p. 174.

⁷⁴ ‘Desirability of U.S. Government Refraining from Statements Regarding Canada During Canadian Election’, Tyler to Manning, 8 February, 1963. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file “Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem”.

⁷⁵ Ritchie to Robertson, 7 February, 1963. LAC, MG 31 E44, Vol. 2, file “14”.

⁷⁶ Ottawa to State, no. 1031, 8 February, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/1/63-2/14/63”.

Ottawa Embassy's advice had been leading them "down an uncomfortable garden path" the election appeared to be "working out in the U.S. national interest."⁷⁷

That same day a report jointly produced by the Canada Desk and the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research was submitted to Rusk, who passed it to McGeorge Bundy the following day. It concluded that while it was too early to know what role anti-Americanism would play in the election, "we are inclined to feel, however, that though anti-Americanism will certainly be present, and could become very dirty, especially if Prime Minister Diefenbaker senses he is definitely losing the election, it will probably not be the dominant theme."⁷⁸ The results of a Gallup poll appearing in Canadian newspapers on 13 March showed that the prestige of the United States among Canadians had dramatically increased nearly three-fold since February 1961. This poll buoyed spirits within the Administration because it had been taken from 28 January – 2 February 1963, the same week as the State Department press release.⁷⁹

Despite these positive appraisals and hopes, the election remained an on-going concern for the Americans. A report for McGeorge Bundy by William Brubeck of the NSC characterised Diefenbaker as a strong and vigorous candidate. "The campaigning", Brubeck noted, "has acted upon Diefenbaker like a powerful shot of adrenalin. He is not pursuing any openly anti-American line but his 'Made in Canada' policy often has anti-American overtones." Also of note were Diefenbaker's "oratorical performances" which "are done with an actor's skill" so that "he thus

⁷⁷ The three MPs were Donald Fleming, Davie Fulton and Arthur Smith. White's reference to the 'ghost of 1911' was regarding the intense anti-Americanism that had characterised that years Canadian federal election and had proved to be a potent force. White to Carlson, 11 February, 1963, and attached memorandum 'Conservative Party policy towards Anti-Americanism'. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Military Matters, 1947-66, Box 2, file "Canadian Nuclear Weapons Problem".

⁷⁸ 'Canadian General Election', Roger Hilsman to Secretary Rusk, 11 February, 1963; and covering letter David Klein to McGeorge Bundy, 12 February, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 2/1/63-2/14/63".

⁷⁹ See 'Gallup Poll in Canada Shows United States Prestige Greatly Increased', Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 15 March, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 2/15/63-3/15/63."

gets away from his failure to face major issues squarely.”⁸⁰ Butterworth, no admirer of Diefenbaker, struck a similar chord in admitting that the Progressive Conservative leader “has done [an] extraordinary job of starting from nearly hopeless position and, by sheer frenetic activity, has made himself contender who must be taken seriously.”⁸¹ Similar comments came from Rufus Smith. In a report to the State Department to which he attached both a transcript and a recording of a speech by Diefenbaker, Smith advised the Department to make notes of “the Prime Minister’s efforts to justify his defense policy, his readiness to adduce, out of context official American statements or positions in support of his arguments, and his efforts to portray himself as the defender of Canadian sovereignty under attack from powerful forces.”⁸²

As the election entered its last week, the Americans became increasingly worried about what actions Diefenbaker might take. On 28 March a report from the Ottawa Embassy referred to the Rostow Memorandum and the widespread knowledge of it in Canada. There was concern that Diefenbaker was going to employ it in the final moments of the campaign. In stark contrast to what had been done with the State Department Press Release of 30 January, Legere advised Bundy that if Diefenbaker wielded the memorandum as evidence of American domineering, the Administration should keep quiet. Doing so would create uncertainty which could cause Diefenbaker’s “turgid act” to “backfire on him”. As Legere argued, “I just have the feeling that Diefenbaker’s dirty pool works better for him when he has a foil then [sic] when he doesn’t.”⁸³ In another memorandum to Bundy, Legere observed that while “everyone [in the government]

⁸⁰ ‘Assessment for the President of Canadian Election Campaign’, Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 14 March, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/15/63-3/15/63.”

⁸¹ Ottawa to State, no. 1241, 28 March, 1963 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, “Canada, General, 3/16/63-3/31/63”.

⁸² Ottawa to State, no. A822, 13 March, 1963. JFKL, NSF Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 2/15/63-3/15/63.”

⁸³ ‘Ottawa 1244 of March 28’, Legere to McGeorge Bundy, 29 March, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 3/16/63-3/31/63”.

theoretically supports the shut-up policy...when a given individual or agency is maligned by Diefenbaker, he or it becomes strongly tempted to lash back.”⁸⁴

The Administration thus took extra care to ensure that no statements were made by any American officials which might inflame the situation north of the border. As Bundy wrote to Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, “during this climactic week of the Canadian election campaign it is likely that intensified efforts will be made to implicate the United States in one way or another, especially by accusing us of trying to influence the outcome.” President Kennedy, Bundy noted, “wishes to avoid any appearance of interference, even by responding to what may appear to be untruthful, distorted, or unethical statements or actions.” He thus urged that the ‘shut-up policy’, in effect since the beginning of the campaign, be even more strongly enforced.⁸⁵ This message came too late to prevent the release, on 30 March, of testimony that McNamara had made before the House Appropriations Committee on 13 February. Speaking about the BOMARC missiles, the US Defense Secretary had admitted that his government might consider dispersing the weapons system to ““cause the Soviets to target missiles against them and thereby increase their missile requirements or draw missiles onto these Bomarc targets than would otherwise be available for other targets.””⁸⁶ The BOMARC sites had not been portrayed as a means of protecting Canadian cities or even of protecting the nuclear deterrent, but were viewed as a way of drawing Soviet fire away from the United States. In effect the “US Defense Department [had] offered Diefenbaker a gift” and he was quick to denounce the Liberals and the Americans for seeking to use Canada as nuclear cannon fodder.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ ‘Canadian Election Campaign’, Legere to McGeorge Bundy, 1 April, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63”.

⁸⁵ ‘Canadian Election Campaign’, McGeorge Bundy to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, 1 April, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63”.

⁸⁶ McNamara quoted in Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), p. 390.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Rogue Tory*, p. 503.

Due to the release of McNamara's testimony the Embassy in Ottawa observed that the nuclear weapons issue had returned to the forefront of the campaign.⁸⁸ A further assessment referred to the testimony as having played a "prominent part in the campaign" by having "bolstered [the] government's position re: arming Bomarc, but also will doubtless make it difficult for any future government to deal with Bomarc in rational fashion."⁸⁹ Kennedy was upset by the Defense Department's indiscretion. He wrote McNamara on 2 April to tell him that the release of the testimony "has strengthened Diefenbaker's hand considerably and increased our difficulties." Kennedy therefore advised that Defense Department officials "should be on alert for our political, as well as military, security."⁹⁰ During a National Security Council meeting later that day, the President expressed his worries by commenting that Diefenbaker might win and that similar anti-American sentiments could intensify in Britain and France.⁹¹

As the election entered its last days William Brubeck submitted a report to Bundy comparing the Liberal and Progressive Conservative campaigns. The Tories, he observed, had cast themselves as the defender of the average Canadian. Moreover, while "Diefenbaker has not often been blatantly anti-American in this role many of his speeches carry snide comments, insinuations, innuendos or other anti-U.S. overtones." In contrast, the Liberal campaign was "energetic and responsible" and was based "on an appeal to fact and reason." Commending Pearson for having "begun to hit back hard recently at Diefenbaker's more outrageous statements", Brubeck also noted with approval that the Liberal leader "has courageously stood up

⁸⁸ Ottawa to State, no. 1285, 4 April, 1963 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63".

⁸⁹ Ottawa to State, no. 1293, 6 April, 1963 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63".

⁹⁰ President Kennedy to the Secretary of Defense, 2 April, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file "Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63".

⁹¹ See 'Summary Record of the National Security Council Meeting,' 2 April, 1963, 10 a.m. *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII, p. 550.

for acquisition of nuclear weapons.”⁹² From Ottawa, Ambassador Butterworth took up an examination of the Progressive Conservative campaign, observing that in his last week on the hustings Diefenbaker had conducted “whistle-stop demagogic type speeches” in which he “continued to play on theme of sovereignty not subservience for Canada particularly with regard to defense policy.” He reaffirmed his grudging admiration for the Canadian Prime Minister in arguing that a:

major point of interest in this extraordinary campaign has been Diefenbaker’s vigorous effort. Starting amid shambles of collapsing government, when his political colleagues and enemies alike predicted inevitable defeat, he has used all his talent for demagoguery and his readiness [to] disregard facts to produce one of [the] most remarkable performances in Canadian history.⁹³

These tremendous abilities were overpowered by Diefenbaker’s flaws and on polling day a Liberal government, albeit a minority one, was elected. In his diary, Charles Ritchie no doubt reflected the views of many officials on both sides of the border: “The government is out. Diefenbaker is gone....I consider his disappearance a deliverance; there should be prayers of thanksgiving in the churches. And these sentiments do not come from a Liberal.”⁹⁴

American assessments of the election took a similar line. Butterworth observed that “of major interest to us is fact that anti-Americanism, even when labelled pro-Canadianism, has proved not to be magic formula many Canadian politicians thought it perpetually contained.” Butterworth was also satisfied that Douglas Harkness had been re-elected to his riding with an increased number of votes, while Howard Green, “the sanctimonious Beelzebub”, had lost his seat. His conclusion then was that “election results indicate not triumph but certainly victory for forces compatible with our interests. We should find Government of Canada in coming months

⁹² ‘Canadian Election Assessment’, Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 5 April, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63”.

⁹³ Ottawa to State, no. 1293, 6 April, 1963 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General 4/1/63-4/10/63”.

⁹⁴ Ritchie, *Storm Signals*, p. 47.

to be more stable, responsible, sophisticate and generally cooperative than at any time since 1958.” He cautioned, however, “this does not mean that fundamental problems of economics and geography which underline our relations with Canada have disappeared.” Indeed, it did not mean that the “Liberal Government under Pearson can afford not to avoid situations or decisions which could make it vulnerable to charges of being American minion.”⁹⁵

A memorandum entitled ‘Outlook for New Canadian Government and Possible U.S. Tactics’ was prepared by the Canada Desk for McGeorge Bundy in April 1963. After discussing the election results it launched into an examination of what could be expected under Prime Minister Pearson. The expectation was that “a Liberal Government would want and work for cordial relations with the U.S., but would be careful to avoid, especially in an initial period, any implication or image of being a U.S. pawn.” It also expected that a Pearson-led government would be “much less petty” and far “more efficient” than its predecessor. However, because the Liberals wished to avoid looking like American pawns, it was important that the Americans did “not expect automatic solutions to our problems with Canadian[s] simply because the Liberals are in power.” Further it advised that the US “should resist the temptation eagerly to embrace the Pearson Administration publicly and thereby embarrass it by providing ammunition to its opponents who will want to label it as an [sic] a U.S. stooge.”⁹⁶ So although Canadian nationalism had been defeated at the polls, it nevertheless remained a problem that American officials were faced with as John Diefenbaker was succeeded as Prime Minister by Lester Pearson on 22 April.

⁹⁵ Ottawa to State, no. 1313, 11 April, 1963; and covering letter L.J. Legere to McGeorge Bundy, 11 April, 1963. JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, “Canada, General, 4/11/63-5/3/63”.

⁹⁶ ‘Outlook for New Canadian Government and Possible U.S. Tactics’, 11 April, 1963 and covering letter ‘Relations with New Canadian Government,’ William Tyler to Under Secretary Ball, 17 April, 1963. NARA, RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada, Records Relating to Political Matters, 1957-1966, Box 3, file “Canadian Cabinet, 1961/62”.

Conclusions

“Americans”, McGeorge Bundy once remarked, “at once too close and too far removed, may not be the best qualified of people to render accurate perceptions of Canada.” Recalling his own familiarity with Canadians prior to becoming National Security Advisor, Bundy wrote that this had “been one of some distance from the kind of understanding of Canada one ought to have before engaging in so challenging a subject.”¹ Yet while many members of the Kennedy administration shared Bundy’s inexperience with Canada, there was a tremendous amount of understanding amongst the diplomats who staffed the Embassy in Ottawa and the Canada Desk at the State Department. These men recognised that Canada was an important ally of the United States both economically and politically as well as militarily. This was why Canadian nationalism worried them so much, and as their experiences with Diefenbaker showed, the nationalist impulse could hurt US interests. As Bundy wrote “we have found Canadians good people to bargain with. They lack the insecurity which so often breeds misunderstanding and deception. Indeed, that is precisely why Diefenbaker was exceptional. It was our failure to understand how exceptional he was that led us to overreact. The fact that he was exceptional also led the Canadian democratic process in the end to disown him”.²

There may indeed have been an overreaction on the part of the US in firing off the press release in January 1963 but those who crafted this document, Willis Armstrong and Rufus Smith, had a deep understanding of Canada thanks to their many years of dealing with Canadians. By 1963, they had both lost all patience and their willingness to publicly repudiate Diefenbaker is all the more remarkable given their appreciation for the power of Canadians’ concern for their

¹ McGeorge Bundy, “Canada, the Exceptionally Favored: An American Perspective”, *Friends So Different*, eds. Lansing Lamont and J. Duncan Edmonds (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1989), p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, p. 236.

sovereignty. Further, by the time he left the Ottawa Embassy in May 1962, Livingston Merchant, another American who understood Canada, had become thoroughly worried both by the nationalist undercurrent in that country and by the actions of the Prime Minister. Indeed Merchant's last interaction with Diefenbaker was the row over the Rostow Memorandum. Additionally George Ball, who was instrumental in pushing the 30 January press release through the bureaucracy, had less long-term knowledge of Canada. Still, over the previous two years he had dealt with Canadian officials on thorny economic matters in which Canada's obstinate position on the EEC, lack of support on the Trade Expansion Act, and deception on the import surcharges, had caused anger and outrage in Washington. Other US diplomats, from Dean Rusk, to Walt Rostow and Delmar Carlson, had seen American plans ruined and goals frustrated by the actions and inactions of America's ally to the north. Having endured this for two years it is no wonder that the Prime Minister's actions in January 1963 provoked an American backlash. The wonder perhaps, is that it took so long for the US to respond to Canadian provocations, and the reason for their patience was that the Americans understood that nationalism in Canada had a profound influence.

The sentiments of American officials were shared at the highest level of the US government. Certainly John F. Kennedy came to loathe Diefenbaker. As the President's brother, Robert Kennedy remarked in 1967, "My brother really hated John Diefenbaker...In fact, you know, my brother really hated only two men in all his presidency. One was Sukarno, and the other was Diefenbaker."³ If President Kennedy truly felt this way then it is remarkable that he not only compared the Canadian Prime Minister to the dictator of Indonesia but that he hated

³ Quoted in Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefined Border* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 11.

Diefenbaker more than Fidel Castro, a man he ordered killed. Despite these feelings, as Robert Bothwell has argued, "There is no hard evidence to suggest that President Kennedy permitted his feelings towards Prime Minister Diefenbaker greatly to influence his policies with respect to Canada. It is less easy to make such an assertion concerning Mr Diefenbaker's policies towards the United States."⁴ As the brouhaha over Canada's import surcharges in the summer of 1962 demonstrated, Kennedy was careful to ascertain the facts of whether or not he had been lied to and this was in spite of the Prime Minister's recent threats to publish the Rostow Memorandum. On the nuclear file, and despite Diefenbaker's inactions, Kennedy showed patience, and as the evidence shows he was ultimately uninvolved in the press release and indeed was angered by it. It is more difficult to argue that the President's dislike for Canada's Prime Minister did not influence the former's unwillingness to consult with Diefenbaker during the October missile crisis, but if one looks at the larger picture of that event, it is clear that the standoff between the US and USSR was just that. Other countries were confined to the background. Further on more minor issues, such as oil bunkering, Canada's fiscal health, and trade with Cuba, Kennedy was helpful, a point Howard Green acknowledged in an interview with historian J.L. Granatstein.⁵ Again, the appreciation for the potency of Canadian nationalism prompted conciliatory American policies on many problems as did the fact of the alliance between Canada and the United States, but in the end the Prime Minister's actions and inactions were too much for the Americans to bear.

Too much blame should not be levelled at Diefenbaker or his government. However much he and some of his ministers may have dithered and deceived, the chief problem was

⁴ Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs, vol. XII, 1961-1963*. (Toronto: OUP, 1968), p. 492.

⁵ See transcript "Interview with J.L. Granatstein, York University Oral History Programme". City of Vancouver Archives, Howard Green fonds, Add. MSS 903, 605-D-1 file 2. I am indebted to Dr. Galen Perras for furnishing me with a copy of this interview.

ephemeral and outside of their control. As American officials saw things, Canadian nationalism drove Canada towards a more independent stance. Reflecting on this afterwards, Bundy observed that “Canada is also naturally perceived as a fast friend and ally of America’s, although the bilateral relationship has seen a marked shift over the long term toward a greater degree of distancing and the exercise of independent judgment on Canada’s part.”⁶ Along these lines historian Greg Donaghy had noted, “at its deepest level, the confrontation between Kennedy and Diefenbaker reflected growing differences between Canada and the United States in their strategic outlook.” As the 1960s progressed, Canada, like other American allies, saw a lessening of Cold War tensions as an answer, while US officials took a differing view.⁷ This in turn led to a weakening of the Western Alliance and of the bonds which had united Canada, Western Europe and the United States during the dark days of the Cold War from the 1940s through to Kennedy’s inauguration. Beginning during the Kennedy years this process was part of a global trend during the 1960s towards a weakening of the Cold War consensus amongst the opposing blocs on both sides of the iron curtain.⁸

Ambassador Butterworth offered a prophetic assessment in this regard just a few days after the Progressive Conservative defeat in April 1963. Comparing Diefenbaker and Pearson, Butterworth felt that the US should “remember Liberals are none the less Canadians and their relative sophistication does not mean they do not suffer from familiar national compulsion to demonstrate to themselves and others that they are not Americans.” Despite the change in governments, the American Ambassador still expected Canadian psychology to remain a factor

⁶ Bundy, “Canada, the Exceptionally Favored: An American Perspective”, p. 233.

⁷ Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), p.7.

⁸ See Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), especially Chapter 1.

in Canada-US relations. The difference now, Butterworth remarked, “is that neither [Pearson] nor [the incoming foreign minister Paul] Martin will suffer from [the] same ignorance and mistrust of us which characterized [the] Diefenbaker-Green approach....” Drawing upon the experiences of his Embassy staff over the past few years, Butterworth concluded with a frank observation:

incidentally we should question [the] premise which has so long been implicit in our concept of Canada’s role, namely that she would automatically, accurately, and effectively represent essentially our own views in assignments such as ICC teams in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia...or that empty chair in OAS. Our experience of last several years argues for less encouragement of separate Canadian roles and pretentions, more of a down to earth approach from us, and more of a turning to other allies such as the Australians when a strong and unembarrassed Western presence is needed as a counterbalance to a Soviet satellite.⁹

Still viewed as allies, Canadians had become, thanks to their nationalist impulse, a little less special in the American mind.

⁹ Ottawa to State, no. 1328, 15 April, 1963 (Two Sections). JFKL, NSF, Series 1, Box 18, file “Canada, General, 4/11/63-5/3/63”.

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