



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

**FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
ET POSTDOCTORALES**



**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

Natalie Rateliffe

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. History

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of History

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

The Eternal Diplomat and the Reluctant Warrior : Canadian-American Relations During the Vietnam War, 1964-1968

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Dr. 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

Dr. Jeffrey Keshen

Dr. Heather Murray

Gary W. Slater

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

The Eternal Diplomat and the Reluctant Warrior:
Canadian-American Relations During the Vietnam War, 1964-1968.

Natalie Ratcliffe

Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Post Doctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in History

Department of History
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa
© Natalie Ratcliffe, Ottawa, Canada, 2009



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-61318-4
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-61318-4

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

■ ♦ ■
Canada

Table of Contents

Legend iii

Acknowledgements iv

Abstract v

Introduction and Historiography

Setting the Stage 1

Chapter II

Tuning into the Seaborn Channel: Broadcasting From America 26

Chapter III

Fickle Friends: Ottawa Between Support and Dissension 56

Chapter IV

Tuning in to the Ronning Channel: Broadcasting From Canada 86

Chapter V

The China Factor: Martin Becomes a Statesman 115

Conclusion

Canadian Diplomacy: Expired But Not Exhausted 146

Bibliography

LEGEND

DRVN – Democratic Republic of North Vietnam (same as DRV and NVN)

DRV – Democratic Republic of Vietnam (same as DRVN and NVN)

NVN-North Vietnam (same as DRVN and DRV)

SVN-South Vietnam

PAVN-People's Army of North Vietnam

NLF-National Liberation Front (political arm of the Viet Cong)

VIET CONG- (North Vietnamese Guerrilla Insurgency-military arm of the NLF)

PRC-People's Republic of China (also frequently referred to as Communist China and Peking)

DEA- Department of External Affairs (in Ottawa)

ICC-International Control Commission (synonymous with ICSC, International Commission for Supervision and Control, which is often used in the literature but not employed in this thesis.)

BACON – Operation Bacon undertaken by Canadian diplomat Blair Seaborn in 1964 and 1965

SMALLBRIDGE – Operation Smallbridge undertaken by Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning in 1966

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Two years devoted to the study of Canadian-American relations during the Vietnam War has taught me far more than history. It has been a thoroughly interesting and rewarding learning experience, guided and supported by family, friends, and most of all, teachers. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the advice and counsel I have received from my supervisor Dr. Galen Perras, especially for sharing his wealth of knowledge both in the subject matter and his resourceful research skills. His help throughout this process was indispensable.

I would also like to thank the staff at Library and Archives Canada who, labouring under the same restrictions as researchers, made the process an enjoyable experience. The archivists, the administrative staff, as well as the security guards became familiar and friendly faces. I am indebted to the consistent and timely help that they have provided throughout my research.

My thesis has also given me the opportunity to travel in the United States and learn more of the country about which I have written. My research has brought to the National Archives and Records Administration in Maryland DC. The archivists were extremely helpful and knowledgeable, working one on one with me to locate the material. My time at the Mudd Seeley Manuscript Library at Princeton University was a similarly positive experience.

I would like to express my gratitude for the funding provided to me by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. This grant enabled me to write about Canada and America's unique relationship from a balanced perspective. The material I acquired there was invaluable and I have only the archivists to thank for helping me locate it among the voluminous records housed at Johnson's Presidential Library. My trip there was an extremely rewarding experience.

I would also like to thank the archivists at Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and the John W. Graham Library at the University of Toronto.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank the History Department at the University of Ottawa for providing the opportunities as well as the financial assistance to help me complete my goals. I am very grateful for the travel grants that I have received, such as the Gaston-Héon Scholarship and the Graduate Travel Grant.

ABSTRACT

Canadian-American relations between 1964 and 1968 were dominated by the Vietnam War in the foreign policy arena. The title of my thesis reflects the respective roles Canada and America assumed in Vietnam throughout the period under examination. President Lyndon Johnson reluctantly fought a war in Vietnam that continuously overshadowed his vision for far reaching domestic reform embodied in his Great Society Program. Canada, never a troop contributor, had maintained a diplomatic presence in Indochina on the International Control Commissions established by the 1954 Geneva Accords. Canada continued in this capacity throughout the conflict, consistently seeking a negotiated settlement, while maintaining its national image as a middle-power, peace-maker in the Cold War. My thesis examines these national roles and how they complimented or more usually combated each other. While Canada's and America's Vietnam policies forms the core of my thesis, I also examine the impact these policies had on Canadian-American relations generally.

Introduction and Historiography

Setting the Stage

“Mr. President: This is just for fun,” quipped National Security Advisor Walt Rostow, “Sometimes a man outside gets the mush out of his mouth and says it just right – this time at the expense of the Canadian position in Vietnam.” Attached to the hand written cover letter was a telegram from Ottawa, which read, “in the Vietnam conflict...Canada has no policy but pretends to have an important role.”¹ These were the words of a Torontonian columnist reporting on a House of Commons Debate in mid-July 1966. Although relayed to the President in good humour, this insignificant slight vividly captures the American perception of Canada’s contribution to Southeast Asia. Canada’s role, plagued by contradictions and indirection, could be described as pursuing too many policies and therefore none at all between 1964 and 1968. Vietnam presented a difficult challenge to Canadian foreign policy architects. Its historical presence in the region and its allied commitments to America necessitated Canada’s participation. Even in an undeclared war, allegiances still have to be proclaimed, and Canada had little choice but to defend its neighbour. For this decision, Canada has been severely criticized. The devastation of the Vietnam War makes it easy to blame aggressors and non-militant accomplices alike. Regarding Canadian involvement, this approach yields an emotive argument with an emotive conclusion; Canada’s Vietnam policy was a failure. However, it was a policy failure and not a moral failure. Ottawa’s policy was marred by inconsistencies and

¹ From National Security Advisor Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 13 July 1966. National Security File, Country File, Canada (hereafter, NSF/CF/Canada), Vol. IV, [Memos 2 of 2], 1/66-12/66, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas, (hereafter LBJL), 123.

contradictions, it failed to influence the pace of the war or Washington's aggression, and it continued far beyond its expiration date. In the end, Ottawa lost American and Canadian confidence concerning its ability to act effectively in Vietnam.

External Affairs Minister Paul Martin, speaking before the House in 1966, defended Canada's Vietnam policy as an autonomous construction that converged with but was not predicated on its neighbour. In the same speech he highlighted the dangerous threat posed by wars of national liberation. The consequences of a communist victory in Vietnam, he warned, would gravely impact newly independent countries around the world and destabilize global security. Canada had a direct stake in the maintenance of an independent South Vietnam and for that reason he argued "in principle we appreciate and support the objectives and policy of the United States."² The cold war had entered a new era of détente, but the threat of communism continued to propel foreign policy in Canada and America. However, each government did not uniformly interpret the threat of communism. America, leader of the free world, had genuinely staked the preservation of global security and its international reputation on a South Vietnamese victory. Canada based its national security on a restrained and rational American foreign policy, to preclude the more imminent threat of nuclear escalation. Paul Martin determinedly expressed that "[o]ur policy in this situation represents our own honest assessment of the position and is not a reflection in any way of pressure imposed on us by the United States."³ However, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson articulated a more honest assessment of Canada's position when he publicly announced in 1965 that, "[w]e must protect and advance our national interests, but we should never forget

²"'The Crucial Issue of Vietnam' Statement by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs in the House of Commons on January 25, 1966." *Statements and Speeches* No66/1, Government of Canada Files, Department of External Affairs (RG25), Vol. 3072, File 8. Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC).

³ Ibid.

that the greatest of these is peace and security. The achievement of this aim--- it is chastising to realize---does not depend on our policies so much as it does on those of our neighbour.”⁴

Canada’s role in the Vietnam War between 1964 and 1968 was inherently contradictory. It attempted to balance obligations in numerous arenas, but eventually the country was unable to reconcile incongruent responsibilities. Consequently, Canada’s role in Vietnam, following a flurry of questionable diplomatic activity in 1964 continuing into 1966, was rendered moribund. Canada’s attempts to augment the large-scale American effort with diplomacy ultimately failed to contribute in a meaningful way to the latter’s Vietnam policy. However, as America became increasingly ensnared in the Vietnam quagmire, the inadequacies of Canada’s contributions were vividly exposed. Diplomacy aimed at negotiations proved to be a hollow ambition as the spectre of war escalated during this critical period. Canada’s limited utility between 1964 and 1966 necessitated its compliance with American policy; a trade-off deemed acceptable at the time. However, when the dissolute nature of Canada’s diplomatic function became public knowledge and war escalated to unprecedented levels, Canadian core values took precedence over the potential dangers posed by a North Vietnamese victory. Having exhausted its diplomatic utility in Washington by the end 1966 and then failing to contribute militarily, Canada’s Vietnam record was marked by failure in Washington and at home. This failure is not highly visible or easily detectable because the popular Canadian collective memory tends to focus on Canada’s military non-involvement in Vietnam and Pearson’s infamous Temple speech in which he provided unsolicited policy recommendation on American soil. However, these

⁴ English, John. “Speaking Out on Vietnam, 1965”. *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases*. ed. Don Munton and John Kirton. Prentice Hall Canadian Inc: Scarborough, Ontario, Chapter 9, 1992. p.135 and .p.139.

points only camouflage the more pertinent observation, that Canada's failure to reconcile external threats with core values incapacitated its ability to fulfil allied commitments while concurrently damaging its domestic reputation.

Although Ottawa's involvement in Vietnam was marred with strategic and tactical indecision, there was a marked uniformity in purpose. Three consistencies characterized Canadian involvement throughout this period. First, Canada attempted to temper the excesses of America's Vietnam policy; secondly, it made efforts to balance allied responsibilities with core values; and, finally Canada actively sought a diplomatic role for itself in the conflict. These three premises precluded a meaningful role for Ottawa in the Vietnam War because they were at odds with American objectives. Ironically, the President pursued relatively dovish policies compared to some of the aggressive policy recommendations coming from his national security and military advisors. Johnson's applied the minimum degree of pressure necessary so as not to lose the war, which amounted to a grand strategy, not designed to win a decisive military victory, but rather to keep the conflict at bay. This strategy led to a policy of graduate military pressure which actually prolonged and intensified the conflict. In sum, Johnson already believed that he was resisting pressure from within his own administration and Canadian pressures paled in comparison. Secondly, America was never convinced that Canada satisfied its allied obligations. Secretary of State Dean Rusk remarked that America never "expected Canada to fight with us in Vietnam. But we expected understanding and support. To put it mildly, we did not have major political support from Canada. That made it more difficult."⁵ Canada was in an admittedly uncomfortable position; forced to balance the aggressive policies of its neighbour with its own reputation of diplomacy and multilateralism. It was a

⁵ Martin, Paul. *A Very Public Life: So Many Worlds*. Vol. II. Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1985. P.227.

fine line that Canada never really mastered. Officials in Ottawa were more successful in catering to American concerns, and securing domestic support in 1964 and into 1966. However, as the war escalated and the Canadian public grew increasingly sceptical, Ottawa sacrificed bilateral relations in foreign affairs to chart a more independent Southeast Asian policy. Its previous record of sustained public support for the US was beginning to crack under the weight of public opinion. This opinion, which reflected the concerns held by many in Pearson's Liberal government, eventually forced Paul Martin to speak out publicly against America's bombing campaign.

Finally, and most importantly, Canada opted for a diplomatic role to achieve the two aforementioned goals. Diplomacy was consistent with its national character and also satisfied, in Ottawa's mind at least, the responsibilities of its continental partnership. Yet this diplomacy accomplished very little. Two peace finding missions failed to bring the belligerents any closer together. Canada's role on the International Control Commission established by the 1954 Geneva Accords was rendered almost entirely impotent in February 1965 when Hanoi evicted the fixed teams, and private persuasion had no effect on Washington's decision making. But matters proved more damaging when Ottawa's diplomatic contributions were unwelcome. Yet due to Canada's close relationship with the US, Washington entertained some of these more ill-conceived projects. However, by the end of 1966, after Canada had publicly lobbied for Communist's China's representation in the UN, the rift had grown too deep. Geographical proximity fashioned a much larger sphere of influence in Washington than was otherwise warranted. On the conflict in Southeast Asia, Ottawa managed to exhaust its influence in the American capital. This gives the wrong impression that Canadian-American relations were damaged across the board.

Issues of foreign policy, and even personal antipathies, are limited in scope and nature. Foreign policy differences did not reverberate across the intricate web of connections between the two nations. This is partly because, as Canadian historian Greg Donaghy points out, Prime Minister Pearson stepped in to contain the damage wreaked by Martin's more ambitious foreign policy goals. It also reveals the weight Washington attached to its partnership with Canada regarding international issues and, conversely, economic and social issues affecting both countries. Again, as Donaghy highlights, the "Asian Conundrum" was only one issue in the vast array of cross national interests.⁶ Nevertheless, Vietnam was the battlefield in America's longest war and the site of Canada's fruitless diplomacy, a surprising conclusion for the world's preponderant power and the self-designated peacekeeper. As such the Vietnam War it is a revealing topic about the nature of Canadian-American relations, and Canada's perceived role within it.

America's intervention in Vietnam marked a new phase in a much longer conflict. France, the former colonial power of Indochina, relinquished control of the country in 1954. The same year as an International Commission for Supervision and Control was established to monitor the implementation of and adherence to the Geneva Agreements, the peace agreement which had ended the first Indochina War. Canada reluctantly accepted membership on this tripartite commission.⁷ However, the commission was a political compromise from its inception. The troika body was composed of delegates from Poland, Canada and India, mirroring the Communist, Western and neutral spheres in the Cold War. Poland demonstrated unwavering support for the North Vietnamese. It is therefore

⁶ Donaghy, Greg. *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. pp. 123-147.

⁷ Levant, Victor. *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War*. Toronto: Between The Lines, 1986. p. 87

unsurprising that Canada was naturally sympathetic to the South Vietnamese cause. The American presence in Southeast Asia also began in the 1950's via two avenues. The first was a U.S.-engineered multilateral Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) complimented by the extension of bilateral aid to the 'free' states in the region.⁸ Ironically, as the world was entering a new era of détente and a Sino-Soviet split was emerging, America pursued its policy of containment with increased vigour. The strategy of containment was premised on the logic that should communism prevail in one location, it would germinate more widely in the region. Canada did not fundamentally disagree with the domino theory or with the dangers communism posed. However, it was the nascent nuclear capability of Communist China that presented a more imminent danger to Canadian security.⁹

Against this backdrop, America became increasingly committed to Vietnam under the auspices of defending South Vietnam's right to exist free of communist subversion. President Johnson continually argued that America did not have imperial designs, but rather shouldered the perilous burden of leading and protecting the free world.¹⁰ A succession of coups and religious movements in South Vietnam created a precarious political environment and obstructed American efforts. On the other side of the seventeenth parallel, Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN), increased its control over the north and covertly supported the effective Viet Cong insurgency. In the south, America responded

⁸ Thakur, Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1984. pp. 78-79.

⁹ Ross, Douglas A. *In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam, 1954-1973*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. p. 260.

¹⁰ "President Lyndon B. Johnson's Address at John's Hopkins University: 'Peace Without Conquest' April 7, 1965." Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum: National Archives and Records Administration. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650407.asp>. Accessed December 10, 2008.

with a policy of graduated military pressure and became incrementally entrenched in the country. Canada never contributed troops to the American effort but instead extended limited diplomatic and political support. From 1964 to 1968, the war reached disproportionate heights as negotiations proved elusive and resolve on all sides to fight grew stronger. Various bombing hiatuses punctuated America's involvement. Instead of encouraging negotiations these pauses counterproductively increased military activity in their wake. America was operating from complex and somewhat irrational premises, where perception had surpassed reality. As a result, Washington found itself engulfed in the Vietnam quagmire.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, could have disappeared in the annals of American political history, as Vice Presidents often do, as a politically motivated appointee who would made his exit from presidential politics as innocuously as he entered it. As his biographer points out, Johnson was a larger than life character, with ambitions that surpassed his towering stature. He agreed to the Vice-Presidency begrudgingly, an appointment which represented the failure of his presidential ambitions.¹¹ Ironically, in this position Johnson, like President John F. Kennedy was extremely hesitant to involve America in an inhospitable and distant theatre. His caution in Southeast Asia can be traced back to his time as Senate Majority leader in 1954, when he voted against extricating France from the decisive battle at Dien Bien Phu. However, thrust into the long sought presidency, Johnson was forced to contend with a conservative Congress which was already resistant to his far reaching legislative reform package known as the Great Society. If Johnson lost South Vietnam, the sanctuary of free-world democracy and the lynchpin in America's strategy to contain global

¹¹ Dallek, Robert. *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 3.

communism, then he would also have lost the war at home to implement the drastic social changes of his ambitious Great Society Program.¹²

The belief that a communist take-over in South Vietnam would constitute a real threat to America's national security needs to be examined within a longer temporal context. The Second World War and the realization that the Soviet Union had acquired nuclear capability much sooner than Washington had anticipated had fundamentally altered the international structure. The threat to global security assumed a much different form premised on bi-polarity and Mutually Assured Destruction. The pivotal doctrinal tenet of American foreign policy, as embodied in President Truman's adoption of NSC-68 in 1950, was 'containment'. The Soviet threat was described both in material and ideological terms. As the policy paper enunciated: "The objectives of a free society are determined by its fundamental values and by the necessity for maintaining the material environment in which they flourish. Logically...the Kremlin's challenge to the United States is directed not only to our values but to our physical capacity to protect their environment."¹³ The means to achieve this objective were military and economic preponderance to root out communist subversion wherever it appeared. By making national security synonymous with the circumvention of communism globally, America committed itself to a strategy of 'perimeter defence.' Implicitly, America confronted every form of communist subversion with the same degree of immediacy and gravity.¹⁴

¹² Immerman, Richard H. "A Time in the Tide of Men's Affairs: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam." *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*. ed. Warren L. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. pp. 57-97 and pp. 59-60.

¹³ 'NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950' April 7, 1950. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-4.htm>.

¹⁴ Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 57.

America's commitments to South Vietnam had antecedents in President Dwight Eisenhower's administration that predicted Indo-China would provide the venue for the next Sino-Soviet confrontation with the West. As early as 1956 and 1958 the National Security Council suggested that, "the national security of the United States would be endangered by Communist domination of mainland Southeast Asia," and furthermore, "the loss to Communist control of any single free country would encourage tendencies toward accommodation by the rest."¹⁵ The domino theory, integral to the notion of containment, had a historical legacy in America's Southeast Asian policy. This rationale reasserted itself forcefully in the early 1960's under President Kennedy's administration. In a memorandum prepared by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara in November 1961, both advisers fervently forwarded the notion that South Vietnam was the lynchpin in Southeast Asia; should Communism prevail, the rest of the region would move inexorably towards the Communist bloc. They argued that the loss of Vietnam would irreparably damage America's credibility and undermine its global commitments.¹⁶ Kennedy appeared to have heeded these warnings and fulfilled America's commitment to protect Southeast Asia under the SEATO treaty of 1954. In one of the President's final speeches, Kennedy reaffirmed his determination to confront communism, reasoning that while Communism remained strong, "[t]he balance of power is still on the side of freedom. [Americans] are still the keystone in the arch of freedom."¹⁷

¹⁵ Herring, George C. *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. New York: Wiley, 1979. p. 151.

¹⁶ "Excerpts from memorandum for President Kennedy from Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara, Nov. 11, 1961, as provided by the Pentagon study. *The Pentagon Papers*, Toronto, New York and London: Bantam Books Inc., 1971. pp. 150.

¹⁷ Johnson, Lyndon Baines. *The Vantage Point: Perspective of the Presidency, 1963-1969*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. p. 43.

Johnson assumed the presidency following Kennedy's assassination in June 1963. Johnson noted in his memoirs that America's Vietnam policy would remain "steady on course" and five days after his assumption of leadership he pledged to Congress that "[w]e will keep our commitments from South Vietnam to West Berlin."¹⁸ Despite counterfactual allegations that President Johnson embroiled America deeper into Vietnam than Kennedy would have done, there remains a marked consistency from the Eisenhower administration through the Kennedy years and culminating in Johnson's decision to escalate American involvement. In a memorandum from George McBundy the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to the President in mid-March 1964, he remarked on the importance of Vietnam to American security. In answering the question, "Why is South Vietnam important to us?" McBundy posited that, "First, it is a key element in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia in turn is an area whose size and importance are plain to see.... Second, we have a commitment there in honor and in national interest. Ten years ago President Eisenhower rightly decided to support the new government of South Vietnam and we have continued that support ever since in good times and in bad."¹⁹ America's Vietnam policy pivoted on two basic premises. First, as was aforementioned, the succession of South Vietnam to Communist rule would threaten free society in the entire region. Secondly, American prestige, due to its historical presence and commitments in Vietnam was inextricably linked to the maintenance of a non-communist regime in the south.

America's military escalation is not the focus of this thesis, but it provides the backdrop for Canada's involvement in Southeast Asia and the parameters for its diplomacy. As mentioned, Canada maintained a historical presence in the region since 1954,

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ John McCone's Memoranda of the Meeting, February 7, 1965' *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), Johnson Administration, Vol. II, January-June 1965, Vietnam, Doc. 81.

participating in the three commissions situated in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The Final Declaration of the Geneva Accord called for ceasefires in all three countries and, theoretically treated Vietnam as a unified country but realistically the accords recognized two Vietnamese governments. North Vietnam and its communist leader Ho Chi Minh were legitimized by this recognition. Consequently, America refused to become a signatory and China withheld its participation. The region's complexities and volatility worried Canada yet it begrudgingly accepted membership out of a sense of duty to maintain a long term peace.²⁰ In its first two years, the Commission's record was commendably successful. However, by 1956 its mandate remained unfulfilled as elections to reunify the country had not materialized. Although it tried to maintain a nonpartisan voting record, Canada's natural sympathies gravitated toward the Western cause and the ICC remained as a symbolic framework for peace bereft of the enforcement powers and realistic mandate it needed to operate effectively.

The literature on Canada's role in Vietnam has been a source of heated yet narrow debate. Despite the notable attention the topic has garnered, there are still relatively few academic publications, including articles in peer reviewed journals, chapters in anthologies and monographs devoted to the subject. Due to the underwhelming body of literature, it is possible to trace the development of this field publication by publication. While the following historiography does not claim to be infallibly comprehensive, it will review the majority of the major and minor works produced on the subject.

The Pearson government sustained scathing criticism throughout the Vietnam War. The fullest contemporary expression of this criticism came in 1973. Journalist Charles Taylor published *Snow Job: Canada, the United States and Vietnam, 1954-1973*. This book,

²⁰ Thakur, Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam*. p. 52

as pointed out by subsequent academics, is more of a polemic than a scholarly work. Indeed one historian has judged it to “be totally bereft of even the rudimentary documentary evidence.”²¹ With this work, Taylor inaugurated the complicity thesis, which reflected, as well as influenced, popular sentiment at the time. This self-effacing account of Canada’s conduct in the Vietnam conflict was a contemporary work that failed to contextualize Canada’s involvement because it lacked both historical distance and classified documents. Despite its poor academic standard, Taylor nevertheless set the tone for the field. Since his emotive condemnatory work was published, subsequent authors have consistently situated their arguments in relation to the “complicity thesis.” As the name would imply, this school charges that Canada was an accomplice to America’s aggressive and immoral Vietnam policy, both through its conduct on the ICC as well as its failure to speak out publicly against the war.²²

Canadian political scientist Victor Levant infused the ‘complicity thesis’ with academic legitimacy when he published *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War* in 1986. His research, however, began in 1978 and thus fell neatly into Taylor’s interpretation. Levant identifies his work with the revisionist school of thought; challenging the image of Canada as a helpful and compassionate bystander. He argues that the documentary record reveals, “Canada to have been a willing ally in U.S. counter-insurgency efforts, sharing the same assumptions about the nature of the insurgency, the

²¹ Preston, Andrew. “Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965.” *Diplomatic History* 27:1 (2003), 73-111. p.74.

²² While many authors cite Pearson’s Temple Speech in April 1965 as public opposition to America’s bombing strategy, Taylor indicts Pearson for being too conciliatory. This demonstrates the weaknesses in Taylor’s work as it failed to contextualize Canada’s conduct in terms of its bilateral relations with the US and within a cold war ideology. Pearson’s Temple Speech marks a significant departure from accepted diplomatic protocol and Taylor fails to credit Pearson with the most vocal opposition to the American strategy that was expressed by an American ally at this point.

strategic geo-political importance of Indochina, and the value of trade and investment in Southeast Asia to the world market system.”²³ Levant formulated his thesis within a revisionist paradigm, similar to the historiographical school that emerged in American foreign policy studies in the 1950s. Introduced by William Appleman Williams, the revisionist school attributed America’s adventurous and increasingly imperialistic foreign policy ventures to economic incentives. It was the search for new markets as well as the protection of American economic interests that propelled foreign policy decisions. Looking at Canada’s role in Vietnam through this economic lens, Levant tied Canadian economic interests, as an industrial nation with a high degree of product concentration, to the American system. Canada was not entirely subservient to the US, but it shared the same interests and thus had the same investments in the maintenance of a democratic government in South Vietnam.²⁴ Levant also asserted, that in addition to economic interests in the region, Canada was also invested in the war’s prosecution. It provided a larger market for Canadian goods based on the American need to supply the military industrial complex, equip its troops and manufacture large volumes of strategic war materials. As a result, Canada’s balance of payments normalized, unemployment dropped and the GNP spiked, culminating in 2.5 billions dollars of war material being provided to the US between 1965 and 1973 as well as creating 140, 000 jobs.²⁵ However, Levant refuted his own thesis, by acknowledging the dramatic impact the 1965 Auto Pact agreement had on Canada’s balance of payments, while only loosely and unconvincingly connecting it to Vietnam. Finally, Levant argued that the ICC was the vehicle through which Canada navigated its economically motivated foreign

²³ Levant, Victor. *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War*. Toronto: Between The Lines, 1986.

²⁴ Levant, *Quiet Complicity*, p. 3

²⁵ Levant, *Quiet Complicity*, 4.

policy. In its capacity on the troika body, Canada consistently maintained a partisan voting record, sharing vital politico-military intelligence with the US while defending American interests to the commission and thus the international community.²⁶ Although more academic, the economic lens via which Levant explained Canada's conduct is unconvincing because he did not adequately address the impact of the Auto Pact agreement or explain why such a small market for Canadian products would compel Canada to collude with America in Vietnam. One is forced to question the subjective motive behind the arguments and, like Taylor's work, *Quiet Complicity* is a moral indictment of Canada's Vietnam policy.

A more realistic approach is provided by Ramesh Thakur who studied the ICC in Vietnam and its constituent delegations from a peacekeeping angle. He averred that the Canadian and Indian delegations had to navigate their conduct on the ICC within the parameters defined by their larger national foreign policy interests. In a related position, Thakur maintained that the ICC's record, within the timeframe originally envisioned for its mandate, was quite successful. Specifically on Canada's role, and the factors that shaped its involvement, Thakur identified two distinct phases. Canada accepted membership on the commission following the Geneva Accords because it did not undermine its membership within the Atlantic community, its newly defined role as peacekeeper or its bilateral relations with the US, France, the Soviet Union and China. The second phase, inaugurated by the Americanization of the war, pivoted on the healthy maintenance of the "Ottawa-Washington axis of the Western alliance."²⁷ Thakur's early publications focused on the first stage from 1954 to 1965 and paint a relatively sympathetic picture of Canadian conduct in this period.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Thakur, Ramesh. "Peacekeeping and Foreign Policy: Canada, India and the International Commission in Vietnam" *British Journal of International Studies*. 6:2 (July 1980),125-153. p. 126.

²⁸ Ibid.

He elaborated on this thesis with the publication of his monograph, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*.

Thakur's book argued that Canada and America converged strategically in their determination to forestall Communist expansion. Furthermore, he declared that the idea of Canadian complicity is premised on the notion that Canada could actually have impacted American policy, which is a fallacious assumption. Considering the ICC's troika composition, Canadian sympathy for the Western cause is both expected and understandable. Moreover, the complicity thesis ignores Canada's honourable record on the Commission prior to the escalation of hostilities.²⁹ Thakur devoted almost four pages to discrediting Taylor's thesis. Subsequent scholars have interpreted Thakur's thesis differently and placed it tentatively within the complicity school.³⁰ Less indicting than Levant, Thakur argued that, "[Canada's] leaders either viewed the conflict entirely in American categories or subordinated their perceptions to dictates of prudence in Canada-United States relations."³¹ However, he also contended that Canada feared the damage that would be caused to the Western world by an American defeat. Therefore, supporting the US position did not necessarily entail subordination because Ottawa calculated its Vietnam policy based on the national interest. Thakur's overall contribution can be described as a theoretical bridge that straddled the complicity thesis and a more objective approach.

In 1984, Douglas Ross published *In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam 1954-1973*. In this comprehensive and well documented study, Ross has provided a more sympathetic account of Canada's Vietnam policy. Ross has declared, like Denis Stairs who

²⁹ Thakur Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1984. pp.206-7.

³⁰ Preston, Andrew. "Balancing War and Peace," p. 75.

³¹ Thakur. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam*, p. 4.

popularized the idea that Canada practiced a “diplomacy of constraint” during the Korean War, that Cold War policy was designed primarily to mitigate American aggression.³² Similarly, Ross maintained that, “reduced to its essentials, the record of Canadian policy-making and diplomacy is not cause for shame. Successive Canadian governments accommodated the policy imperatives of various American administrations not because they believed in the wisdom or practicality of intervention but because they hoped to constrain the play of policy in Washington.”³³ He further defended Canadian conduct, by stressing that Canada’s active role in Indo-China always supported negotiations over force and economic instruments over military ones. His monograph had four general premises. The first was that American policy was never likely to succeed, and secondly that American officials knew this. Third, the prospect of tactical nuclear war was an ever present threat and finally “saving” South Vietnam served no real purpose to the US. Ross alleged that there was a void in the literature and by extension the complicity thesis, because students of Canada’s Vietnam policy failed to situate their study within the parameters outlined above. As such, Taylor, Thakur and Levant singularly looked at Canada’s record of facilitation without discussing the factors informing contemporary Canadian foreign policy makers.

Ross has identified three main ideological strains within the Department of External Affairs: liberal-moderate, conservative and left-liberal. While publicly presenting a uniform liberal-moderate position, Ottawa’s Vietnam policy was more aptly characterized as conservative until 1966. Accommodation was considered to be in the national interest, until public disapproval surpassed the threshold which supported the more hawkish elements in the Department of External Affairs (DEA), and the ideological pendulum swung back to its

³² Stairs, Denis. *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

³³ Ross, Douglas. *In the Interests of Peace*, p. 8.

traditional policy of liberal-moderate Pearsonian diplomacy. The left-liberal ideology played an important yet relatively subsidiary role in the East Tower, and was a vocal opposition to the government's Southeast Asian policy.

While Ross's work provided a more balanced approach to Canada's Vietnam policy, it nevertheless suffers from faulty premises as well. Contextualizing Canada's role was imperative. However, the argument that American policy makers were assured of their policy's futility is a lofty position that is not adequately substantiated.³⁴ The overwhelming historiography on America's Vietnam policy has not yet come to a consensus on this point. Vietnam expert Gary Hess, clearly demonstrated this in his historiographical essay, "The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War." To support his premise, Ross referred readers to the works of Leslie Gelb, Richard Betts and Daniel Ellsberg who Hess has labelled as revisionists. There is a distinct difference between the ultimate policy failure that Ross identifies and the argument that American officials did the minimum possible to avoid defeat at each stage. The paradox of futility identified by Ross is in itself contradictory. Ross is a revisionist in the Canadian historiography but he cannot rely on revisionist American Vietnam scholars for support. In fact, he falls more closely in line with the orthodox school which paints America as a mindless cold war warrior that willingly committed itself to an unwinnable war.³⁵

³⁴ Ross argues that the US policy objective was to create a communist free and democratic South Vietnam. An outright American military victory was feasible but this would not fill the ultimate political objective of its policy.

³⁵ Hess, Gary. "The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War." *Diplomatic History* 18:2 (Spring, 1994), 239-265. pp. 240-241. Also See Ross's chapter "Canada, Peacemaking, and the Vietnam War: Where Did Ottawa Go Wrong?" in *The Vietnam War as History*. ed. Elizabeth Jane Errington and B.J.C. McKercher. New York: Praeger, 1990. pp.133-161. In this chapter, Ross situates himself as more critical of US policy than Eayrs but less critical than Levant and Taylor. He argues that Ottawa failed to make any significant contributions to the American peace efforts. Moreover, Canadian leaders did not fulfil their moral and political obligations to speak out against US policy, in part because a culture of "Anti-confrontational passivity" was preponderant on the hill. Ross argues that this apathy paralyzed Ottawa's ability to act

Another school has emerged which ardently defends Canada's Vietnam policy. Works that fall under this category have been scattered in terms of their publication date. The traditionalist historical narrative, although it was not the first school to emerge, depicts Canada as an honorable dissenter that pursued an independent foreign policy premised on a higher morality than that of its powerful southern neighbour. Lawrence Martin in his study of the relationships between *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers*, examines the tenuous Johnson-Pearson years from a traditionalist perspective. He concluded that following Pearson's courageous Temple Speech, there was a discernable bilateral rift premised on divergent Vietnam policies for the remainder of the leaders' tenures.³⁶ Pearson's courageous if mistimed attempts to temper the excesses of American foreign policy were unsuccessful. Canadian historian Robert Bothwell, in his studies on the topic, conceded that Pearson's "suggestion" was an undisguised policy recommendation. Pearson seeing the window of opportunity for Canadian diplomacy narrowing as America escalated the war, opted for a public venue to express his concerns and offer his experienced advice. Johnson was outraged, but contrary to many accounts the bilateral rift that is commonly depicted in the wake of the Prime Minister's Temple Speech, did not really occur. Bothwell attributed this to the development of a continental domestic disapproval of the Vietnam War. Consequently, Bothwell argued that following 1966 and particularly after the failure of Canada's second peacekeeping mission codenamed Operation Smallbridge, Canada no longer had to concentrate on the Vietnam issue.³⁷ This position was also forwarded in the

effectively and responsibly in the international arena. It is largely a summary of his monograph, heavily punctuated by a polemic on the morality of American intervention and the lessons to be learned in Ottawa.

³⁶ Lawrence, Martin. "Burlesque Circus: LBJ and Lester Pearson" *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers: Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1982. pp.212-235.

³⁷ Bothwell, Robert. *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.

monograph, *Invisible and Inaudible in Washington: American Policies Toward Canada*.

This study examined Canada's Vietnam policy as seen from Washington. From this vantage point, Canadian-American relations in 1964 began on a promising note, with a warm exchange between Johnson and Pearson when the former assumed the presidency. The promise of cordial cooperative relations, were shattered in 1965 with Pearson's Temple Speech. Once grateful for Canada's diplomatic contribution, America was now annoyed by its neighbour's meddlesome Vietnam policy. These differences over Vietnam thus were more of a nuisance than a critical threat to Canadian-American relations.

One of the most glowing accounts of Canada's Vietnam policy was expounded by David van Praagh in his chapter "Canada and Southeast Asia." Although treated briefly, Praagh argues that, "from the start Canada played the role of innocent, and if possible, helpful bystander."³⁸ Preceding Thakur, Praagh struck a similar tone, defending the record of the ICC in its first eight years. The composition of the troika body was structurally predisposed to inefficiency. Tensions between the Canadian and Indian delegation further obstructed the commission's work and damaged their once amicable relationship.³⁹ Praagh also defended Canada against charges of American complicity and information-sharing with Washington. He situated his chapter in a real time, real life context. He argued correctly that Canada was never meant to be a "neutral" member, but rather it was to function as the Western third of an institutional cold war microcosm. Moreover, it was natural that the American and Canadians would associate on a social level in Saigon, and although information was transmitted this way, it was natural and by definition difficult to quantify.

³⁸ Van Praagh, David. "Canada and Southeast Asia" in *Canada and the Third World*, ed. Peyton V. Lyon and Tareq Y. Ismael. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976. pp. 308.

³⁹ Ibid. For further reading on the ICC's impact on Canadian-Indian relations see Barrie M. Morrison "Canada and South Asia" in Ibid. pp. 32-33; and Ramesh Thakur's "Peacekeeping and Foreign Policy: Canada, India and the International Commission in Vietnam" *British Journal of International Studies*, 6:2 (July 1980), p. 128.

Nevertheless, Praagh commended the Canadians for fulfilling their role on the ICC. While this praise may be exaggerated, it nevertheless provided a counter balance to the complicity thesis and subsequent authors have been working within these parameters to produce a synthesis.

A renewed and revised analysis of Canada's foreign policy during this period has recently emerged. This school again challenges the traditionalist and revisionist theories, putting forth a synthesis that is rooted in a more holistic historical context. Greg Donaghy's book *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* has offered an alternative perspective on the Johnson-Pearson era. Focusing on the continental economic integration during this period, Donaghy's central thesis was that America was an accommodating and patient neighbour contrary to the prevailing conclusion that this era marked a rift in bilateral relations. While Donaghy recognized that Canada and America had different calculations of the risks presented to the West by Far East Asia, he did not conclude that foreign policy differences irreparably damaged relations in this period.⁴⁰ In his chapter "The Asian Conundrum", Donaghy articulately and concisely depicts Canada's involvement. Overall, he concludes that Canadian support was very limited and paled in comparison to the meddlesome diplomatic initiatives coined in Ottawa. Martin, in particular, proved to be a consistent and unwelcome voice in Canada's search for peace. The fallout from Pearson's Temple Speech demonstrated the bitter cost of dissent, and the Prime Minister was wary about his Minister's self-designated role as peace broker. As Martin's diplomatic belligerence continued to affront policy makers in Washington, Pearson stepped into pick up the reigns of Canada's Asian policy. Once again at the helm, Pearson was not interested in

⁴⁰ Donaghy, Greg. *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. pp. 123-147.

revitalizing his image as diplomatic champion, but rather with maintaining a policy of moderation that would contain the Asian question. Donaghy argued that Pearson successfully preserved Canadian-American relations in this period.⁴¹

Donaghy is a Canadian historian and his perspective is particularly interesting because, it provides insight into the American perspective on Canada's Vietnam policy. He examined Canada's Asian policy within the larger cross currents of Canadian American relations, and tailors it to the fundamental ideological differences that separated these continental neighbours. This approach was sorely needed and perhaps tardy because of the moral element in the debate. In attempts to continue this trend, it is necessary to examine the attention American scholars have devoted to the Canadian role in this period. As pointed out by Andrew Preston, Canadian involvement in Vietnam has received only cursory attention from American academics. Most of this work is devoted to Canada's first peace seeking mission codenamed Operation Bacon and undertaken by Blair Seaborn in 1964 and 1965. The first American account of Operation Bacon was provided by Allan E. Goodman in the *Lost Peace: America's Search for a Negotiated Settlement of the Vietnam War*.⁴² Two years later, in 1980 American Vietnam scholar Wallace J. Thies gave a fuller account of the Seaborn missions in his book, *When Governments Collide: Coercion and Diplomacy in the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1968*. Thies examines the Seaborn missions in relation to the American debate on military escalation in 1964. He viewed Canada's failed diplomacy within the context of America's military escalation, and averred that Ottawa's diplomatic

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 146-147.

⁴² Allan E. Goodman. *The Lost Peace: America's Search for a Negotiated Settlement of the Vietnam War*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978.

contributions only succeeded in raising the spectre of violence.⁴³ This position is echoed in many of the Canadian works situated in the 'complicity' school, which viewed Seaborn as a messenger boy for the Americans, whose 'good offices' amounted to little more than the delivery of an ultimatum. Thies also discussed Canada's second peace seeking mission, codename Operation Smallbridge and carried out by Chester Ronning, which he essentially viewed as a futile exercise pushed by the Canadians and reluctantly accepted by the Americans. The raw details of the Seaborn and Ronning missions were more fully expounded in George C. Herring's supplement to the Pentagon Papers, which were originally leaked by Daniel Ellsberg and published by the New York Times. In the *Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, primary documents produced by various third party initiatives were compiled into comprehensive chapters. Herring's chapter on the Ronning Missions is particularly valuable because it has received substantially less attention.⁴⁴ This can be attributed to the Canadian character of the second mission as well as the relative lack of importance Washington attached to them. In Preston's review of American sources, he points out that they offer a distinctly American perspective because they rely exclusively on American sources. The first American academic to write from a Canadian perspective due to his reliance on Canadian archival material was Frederik Logevall in his book *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*. Again the emphasis is on the Seaborn missions and the military escalation that occurred in their wake. Echoing Ross's work, Logevall argues that Canada's objective was to forestall a wider war by

⁴³ Theis, Wallace J. *When Governments Collide: Coercion and Diplomacy in the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1966*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1980.

⁴⁴ *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War: The Negotiating Volumes of the Pentagon Papers*. ed. George C. Herring. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983.

contributing diplomatically and therefore Ottawa was pursuing a national and independent foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

This historiographical overview appropriately ends with the most contemporary and thoroughly documented work on Canada's Vietnam policy. Andrew Preston has published two articles, "Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965,"⁴⁵ and "Operation Smallbridge: Chester Ronning, the Second Indochina War and the Challenge to the United States in Asia."⁴⁶ Both works concentrated on Canada's peace-seeking missions: the first focused on the Seaborn missions and the second, as the name implies, examined the Ronning missions. The conclusions forwarded in both works are fatalistic, if somewhat sympathetic accounts of Canada's Vietnam policy. Preston has argued that the American and North Vietnamese positions were so entrenched that the well meaning efforts of a third party intermediary were futile from their inception. According to Preston, Canada consistently maintained a record of public support for America, and rarely deviated from the practice of quiet diplomacy. Despite Ottawa persistence, first propelled by Pearson and later Martin, Canada could not influence America's Vietnam policy, but it should not be faulted for having tried.

The secondary literature on Canada's Vietnam policy provides a valuable context in which to situate the voluminous documentary record produced by Canada's active diplomacy between 1964 and 1968. This study is organized both chronologically and

⁴⁵ Preston, Andrew. "Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965" *Diplomatic History* (January 2003) 27:1, 73-111.

⁴⁶ Preston, Andrew. "Operation Smallbridge: Chester Ronning, the Second Indochina War and the Challenge to the United States in Asia." *The Pacific Historical Review*. (Aug. 2003) 72:3, 353-390. Also see Preston's work which covers both missions in Preston, Andrew. "Missions Impossible: Canadian Secret Diplomacy and the Quest for Peace in Vietnam" in *The Search for Peace in Vietnam 1964-1968*. ed, Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger. Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2004. pp. 117-143.

thematically and each chapter is based on a major diplomatic event. These major themes provide the framework, but the picture is filled in by focusing heavily on personalities. This work is based on the assumption that policy history is largely determined by individuals, guided and limited by the structures in which they are operating, but nevertheless still crucial participants. The overarching objective of this study is to explore how Canadian-American relations were impacted at various stages within the conflict. The first year begins with the Seaborn missions and marks a cordial period in Canadian-American relations. Pearson was at the helm of these decisions and Martin was forced into the passenger's seat. However, with the Americanization of the war in 1965, Pearson felt compelled to counsel his American colleague in his Temple Speech. This decision failed in its objectives and led to increased tensions between the two national leaders. Plagued by domestic troubles, such as the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and federalism generally, and frustrated by his inability to effect American policy, Pearson allowed Martin to chart Canada's foreign policy course. This shift marks a turning point in the study as the attention is almost entirely devoted to Martin. It is also the subject of the third chapter beginning in 1966 with Martin's personally engineered peacekeeping mission. It was aptly designated Operation Smallbridge and undertaken by retired Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning. Despite these efforts, an elusive peace persisted and Martin's motives came under close scrutiny. At this point the study digresses slightly into an exploration of the issue of Communist Chinese representation in the United Nation, which is also focused primarily on 1966 and is integrally linked to Canada's Vietnam policy. The study, which ends in 1967, maintains that Martin may have toned down his more ambitious goals, yet he never abandoned his search for peace in Vietnam. The literature has generally ignored this period in Canada's Vietnam policy

because it is dwarfed by the more dramatic episodes discussed above. Nevertheless, it forms an important part of the story and its inclusion is necessary in order to provide the full picture. Canadian-American relations ebbed and flowed between 1964 and 1968, largely but not entirely in sync with Canada's level of diplomatic commitment to the American efforts in Vietnam. Ottawa's incoherent Vietnam policy allowed it room for flexibility, but in the end the limitations of middle power were vividly exposed and American policy proceeded unabated by Canada's well-meaning if not effective efforts at restraint.

Chapter II

Tuning into the Seaborn Channel: Broadcasting From America

Canada's presence in Vietnam predated the Seaborn mission by a decade. It began with Prime Minister St. Laurent's reluctant acceptance for membership on the troika International Control Commission established by the Geneva Accords in 1954. This responsibility, which commanded a huge commitment in terms of manpower, also gave Canadian diplomats an intimate acquaintance with Southeast Asia. Firsthand experience in the region, coupled with Canada's traditional propensity to focus national security efforts on the Western hemisphere, led Canadian policy makers to draw much different conclusions than their American counterparts. While firmly situated in the Cold War context, the Vietnam situation was essentially a civil war propelled by indigenously generated political objectives and imperatives. This realization placed Canada in an awkward position. In principle, Canadian policy makers were cold war believers. The communist and non-communist worlds were fundamentally different systems and communist victories threatened the stability of the global structure and Canada's position within it. However, Canada delineated between varieties and degrees of communism. A loss in South Vietnam was undesirable but it would not be a fatal strategic loss for the 'free world.' Therefore, while Canada accepted that a degree of military force was necessary in South Vietnam to curtail the activities of the Viet Cong, a lasting victory had to be secured politically. This was a logical conclusion considering the guerrilla insurgency's primary objective was political; the reunification of the country under the Northern government. From the beginning Canada placed and maintained its focus on a political front and hoped, as early as January 1964, that

it could convince the Americans to emphasize a political trajectory in their Vietnam policy.⁴⁷

It was clear that President Johnson's security advisors had reached a much different conclusion. Early in 1964, Secretary of State Dean Rusk outlined the American position on diplomacy, claiming that:

We do not believe that North Vietnam's terrorism can be called off by "an astute diplomatic offensive" at this time. While diplomacy may eventually play a role, we believe this will happen only after the North Vietnamese become convinced that they cannot succeed in destroying the Republic of Vietnam by guerrilla warfare. "Political and social acts of popular benefit" are an essential part in preserving the Republic against destruction. But these acts can only become possible if military successes against the marauders make feasible an unfettered exchange of confidence between the people in the villages and the government in Saigon.⁴⁸

According to both Canada and America, diplomacy and force were necessary components of a Vietnam policy. However, the relationship between political and military tactics was inversed in the American. In stark contrast to Canadian assessments, American political tactics were designed to directly facilitate a South Vietnamese military victory.

Publicly Johnson maintained an image of restraint and moderation. It is important to note that 1964 was a presidential election year and it was crucial that Vietnam remain in the background. McGeorge Bundy later commented that, "Neither [Kennedy nor Johnson] wanted to go to the election as the one who either made war or lost Vietnam. If you could put them off you did."⁴⁹ However, behind this calm exterior America's Vietnam policy was gaining momentum. McGeorge Bundy wrote to the President endorsing Operation Plan

⁴⁷ "Indochina – General," Prime Minister's Visit to Washington. January 21-22. *Talking Points*, Vol. 10827, File No. 20-1-1-17, LAC. Nats pics. 48.

⁴⁸ "Subject-Vietnam," Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President, Washington, Jan. 8, 1964. *FRUS*, 1964-1968, Vol. 1, Vietnam, 1964 (I) Doc. 8 Tab A.

⁴⁹ Qtd in Logevall, Frederik. *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1999. p. 108.

34A; a judgement supported by Rusk, McNamara and McCone.⁵⁰ This strategic plan approved CIA-sponsored South Vietnamese covert action against the North.⁵¹ Such action was premised on the belief that the Viet Cong insurgency was being directed and supplied from Hanoi via radio networks and supply lines operating in and through Laos and Cambodia. Johnson approved the plan to commence on February 1. The initial stage, which called for a four month intensification against the North, involved intelligence overflights, dissemination of propaganda leaflets, and commando raids by South Vietnamese forces. These raids, the centerpiece of the plan, were designed to “result in substantial destruction, economic loss and harassment.”⁵² American Ambassador in Saigon, Henry Cabot Lodge, welcomed the increased pressure against North Vietnam but stressed the importance of maintaining deniability. He also introduced the idea of presenting a carrot and stick to Hanoi as further inducements for DRVN capitulation. The early antecedents of Canada’s diplomatic role can be discerned at this point. It is telling that the idea for negotiations took form within the context of military intensification.

A mere two weeks after Johnson authorized OPLAN-34A, on January 30, 1964 Major General Nguyen Khanh seized control of South Vietnam in a bloodless coup. Khanh’s professed motive was to rectify inefficient administrative organs under the previous leadership as well as to rid the country of communist leaning neutralists. His denunciation of colonialism and his antipathy toward neutralism was an obvious rejection of French policy towards Vietnam. Once the colonial power in Vietnam, in 1964 French President

⁵⁰ “Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President,” January 7, 1964, *FRUS* 1964-1968 Vol 1. Vietnam, 1964, Doc. 4.

⁵¹ ‘National Security Action Memorandum No. 273,’ Washington, November 26, 1963.’ *FRUS*, Kennedy Administration, 1961-1963, Vol. IV, Vietnam, August-December, 1963. Doc. 331; McNamara, Robert. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, New York: Vintage Books, 1996. pp. 103.

⁵² Logevall, *Choosing War*, p.110.

Charles DeGaulle sought neutrality in Southeast Asia and a more open relationship with Asian communist powers. For both South Vietnam and America these developments threatened the non-communist powers in the region. Despite Khanh's rhetoric, the US more accurately pegged his political motives as personal ambition.⁵³ The coup threatened political stability in South Vietnam and the Americans had to decide whether they would support the new government. The Americans were primarily concerned with their military timetable, and Khanh's pro-American attitude was reassuring. It was critical that political transitions in Saigon did not disrupt plans for military intensification. Upon his assumption of leadership, Khanh verbally reaffirmed his commitment to the Americans through Ambassador Lodge. Drastic shifts in America's Vietnam policy had already occurred in the first month of this fateful year and, despite political unrest, they generally adopted a cautiously optimistic assessment of their prospects in South Vietnam.

Canada's permanent representative to the ICC, Gordon Cox offered a more sceptical analysis of US policy in Vietnam. Prophetically surmising that America's current policy in Vietnam, and its increasingly public commitment, was circumscribing the range of options available to them, he predicted that America would have to choose between a humiliating withdrawal and open aggression against the North. However, the remainder of Cox's report belied his ignorance of American intelligence. He feared that US policy makers had wrongly identified South Vietnam as the source of the Viet Cong's insurgency, when in fact it was being directed from the North. If US authorities did not recognize infiltration from the North then the Commission would be rendered entirely impotent. Its emphasis on

⁵³ "Subject – The New Vietnamese Coup," Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Green) to the Secretary of State, Washington, January 30, 1964, *FRUS* Johnson Administration, 1964-1968. Vol. 1. Vietnam, 1964(1), Doc.23.

investigating infiltration and subversion would be redundant if Americans believed the insurgency was indigenous. Finally, Cox expressed serious concern about the stability and longevity of the Khanh government. The new regime, devoid of political substance, forwarded two major themes; the continuation of the war and the rejection of neutrality. While wrong about American intelligence, Cox offered an astute summary of the situation in Vietnam. Its ominous tone and the impact it had in Ottawa at the time are more important than gauging the accuracy of his report retrospectively.⁵⁴

Reports from Canadian officials in Washington offered little more encouragement. According to the Canadian embassy, the Vietnam working group, established by the President in early 1964 and headed by William Sullivan, recognized the deteriorating situation in Vietnam.⁵⁵ There was some optimism in the Khanh government, but rumours of potential coups were circulating. This coupled with the incessant talk of neutralization from President DeGaulle and Senator Mike Mansfield led to an overall decline in morale and war weariness in Vietnam.⁵⁶ Preoccupied with polls and the looming election, Johnson wanted to invest just enough resources in Vietnam to maintain the status quo until after the November elections.⁵⁷ Despite Ottawa's growing concern, External Affairs Minister Paul Martin pledged Canadian support and understanding for the American effort at a NATO ministerial meeting in April. Careful to stipulate that "at the present time" there was no viable alternative to the "vigorous" policy America was pursuing in Vietnam, he believed the recent political instability and the precarious military situation mandated a strong

⁵⁴ "The War in Vietnam" From the Canadian Permanent Mission in Saigon to Department of External Affairs (hereafter DEA), February 15, 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113, File. 20-22-VIET S-2 pt.1, LAC.

⁵⁵ Dallek, Robert. *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Telegram-909, "Vietnam," From the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to DEA Ottawa, 9 March 1964, SECRET CND EYES ONLY, RG25, Vol. 10113, File 20-22-VIET S-2, Pt. 1, LAC.

⁵⁷ Dallek, Robert. *Flawed Giant*. p. 104.

Western presence to forestall communism's spread in the region. In concluding, Martin alluded to the upcoming diplomatic role Canada was going to play in the conflict. He stressed that membership on the ICC furnished unique opportunities to promote the Western cause in Vietnam.⁵⁸

The same day Secretary of State Dean Rusk flew to Ottawa with a unique proposition. Rusk requested the services of newly appointed ICC commissioner Blair Seaborn. As he later recalled, President Johnson considered that "Secretary McNamara was his right arm - and had to carry the burden of the military effort - and I was his left arm, and that my job was to try to find a way to bring this to a conclusion by a peaceful means."⁵⁹ Rusk's involvement in the Seaborn missions was an exercise in this practice, and incidentally, the inception of the Seaborn missions also marks the most interesting Canadian contribution to the Vietnam War during 1964. In addition to Ottawa's more active role in the conflict, the Canadian channel serves as a microcosm of Canadian-American relations. Codenamed Operation Bacon, the Seaborn missions, inaugurated a period of bilateral collaboration, if not always cooperation, at the foreign policy level which was atypical for the period under examination. Canada embarked on a diplomatic mission for its neighbour that eventually exposed their divergent national views on the war. The major point of contention was the content in Seaborn's message. The 'carrot and stick,' first conceived of by Lodge in February, 1964, was fleshed out during Rusk's mission to Saigon between April 17 and 19. Lodge was originally concerned with America's and South Vietnam's public image; increased publicity of American supported aggression against the North needed to be

⁵⁸ "Minister's Speech at NATO Ministerial Meeting," 30 April 1964, Confidential, RG 25, Vol. 10827, File 20-1-1-17, LAC.

⁵⁹ "Dean Rusk I - Typed Interview Transcripts," MacClear (Michael) Papers. Manuscript Collection 10, Interview Transcripts, Box. 21. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

justifiable both domestically and internationally. Aggression unmitigated by diplomacy was deemed too dangerous. For the first time, during a meeting between General Khanh and Secretary Rusk in Saigon, the Americans sought a direct channel to Hanoi, through which they could warn DRVN authorities of the grave consequences resulting from non-compliance. The incentives, or the 'carrots,' at this stage were negligible, consisting of increased food aid, not necessarily supplied by the US, and perhaps the withdrawal of some American personnel from South Vietnam. The primary objective was to terminate the Viet Cong's guerrilla insurgency through selectively targeted bombings designed to induce fear and force capitulation. A secure channel was required to convey this ultimatum and the British, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavs and Poles were discarded in favour of Canada. However, it was not the opportunity that the Canadians were expecting for the Americans were using diplomacy to justify force. In this case diplomacy did not mean negotiations but purely communication. This may have seemed a step forward from the diplomatic isolation hereto characterizing Hanoi-US relations, but it was a hollow version of the diplomacy envisioned by Canadians. Lodge stated this conundrum clearly, "For us to make such a statement to Hanoi through an interlocutor is neither a negotiation nor a dialogue. It is more nearly an ultimatum."⁶⁰

The message underwent several amendments as it passed through the offices of various American and Canadian policy makers. It is interesting to track the changes because they highlighted America's attitude towards Canada and how the latter's diplomatic role was perceived. The preliminary outline was penned by Rusk who sent it to Lodge for approval on May 1. After establishing contact with Ho Chi Minh, Seaborn was to gauge Ho Chi

⁶⁰ "Subject – Discussion Mr. Bundy's Letter April 4, 1964 to the Ambassador," Memorandum of a Conversation, U.S. Embassy, Saigon, April 19, 1964, 10 a.m." *FRUS*. Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. 1, Vietnam(IV), Doc. 120.

Minh's optimism regarding North Vietnam's prospects. Could Seaborn discern whether the DRVN leader felt vulnerable or confident that the North had secured Chinese support? Moreover, what degree of influence did China wield in Hanoi? Seaborn's second assignment was to convey American determination. He was to stress that the US had no imperial designs on Vietnam and therefore could not understand the motive behind Hanoi's continued aggression. If the North desisted from pressuring its southern neighbours then the American presence in Vietnam "would sharply diminish" Finally, a small economic incentive, in the form of normalizing trade relations and food aid was extended.⁶¹ Lodge amended the message to harden its tone but substantially it read the same.

Blair Seaborn's credentials as a communist expert and a seasoned diplomat made him an ideal candidate for the position, although he later admitted that he was not thrilled with the assignment because he "knew the ICC had become a pretty frustrating sort of job," whose functionality was dependent on the cooperation of all sides. However, after learning that the posting entailed, "a second assignment, which was to do some probing of attitudes on the North Vietnamese side and initially at least to carry some quite explicit messages from the US government,"⁶² Seaborn relished the extra sense of responsibility. Having already been assigned to replace Cox in the summer, in his secret capacity as diplomatic interlocutor, Seaborn's posting was pushed forward as the Americans were eager to establish a direct line of communication with Hanoi. Seaborn's mission was two-fold. In the first capacity he was to gather intelligence and in the second he was to deliver a message. The American's were more concerned with the latter part of Seaborn's assignment, whereas the

⁶¹ "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam Washington, May 1, 1964--8:34 p.m," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. 1, Vietnam(IV), Doc. 134.

⁶² "Seaborn, Blair - Typed Interview Transcripts," MacClear (Michael) Papers. Manuscript Collection 10, Interview Transcripts, Box. 21. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

Canadians focused on the former. The task of gathering intelligence gave Seaborn more flexibility to insert a Canadian perspective both in its dealings with Hanoi and in its relations with US policy makers. The active role Canadians wanted to play and the passive role that the Americans expected were destined to conflict.

Pearson and Martin had great respect for Dean Rusk. That he personally flew to Ottawa to request their assistance was evidence of the importance attached to the proposition. Yet Martin and Pearson disagreed with Rusk's pronounced propensity to see, "Communists behind every tree."⁶³ Nevertheless, the Canadians saw a unique opportunity to fulfill its allied obligations to the US without compromising Canada's position on the ICC. Moreover, the diplomatic role assigned to Seaborn was consistent with Canada's self-professed middle power status. Considering these incentives and the personal weight brought to bear on the request by Rusk's first hand delivery, Canada's acceptance is wholly understandable. Martin believed that Canada had an obligation to keep North Vietnam fully informed about America's position. He defended the decision to undertake the missions, arguing in his memoirs that "[the Canadians] He authorized Seaborn to inform the North Vietnamese of the indefinite degree to which America was willing to expand the war based on the information Canada had available. He later argued, unconvincingly, that "Seaborn was not an agent for the United States, and there were no threats in the message carried."⁶⁴

William Sullivan, the inter-agency coordinator for Vietnam affairs and Chester Cooper of the Central Intelligence Agency were put in charge of the Seaborn missions. A talking paper was prepared for Sullivan's visit to Ottawa outlining more specific instructions. This talking paper expanded on the four points originally conceived by Rusk

⁶³ Stursberg, Peter. *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1980. pp. 257.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 259.

and Lodge. Seaborn was authorized to convey that the only alternative to the current American strategy was expansion of the war northward. Withdrawal under the prevailing strategic conditions was not an option open to the Americans who had staked their security and reputation on the maintenance of a free South Vietnam. As such, "American official and public patience with North Vietnamese aggression is growing extremely thin." The gist of this message was consistent with the original. However, this paper is more telling because it clearly outlines Seaborn's job description. In its concluding paragraph, it stated "the purpose of Seaborn's mission in the North would be as an interlocutor with both active and passive functions." However, the only active role assigned to Seaborn was establishing his credentials with Hanoi authorities. Everything else was deemed passive.⁶⁵ Canadians would not concur on this point.

Sullivan and Cooper visited Ottawa on May 28, 1964, meeting first with officials from the Department of External Affairs. After discussing the general situation in Vietnam the conversation moved to the nature of Seaborn's message. Sullivan responded in very vague language that did not divulge the entirety of the message nor its ultimate objectives. Instead, he stressed that Washington was willing to enter into a dialogue with Hanoi and hoped that Canada could assist them. The mission, as it was conveyed to the Canadians, did not represent the ultimatum which Lodge had engineered earlier that month. In fact, the Americans portrayed the initiative as their attempt at opting for a middle ground, seeking to forestall the necessity of increased militarization while simultaneously minimizing the prospect of a conference. Sullivan made it clear that the former outcome was much more likely. These meetings allayed the concerns of both parties. Sullivan reassured the

⁶⁵ "Subject: Sullivan's Talking Paper for Canadians," Memo of 13 May 1964, Secret, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry. File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

Canadians that the network of communication would start in DC and be forwarded to Ottawa through its Embassy, who in turn would contact Seaborn in Saigon. However, in return for this concession, Sullivan asked that, "Mr. Seaborn faithfully transmit the messages even if he did not agree with their content." On this point, Assistant Undersecretary Arnold Smith confirmed his government's intentions to do so. The Canadians were on board.⁶⁶

Prior to Seaborn's first mission, the State Department expressed reservations about Canada's commitment should the contents of Seaborn's message convey a threat. Secretary of State McBundy warned Ambassador Lodge that "...in light of present Canadian attitudes we tend to see real difficulty in approaching the Canadians at this time with any message as specific as you suggest, i.e., that Hanoi be told by the Canadians "that they will be punished"...the more specific message might lead us into a very difficult dialogue with the Canadians as to just what our plans really were."⁶⁷ America's concern was reinforced during a meeting between Johnson and Pearson in New York on the same day that Sullivan and Cooper were meeting with the DEA in Ottawa. The Prime Minister, expressing his concern over escalation, suggested that activity be restricted to South Vietnam. He was referring specifically to Senator Barry M. Goldwater who, during his campaign for the Republican nomination, was advocating using tactical nuclear weapons and conventional bombing in Vietnam. Johnson assured the Canadian leader that he had no desire for nuclear escalation; should America be forced to resort to conventional bombings, targets would be discriminate and limited in scope. By the end of this short conversation the Prime Minister's position had dramatically shifted. Instead of supporting American action limited exclusively to South

⁶⁶ "Record of Conversation – Messrs, Sullivan and Cooper to the Department," 3 June 1964; and "Summary Record of Conversation between the Minister and Mr. Sullivan, June 3, 1964," RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

⁶⁷ 'State 2049 AmEmb SAIGON (TS/NODIS), Priority, Sent 22 May 64, 7:40 P.M.' in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, p. 18.

Vietnam, Pearson acquiesced to Johnson's position of strategically limited conventional bombing in the North.⁶⁸ Two important points can be inferred. Firstly, Pearson's personal and political reservations expressed via 'quiet' diplomatic channels did not carry much weight in Washington. Secondly, U.S. policy makers were aware of Canada's limitations and, from an early stage, questioned their neighbour's loyalty.

Washington remained unconvinced of Canada's resolve but saw no alternative. Johnson felt that the time was ripe for a direct channel to be established. The pending meeting at Honolulu between Vietnamese and American civil and military leaders was organized to assess the situation in Southeast Asia and discuss future courses. This meeting raised speculation and thus the potential for misinterpretation about American intentions for both its allies and enemies. Johnson's message was clear. He needed a reliable messenger and he knew "of no other channel than the Canadians to bring this about."⁶⁹ However, secrecy trumped reliability and the Americans opted to withhold the full contents of Seaborn's message. In a letter to Pearson, Johnson acknowledged that the Canadians wanted a more detailed message, but regretted that at the present time "officials had concluded that they were not rpt not in a position to identify types of combinations of carrots and sticks which USA might wish to hold out to North Vietnamese."⁷⁰ The first outline given to Seaborn contained the two-fold objective of gathering intelligence as well as conveying the American position outlined above. However, how exactly the Canadian channel configured into the American military strategy was not disclosed. Canadians were in the dark about

⁶⁸ "Memorandum for the Record of a Conversation between President Johnson and Prime Minister Pearson, Hilton Hotel, New York, May 28, 1964, 6:15-6:45p.m," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. I, Vietnam, 1964, Doc, 182.

⁶⁹ "Subject - High Level Talking Paper for the Canadians," NSF/CF/Canada, Box. 165, Vol 1, Memos [2 of 2], LBJL, 92.

⁷⁰ Telegram-1951, "Subject - Southeast Asia" From the Canadian Embassy in WashDC to DEA Ottawa, 30 May 1964, RG 25 Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

OPLAN 34A. The initial stage had expired and a second intensification was scheduled for June 1;⁷¹ the same month that Seaborn was to deliver his message. The timing was carefully engineered not just by politicians in Washington, but by the hard-line American Ambassador in Saigon and his military advisors. None of them were sympathetic to Canadian sensitivities. Lodge's primary concern was plausible deniability of the air strikes against the North. He stressed that neither Saigon nor Washington should accept responsibility for the Oplan-34 A raids, but that the signal of American resolve and military capacity be clearly relayed to Hanoi. Moreover, the purpose of Seaborn's mission, according to Lodge, was not diplomatic. He thought the Canadian channel provided the "opportunity of using military power in a sharp focus to achieve specific political objectives, and we can increase or decrease the dose as we judge the traffic will bear and depending on our own readiness."⁷² It was a message designed to force surrender or widen the margin of military manoeuvrability. There was no intention of striking a middle ground such as Sullivan had assured Martin in Ottawa.

The heated debate surrounding the Seaborn mission pivots on this point. Again, the Canadians and Americans had a mirror image interpretation of the interplay between diplomacy and force. The Canadians were not naive nor were they completely uninformed. In the vague debriefing given to the DEA based on the Honolulu meetings, Cooper said the possibility of graduated military pressure exerted through targeted air strikes was explored. Three options were under considerations: "(A) VC logistic facilities such as trails and

⁷¹ "Subject – North Vietnam Operations," Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (McNamara), JCSM-426-64, 19 May 1964, *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. I, Vietnam, 1964, Doc 161.

⁷² "Message From the Ambassador in Vietnam (Lodge) to the President, Saigon, May 15, 1964--4 p.m.," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. I, Vietnam, 1964, Doc. 157.

bridges in NVN and Laos along supply routes; or (B) NVN military bases used to channel aid, such as Vinh; or (C) significant industrial targets in North.”⁷³ Of the three options C, was most unlikely but none of them had been decided upon conclusively.⁷⁴ The Americans continually emphasized that no drastic decision was foreseen in the near future. Johnson stressed that speed was essential; especially considering this was the first attempt at direct communication. Pearson had received Johnson’s assurances of moderation, and American officials had stressed the independence of the Canadian channel. There were obvious risks, but if there was any hope of influencing America’s Vietnam policy, this was the opportunity. Considered in this light, it is difficult to see how the Canadians could have refused.

Seaborn dutifully assumed his position as the permanent Canadian representative to the ICC in early June, 1964. The atypical haste with which he was scheduled to visit Hanoi aroused some speculation amongst South Vietnamese officials and ICC commissioners about Seaborn’s mandate. However, the nature of his mission was too urgent to defer. Seaborn, carrying a letter from Prime Minister Pearson verifying his credentials and the authenticity of his mission, visited Hanoi for three days in mid-June. This first visit primarily satisfied the active role of his mission by establishing contact with the appropriate DRVN authorities, including Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. He reported that Pham Van Dong seemed appreciative of the Canadian channel and perhaps even of the American attempt to establish direct contact. The Canadian commissioner drafted a memorandum of his conversation with Pham van Dong on the flight back to Saigon, the gist of which was

⁷³ Telegram-2043, “Vietnam and Laos: USA Policy,” From Washington to DEA Ottawa, 5 June 1964, SECRET Limited Distribution, RG 25, Vol 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC. Handwritten remark in option (B) read “ICC teamsite!” An indication of the conflict Canada was going to face in assisting the US diplomatically while maintaining integrity on the ICC.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

relayed to Lodge and to Ottawa.⁷⁵ In his more critical analysis of the meeting, completed on June 22, there was a distinctly more cynical tone. Most of his observations were either inconclusive or in the negative. Most importantly, Seaborn arrived at the “tentative conclusion” that “we would be unwise at this stage to count on war weariness or factionalism within leadership or possible military advantage to DRVN or kind of Asian Tito-ism as of such importance to cause DRVN to jump at chance of reaching accommodation with USA in this area.” He was also sceptical that NVN were convinced of America’s resolve and determination to carry the war north. As Seaborn ominously speculated, “the ultimate consequences of which could be World War III.”⁷⁶

The American response to Seaborn’s report was generally positive. Noting that Seaborn’s depiction of Pham van Dong seemed uncharacteristically warm and welcoming, Lodge had little else to comment except that he would like to see Seaborn return in mid-August and that perhaps it might be worth “giving them a neat bloody nose” by targeting a North Vietnamese industrial site before his next visit.⁷⁷ Ambassador Charlie Ritchie said that Bundy and Sullivan seemed pleased at the initial success of Seaborn’s mission. They were not available for lengthy comment, but were optimistic that a useful dialogue was being established.⁷⁸ Despite positive feedback, the success of Seaborn’s mission had to be contextualized. External Affairs received a telegram from their Ambassador in Hong Kong Roberts with some revealing insights into America’s Vietnam policy. For the first time,

⁷⁵Telegram-273, “Initial visit to Hanoi: Call on PM Pham van Dong,” From Canadian Delegation(hereafter Candel) in Saigon(Seaborn) to DEA Ottawa, 20 June 1964, SECRET, RG 25, Vol 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

⁷⁶Telegram-282, “DRVN: Attitudes and Outlook,” from Candel Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 22 June, 1964,SECRET, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

⁷⁷“Telegram from Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State, Saigon, June 24, 1964--3 p.m,” *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. I, Vietnam, 1964, Doc. 222.

⁷⁸Telegram-2250, “Seaborn’s Call on North Vietnamese PM,” from Canadian Embassy WashDC to DEA Ottawa, 22 June 1964, TOPSEC, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

Canadians had a fuller picture of where their 'good offices' factored into to the military strategy. Sullivan, Cooper and Bundy had relayed only part of their government's expectations to Ottawa the previous month. Roberts had learned from an official at the US consulate general, speaking on intelligence directly from the Embassy in Saigon, that Lodge intended to carry the war north. According to Roberts' informant, "the plan was to use the good offices of CDA to approach Hanoi and offer a deal."⁷⁹ The difference in strategy is fairly small, considering the Canadians were well aware of the carrot and stick nature of the message. However, they were not aware of the premeditated military strategy of which their 'diplomatic' operation was a critical and calculated component. It was almost as if the Seaborn initiative was expected to fail so that a next stage of justified military intensification could ensue. Although, Lodge's plan did not carry the day at Honolulu, it was only postponed not discarded. The sensitive and controversial nature of the mission was becoming dangerously clear. It was too late to back out, but Canada needed to step cautiously and with utmost secrecy to protect their reputation.

Seaborn awaited further instructions from Washington, which arrived in Ottawa on July 8 from Arthur Mendenhall of the State Department Vietnam Working Group. US authorities agreed with Seaborn that he should not appear overly eager by visiting Hanoi in July. If there was a scheduled ICC meeting in Hanoi during August, this would present a routine opportunity to follow up with DRVN authorities. Considering there were no amendments to the original message at this time it seemed prudent to suspend the Canadian channel. The most alarming part of this message for Ottawa was point three. It stated that if further instructions were formulated for Seaborn they would be delivered directly to him via

⁷⁹ Telegram-76, "Vietnam" From Tandc Hong Kong to DEA Ottawa, 24 June, 1964, SECRET CND EYES ONLY, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

Sullivan in Saigon. This insinuated, quite clearly, although not expressed explicitly by Mendenhall, that the US Embassy in Saigon was going to assume much of the decision making authority in the future; an arrangement which circumvented Ottawa.⁸⁰ The DEA was aware that a leak of the BACON channel would pose serious problems and it was therefore imperative that Ottawa review and approve Seaborn's messages. Canada expected to be regularly consulted due to the sensitive nature of their participation, a message which must be relayed 'gently yet firmly' to the State Department.⁸¹ However, in July these issues remained dormant, as US policy stayed consistent. Ambassador Ritchie even noticed a slight moderation in Washington's aggressive stance. Moreover, Seaborn agreed that the ball now lay in Hanoi's court and he should not solicit information but rather wait for the DRVN to approach him. Seaborn had spoken with Sullivan who concurred that all messages should pass through Ottawa. All of this transpired amidst relative calm and Seaborn settled into his regular ICC duties.⁸²

The Canadian channel may have been dormant in July but the DEA actively sought to understand America's cryptic and sometimes contradictory Vietnam policy. Officials in Ottawa had agreed to the BACON initiative on the condition that they be kept fully informed but a memorandum penned at the end of July reveals the department's ignorance. Canadian officials could not understand the lull that proceeded Seaborn's June visit to Hanoi. After stressing the urgency of establishing communication, the Americans had sent a hard line message to the DRVN but then adopted a more moderate line post-Honolulu. It seemed to

⁸⁰ Telegram-2453, "North Vietnam," From Canadian Embassy in WashDC to DEA Ottawa, 8 July 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

⁸¹ Telegram-Y-524, "North Vietnam" From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in WashDC (For Seaborn), July 1964, RG 25, Vol 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

⁸² Telegram-330, "NorthVietnam" From Canadian Delegation in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 13 July 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

Ottawa, that Americans were undercutting their own position. If America's objective in creating this channel was to dispel any uncertainty concerning America's position and conviction, then they had failed in this respect. As the memo logically deduced, "[i]f we are confused, it would seem likely that the North Vietnamese are even more uncertain of US intentions."⁸³ Were the Americans vacillating between a withdrawal and extending the war North? If they were not contemplating the latter then what weight did Seaborn's message carry? Not feeling fully informed, resultantly the DEA had to resign itself to wait and see.

The quiet month of July was calamitously interrupted by the Tonkin Gulf Incident on August 2, 1964. While conducting covert operations under the auspices of Operation Plan 34-A, US naval ships were patrolling North Vietnamese coastlines to monitor radio and radar signals broadcasted from the shore. This practice, part of a wider global electronic reconnaissance network, was codename DESOTO.⁸⁴ The US *Maddox* was stationed in international waters twenty nautical miles from the North Vietnamese coast when it came under attack from North Vietnamese gunboats.⁸⁵ The *Maddox* continued its patrols within eleven miles of the shore and avoided proximity to South Vietnamese vessels conducting 34-A operations.⁸⁶ The *USS Joy Turner* joined the *Maddox* and a second attack was alleged to have occurred on August 4. The documents reveal that there was considerable ambiguity surrounding the timing and nature of this second assault.⁸⁷ Secretary of State Dean Rusk remembered that doubt existed in Washington as to whether a second assault had actually

⁸³ "Memorandum – Vietnam – U.S. Intentions," 31 July 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

⁸⁴ McNamara, Robert. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996, p.130.

⁸⁵ 'Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State Saigon, April 17, 1965, 4:21 p.m. 3424. Reference: DOD 152339Z April 15' *FRUS* Johnson Administration Vol. II Doc, 260.

⁸⁶ 'Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State Saigon, April 17, 1965, 3:17 p.m.' *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June, 1965, Doc. 259.

⁸⁷ 'Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State Saigon, April 27, 1965.' *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June, 1965, Doc, 276.

taken place, but defended the administration's actions.⁸⁸ In contrast, Under-Secretary of State George Ball's record unabashedly revealed his personal scepticism concerning the verity of the second attack.⁸⁹ However, as historian Larry Berman astutely pointed out, "...circumstantial evidence was all Johnson needed for ordering reprisals against the North."⁹⁰

The Tonkin Gulf incident provided the ideal context for the President to approach Congress. As he noted later, "I was determined, from the time I became President, to seek the fullest support of Congress for any major action that I took."⁹¹ On August 7, the Joint Resolution of Congress gave the President far-reaching executive powers, awarding him the prerogative "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."⁹² The resolution additionally imbued Johnson with the authority, "to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force...." Johnson was now equipped with the constitutional muscle to wage the kind of war against North Vietnam of which Hanoi had been forewarned.

The official Canadian reaction supported the US retaliatory measures as "appropriate to seriousness of challenge posed."⁹³ However, it was later proven that the second attack never took place. Even more indicting, was America's provocation through OPLAN 34A and the DESOTO patrols, an operation later revealed through the Pentagon Papers. It was

⁸⁸ Rusk, Dean. *As I Saw It*. New York and London: W.W.Norton and Company, 1990, p.444.

⁸⁹ Ball, George W. *The Past Has Another Patter: Memoirs*. New York and London: Norton and Company, 1982. p, 381.

⁹⁰ Berman, Larry. *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the Vietnam War*. New York and London: W.W.Norton and Company, 1982.

⁹¹ Johnson, Lyndon Baines. *The Vantage Point: Perspective of the Presidency 1963-1969*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, p. 115.

⁹² 'Joint Resolution of Congress H.J. RES 1145 August 7, 1964' *Avalon Project at Yale Law School*. <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/tonkin-g.htm#joint>. Accessed Dec 11, 2008.

⁹³ Telegram-Y-609, "Vietnam" From DEA Ottawa to NATO Paris. 14 August, 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S -2 (pt. 2.2).

clear at the time to Canadian policy makers that an element of the story was missing. The ambiguities surrounding the attacks are documented by the circumspection and disagreement that characterized the flurry of correspondence throughout August. Seaborn provided two plausible explanations. First, the North Vietnamese may have acted given their mistaken belief that American vessels were attacking their coastal islands. Or two, they may have been in a state of increased paranoia due to provocative statements emanating from Saigon coupled with American vessels patrolling near territorial waters.⁹⁴ Seeking to clarify DRVN motives, ICC representative Jackson paid a visit to Col. Ha Van Lau. Jackson reported that the Colonel appeared 'rather tired and haggard' and "became quite emotional when reminding me that the second naval engagement was a "sheer fabrication." In his defence Lau argued that the DRVN naval vessels lack the capability to attack US warships operating more than sixty miles off the coast. Moreover, exceptionally poor weather conditions would have made it impossible for the DRVN to have launched the kind of attack of it was being accused. When asked if Chinese could have been responsible, Lau said it was unlikely but if the Chinese were culpable then how did this justify American retaliation against North Vietnam? As Jackson, put so simply, "there were a number of puzzling aspects to the whole episode."⁹⁵

Roberts wrote from Hong Kong days following the alleged second attack to offer a Chinese perspective. He reported that DRVN and Chinese deniability were becoming increasingly vindicated. The burden of proof, according to Communist authorities, rested with the Americans. Internationally, the attacks were being perceived as an opportunistic

⁹⁴Telegram-408, "DRVN Attacks on USA Vessels," From Candel Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 10 August 1964, RG25, Vol. 10113, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.2), LAC. (NP1040270).

⁹⁵"Memorandum for the Commissioner No. 149/64" From the Permanent Representative, Hanoi to Candel in Saigon, 8 August 1964, Confidential, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.2), LAC.

American ploy to garner domestic support and reverse the deteriorating military situation in the South. Moreover, the lack of a convincing DRVN motive lent credence to claims of its innocence.⁹⁶ Roberts did not believe that the Chinese were consulted about the attacks nor did they approve of them. ICC commissioner Jackson disagreed, convinced that the Vietnamese launched both attacks, he believed their technical inability to launch the attacks was not evidence of their innocence but rather of Chinese complicity.⁹⁷ This interpretation had far reaching significance. The Gulf of Tonkin demonstrated that this regional conflict could easily become a wider war, and pit the communist against the free world. Whether or not Canadian authorities wholly accepted America's version of events is relatively unimportant. The war had escalated and Canada recognized which side best served its national interest. As a result, Canada remained a consistent ally throughout this period.

Washington was now ready to disclose the full message to the Canadians. However, as events were unfolding quickly momentum did not allow sufficient time for a measured and thorough evaluation of the American message. The State Department delivered the text of Seaborn's message to the Canadian Embassy on August 8 in Washington, a mere two days before Seaborn's second scheduled visit to Hanoi. Given that the DEA had identified August 6 as the last plausible day they could accept a message from the Americans,⁹⁸ Paul Martin recalled that "he was annoyed that the American message came at the eleventh hour."⁹⁹ More than just warning Hanoi that American patience was exhaustible, this second communiqué unequivocally stated that "...the United States will initiate action by air and

⁹⁶Telegram-110, "North Vietnam," From TanDC HKong to DEA Ottawa, 6 August 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.1), LAC.

⁹⁷"Gulf of Tonkin Incidents: DRVN and Chinese Intentions" Memorandum for the Commissioner No. 179/64, 4 September 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.1), LAC.

⁹⁸Telegram-Y-582,""North Vietnam" From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in WashDC. 4 August, 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.1), LAC.

⁹⁹Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p.429.

naval means against North Viet-Nam until Hanoi does agree to stop the war.”¹⁰⁰ The DEA had an issue with the two final points of the American message. Point D stated the “the DRV knows what it must do if the peace is to be restored” while the final point E, contended that “USA has ways and means of measuring DRV’s participation in, and direction and control of, the war in South Vietnam and in Laos and will be carefully watching their response to what Mr. Seaborn is telling them.”¹⁰¹ Ottawa felt that these points were overly vague; unless Seaborn was fully informed about their significance, he could not transmit them to Hanoi. This point is important because it demonstrates the means via which Canada attempted to effect US policy. It also helps to explain America’s initial reservations concerning Canadian cooperation to faithfully transmit the messages even if they did not agree with their content. As Canadians were asserting their independence, American weariness about their ally’s resolve was vindicated.

The Tonkin Gulf incidents furnished the Americans with a favourable context in which to convey their more hard line ultimatum. Two basic conclusions can be drawn from America’s reluctance to disclose vital information to the Canadian emissary and Canada’s government. First, while the Pentagon had been formulating its plan for Overt Graduated Military Pressure in the preceding months it needed to suspend action until escalation could be viewed as proportional and responsive to pre-emptive aggression coming from the North. Considering Canada’s trepidation concerning the escalation of hostilities, it was likely deemed that the American position would be damaged should Canada be privy to this premeditated policy. Secondly, graduated diplomatic pressure was symptomatic of the

¹⁰⁰Herring, *Ibid*, 23. Also see Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Canada Washington, August 8, 1964--4:41 p.m” *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. 1, Vietnam, 1964. Doc. 304

¹⁰¹ Telegram-2872, “North Vietnam” From Canadian Embassy in WashDC to DEA Ottawa, 8 August 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S-2 (pt. 2.1), LAC.

Administration's general Vietnam policy of applying incremental force in hierarchical fashion. It was feared that the external threat posed to Canada by a strategy of premeditated aggression would be incongruent with its image as a peaceful mediator. Although probably not expressed in these terms, the Americans calculated that Canada's core values would be seriously injured should it be privy to the real function of Seaborn's mission. To preserve the channel, as well as to ensure the faithfulness with which Seaborn relayed his messages, the Americans initially kept Canada ignorant until the situation permitted a reasonable escalation of hostilities.

Seaborn's second meeting with Pham Van Dong occurred shortly after this pivotal point in the war and the message he delivered to Hanoi on August 10 reflected America's strengthened resolve and bore a distinctly threatening tone. In addition to reiterating the basic American position, Seaborn warned DRVN authorities that America was approaching its threshold and now had the weight of a united Congress and citizenry behind it.

Washington authorized him to warn the DRVN that "[if it] persists in its present course, it can expect....to suffer the consequences...the DRV knows what it must do if the peace is to be restored."¹⁰² If the threat had not been understood before, it was clearly expressed in this revised statement. Seaborn's second trip transpired amidst an atmosphere of increased tension and heightened aggression. Hanoi and Washington both declared their increased determination to succeed on their respective terms. Negotiations were implausible.

Consequently, the Canadian emissary's purpose had been reduced from a potential communicative conduit to an American delivery channel. Paul Martin, took serious offence to the allegation that Seaborn was essentially an American pawn, whose good offices as a

¹⁰² 'STATE 169 to Amembassy OTTAWA, STATE 383 to Amembassy Saigon, Immediate, (TS/Exdis), Sent 8 Aug 64, 4:41 PM)' in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, p. 34.

Canadian diplomat had been subverted into an American political subordinate. Martin later unconvincingly argued that, "Seaborn was not an agent for the United States, and there were no threats in the message carried."¹⁰³

Although the intentions were commendable, Seaborn's contribution to the American effort failed to encourage negotiations. His reports repeatedly communicated the DRVN's determination to reject American terms. Seaborn's visits also reaffirmed his own belief that the "DRV are not now interested in any negotiations,"¹⁰⁴ as well as the unnerving observation that Pham Van Dong was "genuinely convinced that things are bound to go his way in Indochina."¹⁰⁵ In hindsight, Seaborn's missions may have raised the spectre of confrontation by entrenching each party's resolve. Consequently, historians such as Charles Taylor and Victor Levant have criticized the decision to send a Canadian diplomat to carry out an American mission. In the following year Seaborn continued his diplomatic missions to Hanoi, but solely as an independent Canadian representative. Washington felt that after delivering the American position in two official visits, Seaborn had fulfilled his mandate. Rusk met with Martin in Windsor, Ontario the Canadian Minister's hometown, and discussed Seaborn's negative reports especially regarding the political situation in Saigon. Martin was particularly sensitive about keeping the Seaborn missions undisclosed and Rusk assured his counterpart that every measure would be taken to ensure Seaborn's anonymity.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Stursberg, Peter. *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1980, p. 259.

¹⁰⁴ 'Amembassy SAIGON 4083 to SecState (Confid/Lidis), Rec'd June 7, 1965, 2:06 A.M.' in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War: The Negotiating Volumes of the Pentagon Papers*. Ed. George C. Herring. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983, p. 44.

¹⁰⁵ Preston, Andrew. "Missions Impossible: Canadian Secret Diplomacy and the Quest for Peace in Vietnam," p. 128.

¹⁰⁶ "Hon. Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, Dean Rusk," 14 September 1964, RG 59, Records of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Miscellaneous Subject Files, 1961-1968, Box 65, File Memoranda for the Record, NARA.

With no prospect of negotiations on American terms, the Canadian channel's utility had been seriously diminished.

Complimenting the Seaborn missions which were cloaked in secrecy, Canada publicly defended American interests in the ICC. The Canadian delegation utilized a number of bureaucratic ploys to support the American position. After hearing the official PAVN's report, Seaborn expressed his inability to respond without due consideration and consultation with the Canadian government. After communicating with External Affairs two courses of actions were deemed appropriate.¹⁰⁷ The Canadian delegate was instructed to question the ICC's jurisdiction under the Geneva Charter. The ambiguity pivoted on the Final Declaration, which the Canadians argued was an informal agreement between the signatories, while the Polish delegates maintained was an official supplement to the Protocol. If the former interpretation was deemed correct then the Tonkin Gulf incidents did not fall within the ICC's mandate. External Affairs in Ottawa did not want to set a disadvantageous precedent for their American 'friends' as it was termed in one telegram by submitting the incident to an ICC enquiry. Moreover, it is likely that Canada did not want to find itself in an uncomfortable situation, where it had to choose between diplomatic integrity and allied responsibilities. While the ICC's Legal Committee eventually ruled against the Canadian position, the significance rests with Canada's motivation to assist the Americans. Perhaps more importantly, it rests with Canada's realization that its position on the ICC would soon reach an impasse where it would be forced to publicly balance the dichotomous preservation of core values and fulfilment of neighbourly duties. Secondly, Ottawa instructed Seaborn to focus on the recent history of inactivity on the ICC. An insufficient

¹⁰⁷ "Final Minutes (Verbatim Record) of the 668th Meeting of the International Commission for Supervision and Control of Vietnam, held at 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, the 13th August, 1964, in Hanoi" Doc. No. ICSC/M/V/F/668 RG 25, Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-8 [FP.1], LAC.

number of Interim reports had been submitted to the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference over the preceding months. Ottawa hoped to capitalize on the ICC's relative stagnation to argue that a report focusing solely on the Tonkin Gulf incidents would be devoid of context. As a result, the co-chairmen could not render an impartial assessment of the situation because the events had not been properly linked to North Vietnamese subversion. This linkage and contextual logic would resurface in the Minority Report issued the following year.¹⁰⁸

Blair Seaborn was beginning to wonder whether Canada's continued presence on the ICC was advisable. Reflecting his personal doubts about the efficacy of his country's membership, Seaborn postulated, "what good are we doing by our presence and why should we stay in?" The answers to these questions hinged on the importance America attached to the Bacon channel. If it wanted to keep it open, then Canada could not relinquish its ICC membership which served as a vehicle for its interlocutor role.¹⁰⁹ The department asked Ritchie to sound out his American counterparts and determine the level of importance they attached to the mission. He responded in the negative. After a discussion with Michael Forrestal, Rusk's Special Assistant for Vietnam, Ritchie was, "left with the distinct impression that the bacon channel does not have rpt not currently have same importance it did earlier this year." However, he concluded on a hopeful note that the channel may only be temporarily dormant and a change in US policy could quickly revive it.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Telegram-Y-649, "Vietnam Commission: Final Declaration" DEA Ottawa to Candel Saigon, 2 September 1964, CONFD, IMMED, Amended Copy 18-1-26, RG 25, Vol. 9510, File No. 100-7-2, LAC.

¹⁰⁹ "Personal from Blair Seaborn to R.L. Rogers," 31 August 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

¹¹⁰ Telegram-550, "Visit to North Vietnam" From WashDC to DEA Ottawa, 2 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

Although the prospect seemed slight, Canada could not cut off a direct channel to Hanoi unless the Americans had rendered it entirely null and void.

Seaborn continued to travel to Hanoi under the auspices of his ICC duties and with the slight yet distant prospect of revitalizing his original interlocutor role. He timed his next trip in coordination with US officials, revealing that the American embassy in Saigon still vested some importance in the channel. Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, Lodge's replacement, was scheduled to return to Washington in November. Seaborn agreed to delay his trip to Hanoi on the chance that Taylor would return with a revised message. The Canadian commissioner bluntly told Alexis Johnson, alluding to Washington's tardiness in August, that he expected to be informed of any development in a timely fashion.¹¹¹ DEA endorsed the postponement as it wanted to keep the BACON channel operational on the condition that future messages contain something new. Simply echoing the basic American position, according to the Canadians, would accomplish little. Ritchie was, therefore, instructed to gauge the mood in Washington and reaffirm Canada's commitment to the BACON mission without appearing overly eager. Canada's perception of its role was shifting, reflecting Ottawa's determination to play a more active role in the future. While willing to continue carrying messages North, its promise to faithfully transmit them was "[d]epend[ent] of course on purpose and specific content of such a message."¹¹² The conditions upon which the channel had initially been established were no longer respected and this contributed to its eventual demise.

¹¹¹Telegram-653, From Candel Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 10 November 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC.

¹¹²Telegram-Y-830, "Visit to North Vietnam," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in WashDC, 20 November 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIET S-2-1, LAC. (NP1040512)

Throughout the remainder of Seaborn's posting he provided Ottawa with a pessimistic assessment of the conflict. The prospect of a coup in Saigon was growing stronger. Seaborn felt that the peasants in the South were growing impatient and they lacked the staying power for a protracted war. Moreover, the bourgeoisie and politicians in Saigon were not willing to make the necessary sacrifices to win. Talks with US officials at the American Embassy in Saigon reinforced his cynicism. Sullivan described the weeks following Tonkin gulf as "sobering and discouraging ones."¹¹³ In Saigon, political unrest persisted, as students and Buddhists demonstrated against the Khanh government. Confronted with popular agitation, Prime Minister Khanh decided to let the demonstrations run their course. Both Alexis Johnson, American deputy ambassador in Saigon, and Ambassador Taylor were convinced that only dynamic and effective leadership in the South, coupled with far reaching executive powers, could bring about stability. However, September witnessed increased political uncertainty and rumours of coups were circulating around the diplomatic communities in the South. In addition to hampering American efforts to curtail the Viet Cong, this popular discontentment also reflected the growing war weariness in South Vietnam.¹¹⁴ In his reports to Ottawa, Seaborn stressed South Vietnam's extremely weak position. According to his estimation, there were no signs that America would take over from South Vietnam militarily. The only option left was negotiation, but in their current position American acquiescence to negotiate would amount to a defeat. A strong military thrust, directed at Viet Cong supply lines, was necessary to give the

¹¹³ Telegram-475, "Political Crisis in Vietnam" From Canadian ICC Commission in Tokyo (Seaborn) to DEA Ottawa, 4 September 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S- 2. Pt. 3, LAC.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Americans some bargaining power. Even in Canadian eyes, the asymmetry in balance and force would not permit the Americans to withdraw honourably.¹¹⁵

While Seaborn was uncharacteristically trying to make room for diplomacy with force, the American's were planning for the increased Americanization of the conflict. Foreshadowing the escalation that would take place in early 1965, Johnson wrote Pearson asking for increased Canadian assistance to the South. In a somewhat chastising tone Johnson accused the Canadians of failing to fulfil their allied responsibilities. He conveyed "frankly that our people are growing restive over the fact that we are carrying virtually all the burden of a conflict in whose outcome – as we see it – all our friends have just as great an ultimate stake as we." Johnson asked for material assistance in South Vietnam, which would not compromise Canada's integrity on the ICC. He hinted at the benefits this would have for bilateral relations. "Such a contribution," Johnson wrote, "would have a value to our friendship and our common purpose far beyond its immediate cost."¹¹⁶ Rewards for compliance, implicitly connotes, punishment for non-compliance. Canada became the beneficiary of America's 'carrot and stick' approach to foreign policy. Despite American reservations, even the highly critical American Ambassador Walt Butterworth described Canada as "above all...a friendly neighbour and ally," but "the United States should not hesitate wherever and whenever appropriate to remind Canada of its basic political and military commitments."¹¹⁷ A general American attitude towards its neighbour can be discerned by the end of 1964, revealing that US patience towards its neighbour was

¹¹⁵Telegram-657, "Future Policy for Vietnam: Air Strikes and Negotiation" From Candel in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 12 November 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIET S- 2. Pt. 3., LAC.

¹¹⁶ "From President Johnson to Prime Minister Pearson" NSF/CF/Canada, Box 165, Vol. II, Cables, 8/64-2/65,LBJL, 22a.

¹¹⁷Telegram-A-493, "Canada 1964," From the American Embassy in Ottawa to the Department of State, 6 January 1965. NSF, Box 16, Files of McGeorge Bundy, Correspondence with Ambassadors, LBJL 5-b.

considerable but not inexhaustible. Canada's response to America's Vietnam policy in 1965 was markedly more hesitant, and sometimes schizophrenic, than its 1964 contribution had been. The pendulum swung between complicity and criticism, leaving America confused about its neighbour's Vietnam policy. In fact, in 1965 Canada's Vietnam policy can be described as being no policy at all but rather an ad hoc accumulation of responses that in sum proved counterproductive to American interests.

Chapter III

Fickle Friends: Ottawa Between Support and Dissension

The cooperation that characterized Canadian-American relations, in terms of their Vietnam policies, waned in the final months of 1964. Seaborn's interlocutor mission unravelled after his second visit in mid-August for the Americans considered his role fulfilled; Seaborn had relayed the American message and had returned with DRVN's uncompromising response. In stark contrast to the American position, Canadians felt Seaborn's mission remained incomplete. As aforementioned, his diplomatic efforts had completely failed to encourage negotiations and, incidentally, sanctioned increased American military activity. This unintended consequence left the Canadians feeling very uneasy. Seaborn continued his trips to Hanoi under the auspices of his regular ICC duties, which was the only authority he now represented. Yet the Canadians were loath to admit that they no longer served as a useful adjunct to America's diplomatic efforts in Vietnam. As mentioned in the last chapter, they forestalled a scheduled trip to Hanoi in November in the hopes that America would provide them with a new message for Hanoi. It became clear that the US had no intentions of revitalizing the channel before the presidential elections, let alone furnishing it with a new message. *Instead of abandoning the mission, Canadians continued to advocate its utility and argue that a trip to Hanoi in November would be useful even in the absence of a new message from Washington. It would provide the DRVN with an opportunity to express "any non-public reactions they may have formulated to recent incidences [in the] Gulf of Tonkin."*¹¹⁸ The Canadians were not deterred by Ritchies' frank appraisal that there was a "complete absence of any initiative on the part of USA officials [in

¹¹⁸ Telegram Y-710, "Visit to North Vietnam," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington, 29 September 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

Washington] to raise subject of a new BACON msg or to enquire about Seaborn's travel plans," which led Richie to conclude that, "no such msg is currently under consideration."¹¹⁹ However, his analysis mirrored his previous positive conclusions that "Washington's interest in channel is probably only dormant; it could quickly revive in a new situation."¹²⁰

The impetus for continuing the BACON channel came more from DEA than it did from Seaborn who was reluctant to take an early trip to Hanoi. His ICC responsibilities were burdensome and, barring a new initiative, his services could not be spared at the mission in Saigon. Moreover, he was convinced that Hanoi's position remained static because the permanent Canadian commissioner in Hanoi, Turner Jackson, who was at the disposal of the North Vietnamese authorities, had not been approached.¹²¹ Cumulatively, these deterrents compelled the Canadians to drop the issue while American presidential elections took center stage. DEA recognized that until the political tides had settled in the US, and a substantive message had been formed, there was little reason for Seaborn to neglect his ICC duties.¹²² On November 3, President Johnson was re-elected by a landslide and DEA were worried that a continued hiatus would eventually force the Bacon channel into obsolescence. By November 30, the DEA instructed Ritchie to, "let Bundy or other appropriately senior State Officials know of our continued willingness to play a helpful role in implementation of any decision taken in WashDC [in] near future to approach Hanoi with new message."¹²³ After sufficient prompting, a slight American interest in Seaborn's November trip to Hanoi fuelled

¹¹⁹ Telegram-3465, "Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian Embassy in Washington to DEA Ottawa, 30 September 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹²⁰ Telegram-3515, "Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian Embassy in Washington to DEA Ottawa, 2 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹²¹ Telegram-549, "Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian Delegation in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 1 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹²² Telegram-Y-791, "Visit to North Vietnam," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Delegation in Saigon Ottawa, 30 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹²³ Telegram-Y-830, "Visit to North Vietnam," From DEA Ottawa to the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC, 20 November 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

the fans of excitement in Ottawa. The momentum had only been momentarily lost and in every effort to accommodate the United States, Seaborn deferred his trip, yet again, until December 10, 1964. The Canadians, false hopes were quickly dashed when their Embassy in Washington received a copy of the message destined for Seaborn. It expressed nothing substantively new, confirming that:

USA has nothing new to add to the points made by Seaborn on his last visit to Hanoi in Aug. All the recent indications from WashDC, however, point to a continued and increasing determination on the part of the USA to assist the South Vietnamese in their struggle. Although he has no rpt no specific message on this trip, Seaborn has noted from its public statements increased USA concern at DRV role in direct support of Viet Cong, and this together with high level mtgs Wash DC makes him feel that time is ripe for any new msg Hanoi may wish to convey. Seaborn should convey attitude of real personal concern over the growing possibility of direct confrontation between GVN and DRV.¹²⁴

This third message was exactly the same in substance, if only slightly more resolute in tone. It reaffirmed American steadfastness but also foreshadowed the intensification of the conflict. If Seaborn was not already concerned about the prospect of 'direct confrontation,' then Washington was telling him that he should be.

The Canadians should have been sensed the gravity behind Seaborn's third message, which was indicative of the policy formulation happening in guarded Washington circles. A day earlier Johnson adopted a Position Paper on Southeast Asia, the culmination of an ongoing Vietnam policy review by the inter-Agency Vietnam Working Group, headed by William Bundy and attended by McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Wheeler and others, outlining key concepts in America's Vietnam policy. It stressed that American policy remain unchanged. However, the remainder pointed to a fundamental shift in American

¹²⁴Telegram-4189, "Seaborn's Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian Embassy in Wash DC. to DEA Ottawa, 3 December 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

strategy if not its objective. The general 'concept' outlined two phases of military intensification. The first was to be initiated within in thirty days and called for the continuance of present policy in addition to a more conspicuous and central role for the US Air Force. American pilots were authorized to provide cover to South Vietnamese and Laotian aircraft conducting strikes against North Vietnam. In addition, they were to assume a less subsidiary role, by independently conducting reconnaissance missions and targeting DRVN supply lines. This first phase even sanctioned reprisal airstrikes against the North if the Viet Cong furnished them with sufficient cause by attacking personnel or military installations in South Vietnam. Following the first month, the plan forecasted a significant increase in the number of US aircraft and shallow strikes into North Vietnamese territory. If Hanoi failed to capitulate on acceptable terms, the next phase of the plan called for graduated military pressures directed systematically against the DRVN. These pressures would primarily consist of airstrikes to be determined based on military exigency. Although this plan quite accurately forecasted the pace and form of America's involvement in Vietnam, it wrongly assumed that it would be able to control the momentum. The plan's impact on American policy is debated by historians, such as Thies who argues that it only slightly altered the American commitment.¹²⁵ Canadian Vietnam scholar described the plan as, "a strategy for an expanded, but not open-ended, American war effort that included strikes against North Vietnam."¹²⁶ However, the institutionalization of graduated military pressures made this conceptual framework a pivotal development in America's Vietnam policy, and

¹²⁵ Thies, *When Government's Collide*. pp. 63-68. Thies also discusses Seaborn's role in this period, arguing that the hollow policy developments in Washington made Seaborn's third disappointing mission a foregone conclusion.

¹²⁶ Preston, Andrew. *Balancing War and Peace*. p 102.

demonstrated that the escalation in February 1965 was part of a premeditated American policy.¹²⁷

This pivotal strategic doctrine was approved by the President on December 3 and identified four key allies, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines all of whom, save for the last, would be fully informed of the 'concept.' Canada, under the category of Other Countries, was to be alerted to its neighbour's "grave concern" but US officials should "avoid spelling out the concept." With respect to Hanoi, the paper stated that, "[w]e will convey to Hanoi our unchanged determination and objectives, and that we have a growing concern at the DRV role, to see if there is any sign of change in Hanoi's position."¹²⁸ Considering, the Americans had been using the Canadian channel to convey this position it is lamentable that Canada was not considered a key ally. Again, Canada was exercising its diplomacy function within the theatre of a grander military strategy of which it was not fully aware. As a Western and a North American nation Canada was naturally sympathetic to the American position in Vietnam. This was expected. However, it was not surprising that Hanoi, as well as the Indian and Polish delegations on the ICC, questioned Canadian integrity when its diplomatic overtures were timed so conspicuously with American military initiatives. The blame cannot be wholly placed on the US. Canada must also shoulder a share of the burden, as it was unable to recognize when its diplomacy had expired. In its eagerness to contribute in a meaningful way to a diplomatic resolution, Canada had overlooked the obsolescence of its role. Canadian culpability for its own uncomfortable position, is evident when one realizes how much information they were privy to even if it did not amount to the full picture. Ritchie wrote to external on December 4 with a detailed

¹²⁷ "Paper prepared by the Executive Committee – Dec. 2, 1964 - Position paper on Southeast Asia,' *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. 1, Vietnam, 1964, Doc. 433.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

description of the first conceptual phase. Even though it was not categorized as a key ally, which perhaps is not surprising considering its refusal to contribute military, Canada was kept abreast of America's short term policy. The major element missing from the American briefing was its long term strategic plan, which was conveyed to the Canadians as yet undecided.¹²⁹

Canada's naivety should not be exaggerated. Ottawa's DEA was staffed with competent and experienced personnel and Seaborn himself was a revered diplomat. They recognized the risks associated with the American message which essentially asked Seaborn to masquerade the US threat as his own honest opinion. If Seaborn approached DRVN officials with a redundant American message, External Affairs rightly assumed that he would be perceived as a chore-boy for the United States. While authorized to carry out his assignment, Ottawa left the scope and content of the message subject to Seaborn's personal discretion.¹³⁰ He departed for Hanoi on December 10 and America's thirty day military timetable was unfortunately scheduled to commence air attacks on supply routes through Laos that same week. Despite Ottawa's protest, Bundy informed Ritchie that the airstrikes could not be postponed, but assured him that the air raids would have little effect on Seaborn's trip. It was encouraging that America disclosed portions of its short term strategy as it effected Canada, but much less reassuring that the negative consequences on its neighbour were disregarded so readily.¹³¹ Again, this should have indicated to Canadians where they factored in to America's Vietnam strategy. An accurate calculation may have

¹²⁹Telegram-4215, "Vietnam-US Policy," From Canadian embassy Wash. DC to DEA Ottawa, 4 December 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹³⁰Telegram-Y-833, "Visit to North Vietnam" From External Affairs Ottawa to Canadian Delegation in Saigon (Seaborn only), 4 December 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹³¹Telegram-4313, "Seaborn's Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian embassy in WashDc to DEA, Ottawa, 12 December 1964, RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

snubbed Canadian sensitivities, but perhaps it would have demonstrated their incapacity to exert real influence on its neighbour's policies. Had Canadian policy makers, realized this sooner, than perhaps Canada's bleak diplomatic track record in Southeast Asia would not have been marred by the same degree of ineffectualness and charges of complicity.

Seaborn's lacklustre reports were to be expected as he was unable to secure audiences with high ranking North Vietnamese officials. He briefly saw Prime Minister Pham Van Dong but only talked extensively with middle ranking official Havan Lau to whom he repeated the American position and the real concern that retaliatory measures were forthcoming. According to Seaborn, Lau maintained a stoic demeanour throughout the interview, taking notes for his superiors, but making no indication of an amended Northern position.¹³² Upon reporting the results to the Americans, Forrestal noted that North Vietnam's complete lack of interest was in itself of interest.¹³³ The year ended inconspicuously, but the bits and pieces of American policy that had been relayed to the Canadians should have alerted them to a looming and irreversible shift in the American Vietnam strategy.

The opportunity to escalate the American war effort presented itself in February 1965. The Viet Cong launched surprise attacks on the US army barracks at Pleiku and two South Vietnamese airfields on February 6. That evening Johnson met with his security advisers and authorized reprisal air strikes against four North Vietnamese targets.¹³⁴ The tides of the American effort had irreversibly shifted north. Following this decision, which

¹³² Telegram-773, "Visit to North Vietnam," Canadian Delegation Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 18 December 1964," RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹³³ Telegram-4396, "Visit to North Vietnam," From Canadian Embassy in Wash DC to DEA Ottawa," RG 25, Vol. 10113 Red Registry, File. 20-22-VIETS-2-1, LAC.

¹³⁴ "Summary Notes of the 545th Meeting of the National Security Council Washington, February 6, 1965, 7:45-9 p.m," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June 1965, Doc., 76.

was later codenamed Rolling Thunder, escalation was inevitable. All concerned parties immediately recognized the gravity of this American initiative. The DRVN described the attacks as “a new extremely serious US war act.”¹³⁵ Johnson later described the decision to bomb North Vietnam as “a turning point.”¹³⁶ As Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara surmised, “wars generate their own momentum and follow the law of unanticipated consequences...Operation Rolling Thunder not only started the air war but unexpectedly triggered the introduction of U.S. ground combat as well.”¹³⁷ The American response on February 7, 1965 inaugurated a new stage in the conflict. Once the Policy of Sustained Reprisal had been authorized McGeorge Bundy recommended that the administration should “develop the necessary public and diplomatic statements to accompany the initiation and continuation of this program.”¹³⁸

Canada’s delegation to the ICC had an obligation to support the US position. Canada’s refusal to contribute troops seriously compromised the appearance of loyalty to a traditional ally. Again, Canada employed increased diplomatic activity to compensate for its lack of military support but also to contribute in a manner that was congruent with its core values. The Canadian delegation was ideally situated to defend American actions. When the Commission issued its February 13 report concerning the events six days earlier Canada abstained. The majority report, ratified by the Indian and Polish delegations, deemed US air raids on February 8 to be in contravention of the Geneva accords, thus labelling the US as an

¹³⁵ “From Ha Van Lau Chief of the Liaison Mission of Vietnam’s People Army High Command To: Ambassador Ma Rahman Chairman ICSC Vietnam. Telegram dated February 8, 1965.” RG 25 , Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6 [FP.1], LAC.

¹³⁶ Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, p. 128.

¹³⁷ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, p. 174.

¹³⁸ ‘Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson En route from Saigon to Washington, February 7, 1965’ *FRUS* Johnson Administration Vol. II, Vietnam, January –June 1965, Doc. 84.

aggressor.¹³⁹ The U.S. position was premised on the retaliatory and defensive nature of its response. Johnson's inner circle was well aware that a sustained air war would damage America's international reputation and undermine the advantages accrued from appearing moderate and proportional. In early 1965 the US administration enjoyed public support from Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines. Canada, among other allies, was identified as demonstrating a modicum of support.¹⁴⁰ However, its actions on the ICC in support of the US would belie this assertion.

Appended to the majority report was a Canadian issued minority statement. While the Canadian delegation recognized the severity of the political and military situation in both North and South Vietnam, it considered the majority report to have been issued out of context. According to the minority statement, Poland and India did not acknowledge the ongoing environment of Viet Cong guerrilla insurgency which provided the key backdrop to the events of February 7, the same logic Blair Seaborn had used earlier with respect to the Tonkin Gulf crisis. The Canadian minority statement unequivocally labelled North Vietnam as the aggressor and primary instigator of hostilities. The evidence supporting the Canadian position was premised on conclusions drawn from the Commission's Special Report of 1962.¹⁴¹ This unusual report found Hanoi guilty for supporting the guerrilla insurgency in the South. Poland denounced the report and it was passed by an Indo-Canadian majority.¹⁴² The Minority statement attached to the ICC's report on the February attacks was written in the same vein and caused an outpouring of hostile reactions because Canada had staunchly

¹³⁹ "From Ha Van Lau Chief of the Liaison Mission of Vietnam's People Army High Command To: Ambassador Ma Rahman Chairman ICSC Vietnam. Telegram dated February 8, 1965." LAC, RG 25, Vol. 10125, File No 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6 [FP.1], LAC.

¹⁴⁰ "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom Washington, February '16, 1965, 9:01 p.m.' *FRUS* Johnson Administration. Vol. II, Vietnam, January -June 1965, Doc. 113.

¹⁴¹ "Statement of the Canadian Delegation," RG 25, Vol. 10125, File No. 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6[FP.1], LAC.

¹⁴² Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 423.

defended the integrity and appropriateness of American actions. India's delegation accused Canada of deliberately distorting the conclusions of the 1962 report and a supplementary Polish response to the Canadian position also rejected the minority report because it had used inconclusive evidence which had not been sanctioned by the Commission. Moreover, Poland abstained from the 1962 report, and therefore could not condone a Canadian statement premised on it. Canada's controversial position seriously compromised its diplomatic integrity on the Commission. The DRVN's media immediately capitalized on the situation.

The North Vietnamese media's response to the publication of Canada's minority statement was scathing and indicted Canada's delegation for its partisan and politically motivated tactics. As one North Vietnamese news report levied, "the separate statement of the Canadian delegation has shielded the US imperialists...everyone knows [the Canadian delegation] follows the USA."¹⁴³ The Canadian minority statement became public shortly after the Department of State released its White Paper entitled *Aggression From the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam* on February 27.¹⁴⁴ North Vietnamese authorities viewed the convergence between the White Paper and the Minority Statement as, "too obvious and shows the connection between these two evil acts."¹⁴⁵ Canada's government, immediately realizing the seriousness of these allegations, felt compelled to respond to Hanoi's accusations in a timely fashion that conveyed both its indignation and sense of insult by tabling a letter of protest in the ICC and if this met with

¹⁴³ "Shame on those who follow the USA! THOI MOI (New Times), 10 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6[FP 2.2]. LAC.

¹⁴⁴ 'Editorial Note,' *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June 1965, Doc. 171.

¹⁴⁵ "On Those Who Plead for the US Bandits NAN DAHN (PEOPLE) 10 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6[FP 2.2], LAC.

Indian and Polish opposition, addressing it directly to General Giap.¹⁴⁶ This episode marks a major watershed in Canada's ICC involvement in Vietnam, because Canadian policy makers were acutely aware that even its measured diplomatic responses could elicit opposition both domestically and internationally. Moreover, Canada recognized that American airstrikes were a disturbing development, and Martin remembers being thunderstruck by America's increased commitment,¹⁴⁷ yet overall, Canadian officials believed that the American response was appropriate and limited. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, Martin directed his frustration at the Indian delegation. In defence of Canada's minority statement, Martin emphasized the asymmetry in the ICC's review of Southern infractions over complaints against North Vietnam. Reminding his Indian counterparts of their previous history of cooperation on the ICC, manifested most visibly in the Special Report of 1962, Martin wondered what had happened to their constructive relationship.¹⁴⁸ Canada's relations on the ICC and its channel to Hanoi were damaged by its continued commitment to America, but that loyalty did not erode Ottawa's self perceived veneer of impartiality. At this point, Canadian officials genuinely felt a responsibility to address what they perceived to be impartiality in the ICC and there was the additional benefit of demonstrating its allegiance to America.

Following the issuance of the minority statement Washington contacted Ottawa to request sufficient copies to disseminate to the American media. The Canadians' conciliatory position was a valuable public relations tool in the United States as it represented international support condoning America's Vietnam policy, especially at a time when

¹⁴⁶ Telegram-Y-213, "DRVN Reaction to Feb. 13 Special Msg" From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Commission in Saigon" 18 March 1965," RG 25, Vol. 10125, File No., 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6[FP 2.2], LAC.

¹⁴⁷ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 431.

¹⁴⁸ Telegram-Y-209, "Vietnam Commission," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Delhi, 17 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10123, File No 21-13-VIET-ICSC-4[FP 3.1], LAC.

America was privately questioning the tenacity of Canadian support during this period.¹⁴⁹ Still, Washington appreciated Canada's supportive diplomatic initiative and hinted that it would benefit bilateral relations.¹⁵⁰ Washington's decision to embark on, "a fairly extensive publicity effort in USA" was warranted based on the, "content of the CND MSG and extent of current public interest in Vietnam might make such an effort useful in context of CDN-USA bilateral relations."¹⁵¹ Hanoi's authorities duly noted cooperation between Ottawa and Washington. The ICC became the vehicle via which Canada orchestrated its policy of diplomatic support for the US initiative at the expense of impartiality. The minority statement is the most vivid illustration of this practice, but it was a manifestation of an almost institutionalised Canadian tradition of sharing information with the United States.

Information sharing with Washington was common protocol for Ottawa. At the commission's inception in 1954 Canadian Ambassador to the US told American officials that, "we would wish to keep the United States informed privately of the course of events." Pearson, External Affairs Minister at the time, immediately had recognized the potential volatility of this arrangement, especially if it became public knowledge.¹⁵² The close working relationship between American and Canadian officials was natural due to their cultural and linguistic similarities and shared experience in Vietnam. When the American consulate in Hanoi officially closed, Canada's routine ICC trips to the North Vietnamese

¹⁴⁹ "129. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson-Washington, February 16, 1965." *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June 1965, Doc. 129.

¹⁵⁰ Telegram-650, "Canadian Publicity in USA" From Washington D.C. to External Affairs Ottawa, 1 March 1965. RG 25, Vol. 10125, File No. 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6[FP 2.2], LAC.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Levant, *Quite Complicity*, p. 193

capital became a valuable channel for the Americans.¹⁵³ The following report from Turner Jackson, a Canadian commissioner in Hanoi in May, 1965, represents the routine information being transmitted to the American Embassy:

Settling of sultry summer over Hanoi and long day of new working routine has failed to discourage local authorities from maintaining tempo of seemingly endless civil defense preparations. Trench and shelter construction and military drilling persist on extensive scale ... MIG aircraft are to be seen almost daily over city.¹⁵⁴

It appeared that Hanoi's authorities were justifiably convinced of Canadian espionage. On February 12 the PAVN contacted the Commission with an urgent request to withdrawal all fixed teams working for the ICC from North Vietnam. The supposed justification for this request was a concern for the security of the ICC members in the face of US air raids. Faced with North Vietnamese obstinacy, the commission capitulated and all five fixed teams were withdrawn to Hanoi on February 22.¹⁵⁵ Canada argued that PAVN's justifications for withdrawal was insufficient considering only two of the five fixed teams were positioned near targets hit by air raids. It can be inferred that the security of ICC members was not the objective of North Vietnamese authorities.¹⁵⁶ Rather, as the war had entered a new and more dangerous phase, the PAVN wished to remove the commissions 'eyes and ears' from its territory. In retrospect, the PAVN's fears were not unfounded as the documentary record of the ICC is littered with information concerning Viet Cong strongholds, manpower, and primary routes of infiltration into the South. One handbook itemized the origin and specificities of North Vietnamese weaponry from tanks, artillery tractors and field guns to

¹⁵³ Bothwell, Robert. "The further shore: Canada and Vietnam [1954 to 1965]" *International Journal*. Toronto (Winter 2000/01). 56:1, pp. 89-114. pg. 111.

¹⁵⁴ Qtd in Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ "Report on the Activities of the International Commission in Vietnam for the month of February 1965-April 3, 1965," RG 25, Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6 [FP.1], LAC.

¹⁵⁶ "'Draft Statement' to be tabled in House of Commons Marcel Cadieux," RG 25, Vol. 10125, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-6 [FP 2.2], LAC.

protective and detecting equipment as well as infantry weapons.¹⁵⁷ If this information was being directly funnelled to Washington, as the evidence suggests, then ICC fixed teams operating within its territory could have seriously undermined North Vietnam's military position.

Seaborn visited Hanoi in early March authorized to perform both ICC functions and continue his interlocutor role. An American official at the Embassy in Siagon, Alexi U. Johnson's, had notified Seaborn in late February that Canada would no longer be called upon as an intermediary between Washington and Hanoi; this responsibility would now be offered to Warsaw or Moscow.¹⁵⁸ Despite Alexis Johnson's tactless, ingratitude for Canadian efforts, Rusk did ask Seaborn to deliver an American White Paper outlining its version of the events to Hanoi.¹⁵⁹ Seaborn also hoped to clarify some of the obscurities surrounding the future work of the commission in North Vietnam. But, Seaborn found himself subjected to the, "bitterest criticism of our position by a representative of the DRVN that I have personally been exposed to."¹⁶⁰ Unable to secure an audience with prominent DRVN officials, the Canadian commission met with middle-ranking official Colonel Hau Van Lau, Chief of the PAVN liaison mission. Rather than providing clarification, Lau elusively responded to Seaborn's inquiries that the ICC could resume its regular functions in the North once the American threat had been removed. If the ICC had been ineffectual prior to this escalation, it was exceptionally impotent in the present circumstances. Ottawa's Embassy in Washington also reported the same resolute conviction among US officials. The conditions

¹⁵⁷ "Handbook" Foreword 'The Purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with a compact source of general information,' RG 25, Volume 3072, File 12, LAC.

¹⁵⁸ Preston, *Balancing War and Peace*, 104-105.

¹⁵⁹ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, 431.

¹⁶⁰ Telegram-149, "Trip to DRVN: Call on Colonel Ha Van Lau" OTTAWA," From The Canadian Delegation to the I.C.S.C. Saigon to To the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs," 8 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10122, File. 21-13-VIET-ICSC-2 Pt. 1, LAC.

for negotiation, according to US authorities, did not exist. Canada agreed. Martin was debriefed by his department on the military situation as Seaborn was sounding out Hanoi leaders. Like the Americans, DEA concluded that negotiations in the present circumstances would be detrimental to Canadian interests. A premature bid for negotiations would result in, "the destruction of the American presence in Vietnam or, and this is more likely, in an early breakdown of negotiation and the creation of an even more serious situation."¹⁶¹ The Canadian strategy was representative of its overall Vietnam policy; an exercise in balancing allied obligations with national interests. As such, Undersecretary of External Affairs, Marcel Cadieux surmised that "[i]t would seem to be in the Canadian interest not to undercut the American position by going all out for negotiation without proper preparation but at the same time to urge restraint in the display of US power in Vietnam and to encourage every channel of communication which may help to produce the prerequisites for a conference."¹⁶²

The world watched as America descended even deeper into the Vietnam quagmire. The policy of graduated military pressure confused non-communist and communist countries alike. Canadian Ambassador to Moscow Robert Ford, reported back to Ottawa on his frank discussion with Vice-Chairman of Council Rudnev, a conversation that aptly captures the sense of confusion and ambiguity through which all countries were navigating their respective foreign policies. Rudnev and Ford's conversation was candid and transparent. The Soviet minister expressed his confusion over America's air strikes against North Vietnam, arguing that if this escalation was not part of a larger strategy, then "American action would be very stupid." Ford responded that Rudnev could not be more wrong and that the air strikes were not part of a coordinated imperialistic plan. But when Rudnev's

¹⁶¹" Memorandum for the Minister - Vietnam Discussions in Cabinet Secret," Canadian Eyes Only, 1 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10122, File21-13-VIET-ICSC-pt. 1.1, LAC. (NP. 52).

¹⁶² Ibid

asked how then could the US have become so deeply involved, Ford explained, "it just snowballed."¹⁶³ The reality lay somewhere in the middle. As discussed, the US was waiting for an opportune time to retaliate with air strikes against Viet Cong provocation in the South. However, the incremental application of force was inherently a reactionary policy, and thus the American's could control neither the theatre nor the pace of the war. So while Rudnev had rightly surmised that Rolling Thunder was a piece of a much larger puzzle, Ford was also correct to conclude that America's commitment was haphazard. Ford's central message was that the Americans did not want to be in Vietnam and that he was sure, "no rpt no one would be happier than President Johnson if a way could be found to settle Vietnamese situation honourably."¹⁶⁴ Rudnev then made a "plea to us, CNDs, to get the Americans to stop."

Pressures on Pearson's Liberal government to exercise its influence in Washington were coming from every corner. Pleas arrived from communist and non-communist countries, domestic pressures and even petitions from American personalities such as Marquis Childs. The Liberal government's position was tenuous at best because of the Quiet Revolution unfolding in Quebec. Opposition in Canada to US plans was particularly salient for Pearson's liberals and Martin admitted to Rusk that he found public opinion about the war was disturbing.¹⁶⁵ With the specter of confrontation reaching new proportions, Martin expressed his understanding and sympathy for the American position. However, he qualified that Canada's support was forthcoming on the hopes that America would keep

¹⁶³Telegram-324, "Vietnam - Conversation with Rudnev" From Canadian Embassy in Moscow to External Affairs Ottawa, 24 March 1965, Lester B. Pearson's Fonds (hereafter MG 26), Prime Minister's Office Correspondence (hereafter N3), Vol. 281, File No. 845/I41V666 Crisis 1965 Confidential, LAC.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Telegram-595, "Vietnam-US Policy " From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in WashDC," 25 February 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9394, File. 20-22-VIETS-2. LAC.

them informed. Despite Bundy's earlier assurances, Martin remained unconvinced that Canada had the full picture. In this message to Rusk, Martin penciled in an amendment which suggested that a Geneva style conference might be unavoidable and that perhaps the time had come to seriously consider organizing one along the most opportune lines for American interests. But as Rusk responded, no signs had emanated from Hanoi indicating any willingness to negotiate; thus, although Washington never dismissed political channels, under present conditions the prospect seemed slight.¹⁶⁶ Secretary General U Thant faulted the Americans for the military escalation in North Vietnam, but Martin argued simply that, "This was wrong. Vigorous as I was in voicing my wish to see an end to the bombing, I did so through diplomatic channels. Public criticism would not enhance our ability to influence the Americans."¹⁶⁷

Perhaps this correspondence convinced Martin that Canada was still a relevant and active participant in the Vietnam conflict, albeit through quiet diplomatic channels. Throughout March, Martin actively sought a diplomatic and internationally coordinated resolution to the conflict. He sent a message to Canadian Embassies instructing the Ambassadors to sound out local opinion and actively search for an opening. It was a mad grab for any and all plausible political alternatives. If the only things stopping the Americans from negotiating were inopportune conditions, then Martin was determined to create favourable ones. Pearson supported Martin in this endeavour; one of the last points

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Also see. "Reply to Secretary Martin Action Memorandum. To the Secretary from William P. Bundy. General Records of the Department of State (hereafter RG 59) Bureau of European Affairs Country Director for Canada, Box 6, Special File Vietnam, National Archives and Records Administration in Maryland, Washington D.C.. (hereafter NARA).

¹⁶⁷ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, 432.

on the Vietnam issue upon which they would agree.¹⁶⁸ Despite Canada's official support for American military actions in Vietnam, privately, officials including Martin and Pearson, harboured serious reservations about the escalatory potential of the American air war against North Vietnam. Pearson delivered a speech to the Canadian Club in Ottawa on February 10 that reinforced the precepts of quiet diplomacy and the helpful fixer role which Martin was secretly exploring. However, he concluded on a qualifying note that Canada's quiet diplomacy did not, "permit either automatic support or captious criticism." While Canada shared global concerns and values with its neighbor, when differences arose Canadian, "official doubts about certain US policies would *often* be expressed, in private, through [diplomatic channels]...It does not mean we must always remain silent if there is strong disagreement."¹⁶⁹

Martin, who tempered his bids for political negotiation with a consistent and respectful public attitude towards his neighbour, always placed the burden for negotiation squarely on the DRVN shoulders. His speech to the House of Commons in late March expressed his hope that America would be measured and restrained in its military policy. However, he was certain, based on his understanding of the American position that should DRVN leaders "desist from provocative acts and...call a halt to infiltration and aggression from North Vietnam, if they were ready to talk about their objectives instead of fighting for them, the United States would be prepared to respond in kind."¹⁷⁰ Although, Martin wanted to help create conducive conditions for negotiation, he did not believe that a public policy

¹⁶⁸ Telegram-Y197, "Vietnam: Canadian Views on Possible Settlement," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassies," 13 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10122, File 21-13-VIET-ICSC-pt. 1.1, LAC.

¹⁶⁹ Telegram-1029, "From the American Embassy in Ottawa to the Secretary of State in Washington," 10 February 1965, Box. 165. NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. II, Memos 8/64-2/65, LBJL, 42b.

¹⁷⁰ "Vietnam - Minister's Speech in the House of Commons From Undersecretary of State to Far East Division March 31, 1965." RG 25 Vol. 10122 File. 21-12-VIET-ICSC-pt. 1.1, LAC.

recommendation to the United States would achieve this. The logic that underpinned this assessment was a degree of confidence in the wisdom and correctness of American action. While the Prime Minister and his External Affairs Minister had the same objectives in Vietnam they disagreed fundamentally on strategy. According to Martin, it was better to work within the context of US policy rather than against it.¹⁷¹ Pearson had arrived at a much different conclusion and this disagreement would damage relations not only with his Secretary of External Affairs but President Johnson as well.

Pearson was coming under intense pressure to speak out against American policy. According to John Hilliker and Donald Barry, accomplished Canadian historians, unidentified “persons highly placed in the United States government who were loyal to Johnson but disagreed with his Vietnam strategy and hoped to moderate it,”¹⁷² were encouraging Pearson to speak out. In addition to this powerful motivator, Pearson was coping with internal pressures to take a stand. Canada’s allied contribution to America’s war was becoming increasingly public with negative coverage on the minority report and Canadian conduct on the ICC. News reports revealed that Canada was passing on vital politico-military intelligence to the United States, allegations which Martin and Pearson did not directly challenge. Rather they skirted the issue to argue unconvincingly that, “members of the Canadian delegation in Viet Nam are not engaged in clandestine or spying activities.”¹⁷³ But while they defended Canada’s position, the American war effort was gaining momentum. The UN Secretary General expressed his grave concern to the General

¹⁷¹ “United States Vietnam Policy,” Memorandum for File, Confidential, 31 March 1965, MG 26N3, Vo. 281, File No. 845/141V666 Crisis 1965, LAC.

¹⁷² Hilliker, John 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. 371.

¹⁷³ Levant, *Quiet Complicity*, p. 195.

Assembly that the recent escalation could threaten world stability.¹⁷⁴ This reflected Pearson's fears, who as a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and seasoned internationalist, felt that he bore the responsibility as well as the authority to suggest an alternative course of action.

Marquis Childs, Chief Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and an old acquaintance of Pearson's, wrote to him on March 31. It can be argued that this letter provided the final impetus the Prime Minister needed to publicize his private reservations. Childs, in close and consistent contact with high-level American officials, presented an alarmist review of the situation in Washington. He argued that LBJ was relying solely on McNamara's recommendations, which represented some of the most hawkish elements amongst the President's national security advisors. Bundy and Rusk fell neatly in line with the Secretary of Defense. Moreover, Childs feared that US policy was being determined by the Pentagon rather than the Oval Office, a dangerous road as this could only lead to military intensification. Under the present circumstances, the war on the ground in South Vietnam was lost. Unless the Americans sought an honourable exit now, they would be forced to commit more resources and men to the struggle without a proper appreciation of the impact this would have on its relations with China and the Soviet Union. He prophetically surmised that the Vietnam War would go down in history as Johnson's War. In Childs' words, the 'rigidity' and "absence of real dialogue in the American administration" cast Canada into a vital role. During a conversation with Martin, Childs seemed most anxious that, "the President receive advice which would include alternatives to the present United States Vietnam policies. This advice, if it could not come from within the United States official circles, might have to come from outside. Mr. Childs seemed to think that Canada had a

¹⁷⁴ Telegram-149, "Vietnam," From UN New York to External Affairs for Rogers Far Eastern Division, 12 February 1965," RG 25, Vol. 9394, File no. 20-22-VIET-2, LAC. (NP145)

special responsibility in this connection and he re-emphasized the urgency (“in the next few weeks”) for Canadian intervention in Vietnam.”¹⁷⁵

The direct cause and effect of Childs’ letter should not be overstated. Pearson’s Temple Speech was drafted before Childs’ conversation with Martin, but it should not be discounted as a motivating factor especially as the Prime Minister and the American journalist had been corresponding prior to the Martin-Childs’ conversation documented above.¹⁷⁶ Amendments to the initial draft of the speech were made following the bombing by the VC of the American embassy in Saigon on March 30. Suggestions for bombing pauses and negotiations, were qualified by statements such as ‘at the right time’ in the amended version. Cadieux feared that if “they came out too strongly in favour of a pause in American action so soon after this outrage it might provoke a hostile reaction if not on the part of the audience then of the American press and the administration.”¹⁷⁷ Pearson who was experienced in the nuances of diplomatic protocol must have been anxious about his speech. Martin was so enraged by the prospect that he threatened to resign if Pearson went through with it. Martin rescinded his resignation, but their relationship, which had always been somewhat fractious because of their rivalry for the liberal leadership, was now seriously damaged. Martin later recognized the intense pressure being exerted on Pearson, but he maintained that public criticism on American soil would have no effect on American policy and it would counterproductively undercut Canada’s ability to work through the ICC.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ “United States Vietnam Policy,” Memorandum for File, Confidential, 31 March 1965, MG 26N3, Volume 281, File No. 845/I41V666 Crisis 1965, LAC.

¹⁷⁶ English, John. *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson, 1949-1972*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. p. 366. English provides an interesting analysis concerning Marquis Childs effect on Pearson and argues that Childs’ warning reflected more than influenced Pearson’s thinking. For a more general analysis of Pearson’s Temple speech see pp. 363-371.

¹⁷⁷ “Vietnam: Prime Minister’s Speech at Temple University,” Memorandum for the Minister, Confidential, 30 March 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10122, File. 21-13-VIET-ICSC-pt. 1.1, LAC.

¹⁷⁸ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, 432.

Perhaps the main impact of Childs' letter was that it convinced Pearson that he had a responsibility to speak out on Vietnam, even though members within his own government seriously questioned the wisdom of this strategy. The intractable and catastrophic trajectory of America's Vietnam policy trumped his usual respect for diplomatic etiquette.

As Pearson revealed in his memoirs, he felt increasing pressure from growing public dissatisfaction with America's actions.¹⁷⁹ Pearson, in retrospect, chose a controversial setting to deliver a "piece of friendly advice from a good neighbour."¹⁸⁰ The Prime Minister, in his acceptance speech for the Temple University World Peace Award in Philadelphia on April 2, took the opportunity to address Johnson's increasingly hard line position on North Vietnam. He proposed a short and calculated intermittence to the bombing. Johnson was predictably outraged by Pearson's speech despite the Prime Minister's defence of American motives. Pearson's timing and venue for expressing concern about the efficacy of America's strategy are illustrative. Until this point, Canada had neglected its core values in the pursuit of congenial relations with the United States, its greatest trading partner and ally. While support never manifested itself militarily, it nevertheless compromised Canada's diplomatic integrity. The war had escalated beyond the threshold in which Canada could reconcile its external threats with its core values in a manner that would maintain public support. However, there is a degree of irony in how Canada formulated its policy towards the American involvement in Vietnam. Diplomatic contributions did not substantially impact American policy. While Washington had welcomed such Canadian initiatives in 1964 and 1965 they were never deemed critical to the American effort. Had Canada remained ambivalent from the beginning then Pearson may not have felt compelled to balance

¹⁷⁹ Pearson, Lester B. *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson Vol. 3, 1957-1968*. ed. John A. Munro and Alex.I.Inglis. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972. p.140.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 143.

Canada's record of complicity with a public pronouncement of uncertainty about American policy. The damage inflicted on bilateral relations undermined its earlier record of diplomatic support.

In this context Johnson was outraged at Pearson's audacity. The Canadian's helpful 'suggestions' were tantamount to a policy recommendation delivered without warning on American soil; neither approved of nor appreciated by those for whom it was intended. It broke with the cardinal tenets of diplomatic protocol which Johnson held in high esteem, by offering a critical speech aimed at US policy without first receiving the president's approval. It was a brazen abandonment not only of 'quiet diplomacy' but of an accepted diplomatic code of conduct; benefiting Pearson who had reinforced his image as a peace-maker and helpful-fixer while effectively stealing Johnson's thunder. The President delivered a speech at John Hopkins University five days later in which he reaffirmed his commitment to "unconditional discussions" with North Vietnam, a clear and direct response to the 17 non-aligned nations who had submitted an appeal for peace.¹⁸¹ As the President wanted to reinforce the American image as a peace loving and moderate nation, Pearson's position, as expressed in his speech at Temple University, made this John Hopkins speech seem mediocre and redundant. Johnson called Pearson to Camp David where, as has been famously engrained in Canada's national narrative, the towering President grabbed the Prime Minister's lapels and boomed "Don't piss on my rug!"¹⁸² The President's anger was palpable

¹⁸¹ President Lyndon B. Johnson's Address at Johns Hopkins University: "Peace Without Conquest" April 7, 1965. <http://www.liblib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650407.asp>. accessed March 25, 2009.

¹⁸² Martin, *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers*, p. 2. For Martin's discussion of Pearson's Temple Speech see pp. 224-228.

and Ball was, “confident Pearson sensed the President’s displeasure.”¹⁸³ William Bundy, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs noted, “LBJ hated being upstaged” especially because a similar American speech, “was brewing when P[earson] spoke.”¹⁸⁴ He pondered Pearson’s intentions in a long hand summary of Canada’s role in America’s Vietnam policy. After noting that during the Seaborn missions, Canada “misunderstood American aims,” the suggestion for a bombing pause was a vivid manifestation of this misunderstanding. The Canadians claimed they, “knew little of US intentions,” but it is equally fair to say that the Americans were confused by its neighbour’s actions. Bowled over by Pearson’s brazen speech, US officials were forced to question whether, “someone put Mike up to it?” A little underhandedly, Childs mentioned that Hubert Humphrey may have been the secret prodder.¹⁸⁵

Upon returning to Ottawa, Pearson promptly penned a letter to the President. External Affairs drafted an initial letter emphasizing the domestic political considerations that informed his speech. A bombing halt, if unheeded, would help vilify the North, and garner popular domestic and international support. Pearson rejected this initial draft and personally penned a much longer letter. But while the Prime Minister was passably remorseful that his speech had been misunderstood, a sincere apology was not forthcoming, and perhaps the letter was designed to convey the Prime Minister’s displeasure at the antagonistic affront he had endured at Camp David. It opened by thanking Johnson for, “our short, but most pleasant, visit last Saturday.” But as the visit had been far from pleasant,

¹⁸³ “Outgoing Telegram Department of State Action: AmEmbassy Ottawa April 6, 1965” NSF/CF/Canada, Box 166, Vol. III Cables [2 of 2] 3/65-12/65. LBJL, 107.

¹⁸⁴ “Canadian Interview,” William P. Bundy Papers, Manuscript Collection #189, Box 8, Folder 4, Vietnam—Canada, 1955, 1963-67, 1983, Mudd Library.

¹⁸⁵ “Canadian Interview,” William P. Bundy Papers, Manuscript Collection #189, Box 8, Folder 4, Vietnam—Canada, 1955, 1963-67, 1983. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Library (hereafter Mudd Library)

such niceties rang uncharacteristically disingenuous. While the letter was intended to assuage Johnson, it really amounted to a restatement of the Temple Speech; arguably revealing Pearson's intentions for revising the initial DEA draft. He highlighted that his suggestions to halt the bombing were qualified by conditions such as "at the right time." He contemplated that such a pause could only have two ends; Hanoi could take the window of opportunity to capitulate honourably; or, if aggression persisted from the North, then the US would have diplomatic justification for its efforts. He concluded by thanking the President for his "frank" remarks, but emphasized that Canada could not appear as 'merely echoes' of the US but rather as an 'independent' yet 'sympathetic' neighbour.¹⁸⁶ He had lost his diplomatic gamble and exposed one of the many contradictions that characterized Canada's Vietnam policy. He admitted publicly that, "pulling the Eagle's feathers is an easy but dangerous way to get certain temporary popularity, as well as having felt satisfaction at having annoyed the big bird."¹⁸⁷ Defying his own advice, Pearson's Temple Speech was an exercise in this tactic. As he had predicted, his 'feather pulling,' had the anticipated effect; the American's were annoyed to say the least.

The Americans, despite Pearson's apology, were not convinced of Canada's penitence, and consequently their allegiance. To drive the point home, Rusk stated publicly,

We have thought...soberly about suspending, for a period the raids on North Vietnam. Some have suggested that this could lead to an end of aggression from the North. But we have tried publicly and privately to find out if this would be a likely result and there has been no rpt no response. Others say such a pause is needed to signal our sincerity, but no rpt no signal is necessary. Our sincerity is plain...or best

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Prime Minister Pearson to President Johnson, Office of the Prime Minister, 6 April 1965, RG 25, Vol. 10122, File. 21-13-VIET-ICSC, LAC.

¹⁸⁷ From the American Embassy in Ottawa to the Secretary of State in Washington. Tel. 1029. February 10, 1965. LBJL Box. 165. NSF Country File Canada Vol. II Memos 8/64-2/65. LBJL, 42b.

judgment tells us it would only encourage the aggressor and dishearten our friends who bear the brunt of the battle.¹⁸⁸

Prime Minister Pearson deviated from Canada's traditional policy of quiet diplomacy. His memoirs reveal concern about the rate of escalation in Vietnam and Johnson's ability to restrain the momentum of war. However, Pearson miscalculated his influence over Johnson. The Canadian leader was not the lone dissenter attempting to curb Johnson's aggressive strategy. Many voices within the administration and intelligence communities were also expressing scepticism about the prospects of the government's Vietnam policy. The President was inundated with policy advice from both hawks and doves, contrary to Childs' opinion. A general theme in the literature on President Johnson focuses on his flawed character as the primary reason for America's over commitment in Vietnam. He is depicted as an intimidating figure that wrested advice conducive to his primary objective of military victory.¹⁸⁹ This portrayal fallaciously overlooks the sheer volume of voices advising the President and his concerted effort to mediate the more hawkish elements in the administration.

History has vindicated one dissenting voice in particular. Under Secretary of State George Ball submitted about twenty papers, challenging US foreign policy in Vietnam and the general assumptions of US policy in Southeast Asia,¹⁹⁰ beginning with a sceptical analysis entitled, "How valid are our assumptions underlying our Viet-nam policies?" penned in early October 1964.¹⁹¹ Ball's memoirs are replete with accounts of his dissent,¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Vietnam : Statements by Johnson and Rusk From Canadian embassy in Washington DC to External Affairs Ottawa, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File. 20-22-VIET S-2, LAC.

¹⁸⁹ Barrett, David M. *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisers*. Lawrence: University Press, of Kansas, 1993. pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 158-159.

¹⁹¹ Letter from Ball to Dean (Rusk), Bob (Robert MacNamara), and Mac (McGeorge Bundy) George W. Ball's Papers, Manuscript Collection #031, 1933-1994, Series 1, Correspondence, Vietnam: Chronology-Vietnam,

and according to the director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), Ball's opposition was not an anomaly in the administration. Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Counsellor to the President Clark Clifford¹⁹³ were among the considerable number of voices in Washington expressing grave reservations about the direction of America's policy.¹⁹⁴ Although Ball, supported by more like-minded colleagues than previously thought, did not succeed in changing the administration's aggressive policy, his memoirs extort an understanding portrayal of President Johnson. Ball defends Johnson, arguing that he was reluctant to further embroil America in the growing crisis, he was compelled to action by his hard line advisers and by the war's momentum.¹⁹⁵ Dissent was based on intelligence amassed not only from the Central Intelligence Agency, but also from the INR, a lesser-known organ of the US intelligence community. This Bureau penned pessimistic and, as history later confirmed, highly accurate reports about the prospects of US policy. The report warned American policy makers that Hanoi could not be bombed into submission.¹⁹⁶ But Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, John McCone, seeing victory as possible, consistently advocated increased bombardment and sending in ground troops as the best means to achieve success.¹⁹⁷ Conflicting intelligence reports contributed to divisions

Miscellaneous. Box 97, Folder 3, Vietnam: Memorandum, 1964 October. For a complete collection of Ball's Memorandum See. George W. Ball's Papers at Mudd Library. A set is also contained in William P. Bundy's Papers also at the Mudd Library. George W. Ball's Papers are also housed in RG 59, Records of Undersecretary of State George W. Ball, 1961-1966. Lot 74D272, Mr. Ball's File to Undersecretary Ball, File Vietnam Memos NARA.

¹⁹² Ball, George W. *The Past Has Another Pattern*. p.383.

¹⁹³ Clifford, Clark. *Council to the President: A Memoir*. New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1992. Refer to pages 15 –22.

¹⁹⁴ Hughes L. Thomas. 'INR's Vietnam Study in Context: A Retrospective Thirty-Five Years Later' Intelligence and Vietnam: The Top Secret 1969 State Department Study National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book, No. 121. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB121/index.htm>. Accessed April 10, 2008.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 374-375.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

¹⁹⁷ "Letter From Director of Central Intelligence Raborn to President Johnson-Washington, May 8, 1965" FRUS, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. II, Vietnam, January-June 1965, Doc. 286.

amongst the JCS during the fateful February of 1965 when America launched its air campaign. Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara, commenting later on the unanimous policy line he received from the JCS, claimed he was informed only after the fact that, “the Army did not agree that bombing North Vietnam would produce the desired results, and the navy wasn’t too sure about it. It was the Air Force and the Marine Corps that were the tough proponents of air power.”¹⁹⁸ This complex issue warrants a much deeper analysis, but it is sufficient to note that Johnson was privy to varied opinions which carried much more weight in the policy planning process.

While Pearson failed to ‘slow’ down America’s Vietnam policy, he succeeded in cooling his personal relationship with President Johnson. This would not have been an unanticipated consequence as the experienced Canadian leader and diplomat could have predicted the negative reception his speech would receive. How else could he explain why the White House only received excerpts at seven in the evening on April 2 when the speech had been completed three days earlier? Ball noted that it was “obviously too late for changes or comment.”¹⁹⁹ Pearson, while still concerned about Vietnam, distanced himself from the struggle. In some ways, Pearson’s Temple Speech protected his personal image as an eternal diplomat, and shielded him from charges of complicity. Martin sensed an opportunity to take the reins. From this point forward, Martin became more critically and personally involved in Canada’s Vietnam policy. He saw that his legacy, and perhaps his prime ministerial prospects, hinged on an artful and successful handling of Southeast Asia. Pearson, having won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 and securing the Liberal leadership, had constantly relegated Martin to a distant second place. The External Affairs Minister saw an

¹⁹⁸ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 175.

¹⁹⁹ Outgoing Telegram Department of State Action: AmEmbassy Ottawa April 6, 1965” NSF/CF/Canada, Box 166, Vol. III, Cables [2 of 2], 3/65-12/65, LBJL, 107.

opportunity to prove his capabilities as a statesman. Contrary to popular belief, the Temple Speech did not signify the end of cordial Canada-US relations. Damage had been inflicted to the highest level of bilateral relations, between the two national leaders. However, the links between the countries on more subsidiary levels remained intact. Ritchie was still in touch with Bundy on a regular basis, Martin maintained constant communication with Rusk, and Canadian commissioners in Saigon retained a close working relationship with their colleagues at the American Embassy. The Temple Speech marked a fundamental shift in Canada's domestic handling of Vietnam more than a real change in Canadian-American relations.

In late April, Canada, under Martin's influence, began to advocate for a more expansive policy in Southeast Asia. For the first time, Canada's position incorporated the official diplomatic recognition of Communist China. In one scenario, increased contact with the Sino-Communist world would contribute to a peace in Vietnam and thus played a subordinate role in searching for a negotiated settlement. In a second possible setting, a peaceful resolution of the struggle in Vietnam could ameliorate relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC or Communist China) and the Western World; relegating Vietnam to a supporting role in search of a larger geo-political goal.²⁰⁰ The central or auxiliary role Canada envisioned for Communist China will receive more attention in Chapter Five. It is nevertheless important to point out, that April 1965 was a benchmark in Canada's overall approach to Southeast Asia. Martin, now the primary Vietnam strategist in Canada, sought more than a supporting diplomatic role. He had much loftier goals, including the basic objective of reaching a détente with Asian communism. From the

²⁰⁰ "Vietnam – Reply to British Foreign Secretary's Message of April 2," Memorandum for the Minister, Secret-Canadian Eyes Only, 20 April 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File 20-22-VIET S-2, LAC.

American perspective, Canada's Vietnam policy must have appeared schizophrenic; vacillating between public support and vocal dissent. A consistent ambivalence would have been much preferred. However, Canada's Vietnam strategy was far from ambivalent in 1966. Under Martin, it assumed an active and somewhat megalomaniac character reflecting the External Affairs Minister's personal and professional ambitions more than Canada's capacity to exert real influence on its neighbour's Vietnam policy.

Chapter IV

Tuning in to the Ronning Channel: Broadcasting From Canada

On July 26 1965, President Johnson wrote to Prime Minister Pearson telling him the US intended to increase its troop strength by a minimum of 80, 000 in the near future. But LBJ also tempered the aggressive content in the letter with an appeal for continued diplomatic activity and expressed his gratitude for innovative Canadian peace probes in the past. Perhaps, certain members of the DEA, namely Martin, took Johnson's professions of appreciation too literally and genuinely saw an invitation for third party initiatives. Nevertheless, this letter demonstrated that the Vietnam issue was "contained" between the US and Canada and, even more importantly, Johnson was keeping his neighbour informed.²⁰¹ Pearson's reaction was disquietingly ambivalent. Johnson's plans for escalating the American effort made the Prime Minister even more sceptical about the former's capacity to lead. As such, Pearson did not want to be closely associated with his neighbour's policy. His immediate inclination was to delay a response; deferral being a more subtle way of expressing his doubt. In one DEA official's assessment, Pearson even doubted the sincerity of Johnson's motives. The record of his conversation with Pearson said that, "from [the Prime Minister's] experience with President Johnson he was sure the latter had something definite in mind. i.e., he wanted to bargain something against concrete Canadian support for the US position in Vietnam. Perhaps this would be purely negative, in

²⁰¹ "From the President to the Prime Minister," 26 July 1965, Secret, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File. 20-22-VIETS-2, LAC.

the sense that he would do something to hurt us if our reply was completely unsatisfactory.”²⁰² Pearson clearly had lost trust personally and professionally, in Johnson.

Pearson’s colleagues convinced him that he should respond to Johnson. Albert Edgar Ritchie of the DEA, who was posted to Washington as the Canadian Ambassador in 1966, stressed that a prompt reply was critical if it were to carry any weight in Washington. Deliberation would only convince the US of Canada’s indecisiveness. However, Pearson made a diplomatic blunder for the second time in three months. During a press conference in early August, the Prime Minister informed the public that a Canadian reply was being drafted between himself and Martin. Pearson said that immediately upon delivering his reply every step would be taken to secure Johnson’s permission to make public their correspondence. This placed the onus entirely upon the President without first consulting Washington.²⁰³ One could imagine that Johnson was growing tired of Pearson’s diplomatic adventures; none of which were designed to help the US in Vietnam, but rather to protect the Prime Minister’s domestic political standing.

Johnson’s letter managed to elicit a very cautious and perfunctory response from the Prime Minister, who reaffirmed Canada’s commitment to the “purposes and objectives of the U.S. policy in Vietnam.” The rest of the message was decidedly less supportive. As a member of the ICC Canada could only support a resolution within the parameters of the Geneva Accords: Further, material assistance would be given due consideration, “within the limits of the possibilities open to us.”²⁰⁴ The final version of the letter specified forms of

²⁰² “Memorandum for Mr. Ritchie from R.A.D. Ford” July 27, 1965. Secret, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File. 20-22-VIETS-2, LAC.

²⁰³ Telegram-123, “From American embassy Washington to Department of State Incoming telegram Department of State, August 4, 1965,” Box 166, NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. III, Cables [2 of 2], 3/65-12/65, LBJL, 45c.

²⁰⁴ “Letter from Prime Minister Pearson to President Johnson” 27 July 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File, 20-22-VIETS-2, LAC.

economic assistance to Vietnam including participation in the Asian Development Bank and the Mekong River Project, as well as exploring the feasibility of a substantial civilian medical corps. The message's final page was devoted exclusively to the subject of UN involvement. The Prime Minister expressed his personal conviction that the "the sooner the UN can be brought effectively into the Vietnam situation the better it will be,"²⁰⁵ personally assuring the President that Canada would explore every opportunity to this end. Pearson was always an internationalist who preferred to work through the mechanisms of multilateral organizations. His renewed emphasis on the UN and his faith in UN Secretary General U Thant, highlights Pearson's lack of confidence in Johnson. He did not think the US would get out of Vietnam unilaterally. As Canada's bilateral diplomatic assistance proved futile, Pearson relying on his natural diplomatic predilections, had turned to the UN. However, in his dash to publicize his revised and more independent position, Pearson managed to snub Johnson yet again.

The US authorities initially agreed to furnish the Canadians with a "serviceable" and "complete summary" of their correspondence, written entirely in third person discourse and omitting all direct quotes. The main point of contention concerned Johnson's request for increased assistance, for it sparked questions into the scope and nature of Johnson's appeal, notably whether it included military aid. The American strategy was to present the summary as a faithful and honest account of the President's position, enabling them to "gloss" over details concerning military assistance.²⁰⁶ However, Johnson's circle of advisors had grown

²⁰⁵ From External Affairs Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington DC. August 6, 1965 "Text of reply to President Johnson," RG 25, Vol. 3096, File 20-VIET Pt. 1, LAC.

²⁰⁶ "Memorandum to the Ambassador of Canada from McGeorge Bundy" 11 August 1965, Box 166, NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. III, Cables [2 of 2], 3/65-12/65, LBJL, 45. (Nat's Pics 239) and RG 25, Vol. 3096, File 20-VIET Pt. 1, LAC.

increasingly irritated over Canada's conduct as Ambassador Ritchie had discussed when he called on Bundy the following day. He quoted Bundy as saying that the result of Canada's public statements was to "dump our problems into the lap of the White House." He went on to say that Pearson's response was condescending in both tone and content, and was informed primarily, 95% in Bundy's estimation, by Canadian domestic considerations. Finally, lamenting that Pearson had gone public with his request to publish the correspondence without conferring with the President, Bundy hinted that this could lead to the same tensions caused by the Temple Speech.²⁰⁷ The American message, which was only intended to keep the Canadians informed and quite naturally request further assistance from its neighbour for the US effort, took on an unnecessary political momentum. The US decided that the correspondence, both verbatim and summary form, could not be made public as it was part of an ongoing series of high-level correspondence with other nations.²⁰⁸ Special White House aide Jack Valenti informed the President that Canada's opposition parties were accusing Pearson of lying about his correspondence with Johnson. Pearson's biographer consider Johnson's refusal to help by making their exchange public was a sign that "he had clearly not forgiven Pearson."²⁰⁹

Those letters, while important for Canadian-American relations, also marked a major escalation in America's Vietnam strategy. This was a difficult decision for the President who contemplated five options. The first three, to decimate the North, to pull out or to remain at the current level of commitment were discarded immediately. The fourth and fifth

²⁰⁷ Memorandum from Ambassador Ritchie for Mr. Kidd, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Langille, Mr. Shenstone and file. Vietnam: Exchange of Correspondence between the President and the Prime Minister., 12 August 1965, Confidential, Vol. 3096, File. 20-VIET Pt. 1, LAC. (NATspics 1030979)

²⁰⁸ From External Affairs Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington DC. : Exchange of Correspondence between the President and the Prime Minister, 14 August 1965, Vol. 3096, File 20-VIET Pt. 1, LAC. (NATspics 1030968)

²⁰⁹ English, *The Worldly Years*, p. 369.

options were the only two under serious consideration, both of which called for increased troop strength and an appropriation from Congress. The only difference was the scope of Congressional involvement, whether he would “go the full Congressional route now [or] give the Congressional leadership the story now and the bill later.”²¹⁰ Under Secretary of State Cadieux immediately recognized the aggressive reorientation of American policy embodied in Johnson’s letter of July 26 which signified the Americanization of the conflict with dangerous implications for America’s allies. Cadieux believed that Johnson was basing his argument on faulty premises. By inextricably linking negotiations to bombing, Johnson was caught in a dangerous cul-de-sac. Bombing had failed to elicit any sign from North Vietnam that it was willing to negotiate. Moreover, it was the least defensible of all American actions in Vietnam and the most likely to induce great power involvement. The miscalculation was quite clear; the route that was the least effective, the least defensible and the most dangerous was unfortunately the route to which the Americans had committed their material and national prestige. While Cadieux recognized that such a simple calculation did not address the situation’s complexity, he maintained that bombing North Vietnam was counterproductive and American efforts should primarily target the Viet Cong and its supply routes into the South. If the US must continue the bombing then a sharp delineation between Viet Cong and North Vietnamese targets should be drawn to clearly demonstrate that the primary American objective was to stop insurgent infiltration not to inflict grave damage to North Vietnam.²¹¹

²¹⁰“ Memorandum of Meeting With the Joint Congressional Leadership/1/ Washington, July 27, 1965, 6:30 p.m.,” *FRUS*, 1964-1968, Volume III, Vietnam, June-December 1965, Document. 94.

²¹¹ From Under-secretary for External Affairs Marcel Cadieux to External Affairs Minister Paul Martin - Memorandum for Minister -Vietnam.” 6 August 1965, RG 25, Vol. 3096, File 20-VIET Pt. 1, LAC. (Nat’s Pics P1030995)

Cadieux therefore envisioned a policy whereby America would extend a bombing pause to the North and concentrate its energy on the Viet Cong in the South, eventually leading to a negotiated settlement. Two major difficulties were identified. The first would be to convince the Americans that they had something to gain from a bombing concession; the second was the means via which Canada would convey this policy. Considering the Temple Speech and the mishandling of the correspondence issue, Cadieux surmised that, "it would be extremely risky at this stage to ask President Johnson to reconsider the bombing of North Vietnam, though it might be feasible when the U.S. build-up in South Vietnam has been completed. I would suggest that we would therefore keep this in mind, waiting for a more favourable opportunity."²¹² The Undersecretary of State for External Affairs was a pragmatic and realistic voice in the department. He understood that quiet diplomacy was critical for Canadian interests. America's Vietnam strategy was dangerous, but to effect real change he realized that Canada had to work within the parameters of its limited importance in Washington and its non-military role in Vietnam. To exhaust its influence in Washington prematurely would circumvent Canada's ability to effect real change when the circumstances were conducive.

This position reflected the overall strategy accepted and, to some extent, practiced in the department. A memorandum, penned by Cadieux, is extremely revealing because it institutionalized the practice of quiet diplomacy while prioritizing Vietnam's importance in relation to more pressing bilateral issues. Cadieux argued that:

[T]he international environment in which we are operating, our own national situation and the nature of our relationship with the United States are all such that, at least for a considerable period; we need to make an informed and sustained effort to confine our representations to the United States to issues which are really important to us; and

²¹² Ibid

that, in deciding on what issues to stand firm if we are strongly opposed by the United States, we need to take into consideration not only the inherent merits of the case but also, in relation to our whole negotiating position with the United States at the time, the extent to which the issue is vital to our interests.²¹³

In terms, of Vietnam this meant that Cadieux had noticed a growing rift between US and Canadian positions over strategy. While in agreement with the origins and nature of the problem, Cadieux identified the conflict as a, “potential source of friction...” He went on to say that,

Precisely because these difference, though partial and not yet acute, are nevertheless on sensitive points and based on strongly held convictions in both countries, we must face the possibility of increasing divergence with the United States on the Vietnam issue. I suggest that this also means that we will have to watch it closely in the months ahead, while pursuing the policy objectives which we consider right and necessary, we are to prevent serious fissures between us and the United States from developing over it. We may also wish to look for off-setting positive factors in other fields as a means of keeping our general relations in good repair.²¹⁴

Cadieux was obviously a strong proponent of quiet diplomacy. He saw vital Canadian interests within the larger spectrum of bilateral relations with the United States. The DEA, while consumed largely by the Vietnam issue, in Cadieux’s estimation should be aware of the larger picture in which Canada’s foreign policy was operating.

Martin only partially listened to Cadieux’s advice. The Minister adhered to the precepts of quiet diplomacy and maintained a record of public support for America’s Vietnam policy. However, he did not heed his Undersecretary’s advice and contextualize the Vietnam issues within the broad spectrum of Canada’s bilateral relations with the United States. Instead Southeast Asia overshadowed Canadian-American relations in the foreign

²¹³ “Memorandum for the Minister Canadian – United States Relations” 24 June 1965, Confidential, RG 25, Vol. 10842, File No. 20-1-2-USA Pt. 3, LAC.

²¹⁴ Ibid

policy arena and became an almost singular occupation within the DEA. Beginning in June, Martin became personally active in probing interested parties for potential solutions to the Vietnam conflict. As his search for diplomatic alternative got underway, Seaborn reported that the North remained firm in its hard-line position and its conviction that the DRVN would prevail.²¹⁵ This military obstinacy further convinced the Minister that a diplomatic initiative was imperative. As both sides in Vietnam hardened their resolve, the window of opportunity for a negotiated settlement grew smaller. Driven by a sense of urgency, Martin held talks with the Soviet Ambassador, in a "personal initiative" to get countries with "some area of influence" to coordinate efforts. Canada and the Soviet Union had influence with Washington and Hanoi respectively, which put them in a unique position. Martin hoped that Hanoi could be convinced to negotiate if the National Liberation Front (the political wing of the Viet Cong) were given representation in the NVN delegation. But the Soviet Ambassador was adamant that he could not speak on behalf of the DRVN and insisted that only Hanoi could determine the composition of its delegation at a negotiating table. However, he did stress that the DRVN was consistent in its demand for an American withdrawal. While little was accomplished at this meeting, it demonstrated two important points. Firstly, Martin had clearly miscalculated his capacity to speak on behalf of the Americans.²¹⁶ In an August meeting in Ottawa, American Ambassador at Large W. Averell

²¹⁵Telegram-374, "Conversation with DRVN Foreign Minister, From the Canadian Delegation to the I.C.S.C. for Vietnam to the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, 9 June 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File no. 20-22-VIETS-2. LAC.

²¹⁶ During a meeting between Rusk and Martin in Washington November 25, 1966, Rusk bluntly told Martin that unless Canada was willing to adopt a military role then he should not feel authorized to make policy recommendations of a strategic military nature. The summary record read, "Martin referred again to the possibility of a Christmas bombing truce and said he felt we should go along with it. The Secretary asked if Canada would be prepared to put troops in Vietnam alongside ours if a truce did not produce peace. Martin responded emphatically that Canada would not be prepared to do so, and the secretary said that in that case, Canada should let us make our own decision." "Secretary's Conversation with Canadian Foreign Minister

Harriman, bluntly told the Minister that the President was not willing to engage in a conference if the Viet Cong had independent representation. According to Harriman, “[b]oth the Canadians [Martin and Pearson] reacted immediately stating that the President had already given that up.” Although Harriman dispelled any misunderstanding on this point, he felt that the point did not “stick” with the Canadians, especially Martin.²¹⁷ This analysis substantiates the second point which can be drawn from Martin’s conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, and that is the Minister’s decision to take a much more active and independent diplomatic role.²¹⁸

In anticipation of the Algiers Conference, the second Afro-Asian conference since Bandung in 1955,²¹⁹ Martin thought that a bombing pause would lessen the prospect of “condemnatory decisions” against US policy. He asked Ritchie to convey this bombing pause suggestion to Rusk, but to ensure that it did not sound like a specific policy recommendation. Suggestion versus recommendation was a trivial difference. Martin’s ‘suggestions’ were respectfully acknowledged and duly unheeded. While Martin was working tirelessly in the North American diplomatic theater, South Vietnam was undergoing political turmoil in its civil-military relations. South Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat had turned over political authority to a ten-man National Leadership Council; turning military officers into civil administrators. The council appointed Nguyen Cao Ky as the new Prime Minister with far-reaching executive powers relegating President Nguyen Van Thieu

Martin: Vietnam. Secretary’s Dining Room, November 25, 1966, RG 59, File Visits, Meetings, POL 7—Visits of Paul Martin, 2/19/66, NARA.

²¹⁷ “Governor Harriman’s Meeting With Canadian Prime Minister Pearson and Foreign Minister Martin of Canada” Department of State Memo of Conversation August 18, 1965, NSF/CF/Canada, Box 166, Vol. III, Memos [2 of 2], 3/65-12/65, LBJL 133.

²¹⁸ Memo of Conversation between Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Soviet Ambassador, 4 June 1965, Confidential Canadian Eyes Only, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File no. 20-22-VIETS-2, LAC.

²¹⁹ T. B. Millar a; J. D. B. Miller. “Afro-Asian disunity: Algiers, 1965,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. (1965) 19 :3, p. 306-321. The conference never took place because the Algerian President Ben Bella was deposed.

to a symbolic role. Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, who served in this position in 1964 and 1965 and punctuated Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's ambassadorship in South Vietnam, was concerned about General Ky's political leadership ability.²²⁰ With South Vietnam in political turmoil and the Viet Cong stepping up its offensive, the conditions were not right to begin negotiations. This did not deter Martin. The next month he instructed his subordinates to devise, "some sort of peace plan for Vietnam (and presumably South East Asia as a whole)."²²¹ The initial approach was relatively unobtrusive, calling for a summary of each interested party's position and then an analysis to discern any points on which they converged. The real significance rests again with the initiative in and of itself. Martin was undertaking loftier goals. He envisioned a peace that extended beyond Vietnam to the whole of Southeast Asia, and as will be discussed, perhaps even onto mainland China.

Soon after Martin tried his hand at big power politics in a diplomatic peace initiative aptly termed Operation Smallbridge. Canadian historian Andrew Preston, who has produced the most contemporary studies on Canada's diplomatic role in the Vietnam War, has argued that the Ronning missions raised the spectre of confrontation by increasing each party's resolve. This conclusion, which has also been applied to the Seaborn missions, is valid. However, it overstates the importance of the Ronning missions in the Vietnam conflict. Martin miscalculated the timing of his initiative and the willingness of its participants. He could not singlehandedly bring about the conditions that would lead to a negotiated settlement, especially considering how reluctantly the Americans had agreed to the venture. Seaborn was commissioned by the Americans and, although a Canadian interlocutor, he had

²²⁰ "Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State/1/ Saigon, June 17, 1965," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Volume III, Vietnam, June-December 1965, Document 5.

²²¹ "Peace plan for Vietnam and South east Asia," From R. L. Rogers Far East Division to Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, 12 July 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9395, File no. 20-22-VIETS-2, LAC.

been imbued with real authority and thus had the ability to greatly impact the outcome of the conflict. Chester Ronning, as will be discussed, had none of these advantages and, therefore, cannot be considered an extension of the Seaborn missions. Nor did Martin want to continue the Bacon Channel which he felt had fallen, "prey to the 'hawk' faction in Washington."²²² Having admitted to a certain dose of naivety when he accepted Rusk's request to present Washington's position to Hanoi, Martin was not going to subject the Ronning missions to the same fate, and was adamant that "Ronning would not serve as a diplomatic conduit for Washington."²²³ It should be more accurately perceived as a poor attempt at a sequel.

Paul Martin continued in vain to resuscitate Canada's diplomatic role in the Vietnam War. He agreed with the contents of Johnson's John Hopkins speech delivered on April 7, just five days after Pearson's controversial Temple speech. While Johnson argued that America had limited objectives in Vietnam, he also defended its air war against North Vietnam as an appropriate and measured policy.²²⁴ In response to President Johnson's speech Hanoi issued its Four Point proposal for peace. These four points called for an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of American military personnel, equipment and bases, and the peaceful reunification of the country free of foreign interference.²²⁵ American Vietnam scholar, George Kahin, argued that Johnson's administration failed to capitalize on this opportunity, which had a real chance at encouraging negotiations. Ball continued his memorandum campaign and again submitted a

²²² Martin, *A Very Public Life*, 435.

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ "President Lyndon B. Johnson's Address at John's Hopkins University: 'Peace Without Conquest' April 7, 1965." Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum: National Archives and Records Administration. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650407.asp>. Accessed December 10, 2008..

²²⁵ *National Security 1965-1970*, 69.

plan for a negotiated peace settlement.²²⁶ Under pressure to respond, Johnson authorized a well-publicized American bombing pause, lasting five days in mid-May, which helped to disarm Johnson's critics. However, as Kahin and Thies point out, the precarious political and military situation in Saigon convinced Johnson that he could only negotiate from a position of strength, thus he rejected Hanoi's Four Points. The bombing pause was primarily designed to boost Johnson's image as a negotiator, which Hanoi's Foreign Minister and even Undersecretary Ball considered a manipulative public relations bid.²²⁷ Six months later, following the Christmas bombing pause, from December 27 1965 into January 1966,²²⁸ Washington released its Fourteen Point proposal for peace, which contained nothing new but represented, "the first time [the points] had been stripped of smothering rhetoric and assembled in one document."²²⁹ Armed with peace templates from both sides Martin wanted to revive Canada's middle man role. He sought an independent Canadian initiative to investigate the remote possibility that terms could be established upon which North Vietnam and America would enter into negotiations.

Chester Ronning was selected for this mission. Born in China to Lutheran missionary parents, Ronning openly advocated international recognition of Communist China coupled with public criticism of American foreign policy.²³⁰ Washington immediately raised concerns about Ronning's natural predilections and questioned the Canadian motive. American Ambassador to Canada Walt Butterworth speculated that

²²⁶ Kahin, George. *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. Pp. 325-330. Provides an interesting analysis of how Washington interpreted Hanoi's Four Points.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ For a copy of President Johnson's letter to Pearson, notifying him of America's intention to end the Christmas bombing pause see. "Japan and Canada," January, 1966. NSF, Box 14, Files Of McGeorge Bundy, Chronological Files, January 16-31, 1966 [1 of 2], LBJL 12a.

²²⁹ Qtd in. Thies, *When Government's Collide*, p. 116.

²³⁰ Preston, Andrew. "Operation Smallbridge," p. 359.

Martin harboured ulterior motives to bring about recognition of Communist China.²³¹ In fact, Martin frankly admits to his secondary objective of normalizing relations with the PRC in his memoirs and admits that Rusk, the hardened cold war proponent, was adamantly opposed to the idea.²³² From the outset, Washington was dubious about the Ronning missions, questioning the diplomat's political leanings, the initiative's objectives and the overall prospect of success. Rusk had worked with Ronning at the 1961-62 Geneva Conference on Laos, and had seen firsthand Ronning's vigorous advocacy for neutrality in Southeast Asia. Based on his close association with Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, Ronning was convinced that the PRC wanted neutrality in the region to maintain a balance between America's spheres of influence in Thailand and the Philippines. Rusk, especially considering French President Charles DeGaulle's ardent support for neutrality, was not impressed with Martin's proposal to send Ronning.²³³ He cabled a telegraph to the American Embassy in Saigon, plainly voicing his pessimistic view and assuring the Ambassador, "there is no occult understanding between Washington and Ottawa on this matter...Quite frankly, I attach no importance to his trip and expect nothing out of it."²³⁴ Even Pearson articulated his misgivings to Butterworth, reassuring him that Martin had engineered the Ronning missions. Pearson also admitted that his External Affairs Minister had underestimated the potential dangers associated with this independent Canadian initiative.²³⁵

²³¹ "AmEmbassy OTTAWA to SECSTATE974 (SECRET-EXDIS), 28 Jan, 1966" in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, p. 171.

²³² Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 437

²³³ Ibid, 358.

²³⁴ 'State to AmEmbassy SAIGON 2525 (SECRET-NODIS), 25 Feb 1966' in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, p. 176.

²³⁵ 'AmEmbassy OTTAWA to SECSTATE 981(Secret-EXDIS), 31 Jan 1966' in *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, p. 171.

Martin first presented his idea to the Prime Minister in January 1966. He argued that the time was right for another initiative as the current Christmas bombing pause was about to expire. He thought the Americans could be convinced to extend the pause if Ritchie approached them with the Canadian position and an offer to send another diplomatic intermediary.²³⁶ In one way, Martin had accurately gauged the dilemma Johnson's security advisors faced. Had the bombing pause been long enough for Hanoi to formulate a reasonable offer? On the other hand, how could the administration afford to leave its forces unprotected? A move to resume the bombing was near unanimous amongst Johnson's security advisors, except for Ball who continued to challenge America's Vietnam Policy in his feverish memoranda campaign. It is worth re-emphasizing that Martin interpreted America's willingness to exhaust every political channel in pursuit of a peaceful settlement very literally. In his formal proposal to the Prime Minister, Martin referred directly to the, "clear invitation by the United States to other countries, including Canada, to help in whatever way they can to move the battlefield to the conference table."²³⁷ Yet Martin was not completely upfront about his intentions. He alleged that Ronning's "special visits" to Southeast Asia, "would be focused on the Vietnam problem. Their purpose would be to make an oral presentation of Canadian views in Hanoi and Peking and to sound out attitudes in the two capitals with respect to a settlement of the present conflict."²³⁸

Martin was masking more lofty ambitions for the Ronning trip. The last section of his memo, which was devoted to the Peking portion of the mission, bore a suspiciously defensive tone. The External Affairs Minister was well aware that even an unofficial visit to

²³⁶ "Vietnam: Note For the Prime Minister." From Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin, 20 January 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9403, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²³⁷ "Special Visit to Peking and Vietnam," Memorandum to the Prime Minister from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 20 January 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9403, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²³⁸ Ibid.

Peking by a Canadian official would arouse opposition from the US. Compounded by his selection for emissary, it seems necessary to question Martin's motives and perhaps to read more deeply into the objectives outlined to the Prime Minister. In an effort to avoid US criticism, Ronning would visit Peking on a personal basis, while he would not be authorized to discuss Canadian recognition of Communist China, he should gauge Peking's policy towards the UN General Assembly.²³⁹ Rusk and Martin were in close and consistent contact during this period, corresponding via telegrams and face to face meetings in which Rusk expressed his concerns to the Minister. In fact, Rusk considered the Vietnam portion of Ronning's trip largely redundant. It was the Peking stopover that was interpreted as a major policy change which could adversely affect the American position in Asia and in the United Nations.²⁴⁰ Rusk was right to be concerned over Canadian intentions. Ronning was not authorized to discuss the broad issue of Sino-Canadian relations regarding recognition, but, "[t]he question of Chinese recognition in the United Nations is a different matter."²⁴¹

American concerns were allayed when Peking refused to accept Ronning's visit. In stark contrast to the Chinese reaction, Hanoi expressed keen interest in the Canadian initiative. Victor Moore, the new Canadian Commissioner to the ICC, visited Hanoi in early February and, to his surprise, secured meetings with important DRVN officials, including the Vice-Minister for Defence, the Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister.²⁴² The caliber of his audience and their cooperative

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ "American reservations about Operation Smallbridge" From the Undersecretary of State for Far East Affairs to the Far East Division, 8 February 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9403, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²⁴¹ "Discussions in Peking Questions Affecting China – Instructions for Smallbridge," 8 February 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9403, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC. There was a handwritten note from Paul Martin in the margins indicating that this memo was not used. However, he check marked the quote cited above, and it ca, therefore, reasonably be assumed that he agreed with this position.

²⁴² "Smallbridge Visit" From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 11 February 1966, RG25 Vol. 9403. File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

attitude made Moore hopeful about the mission's prospects and reassured Martin that the Canadian channel was important. Especially after receiving a Polish refusal to allow the ICC to have a more active role, Martin felt at liberty to assume a large scope of action for Canada's unilateral approach.²⁴³ The ostensible purpose of Ronning's trip was to present Prime Minister Pearson's reply to a letter from Ho Chi Minh in which the DRVN leader denounced American actions and motives in Vietnam. Martin's real agenda was to adopt a more "active probing approach for the Smallbridge's discussions in Hanoi."²⁴⁴ In attempts to demystify North Vietnam's position, Martin formulated pointed questions about Hanoi's Four Points: Under what conditions would North Vietnam initiate its Four Point proposal? Were the conditions considered necessary preconditions to negotiation? Additionally, North Vietnam stipulated that American acts of war against the North must cease before a political settlement could be contemplated. Did North Vietnam intend to offer a reciprocal de-escalation? Considering, the Christmas bombing pause did not lead to fruitful discussions, the Canadians assumed that a bombing cessation was not sufficient to meet Hanoi's conditions. Did Hanoi have any other conditions? Moreover, which portion of Johnson's Fourteen Points did Hanoi reject?²⁴⁵ Armed with these questions, Ronning met Pham Van Dong on March 10 in Hanoi. Amidst the typical professions of resolve and slander towards the 'American imperialists', the Canadian diplomat elicited a breakthrough. According to Ronning, Pham Van Dong expressed a willingness to enter into negotiations pending a cessation of US aggression against the North. For the first time, Hanoi's leadership did not

²⁴³Telegram-Y-204, "Smallbridge Discussions in Hanoi," From External Affairs Minister (Martin) to Commissioner in Saigon. 2 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁴⁴Telegram-Y-205, "Smallbridge Discussions in Hanoi," From Commissioner in Saigon to Canadian Embassy in Washington DC, 2 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁴⁵"Smallbridge Discussions in Hanoi," From External Affairs Minister (Martin) to Commissioner in Saigon, 2 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

explicitly link the Four Points with negotiations, an apparent concession which led Ronning to believe he may have found the diplomatic opening needed for a negotiated settlement.²⁴⁶

While he described this shift as “a slight glimmer of hope,”²⁴⁷ it represented the only conciliatory statement expressed by any DRVN official during Ronning’s visit. Just as importantly, North Vietnamese officials expressed their appreciation for the Canadian channel and hoped that it would remain open, indicating to Ronning that they expected an American response to come through him. Before the Canadian envoy could personally brief Martin, Moore wrote to Ottawa describing, “his brilliant performance.” In fact, the Canadian commissioner’s interpretation of the meeting seems to have germinated the seeds of optimism and Ronning’s small glimmer of hope was quickly becoming a major breakthrough. As Moore wrote,

what we have is an indication that DRVN wish to talk; that they are not rpt not opposed to a role for the ICSC when conditions are ripe, but wish no to have CDA use its presence on commission and commission’s facilities as vehicle for CND good offices; and that they come up with an offer, albeit tenuous. The offer exists in lifting from its context in foreign ministry Jan4 statement of bombing issue...and making it sole condition for negotiations viz the stopping of air raids quote and all other acts of war unquote against territory of DRVN.²⁴⁸

Ottawa had to handle the situation carefully. North Vietnam had refused to commit its proposition to paper, and stressed that secrecy was absolutely critical. If External Affairs mishandled the matter, the DRVN could simply deny the Canadian version of events.

Canadian officials had constructed a fragile proposition on a shaky foundation, forcing the

²⁴⁶ Preston, “Operation Smallbridge,” p. 132. Also see. Telegram-184, “Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge,” From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon (Seaborn) to DEA Ottawa, 11 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²⁴⁷ Telegram-184, “Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge” From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon (Seaborn) to DEA Ottawa, 11 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁴⁸ Telegram-188, “Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge” From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon (Moore) to DEA Ottawa, 12 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

DEA to perform a delicate balancing act. In Canada's efforts to present the "new" position before the pieces of the puzzle collapsed, or before the press blew their cover, Ottawa became overly consumed in timing more than substance, compelling them to stress the newness in the DRVN's position. Wanting to keep public scrutiny to a minimum, Martin felt that Ronning should present his impressions to officials from the State Department, as well as Charles Ritchie, in "a usual place" in Ottawa.²⁴⁹ Presciently, the DEA opted to take the message to Washington rather than force their American colleagues to solicit Ronning's company, demonstrating again the relative importance each country attached to the missions, and the very different manner in which they interpreted the results. On March 20, Ronning and Ritchie went to Washington and met with William Bundy at the Canadian Embassy. Bundy listened attentively to Ronning's account and promised to give it a full review. However, his initial reaction to North Vietnam's 'new position' was indicative of Washington's lack of enthusiasm. Observing that the link between bombing and Hanoi's Four Points had always been ambiguous, Bundy posited that an official and unconditional American declaration to end the bombing would insinuate an official acceptance of Hanoi's Four Points.²⁵⁰ While Ritchie reported Bundy's scepticism, he failed to focus on it sufficiently. The marked divergence of opinion pivoted on this point. As, Bundy would later comment, "the Hanoi ploy was clever."²⁵¹

The lack of American interest was clearly demonstrated by the silence that emanated from Washington following Ronning's breakthrough. Moore, initially so optimistic about Operation Smallbridge, was growing increasingly concerned about the deflated mission. He

²⁴⁹ "Ronning's Visit to Vietnam," Memorandum for the Minister, 15 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁵⁰ Telegram-838, "Vietnam - Ronning," From the Canadian Embassy in Washington (Ritchie) to DEA Ottawa, 21 March 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁵¹ Preston, Andrew. "Missions Impossible," p. 133.

wrote to Ottawa in mid-April and pointed out that it had been five weeks since Ronning's visit to Hanoi and four since he had briefed American officials in Washington. While recognizing that Canada was only a "middleman," Moore lamented that the US was undermining its own position should it wish to convey something new to Hanoi. His concern, however, was equally focused on the diplomatic stalemate that characterized Canada's second peace feeler mission.²⁵² External Affairs took Moore's telegram into consideration, but the frustrating reality was that the Americans were not ready to respond. The Buddhist Revolt in the South, which protested the South Vietnamese dependence on American power, exposed the political instability in Saigon. Coupled with the belief that Hanoi was only conveying its standard public position to Ronning, US officials decided to let the unwanted Canadian channel fall into disuse. The department tried to prod Washington into action by reminding the Americans of Moore's scheduled ICC visit to Hanoi.²⁵³ However, gentle reminders were not sufficient.

Martin phoned Bundy on April 22. He was not going to let Operation Smallbridge go without a fight. As will be explored in more depth in Chapter Five, Martin had pinned his personal and professional ambitions on a successful diplomatic mission. Afflicted by tunnel vision, Martin claimed that, "in current situation it appeared to us to be one of very few channels which held any promise of opening up possibilities of moving toward some kind of peaceful settlement of Vietnam conflict."²⁵⁴ However, there were other channels open to North Vietnamese diplomatic overtures, including the American-established

²⁵² Telegram-309, "Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge," From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon (Moore) to DEA Ottawa, 16 April 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁵³ "Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge" Memorandum for the Minister (Paul Martin) from the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs (Marcel Cadieux), 18 April 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁵⁴ Telegram-Y-288, "Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., 22 April 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1. Vol. 2, LAC.

Rangoon channel. It seemed to the Americans that if Hanoi really wanted to present a revised position to Washington then this avenue would provide the timeliest and most direct route. Martin's defence of his country's 'unique' position exacted a mildly positive response from Washington. However, this conciliatory position was more indicative of American concerns over the state of bilateral relations with Canada than it was over the actual efficacy of the Ronning missions.

An American position paper on the Ronning missions indicated a desire to keep the Canadian channel open, but clearly stated that Ronning's first visit did not represent "any real 'give' in Hanoi's position."²⁵⁵ When President Johnson had sent emissaries to 34 capitals and messages to 81 countries seeking third party peace initiatives at the beginning of the year, Martin took this as a clear indication of Canada's role in the conflict.²⁵⁶ As discussed earlier, Martin jumped on the opportunity and neglected to recognize his limitations. In an attempt to cater to Canadian sensitivities, the State Department drafted an oral message to be transmitted to Hanoi. However it was clear that the Ronning channel was not considered essential. Ottawa could use either Victor Moore, its permanent commissioner to the ICC, or Ronning if they deemed it appropriate. That Washington let Ottawa determine "the appropriate level" reveals America's lack of confidence in Operation Smallbridge. Washington clearly considered the Canadian channel to be subsidiary to its permanent channel in Rangoon. Ronning was authorized to probe the alleged suggestion for peace that he had obtained in his first meeting, and to "reiterate U.S. willingness to pursue the matter further through the established direct channel," giving some hope to Ottawa that the

²⁵⁵ "Memorandum to the Government of Canada, Secret, No. 358" From the Ambassador of the Embassy of the United States Ottawa (Butterworth) to the External Affairs Minister (Martin), 26 April 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²⁵⁶ "Peace Initiatives," RG 59, Bureau of Euro Affairs (Canada Desk), Box 10, File. Vietnam, 1966, NARA.

“Canadian channel might continue to be used in the event of a forthcoming response.”²⁵⁷

This was a very vague prescription for the Canadian initiative and it was arguably Washington’s attempt to convey its lack of enthusiasm in a diplomatic yet discernable way.

According to Butterworth, Martin received the American message favourably. Nevertheless, DEA thought that Ronning, accompanied by External Affairs officer Klaus Goldschlag, should visit Washington and suggest Canadian revisions. After lunching with the Canadian officials, Bundy surmised that, “the effect of the Canadian revision is to underscore the Canadian role and to re-phrase the key sections about possible reciprocal reduction in hostilities.”²⁵⁸ However, he was concerned that Ronning intended to undertake the trip personally. Bundy feared that Ronning’s presence in Saigon would arouse suspicions and fuel rumours that the US was circumventing South Vietnamese officials in an attempt to resolve the conflict directly with Hanoi. While the US could do little to dissuade Ronning, it encouraged the Canadians to publicize that Ronning was visiting Hanoi in connection with Canada’s ICC role. However, this was the last Ronning mission Washington would condone. As Bundy recommended, “while the ICC cover story may work on this occasion, [the US] cannot support Ronning himself doing the trip again (in the unlikely event there should be any real response).”²⁵⁹ Martin met with high-ranking American officials later that month and devoted the majority of the conversation to defending Ronning’s credibility and integrity. It was becoming increasingly obvious that the choice for Canadian emissary was a point of friction. Moore was already stationed in

²⁵⁷ “Memorandum to the Government of Canada, Secret, No. 358” From the Ambassador of the Embassy of the United States Ottawa (Butterworth) to the External Affairs Minister (Martin), 26 April 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1, LAC.

²⁵⁸ “Proposed Canadian Revision in Oral Message to Hanoi: Action Memorandum” From William Bundy Through: George Ball To: the Secretary, 4 May 1966, NSF/CF/Canada, Box 167 [2 of 2]. File. Ronning Mission, 1966, LBJL 25.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Vietnam and thus had an expedient excuse to visit Hanoi regularly under the auspices of his ICC duties. Seaborn's missions in 1964 had been carried out in this manner. Washington's concern was centred on more than Ronning's liberal predilections regarding communist China, it was about the visibility of the Canadian channel.²⁶⁰ Based on the New Year's call for peace initiatives coupled with Martin's persistence, Washington felt compelled to reluctantly sanction a second mission.

Now that the Americans were on board, Martin needed DRVN's acquiescence. Couched in the usual professions of American culpability, on May 21 Hanoi approved a second visit by Ronning without specifying a time frame.²⁶¹ External Affairs analyzed the North Vietnamese aide-memoire and identified two main objectives. First, Hanoi wished to make clear that it was a passive participant and did not wish to encourage the Canadians. Secondly, it was designed as a record which the DRVN could present to the Chinese to defend itself against charges of capitulation.²⁶² As North Vietnamese and American enthusiasm were waning, the prospects for the Ronning channel grew even bleaker when the story leaked to the press on June 15. As the North Vietnamese had repeatedly emphasized that secrecy was paramount, when the Agence Press France reported on Ronning's mission, it essentially guaranteed its futility. However, the momentum was already in full gear and the Canadians proceeded as planned.

²⁶⁰ "Vietnam - Memorandum of Conversation - Secret-in Foreign Minister Martin's Office 9:00am to 10:00 am," 16 May 1966, RG 59, Box 10, File Vietnam, 1966, NARA. Also see. "Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Ambassador Goldberg, - Secret Canadian Eyes Only," 16 May 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1.Vol. 2, LAC.

²⁶¹ Aide-Memoire - Secret From Hanoi to Canadian Permanent Commissioner in Hanoi. May 21, 1966. LAC RG 25 Vol. 9404 File No. 20-22-VIET.S.-2-1-1.Vol. 2.

²⁶² Telegram-Y-114, "Operation Smallbridge," From DEA Ottawa to Brussels (For SSEA, USSEA and HADWEN only), 4 June 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 3, LAC.

The basic message initially penned by the Americans, with two minor edits, was still considered appropriate. Additionally, Washington asked Ronning to inquire about American prisoners being held in North Vietnam and to stress the importance the US attached to maintaining communication with them. If Hanoi allowed the ICC or a third country to act as a protecting power, then the US would reciprocate in a positive way. Canada willingly accepted this role, promising to transmit the message faithfully but allowing Ronning to judge the timing and context of its deliverance. This added dimension provided an ideal context for Ronning's visits and perhaps heightened the chance of a positive outcome considering the tangible nature of the issue. However, this interpretation was quickly discredited when Washington presented inconsistent positions, one private and one public, about their conditions for negotiation. What irked the Canadians, was that the Americans had approached the Chinese Embassy in Poland with a similar position contained in Ronning's message. This approach promptly became public knowledge and it seemed to the DEA that Washington was intentionally undermining the mission by opting for a channel that was notoriously against negotiation. DEA surmised that:

It would appear that QUOTE demanding a specific price UNQUOTE is precisely what Americans have now done, they have also added a new element, namely mutually acceptable observation. It is conceivable therefore that North Vietnamese may query Smallbridge as to relationship between message conveyed by Chinese and message conveyed through CDN channels. In such an event, would we be right in telling the North Vietnamese that USA would be prepared to consider cessation of bombing of North in circumstances where this would be a step towards peace, that the message conveyed through the Chinese outlined certain areas in which North Vietnamese could make concessions that would be attractive to USA and South Vietnam, but the fundamental USA interest was still to elicit from Hanoi some indication of areas in which they might be able to move towards reduction of scale and scope of hostilities.”²⁶³

²⁶³ Ibid

The Ronning mission was labouring under restrictive conditions which foreshadowed its ultimate ineffectiveness. Washington never invested confidence in it. Further, even if Hanoi initially saw some potential, every signal it had received in the elapsed time would deter its initial optimism.

Ronning met with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach. As expert Andrew Preston has pointed out, Ronning entered into these talks with vigour and resolve despite the many impediments he had encountered along the way. In addition to North Vietnamese and American apathy, Prime Minister Pearson had undercut the Canadian position. In his May 1 speech, Pearson called for mutual de-escalation eventually leading to a peace conference, essentially endorsing the American prescription for peace.²⁶⁴ Out of concern for his country's relations with America, the Prime Minister publicly supported Washington and completely disregarded Martin's request to refrain from making statements on Vietnam.²⁶⁵ The North Vietnamese viewed Pearson's speech as the official Canadian position, which did not make Thach well disposed to hear Ronning out. Nevertheless, Ronning spoke with the Vice Minister as though he was authorized to bargain for conditions. He presented the American interpretation of his March message as, "[calling] on them to make a great concession, but you would be making no concession in order to obtain it." Ronning expanded on the American response, arguing that, "[i]f the USA unconditionally stopped the bombing of the DRVN, it would give an advantage to the other side like fighting with one hand tied behind your back. So the condition on which they would agree to stop the bombing, is that the DRVN should also offer a concession." Thach obstinately maintained that America, as the aggressor, had no right to demand

²⁶⁴ Preston, Andrew. "Operation Smallbridge," p.378.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

concessions, especially as he considered the American position to be “irrational and illogical.”²⁶⁶ The military tempo was escalating and, despite Ronning’s efforts, the diplomatic gap was growing wider.

In a last ditch attempt to exact any sign of accommodation from North Vietnam, Ronning met with Vice Prime Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh on June 17. However, the Canadian should not have held his breath. The response from the Minister for Foreign Affairs was uncompromising; there would be no mutual de-escalation. The Americans must cease all hostilities against North Vietnam, withdraw their troops from Vietnam and respect the national sovereignty protected by international law and reinforced by world public opinion. Trinh went even further in his emotional condemnation of American conduct by calling Canadian motives and integrity into question. Ronning lamented that if Hanoi considered his sincerity circumspect then the channel was futile and should be discontinued. However, it was a hollow threat as Ronning did not want to dissolve the channel. He reassured Trinh that Canada was still “prepared to act as a messenger, and of course, as a go-between between two strong opposite forces, one tries to present the best possible view, one to the other.”²⁶⁷ In defense of Operation Smallbridge, Ronning appealed to his personal credentials, arguing that he was chosen, not merely for his qualifications, but because of his widely publicized sympathies for and affiliation with Asia. It was a desperate attempt to keep his mission alive.²⁶⁸ Moore wrote to Ottawa concisely summarizing the mission’s results. In the commissioner’s assessment, “[w]e have failed to achieve the main objective of phase two of the operation (to convince the DRVN leaders of American sincerity and to

²⁶⁶ Telegram-528, “Operation Smallbridge,” From Commissioner in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 18 June 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 3, LAC.

²⁶⁷ Telegram-527, “Operation Smallbridge- Vice Prime Minister,” From Canadian Delegation in Saigon to DEA Ottawa, 19 June 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 3, LAC.

²⁶⁸ Ibid

induce a positive response); we have succeed in reaching the secondary objective (Ott-Hanoi channel remains open).”²⁶⁹

Martin wanted Ronning back in Ottawa without delay. The first debriefing occurred on June 20 in Ottawa. Ronning was absent from this meeting, but the gist of his conversations in Hanoi were presented to US officials who concluded that the mission had produced “an empty basket.” For all intents and purposes the mission was a dead letter to Washington, but Butterworth feared that Ottawa would try to keep the mission alive by creating its own message to present to Hanoi. He thought that it would be difficult to convince the Canadian Government to abandon the initiative and Washington’s best hope was to coordinate an early meeting with Ronning to dispel any illusions he held about the utility of Operation Smallbridge. In fact, US officials were growing increasingly frustrated with Martin’s unsolicited efforts that kept the US cornered but not fully informed. Walt Rostow wrote to the President, in an obviously exasperated tone, that, “Martin, without revealing any substance, is trying to keep us hemmed in on the grounds that ‘the channel is still open.’”²⁷⁰ Following Butterworth’s suggestion, American and Canadian officials met in Ottawa on June 22, to have a frank and thorough review of Ronning’s second mission.

Over a three hour dinner, Assistant Secretary Bundy, Mr. Joseph Scott (DCM-Ottawa), and Mr. Paul Kreisberg in the Far Eastern Department spoke with Martin, Ronning and External Affairs Officials, Goldschlag, Cadieux, Messrs., Collins and Delworth. This candid conversation gave the Americans an informative look into Canadian thinking. Moreover, it convinced them that Martin was the driving force behind the continued

²⁶⁹ Telegram-531, “Vietnam – Operation Smallbridge-Assessment” From Canadian Commissioner in Saigon (Moore) to DEA Ottawa, 19 June 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 3, LAC.

²⁷⁰ Walt Rostow to President Johnson, June 20, 1966. Monday 5:15 pm The White House Washington D.C.,” NSF/CF/Canada, Box 167 [2 of 2], File Ronning Missions, 1966. LBJL 23.

Canadian initiative. While everyone at the dinner table agreed that Operation Smallbridge had failed, Martin specifically wanted to place the blame on the US. The American analysis was astute and took into account the domestic and personal factors affecting Canadian policy. Bundy aptly recorded that:

it was plain from Martin's manner that he took the failure of the mission as a personal blow. This fits with Scott's analysis shared by Butterworth, that Martin viewed the mission as a major attempt to achieve a Canadian diplomatic success, and as a major effort to put a feather into his own cap as a contender to succeed Pearson. Probably for these reasons, as well as his general wishful tendency on Vietnam, Martin early in the dinner launched into a complaint that our position had not been forthcoming enough.²⁷¹

Tempered by the more moderate position of his colleagues, Martin reigned in his accusatory line. The Americans were confident that he would not publicly denounce their conduct, especially as the majority of the Canadians at the table were convinced of the reasonable and rational nature of the American approach.

The Ronning missions only managed to slightly delay an American decision to bomb petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) targets in the North. Even this however, was a double edged sword because the Canadians could be accused of providing diplomatic justification for military intensification.²⁷² Ronning had returned with a hard line position from Hanoi. As neither party was willing to budge, there was little the Canadians could do to influence the American decision to escalate the war effort. As pointed out by one Canadian official, there was a correlation between the Ronning missions and bombing storage facilities in the North, but this was only in the form of delaying an American decision, not a prequel to the

²⁷¹ Memorandum for the Record Subject "Dinner Meeting with Paul Martin and other Canadian Officials, June 21 1966." 22 June 1966. RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political and Defense, Box 1990, File POL Political Affairs and Relations Canada-US [1 of 2], NARA.

²⁷² "Vietnam—POL" Summary Notes of the 559th Meeting of the National Security Council Washington, June 17, 1966, 6:05-8 p.m. *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Vol. IV, Vietnam, 1966, Doc. 159.

eventual escalation.²⁷³ Bundy concisely conveyed the Canadian position to the President on his return from the Ottawa meeting. He relayed:

It is very clear there was no response from Hanoi. We had a long read-out from Ronning. There is no give in their position. They indicated they wouldn't even talk as they did in Rangoon. There may be a slight lateral shift, but no forward move. Canada accepts that. Martin went before the House today. Our area of worry is their general underlying lack of sympathy with us. Martin said he would be disturbed if Canadians thought they had been used. They may charge we put them in a false position.

Despite the obvious disinterest Washington had demonstrated for continued the Canadian channel, Martin obdurately stuck to it. While recognizing that it had fallen into disuse for the moment, he adamantly maintained that it could again be resurrected and for that reason, the channel should remain open.²⁷⁴ Ronning clung to the idea even longer, contacting the Department as late as January, 1967 to suggest that the time was ripe for another initiative.²⁷⁵ The overall effect of the Ronning missions had very little bearing on the events in Vietnam. However, they did have a marked effect on Canadian-American relations. It was becoming increasingly clear to American officials that Canada's Vietnam policy was being formulated on the basis of domestic, and even personal and professional, considerations. Ottawa thus no longer served as a useful adjunct to America's diplomatic efforts in Vietnam. In fact, the Canadian efforts were now seen as a liability in Washington. Martin and Ronning were riding the coattails of Canada's ability to punch above its weight in diplomatic ventures. The margin between their real capacity for influencing the pace and nature of negotiations

²⁷³Personal Letter from Far Eastern Affairs(K. Goldschlag) to Canadian Ambassador to Belgrade, Yugoslavia (Mr. R. Campbell), 8 August 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 4, LAC.

²⁷⁴Telegram-Y-652, "Operation Smallbridge – CND channel prospects" From DEA (Paul Martin) to the Canadian Comissioner in Saigon (Victor Moore), 15 September 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 4, LAC.

²⁷⁵"Vietnam," Memorandum from Far Eastern Division (K. Goldshclag) to the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs (Cadieux), 9 January 1967, RG 25, Vol. 9404, File No. 20-22-VIET.S-2-1-1. Vol. 4, LAC.

was growing increasingly distant from Canadian perceptions and as a result its Vietnam policy achieved little at home or abroad.

Chapter V

The China Factor: Martin Becomes a Statesman

Canadian-American relations between 1964 and 1968 were strained by foreign policy differences but never fractured in the manner as depicted by many scholars. As discussed above Canadian historian Greg Donaghy believes that the differences over Vietnam were contained.²⁷⁶ The Vietnam War, due to its depth and duration, has received the most attention in terms of Canadian-American foreign policy. However, a survey of sensitive bilateral issues beyond what is readily available in the secondary literature reveals another significant source of friction often neglected by scholars. The thorny question of Communist China and its place in the international system marked one of the deepest ideological and practical differences between Canada and America during this period. Although there were significant differences in these countries' respective policy approaches to Vietnam, the ideological assumptions upon which they operated were not totally incompatible. Both believed North Vietnam to be the aggressor, given its support for a guerrilla insurgency in contravention of the Geneva Accords. If Canada and America differed substantially in means, they did not differ so drastically in ends. An outright American defeat would damage the Western reputation and put NATO and the European theatre at risk. Canada, despite disagreeing with many of its neighbour's tactics, was invested in an American ideological victory. Consequently, Ottawa limited its criticism to private channels and actively sought a diplomatic role to achieve the desired ends in Vietnam via different means. But the recognition of Communist China and its representation in the

²⁷⁶ Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies*, p. 147.

United Nations was a decidedly different issue and is in many ways is much more revealing about the nature of Canadian-American relations.

The question of Communist China was intimately linked to the conflict in Vietnam. Canadian officials often coupled a negotiated settlement in Vietnam to a more open policy with Communist China. The Canadian position was simple. Stressing closer relations contrary to the American policy of isolation, Ottawa believed that a real and lasting settlement to the crisis in Indochina demanded recognition of this political reality. With France's recognition of Peking, and with the tide of Afro-Asian states in the General Assembly moving in the same direction, both Pearson and Martin felt that a reappraisal of Canada's position was long overdue. The difference between Washington and Ottawa was clear; exclusion versus inclusion. Canada did not move ahead with its China policy out of fear that it would damage relations with its most important ally. However, a number of factors came into play that forced a slight yet significant change in Canada's China policy between 1964 and 1968. The first was public opinion, which strongly supported a more open relationship with the PRC. The shift in the United Nations in support of recognition exerted even more pressure on the Canadian position. Finally, Paul Martin's personal interest in the issue ensured its top priority in the Department. The Prime Minister had a keen interest in China, but he was more willing to let 'sleeping dogs lie' than was his external affairs minister.

While much of this chapter relies on primary documents and memoirs, it is helpful to situate the topic within the secondary literature. Sino-Canadian relations in the 1960s have received the most thorough treatment by Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Folic's anthology *Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China*. As Evans, has noted in

his introductory chapter, at the time of this book's publication a major academic study of Canadian policy in East Asia was sorely lacking. While many Canadian historians researched their country's involvement in Korea, Indochina and Japan, the twenty-one year road to Canada's recognition of the PRC was left unearthed. *Reluctant Adversaries* does much to fill this scholarly void. Although the book covers over two decades, five chapters are particularly relevant to Pearson's government. Don Page's study, "The Representation of China in the United Nations: Canadian Perspectives and Initiatives, 1949-1971," has provided a succinct and understandable account of Ottawa's position on Peking in the United Nations. He rightly has argued that, "few cases better illustrate the variance between what a middle power may wish to achieve in a multilateral forum and what is possible given its limited resources and the variables of international diplomacy, than the twenty-two year debate over the representation of the PRC in the United Nations."²⁷⁷ Of particular interest to this study is Norman St. Amour's chapter, "Sino-Canadian Relations, 1963-1968: The American Factor." St. Amour has contended that there was, "no dramatic improvement in Canada's diplomatic relations with the PRC during the Pearson years."²⁷⁸ In light of the crisis in Southeast Asia, and Washington's adamant opposition to recognition, Pearson did not see the wisdom in a complete policy reversal. It did not warrant the damage that would be incurred to Canadian-American relations, especially considering that Sino-Canadian relations were growing closer in the cultural and economic realms. However, this coupling of PRC recognition with Washington's wrath, according to St. Amour, existed more in principle than reality. There was no evidence to suggest that Canada would be punished for

²⁷⁷ Page, Don. "The Representation of China in the United Nations: Canadian Perspectives and Initiatives, 1949-1971," *Reluctant Adversaries*. ed. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. pp. 73-105. p. 73.

²⁷⁸ St. Amour, Norman. "Sino-Canadian Relations: The American Factor," *Reluctant Adversaries*. p. 107.

adopting an independent policy in the United Nations. However, St. Amour has understated the importance of the shift in Canada's Asian Policy during the Pearson administration as well as the pressure exerted on Ottawa from US officials. This chapter will focus on the significance of what St. Amour saw as a minimal policy change as well as the degree to which Washington constrained Ottawa's scope of action. Contrary to St. Amour's position that Ottawa circumscribed itself, this chapter argues that External Affairs Minister Paul Martin pushed the limits of Canada's China policy. Coming up against his own Prime Minister and intimidating opposition emanating from Washington, Martin consistently pushed the envelope. His inability to effect a complete reversal in Ottawa East Asian policy reveals a lot about the dynamics in Ottawa as well as its relationship with Washington.

Paul Martin was often at the helm when formulating Canada's Asian policy, but Pearson was never far behind. The third pertinent chapter, written by Pearson's biographer, John English, is simply titled, "Lester Pearson and China." As English points out, Pearson was a lobbyist for PRC recognition, as early as 1953 with the end of the Korean War and Stalin's death.²⁷⁹ However, as American involvement in Southeast Asia grew exponentially deeper, Canada's scope of manoeuvrability narrowed considerably. In stark contrast to St. Amour's conclusion that Ottawa's restrictions were self-imposed, English has averred that Pearson could not justify an independent Asian policy in light of the damage it would incur on Canadian American relations. Pearson remained cautious, and at times appeared ambivalent, on the question of China. His primary function was to act as a "restraint upon Martin's initiatives even though he fully shared Martin's concern that the PRC isolation should end."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ English, John. "Lester Pearson and China," *Reluctant Adversaries*, p. 137.

²⁸⁰ English, "Lester Pearson and China," 144.

Canada's Asian policy during the Pearson administration has also been explored by Greg Donaghy in his monograph, *Tolerant Allies*, and in his chapter in an anthology, "Minding the Minister."²⁸¹ Substantially similar, Donaghy has argued in both pieces that Martin and Pearson's approach to Southeast Asia were largely compatible until the end of 1965, when the external affairs minister grew restless under the constraints of 'quiet diplomacy.' Propelled by domestic opinion and professional ambition, Martin was eager to get negotiations underway, both for a settlement in Vietnam and recognition of the PRC.²⁸² Martin's lofty ambitions placed Pearson in an uncomfortable position, continuously forced to reign in his foreign minister and avoid fractures with Washington. Pearson was the embodiment of Canadian middle-power diplomacy and struck the median in Canada's Vietnam policy as well as a compromise in its China policy. Pearson was the break on Martin's 'unPearsonian,' synonymous at the time, with an 'unCanadian' approach to East Asia and sensitive bilateral issues with Washington.²⁸³

A comprehensive monograph on Sino-Canadian relations is still missing. In terms of secondary sources, the topic has garnered only cursory attention from scholars, most recently Andrew Preston, who has directed his readers to Frolic's and Evans' anthology on the subject. Why has such an interesting topic been so consistently overlooked? Perhaps one explanation is that Canada's diplomatic involvement in the Vietnam War was deemed sexier. Controversial episodes in Canada's history, especially when it calls into question its independence from the US, are of particular interest to students of Canadian-American relations. Vietnam presents exactly this opportunity. However, it I argue that the question

²⁸¹ Donaghy, Greg. "Minding the Minister" in *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*. ed. Norman Hillmer. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999. Pp.131-152.

²⁸² Donaghy. "Minding the Minister, p. 139.

²⁸³ Ibid, 148-9. And *Tolerant Allies*, pp. 146-7.

of recognition is an equally valuable litmus test for Canadian foreign policy autonomy between 1964 and 1968, and provides an important case study for examining the limitations imposed on Ottawa by Washington. Canada's China Policy and Canada's Vietnam policy were mutually reinforcing and mutually constraining. They were part and parcel of Canada's overall Asian policy; in tandem, fuelled the ideological differences that aggravated but did not rupture the 'special relationship' between Ottawa and Washington.

From the beginning of Johnson's tenure, Canada's position on recognition was a point of concern. In early 1964, Washington sounded out Canadian officials at various levels to discern whether a shift on Communist China was being contemplated. In mid-January Assistant Secretary in the State Department, William R. Tyler, called on Canadian Ambassador to Washington Charles Ritchie, asking him to clarify Canada's China policy. Ritchie assured him that no policy change regarding Mao Tse-tung's Communist government was forthcoming.²⁸⁴ The Canadian Ambassador's assurance did not mollify his American counterparts as only four days, in a high-level meeting between Canadian and US officials at the White House, Canada's position again came under scrutiny. While Johnson and Pearson were having a private talk in the President's office, Rusk engaged Martin in a conversation about the Far East and Southeast Asia. France's imminent recognition of the PRC marked a major shift in the Cold War structure according to Washington. While Martin recognized that France's policy shift was undesirable for the Americans, he urged them to respond with restraint and appropriateness. When probed about the effect of DeGaulle's impending announcement, Undersecretary of State George Ball clearly linked the recognition issue to the conflict in Vietnam. Ball argued that Saigon would perceive

²⁸⁴284 "Possible Recognition of Communist China," Memorandum of Conversation between Assistant Secretary William R. Tyler and Canadian Ambassador Charles A. Ritchie. Department of State, 18 January 1964, NSF/CF/Canada, Box. 165, Vol. I., Memos [2 of 2]. 12/63-1/64. LBJL 94a.

French recognition of Peking as a move towards neutralization, which would severely damaging government and public morale and by extension undercut America's progress in the region. Martin's presumptuous call for moderation, elicited the opposite reaction. Ball warned that the American response would be severe, because they feared that French recognition "would upset a few apple carts." If the Afro-Asian voting bloc in the United Nations followed France's lead, it would seriously complicate American membership, and against this backdrop, Ball declared that Washington was particularly interested in Canada's position.²⁸⁵

Martin, in a brave if somewhat misplaced disregard for the gravity of America's concerns, spoke out of conviction for what he believed was Canada's national interest. In response to Ball's query, Martin said that he agreed with the "basic premises" of DeGaulle's position. While he recognized the immense impact this would have on Washington, and considered the possible effect on NATO, Martin refused to place limitations on the Canadian government by committing himself to a position on recognition. Determined not to hem himself in, Martin skirted Ball's efforts to get the Canadians to commit to the status quo. Clearly revealing his preference for recognition, Martin argued that, "[Canada] sincerely felt that it was not a practical or a farsighted policy to continue to ignore the Chinese indefinitely."²⁸⁶ Although, consistently pressing Pearson to advocate a "one China, one Taiwan" in Washington, even Martin later admitted that January 1964, "was not the right time to discuss fresh initiatives with the Americans."²⁸⁷ Ball drove the point home with a lightly veiled threat that there were two things which could adversely affect the American

²⁸⁵ "Far East and East Asia" Part 4 of 14," Memorandum of Conversation, 22 January 1964, NSF/CF/Canada, Box 167 [2 of 2], File "Pearson Visit" 1/22/64., LBJL 22d.

²⁸⁶ Ibid

²⁸⁷ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 509.

attitude towards the UN: financing problems and the admission of Communist China. If the possible damage to bilateral relations was not a sufficient dissuasion, then perhaps the UN's integrity could convince Martin to abandon his line. The conversation was interjected by the arrival of the Prime Minister and the President from their private conversation. Pearson swooped in and retracted some of the hard line positions taken by his External Affairs Minister. Like Martin, Pearson realized that domestic public opinion was agitating for recognition, but Canada did not want to cause undue complications for its powerful neighbour. In a more diplomatic tone, Pearson hoped that a two China's could eventually be arrived at, but in the meantime Canada did not want to, "do anything now to add to United States difficulties."²⁸⁸

The Canadian version of the conversation, downplayed Martin's hard line tone, but the Americans heard it loud and clear. Rusk had predicted that Martin would take this line, informing the President that "[M]artin has idea of more contact with Communist China."²⁸⁹ At this point, Martin had already convinced Cabinet to allow *The Globe and Mail* and the New China News Agency to exchange offices in Peking and Ottawa. Coupled with the substantial volume of Canadian wheat sales to the PRC, Martin's multi-pronged approach to relax relations with Communist China was coming into sharper focus in Washington. Faced with absolute American refusal to consider PRC official recognition, Martin asked Rusk, "to consider the wisdom of developing unofficial cultural and trade links with the Chinese to reduce their isolation."²⁹⁰ The Minister received a resounding no and was "urged not to

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ "Subject: Your Meeting with Prime Minister Pearson" from the Secretary of State Washington, NSF/CF/Canada, Box. 167 [2 of 2], File. Pearson Visit Briefing Book [1 of 2] 1/21-22/64, LBJL 1-50g. NP 35.

²⁹⁰ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 508.

interfere with the 'natural' development [of the West's] Sino-Soviet development.”²⁹¹ The Secretary of State, wary about Canada's commitment to the United States, stressed that Pearson was going to continually, “assert Canada's independent identity and “stand up to” the US.”²⁹² He saw the spectrum of Canadian-American relations evolving in a zero sum game. Although he perceived the “Pearson government is, in spirit, friendly to us and, in principle, much more sympathetic with US objectives...it, too, has felt compelled to take a series of measures that have kept our relations on the edge of tension---measures that can, if carried too far, result in serious economic and political problems between our two countries.”²⁹³ The idea that there were repercussions for pursuing policies that were too much at variance with Washington's was not a paranoid illusion in Ottawa. To Pearson's dismay, it was a reality that Martin would test.

Ottawa was generally pleased with French recognition because it believed that it would pave the way for a 'two Chinas' solution. At the moment, the fallout from French recognition could be contained if Washington did not overreact. The real danger lay in a rigid American policy. If Johnson refused to moderate his inflexible approach to Communist China, then Peking might eventually join the international community in the UN and marginalize Taiwan. If this came to pass, then Canadian officials predicted that, “Nationalist China (i.e.) Formosa...will be reduced in effect to an island fortress protected

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² “Subject: Your Meeting with Prime Minister Pearson” from the Secretary of State Washington, NSF/CF/Canada, Box. 167 [2 of 2], File. Pearson Visit Briefing Book [1 of 2] 1/21-22/64, LBJL 1-50g.

²⁹³ “Subject: U.S.-Canadian Problems” Memorandum for the President from the Secretary of State Washington, 12 December 1963, NSF/CF/Canada, Box 165, Vol. 1., Memos [1 of 2], 12/63-7/64, LBJL 80b. NP 126-7.

by the United States Seventh Fleet and almost completely lacking in international status.”²⁹⁴

As Paul Martin, summed it up to Pearson:

We think that the Americans ought to be urged to see that they cannot hold much longer to their present policy, that the “two Chinas” (really China plus Formosa) solution would be best for the West, that there is a limit to the time during which any choice will remain to the West, and that we are ready to work with them to achieve a “two Chinas” solution if they agree.²⁹⁵

Martin actually placed little importance on Washington acquiescence. He saw the margin for instituting a ‘two Chinas’ approach narrowing. If he could not convince Washington, then Martin was determined to work through other means to achieve this goal, such as the United Nations and his personally engineered peace finding mission to Hanoi. Perhaps Martin figured that the wisdom in his policy would vindicate itself, and the American’s would be retroactively appreciative.

It is likely that Martin felt his strategy was yielding results. Next month, in early February, Rusk was reminded by an official in the Far East Department that the Canadians hoped to minimize the importance of French recognition with a measured American response that would contain the fallout. If Nationalist China could be convinced to respond in kind and maintain diplomatic relations with France then the impact of DeGaulle’s policy shift would not set the undesirable dichotomous precedent of exchanging Taiwanese recognition for PRC recognition. The American Secretary concurred with this approach and Canadians’ concluded, “that this line was paying off handsomely.”²⁹⁶ However, Martin’s

²⁹⁴ “Discussion of China with President Johnson” Memorandum for: the Prime Minister from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Secret, 20 January 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9393, File no. 20-CHINA-14 vol. 2, LAC. (NP 110-115)

²⁹⁵ Ibid

²⁹⁶ “Telephone Conversation between Mr. Arnold Smith and Mr. Basil Robinson, Canadian Embassy Washington” Memorandum to the Minister, Confidential, 3 February 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9393, File no. 20-CHINA-14 vol. 3, LAC.

plan began to unravel when Taiwan announced its intention to sever diplomatic relations with France on February 10, 1964. Speaking at a NATO meeting, Martin continued to stress that a two Chinas solution, more accurately described as a 'one China, one Formosa' formula, offered the most viable solution for the West.²⁹⁷ The Americans did not condone this strategy whose lack of feasibility was demonstrated by France's inability to maintain relations with both political realities. The U.S. convinced Taiwan to postpone its diplomatic withdrawal from Paris, thus forcing DeGaulle to act first and remove French representation from Taiwan. The Canadians and Americans had opposing objectives. Martin earnestly hoped that diplomatic relations could be maintained between France and Taiwan, eventually leading to his preferred 'two Chinas' solution. The Americans, on the other hand, considered France's forced abandonment of diplomatic support for Taiwan a diplomatic victory. In the words of one State Department China expert, "This was a gain for the U.S. since many nations would recognize Peiping if they thought they could maintain diplomatic relations with "Two Chinas." Few nations have followed the French lead because it became clear that any nation recognizing Peiping had to go all the way and recognize its right to take over Taiwan and its twelve million non-Communist people."²⁹⁸

The Americans privately hinted that the defeat of Article 19, which covered UN financing, and the potential seating of Communist China would force them to seriously reconsider their commitment, and perhaps even membership, in the UN.²⁹⁹ The State

²⁹⁷ "NAC Discussions -China," Memorandum for the Minister, Confidential, 17 February 1964, RG 25, 9323, File 20-CHINA-14 vol. 3, LAC.

²⁹⁸ "SUBJECT: U.S. Relations with Republic of China (Taiwan)" Memorandum From the Central Intelligence Agency's Deputy Director for Intelligence (Cline) to Director of Central Intelligence McCone Washington, March 2, 1964." FRUS, Johnson Administration, 1964-68, Vol XXX, China, Doc. 15.

²⁹⁹ "The United States, Communist China and the United Nations," Memorandum from Far East Division R.L. Rogers to Mr. Arnold Smith. Confidential Canadian Eyes Only, 4 March 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 3, LAC. NP 175.

Department's public position was equally inflexible. Rosemary Foot, an expert in America's policies towards Communist China, pointed out that 1964 was a crucial year for America's China policy. It could not allow a two-China's solution to take root because it would eventually force a vote in the UN to the detriment of America's position. Moreover it could not allow France's recognition to undermine America's support for the important question formula, which required a two-thirds majority to change the organization's policy towards Communist China.³⁰⁰ America was even questioning the loyalty of its North Atlantic friends predicting that:

Canada, Italy and many others are impatient to get on some new track that is not vulnerable to the political charge they are "ignoring" the world's most populous nation. The Africans are increasingly wobbly. The French are increasingly unhelpful.....This picture of our friends and allies leaving the sinking ship of U.S. policy is not overdrawn; but what it reveals is not their defection from the anti-Communist cause, but their defection from existing policies.³⁰¹

Martin, the chief engineer of Canada's "one China, one Formosa" formula, recognized that Washington was not interested in fresh perspectives on the issue. In his memoirs he recalls that Rusk was incensed at the French decision to pursue recognition without consulting with its NATO allies. Nevertheless, Martin was convinced that the principle of universality and the dangers of continued PRC isolation were sufficient cause to actively pursue his strategy.³⁰² As early as May, the Far East Division provided a template for the eventual recognition of Peking. The drawbacks and benefits of bilateral recognition were explored,

³⁰⁰ Foot, Rosemary. *The Practice of Power: US relations with China since 1949*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. p. 39-45. She provides a brief overview of US position on recognition in the United Nations. She writes on Canada's reaction briefly, "Rusk pleaded with the Canadian government, for example, , not to follow the French lead, but the new liberal government in Ottawa was not to be so easily cowed this time and vowed that it would only support the IQ (important question) resolution in return for a 'very specific promise at the highest level' in Washington that a new look would be taken at the representation policy." p. 41-42.

³⁰¹ "Communist China and the United Nations," Memorandum from Harland Cleveland to the Undersecretary of State (Ball), 31 October 1964, RG 59, Records of Undersecretary of State George W. Ball, 1961-1966. Lot 74D272, Portugal to [V]iet-Nams (Ball's Memoranda), Box 22, File Initiatives, NARA. (NP230)

³⁰² Martin. *A Very Public Life*, p. 509.

and while it risked damaging relations with the US, it had the advantage of speed. Taking into account American political factors, the report identified December 1964 through the first half of 1965 as the most expedient window for bilateral recognition. Martin felt that if he did not act quickly, “the ground would be cut out from under us, and Taiwan would find itself ejected from the United Nations.”³⁰³ If the damage to Canadian-American relations were deemed too severe, then recognition could follow UN representation, but the Department estimated that this would not materialize until the 21st General Assembly in 1966. Martin was forced to choose between timing and strategy, but even he recognized that bilateral recognition would seriously damage Canada’s standing in Washington.

The tactics section of the report is most revealing. It blatantly acknowledged that a ‘two Chinas’ solution was unfeasible considering the position of Nationalist China, Communist China and Washington. Martin was actively pursuing a strategy that he knew was bound to fail in the current international climate. This report advised that bilateral recognition should be withheld until the UN recognized the PRC, a conclusion which was supported by some of his “ablest advisors” who also warned that Washington could retaliate. Despite this wise counsel, Martin was still considering a policy shift at the upcoming General assembly.³⁰⁴ If Canada could go on record at the 19th General Assembly in 1964 advocating for dual representation and, therefore, the right of Formosa to self-determination, then it could proceed with bilateral recognition. The larger the voting bloc in favour of this approach, the less egregious Canada’s position would appear.³⁰⁵ The differences between Pearson and Martin were coming in to sharper focus as 1964 wore on. Pearson, as his

³⁰³ Ibid, p. 11.

³⁰⁴ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 513.

³⁰⁵ “Canada’s Relations with Communist China,” Memorandum from R.L. Rogers Far East Division to Arnold Smith, Secret, 1 May 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 4, LAC.

biographer has noted, was much more inclined to take a cautious line on the issue of recognition. It did not amount to a crisis and in his calculations there was no need to create one.³⁰⁶ Martin, on the other hand, made no attempts to conceal his ambitions, vividly demonstrated in his speech at a NATO ministerial meeting on May 12. Martin unconvincingly assured his audience that “we have no intention of doing anything which would add to the difficulties of our friends,” but he continued in a much more menacing line that “the reality of the situation nevertheless may require some modification of our position after the 19th session at the UN.”³⁰⁷ When the French Ambassador in Ottawa asked whether the Minister’s NATO’s speech represented a shift in Canada’s China Policy, he was told that the Prime Minister had just informed the House that no new policy being considered.³⁰⁸

The idea of a two-China’s solution was being jockeyed around the department, and as Don Page has noted, it received almost no support.³⁰⁹ The American position was driven home by its delegate in an informal address to NATO members. After reaffirming its opposition to Peking’s entry into the UN, the American delegate warned that if any of the twelve NATO members switched their vote to an abstention, then the balance of power would swing away from the US.³¹⁰ The request was clear; vote for the “important question” formula and vote against the Albanian resolution, thus barring Peking’s entry into the community of nations. The Economic Division in Ottawa heeded this warning and did not want to sacrifice relations with Washington for a more open policy towards Peking. In a

³⁰⁶ English, John. *Reluctant Adversaries*, 144.

³⁰⁷ Telegram-Y-360, “Subject Communist China,” From Far Eastern Affairs Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Brazil, 21 May 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 4, LAC.

³⁰⁸ Telegram-Y-342, “Canadian Policy on China,” From Far East Division to Canadian Embassy in Paris. 14 May 1964, CONFD, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 4, LAC.

³⁰⁹ Page, Don. *Reluctant Adversaries*. 92.

³¹⁰ “Point Summary of Informal Note of USA Delegation to NATO during PAC Discussions of Relations with Communist China,” Confidential, 20 July 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 5, LAC.

memo to the Far East Division, the Economic Division warned that the continuance of profitable economic and trade relations with the US was dependent, in large measure, on the "good will and cooperation of the Administration."³¹¹ In order to secure American favour, Canada had to maintain the status quo and refrain from public statements that could contribute to a shift in the Assembly's attitude toward the PRC. This ran completely contrary to Ottawa's concern that a static position at the 19th Assembly would lead to a majority vote on the Albanian resolution at the 20th Assembly and give Taiwan's seat to Peking.³¹²

Ottawa officials were in a difficult position. Should they capitulate on the China recognition issue to preserve cordial relations with America or did they have a responsibility to adopt an independent position at the 19th Assembly that better reflected DEA's own analysis as well as domestic opinion? DEA was deeply divided on the issue. Martin was willing to jeopardize economic relations with the United States, recalling that "[t]his was a risk I was prepared to take. On the China question, I had to tread a fine line between doing what was right, and maintaining the best relations with our neighbours."³¹³ While the wisdom of recognition was near unanimous in Ottawa, there was marked divergence on timing and strategy. Even Canada's representative to the UN, Paul Tremblay, warned against adopting any position that would suggest a two-China's proposal. He argued that Nationalist and Communist China had already expressed their deep antipathy to this solution and that Washington would be forced to publicly oppose it. There was nothing to be gained from pursuing this line, compelling Tremblay to speculate that the best alternative was

³¹¹ "Relations with Communist China" Reference Mr. Smith's Memorandum of Sept 25. From the Economic Division to the Far East Division. Confidential. September 29, 1964. RG 25 Vol. 9323. File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 5.

³¹² Telegram-3516, "Chinese Representation at the UN," From Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to DEA Ottawa 2 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 6, LAC.

³¹³ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 513.

perhaps the inevitable one; sit back and wait for Communist China to replace the Nationalists in the UN.³¹⁴

Canada's Ambassador to Washington, Ritchie, was understandably more sympathetic to American concerns. Although counseled by different motivations, Ritchie arrived at the same conclusions as his UN colleague. The basic premises for his policy recommendations were threefold; first that Canada's main objective should be to minimize the danger associated with Communist China's inevitable entry in to the UN; second, to ensure that Canada did not trail behind American policy; and, finally to avoid damaging US-Canadian relations. With this in mind, Ritchie staunchly warned against a shift in Canada's position at the upcoming Assembly. A 'two China's' policy was a practical impossibility, which would only isolate interested participants and perhaps preclude meaningful Canadian involvement in East Asian. He recommended that, "the present position should continue to be held by friends of GRC," to avoid a "highly adverse USA reaction."³¹⁵ This negative prediction was also forwarded to the Minister within his own department. A memorandum discussing the pros and cons of various initiatives was strewn with Martin's handwritten comments. In a predictable pattern, Martin scribbled his concurrence with the advantages to be accrued from independent action and his objections to potential disadvantages. The section dealing with "Disadvantages of Recognition" is most revealing. In the margins, Martin speculated that, "in time [independent Canadian action] would be forgotten." He does not specify by whom, but one can wager a guess that he was referring to the Americans, the Nationalists or the PRC. As an experienced politician, Martin discounted to quickly that grudges can have a

³¹⁴ Telegram-1475, "Chinese Representation," From Permanent Mission to United Nations in New York to the DEA Ottawa, 12 October 1964, Secret CND Eyes Only, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 6, LAC.

³¹⁵ Telegram-3632, "Chinese Representation at UN," From Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to the DEA Ottawa, 15 October 1964, CONFID. CND Eyes Only, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 6, LAC.

long shelf life. In the next sentence, Martin clearly reveals his propensity for action. As the protocol of 'quiet diplomacy' demands, the memo realistically noted that "private Canadian pressures on American administration are likely to be more effective in creating a more flexible United States approach." Martin margined, "This is the least we should do."³¹⁶

To complicate matters even further, Communist China went nuclear, detonating its first bomb in mid-October. While this step hardened US resolve, it only further convinced the Canadians that China should be brought into the UN. A rogue nuclear capability in the Cold War, especially as the conflict in Vietnam worsened, played on Canadian fears. This may have been the deciding factor for Martin. The advice from Tremblay and Ritchie may have mitigated Martin's ambitions, but it could not quell them. While he abandoned the idea of forwarding a 'two China's solution,' Martin was not ready to capitulate entirely. On the advice of Cadieux, he proposed that the issue of Chinese representation be submitted to the Secretary General for further consideration, thus indicating to General Assembly members Canada dissatisfaction with the current situation. Justifying this course of action to the Prime Minister, Martin argued that Communist China could likely be seated at the 19th Assembly and would definitely secure admission at the 20th. Such a development would significantly reduce Canada's ability to stay abreast of this shift and ahead of US policy. Martin argued that in absence of a more drastic move, at the very least Canada should submit, "some form of declaratory resolution which would allow Assembly members to go on record regarding the existence of two regimes."³¹⁷ He advocated a shift in the Canadian

³¹⁶ "Chinese Representation at the United Nations – Canadian Action," From Undersecretary of External Affairs (Marcel Cadieux) to Secretary of External Affairs (Paul Martin). Memorandum for the Minister. CONFIDENTIAL CANADIAN EYES ONLY, 27 October 1964, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 6, LAC.

³¹⁷ "Chinese Representation in the U.N. and Recognition of China," Memorandum from the External Affairs Minister (Martin) to the Prime Minister (Pearson), 10 November 1964, Confidential, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 7, LAC.

position, if a clear majority voted in favour of seating Peking. His approach was more moderate. While not suggesting that Canada take the lead on 'two China's' formula, Martin did endorse a policy shift that reflected the majority position in the General Assembly. Ritchie was authorized to convey this position "frankly" to Rusk.³¹⁸ The divergence between Canadian and US approaches to the issue of Chinese representation was coming into much sharper focus.

The Assistant Secretary for State for International Organization Affairs, Harlan Cleveland, and Dean Rusk could not be swayed. Although Martin wished to keep his neighbour informed, he also wanted, "to persuade Americans to a different course. Unless it adopted a more flexible course there was a distinct danger that USA would go down in defeat in regard to Chinese rep."³¹⁹ Americans sincerely believed, contrary to Canadian predictions, that the Chinese would not be seated at the 19th Assembly. When confronted with American obduracy, Martin was forced to reconsider, for a second time, the scale of his initiative. Cadieux suggested that a compromise was necessary. Canada should vote in favour of a two-thirds majority required for Peking's admission and it should actively seek the cooperation of member nations in support of a declaratory resolution. Canada had entered into tripartite consultations with the Belgians and Italian as initial step in this direction.³²⁰ However, Canada should not vote in favour of Peking's admission even if it was supported by a majority in the Assembly. At most, Canada should abstain.³²¹

³¹⁸ Telegram-Y-109, "Chinese Rep in UN" From the DEA Ottawa to the Canadian Embassy in Washington. 13 November 1964, Confidential, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 7, LAC.

³¹⁹ Telegram Y-831, "Chinese Rep in UN – Visit of Harlan Cleveland," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C, 17 November 1964, Secret, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 7, LAC.

³²⁰ Telegram Y-794, "Chinese Rep in UN – Advance Consultations," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., 3 November 1964, CONFID, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 7, LAC.

³²¹ "Chinese Representation in the United Nations—Cabinet Discussion," Memorandum for the Minister (Paul Martin) from the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs (Marcel Cadieux), Secret, 21 December 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9323, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 8, LAC.

The question of Chinese representation was not put to a vote at the 19th General Assembly. Complications with peacekeeping financing could not be resolved and the meeting disbanded, leaving the issue of Chinese representation unresolved and, as the American's predicted, unchanged. This situation suited Martin, as his initiative at the Assembly was ill-timed and probably destined for failure. Deferral on the vote regarding Chinese representation, actually allowed Martin to save face and, as he optimistically surmised, to give the Americans more time to reconsider their position. However, as the war in Vietnam escalated, the American position on recognition grew more resolute. As Rusk warned Martin, "the USA authorities felt quote with almost literally deadly seriousness unquote that anything which made Peking think that it was on the right track was a contribution to war. In American view question of recognition and aggressive Chinese policy in Southeast Asia were linked."³²²

The following year witnessed the same Canadian tactics although they were exercised with considerably less enthusiasm. Because there was no regular General Assembly in 1964, the last official vote took place in 1963. Since then a number of significant developments had occurred. As the Vietnam War worsened, opposing positions became more entrenched. The situation was complicated by Indonesia's withdrawal from the UN and its President's threat to establish a rival international organization. The Canadian delegation predicted that despite a simple majority in favour of seating Communist China, the US would garner enough support for the "important question" resolution, which demanded a two-thirds majority to even consider a resolution regarding Peking's

³²²Telegram-1824, "19th UNGA – Chinese Question Conversation with Dean Rusk," From Paul Martin at the Permanent Mission in New York to DEA Ottawa, 1 December 1964, Secret, RG 25, Vol. 9323. File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 8, LAC.

representation.³²³ With the added protection of the “important question,” the Americans felt that the status quo would be maintained at the 20th Assembly. Although Washington expressed some concern about the Canadian position, the issue seemed to be more contained than the previous year. Rusk had spoken with Martin in New York and reported that the Canadian External Affairs Minister was unlikely to introduce a “two-China’s” proposal or abandon its support for the “important question” resolution.³²⁴

A Canadian Cabinet decision in mid-November outlined the basic parameters of Canada’s approach at the 20th General Assembly. The Canadian delegation was instructed to vote against a resolution that would expel Taiwan in favour of the PRC and to vote in favour of the ‘important question’ resolution. Room for a new Canadian initiative was found in point three which authorized the delegation to submit a resolution authorizing the Secretary General to approach Peking about its criteria for membership. The momentum that Martin had gained the previous year was halted prematurely by circumstance. This shift appeared to be in his favour because the conditions were growing increasingly unpropitious for a radical departure from Canada’s traditional position. Martin blamed Peking’s intransigence for this obstruction. In a public statement, Martin alleged that,

Canada would have welcomed the opportunity to see Communist China take a seat in the world organization had Peking made this possible. If that has not yet happened, it is because Peking itself has set the price a price on participation which is unacceptable. In the view of the Canadian government it is not for the United Nations to accommodate itself to the views of a single nation, however powerful

³²³ Telegram-1281, “Chinese Representation,” From Canadian Permanent Mission in New York to DEA Ottawa, 13 August 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 9, LAC.

³²⁴ “Chinese Representation in the United Nations - Visit of Prime Minister Pearson – January 15, 1965,” NSF/CF/Canada, File Pearson Visit Briefing Book [1965], LBJL 23. 94 Also see. “Chinese Representation in the United Nations - Visit of Prime Minister Pearson – January 15, 1965” RG59 (EUR/CAN) Records Relating to Political Matters Box 4, File POL 7—VISIT PM Pearson to LBJ Ranch,” 15 January 1965, NARA.

or populous. It is for Communist China to make that accommodation.³²⁵

After talking with Secretary General U Thant, Martin concluded that PRC's Foreign Minister Chen Yi's obstinacy was propaganda. U Thant believed that the PRC was interested in joining the UN as demonstrated by its endorsement of the Albanian resolution. According to Martin, the Secretary General still saw the utility in diplomatic initiatives designed to induce PRC cooperation over the next few months.³²⁶ He thought, that Canada was particularly well positioned, given its economic and cultural relations with Peking to pursue private negotiations. It is likely that the Minister's rationale for Operation Smallbridge, was fleshed out in this period. New Canadian initiatives regarding China were on hiatus in 1965, to America's relief, but behind the scenes Martin was strategically positioning his government for a diplomatic offensive.

In the first high-level meeting between Canadian and American officials since 1964, Martin was determined to hold the Canadian line. The DEA rightly identified Rusk as the main obstacle barring new initiatives by the State Department for the American Secretary of State later commented that, "China's attitude toward Vietnam alone precluded its recognition."³²⁷ Rusk reflected a general feeling within the State Department, expressed in a December 1966 memo entitled, "[p]ossible means of deterring Canada from an early move towards diplomatic recognition of Communist China." The memo identified the principal deterrents as Canada's fear of damaging relations with the US, but an official in the Bureau

³²⁵ "Chinese Representation," Statement by the Honourable Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs. For immediate Press Release, 17 November 1965, Speech. No. 73, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 10, LAC.

³²⁶ "Martin's Talk with U Thant," From Permanent Canadian Delegation in New York to the DEA Ottawa, 24 November 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 10, LAC. NP 618. Also see. "China" Memorandum of Conversation in Ottawa May 16, 1965. RG 59, Box 10, Bureau of Euro Affairs (Canada), File. "Communist China 1966," NARA.

³²⁷ Rusk, Dean. *As I Saw It*, p. 286.

of European Affairs surmised that “[the Canadians] have now gone beyond this point, and have arrived at a number of conclusions which are impelling them toward an effort to establish relations.”³²⁸ Speaking about impending shifts in Canada’s China policy, the memo warned that the Americans “should recognize...that what the Canadians have in mind is closer to notification than to what we think of as consultation and in any event it will be short notice.”³²⁹ Faced with Rusk’s staunch resistance towards liberalization supported by likeminded colleagues in the State Department, Martin’s objective was modestly designed to convey the Canadian position without explicitly trying to influence his American counterpart. Canada had always fulfilled its promise to keep its neighbour fully informed, and the meeting in February 1966 was designed to do just this. Martin wanted to make it clear that the West’s strategy should be focused on bringing Peking into the UN with the least amount of damage to the organization. Due to Canada’s consistent support for American policy, Martin felt at liberty to express his reservation about the feasibility of American policy. As its assessments on the outcome of the 21st General Assembly were considerably more pessimistic, Canada could no longer resist the pressure to act. In this context, Martin wanted to maintain complete freedom of action for his government regarding Chinese recognition.³³⁰ To Martin’s surprise, Rusk expressed his willingness to be more flexible. This unanticipated switch, led the DEA to surmise, “we may be approaching a

³²⁸ “Subject: Possible means to deter Canada from an early move towards diplomatic recognition of Communist China,” From Bureau of European Affairs John M. Leddy to Eastern Affairs William Bundy, 22 December 1966. RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political and Defense, Political Affairs and Relations, POL 17 CAN-CHICOM, NARA.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ “SSEA’s Visit to Washington—Background Brief and Talking Points on China,” From the Undersecretary of State to the Far Eastern Division, Secret, 15 February 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol 11, LAC. NP 666.

breakthrough.”³³¹ Rosemary Foot, attributes the State Department’s newfound flexibility to the realization that its tradition policies towards China would not hold for much longer. It was in Washington’s interest to align itself with Western nations that advocated PRC inclusion and towards this end Johnson authorized the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, Joseph Sisco and US Ambassador to the UN Arthur Goldberg to meet with Martin in Ottawa. As Foot has aptly captured, “Martin was clearly ahead of US thinking on the issue: whereas he contemplated a resolution that would bring the PRC into the Security Council and leave the Nationalists in the General Assembly, the furthest the US administration was prepared to contemplate going was a two-China’s initiative or a resolution advocating setting up a study committee to consider the whole question of representation.”³³² William Bundy described Johnson’s and Rusk’s reaction to the Canadian resolution as, “absolutely dumbfounded.”³³³

The Department’s hopes were promptly dashed when US officials rescinded the hints that they were reconsidering its China policy. Martin’s “astonishment” to find Rusk “more open-minded,” was a fleeting moment as, “within days, [Martin] learned that Rusk had changed his mind yet again.”³³⁴ This back peddling within the State Department masked the divisions that existed between policy makers regarding America’s China policy. According to Washington’s estimates, the Chinese representation issue would again reach a stale mate in the General Assembly and America could afford to hold its line. Martin was forced to admit that “we have no reason to be particularly optimistic that the American position this

³³¹ “China and the United Nations – Mr. Martin’s conversation with Dean Rusk on February 19, 1965.” Memorandum for File – Far Eastern Division, Secret, 21 February 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol.11, LAC. NP 683..

³³² Foot, *The Practice of Power*, p. 44.

³³³ Qtd in *Ibid*.

³³⁴ Martin, *A Very Public Life*, p. 517.

year will be such as to facilitate ours.”³³⁵ What was the Canadian policy? Martin was a convinced proponent of any policy that would put Canada on record as adopting a distinctly different position than the US. For instance, once an advocate for a “two Chinas’ formula, in 1966 Martin withdrew his support, claiming that due to its unfeasibility it would amount to a delaying tactic and lead to charges that Canada was capitulating to American pressure. He had always known various forms of a “two-China’s” policy were unrealistic, yet in 1964 he lobbied for this approach in the Department. Martin argued that Canada had missed the opportunity to table this policy two years prior. Moreover, the mounting international support for Peking, as well as America’s growing preference for this approach, now made it undesirable. Pearson countered, “But why-we have had the two China’s policy in mind for years[?]”³³⁶ Martin’s policy recommendation was three-fold. The first was to vote in favour of the ‘important question’ formula which Pearson wholly agreed with. The second was to abstain on the Albanian resolution, and explain this shift after the vote had been tallied to minimize damage to Canada’s relations with the US and Taiwan. Pearson was less convinced by this course, margining that, “our explanation would have to make clear we are not supporting the expulsion of Taiwan.”³³⁷ Obviously concerned about Canadian-American relations Pearson agreed with Martin’s conclusion that Ottawa should not appear to be lobbying support from its friends for an abstention. The third phase of Martin’s plan, envisioned a more active policy in support of seating the PRC at the 22nd General Assembly which would be facilitated by an abstention.³³⁸

³³⁵ “Chinese Representation in the UN” Memorandum for the Prime Minister from the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Secret Canadian Eyes Only, 28 February 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 12, LAC. NP 791

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

Apparently impervious to the Prime Minister's suggestions, Martin told Rusk in plain terms that he intended to change Canada's position at the upcoming assembly. An annoyed Rusk, retorted that, Canada had a "free ride on this issue since it was not repeat not involved in question of Chinese militarism,"³³⁹ an obvious reference to Ottawa's refusal to contribute militarily to the Vietnam War. The two issues were inextricably linked and US officials thought Canada was proving difficult on both fronts. In addition, it appeared as though Martin was taking a liberal interpretation of the Prime Minister's reservations. He admitted that an abstention on the Albanian resolution would only benefit Peking, so he reverted back to a "one China, one Formosa" formula.³⁴⁰ While mere circumspection, Martin's renewed approval of a 'two-China's' formula paralleled the realization that the US was losing interest in this approach. It can be argued, that Martin's strategy inverted those of his American counterparts, leading one to posit that the appearance of autonomy in foreign relations was equally as important as the inclusion of Peking in the United Nations. This may not have been Martin's intention, but this is how it was received in Washington.

The Americans were genuinely worried that a Canadian shift at the 21st General Assembly would pre-empt a landslide in favour of Peking. Rusk spelled this out very clearly in a memo to the President, warning that, "[t]he Canadian shift makes a critical difference. If we lose the support of these friends, it is probable that the Albanian resolution will obtain a simple majority for the first time. We could probably still stop its adoption by relying on the procedural device of such a resolution receives a 2/3 majority for adoption, but we will have suffered an important defeat." Rusk pondered two options, either strictly oppose the

³³⁹ "Extracts of Telegram 2181 of July 26/66 From Washington to External Minister's Office Conversation with Sec Rusk," RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 12, LAC.

³⁴⁰ "Chinese Representation-Discussion by Cabinet" Memorandum for the Prime Minister from the External Affairs Minister. Secret Canadian Eyes Only, RG 25, Vol. 9324, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 14, LAC.

initiative or to let it proceed on the assumption that it would not receive a two-thirds majority. Both options had obvious drawbacks, but Rusk felt that Martin could not be dissuaded. The Canadians were going to stand firm; failing a new initiative, Ottawa warned it would be forced to cast a different vote on the Albanian resolution. Rusk, "conclude[d], therefore, that we must engage the Canadians next week with the safest countermeasure we can offer, i.e. establishment of a Study Committee to examine all facets of the Chinese representation issue and report back to the next General Assembly."³⁴¹ As he did not think that this initiative alone would deter Martin, Rusk therefore bypassed his Canadian counterpart and appealed directly to the Prime Minister. He confided in Pearson, that the Americans had "serious problems with the Canadian draft" which would have the effect of "creat[ing] maximum mischief for minimum result." After pointing out the many defects inherent in the Canadian proposal, Rusk delivered an unveiled warning to the Canadian leader. He wrote, that the weaknesses in the proposal lead US officials to the, "clear conclusion that we would in any event have to oppose your resolution in its present form, if it were introduced, and indeed would have to exert every ounce of our influence to defeat it by the heaviest margin possible. I need not underscore the seriousness of such a split between our two nations."³⁴²

The vote on Chinese representation was fast approaching, and the Canadian position was characteristically divided. In defence of Ottawa's vacillation, the circumstances were in a constant state of flux and Martin had to continually reconfigure his strategy. After realizing that the Canadian draft resolution was too volatile, Martin considered co-

³⁴¹ 'Subject: Chinese Representation,' Memorandum for the President, RG 59, Secret Bureau of Euro Affairs (Canada), Box 8, File Organizations and Alignments POL 3 – UN 1966, NARA.

³⁴² "Letter from the Secretary of State Dean Rusk to the Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson delivered by the American Ambassador in Ottawa, Walton Butterworth.' November 9, 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9325, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 12, LAC. NP 004.

sponsoring an initiative with Italy and Belgium. It called for the convening of a committee to actively seek a resolution for the issue of Chinese representation to be presented at the 22nd General Assembly. This differed slightly from the original American concept of a study committee, which was more open-ended and was little more than a stalling mechanism. Only days before the vote, the Italians, under American pressure, abandoned support for the Canadian revised draft. The latter was a shadow of the original conception, but it at least referenced the existence of two Chinas and the political reality of Communist China. Another house of cards had toppled and Martin was faced with a very difficult decision.³⁴³ Although Pearson wanted to see progress on the issue, he was much less willing than Martin to ram it through the 21st Assembly considering American opposition. As Martin recalled, Pearson pressured him to vote for the study committee proposal and against the Albanian resolution in usual fashion. Pearson was particularly concerned about Martin's plan to publicly call for Peking's inclusion in the Security Council. When relaying these concerns to the Department and its Minister, Pearson was told in no uncertain terms, that Martin strongly believed this was a crucial component of Canada's position. The Minister, however, was adamant that Canada should vote in its best interest regardless of Washington's position.³⁴⁴ The Prime Minister responded that he would not interfere, which amounted to a tactful compromise. Although Pearson sanctioned Martin's speech it was only on the expectation that "it was "strong" enough to offset the need for an abstention on either the Albanian or the Italian resolution."³⁴⁵

³⁴³ "Chinese Representation – Discussion in Cabinet," Memorandum for the Minister, Secret, 17 November 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9325, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 16, LAC.

³⁴⁴ Martin. *A Very Public Life*. 524.

³⁴⁵ "Chinese Representation," Memorandum for Far Eastern Division, Confidential, 23 November 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9325, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 16, LAC.

On November 23 1966 Martin addressed the General Assembly. The preferred Canadian draft resolution which called for a "one-China, one-Formosa" approach was clearly enunciated. He lamented at the stalemate which blocked any real forward motion on the issue, and denounced the study committee as another attempt to stall. While Martin announced his intention to vote for the study committee, this step was agreed to only in absence of a more far reaching initiative. He also disclosed, unsurprisingly, that the Canadian delegation would vote for the important question formula. On the delegation's cast for the Albanian Resolution, Martin was suspiciously quiet. In the end, Martin capitalized on the opportunity to put the Canadian position on record, as distinctly different from its neighbour's, and in constant search for a resolution.³⁴⁶ Rusk and Martin, who spoke in New York on November 27, acknowledged the differences that existed between their positions. Rusk in some ways had given up. Martin was determined to move forward and American efforts to thwart him had been futile. He only hoped that Canada would make it clear to America's Pacific allies, that this had been a wholly independent initiative which did not indicate a shift in American policy.³⁴⁷ Canada's revised, and now publicized, position needed to be buttressed by a concrete policy initiative. This came on November 29 when Martin abstained on the Albanian resolution.

³⁴⁶ No. 66/47 "Chinese Representation at the United Nation – Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs the Honourable Paul Martin, to the United Nations General Assembly November 13, 1966." Information Division Department of External Affairs, Ottawa. Statements and Speeches, RG 25, Vol. 9325, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 16, LAC.

³⁴⁷ "Re: Conversation between SSEA and Dean Rusk. Chinese Question," From Canadian Delegation in New York to DEA Ottawa, 27 November 1966., RG 25 Vol. 9325. File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 16, LAC.

The American reaction was surprisingly reserved. Washington seemed to have accepted the Canadian shift as a *fait accompli*,³⁴⁸ and Martin deemed his “Canadian Initiative” a success. Speaking to an audience in Toronto he boasted that:

I firmly believe the United Nations will not return to its previous immobility on this problem. The door has been opened. A consensus may be developing. This is what we had in mind. You cannot resolve a question like this merely by votes in the General Assembly of the United Nations. What has taken place in New York during the last few days – and we have been at the forefront of these developments – has given impetus towards the essential efforts which must be made outside the United Nations by the parties primarily involved.³⁴⁹

Despite Martin’s enthusiasm, there was a discernable rift between himself and Pearson. As argued by Greg Donaghy, Pearson felt compelled to assume more control over Canada’s Asian policy. The failed Ronning missions and the dramatic episode at the 21st General Assembly, led Pearson to question Martin’s wisdom and motivation. Washington did so as well.

US officials rightly predicted in early January 1966, before Operation Smallbridge was in effect that Martin housed ulterior motives; namely paving the road to recognition.³⁵⁰ While Peking’s refusal to grant Ronning a visa came as a relief to the Americans it indicated a more fundamental shift internally in the PRC. Canadian journalist, Mark Gayn, had written for the New York Times and had been the Washington Post’s Shanghai correspondent, and in the 1960’s he worked for the Toronto Star.³⁵¹ As a China expert, Gayn’s services were highly sought after and revered Canadian diplomat John Holmes

³⁴⁸ See. St. Amour. 121. Page, Don. 97. In *Reluctant Adversaries*. Donaghy, Greg. *Minding the Minister*, p. 148. and *Tolerant Allies*, p. 146.

³⁴⁹ No. 66/48. The Chinese Issue at the United Nations Part of a Speech by the Secretary for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Toronto Junior Board of Trade, November 29, 1966, Information Division DEA Ottawa. *Statements and Speeches*, RG 25, Vol. 9325, File 20-CHINA-14.vol. 16, LAC.

³⁵⁰ Herring. *Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*. 163

³⁵¹ Perry, Roland. *Last of the Cold War Spies: The Life of Michael Straight, the only American in Britain’s Cambridge Spy Ring*, Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2005. p.148.

commissioned him to write a chapter on Canada's relations with China. This correspondence demonstrates Gayn's impact on Canada's policy making process as well as his connections with the Department. In 1966, as one of the few Westerners with direct experience in Peking, Gayn speculated that China was turning inwards, which corresponded closely with its denial to admit Ronning. The Canadian journalist surmised that the PRC's decision to "turn inward" was informed by, "its increasing isolation in the world. The number of friends, never large was drastically cut down in the past year." Moreover, "Moscow has had great success in isolating China in the past seven or eight months, notably in North Vietnam and North Korea." Gayn concluded that, "the near total isolation could perhaps be breached by a change in China's external policies. But rather than abandon its militancy, Peking has chosen to turn to isolationism."³⁵² Ironically as Martin was seeking closer relations with the PRC, its leader Mao Tse Dong had adopted isolationism with a renewed virulence.

The issue of Chinese representation was never subsidiary to Vietnam. Peace in Vietnam and PRC recognition became inextricably wedded by 1966. Martin, speaking to an audience in Banff, aptly described his approach as a general "Asian policy...which covers events of this current era, mainly in China and Southeast Asia."³⁵³ Martin's strategy was innovative. He realized that Ottawa was able to punch above its weight in a multilateral forum. If the war in Vietnam coupled with Chinese recognition, formed the general parameters of Canada's Asian policy then a success in one would more likely resonate in the

³⁵² "Observations and Assumption," China, June 1966, Mark Gayn, Hong Kong, VI/13/66. Manuscript Collection 215, Box 58, Series 5: Subject Files, Folder 11, Notes 1966-67, Mark Gayn Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

³⁵³ No 66/34 "Canada's Asian Policy -- A Speech by the Secretary for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the Fourth Annual Banff Conference on World Affairs, Banff, Alberta," 26 August 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9510, File. 100-7-3., LAC.

other. Martin approached the issue from both angles by undertaking an independent peace initiative as well as introducing an autonomous Canadian advance to recognition.

Predictably, Martin had more success in his latter endeavour because of the multilateral context in which the diplomatic initiative was waged. It is for this reason that Martin's diplomacy regarding Chinese representation concerned the US. In a bipolar world, peripheral countries waged real clout in international organizations and Canada's decision to break with the US on Peking could have ignited a chain reaction in the UN. Martin was aware of Canada's more powerful position in this circumstance and did not hesitate to wield it to his advantage. In the end, Canada gained little and veered towards bilateral recognition. Pearson needed to reign in his External Affairs Minister who had exhausted his influence in Washington and tested its patience beyond neighbourly limits. It was a step forward, for Canada's China policy but perhaps, it marked a step back for Martin's personal and professional ambitions. Moreover, it was another mar on the record of Canadian-American relations in this period.

Conclusion

Canadian Diplomacy: Expired But Not Exhausted

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara for months had resisted the pressures to widen the bombing campaign, but by mid-June 1966 he felt the situation had changed for the worse. North Vietnam was increasing its war efforts and its infiltration into the South, consequently the military utility of POL sites was greatly increased, warranting an American decision to target them. However, the military expedience of this decision was overshadowed by extraneous factors. First and foremost, the second Ronning mission was underway and Ronning had not yet confirmed that Hanoi's position remained unaltered. Thus, Johnson felt that a decision to widen the war would be uninformed and to exacerbate the President's frustrations, Martin only authorized Ronning to speak directly with himself and bypass the American Charge in Vientiane. As an exasperated Johnson pointed out, "[m]any people who have no responsibility for the conduct of the war oppose a wider bombing program."³⁵⁴ However, after the Canadian emissary reported that Hanoi had not reconsidered its position, Johnson authorized the bombing of POL sites in and beyond the DMZ. To DEA's dismay, they were not informed of this escalatory decision. The Americanization of the Vietnam War was accelerating at an alarming rate, but Martin refused to abandon his search for common ground.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ "Summary Notes of the 559th Meeting of the National Security Council Washington, June 17, 1966, 6:05-8 p.m," *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Volume IV, Vietnam, 1966, Doc. 159.

³⁵⁵ "Memorandum to the Minister: Vietnam" From Undersecretary of State (Cadieux) to External Affairs Minister (Martin), Confidential, 29 June 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9396, File No.20-22-VIET-S, vol. 15, LAC. (NP. 1040562)

After Ronning's second mission in June earlier that year, Martin realized that this avenue offered little prospect for success, unwelcome as it was in Washington and Hanoi. However, Martin refused to admit that the Canadian role in general was subject to the same fate. In his eyes, the American air strikes against DRVN installations in Hanoi and Haiphong following Ronning's second visit made a negotiated settlement even more critical. A private US informant secretly told DEA official Klaus Goldschlag, that he detected a slight change in the PRC's attitude following the American decision to bomb close to two densely populated areas. The informant, described as a man who Canadian officials had a long and fruitful professional relationship with, was uncharacteristically pessimistic and therefore his concerns were worth heeding. He warned that as American military successes grew so did its terms for settlement, and it seemed unlikely that the Communist bloc would acquiesce to such demands.³⁵⁶ As Canada had feared from the beginning, outright Chinese involvement in the Vietnam War seemed a likely development. Thus, Southeast Asia could yet prove to be the powder keg igniting a third global and perhaps even nuclear conflict.

Armed with these alarmist predictions, Martin continued his search for peace in Vietnam. Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly, he argued that Canada could not concede that a peace was not achievable in the present circumstances. While admitting that it would not be easy, Martin was adamant that the first step on the path to peace was imperative. His logic was walk before you can run; an ironic prescription for a man who wanted to personally engineer a peace in Vietnam while simultaneously recognizing Communist China. Speaking to the Assembly, Martin reaffirmed his strong conviction that only a political settlement would lead to a lasting peace. As a member of the ICC, Canada

³⁵⁶ Letter from Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. (Y. Beaulne) to Head of Far Eastern Division (Klaus Goldschlag), DEA Ottawa, 6 July 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9396, File. 20-22-VIET-S vol. 15, LAC.

was consistently trying to turn “responsibilities into opportunities” and he hoped that the troika commission could be used in that capacity.³⁵⁷

The American Ambassador to the United Nations delivered a speech on September 22 that would give Martin cause for hope. Goldberg stated that America would be "prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Viet-Nam the moment we are assured, privately or otherwise, that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation on the other side."³⁵⁸ The DEA considered this to be a significant development in America's negotiating position. The order in which Goldberg presented America's conditions emphasized that a withdrawal of American forces would lead to peace and not proceed it.³⁵⁹ Despite the renewed hopefulness in Ottawa and the United Nations, Bundy assured Ritchie that there were no new elements in Goldberg's speech. All of these points had been relayed to the Canadian government, at least privately, in varying forms. While Bundy divulged that the, “codification on various points might be an act of significance,”³⁶⁰ it was Chester Cooper who more accurately captured the significance of Goldberg's speech. Speaking specifically about the upcoming Manila Conference, a meeting of nations contributing troops, Cooper admitted that a significant new peace initiative was unlikely. The Asian powers lagged behind American willingness to consider various peace proposals. Ritchie suggested to the Minister that Canada open a closer dialogue with the various Asian powers. Specifically, Ottawa should convey its perpetual search for peace and emphasize

³⁵⁷ Telegram-1687, “Advance text of Mr. Martin's Statement to be made in General Debate,” From Permanent Mission in New York to Department of External Affairs Canada, 22 September 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9396, File 20-22-VIET-S vol. 17, LAC.

³⁵⁸ Editorial Note. *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Volume IV, Vietnam, 1966, Doc. 244.

³⁵⁹ “Vietnam,” Memorandum for Minister, Secret, 29 September 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9398, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 7, LAC.

³⁶⁰ Telegram-2957, “Vietnam: USA Views” From Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. to the DEA Ottawa. 30 September 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9396, File 20-22-VIET-S vol. 17, LAC.

the Ronning missions as well as its role on the ICC. Seeing value in this tactic, Martin redirected his efforts to countries with stakes in the Vietnam conflict, but which were more peripheral than America, South Vietnam and North Vietnam.³⁶¹ His approach was now multilateral and designed to approach the issue from as many different angles as possible.

Martin waged a multi-front diplomatic assault in November 1966. His main goal was to transform the ICC from a futile remnant of symbolic cooperation into an effective piece of international machinery. As Martin truly believed that the problems in Vietnam could not be solved in the United Nations, therefore the last tangible vestiges of the Geneva Accords needed to be preserved and revitalized. Had Martin taken into account the stalemate which had pervaded the institution for the previous ten years, he may have reconsidered his strategy's practicability. However, in Martin's defence, the ICC was the only forum which was theoretically accepted by all interested parties even if it had fallen into disuse. It had important symbolic value but it also had the potential for pragmatic utility because of its antecedents in the region and the networks it had already established.

Canadian Military Advisor to the Commission Brigadier H. E. Chubb, would probably have warned Martin that the ICC had been rendered moribund. As he later wrote about the deadlocked commission, a typical working day was characterized by the:

Masses of paper flowing from one side of the table to the other and the inevitable final results that add up to virtually nothing...Today it was the turn of the Canadians to indulge in a little...shouting and waving of arms...We continue this nonsense tomorrow afternoon! The only sensible suggestion...came to [naught]. However it is on the record that we tried and this is what counts...or so I'm told!³⁶²

³⁶¹ Telegram-3018, "Vietnam: Manila Mtg and CND Policy" From Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to DEA Ottawa, 7 October 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9398, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 7, LAC.

³⁶² Qtd in. Lieutenant Colonel Shane B. Schreiber, CD, MSM. "The Road to Hell Part 2: Canada in Vietnam, 1954-1973. *Canadian Army Journal*. 10:2. (Summer, 2007), 82-97. p. 85.

Canada's diplomatic corps had extensive experience in Vietnam, but the ICC's long presence in the region was plagued by more than bureaucratic redundancies; it was internally and externally stalemated by its composition and the environment in which it was operating.

In characteristic fashion, Martin could not bridge the gap between politics and policy. Engineering a peace in Southeast Asia thus reaffirming the moral high ground of a middle power and confirming Canada's national identity as peace broker would have benefited Martin's Liberal leadership prospects immensely. This powerful motivator created a singularity of purpose in Martin; peace in Vietnam at all costs. He had focused his past three years as Minister for External Affairs on the conflict in Southeast Asia with nothing to show for his efforts save for a failed peace-seeking mission. He had one year left to fashion himself into a viable contender for the Liberal leadership and competition was growing fierce. Young and charismatic Liberals were swiftly scaling the party ranks, notably Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Martin needed to differentiate himself and demonstrate his value as an experienced and wise elder statesman.³⁶³

In pursuit of these goals Martin continued to look for "opportunities" to facilitate a negotiated settlement. The idea of creating a new ICC initiative had been circling, both in the department and in international circles for some time. First introduced in December 1965 during a discussion with Rusk and U Thant at a NATO ministerial meeting, the idea was abandoned because of the American Christmas bombing pause. Efforts to initiate an ICC approach resurfaced after America resumed its bombing campaign in early February 1966, but Martin's objectives were now much more limited. Realizing that calls for a new Geneva-style conference would be negatively received and thus undermine this potentially

³⁶³ Hilliker, John and Donald Barry. *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume 2: Coming of Age, 1946-1968*, p. 256.

useful tactic, instead, Martin sought to use the ICC as a forum to analyze and find common ground between the various negotiating positions. However, using the ICC as a multilateral peace broker only received mild support from India and was obstructed by Poland. In response to a letter from Martin, the Polish Foreign Minister said that the time was not ripe for a Commission initiative although he did not dismiss the idea that it could prove useful in the right circumstances.³⁶⁴ The ICC function as mediator was put on hiatus for several months.

In November 1966 Martin went on an Eastern European tour, meeting high ranking officials in Warsaw and Moscow. While much of the discussion focused on bilateral issues and pledges of increased cooperation between their respective nations, Martin harboured ulterior motives. The conversation consistently focused on Vietnam, and the Minister pressed his Eastern European hosts to commit to an ICC initiative. He believed that without Soviet acquiescence, Canadian efforts to mobilize the commission would be continually obstructed by the Polish delegation. While securing a surprisingly receptive and warm audience with Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev and even President Nikolai Podgorny, Martin failed to convince them to endorse his strategy. Martin was tactfully told that, "sometimes even good intentions run counter to realities and requirements of a given situation. USSR accepted Canadian presentation even if our positions differed. But they were inclined to think that our influence could be more usefully deployed in Washington D.C."³⁶⁵ Perhaps Moscow did not realize the extent to which Martin had exhausted his influence in Washington, and this second attempt had grown out of previous failures to

³⁶⁴ Telegram. Y-879, "Vietnam – Commission Initiative," From DEA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy in Washington DC, 29 December 1966, CONF., RG 25, Vol. 9398, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 9, LAC.

³⁶⁵ Telegram-2011, "Vietnam: Discussion with Gromyko," From Canadian Embassy in Moscow to the DEA Ottawa, 11 November 1 1966, RG 25, Vol. 9398, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 8, LAC.

change the course of American policy. Martin's influence was slowly ebbing and his options were growing precariously narrow.

The ICC, for all intents and purposes, had fallen into disuse. Ironically, when Martin returned from his Eastern European tour, Rusk expressed interest in using the ICC to revive an expanded Geneva style conference. This suggestion paralleled a Polish offer to review the ICC's procedural protocol to streamline operations. Both initiatives were discarded in favour of an Indian proposal to host a conference. However, a detailed review of the obstacles and superficial gains made during these attempts to engineer an ICC formula is of little value. That Martin continued to press, even as late as March 1967 for an ICC initiative, demonstrates the lack of options available to third party efforts, especially Canadian ones.³⁶⁶ Instead of admitting defeat, Martin decided that a solution was impossible in the current circumstances. The crux of the issue had always been America's bombing campaign which Martin perceived as the indissoluble obstacle barring political advancements.

Speaking before the House of Commons Standing Committee, Martin outlined his Four Point Proposal for peace. This was his last ditch attempt to inflate a deflated Vietnam policy and to revivify his own reputation. Before embarking on his prescription he laid out the Canadian position, as he saw it in 1967. He envisaged Canada as fulfilling two roles. First, it did not have a direct national interest in Southeast Asia but rather remained there in a peacekeeping capacity on behalf of other nations who were directly involved. Secondly, Canada was there to contribute to Vietnam's material and economic development. After absolving Ottawa of culpability in the conflict, Martin's defended the ICC and its future potential in an eventual settlement. Canada perpetually used its national influence in

³⁶⁶ Telegram-Y-232, "Vietnam - Possible Appeal by ICC," From External Affairs Minister (Paul Martin) to Canadian Embassy in Delhi, 10 March 1967, RG 25, Vol. 9398, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 12, LAC.

Washington, Hanoi and Saigon, to promote a peaceful resolution. Martin fleshed out this third point in such vague language and contradictory spirit that it is worth reproducing verbatim. He stated that:

there is one thing of which I am sure and it is this: if our efforts are to be of any avail, they must be deployed within the limits of what the situation suggests is realistic. They are best directed at arriving towards some common denominator which the parties themselves are prepared to accept as reasonable. We will neither bludgeon nor shame the parties into accepting a course of policy which they regard as being contrary to their basic national interests. And this is something which I would ask those who would have us follow a different course to remember.³⁶⁷

It is arguable that Martin rarely acted within the limitations of the situation. His intentions, setting aside leadership aspirations, were perhaps genuine and his active search for peace commendable in its tenacity. Considering the Ronning mission alone, Martin's self designated role as peace seeker in the Vietnam conflict surpassed his country's ability to realistically alter the conditions in which peace would be acceptable. Perhaps it is overly harsh to indict him for trying, but the Ronning missions as discussed earlier were doomed from their inception. Furthermore, the assurance that Canada would neither "bludgeon nor shame" a country into accepting its policy presumes that Canada had the capacity to do so, which it ultimately did not. To pursue a "bully's" strategy, when in fact you are the small kid in the playground, would only inflict damage on yourself. Martin closed his introduction by reaffirming Canada's commitment to participate in a peace that would inevitably require some sort of international presence.

³⁶⁷ Statement by the Hon. Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs to the House of Commons Standing Committee," 11 April 1967, Far Eastern Affairs, Ottawa. Klaus Goldschlag/ps., RG 25, Vol. 9399 File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 12, LAC. Also see. From American Embassy in Ottawa to Secretary of State for External Affairs," 11 April 1967, NSF/CF/Canada, Box 166, Vol. V, Cables [2 of 2], 1/67-10/68, LBJL, 73.

Martin then presented his blueprint for peace. Building on a three-point proposal forwarded by U-Thant, Martin prescribed the following measures. First, he called for the rehabilitation of the DMZ and a renewal of the ceasefire established by the 1954 Geneva Accords. He included a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam from the South or from any other location in his call for a ceasefire. Secondly, he called for a freeze in all military activities, leading to his third stage which entailed the cessation of all hostilities between the parties. In the final leg he envisaged a return to the Geneva Peace agreement, with the concurrent removal of all outside forces.³⁶⁸ On April 18, Ottawa received word that North Vietnam had officially rejected Martin's proposal. That same day Saigon accepted the Canadian plan and Washington followed suit a day later.³⁶⁹ However, Hanoi's rejection only bolstered the image of SVN and America as peace seeking nations. It was a public relations move as well as a final friendly overture from Washington to Ottawa. Speaking frankly to Ritchie, after a few sociable drinks, Rusk said that Canada should appreciate the favourable response from Washington and Saigon and although he, "hoped that Canada would draw the right conclusions from this incident but he rather doubted we would do so. By this I assume he meant that he hoped we would recognize that it was North which was the party really unwilling to start negotiations."³⁷⁰ The real weight Washington attached to Martin's final initiative was more honestly captured by Johnson. During a meeting between the Prime Minister and the President on May 25, 1967, the former elicited Johnson's reaction to the Four Point proposal. The commanding yet beleaguered leader responded acidly that he,

³⁶⁸ Ibid

³⁶⁹ Telegram-1448, "Vietnam – SSEAS speech of April 11," From the Canadian Embassy in Washington to DEA Ottawa, RG 25, Vol. 9399, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 14, LAC. (NP 259)

³⁷⁰ "Subject: Informal Talk with Secretary Rusk about Vietnam, France, etc." Memorandum, Confidential, 20 April, 1967. From the Canadian Ambassador in Washington (Albert Edgar Ritchie) to DEA Ottawa, RG 25, Vol. 9399, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 14.

“...thought the proposal had about as much appeal as a proposal to become a Yankee would have had to his Confederate grandmother.”³⁷¹

The elusive peace in Vietnam persisted. During the leaders' meeting at Harrington Lake, Johnson repeatedly explained the contours of American policy and added paternally, that, “he was not going to jeopardize the safety of my boys.” Martin, who was present at the meeting, remembered, “That’s what he kept saying. He was doing that very thing. He was jeopardizing their safety by carrying on the war.”³⁷² Nevertheless, Johnson continuously maintained that the US wanted a peaceful settlement in Vietnam. Further, as outlined in his San Antonio speech, as soon as Hanoi guaranteed a mutual de-escalation of hostilities, Johnson would call off the bombing. Pearson interjected, with the usual Canadian counsel, that peace in Vietnam could not be achieved militarily but only through a negotiated settlement.³⁷³ The President’s defence of America’s bombing campaign did not fall on sympathetic ears in Ottawa. When reassessing Canada’s Vietnam policy in July, Cadieux argued that there was still a role for third parties to play in an eventual Vietnam settlement. While negotiations must be undertaken by parties directly involved in the conflict, countries like Canada could still help to create the conditions in which negotiations could take place. As the Undersecretary noted, “this has been the main thrust of Canadian efforts over the past sixteen months and I believe that is the direction in which our efforts should continue to be employed. The dilemma we are now facing is focussed on the question of the bombing of

³⁷¹ “Subject: U.S. April 19 Proposal affecting the DMZ in Vietnam,” Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, April 20, 1967. *FRUS*, Johnson Administration, 1964-1968, Volume V, Vietnam, 1967, Doc. 140.

³⁷² “Vietnam War: The Missions—Paul Martin,” in Peter Stursberg, Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma. Toronto: Doublday Canada Limited, 1980. p. 286.

³⁷³ “Talks between President Johnson and Prime Minister Pearson, Ottawa, May 25, 1967. Vietnam,” Confidential Canadian Eyes Only,” RG 25, Vol. 9399, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 16, LAC.

North Vietnam.”³⁷⁴ Although the Americans did not dismiss third party intermediaries in their search for peace, experience with Canadian diplomacy among other Western efforts, had taught them a few things. The Americans now envisioned a scenario in which a direct contact would be made with Hanoi by a national leader, who had relations with Washington and Hanoi, but was not ideologically affiliated with either.³⁷⁵

Mimicking Pearson’s Temple Speech in 1965, Martin spoke before the General Assembly and explicitly denounced the American bombing as the greatest obstacle towards peace. The External Affairs Minister firmly believed that peace efforts would prove futile until America stopped its bombing campaign. He stressed that this was the first time he had spoken out publicly against America’s Vietnam policy.³⁷⁶ The time had come when Martin no longer believed that the conditions for negotiation could prevail until America stopped bombing the North. Martin’s past and future efforts to create conducive conditions were irrelevant until this first critical criteria was fulfilled. By October 1967, foreign policy differences that separated Canada and America had reached worrisome levels. Not attempting to disguise his aversion to the Canadian policy, Butterworth asserted that:

There has been a steady accumulation of evidence in the past few months that the Pearson government has been working out more policies, at variance with US views and harmful to US interests, which spell a general outlook, which if not anti-American in inspiration, is certainly anti-American in result. Some of these policies have some realistic relationship to Canadian interests: others reflect little more than more than a yen to yank Uncle Sam’s beard, to strike a theatrical and supposedly popular pose in US expense in the leadership race and to embarrass the US by highlighting

³⁷⁴ “Vietnam-Memorandum for the Minister,” Confidential, 7 July 1965, RG 25, Vol. 9399, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1, Vol. 16, LAC.

³⁷⁵ “Tab A: Subject: Direct Contact with Hanoi – A Scenario,” NSF, Files of Walt W. Rostow, Box 6, File [Vietnam-January-March, 1967], LBJL 4d.

³⁷⁶ Telegram-2570, “Vietnam: SSEA’s briefings for Press,” From Permanent Canadian Mission in New York to DEA Ottawa, Restricted, 27 September 1967, RG 25, Vol. 9400, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1 Vol. 19, LAC.

embarrassing problems partly with view to papering over controversy with Quebec.³⁷⁷

The American Ambassador delivered even more scathing criticism concerning Canada's handling of Vietnam, especially regarding Martin's delinquency from the entrenched practice of quiet diplomacy. After Martin publicly called on America to unilaterally halt the bombing, Butterworth charged that Martin had:

Twisted the stiletto, once inserted, by saying in parliament in response to [a] question that he had advised us beforehand.³⁷⁸ In act, he had only given preview of his speech to US officials in the UN in QTE general terms UNQTE...and Fonmin Martin also stated that he was, in effect, abandoning his advertised policy of private diplomacy about Vietnam vis-a-vis US. He said Canada had been mistaken in thinking it should not QTE speak up UNQTE to us on the subject. Canada had responsibility for action in its capacity as member of ICC.³⁷⁹

It seemed as though Martin had given up hope in the efficacy of quiet diplomacy. As both sides remained equally inflexible, he hoped that Canada's pressure in concert with other Western nations, could convince the Americans to pursue a different strategy. Martin's position was clear. He believed the onus was on the United States to make the first move and this must necessarily entail a bombing halt. Once this measure had been undertaken, the North would feel significant pressure from the non-aligned nations to respond positively.³⁸⁰

Martin publicly broke with US policy in late 1967, but this decision did not resonate as it would have four years earlier. As America was became increasingly ensnared in

³⁷⁷ "Secret-Ottawa" From American Embassy in Ottawa to the Secretary of State in Washington DC., October 1967, Telegram-2179. LBJ Papers of LBJ Presidency, 1963-1968. NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. V, Cables [2 of 2], 1/67-1/68, LBJL 58a.

³⁷⁸ A copy of this response can be found in "Anticipated Question in the House of Commons-Vietnam, 29 September 1967. Far Eastern/WT. Delworth, RG 25, Vol. 9400, File 20-22-VIETS-2-1. Vol. 19, LAC.

³⁷⁹ "Secret-Ottawa," From American Embassy in Ottawa to the State Department in Washington DC, October 1967. Telegram-2179. LBJ Papers of LBJ Presidency, 1963-1968. NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. V, Cables [2 of 2], 1/67-1/68, LBJL 58a.

³⁸⁰ "Twenty Million Questions—An Interview with : The Honourable Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs. Program No. 51-26101-7005. For Release: Wednesday, October 11, 1967.9:00PM – 9:30PM. LBJ Papers of LBJ Presidency, 1963-1968. NSF/CF/Canada, Vol. V, Cables [2 of 2], 1/67-1/68.,LBJL 58a. (NP 61).

Vietnam, international endorsements, had little impact on its Southeast Asian policy.

Johnson was more concerned with his domestic critics and his battle on the home front, than unwelcome advice from a meddling neighbour. His brainchild, the Great Society, had come to a literal standstill as Vietnam overshadowed the President's vast domestic portfolio. Johnson embarked on his presidential path with ambitious goals for domestic reform.

However, as his term unfolded, his vision, encapsulated in the Great Society, was overtaken by events in Vietnam. Throughout, Johnson tried to fight both wars but in so doing, he opted for a middle ground that failed to satisfy the military establishment, his Congressional critics, domestic opinion or the international community. Johnson's ad hoc Vietnam policy was characterized by inconsistencies and contradictions, which was the result of years of mediocre and disjointed decision making. He consistently sought a policy that would keep the Vietnam issue at bay, so that he could focus his attention and resources on domestic concerns. By 1968 Johnson could no longer opt for a middle ground. Vietnam had defeated his legislative war on the home front was cast aside. On March 31, 1968 Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election that Fall.³⁸¹

The political situation was undergoing a drastic change in Canada as well. On December 14, 1967, Pearson announced that he would step down as leader of the Liberal Party. With this announcement, a hard-fought race for the liberal leadership began. Having vied for the position since his political career began, and having lost to Pearson in 1957, made this campaign critically important to Martin. As Pearson remembered in his memoirs, "I felt that he was subordinating everything, even his work at External Affairs, to his campaign, and this I did not like. I let him know what I thought, and did not attempt to

³⁸¹ George C. Herring. *America's Longest War*, pp. 196-197.

disguise my feelings.”³⁸² Pearson only slightly veiled his support for Pierre Elliot Trudeau as his successor, a francophone who in Pearson’s opinion was, “a man for this season, uncontaminated and uninhibited.”³⁸³ This less than private endorsement, coupled with the young politician’s charisma, secured Trudeau the coveted position. As the administrations in Canada and American underwent sweeping changes in 1968, so too did their respective Vietnam policies. Trudeau distanced Canada from America’s perilous Vietnam policy much more than his predecessors.

Canada’s Vietnam policy began in 1954 and continued into and beyond 1973 with the Paris Peace Treaty. The temporal period studied in this paper, was chosen for a number of reasons. The consistent variable was the parallel administrations in American and Canada. While some of the high-level positions circulated, the individuals responsible for the countries’ respective Vietnam policies remained conveniently consistent. Moreover, each government operated from a consistent set of ideological premises. In addition to the opportune practical considerations, this period also marks Canada’s most active diplomatic contribution to the conflict. It is logical that these episodes form the core of the study. Although they have been addressed elsewhere, there were details before, between, and after the episodes that were largely ignored by other researchers. And although efforts were made to inject subjectivity into the field, a comprehensive study unencumbered by moral objectives was lacking. Thirdly, this period is revealing about the nature of Canadian-American relations. Contrary to common held perceptions, America was actually an extremely patient neighbour in this period, giving Canada a reception and sphere of influence that other middle powers were not granted. This was due in great part to the vast

³⁸² Hilliker, John and Donald Barry. *Canada's Department of External Affairs*, p.256.

³⁸³ Stursberg, *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*, p. 290.

web of bilateral relations between the two countries and their geographical proximity. This study offers a unique look into the way foreign policy is formed in Canada and how America's policy towards Canada is created in response. It was not just exercised at the highest level. The contacts between Canadian and Americans regarding Vietnam occurred in many forums, including but not limited to the American Embassy in Ottawa, the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC., the American Embassy and ICC headquarters in Saigon, NATO meetings in Paris and the United Nations in New York. Diplomacy was conducted by a vast array of individuals in many venues and all of this contributed to Canada's Vietnam policy and its relations with the US. There were tensions between the two countries as Canada's policies were increasingly divergent from America's but this study demonstrates that bilateral relations are much more intricate and intertwined than high level politics.

The complex web that forms bilateral relations also helps to explain Canadian complicity. As a Western ally with a vested national interest in a Western victory, Ottawa's Vietnam policy was entirely rational. Although Canada shared its neighbour's ideology, it did not believe that Vietnam could be resolved militarily. America became increasingly entrenched in Vietnam partly because the administration successfully construed the external threat of a communist victory as imminently dangerous to American core values. Canada could not justify its Vietnam policy in the same way, because it was operating under an entirely different set of conditions. Canada's middle power status was predicated on an independent foreign policy approach which emphasized peacekeeping and mediation. While the global threat of communism was generally accepted, Canada could not intimately link communism to its national security in the same manner as America.

Canada's national security was more realistically hinged on American moderation. In this way, the Vietnam War became an imminent external threat by default.

Canada sought close bilateral relations in attempts to forestall the dangers of an aggressive American policy, which could potentially trigger a wider war or induce China's nuclear involvement. One manner in which Canada reconciled the contradictory nature of Canada's core values and its allied responsibilities was to increase its diplomatic contribution. Washington accepted the Canadian intermediary Blair Seaborn. However, when his mission to create dialogue between Hanoi and Washington was replaced by a mandate to deliver an American ultimatum, Canada's intentions came under close public scrutiny. As questionable activities on the ICC came to the public's attention, Ottawa was hard pressed to defend itself. Perhaps in part because of past diplomatic failures in Vietnam or maybe to breath fresh life into Canada's core values, Pearson delivered his infamous Temple Speech. This event marks a shift in Canada's Vietnam policy. Always attentive to foreign policy, as Prime Minister Pearson became consumed by domestic concerns, Martin took on the role of Canada's primary architect of policy in Southeast Asia. In this role, the External Affairs Minister pushed the limits of his influence in Washington. He cornered the Americans into accepting a futile peace seeking mission and created trouble for them in the United Nations regarding Chinese representation. Considering the degree of variance between their policies, Washington was surprisingly tolerant of Martin's more adventurous ideas. Despite the overall failure of its Vietnam policy, Canada always tried to function within the limits of peacekeeping and mediation and consequently it did not contribute significantly to the American effort. Strict adherence to its core values was incongruent with allied responsibilities. However, when the public became aware of Canadian complicity,

Ottawa's policy makers were forced to defend their prior conduct and pursue more autonomy in Vietnam. Meeting neither obligation in full, Canada opted for a middle ground policy that ironically led to its overall failure. Canadian politician John Holmes surmised it well: "There are bound to be situations in which a country, either in its national interest or out of moral conviction, must refuse to go along. The world, however, will proceed on its course regardless. Jumping off a ship can be a grand gesture, but one is apt either to drown or end up permanently on an atoll."³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ Qtd in. Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, p. 258.

WORKS CITED

- Barett, David M. *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisers*. Laurence: University Press, of Kansas, 1993.
- Berman, Larry. *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the Vietnam War*. New York and London: W.W.Norton and Company, 1982.
- Bothwell, Robert. *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.
- Bothwell, Robert. "The further shore: Canada and Vietnam [1954 to 1965]" *International Journal*. Toronto (Winter 2000/01). 56:1, pp. 89-114.
- Dallek, Robert. *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998
- Donaghy, Greg. *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
- Donaghy, Greg. "Minding the Minister" in *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*. ed. Norman Hillmer. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- English, John. "Speaking Out on Vietnam, 1965". *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases*. ed. Don Munton and John Kirton. Prentice Hall Canadian Inc: Scarborough, Ontario, Chapter 9, 1992.
- English, John. *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*. ed. Norman Hillmer. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- English, John. "Lester Pearson and China," *Reluctant Adversaries*. ed. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. pp. 133-147.
- English, John. *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson, 1949-1972*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.
- Foot, Rosemary. *The Practice of Power: US relations with China since 1949*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Gardner, Lloyd C. *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam*. Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1995.

- Goodman, Allan E. *The Lost Peace: America's Search for a Negotiated Settlement of the Vietnam War*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978.
- Herring, George C. *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. New York: Wiley, 1979.
- Hess, Gary. "The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War." *Diplomatic History* 18:2 (Spring, 1994), 239-265. pp. 240-241.
- Hilliker, John 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.
- Immerman, Richard H. "A Time in the Tide of Men's Affairs: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam." *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*. ed. Warren L. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Kahin, George. *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. Pp. 325-330. Provides an interesting analysis of how Washington interpreted Hanoi's Four Points.
- Lawrence, Martin. "Burlesque Circus: LBJ and Lester Pearson" *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers: Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1982.
- Levant, Victor. *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War*. Toronto: Between The Lines, 1986.
- Lieutenant Colonel Shane B. Schreiber, CD, MSM. "The Road to Hell Part 2: Canada in Vietnam, 1954-1973." *Canadian Army Journal*. 10:2. (Summer, 2007), 82-97.
- Logevall, Frederik. *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Morrison, Barrie M. "Canada and South Asia" in *Canada and the Third World* ed. Peyton V. Lyon and Tareq Y. Ismael. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976.
- Page, Don. "The Representation of China in the United Nations: Canadian Perspectives and Initiatives, 1949-1971," *Reluctant Adversaries*. ed. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. pp. 73-105.
- Perry, Roland. *Last of the Cold War Spies: The Life of Michael Straight, the only American in Britain's Cambridge Spy Ring*. Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2005.
- Preston, Andrew. "Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965." *Diplomatic History* 27:1 (2003), 73-111.

- Preston, Andrew. "Operation Smallbridge: Chester Ronning, the Second Indochina War and the Challenge to the United States in Asia." *The Pacific Historical Review*. (Aug. 2003) 72:3, 353-390.
- Preston, Andrew. "Missions Impossible: Canadian Secret Diplomacy and the Quest for Peace in Vietnam" in *The Search for Peace in Vietnam 1964-1968*. ed, Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger. Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2004. pp. 117-143.
- Ross, Douglas A. *In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam, 1954-1973*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. p. 260.
- Ross, Douglas. "Canada, Peacemaking, and the Vietnam War: Where Did Ottawa Go Wrong?" *The Vietnam War as History*. ed. Elizabeth Jane Errington and B.J.C. McKercher. New York: Praeger, 1990.
- St. Amour, Norman. "Sino-Canadian Relations: The American Factor," ed. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. pp. 106-132.
- Stairs, Denis. *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- Stursberg, Peter. *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1980.
- T. B. Millar a; J. D. B. Miller. "Afro-Asian disunity: Algiers, 1965," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. (1965) 19 :3, p. 306-321
- Thakur, Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1984.
- Thakur, Ramesh. "Peacekeeping and Foreign Policy: Canada, India and the International Commission in Vietnam" *British Journal of International Studies*. 6:2 (July 1980), 125-153.
- Thakur Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1984.
- Theis, Wallace J. *When Governments Collide: Coercion and Diplomacy in the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1968* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Van Praagh, David. "Canada and Southeast Asia" in *Canada and the Third World*, ed. Peyton V. Lyon and Tareq Y. Ismael. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976.

MEMOIRS

Ball, George W. *The Past Has Another Patter: Memoirs*. New York and London: Norton and Company, 1982.

Clifford, Clark. *Council to the President: A Memoir*. New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1992.

Johnson, Lyndon Baines. *The Vantage Point: Perspective of the Presidency, 1963-1969*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

Martin, Paul. *A Very Public Life: So Many Worlds*. Vol. II. Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1985.

McNamara, Robert. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Pearson, Lester B. *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson Vol. 3, 1957-1968*. ed. John A. Munro and Alex.I.Inglis. Toronto and Bufallo: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

Rusk, Dean. *As I Saw It*. New York and London: W.W.Norton and Company, 1990

PUBLISHED PRIMARY RESOURCES

Merchant, Livingston T. and A.D.P. Heeney. *Canada and the United States: Principles for Partnership, June 28, 1965*.

National Diplomacy 1965-1970. Washington: Congressional Quarterly, May 1970.

The Pentagon Papers. Toronto, New York and London: Bantam Books Inc., 1971.

The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War: The Negotiating Volumes of the Pentagon Papers. Ed. George C. Herring. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983.

PRIMARY ON-LINE RESOURCES

Foreign Relations of the United States. Kennedy Administration Vol. IV.
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/kennedyjif/iv/>. Accessed on November 29, 2007.

Foreign Relations of the United States. Johnson Administration Vol. I, II, III, IV.
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/>. Accessed on December 10, 2007.

'Joint Resolution of Congress H.J. RES 1145 August 7, 1964' *Avalon Project at Yale Law School*. <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/tonkin-g.htm#joint>. Accessed Dec 11, 2007.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum: National Archives and Records Administration.
<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650407.asp>.
Accessed December 10, 2007.

'NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950' April 7, 1950.
<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-4.htm>.

PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, President 1963-1969
National Security File, Country Files, Canada
National Security File, Country Files, Vietnam
National Security File, Head of State Correspondence File
National Security File, Files of McGeorge Bundy
Confidential Files

National Archives and Records Administration

General Records of the Department of State
Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Canada (EUR/CAN)
Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political and Defence
Country Files, 1963-1966, Canada
Records of Undersecretary of State, George W. Ball, 1961-1966
Records of Secretary of State Dean Rusk

Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript

William P. Bundy Papers
George W. Ball Papers

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Mark Gayn Collection
Michael Maclear Papers

John W. Graham Library, Trinity College

John W. Holmes Papers

Library and Archives Canada

Department of External Affairs Records
Lester B. Pearson Fonds