

**editorial**

## **Canada's defence dilemma calls for drastic action**

Canada's defence dilemma is the result of political expedience.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker set out on this hazardous course when he discovered that he could cut back on defence with impunity and upset very few people. It is true there is little cause for real concern, provided we don't mind being dependent upon our good neighbor to the south.

The government also discovered it can keep up a facade of preparedness by obtaining bargain basement lots of U. S. aircraft and other weapons, and can keep a respectable labor force employed by producing hardware under licence — without having to absorb the high and hidden costs of research and development.

But in its blind pursuit of a low-cost defence policy, the government became caught up in the web of nuclear weapons. Aircraft and other items were supplied "on the cheap" because the States realized that Canada could play a role in plugging up some of the holes in our continent's defence; but naturally the States required that the weapons used by Canada could match U. S. nuclear capability.

This is the point where the Canadian government reneged.

I sought an official reply to the question: "Failing the adoption of nuclear

warheads for our Bomarcas and the missiles carried by our aircraft, what alternative use can be made of these weapons?"

And here is the reply that I was given: "Of course you can appreciate that the government is not anxious to get into matters of this sort at this time."

Make no mistake about it — we are getting a lot for our defence dollar. Trouble is that as of now, it is a lot of junk.

Enough of criticism; what is needed is a way out of our defence dilemma. If the government — and Canada — has set its face against the acceptance of nuclear warheads then the weapon carriers should be returned to the States or scrapped. Let's not waste any more Avgas.

Then if we may be permitted to dust off an old suggestion of ours once more: most of our defence effort should take the form of stand-by airlift equipment for the use of the United Nations and NATO. This could be a truly Canadian contribution — say 50 Canadair CL-44s and 100 DHC Caribou aircraft, supported by Otters and Beavers.

This will seem a drastic and costly measure, but it is the best alternative to a nuclear role, which the Diefenbaker government appears unwilling to accept.

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