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"Diefenbaker's Legacy: New Ways of Thinking about Nuclear Weapons and Canada's Defence Policy"

Erika Simpson

Abstract

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's initial decision to acquire nuclear weapons systems for the Canadian Forces was followed by much debate within Cabinet. During the Cuban Missile crisis, Cabinet Ministers continued to argue about whether Canada should fulfill its defence commitments. Finally the Prime Minister and his Minister of External Affairs Howard Green publicly opposed the nuclear commitments the government had originally undertaken.

This paper asserts that the underlying belief systems of influential decision-makers significantly influenced defence decision-making leading to the Diefenbaker government's contrasting record of nuclear commitments. The research is based largely on documents arising out of the recently-declassified records of Cabinet; the newly-opened personal papers of the Prime Minister; and the documents available from the Department of National Defence's Directorate of History (e.g. the recently-opened Raymont series).

The paper shows that, contrary to conventional wisdom, senior officials within the Diefenbaker government, including the Prime Minister after 1962, were not altogether confused by the strategic environment nor naive about their defence responsibilities and NATO obligations. Some deliberately attempted to buy time and seek options to delay the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Whereas 'Defenders' within the government worked to fulfill the nuclear commitments, 'Critics' pursued alternatives which they deemed to be in the best interests of war prevention. It seems a precedent was established in this period—these assumptions and tactics would be reflected at various times in the beliefs and policy direction of the Trudeau government.

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“Diefenbaker’s Legacy: New Ways of Thinking about Nuclear Weapons and Canada’s Defence Policy”

Erika Simpson

Introduction:

Canada is unique in that we had the technological ability and resources to develop our own nuclear weapons, or to acquire them from the United States, but chose not to. Why did Canada choose not to acquire nuclear weapons? What contributed to our anti-nuclear stance? This paper analyses the Diefenbaker government’s legacy with respect to Canadian defence policy and the onset of ‘new thinking’ about nuclear weapons. It asks why Prime Minister Diefenbaker and some of his advisers began to question whether Canada should take on a nuclear role. What beliefs about nuclear weapons and the nature of the threat led some high-level policy-makers to argue against acquiring nuclear warheads? What assumptions about the dangers of abandonment, entrapment, and nuclear deterrence incited some decision-makers to oppose the nuclear commitments? It is demonstrated that a new way of thinking—typical of ‘Critics’—significantly influenced decision-making and led toward the Diefenbaker government’s contrasting record regarding nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker’s legacy was that he was the first Prime Minister, and certainly not the last, to countenance Canada taking an anti-nuclear stand.

Background: Firm Commitments to Acquire Nuclear Weapons

Beginning in 1957, the Diefenbaker government undertook firm commitments to acquire five different nuclear weapons systems: the *Bomarc* missiles; the CF-101 air defence interceptors or *Voodoos* deployed in Canada; the CF-104s or *Starfighters* deployed in Europe as part of NATO's striking force; the *Lacrosse* atomic missiles in Europe (which were eventually replaced by the *Honest John* missiles) and a rarely-mentioned fifth commitment to acquire nuclear depth charges and nuclear torpedoes for Canada's maritime forces in the North Atlantic.¹

These decisions to acquire nuclear-capable systems were made at various times between 1957 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1961 the government vacillated on whether or not to acquire nuclear warheads. By late 1962 high-level decision-makers, including the Prime Minister, expressed outright opposition to fulfilling the nuclear commitments. And in 1963 John Diefenbaker campaigned on a platform opposed to the \$700 million of nuclear commitments his government had originally undertaken. Why did the government choose not to acquire nuclear warheads? What factors contributed to its anti-nuclear stand?

Between 1957 and 1960 many different factors seemed to impell the government **toward** acquiring nuclear systems.² Furthermore, it seems apparent that other systemic- and

¹For an in-depth discussion of the nature and timing of all these commitments, see Erika Simpson "Canada's Contrasting NATO Commitments and the Underlying Beliefs and Assumptions of Defenders and Critics" (an unpublished PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Toronto), 1995, ch. 5, pp. 247-266.

²For instance, in the international arena, new technological developments such as the development of the Russian Sputnik in 1957, and the successful testing of the Bomarc B in 1959, prompted Prime Minister Diefenbaker to support the Bomarc acquisition. Bilateral pressures such as the Congressional debate in the United States against acquiring a full complement of Bomarc, and the American transfer to Canada of the Voodoos, incited military advisers like General George Pearkes and General Charles Foulkes to favour acquiring these nuclear-capable weapons systems. NATO directives, including MC 14/2 and MC/48/2

state-level factors interacted to **dissuade** Canadian leaders between 1961 and 1963 from fulfilling the commitments.³ Yet international pressures, regional factors, and domestic concerns do not provide a sufficient explanation for these changes in Canadian defence policy. The fact that there were, at the same time, some high-level decision-makers who favoured, and others who opposed, fulfilling the nuclear commitments, indicates that an important reason for the change in policy stemmed from individual decision-makers' different attitudes toward this issue.

To summarize, the first Minister of National Defence George Pearkes, his successor Douglas Harkness, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff General Charles Foulkes, the Canadian Ambassador to the United States (US) Arnold Heeney, and many other high-level defence experts like the Chief of the Air Staff Hugh Campbell and Air Chief Marshal Frank Miller favoured acquiring nuclear weapons. Cabinet Ministers like George Hees and civil servants like the Secretary to the Cabinet Robert Bryce also supported nuclear acquisition. Initially the Prime Minister was also convinced that Canada should acquire these weapons, but became

recommending defence preparations premised on using nuclear weapons from the outset, appeared to sway Diefenbaker and his first Defence Minister George Pearkes. Financial imperatives such as the cancellation of the Avro Arrow, and its 'substitution' with the relatively inexpensive Bomarc missile, also seemed to affect Diefenbaker's attitude. In fact, military recommendations such as General Lauris Norstad's briefing to Cabinet seemed to have a considerable influence on members of Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff. Influential defence policy-makers had to consider all these sorts of international and domestic variables when they decided to acquire five nuclear weapons systems. For further discussion of the impact and timing of these different factors, see Simpson "Canada's Contrasting NATO Commitments, ch. 5, pp. 246-298

³International crises such as the Cuban missile crisis and the subsequent easing of tensions led some decision-makers like Minister of External Affairs Howard Green to more avidly question the necessity to acquire nuclear weapons. United Nations (UN) recommendations such as the Irish Resolution and Canada's high-profile position in the UN's 18 Nation Disarmament Committee influenced the Cabinet's debate. American behaviour such as President John Kennedy's 'failure' to consult during the Cuban missile crisis and the publication of the US State Department's press release; electoral considerations such as the influence of increasingly divided public opinion and Opposition Leader Lester Pearson's unexpected *volte-face* regarding the nuclear issue; as well as domestic criticism in the form of an outpouring of letters and complaints from groups like the Voice of Women, all contributed in some measure to different decision-makers' lack of support for the nuclear weapons. For further discussion of the impact and timing of these different factors, see *Ibid.*

more uncertain beginning in 1959, after he appointed his good friend Howard Green as Minister of External Affairs.

Howard Green and Norman Robertson, Green's Deputy Minister of External Affairs, strongly opposed acquiring nuclear weapons. With the assistance of George Ignatieff, Diefenbaker's special advisor on nuclear issues, the 'trio' sought to delay the acquisition process, and to advise Diefenbaker against acquiring the nuclear weapons. Although the growing peace movement, and the public's increasing anti-Americanism also pushed the Prime Minister to rethink the nuclear issue, there is no doubt that these three tried to delay, if not reverse, the Prime Minister's stated policy.

In other words, the underlying attitudes and beliefs of individual policy-makers significantly influenced defence policy-making. Mounting evidence indicates that the government's rejection of nuclear weapons stemmed from new ways of thinking about everything from the nature of the threat to the suitability of nuclear deterrence strategy. This was a new way of thinking and arguing first espoused by Howard Green, Norman Robertson, George Ignatieff, and eventually John Diefenbaker.

This new way of thinking was not always logical. It was sometimes incoherent and confused. But it was embedded in a related set of assumptions which will be referred to here as typical of 'Critics' or New Thinkers. And it was a *Weltanschauung* reflected later in the approach and policy direction of the Trudeau government.⁴

⁴ For an in-depth analysis of Trudeau's worldview and the attitude of some of his advisers toward nuclear weapons, see *Ibid*, chs. 3-4, pp. 107-237

In order to appreciate the 'new thinking' espoused by Canadian leaders like John Diefenbaker, we need first to overview the main elements of old traditional thinking—typical of 'Defenders'. We cannot appreciate the unique contribution of new thinkers without briefly overviewing the core assumptions made by Defenders.⁵

The Underlying Beliefs and Assumptions of Defenders:

1. Defenders feared abandonment:

Defenders feared that NATO's close ties, especially among the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom (UK), were threatened unless Canada maintained, if not strengthened, its defence commitments, for example by acquiring nuclear warheads. Defenders often put forward fearful scenarios that if Canada's military commitments were weakened or reneged upon, Canada would be in danger of deserting its closest allies and being itself abandoned—isolated. For instance, the Ministers of National Defence, George Pearkes and then Douglas Harkness, and many other defence officials, like Charles Foulkes and Frank Miller, often put forward forbidding scenarios arguing that if the government failed to acquire nuclear systems, the country would be in danger of neglecting its allies and running the risk of suffering from US retaliation. These kinds of persistent concerns that the Canadian government was in danger of neglecting its friends and allies, and therefore could suffer from an array of negative

⁵Unfortunately, space constraints prevent an in-depth analysis of traditional thinking using examples from the declassified documents, letters, diaries and memoranda of 'Defenders'. For a comprehensive survey of the evidence leading to this kind of overview, see *Ibid*, pp. 107-182, 299-367. Instead, the main elements of the traditional way of thinking are briefly summarized. Notably some policy-makers advocated certain beliefs more strongly than others. The profile paints the broad brushstrokes of a mind-set; but no one decision-maker can be held up as a perfect example of a 'Defender'—or a 'Critic'.

consequences, were categorized together as evidence of a wide-spread tendency among Defenders to fear abandonment, as opposed to entrapment.

2. Defenders believed Canada should pursue closer ties to the allies through established kinds of military commitments:

Secondly, Defenders assumed Canada should pursue closer ties to the allies through established kinds of military commitments. Obviously Canadian decision-makers have suggested a variety of ways to signal close military ties to Europe and the US. But the marked tendency among Defenders was to advocate 'traditional' and 'established' ways of fostering such ties. At that time, in the early 1960s, established methods involved commitments to maintain or increase the number of Canadian Forces personnel earmarked for NATO purposes, particularly the number of Forces deployed overseas in Europe; promises to modernize or to ear-mark more weapons systems and equipment to the Forces in NATO, particularly the Canadian Forces in Europe (CFE); and commitments to maintain or increase the percentage of the federal government's defence budget and the percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) directed toward the defence of the Alliance.

3. Defenders believed the external threat to the Alliance was opportunistic and aggressive:

Defenders have been distinguished thus far by their beliefs about the dangers of abandonment and their assumptions about the imperative of pursuing closer ties to the allies through traditional means. Another core belief of Defenders related to their predominant perceptions of 'the threat' to the Alliance. From 1949 to 1960, many Defenders perceived the external threat to the Alliance as an aggressive and opportunistic bloc. But their actual references to the nature

of the threat, behind-the-scenes, were relatively infrequent because it seems their perceptions of the threat now formed the 'backdrop' of their thinking. Rather than dwell on the threat, discuss whether the Soviet Union was insecure or opportunistic, or consider whether the Communist World was monolithic or divided, Defenders simply assumed the threat from the 'USSR', 'Communism', 'Nikita Khrushchev', and/or 'Marxism-Leninism' was aggressive and opportunistic. Instead Defenders focused their intellectual energy upon analysing the the allies' foreseeable intentions, especially the United States' likely reactions.

4. Defenders assumed Canada and the Alliance's weapons were necessary and non-threatening:

Fourthly, Defenders were inclined to view Canada and NATO's weapons systems as necessary and non-threatening—rather benignly. They tended to downplay Canada's capabilities and to regard our weapons systems and intentions as 'defensive', not 'offensive'.⁶

Although others criticized select NATO weapons for being potentially offensive, first-strike systems, Defenders tended to portray Canada and the Alliance's weapons systems as part of a

⁶Notably, as this research focuses on the psychological milieu, not the operational milieu, questions about whether Canada and the other allied countries actually possessed 'offensive' or 'defensive' weapons are unimportant—what is important is whether leaders themselves regarded Canada and the Alliance's weapons as non-threatening and 'defensive'. By way of explanation, one could distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons in a variety of ways. Offensive *versus* defensive weapons might be distinguished in geographical terms: if a weapon can be effectively used abroad, on the adversary's territory, then it is offensive and if it can be used at home, once an attack has taken place, then it is defensive. The offensive/defensive distinction could also be based, however, on 'range' variables (e.g. immobile, local, limited *versus* extensive, long, highly mobile) or 'impact' variables (e.g. high explosive, weapon of mass destruction, chemical, toxic, biological, nuclear). A weapon might also be distinguished on the basis of whether it is strategic *versus* tactical: a weapon which is capable of reaching the enemy's homeland or attacking deep behind the enemy's echelons might be classified as strategic and offensive while a weapon which operates on or close to the battlefield might be conceived of as tactical and defensive. Alternatively, as some critics like Pierre Trudeau argued, weapons could also be distinguished as offensive or defensive with reference to the subjectively-perceived capabilities of the systems (e.g. the subjective motivations attached to them). In other words, the best judge of whether a system (e.g. the CF-104 strike-reconnaissance aircraft) was offensive or defensive could be the adversary, the Soviet Union.

second-strike deterrent. (For example, the CF-104s in Europe were considered to be 'defensive', not 'offensive', until Pierre Trudeau began questioning this basic assumption in 1969). Whereas Defenders, like the Minister of National Defence Douglas Harkness, constantly referred to Canada's Bomarcas and CF-101s as defensive, they avoided discussing the possible offensive role of Canadian weapons systems, like the CF-104s. Indeed, it appears from a perusal of the records of Cabinet meetings and high-level debates that most Canadian leaders did not make subtle distinctions between offensive *versus* defensive weapons on objective grounds or commonly-accepted technical definitions. Rather the general tendency among Defenders was to assume Canada's weapons systems were 'defensive', and not consider whether the Soviet Union might perceive Canadian weapons systems as somehow provocative or tension-producing.

5. Defenders believed deterrence doctrine was suitable and reliable:

Finally many influential decision-makers premised their support for maintaining, if not strengthening Canada's nuclear commitments on deterrence doctrine. Most expressed considerable faith in deterrence. This faith was retained as nuclear strategy evolved from 'massive retaliation' in the 1950s to 'flexible response' in the 1960s. For example, before 1957 most Defenders believed 'credible deterrence' relied mainly on the United States' monopoly of ballistic nuclear missiles.⁷ By the late 1950s, many Defenders assumed deterrence

⁷Until 1949, only the United States had developed thermonuclear weapons. The first Soviet explosion of an atomic bomb in 1949 was followed four years later by the development of a hydrogen nuclear bomb. But it was not until 1957, with the launch of the Sputnik, that military strategists in the United States and Canada generally recognized that there now existed a 'balance of terror' between the US and the USSR. This balance also had attendant implications for deterrence strategy—implications which came to be appreciated around 1959-1960.

doctrine had to be based on the threat of 'massive retaliation'.⁸ And in the 1960s, deterrence doctrine evolved such that a credible deterrent at all levels was thought necessary so as to ensure 'flexible' response.⁹ Despite all these changes in nuclear strategy, however, most Canadians understood the basic principles of elementary deterrence strategy, including Diefenbaker, and behind-the-scenes argued that Canada had to fulfill its nuclear commitments or run the risk of undermining deterrence.

Thus, to summarize a great deal of newly-declassified evidence, many Cabinet Ministers and defence advisers recommended modernizing Canada's weapons systems with nuclear weapons because of their beliefs about the dangers of abandonment; the nature of the threat; the utility of nuclear weapons; and the reliability and suitability of deterrence. Beginning in 1957, the Defence Minister General Pearkes, supported by his senior adviser General Foulkes, argued in favour of acquiring these weapons systems for the Canadian Forces. The Prime Minister initially relied a great deal upon their assessments. Whereas Diefenbaker was unsure of himself at the 1957 NATO Council meeting, and perhaps confused about the nature of the commitments he was undertaking, there could be no doubt that between 1957 and 1961 the Prime Minister also favoured acquiring these nuclear weapons. Behind-the-scenes and in private conversations, Ambassador Arnold Heeney, Air Chief Marshal Frank Miller, Chief of the Air Staff Hugh Campbell, Associate Defence Minister Pierre Seigny, Cabinet Minister

⁸John Foster Dulles first promulgated the doctrine of massive retaliation in 1954. It suggested that the US would retaliate with considerable force, possibly including nuclear weapons, anywhere in the world.

⁹The strategy of 'flexible response' was officially adopted by NATO in 1967, however, it had been unofficial doctrine since the early 1960s. According to the Ad Hoc Committee on Defence Policy in 1963: "Flexible response is in a sense a generalization of the concept of a limited war. It is based upon the proposition that the Western Alliance as a whole and the United States in particular should not be placed in a position of excessive reliance upon nuclear weapons or, more generally, of requiring to employ force in a manner incompatible with Western aims and objectives. The principle of flexible response places increased emphasis upon the provision of conventional forces. It involves reduced dependence upon strategic and tactical nuclear weapons although it does not reduce the requirement for these capabilities." DND, Directorate of History [hereafter DHist], R.J. Sutherland (Chairman), *et al* "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Defence Policy", p. 14 [SECRET CANADIAN EYES ONLY].

George Hees, and the Secretary to the Cabinet Robert Bryce were also vigorous advocates of the nuclear commitments. Taken together, the presence within the inner circle of decision-making of these influential Defenders contributed to the government's support for the acquisition of nuclear weapons.¹⁰

In other words, Canada's decision to *acquire* nuclear weapons cannot be attributed to international, technological, and strategic developments beyond the control of the Diefenbaker government. The underlying beliefs of key political leaders were important factors impelling the government to favour acquiring nuclear weapons. The 1957 NATO Council directives, General Norstad's briefing to Cabinet, Diefenbaker's cancellation of the Avro Arrow, and the launch of the Sputnik, all influenced defence decision-making, however, key Canadian leaders supported the acquisition of nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces because of their beliefs about the dangers of abandonment; the salience of the Soviet threat; the utility of nuclear weapons; and the importance of buttressing deterrence

Finally, it is important to note that within the inner circle, there were at first no high-level decision-makers who were opposed to, or even critical, of the nuclear commitments. The views of the first Minister of External Affairs Sidney Smith had not yet crystallized and, until Howard Green assumed office, Deputy Minister Norman Robertson felt uncomfortable about putting forward his growing concerns.¹¹ The Prime Minister also did not encourage debate and discussion among his staff and advisers—indeed, with reference to defence matters, he initially relied on his own opinions and the advice of Pearkes¹² and Foulkes.¹³ Rather than discuss the

¹⁰For analysis and evidence, see Simpson "Canada's Contrasting Commitments...", ch. 6, pp. 183-245. This is not to say, however, that it was solely the presence of 'Defenders' which accounted for the government's initial support for the nuclear commitments. Other factors such as the climate of opinion among the NATO allies favouring nuclear modernization, along with new technological developments and American pressure to acquire the CF-101s and Bomarc, contributed to the outcome. But there can be no doubt that the main elements of the belief system of Defenders played an important contributory role.

¹¹Interview of Basil Robinson, September 14, 1992. For more on Robertson's views, see also Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 108; Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 84; and J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-1968*, (Ottawa: Deneau, 1981), pp. 336-363

¹²Notably General Pearkes was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia in 1960 and Douglas Harkness became the new Minister of National Defence. Whereas the Prime Minister had accorded General

matter with External Affairs' officials or submit the question to Parliamentary debate, Diefenbaker relied upon the advice of his senior defence officials. During this time period, Howard Green was also still a backbencher; he did not become Minister of External Affairs until June 1959. Another potential critic of the government's stance, George Ignatieff, did not return from the UK to act as Diefenbaker's adviser on nuclear issues until January 1961. In other words, defence decision-making was dominated by key policy-makers who shared many beliefs and assumptions typical of Defenders. That it might not be necessary to acquire the nuclear warheads in order to demonstrate Canada's continued commitment to NATO and NORAD was an idea not yet countenanced. It was not until Howard Green took office that the Prime Minister began to waiver and vacillate about whether or not to fulfill these commitments.

Accordingly, the remainder of this paper overviews the kinds of beliefs which led some to recommend de-emphasizing and restructuring Canada's nuclear commitments. It argues that a few influential decision-makers possessed belief systems more typical of 'Critics' in the period between 1959 and 1963. And it explores in greater detail their underlying assumptions regarding the dangers of entrapment; the nature of the threat; and the limitations of different weapons systems and strategies.¹⁴ What were the main elements of 'new thinking'?¹⁵

Pearkes much authority and influence, Harkness was not as close to the Prime Minister nor as highly-esteemed. Although he proved to be a vigorous Defender who argued in favour of acquiring the nuclear weapons with conviction and energy, Harkness was not able to convince the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of his views.

¹³General Foulkes' resignation in 1960, in opposition to the government's vacillating policy regarding the nuclear weapons, and Arnold Heeney's ill-health in 1961, forcing his eventual replacement by Charles Ritchie in January 1962, also weakened the force of the arguments put forward by Defenders in defence of acquiring the nuclear weapons. Within the inner circles of defence decision-making, Douglas Harkness, Pierre Sevigny, George Hees, Hugh Campbell, and Frank Miller, were confronted with an increasingly indecisive Prime Minister and a vociferous External Affairs Minister, backed by a strongly-motivated Deputy Minister and a determined Assistant Deputy Minister.

¹⁴Due to the focus of this volume on John Diefenbaker, much of the remaining analysis centres on Diefenbaker's beliefs. Further evidence documenting the convictions and original arguments of the 'trio', Howard Green, Norman Robertson, and George Ignatieff is found in Simpson "Canada's Contrasting Alliance Commitments...", ch. 7, pp. 368-417

¹⁵Notably, no one Canadian leader can be dogmatically categorized as a 'critical new thinker'. But the basic tenets of this belief system frequently appeared in private correspondence, personal memoranda, and the Cabinet Conclusions. In generalizing about Critics' core beliefs, it may also seem as if their ideas were more

Substantive Beliefs and Assumptions of Critics

1. Critics feared entrapment:

In sharp contrast to Defenders, Critics were preoccupied with the dangers of entrapment, not abandonment. They tended to be suspicious about the likelihood and possible consequences of the allies drawing Canada into an armed confrontation. And they worried about NATO undertakings, particularly American military objectives.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker's fears about entrapment first began to affect his decision-making in 1960, about a year after Howard Green was appointed to External Affairs. Over time, these suspicions intensified. Diefenbaker expressed his strongest fears about the dangers and consequences of entrapment during the Cuban missile crisis, when the Cabinet debated whether or not to alert the Canadian Forces. From the time Howard Green took office in 1959, however, he was suspicious of the US and fearful that the Alliance leader could draw Canada unwillingly into a dangerous confrontation.

For example, in the emergency Cabinet meetings during the Cuban crisis, Diefenbaker and Green feared the country was in danger of becoming entangled in what they called "domestic" and "Cuban" affairs. Their comments during Cabinet meetings reflected their fears of what they described as "embroilment" or entrapment. Over two days of discussions, they argued that, "Canada was not automatically embroiled anytime the US was but practically, however, Canada was." They believed "there were great dangers in rushing in at this time" and "quick action brought quick judgement". Furthermore, Canada should not appear to be "stampeded".¹⁶ In particular, their fears about "embroilment" impelled them to recommend the

logical and carefully considered than they were at that time. It is important to remember that their 'new thinking' during the early 1960s regarding difficult dilemmas involving defence and deterrence may now seem familiar and possibly obvious to Canadians. However, it was daring 'new thinking' then, decades before Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and the peace movement popularized and legitimized these sorts of criticisms.

¹⁶Privy Council Office [hereafter PCO], Cabinet Conclusions, October 23, 1962, pp. 4-5; October 25th, p. 16, [SECRET]. Notably, the Cabinet Conclusions were obtained under the Access to Information Act from the PCO but are now also on deposit at the Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC]. These records of

government behave normally and deliberately; that the troop rotation to Europe be deferred; and the government delay its decision to alert the Canadian Forces.¹⁷

Underlying these arguments about the dangers of "rushing in" was an assumption that alerting the forces would only increase the likelihood of war. In one emergency Cabinet meeting, Diefenbaker's concerns about war impelled him to caution his colleagues that 'Canadian mothers did not want their sons to be killed in any foreign war' and 'the Cuba business was no affair of Canada's.'¹⁸ Indeed, his fear that the US could drag Canada unwillingly into an armed confrontation, possibly a nuclear war, was such that when the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan sent an urgent message, Diefenbaker's fear of entrapment incited him to entirely misinterpret the content of that message to his colleagues. The Prime Minister reported to Cabinet that the British Prime Minister thought the Soviet Union was "balanced on the knife's edge of indecision" and "any hostile act might precipitate a Russian attack." Diefenbaker proceeded to take this message to mean that alerting Canada's defence might be just enough to precipitate the outbreak of war.¹⁹ Later, after the crisis ended, it became apparent that Macmillan had strongly supported Kennedy throughout. Although the British Prime Minister scoffed at Diefenbaker for his "faint heart", it was not Diefenbaker's fears about Khrushchev's intentions which provoked him to oppose alerting the Forces. It was

Cabinet meetings, usually written by Robert Bryce, often attribute points made by Ministers not to specific individuals but to 'some Ministers' or to 'the Cabinet'. However, comments made by the Prime Minister, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Minister of National Defence were usually specifically attributed. Further evidence that it was Diefenbaker and Green who made these sorts of arguments in Cabinet is confirmed by other accounts of the Cabinet meetings. For example, see PAC, Douglas Harkness Papers, MG 32, B19, vol. 57, "Unnumbered series on 'The Nuclear Arms Crisis'"; Patrick Nicholson Vision and Indecision, (Longmans Canada Limited: Don Mills, Ontario, 1968), pp. 158-159; Nash Kennedy & Diefenbaker, p. 199; and Pierre Sevigny, This Game of Politics, (McClelland and Stewart Limited: Toronto, 1965), p. 256

¹⁷PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 23, 1962, pp. 4-5; October 24, 1962, p. 5, [SECRET]; and, PAC, Douglas Harkness Papers, MG 32, B19, vol. 57, "Unnumbered series on 'The Nuclear Arms Crisis'".

¹⁸According to Patrick Nicholson, Vision and Indecision, p. 159.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 165; Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker, p. 199.

his beliefs about the escalatory tendencies of American "military leaders"²⁰ which likely accounted for the way in which he reinterpreted Macmillan's message to the Cabinet.

Yet immediately after the Cuban missile crisis ended, despite his heightened fears of entrapment, Diefenbaker ordered Harkness and Green to conduct absolutely secret negotiations with the US in order to acquire nuclear warheads based on either the 'joint control' or 'missing parts' approaches.²¹ Diefenbaker seemed to accept the necessity of accepting nuclear warheads so long as the US consented to his concept of 'joint control'. By 1961 Diefenbaker interpreted this nebulous concept to mean that Canada would accept 'joint control' over all the Canadian nuclear weapons systems so long as President Kennedy used his executive powers to reinterpret the 'present law' in such a way as to permit the 'necessary agreement' with Canada.²² Even during his first meeting with Kennedy, before their relationship became embittered, Diefenbaker referred to the imperative of obtaining 'joint control and joint custody' over the nuclear weapons.²³

It may have been that Diefenbaker insisted upon some measure of joint control because he meant somehow to curtail, if not harness, the US from any ill-considered resort to the use of Canada's nuclear weapons.²⁴ Indeed, in later years Diefenbaker's close aide, Basil

²⁰PCO Cabinet Conclusions, October 24, 1962, p. 7, [SECRET]. Notably, the original classification of a document (*e.g.* TOP SECRET, SECRET, CONFIDENTIAL, *etc.*) is notated in the footnotes, although in most cases much of the original document has been declassified. Despite the 'thirty-year' rule, however, large sections of the Cabinet minutes are still classified mainly because of Sections 13(1) and 15(1) of the Access to Information Act.

²¹PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 30, 1962, p. 10, [TOP SECRET].

²²PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, February 21, 1961, p. 1, [SECRET].

²³PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 25, 1961, p. 6, item k), [SECRET]. Notably, Diefenbaker also told Cabinet after this meeting with Kennedy in 1961 that, "The President had said he would go as far as possible to meet the Canadian position in the matter, and there had been reliable reports in the last few days that members of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee would agree to joint control with Canada over nuclear weapons stockpiled in this country for Canadian use. It would not have been possible two years ago to obtain U.S. agreement to this principle. A change in U.S. law might not be required to give effect to an agreement to share with Canada joint control over nuclear weapons stockpiled in Canada." These comments do seem to indicate that some measure of Canadian joint control, as Diefenbaker conceived it, was being seriously discussed in the United States in 1961.

²⁴In another example, Diefenbaker told Cabinet in 1961 that not to obtain joint control "would be an abandonment of responsibility on the part of Canada." PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 25, 1961, p. 4, [SECRET].

Robinson, explained that in his view, the Prime Minister's reason for seeking joint control seemed to be "to satisfy himself" that nuclear weapons would not be used, except with agreement of the Canadian government. According to Robinson, Diefenbaker was not motivated simply by "crass politics" but believed it was his "political responsibility" to acquire joint control—indeed, the Prime Minister was "afraid" of being accused of not having ensured Canada an equal say in the decision to use nuclear weapons.²⁵ Diefenbaker's autobiography also seems to confirm this assessment. As he wrote, he had deemed it "essential that the Canadian government be in as strong a position as possible to bring its influence to bear on any decision to use nuclear weapons, and perhaps to deter the United States from any possible ill-considered decisions in this respect."²⁶

Prime Minister Diefenbaker's belief that Canada was in danger of entrapment seemed to stem from images he gained while in office. At about the same time that he began wavering about the nuclear acquisitions, his closest advisers began to worry about the Prime Minister's growing 'anti-Americanism'. When Arnold Heeney questioned Diefenbaker closely in 1960, the Prime Minister's explanation reflected his first-hand impressions of the United States gained while he was in power. Diefenbaker explained that "the avalanche of anti-Americanism" in Canada stemmed from the widespread impression that the United States was pushing other people around; from distrust of the American military; from the economic aggressiveness of American interests; and, he added almost as an afterthought, from the adverse trading position.²⁷ The Prime Minister's imagery of the American leadership began to affect his decision-making in 1960, well before Kennedy became President. His steadily-mounting impression that the United States' leadership was aggressive and its military leaders were

²⁵Basil Robinson interview, September 14, 1992. Interestingly, thirty years later, when asked what he thought Diefenbaker had meant by joint control exactly, Basil Robinson threw his hands up in the air and shrugged. Robinson was not sure that Diefenbaker "fully understood all the jargon."

²⁶John Diefenbaker, *One Canada 1962-1967*, (Scarborough, Ontario: Macmillan-NAL Publishing, 1977), vol. 3, p. 80.

²⁷PAC, Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E 144, vol. 2, file "Memoir, 1960, Chapter 15, diary, #2", August 30, 1960 entry; see also Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 58.

untrustworthy seems also to have been influenced by other first-hand experiences. After establishing NORAD, he came to regard the agreement as having been presented in 1957 on false pretences.²⁸ He was frustrated about his unsuccessful effort to sell the Avro Arrow to the US, and doubly so because he had to acquire American-made interceptors afterwards.²⁹ He also did not want to admit that he had been obliged to personally intervene to ensure reinstatement of the Bomarc programme.³⁰ With the inauguration in 1961 of a young and seemingly impetuous President, Diefenbaker's suspicions grew. They were undergirded by the Bay of Pigs incident in April 1961 and came to entirely preoccupy him once he found the memo, "What We Want from Ottawa Trip".³¹ By 1963, according to George Ignatieff, the Prime Minister's distrust of the US had grown to the point that he truly believed he had been tricked into accepting a defence policy for Canada which was subordinated to a certain type of weapons programme and to the interest of a foreign government.³²

Diefenbaker's distrust of the United States intensified while in office and contributed to his growing fear of entrapment. Yet it is notable that the Prime Minister retained considerable faith in Britain and the other allies. Even during the Berlin crisis in September 1961, the Prime

²⁸ According to an interview of George Ignatieff by Roger Hill, Senior Research Fellow, Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, "Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security Transcripts" [hereafter CIIPS Transcripts], (unpublished transcripts: Ottawa, 1987), p. 104. Notably, these are *verbatim* transcripts of interviews conducted by Roger Hill, David Cox, Nancy Gordon, *et al.* Excerpts from these transcripts are cited with the permission of Roger Hill.

²⁹ According to Ignatieff, "he [Diefenbaker] was told by National Defence after he had signed NORAD, there was no need for such an aircraft, because the United States would take care of all that and they would not buy the Arrow in any shape or form; they had all kinds of aircraft and missiles and we were going into the missile age anyway. And in his fury, I think, Diefenbaker not only made the decision to scrap the Arrow, but he said that every Arrow plane, even the few models that had been made, had to be destroyed." CIIPS Transcripts, p. 118.

³⁰ John Diefenbaker, One Canada: The Years of Achievement 1956-1962, (Toronto: McMillan, Canada, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 51-52, 60.

³¹ For a detailed account of Diefenbaker's growing suspicions once Kennedy came into power, see Nash, Kennedy & Diefenbaker. Nash argues Diefenbaker's perception of the United States shifted because he heartily disliked Kennedy. In fact, Diefenbaker's 'anti-American' imagery began to affect his decision-making in 1960, well before Kennedy became President.

³² As Ignatieff recalled: "It affected his whole attitude in relation to the United States. I mean a lot has been said about his personal antipathy to a young President such as Kennedy. But it had this background in the defence issues, where he felt he had been cornered into a subordinate position and contrary to all his convictions." CIIPS transcripts, p. 118.

Minister was hardly trepidatious that the other NATO allies would draw Canada, unwillingly, into an armed confrontation. One possible explanation for this is that when Diefenbaker dwelled on the intentions of the other NATO allies, he tended to focus on the United Kingdom. He may not have been inclined to suspect British motives because of his attachment to the British Crown. Over time, however, he became more wary of entrapment in an American-led initiative.

2. Critics believed Canada's established military ties to the allies should be restructured and de-emphasized:

Critics sought to revise and restructure Canada's traditional military ties to the other allies. In particular, they opposed increasing the number of Canadian Forces for NATO purposes, including the number of personnel deployed overseas. They were critical of the government's promises to modernize and deploy more weapons systems and equipment to NATO. And they were generally intent upon limiting the percentage of the federal government's defence budget and the percentage of the country's GNP directed toward the Alliance.

With respect to this sort of conviction, it is important to note that between 1957 and 1963, most high-level decision-makers, including Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Howard Green, steadfastly rejected the complete severing of Canada's association with NATO—what they called 'neutralism'. In fact, Diefenbaker claimed that he could not abide neutralists and heaped scorn on James Minifie, "the reigning advocate of neutralism" and a "Washington-based journalist and expatriate for whom Canada wasn't good enough."³³ Nevertheless, among the decision-makers at the centre and core of defence policy-making, Green, Robertson, and Ignatieff, consistently believed the government should restructure its nuclear commitments to NATO. Beginning in 1960, Diefenbaker also sought to de-emphasize Canada's nuclear ties. He did this, for example, by waiving and advocating new proposals like 'joint control' and 'missing parts'—propositions which seemed designed to interminably delay negotiations.³⁴

³³PAC, Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E 144, vol. 2, file "Memoir, 1960, Chapter 15, diary, "#2", August 30, 1960 entry. Notably, James Minifie was the author of a book which argued for Canadian neutrality. Peacemaker or Powdermonkey: Canada's Role in a Revolutionary World, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960).

³⁴For instance, the joint control approach was premised on the condition that the nuclear weapons would not be obtained pending a complete break-down of disarmament negotiations. The missing parts idea was based on the condition that the United States would consent to store the nuclear warheads or parts of the warheads on American soil and, in the event that Canada authorized their deployment during an emergency, the US would undertake to transport the parts to Canada and install them in the Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors.

Further to this point, while Critics recommended Canada de-emphasize and restructure its traditional military commitments to the Alliance, during the early 1960s some Critics did so without first assessing the strategic rationale and implications of the original commitments. For instance, it was sometimes recommended that certain weapons systems be cancelled, reduced or not acquired because Critics worried about their attendant implications for signalling Canada's intentions to escalate, rather than de-escalate, the arms spiral. Instead, Critics frequently recommended options and alternative proposals to Canada's traditional military commitments to NATO because they wanted, above all, to delay or depart from the government's previous course of action or policy direction.

In this regard, there are a number of examples of Green, Robertson, Ignatieff, and Diefenbaker (beginning in 1960) recommending Canada not fulfill its military commitments without fully assessing these commitments' strategic purpose and implications. For example, during the Cuban missile crisis, Diefenbaker's hesitation to alert the Canadian Forces and his impromptu proposal for an "on-site inspection team" enraged President Kennedy and his envoy Livingston Merchant because it indicated the Canadian Prime Minister distrusted their intentions and photographic evidence.³⁵ It was apparent that Diefenbaker had also not explored his own proposal for an on-site inspection team because, as Green pointed out later that week in Cabinet, "the difficulty was [with the on-site proposal] that neither the Russians nor Cuba had denied that missile bases were established in Cuba".³⁶

These decision-makers' opposition to fulfilling the government's military commitments and inclination to advocate alternative proposals was best exemplified by their advocacy of the 'joint control' and 'missing parts' approaches. High-level military advisers, like General Charles Foulkes, argued that the negotiations with the US to acquire the nuclear weapons would need to be based on the principle that the nuclear warheads for the Canadian forces in Europe, and

³⁵ According to Dalton Camp in Peter Stursberg, Diefenbaker: Leadership Lost 1962-1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 19 and Nash, Kennedy & Diefenbaker, p. 189.

³⁶ PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 25, 1962, p. 16, [SECRET].

the interceptors in Canada, would be supplied by the US and remain American property. They also maintained that the nuclear weapons stockpiled in Europe would be guarded by NATO's soldiers, and custody and maintenance would have to remain with the US.³⁷ On the other hand, Diefenbaker, Green, Robertson, and Ignatieff espoused 'joint control'. As Diefenbaker explained, "We have made it equally clear that we shall not in any event consider nuclear weapons until, as a sovereign nation, we have equality of control—a joint control".³⁸

Yet it is unlikely that Diefenbaker fully assessed the strategic rationale of rejecting the nuclear weapons and the military implications of promoting the joint control and missing parts approaches. Together, Green and Robertson, with some assistance from Ignatieff, were the formulators of the joint control approach. As Ignatieff later explained, "We came up with our own formula for defusing the government's nuclear dilemma.... To the beleaguered Prime Minister, this compromise solution was a welcome peg on which to hang his own indecision, and he clung to it even after it became obvious that it wasn't strong enough to save his government."³⁹ The missing parts approach also grew out of the trio's conversations.⁴⁰ Their suggestion that nuclear warheads be stored on American territory and delivered quickly in the event of emergency seemed designed to bridge gaps among opposing viewpoints. The missing parts approach sought to satisfy Diefenbaker's desire for joint control so as to deter American escalatory tendencies; it endeavoured to satisfy Green, who was fervently opposed to nuclear weapons; and it sought to mollify Harkness, who worried about Canada's defence of the deterrent.

³⁷For example, see General C. Foulkes on CBC TV, "Citizen's Forum", November 6, 1960, transcribed in *News & Views*, no. 92, November 22, 1960, p. 11.

³⁸For Diefenbaker's own reference list of his statements referring to joint control, see John G. Diefenbaker Centre [hereafter JGD Centre], Prime Minister's Office, vol. 74, file 10385, "Public Statements by Members of the Government Regarding the Acquisition and Storage of Nuclear Weapons", November 24, 1960. Notably, permission to peruse the original speeches and notes of Prime Minister Diefenbaker was originally granted from the JGD Centre.

³⁹George Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemonger*, (Toronto: Penguin Book), 1985, p. 189.

⁴⁰According to Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 152.

Both the joint control and missing part approaches demonstrated the extent to which these decision-makers were prepared to advocate alternative strategies which were designed to delay or depart from the government's previous course of action. Although their recommendations advocating joint control or missing parts were attributed to ignorance and naivety about strategic matters, they indicated these Critics wanted, above all, for Canada to delay or depart from its previous policy direction toward acquiring nuclear weapons. Indeed, as Ignatieff later admitted, "We knew all along that the [joint control] proposal was no more than a holding action, that the Americans would never accept joint control with regard to the use of nuclear weapons. But in the meantime it did enable Howard Green to wage a number of successful campaigns on behalf of the one cause, which, in his mind, overshadowed all others in importance, namely arms control."⁴¹

3. Critics believed the external threat was exaggerated and misunderstood:

While Defenders believed the Soviet threat was aggressive and opportunistic, Critics tended to believe that the 'Communist threat' was exaggerated and that the evil intentions of the 'Soviet Union' were being misinterpreted.

The most striking evidence of the turn-around in the Prime Minister's assessment of the threat is found in the declassified record of the Cabinet meetings during the Cuban missile crisis. Diefenbaker believed American leaders were exaggerating and misinterpreting the threat from Khrushchev. However, the Prime Minister had begun to project a strikingly different image of the Soviet threat beginning in 1961. During the Berlin crisis, he suddenly noted it should not be overlooked that the Soviet Union had fears too. Although Soviet policies sometimes defied the laws of reason, it was important to seek to understand their vital interests, objectives, and fears.⁴² A few months later, Diefenbaker referred to Mr. Khrushchev as a "realist" who supported "a course of peace—a course of realism—a course in keeping with the

⁴¹ Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemaker*, p. 189.

⁴² JGD Centre, Speech Series Collection, vol. 65, file 996, "Partial Notes for an address to the Canadian Bar Association", Winnipeg, September 1, 1961, p. 22.

choice of the Canadian people".⁴³ By October 1962, Diefenbaker was so preoccupied with the suspicious motives of President Kennedy and other "military leaders" that he hardly paused during Cabinet meetings to consider Khrushchev's intentions—and when he did so, he assumed a relatively benign view of Soviet motives. As was pointed out to his colleagues during the emergency meeting of Cabinet on October 24, 1962, the USSR had some years before a similar reason to complain about American missile bases ringing Soviet territory.⁴⁴ Indeed, many years later, Diefenbaker still maintained that Khrushchev's behaviour during the crisis was cautious and relatively moderate. As he wrote, "Khrushchev went out of his way to cultivate a moderate and reasonable image."⁴⁵

Whereas the threat Diefenbaker perceived from the Soviet Union and Mr. Khrushchev faded over time, his impression of the US as a threat to international peace and security intensified. For instance, instead of criticizing Khrushchev for secretly deploying missiles to Cuba, he lambasted American officials for emphasizing to him that the substance of their photographic evidence was secret and shortly afterwards revealing this information to the press.⁴⁶ Although the depth of Diefenbaker's suspicions was quickly evident to President Kennedy due to Diefenbaker's impromptu proposal for an on-site inspection team, the Prime Minister openly revealed his distrust of American intentions when he told reporters during the crisis that, if his on-site inspection proposal was implemented, "the truth will be revealed."⁴⁷

Diefenbaker also grew increasingly wary about American domestic politics and concerned that certain American leaders were bent on inciting war. As was pointed out in Cabinet in 1962, there were "domestic political overtones in the US decision" to confront the Soviet Union over Cuba. Instead of focusing on Khrushchev's provocative intentions, it was argued that the US could be responsible for provoking war by imposing a selective blockade

⁴³JGD Centre, Speech Series Collection, vol. 87, file 1122, May 28, 1962, p. 2.

⁴⁴PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 24, 1962, p. 2, [SECRET].

⁴⁵John Diefenbaker, *One Canada 1962-1967*, p. 71.

⁴⁶PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 24, 1962, p. 2, [SECRET].

⁴⁷Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 189.

on Cuba.⁴⁸ As the Prime Minister explained to Cabinet, certain military leaders in the US appeared determined to fight the USSR—indeed, three years before, some of them had told him that the United States could defeat the Russians any time before the autumn of 1962, but that the outlook thereafter was less certain.⁴⁹

It seems Diefenbaker's gradual change of heart regarding the Soviet threat stemmed in part from his realization that, "as a matter of survival", it was important the "freedom-loving nations" sought, through the processes of diplomacy, to build on the hope of international peace. Slowly the Prime Minister came to recognize that although Soviet foreign policy would not be transformed, it was possible "to identify and to welcome certain modifications in the Soviet approach to international problems." In particular, Diefenbaker emphasized that the symbolic importance of the Soviet Union's participation in the UN's Special Disarmament Committee could not be disregarded.⁵⁰ The Prime Minister's fluctuating imagery of the threat also stimulated changes in the way he processed information about the Soviet threat. During the Cuban missile crisis, for instance, he suggested to his colleagues that Khrushchev's attempt to deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba was understandable given the United States' prior deployment, within striking distance of the Soviet Union, of nuclear missiles in Turkey. Whereas in 1958 Diefenbaker likely would have condemned Khrushchev for his actions, by 1962 he was trying to empathize and see the strategic situation from the adversary's viewpoint.

In summary, for Diefenbaker (beginning in 1961), and other Critics like Green, and Robertson, the main threat to Canada's security was not the Soviet bloc but the threat of nuclear war arising out of both sides' stockpiles of nuclear weapons. In their view, the greatest threat to Canadians was not the danger of armed attack but the possibility of miscalculated or accidental war escalating uncontrollably. For these influential decision-makers, the threat of

⁴⁸PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 23, 1962, p. 4, [SECRET].

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, October 24, 1962, p. 7, [SECRET].

⁵⁰For early evidence of his changing imagery, see for example JGD Centre, Diefenbaker Speech Series Collection, vol. 30, file 779, speech to Michigan University, Lansing, USA, June 7, 1959, pp. 6, 18, 20.

nuclear war was much more dangerous and salient than the threat from Mr. Khrushchev and Russian missiles in Cuba.

4. Critics believed both sides' weapons were unnecessarily threatening:

Critics tended to view the weapons and force structures of both sides as problematic. They frequently pointed out that many of NATO's weapons systems were unnecessary and might be perceived as overly threatening. In particular, Critics worried that both blocs would regard one another's forces and doctrine as provocative, thus prompting spiralling arms races and the risk of uncontrollable escalation.

As more information circulated in the mid-1950s about the dangers of nuclear war, some decision-makers began to recognize the drawbacks of these weapons and counsel disarmament. For example, the opposition of Green, Robertson, and eventually Diefenbaker to nuclear weapons was partly based on their exposure to information and disturbing facts about the dangers of nuclear war. As Arnold Heeney recorded in his diary, the Minister of External Affairs apparently shunned nuclear weapons. According to Heeney, "My judgment is that this instinctive repulsion for nuclear involvement of any kind is at the base of Mr. G's [Green's] own negative attitude over all defence matters, espec. [especially] where the United States, the great nuclear power is involved."⁵¹ Like his Minister, Norman Robertson was also "absolutely horrified that mankind would seriously contemplate using the nuclear weapon".⁵² As Basil Robinson explains, both Green and Robertson were exposed to the 'anti-nuclear' arguments propounded in the mid-fifties by the peace movement, first in the UK and later in Canada. Robertson particularly took the anti-nuclear viewpoint to heart, believing that once one

⁵¹PAC, Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E 144, vol. 2, file "Memoir, 1960, Chapter 15, diary #2", September 20, 1960 entry.

⁵²Interview of Basil Robinson, September 14, 1992. For more on Norman Robertson's anti-nuclear convictions, see Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World* p. 108; Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, p. 84; and Granatstein, *A Man of Influence*.

understood the effect of a nuclear explosion, the only course was to shun nuclear weapons and put them outside of mankind's experience.⁵³

There is no doubt that the peace movements beginning in Britain in the 1950s and spreading throughout Western Europe and North America in the 1960s and 1980s stimulated many Canadian citizens to think about the dangers of nuclear war and to question the assumptions undergirding deterrence. Letters, marches, and appeals drawing attention to the dangers of war seemed to make an overwhelming impact on some leaders. For some decision-makers, dismantling and destroying nuclear, conventional, biological, and chemical weapons seemed to become the preferred option.

For example, Prime Minister Diefenbaker's beliefs appeared profoundly influenced by impressions he received in the early 1960s as more people began to discuss the dangers of nuclear war.⁵⁴ Diefenbaker's assertions in January 1963 that "nuclear war is indivisible" and "nuclear weapons as a universal deterrent are a dangerous solution" were purportedly based on his reading of the Nassau Communique and ideas expressed by George W. Ball, the American Under-Secretary of State.⁵⁵ But the Prime Minister was also influenced by the mail he received from anti-nuclear groups like the Voice of Women.⁵⁶ Although very much swayed by Howard Green,⁵⁷ Diefenbaker claimed to be considerably affected by the thousands of letters he

⁵³Interview of Basil Robinson, September 14, 1992. Robinson also speculates that Norman Robertson's comparatively early exposure to the peace movement stemmed from his strong interest and close reading of developments in UK politics. See also Granatstein, *A Man of Influence*, pp. 338-339.

⁵⁴Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision*, p. 159; Sevigny, *This Game of Politics*, p. 259. Notably, precise information about the possible effect of nuclear weapons on the general population was not widely circulated until the early 1960s. For instance, the public was not generally made aware until 1963 of the fact that each CF-104 in Europe could carry a one-megaton bomb, equivalent to 1 million tons of TNT, or 50 times as powerful as the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. As Dave McIntosh explained in 1963, "The RCAF division in Europe, with eight squadrons of 18 CF-104s each, would thus have the power to destroy 144 cities at one blow." McIntosh, "Canadian CF-104s in Europe can carry 'Million-Ton' Bomb", *Toronto Star*, (April 16, 1963).

⁵⁵*Hansard*, January 25, 1963, p. 3128.

⁵⁶For instance, see Nicholson *Vision and Indecision*, p. 159; Sevigny *This Game of Politics*, p. 259.

⁵⁷By 1962, Diefenbaker referred to Green as "one of the greatest leaders in the field of disarmament and world peace" and someone who had achieved for Canada "an undisputed place in the field of international affairs and the pursuit of peace for all mankind." JGD Centre, Prime Minister's Papers, vol. 87, file 1122, "International Affairs-Defence Policy", May 28, 1962, p. 3.

received reflecting changes in the general climate of opinion.⁵⁸ Even though Diefenbaker reasoned that people rarely wrote letters except to express opposition, he regarded his letters to be a most useful cross-section of the public's understanding—and sometimes misunderstanding—of the goals the government had set for itself.⁵⁹ Yet it was also true that at other times, if public opinion contradicted his own views, the Prime Minister seemed unaffected.⁶⁰

No doubt, the Prime Minister's well-honed political instincts, his practiced ability to appraise public sentiment, and his many reliable sources helped him to read changes in the electorate's beliefs.⁶¹ Whereas the Prime Minister's 'conversion' to an anti-nuclear stance was not wholly driven by electoral considerations, it is true that Diefenbaker adeptly utilized trends in domestic public opinion to undergird his anti-nuclear arguments; he quickly recognized that anti-American sentiments could be useful to him for electoral purposes; he knew how to capitalize on the "What We Want from Ottawa Trip" memo he found for electoral gain; and he did not hesitate to use the State Department's press release to incite anti-American sentiment during the 1963 election. In other words, the evidence indicates that Diefenbaker tended to

⁵⁸Generally speaking, Diefenbaker greatly relied on letters but not on public opinion polls to detect shifts in public opinion. This is confirmed by Pierre Sevigny's remarks in Peyton Lyon, Canada in World Affairs: 1961-1963 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 71 and Harkness's comments in Peter Stursberg, Leadership Lost 1962-1967, p. 25.

⁵⁹According to JGD Centre, Diefenbaker Speech Series Collection, vol. 59, file 967, "Notes for an Address on 'The Nation's Business'," June 21, 1961, p. 1. Also according to Arnold Heeney's diary, Diefenbaker was powerfully affected by the shift toward anti-Americanism which he detected in his letters beginning in 1959. PAC, Arnold D. P. Heeney Papers, MG 30, E 144, vol. 2, file "Memoir 1959, Chapter 15, diary #1", March 29, 1959 entry.

⁶⁰A case in point was his assertion during a Cabinet meeting in February 1961 that the public's appreciation of the need to have nuclear weapons had been weakened by the government's recent emphasis on disarmament negotiations, but that negotiations to acquire the nuclear weapons should continue. PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, February 17, 1961, p. 2, [SECRET].

⁶¹Notably, there is no indication that polls were heavily influential. In 1961, for example, when the issue of nuclear weapons began to attract greater public attention, the Cabinet briefly discussed poll results but concluded that different polls produced diametrically opposite results. PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, February 17, 1961, p. 2, [SECRET]. Certainly if polls had heavily influenced Diefenbaker and Green, they would have supported the acquisition of nuclear warheads in January 1963 since the polls they saw indicated that a strong majority favoured acquiring nuclear weapons for all the nuclear weapons systems. PAC, Douglas Harkness Papers, MG 32, B19, vol. 57, "'The Nuclear Arms Question', Background Correspondence, memoranda, etc.", "CTV Program Telepol", January 27, 1963.

interpret letters, shifts in public opinion, and changes in the electorate's mood in light of his own gradually-shifting belief system

Notably, an examination of the Prime Minister's own jottings reveal that by 1961 Diefenbaker believed that he himself would somehow be responsible if nuclear weapons were used in a third world war. As he scrawled on his notes for a speech on radio, "the thought of a third world war, especially one in which nuclear weapons would be used is a constant companion of one who has the responsibility and trust which rests on me."⁶² It may have been this sense of responsibility and trust which prompted him to begin cautioning that many of NATO's weapons were unnecessary and might be perceived as posing an offensive threat. Certainly by 1963 Diefenbaker felt compelled to explain to the House of Commons during his Nassau speech that acquiring more nuclear weapons was a mistake and would add nothing materially to our defences. In fact, the Prime Minister claimed during this speech that nuclear war was indivisible; that there should be no further development of new nuclear power anywhere in the world; and nuclear weapons as a universal deterrent would be a dangerous solution.⁶³

In part, Diefenbaker's conviction that both sides' stockpiles of nuclear weapons were unnecessarily threatening seems to have been prompted by his personal sense of responsibility to ensure the survival of millions of Canadians. But this belief probably also grew out of Diefenbaker's regular weekend conversations with Howard Green. This Minister of External Affairs believed nuclear weapons, worldwide, were threatening and dangerous—indeed, their acquisition by Canada might lead, he thought, to spiralling arms proliferation in other regions of the world, including the Middle East, and to heightened dangers of unintentional escalation.⁶⁴

⁶²JGD Centre, Diefenbaker Speech Series Collection, vol. 56, file 950, "Speech on CBC Radio International", May 5, 1961, p. 2.

⁶³Hansard, January 25, 1963, pp. 3129-3130

⁶⁴For example, see PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 23, 1961, p. 6, item c), [SECRET]. Notably, the Cabinet Conclusions did not directly attribute this argument to Howard Green but to 'some' Cabinet Ministers. It is highly probable, however, that it was Green as it is accompanied by other arguments typical of his reasoning (e.g. "It would be a tragic policy for Canada to stockpile nuclear weapons at this time...the

Although Diefenbaker initially assumed nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces were necessary, near the end of his term in office he too believed, like Green and Robertson, that these weapons were a dangerous solution.

The belief that both sides' weapons were dangerously offensive sometimes prompted original arguments and new lines of reasoning. In Diefenbaker's case, he no longer refrained from referring to the possibility of nuclear war but began to put forward vivid and grisly references to its dangerous consequences. Due in part to his practiced rhetorical skills, Diefenbaker excelled at using vivid metaphors (*e.g.* the Pentagon intended to make Canada a "burnt sacrifice"; the Liberal party wanted to make Canada a "nuclear dump"⁶⁵). The Prime Minister's newfound convictions also impelled him to calculate the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons. As he himself pointed out authoritatively in May 1962:

The present day bomb, with the dimension of 100 million tons of T.N.T., would equal the explosive content of 10 million aircraft in the last war. That is why those of us who have the responsibility of leadership—this responsibility that remains with us day and night—carry this fear that through error or mistake we bring about a war that will destroy all mankind.⁶⁶

Indeed, Diefenbaker's assertion that he himself would be responsible through error or mistake for bringing about a nuclear war is explicable only with reference to his new concept of joint control. This original proposal was partly based on his conviction that Canada had to play a more important role in harnessing the United States' possible resort to the use of these devastating weapons.

The perception of NATO's own weapons as unnecessarily threatening also sometimes influenced the way in which Critics filed and interpreted other related information. Once Diefenbaker came to believe nuclear weapons were undesirable, he conveniently overlooked the fact that he had previously favoured acquiring nuclear weapons. As Harkness commented

Canadian example might result in a dozen or more powers, some of them, like the United Arab Republic, in tense and dangerous parts of the world, following the example...").

⁶⁵Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), pp. 388, 392.

⁶⁶JGD Centre, Diefenbaker Speech Series Collection, vol. 87, file 1122, "International Affairs--Defence Policy", May 28, 1962, p. 2.

later, "he convinced himself by some process of self-hypnosis that he had never favoured getting the nuclear weapons."⁶⁷ The Prime Minister's capacity to reinterpret and rationalize the past is best illustrated, however, by his claim during the 1963 election campaign that he had always sought to acquire conventional warheads for the Bomarc missiles and his assertion that "the Liberal party would have us put nuclear warheads on something that's hardly worth scrapping".⁶⁸ Even Diefenbaker's definition of what he meant by 'the nuclear club' was revised to reflect his new-found beliefs. In 1962 he interpreted Kennedy's disarmament plan, announced at the UN, to mean that Canada would contribute to a dangerous expansion of the nuclear club by acquiring nuclear warheads. However, Kennedy had announced there should be no expansion of independent nuclear capabilities to other nations, and not referred to a reduced need for NATO's nuclear weapons systems. Diefenbaker also interpreted the Kennedy Declaration to mean that Canada would now definitely not need to join the nuclear club. Yet the Canadian Joint Chiefs of Staff had previously, in their attempt to present a rationale in support of nuclear weapons, pointed out that the only members of the so-called nuclear club were the four nations which had developed an "independent" nuclear capability—according to the Chiefs of Staff, Canada was seeking an "interdependent capability" to use the nuclear warheads in conjunction with the US and the NATO allies.⁶⁹ Thus, it seems Diefenbaker's reluctance to acquire these weapons affected the way in which he interpreted other related information, including President Kennedy's speeches and the advice he received from the Canadian Joint Chiefs of Staff.

⁶⁷Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker*, p. 296.

⁶⁸Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs*, p. 205. Although Diefenbaker claimed during the election that he had always sought to acquire conventional warheads from the United States for the Bomarc A missiles, there is no denying that the Cabinet, including Diefenbaker, knew in August 1961 that, "There were no conventional warheads for the Bomarc B in production". PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 23, 1961, p. 8, [SECRET].

⁶⁹DND, DHist, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Defence Staff, The Raymont Collection, Series 1, 73/1223, file 303, draft of a Joint Staff Working Paper, "Nuclear Weapons for Canadian Forces", October 11, 1961.

The convictions of Critics about the danger of nuclear weapons also affected the way in which they categorized incoming information. For instance, Green, Robertson, and Diefenbaker did not make strong distinctions between strategic, tactical, defensive or offensive nuclear weapons.⁷⁰ If they categorized Canadian nuclear weapons systems at all, they grouped them according to whether they were destined for deployment on Western European or Canadian soil.⁷¹ Even during the Cuban missile crisis, when Diefenbaker and Green reluctantly consented to begin negotiations to place future Canadian nuclear weapons systems in Europe under NATO's command, these decision-makers steadfastly opposed deploying nuclear warheads on Canadian soil. According to Knowlton Nash, their attitude 'puzzled' high-level military representatives in Canada and the US because Canada seemed about to acquiesce to an offensive nuclear strike role in Europe, yet reject a defensive nuclear role in Canada. It may have been, as Nash argues, that Diefenbaker and Green countenanced nuclear weapons in Europe, which was far away, but were reluctant to accept nuclear weapons in Canada's own backyard.⁷² It is more likely, however, that the long delay before Diefenbaker and Green agreed to pursue negotiations, as well as Diefenbaker's subsequent obfuscation and refusal to sign the papers authorizing their acquisition⁷³, meant that these Critics eventually agreed on

⁷⁰To illustrate, Howard Green pointed out in 1961 in Cabinet that, "In some countries, weapons of limited range might be used for offensive purposes. Such a spread of nuclear weapons would increase the dangers of war." PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 23, 1961, p. 6, item c), [SECRET]. A few years later, when Peyton Lyon interviewed Green in 1965, Green made no distinction between the nuclear weapons based in Canada, with a radius of less than five hundred miles, and the strike aircraft in Europe, which could deliver nuclear bombs well behind enemy lines. Lyon, Canada in World Affairs, p. 118, footnote 114. Years later, however, Green did distinguish between first-strike and second-strike weapons. He argued that Canada should not have become involved in the strike reconnaissance role in Europe, although in late 1962 he had reluctantly agreed to it. The problem was, he explained later, due to "confusion" and "the defence people". As he explained, "With the CF-104s, Canada got herself into the position where we were the strike force in NATO. We should never have got into that position in the first place but the defence people got us into that..." PAC, MG 32, B13, Howard Green Collection, vol. 12, transcript of interview of Howard Green by Edwin Eades, October 21-22, 1980, pp. 79-81.

⁷¹PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 23, 1961, pp. 4-5, [SECRET].

⁷²Nash, Kennedy & Diefenbaker, p. 212.

⁷³As Nash writes, after the Cuban missile crisis, Harkness tried several times to get Diefenbaker to sign the papers authorizing the nuclear weapons for the Canadian NATO forces in Europe, but each time Diefenbaker put him off, saying there was no hurry and that he wanted to sign the deals for all the nuclear weapons systems at the same time. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

October 30th, 1962 to discussions with the US—but only as an unfortunate, yet necessary, compromise to satisfy the allies and Defenders within Cabinet. Certainly the Cabinet records show that on October 30th, Diefenbaker agreed to pursue secret negotiations with the US, led by Green and Harkness, toward "a general agreement" based on the storage of missing parts for the Bomarc and the 101's in the US and premised on the storage of weapons for the Canadian Forces in Europe on bases in Europe.⁷⁴ However, there is no record afterwards that Diefenbaker and Green actually agreed to acquire these nuclear warheads

In summary, therefore, the influential decision-makers at the centre of defence policy-making who abhorred the idea of acquiring any kind of nuclear weapons were Diefenbaker (beginning in 1961), Green, Robertson and, further removed from the centre of decision-making, Ignatieff and General E.L.M. Burns, Canada's adviser to the UN's 18 Nation Disarmament Committee. These decision-makers rejected both sides' nuclear arsenals as unnecessarily threatening.

5. Critics believed deterrence doctrine was unsuitable and unreliable:

Another important characteristic of Critics was their lack of faith in deterrence and tendency to denigrate the assumptions underpinning this doctrine. Critics generally believed that to rely on the Alliance's nuclear forces would increase, not reduce, the likelihood of war. Rather than depend on deterrence to prevent conflicts from occurring, they drew attention to threatening scenarios which they feared could not be averted by deterrence.

In this case, as early as 1961, it was argued during Cabinet's secret discussions that it would be misleading to give Canadians the impression that Bomarc missiles and Voodoos could 'defend' them against nuclear weapons. According to the records of this meeting, an unnamed Minister thought it would be deceptive of the government to let Canadians think the Bomarc missiles and CF-101 interceptors were to protect them.⁷⁵

⁷⁴PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, October 30, 1962, pp. 10-11 [SECRET]

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, August 23, 1961, p. 8, [SECRET].

Despite this Minister's warning that there could be no defence against the enemy's weapons, the idea the Alliance would be able to defend itself in the event of war continued to be common currency among many Cabinet Ministers. The problem which developed for Prime Minister Diefenbaker was that, although he initially subscribed to the view that making preparations for civil defence against nuclear attack was necessary, by 1959-1960 he believed there would be 'total destruction' and 'a shattered world' if nations drifted into nuclear war. Due to such dissonant beliefs about the foreseeable outcome of nuclear war, it probably was easier for Diefenbaker to eventually convert to the view that there could be no defence against nuclear weapons and no winner in a nuclear war. Whereas by 1961 he considered there could be "no margin for doubt about the devastation which could be wreaked on mankind either by intent or by miscalculation," by 1963 he had no hesitation about making stronger references to nuclear war. As he stated, "The day the strike takes place, eighteen million people in North America will die in the first two hours, four million of them in Canada"⁷⁶

Prime Minister Diefenbaker's lack of faith in deterrence began to be evident in 1960. His fear that Canada could not survive a thermonuclear war fuelled his growing lack of confidence in the capacity of nuclear deterrence to avert nuclear war. It is noteworthy that by 1960 other defence policy-makers, like Arnold Heeney, were carefully expressing their doubts about the credibility of the doctrine of 'massive retaliation'.⁷⁷ The Prime Minister did not verse his growing doubts about deterrence doctrine in strategic orthodoxy, however, but responded with his own ideas about joint control. His explanation that, "We took the stand that we would have them available if war ever came—that Canada would then be in a position to have

⁷⁶JGD Centre, Speech Series Collection, vol. 65, file 996, "Partial notes for an address at the Canadian Bar Association Dinner", Winnipeg, September 1, 1961, p. 11; Nash, Kennedy & Diefenbaker, p. 228.

⁷⁷As Arnold Heeney wrote Howard Green in 1960: "This policy of 'nuclear deterrent' and 'massive retaliation', although much maligned in some quarters has, ironically, recently received the highest tribute, that of Soviet emulation. [In January 1960] Premier Khrushchev announced a similar policy for the Soviet Union, based on the striking power of the Soviet ICBM, at the same time declaring the Soviet intention to reduce military forces in the next two years to below levels planned for the United States forces." Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (formerly DEA), file 4901-Y-40, vol. 58, Ambassador Arnold Heeney to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, "The Defence Debate: The Relative Strengths of the United States and the Soviet Union", Washington, March 14, 1960, p. 2, [CONFIDENTIAL].

available to her the best weapons possible" demonstrated a lack of faith in nuclear deterrence, which was based then upon ready-to-shoot missiles and interceptors already-in-place.⁷⁸

Diefenbaker's insistence on the 'missing parts' approach also defied conventional strategic logic. His primary objective seemed to be to delay, and not deploy, nuclear warheads. But Defenders argued that this approach meant that the missing warheads would have to be flown to Canada during a crisis. They maintained that putting parts for nuclear warheads in place during an emergency, or once a war had begun, undermined the survivability of the United States' second-strike capability and belied a lesson of the Cuban missile crisis, which was that a crisis could come to pass in a matter of hours and there would not be time to install missing parts. Yet Diefenbaker reasoned differently. He seemed to assume Canada's espousal of the missing parts approach would contribute to decreasing, not exacerbating, tensions and slow-down, if not prevent, hair-trigger readiness during a crisis. By 1963, when Diefenbaker hinted during his Nassau speech that the "white rocketry" would be scrapped because no one had guessed four years before that the Soviet Union would develop intercontinental missiles, the Prime Minister seemed to understand that both sides' vulnerability meant that what was now important was that the Alliance strengthen its conventional forces. This was imperative in order to avoid, as he put it, "the disastrous choice between surrender and all-out nuclear war."⁷⁹ Thus Diefenbaker's unorthodox suggestions about pursuing joint control, ensuring missing parts, and strengthening the Alliance's stockpile of conventional weapons, seem to have been advanced in order to slow-down escalatory tendencies, raise the nuclear threshold, and curtail the US from overhastily resorting to the use of nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister's search for alternatives, in other words, was premised on a serious concern that nuclear deterrence alone was inadequate as a war prevention strategy.

⁷⁸JGD Centre, Diefenbaker Speech Series Collection, vol. 87, file 1122, "Untitled draft of speech", May 28, 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁹⁷⁹Hansard, January 20, 1963; Diefenbaker One Canada 1962-1967, Vol. 3, "Transcript of Prime Minister's Statement", p. 92

Howard Green's reluctance to rely solely upon nuclear deterrence to prevent war also led him to put forward an entirely different conception of the scenario which would foreseeably arise out of Canada's decision to fulfill its nuclear commitments. As he explained to Cabinet in 1961, if Ministers chose to stockpile nuclear weapons, Canada would provide a bad example to other countries that they, too, had an equal right to provide for their defence. This could result in a dozen or more powers, like the United Arab Republic, following Canada's example in tense and dangerous parts of the world.⁸⁰ Apparently Green foresaw a frightening scenario of dangers which might stem from rampant 'horizontal' proliferation and uncontrollable escalation. Yet it was an unusual scenario for a Canadian decision-maker to advance at that time. Most decision-makers who came to fear nuclear escalation, like Diefenbaker, envisioned nuclear war solely in terms of the prospect of deterrence failing between the two superpowers. Relatively few feared the consequences of horizontal nuclear proliferation. It seems the Minister of External Affairs was willing to think independently about the logic of deterrence and draw attention to alternative scenarios which were accorded little regard by strategists in NATO's upper echelons.⁸¹ As Ignatieff recorded later, "if Green's naivety and lack of sophistication led to some embarrassing incidents, these shrank in significance beside his selfless pursuit of world peace and the determined, often imaginative way in which he explored solutions to international conflicts."⁸²

Conclusion:

⁸⁰PCO, Cabinet Conclusions, August 23, 1961, p. 6, Section c) [SECRET]. Notably, the Cabinet Conclusions did not directly attribute this argument to Howard Green but to 'some' Cabinet Ministers. It is very likely, however, that it was Green as it is accompanied by other arguments typical of his belief system (e.g. "A nuclear war would be quite unlike any wars previously known; it would destroy civilization. There were already enough nuclear weapons in the possession of the U.S. and the Soviet Union to destroy the world and there was no need for more in Canada.")

⁸¹For example, see DEA, Statements and Speeches, no. 62/17, Howard Green, "NATO's most harmonious meeting", House of Commons, December 17, 1962, p. 3.

⁸²Ignatieff, The Making of a Peacemaker, p. 197.

It was asserted that high-level decision-makers like George Pearkes, Charles Foulkes, Douglas Harkness, Arnold Heeney, Hugh Campbell, Frank Miller, and George Hees possessed beliefs typical of Defenders—beliefs which led them during their terms in office to advocate the acquisition of the nuclear weapons. Initially the Prime Minister was also convinced that Canada should acquire these weapon systems, although he became more uncertain beginning in 1959, after Howard Green was appointed Minister of External Affairs. In the early years, however, the presence within the inner circle of decision-making of these Defenders helped lead the government in a direction toward acquiring nuclear weapons. When and why did the government change course?

At the centre and inner core of decision-making, Howard Green and Norman Robertson had underlying belief systems typical of Critics—beliefs which led them between 1959 and 1963 to strongly oppose the acquisition of the nuclear weapons. Green and Robertson, with the assistance of George Ignatieff, sought to delay the acquisition process and to counsel the Prime Minister against acquiring the nuclear weapons. Although the growing peace movement and the domestic public's increasingly anti-American stance also pushed the Prime Minister to rethink the nuclear issue, there is no doubt that 'the trio' sought to delay, if not reverse, the Prime Minister's stated policy in favour of obtaining nuclear weapons.

As for the Prime Minister himself, between 1960 and 1962 his views gradually changed from those of a Defender to those of a Critic. This shift partly accounted for his initial advocacy of nuclear weapons between June 1957 and August 1960, his vacillation and indecisiveness until October 1962, and his rejection of the nuclear commitments in the period between December 1962 and April 1963. Although the Prime Minister wanted to remain a

member of NATO in good standing, he eventually questioned the necessity to acquire nuclear weapons as part of Canada's commitment to the Alliance. Despite pressures from United States' authorities, the media, and military personnel, Diefenbaker became more inclined to the view of Critics—that Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons would contribute to international tensions and increase the likelihood of entrapment in a global holocaust. Although Diefenbaker never questioned the necessity to deploy Canadian Forces overseas in Europe, he equivocated in terms of the nuclear issue. His attitudes toward President Kennedy, the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy's memo, and the release of the U.S. State Department's press release, all contributed to his growing fear of entrapment and reluctance to authorize the nuclear weapons acquisition. Thus, although Diefenbaker's newfound belief system was not the only factor impelling the government to oppose the nuclear weapons, it was significant. Allied with Green, Robertson, and Ignatieff, the beliefs of Critics eventually overrode the convictions of Defenders.

In summary, it seems that many influential decision-makers in the inner circle possessed interlocking belief structures typical of Defenders or Critics. These belief systems are summarized in the following table (see overleaf):

Canadian Thinking about Nuclear Weapons & Defence Policy:

Core Assumptions & Beliefs

Defenders:

- These decision-makers feared **abandonment**.
- They believed Canada should pursue **closer** ties to the allies through **established** kinds of military commitments.
- They believed that the external threat to the Alliance was **opportunistic and aggressive**.
- They assumed Canada and NATO's weapons were **necessary and non-threatening**.
- They believed that **deterrence** doctrine was **suitable** and reliable.

Critics:

- These decision-makers feared **entrapment**.
- They believed Canada's established military ties to the allies should be **restructured and de-emphasized**.
- They believed the external threat was **exaggerated and misunderstood**.
- They believed both sides' weapons were unnecessarily **threatening**.
- They believed **deterrence doctrine** was unsuitable and **unreliable**.

These belief systems shaped and constrained decision-making concerning whether or not to fulfill Canada's Alliance commitments. Although there can be no doubt that a variety of other systemic-level and domestic-level factors interacted to push the government towards acquiring nuclear weapons—and eventually away from its previous commitments—it seems apparent

that the beliefs of key decision-makers also played a significant role in affecting policy outcomes.

Finally, it is interesting to consider that Canada was the only country during this time-period which rejected acquiring nuclear systems although it had the opportunity to possess them.⁸³ Despite the opportunity, capability, and even the knowledge base to acquire or produce our own nuclear weapons, the strong convictions of a few politicians contributed to the government's anti-nuclear stance. Although this stand was short-lived, and incoming Prime Minister Pearson acted quickly to fulfill the government's commitments, a few years later the Prime Minister who finally ordered the phasing-out of Canada's nuclear systems held many of the same underlying beliefs and convictions as Green, Robertson, and Ignatieff.⁸⁴ Whereas the threesome were among the first influential Canadian decision-makers to criticize and oppose acquiring nuclear weapons, the main elements of their beliefs resurfaced in later years with respect to nuclear weapons as well as other NATO commitments, particularly the overseas stationed land forces. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's legacy was that he allowed this sort of questioning and criticism to take place. Certainly, Diefenbaker vacillated, he was indecisive, at times disingenuous. Perhaps he should have downplayed his own concerns about entrapment in an American-led nuclear war or adopted a policy of 'quiet diplomacy'? However, Diefenbaker must be admired for having the temerity and frankness to at least debate these issues, and go against the advice of his own defence experts. He is commendable for being the first Prime Minister, and certainly not the last, to countenance Canada taking an anti-nuclear stand.

⁸³At that time, three NATO nations (the US, the UK, and France) possessed their own nuclear weapons. Five other NATO countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, and Turkey) entered into bilateral agreements with the US under which they would acquire nuclear weapons systems. As a 1968 DND study for the Special Task Force on Europe added, these warheads were to be retained under US custody until their release was authorized by 'joint decision'. DND, DHist, DND for STAFEUR, "Canadian Military Interest in Europe", V 2390-1 (STAFEUR), November 1, 1968, p. 26, [SECRET].

⁸⁴See Simpson "Canada's Contrasting NATO Commitments...", ch. 4, pp. 184-245.