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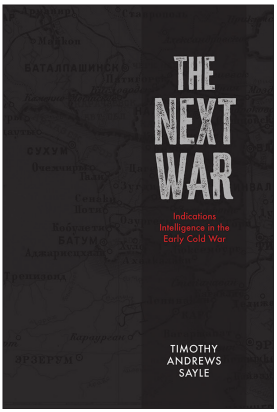

THE NEXT WAR: INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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A Third World War in the Making?

Partner or Prophylactic?

In late May 1944, Canadian troops in the United Kingdom were training to storm the beaches at Normandy. D-Day, June 6, 1944, was more than a week away. France was still occupied, and Hitler's Nazis controlled Europe. But in Ottawa, a group of civilian officials and military officers was already imagining whether and how the next war would come, and what it would mean for Canada.

The Post-Hostilities Planning (PHP) Committee had been established in 1943 to advise the government on a host of issues that would face Ottawa and its allies once the Second World War had been won.[1] What place would Canada occupy in the world after the war? The one place it was certain to be, and which could not be altered by any wish or effort, was its geographic location. Stuck between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Geography put Canada smack in the middle between what, it was clear at the time, would be the two most powerful states in the postwar world. Two states, in fact, that might very well begin a new war against each other. After the defeat of the Axis, advised the PHP Committee, the only nation "physically capable of launching an attack on North America" would be the USSR. If tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were to build, and especially if the United States itself were to begin to "make large scale preparations for hostilities" — that is, to prepare for war — then Canada's position would be "extremely difficult."[2]

This notion — that if war were to come again, it would come between the Soviet Union and the United States — was not just found in the imagination of Canadian officials. Ottawa's allies in both London and Washington also believed that the only possible enemy in the postwar world was the Soviet Union. In July 1944, Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, the chief of the imperial general staff, wrote in his diary that "the main threat 15 years from now" would be the Soviet Union.[3]

The British had a Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, too. It relied on an assessment by the United Kingdom's Joint Intelligence Committee, written in late 1944, to guide its thinking about Soviet strategic interests and possible postwar actions. British intelligence deemed that, after the war, Moscow would undertake a search for "security," including seeking to control buffer zones along the Soviet border. They expected the Soviet Union to "build up a system of security outside her frontiers in order to make sure, so far as is humanly possible, that she is left in peace and that her development is never again imperiled by the appalling devastation and misery of wars such as she has twice experienced within a generation." But would this aggressive search for security lead to conflict with the United States or the United Kingdom? Ultimately, the JIC concluded, the answer would depend on whether these states could "convince the other of the sincerity of its desire for collaboration" rather than conflict.[4]

In January 1945, the United States' Joint Intelligence Committee produced its own "Estimate of Soviet Postwar Intentions and Capabilities." The American JIC's conclusion was similar to the British JIC's: that the Soviet Union would not wish to embark on general war after the Nazis were defeated but would seek security by dominating states on its border.[5]

The prospect of postwar tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union was an obvious possibility, even likelihood, from Ottawa's vantage point in 1944.[6] But this is not to say that Canadian officials thought the Soviet Union wanted war. In both 1943 and 1944, the Canadian ambassador to the Soviet Union, Dana Wilgress, argued consistently that the Soviet Union would prefer peace after the devastating Nazi invasion.[7] The PHP Committee did not think that the Soviets would seek to escalate tensions, but they worried that American oversensitivity to Soviet actions could lead to conflict. Canadians, the PHP noted, would likely take "a much less serious view" of the "potential aggressiveness of the U.S.S.R."[8] than their American neighbours.

Any future war would have serious implications for Canadian sovereignty. In a wartime paper, the Post-Hostilities Planning Committee explained that in the midst of the "present war," — that is, the Second World War — the United States had constructed a number of military facilities in Canada. These facilities, especially air bases, were nominally defensive in nature. But the Canadians knew that these bases were fully capable of serving offensive purposes. And the Soviets knew it, too. If, in the postwar world, the Americans pushed Canadian leaders to develop or lend more such facilities in Canada to the United States, the Soviets might see these as threatening actions with "embarrassing results for Canada."[9] If war came, would Canada have a choice in its role? Or would the United States insist on using Canada as a launching pad, if not battleground, for the war?

Prime Minister Mackenzie King puzzled over these threats. He fretted about Canada's place "lying between the U.S.S.R. on the one side and the U.S.A. on the other." He believed that Canada's position "may have to be worked out with very special care."[10] King, who served as prime minister but also as secretary of state for External Affairs, had at least one senior adviser who thought Canada should avoid any real postwar military planning with the United States. Canada, according to Escott Reid, first secretary of the Canadian embassy in Washington, was a "buffer state between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R." Reid, like some on the PHP, worried that if tensions between the United States and Soviet Union pushed the two states to the brink of war, Washington would put enormous pressure on Ottawa to support the American war effort and lend it territory for bases. He hoped that if Canada remained neutral in any such conflict, "saner counsels may prevail," and Canada might find a way of preventing general war between Canada's giant neighbours. "We could," he wrote, "try and make Canada a chastity belt" between the Soviet Union and the United States.[11]

Reid, who would continue to serve in important roles in the Department of External Affairs until 1962, liked to think big, and to think creatively. The sketch he laid out, in which Canada would avoid any real participation in military planning with the United States, allowed him to imagine and urge his readers to consider a range of options for Canada in the postwar world. But Canada's options were not so broad. King had committed to deep defence relations with the United States in an agreement with President Franklin Roosevelt at Ogdensburg, New York, in 1940, which had created a PJBD with high-level civilian and military representatives from both states. He remained

fully committed to the PJBD with an emphasis on "Permanent."[12] In the post-war world, Canada would find itself beside the United States, both figuratively and literally.

World War Three?

Just how likely did another major war seem as the Second World War came to a close? Given the destruction and devastation in the world of 1944, there was a general sense in Ottawa that it would be at least a decade after this war ended before another one might begin. Germany and Japan, the most recent aggressors, would be defeated. The Soviet Union, while a victor, would be ravaged by war. Nonetheless, the PHP Committee's reports suggest that some Canadian officials worried, as early as the spring of 1944, that a victorious United States might misunderstand or overestimate the actions of the Soviet Union, perceive a threat to Washington from Moscow, and plunge the world back into war.

These were not intelligence appreciations or assessments, per se. Even by early 1945, there was no formal intelligence organization for making assessments on potential Soviet actions, or the risk of war. The Canadian JIC, which had been established during the war in November 1942, coordinated intelligence for the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) by streamlining the army, navy, and air force intelligence services. While the purpose of the JIC was, on paper, "to conduct intelligence studies and to prepare such special information as may be required by higher authority," it seldom carried out these duties; its actual function was to be a communicative vessel for receiving UK and US JIC intelligence assessments.[13] Not until June 1945 did the JIC expand beyond its military branches by incorporating two additional representatives from the DEA and the RCMP. These changes greatly enhanced the JIC's ability to address intelligence demands.[14]

In July 1944, the Canadian CSC directed the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington (CJSW) to query American officers on the prospects of another war. (The CSC consisted of the heads of the Canadian armed services, and the CJSW represented the Canadian military attachés in the United States.) The Canadian officers in the US were directed to ask their American colleagues whether they agreed that there was "no danger of attack on North America" in the ten years after the current war ended.[15]

The responses the Canadians received from their American colleagues were mixed. Some US officers and officials saw "no reason whatever" why

the United States and the Soviet Union might go to war. But the possibility of a war between the United Kingdom and Russia, which would draw the Americans back to Europe, "lurked in their minds."

Other US officers, including the deputy chief of staff of one of the services, said the US could not agree with the Canadian assumption of no danger to North America. Not because of the Soviet Union but because of civil-military politics in Washington. The services were pushing for retaining a large navy and compulsory military service. If word "ever reached the ears of Congress" that war was unlikely, then the US service chief's hopes for continued and even bigger budgets "would be dashed against the rocks." Here was an early and important indication for the Canadians of how the US military's domestic political needs could colour their stated views about the chances of peace, and the difficulty of truly assessing the threat to North America.[16]

There was a variety of opinions in the Government of Canada, too. On one hand, Canadian diplomats in the Soviet Union, and Canadian diplomats in Washington, believed that the problems of postwar "recovery and development" in the Soviet Union were just so vast that war between the US and the USSR in the decade after 1945 was "extremely remote."[17] On the other hand, senior military officers, like Air Marshal Robert Leckie, the chief of the air staff (CAS), believed there was a "grave danger" in assuming there was no possibility of any threat of war, or assuming that there could be no future threat to North America.[18] This does not necessarily reveal disagreement, but a divide between those who thought war unlikely and those who believed it dangerous to plan as if war was unlikely. It was a distinction not easily resolved in the coming years.

What leaders in Washington or Moscow wanted, however, and what they might get, were hardly the same thing. In 1945, Wilgress reported from Moscow that the world had fallen back into that "pre-war game usually described as the 'war of nerves,'" with rumours of troop movements and possible war. He believed it was "this irresponsible readiness to play with fire that makes one uneasy about the ability to avoid conflagrations."[19]

War, it seemed, could indeed come again. But unlike the Second World War, a future general war could come to North America. Ultimately, the PHP Committee, and then the Cabinet War Committee (CWC) itself, agreed that the nature of warfare had changed so much during the Second World War that Canada could not safely assume that North America would be protected in any future conflict.

The great improvements in the range of aircraft meant that Canada would no longer be protected by oceans. And more important, perhaps, neither was the United States. Canada lay "across the shortest air routes from either Europe or Asia," and Canada was now "of more direct strategic importance to the United States." The result was that the "defence problems of Canada and the United States must now be considered as inter-dependent."[20]

This prospect of future conflict appeared vague and abstract, yet even the slight possibility of another war would affect how the United States acted. And while Canadian officials did not expect that Washington would return to the isolationism of the interwar years, they worried that those instincts may reappear in a new guise, as "a militant form of continental defence-mindedness."[21] The Americans might try to huddle down on the continent, ignore the rest of the world, and build Fortress America.

As the base-building and other co-operative efforts of the Second World War had revealed, a Fortress America would really need to be a Fortress North America, with Canada used as a staging ground for both offensive and defensive operations. It had become obvious to the CWC during the war that the existence of sprawling US air bases in Canada could "impair Canada's freedom of action."[22] In a postwar world marked with tensions between the US and the USSR, would Canada have any freedom whatsoever to make decisions of war and peace?

In the Canadian view, in early 1945, the threat to North America may have been a theoretical possibility but remained practically minimal. Ultimately, the nation's senior leaders, the Cabinet War Committee, believed that "security on the continent depends on the maintenance of peace in Europe and Asia." If there had been "any single lesson" of the current war, they agreed, it was that "no nation can ensure immunity from attack merely by erecting a defensive barrier around its frontiers." For Canada, the "first lines of defence" were not the oceans and air corridors of North America, but "far out into the Pacific in the West and to Europe in the East."[23] But did the Americans see it the same way?

Toward a Shared Appreciation

A series of meetings between Canadian and American officers in late 1945 and into 1946 revealed some of the main differences in thinking between the two nations on postwar defence issues. The root of disagreement lay in a different interpretation of the lessons of the last war.

In June 1945, the Nazis had been defeated but the war in the Pacific was not yet over. The Americans were already organizing their defences for a postwar world. At a meeting of the PJBD, US major general Guy Henry asked his Canadian counterparts a whole slew of questions about future joint defence efforts. What did Canada think of the postwar defence value of all the bases that had been built in northwestern Canada during the war? Would Canada collaborate with the Americans, as part of the US effort to organize the republics of North and South America for defence after the war? Would the Canadian public accept closer defence ties with the US? Would the United Kingdom be concerned by closer Canadian coordination with the Americans?[24]

The Canadians took time to try and develop answers to Henry's questions. While the US officers spoke about a new system of defence and closer relationships, the Canadians "had no indication" of just what the Americans were thinking. Any joint defence planning, the Canadians insisted (to themselves), "should enjoy a two-way flow of information."[25]

A few months after Henry's questions, Brigadier-General Maurice Pope offered the Canadian response in the September meeting of the PJBD. He pointed out, frankly, that Canada had no information whatsoever on just what the US Army or Navy views were on joint defence. He also recalled grievances over the installations and bases the Americans had built in Canada during the war, which the Canadians did not think to be militarily valuable at that time or since. In the future, he said, Canada needed to be "made more fully aware" of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) "appreciation" of defence requirements. The phrase "appreciation" is key here; it was the Canadian phrase used instead of what the Americans would later call an "intelligence assessment." If indeed the US-Canadian defence effort was going to be joint and permanent, Pope was saying, the two countries needed to have a shared intelligence appreciation: Canada and the United States should "seek to agree as to the international picture of the coming post-war period in so far as this has a bearing on the question of North American defence."[26]

To achieve these goals, Pope continued, it was necessary to revise an earlier joint appreciation made in 1941, ABC-22, and "bring it into line with our new joint appreciation of our defence position." Tipping the Canadian hand somewhat, he said he doubted that "a military appreciation of our North American defence position over the next one or two decades will lead to the conclusion that the northern half of our territories is threatened with invasion."[27]

Pope, who had served on the Western Front in the First World War and in senior leadership positions in the Canadian Army during the Second World War, was worried about a third. He told his US counterparts that if a major war were to return to the world, he assumed that the "main Canadian effort will again consist of furnishing Armed Forces outside North America" while the American effort would be different.[28] His implication was that, as in the First and Second World Wars, Canada would join any conflict at its outset, while the Americans would again delay their entry into war.

The Americans bristled at Pope's comments. When they responded to Pope in November, they challenged the idea that if war came again, Canada would make "her military effort overseas on a timetable separate and far in advance of that of the United States." The Americans insisted they had learned a different point from the Second World War, and now "lean[ed] to another interpretation of history."[29] "It seems to us," said J. Graham Parsons, an American diplomat and the most senior member of the US delegation to the PJBD, that "the basic lesson of history is that in a world war the intervention of the United States is decisive."[30] And if the Americans had drawn this lesson, so too, they expected, would have potential adversaries.

"Under conditions of modern technology," Parsons continued, "we feel that a future Hitler would read the basic lesson of history correctly and regard the North American industrial base as his first target." He offered confident betting odds ("four to one") that "in any future world conflict, war would be brought to us here rather than that we would again be allowed to defend our continent in Europe or in Asia." Airplanes carrying atom bombs, he warned, would also strike Canada: "[i]f Detroit and Buffalo are attacked, Windsor and Hamilton will not be immune."[31]

This vision of future war was more significant than just an exchange across a board table. Pope had called for a revision of the 1941 appreciation. The US members of the PJBD obliged.[32] The Americans wanted the revision to take account of their expectation that North America would be a target, and an important target, for any future adversary. This was the postwar case for building a Fortress North America.[33]

These early discussions between Americans and Canadians about the future of war in the postwar world were held between military officers on the PJBD. But the strategic and political issues associated with joint defence planning were of great importance to King and the Cabinet. Because defence plans might involve questions of a US presence in Canada and raise issues of

sovereignty, the government wanted to ensure that development of joint plans with the United States, and the appreciations on which they were based, not be left solely in the hands of the military.[34] Similarly, the Canadians wanted American views that were not the product only of the US military, with their internecine budget squabbles, but also the views of civilian diplomats in the State Department.[35]

In December 1945, after "considerable discussion," the Cabinet approved the creation of a new institution for joint defence planning with the United States. This new body, the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC), was to operate under the auspices of the PJBD and be responsible for developing an appreciation and then plans for the defence of North America. The Cabinet noted, however, that "any plans for joint defence had to be submitted to government," ensuring civilian oversight of the MCC's work.[36]

The Cold War Begins

The first meeting of the Military Cooperation Committee was held in May 1946. Canadian officers travelled to Washington to meet their counterparts. The two sides produced drafts of both an "Appreciation of the Requirements for Canadian-United States Security" and a "Joint Basic Security Plan" (BSP) for consideration by both governments. The BSP consisted of "essential war plans, that is, what facilities, personnel and material are considered necessary on the outbreak of war" with an unnamed enemy.[37] The plan was informed by the appreciation, which was a planning and intelligence document.

But between the creation of the MCC at the end of 1945 and before the May MCC conference, the Cold War had begun. In September 1945, Igor Gouzenko, a cipher clerk of the GRU (Soviet Main Intelligence Directorate), defected in Ottawa. The documents he smuggled out of the Soviet embassy revealed extensive espionage in Canada and the United States, including spying on the atomic bomb program. In February 1946, Joseph Stalin gave a speech interpreted by some in the West as a declaration of "World War III." In the months leading up to the May conference, there was a flurry of diplomatic reporting and intelligence analysis as American, British, and Canadian officials tried to determine whether Stalin's speech indicated a Soviet desire for hostilities.

In early 1946, the UK JIC began updating its paper on "Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions," filling a gap in analysis left since the 1944 wartime assessments of the Soviet Union.[38] Intelligence on the Soviet Union remained

sparse. As one Foreign Office official observed, the amount of information available was "insufficient for a proper intelligence appreciation," and the committee had, "as in 1944, to crystal gaze rather than to marshal facts and figures in such a way that deductions are inescapable."[39]

Lacking any secret intelligence on Soviet intentions, it was diplomats who provided the most crucial, and compelling, analysis of Soviet intentions. It was in response to Stalin's speech that George Kennan wrote his famed "Long Telegram" to the State Department from Moscow. Kennan's telegram laid out the challenges the Soviet Union would pose to the international system, but he ultimately concluded that the problems posed by Moscow were "within our power to solve — and . . . without recourse to any general military conflict."[40] In March, Frank Roberts, the British ambassador to the Soviet Union, wrote the British equivalent: a lengthy dispatch in which he predicted continuing tensions with the Soviet Union but stressed the possibility, even the need, for coexistence.

That same month, Dana Wilgress offered the Canadian version of the "Long Telegram," asking a question that would dominate Canadian intelligence assessments for the next five years: "[a]re the Soviet leaders prepared to risk another major war in the near future?"[41] Wilgress gave a negative answer. Moscow was in no position to wage war and would not risk provoking one on purpose. At the same time, however, the flux in postwar world affairs would tempt the Soviets into trying to achieve more gains: they would seek to prosecute a "war of nerves" and succeed unless their bluffs were called. The diplomatic analysis, then, pointed toward a tense and difficult future, but not one in which the Soviet Union was likely to choose war.

The draft appreciation presented to the MCC in May 1946 was a stark contrast to the dispatches from abroad. Where the diplomats thought war unlikely and unwanted, the appreciation jumped forward to what would happen in the event a war had begun. This reflects the purpose of the document itself, which was to appreciate the military resources required in case of war.

While the appreciation was presented as a joint MCC document, it was, fundamentally, an American military intelligence paper. Up to this point, almost all intelligence distributed or briefed to joint US-Canadian efforts, including at PJBD meetings, had been provided by the United States.[42] The draft appreciation followed this pattern, even down to the traditional American practice of not naming potential enemies.

Rather than assess the likelihood of war, the paper dwelled on the possible vulnerability of North America in the event of another world war. With the development of the atom bomb, but also rockets, guided missiles, submarine warfare, and biological warfare, North America was losing its "immunity" to war. While the paper admitted "major invasion" of North America was unlikely in the next several years, it assumed an enemy could develop and produce an atomic bomb in the next three to five years.[43]

War might come, the drafters explained, if a "major world power" were to start a war in Europe and overrun the continent. In that case, the United States and Canada would intervene on the side of Great Britain. And such a war would not remain limited to Europe. The US-drafted appreciation bore the imprint of the historical lessons previously described by the Americans on the PJBD: the power that conquered Europe would subject the United States and its war-making potential to attack, for "[h]ostile powers would not forget that in World War I and II this potential was the decisive factor."[44] Any state that attacked Europe would be driven to also attack North America. By 1950 or so, an atomic-armed enemy that controlled Europe would seek to use Iceland, Greenland, and even Labrador and Newfoundland as "springboards" to attack North America from the east. Alaska and northern Canada would provide launching pads from the west.[45]

On one hand, then, the appreciation was extremely specific, even to the point of certainty, in rendering a grim future in which a power managed to conquer Europe and then extend its attack against North America. On the other hand, it was purposefully vague as to what state would take this action, let alone why. When the Canadian team had wanted to discuss and assess "the intentions of potential enemies," the Americans would not agree, and so the appreciation did not include any discussion of whether the Soviet Union intended to launch a war, or whether such a war was even likely.[46] The Canadian team at the conference accepted the paper pending further consideration in Ottawa.

The appreciation, if read on paper, had obvious gaps. To try and overcome its deficiencies, Canadian intelligence officers presented the paper to the prime minister and the Cabinet Defence Committee (CDC) he chaired. The intelligence officers then orally explained what was left out of the paper: that the only real threat was the Soviet Union.[47]

Still, the briefing by Canadian officers could not alter the fact that the appreciation was the work of American intelligence officers. The formal brief

to the CDC observed that the "Canadian Intelligence organization is not sufficiently developed to be able to produce very much material from its own sources, nor is it yet capable of assessing the value of Intelligence from other sources."[48] The Canadians had sought to double-check the American figures against a small amount of information they had received from the Royal Air Force (RAF). Still, the paper was ultimately based "largely on the United States assessment of the scales and probabilities of attack against this continent" and the Canadian Chiefs of Staff were "not in a position to offer useful comment on the Intelligence background on which this Appreciation is based."[49]

The intelligence available to the United States was also limited. And perhaps unbeknownst to the Canadians, there was disagreement in the US as to whether and how to understand Soviet intentions. In July 1946, the Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), the analytical section of the Central Intelligence Group — the immediate precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — submitted its first report, "ORE 1: Soviet Foreign and Military Policy." The analysts concluded that the Soviets might, due to their ideology, be interested in world domination. But ORE 1 judged that a "resort to force is unlikely in view of the danger of provoking a major international conflict."[50] Like the 1944 and 1945 analyses, ORE concluded that Soviet military policy derived from "preoccupation with security which is the basis of Soviet foreign policy."[51]

At the same time, in Washington, the US JIC submitted its own estimate. Published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS 1696 was written in a more alarmist tone than the ORE paper. While it did not contradict ORE 1, it painted a grim picture of a future war with the Soviet Union in which gas and germ warfare would accompany atomic destruction.[52] The United States, then, was producing uncoordinated, if not quite conflicting estimates: one from the civilian ORE and the other by the US JIC, subordinate to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[53]

Whether or not Canadian officials were privy to the ORE assessments, they were privy to the reporting of their own diplomat, Wilgress, and also the thinking of State Department officials like George Kennan (whose analysis matched more closely with the civilians at CIG).

The disconnect between the intelligence appreciation from the MCC and the diplomatic assessments worried Canadians in the Department of External Affairs. They did not want Canada's postwar defence policy based on the type of intelligence provided by the US military to the MCC. Further complicating matters was sensitivity in the Department of External Affairs that the MCC's appreciation had overstepped its bounds.

Hume Wrong, the associate deputy under-secretary of state for External Affairs, believed that the appreciation had strayed out of the military's lane and into the DEA's responsibilities. While Clerk of the Privy Council and Cabinet Secretary Arnold Heeney, Canada's top civil servant, accepted that it was the job of military advisers to assess military capabilities, he pointed out that it was the DEA's "to estimate the possibilities of the outbreak of such a war."[54] The MCC appreciation had seemed to estimate the possibility of war by assuming it could happen, and several senior DEA officials believed that estimate was off base.

Heeney and Wrong, along with Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (USSEA) Norman Robertson, were wary of the appreciation. In general, they agreed with the basic thrust: North America was more vulnerable now than it had been in the past. And yet they believed that the appreciation was overly alarming, and no basis for national policy.[55]

The embarrassing situation caused by the paucity of Canadian intelligence gathering or intelligence analysis capability, combined with the Department of External Affairs' claim to responsibility, provided a catalyst for action. The result was the first attempt to draft a Canadian strategic appreciation of the Soviet threat to North America.

First Try

In early July, the Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee directed the preparation of a report titled "Strategic Appreciation of the Capabilities of the U.S.S.R. to Attack the North American Continent."[56] The paper, which was really a compilation of various shorter papers drafted by the separate intelligence branches of each service, was a failure. It was repetitive and deemed not suitable to be sent to the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Where the intent or expectation had been to determine the various "forms and scales of Soviet attack" that might be expected against Canada, the paper focused almost entirely on assessing a full-scale attack — similar to the MCC appreciation.[57]

G. G. "Bill" Crean, a member of the Department of External Affairs who would play an important role in the development of the Canadian intelligence structure, was especially critical of the paper. Crean, who had served in British intelligence in the war, thought it "seriously over-estimated"[58] Soviet capabilities. His comments on the paper mark the first example of civilian officials working to try and shape and restrain military assessments of the Soviet threat.

Where the paper had focused on what might happen if the Soviet Union launched a full-scale attack, Crean thought this was the wrong track and led to the wrong result. To him, the "chief value of a paper of this kind is not so much to show how successful the Soviet[s] would be, but really to show how difficult operations would be against the North American Continent."[59] Crean believed the idea of the Soviet Union launching a full-scale attack against North America in the near future was fantasy. He argued that it was unreasonable, at least in the next five to ten years, to expect the Soviet Union to choose war and direct all of its energies at North America. This contention would be a major sticking point in future analyses of the Soviet threat for decades to come.

By the end of the summer of 1946, the Canadians had started work on their own strategic appreciation but had not yet formally approved the joint MCC appreciation. The Cabinet remained wary of accepting any joint plans with the United States, especially ones based on a US appreciation.

US diplomats were sympathetic to the Canadian delay in approving the MCC papers. The US ambassador in Ottawa, Ray Atherton, assumed the delay was part of the postwar transition in Ottawa, as Canada looked to the US, rather than Britain, for guidance in world affairs.[60] He perhaps did not realize how much the Canadian experience with the Americans during the Second World War had made the Canadians wary.

American patience started to run out as Americans grew increasingly worried about the Soviet threat in August 1946. Soviet propaganda, according to US analysts, had reached a "fever pitch." Two US aircraft were shot at over Yugoslavia, with one forced down and the other destroyed. And the Soviets were putting enormous pressure on Turkey over the Straits of the Dardanelles, insisting that the Soviets and Turks share responsibility for the defence of the straits. This bid for influence and control over Turkey and the straits would be one of the most significant moments in the early Cold War.[61]

As a result of these events, all of which occurred in the middle two weeks of August, a US intelligence "Special Study" in late August warned that "consideration should be given to the possibility of near-term Soviet military action."[62] The study, conducted by the civilian Central Intelligence Group (the precursor to the CIA), maintained that there was no information that the Soviets were halting their postwar demobilization program (in fact they were accelerating it). Yet nor were there indications of Soviet or satellite troops concentrating, moving, or building-up supplies. The report concluded that

the events of August should be "interpreted as constituting no more than an intensive war of nerves." Nonetheless, the tensions of August likely propelled the Americans to press the Canadians for an answer on the MCC appreciation.

In early September, the US representatives on the Permanent Joint Board of Defence tried to push the Canadians forward on the issues of joint planning, air defence, and the establishment of US bases in Canada. The US Army member wrote a letter to the board (the formal way in which members communicated and put key points on record) and used the appreciation as the lever. He noted that the "outstanding feature" of the joint appreciation, to which all members had agreed, was that in approximately five years "a potential enemy will be able to inflict serious damage on the vital areas of Canada and/or the United States by aerial bombardment,"[63] delivered via aircraft or guided missiles, and potentially including atomic bombs. Crucially, he observed that "military principles have in the past laid down that the best defense is the offense,"[64] but noted that strategic offensive plans were outside the scope of this defence plan. The note from the US Army member, then, contained two red flags for the Canadians. First, that a joint appreciation, agreed to by the Canadians but based on US intelligence, could be used as a lever to shape Canadian defence policy. Second, that planning purely for defence was partially artificial, as it ignored what would actually occur in war.

The Importance of Combined Intelligence

Senior Canadian military officials were aware of the political difficulty inherent in trying to gain Cabinet approval for military planning based solely on American intelligence. They needed a Canadian solution.

In October, the Joint Planning Committee (JPC), a subsidiary committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and one which included a DEA member, reviewed the Canadians' almost exclusive reliance on American intelligence in joint US-Canadian efforts. The JPC suggested that future intelligence briefs or appreciations drawn up for either the MCC or the PJBD should be the work of a "*combined* Canada-United States intelligence team."[65] While acknowledging that the majority of information that made up any assessment would come from the Americans, the JPC argued it should be "interpreted and presented on a combined basis." In a nod to a growing concern in the DEA, the JPC also recommended that it would be desirable to have representatives of the DEA and the State Department take responsibility for a combined diplomatic appreciation that would form a portion of any overall assessment.

It is difficult to overstate the skepticism that Canadian and American civilians, in the Department of External Affairs and in the State Department respectively, held for the judgment of military and naval officers. Up until the autumn of 1946, the joint planning and the drawing up of the appreciation had been the preserve of the military. As Crean had noted in his comments on the first Canadian strategic appreciation, the result was to focus on worst-case scenarios and the possibility of general war.

Lester Pearson, writing from his post as ambassador in Washington, reported that his interlocutors in the State Department, men like John Hickerson who sat on the PJBD, had "a profound distrust of the military mind and all of its works — a distrust which he does not hesitate to express in no uncertain terms."[66] Pearson, from his long dealings with the Americans, knew of the sometimes impenetrable barrier between the State Department and the Pentagon. He was one of the most powerful voices pushing for civilian involvement in the development of appreciations, and the need for conversations between the DEA and State.

American planning was not put on hold just because Canadian diplomats wanted more control. While the form and process for future US-Canadian intelligence appreciations remained in limbo, the United States continued to develop military plans for the new Cold War world. In early November, Canadian officers were invited to participate in secret tripartite staff talks with the Americans and the British — plans distinct and separate from the MCC discussions about the defence of North America. Pearson was initially hesitant but came to see the value for Canada. "The more I think of it," he wrote, "the more I am convinced that a joint appreciation and forecast of the global strategic situation, developed by our two great prospective Allies in another war, would be of great value in reaching intelligent decisions on our own domestic policies, provided that is well done and carries conviction." Canada could not plan its defence policy — the example he provided was regarding air defence — "except in the light of some authoritative appreciation concurred in by both the U.S. and the U.K. of the conditions and theatres in which another war is likely to be fought and decided."[67]

Pearson was realistic enough to understand that the US and the UK would be planning for war, and that Canada's defence policy would be shaped by both the appreciations and subsequent plans made by those larger powers. At the same time, he wanted to ensure that those appreciations were the work of the civilian leaders in each country.

As Pearson came to see the advantage of Canada participating in global military planning, and not just North American defence, the broader issue of US-Canadian joint defence planning came before the prime minister and the Cabinet Defence Committee. The day before the committee met, on November 12, 1946, Pearson made a significant intervention. He wrote to King, warning that if the Soviet system did not change, "the U.S.S.R. is ultimately bound to come into open conflict with western democracy." While war was not inevitable, Pearson warned the prime minister to "not make the mistake we made with Hitler, of refusing to take seriously the words those leaders utter for home consumption."[68] A new war, however, might feature atomic bombs. Pearson offered his prime minister some hope: "All this does not mean war today or tomorrow. I cannot believe that [the Soviet Union] . . . would be ready to strike in five or ten years. But," he continued, "the way the world is now going, there can only be one ultimate result — war."[69]

King, in receipt of this gloomy warning from Pearson, chaired the CDC on November 13. Intelligence officers briefed him on the MCC appreciation and its conclusions that North America "could no longer be regarded as immune from air attack,"[70] and that a potential aggressor might hold the atomic bomb in a few years. They made clear to King and the other CDC members that the intelligence was American in origin. While the Canadian officers did not dispute the intelligence — indeed they agreed with it, and pointed out they had compared it to British assessments — they were wary of the broader plans the Americans were developing based on the appreciation. For instance, Robert Leckie, the CAS, told the committee that he did not agree with the American assumption that the Soviet Union would try to neutralize the continent through bombing. He expected attacks of a diversionary nature only. He thought the Americans plans for air defence were "extreme," and the situation did "not warrant the establishment of an elaborate defence scheme employing our resources in a static role."[71] The CAS, clearly, was wondering if the Americans were envisioning a wartime role for Canada as the gendarmerie of the North America skies, on patrols at home and with no offensive role.

The next day, the situation repeated itself in front of the full Cabinet, with the Chiefs of Staff again present and intelligence officers briefing all ministers on the MCC's draft appreciation and draft basic security plan. Major William Anderson, head of the Intelligence Branch, was the primary briefer and took two hours to offer what King thought to be an "exceptionally well performed" briefing. King wrote in his diary that he thought the rest of the Cabinet were

"profoundly impressed." He even acknowledged that the information was "largely based on American sources," but seemed to take some comfort in the fact the information had been checked against the UK's. King, seemingly having taken Pearson's memorandum to heart, wrote that "the world situation is infinitely more dangerous than we have yet believed it to be. It would almost seem that we are headed into an inevitable conflict." If there were to be a war, he wrote, it "may result in a sort of Armageddon."[72] King was "coming to the belief that a third world war is in the making although it may take a decade to bring it on."[73]

The problem of joint planning, bases, and adapting Canada to "the military situation today," he wrote, "is the greatest problem which the Canadian Government has been faced since the war."[74] King, however, remained cautious. He was deeply concerned about the costs of defence, and worried that new military plans would cause the budget to explode. He worried, too, about bases and "competitive arming in the North," fearing this might begin a sort of arms race that "will not end until there has actually been war."[75] Going down this dreary road, King even began to imagine a scenario by which the Canadians and the United States built bases in the Arctic that the Soviet Union was then able to capture and use against North America.[76]

US-Canadian Differences

In November, in the days after the intelligence briefings for Cabinet, Brooke Claxton, the minister of National Health and Welfare (but soon to become minister of National Defence), wrote to King and emphasized "in the strongest terms" the "fundamental difference in the concepts of the American and Canadian staffs."[77] These differences lay in how the Canadians and the Americans interpreted the joint appreciation. The Americans, Claxton wrote, "say that they are to be the object of the main attack," while the Canadians say North America "would be the object of a diversionary attack."[78] The Americans' plans, and the level of Canadian defence expenditure and the bases the plans would require, were based on American fears that the Canadians did not share. Claxton warned that continuing to base plans on the American interpretation of the appreciation would be beyond Canada's capacity and would only achieve "a Maginot line across the north of Canada" — a reference to the enormously expensive, and ultimately ineffective, French defences against Germany built before the Second World War.[79]

Up to this point, delay had been King's preference. But, as Claxton warned, if Canada continued to wait, planning would continue, bit by bit, and "each day we allow them [the Americans] to continue along the present course" would "commit us further to acceptance of that course."[80] A high-level meeting was required, to prevent the Government from entering "upon the most important action in the peacetime history of the country on the basis of a possible misunderstanding."[81]

While scholars may, in hindsight, neatly divide foreign and domestic policy, the King Cabinet believed that its defence plans had become a "matter of major external and internal policy for Canada."[82] And the defence plans were, ultimately, derived from an intelligence appreciation made not by Canadians but by Americans.

Claxton's letter pushed discussion back into Cabinet. Ministers in Cabinet decided that before they could approve any defence plans, they would require a truly "agreed appreciation," one "prepared with the greatest care and only after full discussion between the two governments on the diplomatic level."[83] In the meantime, the Canadians would assure the Americans they would continue to participate in draft planning but would not yet concur in the draft joint appreciation.

The insistence on a joint appreciation, and one arrived at after input from diplomats from both countries' foreign service, was guaranteed to put the existing appreciation, "largely a military document," on ice. The Canadian effort then proceeded on two tracks: talks between the Department of State and the Department of External Affairs, and an effort to develop "a purely Canadian appreciation" that could be used to inform the Canadian position in discussions of a new joint appreciation with the Americans.[84]

US-Canadian Agreement

Diplomats from the Department of External Affairs were directed to examine, with their State Department colleagues, an "estimate of Soviet intentions (as distinct from Soviet military capabilities)."[85] Those tasked with the examination were permitted to assume that threat of Soviet aggression was real, but they were to consider where and when aggression any might occur.

Critically, given the Cabinet's concerns about air defence and US bases in Canada, the diplomats were to "raise the general question as to whether the principal threat of war is likely to arise in Europe or whether an 'all-out' attack on the North American continent is a probability."[86] The question of

"when" an attack might be expected would affect the "tempo and scale of our defence planning."[87] The DEA already seemed convinced the existing joint draft appreciation overestimated the likelihood of an attack on North America. Furthermore, as the American PBJD representatives had said quite plainly that they viewed offence as the best defence, it seemed likely that the US and Canada would end up fighting in Europe again. For the Canadians to make the best decision about its defence policy, they needed to know about US global strategy.

In late November, officers of the Department of External Affairs drafted a "Political Appreciation" meant to assess the prospects (rather than the capability) for Soviet aggression. The document was drafted to prepare for the meeting with the Americans, but it would also serve as the text for an important component of the Canadian appreciation drawn up in 1947 (see below).[88] In December, Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Louis St. Laurent agreed to loan these documents to the Americans in December 1946, as a preview of Canadian thinking. It was, in effect, an early and informal version of sharing intelligence analysis.[89]

The process driving the drafting of the political appreciation was fundamentally different than the MCC appreciation that assessed Canada-US security needs in case of a full-scale attack on North America. The discussion and analysis now revolved around the much more difficult challenge of appreciating what might happen, and not simply planning for the worst case.

In December, Pearson and a group of Canadian officials met with the American ambassador, Atherton, and several US experts and military officers to discuss the draft joint appreciation and the basic security plan. The meeting occurred in a "most frank and cordial atmosphere."[90] This was significant for the Canadians, who recalled much more adversarial meetings with the Americans in 1941. "Happily," Pearson wrote, "it is some years since there has been any table-pounding in defence discussions between the two countries."[91]

Pearson began the meeting by laying out the Canadian analysis in the political appreciation: that "there was only slight risk of aggression on the part of any potential enemy, such as the Soviet Union, in the near future."[92] The Soviet Union would, in the meantime, strengthen its economy and build up its war potential. The United Nations, Pearson said, "would be ineffective in maintaining peace," and so it was only prudent for Canada and its allies to make preparations for security. George F. Kennan, the renowned Soviet expert, and father of the American Cold War policy of containment, had read

the Canadian paper and agreed in general with its conclusions. He sketched his vision of containment: that the democratic countries could "exert some influence" on the Soviets and prevent them from "attaining by aggressive policies things it was essential to deny them."[93] The Americans said they had already set down "stop lines" to Soviet expansionist policy, a reference to Turkey and Iran.

Heeney picked up on Kennan's point regarding influence to emphasize the Canadian view that there was bound "to be some element of provocation in the overt planning of joint defence measures in the Arctic."[94] The DEA officials, from the very beginning of their consideration of Soviet intentions, understood that Western strategy, even planning and base-building, would and could influence Soviet actions. For decades to come, the Canadians would be wary that defensive moves in the West would appear as offensive measures to the Soviets, who in turn would take defensive actions that would appear offensive.

The Canadians then moved the discussion to try and learn more about American global strategy and general strategic planning beyond the defence of North America. General Henry, returning to the theme of his PJBD comments earlier in the year, said that if war were to come in five or six years, the major Canadian and US military effort should be outside North America. But over time, as enemy technology — that is Soviet bombers and possibly missiles — were developed and built, the proportion of effort spent on the defence of North America would have to increase.[95] The American strategic concept for "any future war would be to develop the maximum fire power at the greatest effective distance away from North America."[96] And while North America had to be secure, the Americans said they did not favour "the enormous diversion of resources" necessary to provide "one hundred percent protection for North America."[97] This was a far more nuanced description of American strategic thinking than presented in the MCC plan and appreciation, which had only focused on continental defence.

This meeting was of crucial importance. First, Canadian officials found themselves in close agreement with their State Department colleagues on the Soviet threat, and found "no effort on their [the American] part to over-emphasize dangers or underline necessities."[98] While the Canadian diplomats knew they could count on their colleagues at State, this also reinforced the DEA's concerns that purely military appreciations would be worst case in nature, even alarmist.

Second, the DEA was able to gain some information about how the concept of war was developing in US minds. The discussion of American thinking about general war, rather than a narrow discussion of the defence of North America, helped put continental defence in perspective. Defending North America was important to the United States, as it was to Canada. But it did not seem the Americans were expecting to build a Fortress North America, with all the cost and sovereignty implications that would entail for Canada. As Washington's plans for maximum firepower at the greatest distance from North America developed, there would be different and no less pressing implications for Ottawa.

JIC 1 (Final)

In the first months of 1947, the Joint Intelligence Committee in Ottawa began work on the purely Canadian appreciation the Cabinet Defence Committee had requested in late 1946.[99] This Canadian assessment of the Soviet Union was to be completed in time for use in discussions to develop a joint appreciation with the Americans in May. The paper, which was finalized in March 1947, was titled "JIC 1 (Final)."

The aim of JIC 1 was to "determine the capabilities of the U.S.S.R. to attack the North American continent within the next ten years," as well as "an estimate of the probable amount of warning to be expected."[100] The report was divided into seven parts, with its first two sections offering an assessment of the Soviet Union's political and economic capabilities and the potential of waging war against North America. The next four analyzed Soviet manpower, weapons, naval, military, and air force capabilities. The final section examined potential threats to Canada's internal security, either by domestic vulnerabilities and/or from the Soviets pursuing their policies through "penetrating the Canadian democratic system."[101]

DEA officials who worked on the paper believed their basic role on the Joint Intelligence Committee was "to emphasize considerations that do not occur to the military mind."[102] Ultimately, the DEA tried to achieve this by attaching the political appreciation, drawn up for discussion with the State Department in late 1946, to the JIC paper as an appendix. Its inclusion added a dimension entirely absent from the previous joint appreciation that had included only military and naval sections. But the political appreciation was tacked on to a largely military assessment. There was no effort to integrate the military and political elements of the paper.

DEA officials wondered if any such integration were possible. In a note with a cutting edge, indicative of DEA officials' views of their military counterparts, Escott Reid warned Pearson that the political appreciation might "mislead the Chiefs of Staff because it assumed a comprehension of the complexities of the problem which, because of their special training, they may not possess."[103] In the closing weeks before the paper was finalized, the DEA sought to alter the military assessment, worrying that some of the Soviet capabilities had been overestimated.[104]

In May 1947, with their Canadian-made appreciation in hand, representatives of the Canadian JIC met with the US JIC in Washington to establish a new joint appreciation. The discussions, however, contained an underlying problem. The Canadians wanted a broader discussion on the prospects for general war. The conference, however, was meant to discuss the appreciation and plan for the continental defence, and so the Americans would only discuss intelligence and planning in this narrower context. The American position was strong, for there had never been agreement that the meeting would be a full-fledged discussion of the prospects for general war. The Canadian team agreed to work within the constraints of "defence." But much to the surprise of senior officials in Ottawa, the joint US-Canadian meeting concluded that no changes of substance were required to the original draft appreciation written in 1946. The teams agreed to move forward with the original document.

Pearson was unwilling to accept this result. In the first place, the Canadians had been trying to move away from a purely military appreciation to one that included a political appreciation of both the chances of war and the type of war that might occur. Discussions with the Americans — both the State Department officials and general officers like Henry — had revealed that American strategic planning was envisioning a general war fought outside of North America. How could the original appreciation, with so much emphasis on the defence of the continent, remain relevant when the broader strategy for general war was shifting? Furthermore, as the world situation had grown more tense throughout 1946, how could the appreciation remain the same? Pearson convinced his colleagues on the Chiefs of Staff Committee that they could not accept the statement that "there had been no changes which affected the Appreciation."[105]

The experience of trying to agree a joint appreciation with the Americans had raised concern for Canadian officers, too. The chair of the Joint Planning Committee, Captain H. N. Lay of the Royal Canadian Navy, had been tasked

with drawing up joint plans with his US colleagues. He complained that his team had "been handicapped by having to keep our planning within the bounds of a DEFENCE or a SECURITY plan."[106] The result was that Canadian defence planning had focused on providing "purely defensive measures on the North American continent to meet a Russian attack."[107] Lay understood the importance of maintaining defence against a possible surprise attack, and that the need for defence would increase as the Soviet ability to launch a long-range attack, possibly with atomic bombs, increased. Over time, the "period of warning" before any potential Soviet attack would only shrink as Soviet aircraft and missile technology improved, and so it was essential that Canada continually improve its "intelligence organization, methods and techniques."[108] But if war came, the Americans seemed now to agree with the Canadian view, what Pope had told the PJBD, that the fighting should occur as far away from North America as possible. And the Canadians would want a part of the offensive action. Charles Foulkes, the chief of the general staff, rejected any idea that Canada would play a "purely defensive role in any future war," leaving the offensive fights to others.[109]

Lay, and no doubt Foulkes, too, assumed that the United States had or was developing strategic plans for general war. But Canada was developing no plans beyond the joint defence plans it was negotiating bilaterally with the Americans. If the joint planning proceeded along the tracks laid down in 1946, the Canadian role would be exclusively defensive, because they were not playing a role in planning for any strategic offensive. At the same time, there was no point in Canada making "strategic war plans" on its own without working closely with the Americans and the British, who would be Canada's major allies in any general war.[110]

The problem was bigger than Canada not being able to choose a role in a future war. In 1947, the prospects of general war appeared more likely to Pearson and DEA officials than at any point since the end of the Second World War. Reid told the Chiefs of Staff Committee that "the comparative certainty of the next ten years being free from war had been reduced by events."[111] His concern was not that Moscow was seeking war, but that Washington might feel compelled to attack. The "balance of power," he told the chiefs, might alter against the United States, or the United States might presume the balance would tip and choose to act. It remained that "[i]n either event, there was a possibility that the United States might take action which could precipitate war."[112]

An American Attack?

In late August, Reid drafted a paper on the prospect of the US precipitating a war and of conflict with the Soviet Union more generally.[113] He distributed his memorandum within the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa, and to several Canadian diplomatic posts abroad. The memorandum was not an intelligence appreciation or assessment, but a thought-piece considering different aspects of the US-Soviet relationship and the implications for Canada. Reid's paper, one recipient wrote, was a "scissors and paste" exercise, cobbling together the ideas of George Kennan, several departmental memoranda, and dispatches from Canadians like Dana Wilgress writing from the Soviet Union. The responses to the paper, however, are more important than the paper itself. The paper served as something of a Rorschach test, with replies providing an insight into viewpoints and assumptions that Canadian officials held about the prospects for war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Maurice Pope, the colourful general who had served on the PJBD and was now in Berlin, pushed back against Reid's focus on immediate Cold War crises and urged him to put the analysis in a longer-term framework. "Present Soviet foreign policy," he wrote, is "simply a continuation of Russia's age old policy of expansion." The Russian goal to create a "cordon sanitaire" on its border was, he said, "as natural and as reasonable as the United States desire for bases as far away as Greenland and Dakar."[114]

Worrying too much about Czechoslovakia's relationship with the Soviet Union, for instance, was unhelpful, as it was "really no different from Canada's position vis-a-vis the United States." Russia had existed for centuries "alongside Western Europe," even if, as he said, it was not a part of it; even if Stalin's Soviet Union fell apart, "Russia would still remain." For Pope, Soviet policy was Russian policy, and both policies were what should be expected of states concerned about their security. He even went as far as to conclude that "the United States, and to some extent British, monkeying in Polish, Bulgarian, etc., affairs has had the effect of unnecessarily goading the Russians."[115]

Marcel Cadieux, Lester Pearson's executive assistant, saw things much differently from Pope. Reid's paper had suggested an equality between Soviet and American interests, arguing that both were "[e]xpanding powers . . . scaring each other into further expansions of their defence." Cadieux disagreed with Reid, arguing that only the Soviet Union was an expanding power, and that all US efforts were warranted by the aggressive policies directed by Moscow. "To

put it into a nutshell," he concluded, "the U.S.S.R. is waging war against us in all but a military means." On this basis, Cadieux called for the expansion of Canadian "intelligence facilities to learn more and more about the U.S.S.R." Only with better intelligence could Canada understand the Soviet Union, and "take advantage of its weaknesses by applying pressure at the right time and in the right manner to discourage its aggressive tactics."[116]

Wilgress was not impressed with the paper. He thought it focused too much on the chance of war. Writing from Berne, he observed that "no one thinks or talks about the possibility of war, whereas in North America this seems to be the obsession which is colouring all thinking about the Soviet Union."[117]

It was time to stop arguing about how to deal with the Soviet Union. This, he thought, had been answered by Soviet action in recent years. The United States had adopted its "policy of firmness" — those "stop lines" the Americans had mentioned to Canada in December, and what would come to be known as containment. The Soviets were not totally convinced of Washington's firmness yet, but it was the only policy that would contain the Soviet Union and prevent them from tempting steps which might escalate to war. Canada, Wilgress wrote, should "give every support to that policy of firmness upon which the United States is embarking since any wavering from that policy would be sure to be exploited by the Soviet leaders for their own purposes and hence is the most dangerous course which we could undertake."[118]

Robert Ford, the chargé d'affaires at the Canadian embassy in Moscow, offered a convincing explanation for how domestic politics in both states might lead to war: the Soviets, he worried, might risk war to divert "their people's minds from the miseries of repeated Five Year Plans." In the United States, "a strongly anti-Communist, isolationist administration" might become so frustrated with socialist governments in Western Europe that they cut off aid to their allies, creating the possibility for Soviet encroachment, and "at the same time goad the Moscow leaders into war." The Americans underestimated the strength of the Soviet Union, he thought, and the best evidence for this was the suggestion some Americans had been making "that the whole question could be settled now by dropping a few atomic bombs on Russia."[119]

R. M. Macdonnell, writing from Prague, thought such an outright American decision for war unlikely. He found it "almost impossible to conceive of a situation arising in which the Congress of the United States could be persuaded that a preventive war was necessary or desirable."[120] Charles

Ritchie, writing from Paris, agreed with Macdonnell. He thought the idea of the US preparing a preventative war "unreal" for several reasons, including the fact that "the vast and secret preparations" required for a surprise attack on the Soviet Union "seem totally incompatible with American realities as we have learned to know them in the past."[121] And yet, he noted, if the government of the United States became convinced that war was necessary for American self-defence, it "might launch the first blow in the belief that if they did not do so the Soviet Union would have the advantage of a surprise offensive."[122]

During this period in 1947, the Canadian embassy in Washington was closely tracking statements made by Americans pushing for preventive war against the Soviet Union. Joseph Alsop, a journalist for the American *Herald Tribune*, reported that a number of congressmen who had travelled to Europe had concluded "that we might as well have another war and get it over with." The Canadian diplomats in Washington had sometimes heard this sort of thinking in private conversation. The *Washington Times* provided "an almost comical example of swaggering and vicious belligerence" in response to Soviet accusations that the Americans were somehow akin to the recently defeated Nazis; the Canadians read the *Washington Times* point of view to be: "Okay; if they insist on calling us Hitlers, let's do some Hitlering."[123] Ultimately, however, Ambassador Hume Wrong wrote, while the term "preventive war" was "thrown about pretty loosely these days," the number of Americans advocating such a policy was "negligible in number."[124]

And yet they could not be ignored. As Hume Wright (then third secretary to Ambassador Hume Wrong at the Washington embassy) wrote, the post-war United States "occupies a position, in a period of nerve-cracking tensions, where her actions basically affect the day-to-day existence of whole countries." As a result, the "unstable and irresponsible side of the United States is inevitably of vital concern to the world."[125]

In a sophisticated analysis, Wright examined a number of worrying ways in which rabid anti-Communism, the nature of Congress, inexperience in international affairs, and "plain ignorance of some elementary historical facts" led to questionable American foreign policy choices. American policy, he thought, rested too heavily for its domestic support on fear of the Soviet Union and hatred for Communism. But without this motivation, the United States might slip into its "pre-war aloofness," and "the fool's paradise of the Kellogg Pact" — a former American secretary of state's treaty to renounce war. All of what Wright called the "extravagances appearing in the press and

in speeches in Congress" were embarrassing, "but we must bear with them, for without them the rest of the world would be worse off."[126]

Pearson, at Reid's suggestion, sent Wright's analysis to Prime Minister King, along with a note designed to dampen King's fears the United States might launch a preventive war. This analysis from Washington was crucial in moving the Cabinet beyond any lingering notion that there was an equivalence between the Soviet Union and the United States.[127] In essence, what was happening in the United States was a process, part of it ugly and embarrassing, that nonetheless was "spreading public support for effective military preparation for war."[128]

As Wilgress and other Canadians argued, this was the policy of firmness that would, paradoxically, ensure war with the Soviet Union did not come. But it would rest on a knife's edge.

In the fall of 1947, while Canadians posted abroad were responding to Reid, the Cabinet Defence Committee received an update. Cabinet members were informed that in the coming decade, changes in the balance of power would advantage the Soviet Union, but that it was "unlikely that these alterations will make it worthwhile for Russia to precipitate a planned war, even assuming that its aim are expansionist."[129]

In fact, the Soviet Union would try to avoid "stumbling into a war." If war did come, any attack against North America would be likely to be "diversionary in character;"[130] an attempt to pin down forces in North America, rather than an all-out assault on Canada and the United States. While North America was increasingly vulnerable, and might be attacked, it would not be the primary target in a war. And yet, a war still might come if the Soviets overplayed their hand and the Americans responded with force.

Conclusion

In the last year of the Second World War, Reid had imagined Canada standing apart from the Soviet Union and the United States, or even perhaps standing between them as a "chastity belt." But for most of the government, from Prime Minister King down through the Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, and both the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence, the defence plans and policy of Canada and the United States were intertwined.

The discussion engendered by Reid's 1946 thought-piece led to a confirmation of King's long-standing policy: Canada and the United States were on the same side in peace — and in the Cold War. And while the American

political system was odd and sometimes seemed dangerous, it was better that the United States was playing a part in world affairs, as this was more likely to guarantee peace. And yet, it seemed likely that if the United States thought peace was in jeopardy, it was prepared to destroy that threat to peace by resorting to war. It was crucial, then, to find a way of understanding Moscow's true intentions.