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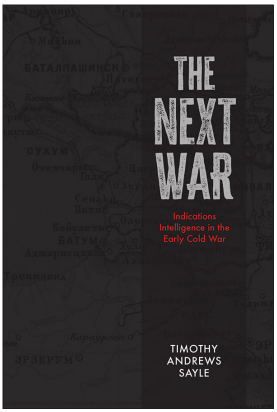


# THE NEXT WAR: INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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# Agreed Intelligence

In early 1948, Canadian diplomats were growing more concerned by the changes in American strategy they had detected in 1947. Pearson heard rumours of a United States "master plan" for global war and thought the British may have had some knowledge of, and perhaps a part in, the making of this plan. The Canadians, as they had told the Americans in December 1947, were eager to know about any such "global strategy" because Canada assumed and expected to play a role in any future war. But were the British and Americans making assumptions, or even plans, about what Canadian forces would do in a war, without Canadian input?[1]

Even in 1948, there remained some debate about just what shape a future war would take. In Canada, the chief of the general staff, Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes, assumed that a new general war would follow traditional patterns. "The teachings of military history," he told the other chiefs, "confirmed the view that wars were eventually won or lost on the ground."[2]

But increasingly, and to the contrary, there was an expectation the next war would be nothing like the gruelling Second World War. The chief of the air staff, supported by the chair of the Defence Research Board, disagreed with Foulkes. They believed that the next war would be "won or lost in its very early stages by direct air attacks on . . . vital centres."[3]

This view tracked closely with thinking in the United States. The release of the Finletter Report in the United States, the result of a study of military strategy commissioned by President Truman in the summer of 1947, suggested that the Americans would prioritize offensive air power.[4] This is certainly how the Canadians interpreted the American views.[5]

Prioritizing offensive air power had major implications for the planning done by the MCC. The US-Canadian work to date on the Basic Security Plan

had been based on the appreciation of 1946. As discussed in the previous chapter, these plans were security or defence plans, not war plans. They did not take into account the offensive strategy the Americans or Canadians would pursue in war. Now, if the Finletter Report showed the future of American thinking about war, and that future revolved around massive offensive striking power, existing plans to defend North America seemed obsolete, even unrealistic.

Members of Canada's Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) started calling for a review of the "whole Canada-U.S. Basic Security Plan." If offensive air operations were to be the main effort in a general war, then defensive air operations "should form only a very small part of any overall plan." Future war would call for the best defence: a strong offence.[6]

The Canadians were aware of, and disliked, the unrealism of developing one plan for the defence of North America, and a separate offensive war strategy. These tensions were never fully resolved.

In 1948, Canadian analysts prepared assessments of the threat to North America in advance of bilateral meetings with the United States. These bilateral meetings would result in American-Canadian Agreed Intelligence (ACAI) assessments intended to establish a joint appreciation to inform plans for continental defence.

That year the Canadians also participated in separate trilateral military planning meetings with their American and British partners to establish what would become ABC (American-British-Canadian) plans in case of war with the Soviet Union. It was in these emergency war plans that the Americans and British staked out their ideas for offensive operations against the Soviet Union. Canadian efforts to ensure Ottawa's interests were included in these broader plans led to Canadian efforts to assess Soviet aims and strategy in case of general war, too.

These two types of assessments: one needed for the defence of North America, the other designed to understand Soviet strategy and prepare for a response in war, proceeded simultaneously in 1948, and with only limited connection between the two.

Canadian efforts to insert themselves into the tripartite intelligence appreciations were overshadowed in 1949 by two major events: the explosion of a Soviet atomic device, which threw the American, British, and Canadian assessments into question, and the signing of the Washington Treaty, the precursor to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which signalled a

shift from tripartite war planning toward a broader alliance defence policy, strategy, and plans.

## The Threat to North America

In January 1948, the Military Cooperation Committee requested that the Canadian and US Joint Intelligence Committees separately review the 1946 joint appreciation. Each JIC was to prepare a list of changes or updates. The request, as it was phrased, raised concerns among DEA officers on the Canadian JIC. The recommendation to review and update the appreciation suggested that the new version was to follow the old form, with only some minor changes. The DEA, however, wanted to scrap the initial appreciation and begin again.

The Canadians wanted the new draft to include an "assumptions" section that laid out the basic ideas that informed the plan. The original US-drafted appreciation "omitted . . . any reference to the actual potential enemy, Russia" and, as a result, was "unrealistic." When, in a meeting with the Chiefs of Staff, the senior army officer warned about the Canadians pushing too hard on what was to be a joint paper, Escott Reid insisted that the Canadians should not be held back from "putting forward purely Canadian views."[7]

Unlike the 1946 drafting process, the Canadians were eager to have a role in the "development of a proper intelligence appreciation."[8] The Canadian interest in developing a new joint appreciation led the MCC to cancel the January request and instead issue a new request for both JICs to "meet, and together review and revise" the May 1946 appreciation, and produce "a single document" indicating "those enemy capabilities and probable courses of action upon which a review and revision of the Canada-United States Basic Security Plan should be based."[9]

In preparation for such a meeting, the Canadians prepared their own appreciation, JIC 3/48 (Final). The study, titled "An Appreciation of the Possible Military Threat to the Security of Canada and the United States," aimed to assess "the capabilities of a potential enemy to conduct offensive operations" against Canada, Newfoundland, and the United States.[10] It identified the USSR as the only potential threat.

JIC 3/48 (Final) stated that in case of war, a large proportion of Soviet capabilities would be fighting in other theatres removed from North America. Curiously, however, the paper also stated that it was "considered advisable to appreciate the maximum strategically sound effort which the USSR could

direct"[11] against Canada and the United States. This "maximum effort" type assessment had already been questioned in Canada. Presumably, because the Canadians knew the Americans would use this same type of assessment, they felt compelled to stick with it. This would allow the officers at the joint conference to compare apples, rather than apples and oranges.

The assessment considered Soviet naval and military capabilities in two time periods: in 1948 and beyond 1948. In 1948, the Soviet Navy would be capable of destroying shipping and carrying out minor attacks on coastal areas. But the lack of trained personnel and shortage of repair bases meant that a sustained naval effort would be impossible, and the Soviet Navy could not "seriously affect the security of Canada and the United States."[12]

Limited bases in Eastern Siberia meant that the Red Army would only be capable of "isolated airborne operations" of up to a few hundred men against North America, and lack of fighter escort meant resupply would be "impossible." Teams of forty saboteurs might be landed by submarines.[13] Overall, the ground threat to North America was limited.

The main concern, air attacks, would also be limited in 1948. The Soviets were working to increase the production of heavy bombers — what the Canadians and their allies referred to as "B-29-type bombers," as they were comparable to the American B-29 Superfortresses strategic bombers that had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But despite the increase in heavy bombers, "the employment of these aircraft in any numbers" against the US or Canada was assessed to be limited by the "lack of suitable bases in North Eastern Siberia" and the difficulty of supply in that region. At most, the Soviets could launch 100 bombers against Seattle, Vancouver, and Edmonton for "a very limited period." If the bombers were sent on a one-way mission, they might attack, from either Siberia or Murmansk, all the industrial areas of North America. In short, the Soviet Union was "not considered capable of materially impairing the war-making potential of Canada and the United States by air attack."[14]

In each of the assessments devoted to the Navy, Army, and Air, the Soviet capabilities were expected to improve after 1948. The Canadians, however, were relatively sanguine about the Soviet development of long-range aircraft. They assumed the Soviets would only bother developing long-range aircraft that could attack North America if the Soviets also developed an atomic bomb for the bombers to drop. And while the Soviets were expected to develop their

own bomb, the Canadians assumed that the United States would, for the foreseeable future, maintain a greater stock of atomic bombs than the USSR.

Curiously, the relationship between the likelihood of a Soviet bomb, and the assumption that the Soviets would only build long-range aircraft if a bomb was developed, is not followed through to its logical end. As for the future likelihood of "atom bombing," the Canadians punted, arguing that the "very little knowledge of Soviet ability or plans" meant "no definite date" could be given as to when this capability would be available to the Soviets.[15]

While the Soviets had many ways in which they could strike the continent, none were significant. The "most practicable" course of action was via subversive activity, which was mentioned briefly in the assessment and with sensational language.[16] Ultimately, none of the Soviets' military options posed a threat to the security of Canada or the United States or the continent's war-making potential.

In contrast to the 1946 appreciation, the assessment "indicated reductions in the scales of anticipated forms of attack" against North America. The Canadians were confident in these conclusions and wanted them brought forward to the MCC.[17]

While the Canadians were working on their new assessment, meant to inform a jointly derived appreciation, the US JIC went ahead and produced its own independent revision of the 1946 appreciation. The US section of the MCC proposed to use the US JIC's paper as the basis for revising the Basic Security Plan.[18]

The Canadian paper and the US JIC paper differed considerably in their judgment as to whether the USSR had the capacity to "impair [North America's] war-making potential"[19] by direct attack. The Americans thought yes; the Canadians no.

The 1946 draft appreciation had judged that Soviet attacks on the continent would be "of limited strength." The US JIC's 1948 draft removed this qualifier. The Canadians, having "no intelligence which indicates an increased enemy capability in this regard," disagreed. There was no reason to think there had been a change. Neither did the Canadians accept the American contention that the Soviets could seize objectives in Canada, Alaska, or Labrador by airborne attack, and then use those objectives as bases for attacking vital strategic targets in North America.[20] In the Canadian view, there were not enough bases in Eastern Siberia to support much more than a small airborne

operation against Canada, and out of range of fighter escorts, any airborne troops could not be resupplied.[21]

Overall, the Canadians complained, there was a "general tendency in the American paper . . . to credit a potential enemy with greater capabilities than we consider reasonable."[22] While the Canadians had conducted a "full re-appreciation," the Americans had just amended the original document. It was not so much that the US had inflated the threat but that they had not downgraded the threat as time passed and intelligence changed.

## War Planning

In August 1947, the US Joint War Plans Committee had prepared a joint war plan, BROILER. The plan assumed that the United Kingdom and Canada would fight as allies of the United States in a war, and BROILER (later renamed FROLIC) called for action to secure bases in North America, the United Kingdom, and the Cairo-Suez region for launching a strategic air offensive against the Soviet Union.

When local Communists staged a coup in Czechoslovakia in late February 1948, war planning moved into a new gear. In April, American, British, and Canadian planners met and used BROILER/FROLIC as the basis for an "outline emergency war plan." The outcome was a series of "unilateral but accordant" plans prepared by each participant state; the US plan was known as HALFMOON, the British as DOUBLEQUICK, and the Canadian plan as BULLMOOSE. Later that year, the plans were revised as FLEETWOOD (US) and SPEEDWAY (UK). But the goal of the Canadian attendees was not only to participate in drafting joint plans, but to try to understand their allies' thinking.

Foulkes attended the meeting in April 1948 with a goal to "secure" from the Americans and the British "some idea of their overall strategic concept" so that the Canada-US Basic Security Plan could be developed in relationship to the Anglo-American war plans. He learned, however, that "no common concept" had been developed or agreed between the Americans and the British, but that they were developing arrangements for exchanging information and reaching agreement.[23]

On his trip, it became obvious to Foulkes that little thought had been given in Washington to the Canada-US Basic Security Plan, and when Foulkes told his US counterparts about the old, heavily defensive plan, they thought it "unrealistic." He also learned, and reported back to Ottawa, that the US

military officers he met with were now "more concerned about the possibility of war within the next eighteen months."[24]

To support the Canadian planners participating in the staff discussions, the JIC had tasked the Joint Intelligence Staff (JIS) with preparing a second paper, with the "suggested object" being to "determine the ability of the USSR to wage war, its grand strategy and aims in relation to a future war." The "scope" of the paper was to include military factors, but also political and economic factors.[25]

Before his visit to Washington, Foulkes had been urging the DEA to participate in the JIS' task of developing a paper on Soviet grand strategy in war. Such an effort to examine Soviet aims had been on the JIS' agenda for some months, but no work was done on the paper because the Department of External Affairs refused to participate. The DEA did not think it useful to conduct one large global study of Soviet strategy and war aims, preferring to do several regional studies instead. This was consistent with the general DEA view that if war began, it would begin over a local or regional issue and Soviet aims and strategy would be directly related to the war's origins. Foulkes appealed to the DEA to participate by warning the under-secretary of state of External Affairs (USSEA) that Canada needed an "independent paper" on the subject, or else Canada would be forced to "base our military and strategic planning entirely on United Kingdom and United States estimates of the situation."[26] The DEA came around to participating, perhaps convinced that if they did not assist in the creation of such a paper, Canadian military planners could not represent Canadian interests effectively.

By the end of May, the Canadian JIS had completed its paper, JIC 4/48, "An Outline of Soviet Capabilities and Strategic Objectives in a War Beginning before July, 1949." The Canadian assessment listed crucial factors that would influence Soviet strategy: first, the "enemies of the USSR," [27] as the paper put it, would enjoy naval supremacy and be capable of striking Soviet territory from theatres of their own choosing. Second, there would be no allied air or land invasion of Soviet territory early in a war; the Soviet Union only had to fear strategic bombing, and atomic bombing at that. Crucially, the paper claimed the "USSR would not be in a position to seize or neutralize the main allied base — Canada and the United States."[28]

These factors all added up to an important and nuanced analysis of the Soviets' likely strategy: the only way the Soviet Union could defend its territory from strategic bombing would be "to seize or neutralize those areas from

which its enemies could strike." The Soviet defensive strategy, then, would require massive offensives to seize or neutralize:

(a) Western Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg.

(b) The United Kingdom.

(c) The Arab States (including the Nile delta) and Persia.

(d) Greece and Turkey.

(e) Italy (including Sicily).

(f) Spain and Portugal.[29]

The Canadians assumed the Soviets could and would move to occupy all these territories (with the exception of the UK and the Nile Delta, which the Canadians thought less likely). It was not so much an assumption that the Soviet Union sought to conquer the world by military force, but that the imperative to deny its enemies bases on its periphery would require massive offensive campaigns.

While the Soviet Union, the drafters assumed, could move in almost all directions on its periphery, the paper concluded that the Soviets would not cross the Atlantic — or Arctic — Oceans. The paper concluded that "[a]t the present time the USSR does not possess the means either at sea or in the air of carrying the war to the North American continent which will be the main bases of its enemies."[30]

Canadian appreciations of possible Soviet strategy in case of war continued to downgrade the likelihood of major Soviet attacks on North America, and implicitly suggested that there would be no chance of the Soviet Union waging a "maximum effort" campaign against North America. If war came, Soviet strategy would be to focus on denying peripheral areas to its enemies — not on attacking the United States.

In June 1948, ABC military planners met again to prepare a short-range plan to meet any emergency before July 1949. Both the Canadian intelligence appreciations and the meetings with ABC military planners confirmed that there was very little possibility of an attack on North America beyond a diversionary attack meant to panic the population and tie down American and

Canadian forces. In this environment, the "passive defence" of North America was both "wrong and unreal." The obvious conclusion was that the Basic Security Plan "should be examined freshly" with North American defence considered "as part of the broad picture and not as an isolated problem."[31]

As the Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton told his Cabinet Defence Committee colleagues, the Soviet Union was "unlikely to provoke a planned war in the near future, but the possibility of either a planned or an 'accidental' war due to Russian miscalculation must be taken into account."[32] It was wrong to view war as inevitable, but plans must be made for defence. Current assessments claimed that the Soviets could "overrun all of Europe in under six months," but the stronger the Western defence, the longer this would take. "Time," he said, was "not necessarily on side of USSR."[33]

## ACAI (American-Canadian Agreed Intelligence)

The MCC planners still had no agreed estimate or appreciation (the American and Canadian terms, respectively), and by August it had "become essential" to arrive at one to inform the Basic Security Plan. In the first week of August 1948, the joint American-Canadian military planners met in Kingston, Ontario, to set terms of reference for a "single agreed strategic estimate (appreciation)" to be drafted and agreed by the two countries' JICs by October 1, 1948. The planners needed estimates of a date when Soviet leaders might think they had adequate military capacity to attack. This would allow them to divide the "foreseeable future" into chronological periods reflecting a significant change in enemy capability or strategy. The planners also sought an estimate of Soviet capabilities and strategy, and the forms and scales of attack on Canada and the US.[34]

The result was the first American-Canadian Agreed Intelligence (ACAI) estimate, "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Against Canada, the United States, and the Areas Adjacent Thereto, 1949–1956," ACAI 5 (Final), finalized on October 21, 1948.[35]

ACAI 5 was prepared over two conferences in September and October, held in Washington and then Ottawa. The Canadian Joint Intelligence Staff (JIS) met with a team from the US Joint Intelligence Group (JIG) in Washington from September 27 to October 1. At the first meeting, the US team tabled a full draft of a complete paper, and evidently expected to have "an agreed appreciation, based on their draft, within a few days." This was far too optimistic. One of the Canadians at the meeting recalled that it "was soon

realized that agreement on the title, problem, assumptions, etc., would be a lengthier task than the U.S. team had envisaged."[36]

The two teams spent time discussing these "preliminary matters" — essentially trying to set the fundamental objectives of their task — and the "feeling developed" that finding agreement on the "essential framework of the paper" was "time well spent." By beginning essentially from scratch, the American "inclination" to regard the Canadians' role as simply "commenting on their paper was overcome." The JIS reported to Ottawa that the Canadian view was given full weight by the Americans.[37]

After settling these basic points in Washington, the two teams met for a second combined meeting in Ottawa from October 13 to 21. Both teams tabled draft papers, which were then divided up for discussion and editing, before being reassembled into a combined paper. The US-Canadian teams used the American sections and appendices concerned with ground, air, and naval forces, along with "new weapons," and the Canadian sections that covered the "basic concept, capabilities and probable courses of action." The JIS reported that there were "no differences of opinion worthy of mention" during the drafting, and that combined summary and conclusions were agreed to on October 21. The secretary of the US JIG stayed on two more days to help edit the appendices, and on October 26 the final paper was flown to Washington.[38] That the paper travelled by air was likely the result of the physical nature of the document: with its reams of data and appendices, it appeared to the Canadians that the final product "was rather bulky, which is in keeping with normal U.S. practice."[39]

The Canadian team regarded their co-operation with the JIG to be "a very valuable experience." The US team was "very open-minded and willing to make decisions on its own responsibility." The Canadians noted that the volume of information provided by the US intelligence system on naval, army, and air forces, along with scientific, manpower, and mobilizations calculations, was much greater than that available from Canadian sources.

Ultimately, however, "Canadian intelligence calculations . . . very closely paralleled those of the U.S." This, perhaps, was because of the existing "international exchange of intelligence." As a result, the two sides had "no difficulty" in "reaching agreed estimates." Even though the Americans likely understood the significant mismatch in national intelligence gathering capabilities, the US team never questioned Canadian "sources of information" and always "accepted Canadian intelligence at its face value." The process, then, seemed to

be a good one, and the Canadians felt like they had held their own: "[i]n the application of information to a strategic intelligence problem, the Canadian intelligence system at no time needed to fear comparison."[40]

In keeping with their interpretation of the MCC instructions, the combined team had split their assessment into two parts: one dealing with the period 1949 to 1952, and the other 1953 to 1956. Questions about how best to split assessments chronologically, between the present and the future, had dogged Canadian intelligence officials throughout the year, and this particular split raised questions. During the conference, the teams had agreed to the particular split because it matched the timing by which the Americans estimated that the Soviets might explode their first atomic weapon: 1953.[41] Upon reviewing the paper in November, the Canadian JIC challenged the significance of 1953. They did not think that year to be important — perhaps because the explosion of a weapon itself was not as significant as the development of the ability to deliver the weapons en masse — and would have preferred a greater focus on 1956.[42]

This chronological break became such a sticking point in Ottawa that it led the chair of the Canadian JIC, G. G. Crean, to write to his US counterpart and put in train plans for a new conference to revise ACAI 5 (Final). One easy change was required at the conference: it was discovered that the US side had used the wrong year's estimates of Soviet naval figures.[43] More important was addressing the chronological breakdown of the paper. The Canadians feared that having split the assessment into two periods, military planners might take 1953 as a critical date, even though the Canadians attached no particular importance to the year. But 1953 did not, in their minds, represent any strategic appreciation of the likelihood of war, that is, that war would be more likely after that point.[44]

Upon Canadian urging, the teams met again in Washington from December 2 to 10 with the task of finding a way to reconcile their differences over the chronological breakdown of the paper. The US JIG thought there should be two distinct estimates, one for an emergency or short-range plan focused on present circumstances, and one for a long-range plan covering a future date range. The Canadians wanted only one estimate.[45] The two teams ultimately decided to draft the paper with two sub-headings under each subject heading, one describing the situation in 1949, and the other 1956. This would meet the US requirement for having an accessible form of "current intelligence," as well as the "Canadian view that the future must be treated

essentially as one period." In addition to producing a revised estimate, now titled ACAI 5/1, the meeting had also cleared up "a fundamental point which might otherwise have continued to confuse both parties in future discussions of Canada-United States intelligence problems."[46]

Just before the Americans and Canadians had agreed on ACAI 5, American and British intelligence teams had agreed on their own American-British Agreed Intelligence document, ABAI 5, "Soviet Intentions and Capabilities." The Canadians received copies of the paper (which, when printed in London, bore the British file number JIC (48)100 Final). The Canadians examined ABAI 5 closely and determined that, as the US team had used the same basic intelligence in both papers, it was "quite obvious that the general approach and conclusions are of a very singular nature."[47]

ABAI 5 was also divided into chronological sections, with Part I covering conditions in 1949, and Part II forecasting 1956–57. ABAI 5 was also significant for the Canadians, in that the American-British document "emphasize[d] clearly the position relegated to Canadian Military authorities by the U.S." in case of war.[48] This seemed to suggest a two-tiered intelligence relationship: the Canadians were still stuck working with the US on ACAI papers focused only on the defence of North America, while ABAI papers were the basis for global war plans.

In February 1949, American officials decided it was time to amend the American-Canadian appreciation. ACAI 5/1, according to the Americans, had been "based on intelligence that has now changed considerably," and they sent a list of proposed amendments.[49] The changing intelligence indicated "a marked increase in the Soviet strategic air ability resulting in greater capability of the Soviet Air Force to inflict physical damage on the North American continent."[50] The Canadians were immediately skeptical.

One amendment, referring to the number of Soviet B-29-type aircraft and transport aircraft, was two and a half times greater than the British estimate known to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), and so was unacceptable to the RCAF.[51] Wing Commander William Weiser, the director of air intelligence told his colleagues on the Canadian JIC that the American "figures would not bear critical analysis." He connected the newly increased numbers to internal US disagreements between the US Air Force, President Truman, and Congress, and "suspected that the intelligence was coloured by the U.S.A.F. desire for a larger airforce."[52]

Crean refused to accept the list of amendments and suggested instead that a conference would be preferable to trying to update the ACAI document by correspondence. The Canadians wanted to avoid the back-and-forth proposal of unilateral amendments, ostensibly because it would complicate planning, but also no doubt because the Canadians believed the conference approach had led to a far better ACAI 5 and ACAI 5/1 than acceptance of the original US paper proposed in 1948.[53]

When the Canadians complained about the bomber numbers, they got a bit of a shock. US officials told the Canadians that at a recent USAF-RAF conference they had agreed to the higher bomber figures. The US side was essentially using a joint US-UK estimate to rebut Canadian intelligence in an American-Canadian exchange.[54] The Americans suggested that the US and Canadians just list separate national figures in their joint appreciation, but the Canadians refused, believing that this "would lead to an impossible situation as there would be no agreed intelligence on which any joint plan could be acceptably prepared." The Canadians wanted to discuss this and come to an agreement. They pressed the conference idea, believing that "if the basic intelligence on which the aircraft figures had been arrived at was jointly examined by both the Canadian and American intelligence organizations, agreement should be possible."[55]

The Americans agreed to a conference. In May 1949, as the MCC prepared for its second annual revision of the Basic Security Plan, the MCC formally advised both governments that "it would be highly desirable to have available, for comparative purposes, an up-to-date, agreed Canada-United States intelligence document" and requested both JICs to produce such a document.[56]

It was also in May 1949 that Canada made an effort to be included in the American-British agreed intelligence framework that provided appreciations for the ABC planners.[57] Yet it is necessary to understand the evolution of ACAI intelligence in 1949 by examining the period before the first and only ABCI intelligence conference in the autumn of 1949.

The efforts to revamp ACAI 5/1 as ACAI 5/2 suffered "considerable delay" in the spring of 1949 which, in turn, had delayed the agreement of a revised Basic Security Plan.[58] The delay, resulted from the fact that the "Estimate (Appreciation) was not acceptable on the Canadian side because of disagreement with the intelligence data upon which it was based."[59]

Part of the disagreement rested on production figures of B-36-type bombers; the Canadians again thought the US figures high and preferred

British numbers they had been forwarded from London. In preparing ACAI 5/2, the US side had predicated their assessment on the assumption that "the whole weight of the U.S.S.R. would be thrown against this continent [North America]," and ignored the possibility — even likelihood — that the Soviets would deploy part of their forces elsewhere.[60]

This continued adherence to using "maximum capability" figures to inform appreciations led to much discussion and debate in Canada's JIC. It would be impossible to prepare a "realistic paper that was based on Soviet capabilities against the North American continent" when the paper ignored "the employment of Soviet forces against other areas."[61] Quite obviously, ignoring the likely use of Soviet force elsewhere, or even the "effects on Soviet strategy of the efforts of the Western Powers to counter-balance Soviet capabilities," had led to a rather skewed and unrealistic assessment.[62]

Ultimately, the Canadians would agree to many of the American drafting positions. But the JIC forwarded ACAI 5/2 to the Chiefs of Staff Committee with a covering memorandum explaining the "maximum capability" approach: the US-Canadian intelligence team had drafted the appreciation with the assumption "that all the weapons which had the capability of use against this continent would be so used and would not be diverted to other theatres, although it was realized that the USSR would inevitably be engaged in hostilities elsewhere." This approach was accepted by the Canadians, the note went on, because to have done "otherwise would have required an overall, worldwide survey of Soviet course of action beyond the capability of the combined Intelligence teams."[63] With provisos in place, the CSC approved ACAI 5/2, "Probable Soviet Courses of Action Against Canada, the United States, and the Areas Adjacent Thereto, 1 January 1957," in August 1949.[64] By that time, the Canadians were preparing to confront the unreality of the ACAI agreements in a tripartite setting.

## Toward American-British-Canadian Intelligence

In the spring of 1949, the Canadians learned that the chair of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee, William Hayter, would soon visit Washington, DC. The Canadians invited Hayter to Ottawa and, ahead of his arrival, secured authorization from the CSC to "raise with him the desirability of Canada taking part in the discussions and writing of strategic estimates which had previously been prepared bilaterally by the U.S. and U.K."[65] These estimates included ABAI 5 that the Canadians had seen earlier that year.

Less than two weeks after the Canadians inquired with Hayter on May 30, the UK JIC passed word that it agreed to Canadian participation in "future Anglo-US intelligence meetings" subject to US agreement.[66] The British JIC also started providing the Canadian JIC with more intelligence papers now that Canada had an increased "need to know."[67]

Shortly after receiving word from London, Crean wrote to Major General W. E. Todd, the deputy director of the US Joint Intelligence Group. Crean, noting that it was "always difficult to participate in bilateral discussions on subjects which concern three parties,"[68] sought to bring Todd fully into the picture by laying out the Canadian interest in participating in tripartite intelligence discussions.

As explained above, the Canadians had participated in tripartite ABC military planning conversations in London in September 1948, and the Canadians had a "natural desire to see the tripartite nature of these arrangements preserved."[69] Since the ABC planners were expecting to continue meeting on a tripartite bases, Crean said the Canadians thought it "only reasonable that all three countries were able to examine the basis upon which the Intelligence Estimates were made."[70] As the Canadians worked with both British and American authorities, "we stand to suffer most from any lack of coordination" between the three countries. This was "particularly true," he wrote, in relation to "something as basic to government policy as an Intelligence Estimate."[71]

On their face, these are reasonable arguments and likely represent the fundamental Canadian objectives for wishing to insert themselves in tripartite intelligence appreciations. That said, there are a host of other reasons why the Canadians wished to participate. In the first place, the Canadians had found British estimates of Soviet air capabilities more in keeping with their own, and yet the US JIG had been able to use bilateral US-UK estimates to rebut Canadian intelligence on air issues. A tripartite estimate would also allow for the Canadians to have another opportunity at assessing the Soviet threat to North America, on which Ottawa and Washington clearly diverged. The Canadians had noted the volume of intelligence information available to the Americans, and while they received vast amounts of information in the ACAI process, an ABC intelligence process might offer even more.

The primary concern, however, must have been ensuring a Canadian role in intelligence appreciations that would go on to inform force planning and the defence budget. By May 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty had already been

signed, and work was underway on the military system that would support the alliance.[72] Crean clearly saw — and, as this chapter implies, he was correct to see — US-UK meetings as the basis for what would become NATO planning. As he told the JIC he chaired, "in the event of a satisfactory arrangement whereby Canada would be included in future US-UK intelligence discussions, we might be in a stronger position to deal with discussions on the form of the Atlantic organization."[73]

After sending his letter, Crean met Todd in Washington on other intelligence business and discussed "our participation in ABC Intelligence appreciations." Todd seemed entirely agreeable.[74] In early July, Todd wrote back formally, describing the issue as one of "Canadian participation in future US/UK intelligence discussions." The US JIC thought it "advantageous to all concerned if the estimates we make in collaboration with the British are consistent with those prepared jointly with the Canadians." He expressed American willingness "to conduct our next intelligence discussion on a trial tri-partite basis." The trial effort would help determine "workability of such procedure" and whether "resulting intelligence instrument serves the special needs of Canadian-United States MCC planners."[75]

Todd's letter may not have been a ringing endorsement of tripartite intelligence, but he followed up on September 1 with a cordial invitation for a Canadian intelligence team to visit Washington and join a ten-person team representing the UK JIC led by Brigadier Valentine Boucher, the UK director of military intelligence.[76] The conference would set out to revise ABAI 5, which had been previously prepared in a bilateral American-British conference.[77] The US sent ABAI 5 to Ottawa on September 2, and the Canadian team prepared, on September 10, to write an "agreed appreciation" with the object of estimating "the strategic intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union in the event of a war in which the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada are involved now to the end of 1950, and to project this estimate to 1956–57."[78]

The Canadian team of eight, including and led by Group Captain W. W. Bean, set out for Washington with three instructions from JIC. First, while the tripartite estimate itself would be subject to JIC approval upon completion, Bean's JIS team was "empowered to give provisional, corporate approval" on matters that would not need reference to JIC. Second, the team was to conduct discussions "in such a manner as to negate the possibility of either the British or Americans presuming that the Canadian team is taking sides." Finally, it

was "imperative" that "attacks against the North American continent are considered in relation to other theatres, and the form and scales of such attacks clearly emerge."[79] This instruction was, perhaps, the most important element to stress in the conference.

## The First and Last ABCI Conference

The first meeting of the American-British-Canadian Intelligence conference was held the morning of September 12, 1949. Rear Admiral Thomas B. Inglis, the director of US naval intelligence, opened the conference by noting that there had been a US-UK meeting about one year before, and also several US-Canadian meetings. This was the first conference, he announced, to be "conducted on a tripartite basis."[80]

It also was to be the last. Very early in the conference, Todd made clear that "[t]his was definitely the first and last intelligence appreciation which would be a combined U.K.-U.S. and Canadian effort." This "dictum" had been handed down by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and concurred by the British Chiefs of Staff. It was not only the last ABC Intelligence appreciation, but the end of ABC military planning, for this "principle is to be applied to planning also."[81]

It was initially unclear to the Canadians why this "dictum" had been applied. Even by the end of the conference, the Canadian JIC was asking Bean to try and determine the future intentions of the Americans toward both ABC intelligence and ABC planning. If Canada was not to participate in the intelligence appreciation, or planning, "we might find ourselves in the position of being asked to commit forces on the original plan to which we had agreed, although not consulted on any revisions. This might be most embarrassing from our point of view."[82] Only over the rest of 1949 would it be obvious that the winding down of formal ABC conferences was connected to the American and British desire to push planning and intelligence appreciations into the new NATO structure, and the need to ensure that any extra-NATO planning occurred invisibly to the other allies.

That this was to be the last such appreciation did not devalue the appreciation itself, nor the import with which the conference attached to its task. As Inglis noted, the paper "would be the principal paper on which all planning would be based." A previous US-UK meeting had produced the document under review at this meeting, ABAI 5. It had been written in support of HALFMOON. But HALFMOON had been developed, and ABAI 5 written in

a different budgetary environment in the United States. Inglis took a moment to express his "personal views" on ABAI 5, explaining how planners thought the Soviet capabilities described in it had "been overrated and that it would not be possible for the Soviets to overrun all of Europe and the Middle East within six months." There were logistical limitations on the Soviet action, and the paper had ignored opposition the Soviets surely would encounter. The result had been "too optimistic from the Soviet point of view." Boucher, in agreement, bluntly said that the British "too had been under pressure with respect to possible overstatement of Soviet capabilities in A.B.A.I. 5." But UK authorities felt it "necessary to present to the Planners the maximum capabilities of the Soviet Union and that caution should be exercised in downscaling those capabilities."[83] Boucher was not being disingenuous, but represented the British efforts to navigate between their own preference for minimal planning and their growing sense that their new European allies would need maximum support from the United States.

On the afternoon of the first day, Todd, in the chair, sought to set an informal tone for the rest of the conference. He urged Boucher and Bean to consider themselves co-chairs of the conference. Both the US and UK teams tabled revisions of both the first and second parts of ABAI 5, and the teams were divided up to allow tripartite representation on subcommittees related to the different sections of the estimate.[84]

The British made a bold bid to push their own paper as the basis for the conference. In ABAI 5, the British and American intelligence teams had assumed that M-Day and D-Day — that is, the days the Soviets began mobilizing and the day they began their attacks — would be the same day. The new British version reflected their assessment that the "possibility of war before the end of 1950 was remote" and that there would be a longer period between M-Day and D-Day.[85] (That is, the Soviets would need some time between the start of mobilization and the beginning of operations.) This would be a sticking point throughout the conference.

In line with the aforementioned JIC instructions to the JIS team, Bean expressed the Canadian desire for the estimate to "contain a full consideration of the forms and scale of Soviet attacks against the North American continent in relation to campaigns elsewhere."[86]

Before the meeting adjourned, an American Army officer suggested that the paper be drafted with the phrase "Anglo-American Powers" replacing "Western Powers." It was important, he said, that the paper reflect that the

Soviet capabilities "had been dealt with only from the tripartite viewpoint." (He perhaps considered the phrase Anglo-American as inclusive of Canada). Bean suggested a formulation that included Canada, and it was agreed at the second meeting the paper should use the phrase "United States, United Kingdom, Canada and their Allies."[87] The issue would remain dormant until the end of the conference, when an American representative would again push for the restatement of the "Problem" section of the assessment without mention of Canada. Bean agreed to this if a footnote were to be included.[88] After some meetings between the co-chairmen, the Canadians, "under strong pressure," realized the other two would not give in and "Anglo-American" would stand against Canadian objections, with no footnote included.[89]

## ABCI 15

By the end of the conference in the last week of September 1949, the American-British-Canadian teams had agreed to a provisional document with two parts: an estimate of Soviet "intentions and capabilities" in war against "the Anglo-American Powers" in 1950 (Part I) and in 1956–57 (Part II). Before the end of the conference, however, Part II had been rendered totally useless by the first Soviet atomic explosion.

The Soviet explosion occurred in August, just before the ABCI conference began. It is unclear who, if any, of the officers at the conference knew about the detonation, and when. As late as September 14 during the conference, the Scientific Committee (made up of officials from each state) had estimated that the "earliest possible date" by which the Soviets might explode "their first test atomic bomb" was in mid-1950. The "probable date," however, was "mid-1953."[90] This had been the date pressed by the Americans, and which had been used to mark the chronological divisions in both the previous ACAI and ABAI papers.

Nearly a month after the Soviet explosion, and near the end of the tripartite intelligence conference, President Truman announced news of the test. The explosion of the Soviet device set off a major debate within the US intelligence community.[91] But for the joint teams, it meant that the estimates for Soviet atomic production figures included Part II were far too low, and that the entirety of Part II would need to re-evaluated.[92]

Both Parts of ABCI 15 are significant: Part I for what it revealed about assessments of the immediate Soviet threats, and Part II for the gaping hole it left in intelligence estimates and planning for a future war with the Soviet Union.

## Part I of ABCI 15

The first part of ABCI 15 was a large document, sprawling over eighty pages and including eleven appendices. It included, as per its "object" statement, an analysis of Soviet strategic intentions and capabilities in case of war, but also detailed estimates and a map of probable Soviet campaign plans, as well as analyses of the military capabilities of states potentially allied with the Anglo-American powers.

It was clear from the very first page of ABCI 15 that this was something of a compromise document: the first heading, "The Outbreak of War," laid out the separate and unreconciled views between the United States on one hand and the United Kingdom and Canada (mentioned by name) on the other as to whether they would receive warning of an impending attack. The UK and Canadian position was that war was not likely, and that if it did come in 1950 it would be preceded by a three- to four-month build-up and a period of strategic warning. This was in contrast to the American position that the Soviets could launch a war and achieve their objectives without mobilization, thus without warning to the Anglo-Americans. The issue of strategic warning would gain important salience in the coming years, but in ABCI 15 the parties agreed to disagree.[93]

There was also obvious disagreement between the American and British estimates of a Soviet atomic capability in case of war in 1950. The final draft stated that the Soviets would have "no more than 10 atomic bombs by the beginning of 1950 and a maximum of 30 by the end of 1950." The British fought a rearguard action into December of 1949 to amend this section, ultimately getting agreement to add a footnote indicating that the UK JIC thought these were "absolute outside figures" and would have preferred no figures be stated.[94]

Since the appreciation would be used to plan for war, and as the UK was expected to be a target for Soviet atomic bombing, it seems possible that the British wished to downplay the likelihood of Britain's nuclear destruction. If both assumptions were true, that is if the Soviets had these bombs, and they would be used against the UK, then there would be little point in planning for the defence of the home islands.

ABCI 15 was somewhat vague and contradictory in its explanation of Soviet goals in war. At one point, the estimate stated that the "ultimate object of Soviet policy" was "the establishment of communism, directed by Moscow, throughout the world." The intelligence staff assumed that the Soviets would

know that "this object can only be attained through the collapse of the two main bastions of democratic power—the U.K. and the U.S.A.," and that in 1950 the "major military invasion of North America would be an impossible task." Given these assumptions, the Soviets could be expected to launch a two-stage war: in the first stage, they would defeat the United Kingdom and dominate Europe and Asia. From there, they would "consolidate . . . an impregnable position from which North America could be gradually weakened by communist infiltration and economic pressure, and ultimately attacked by military forces." The Soviets, in turn, could expect that the Anglo-Americans would not let bits of the world "be overrun singly" and "would attack the Soviet Union from any direction that was possible." As a result, it was essential for the USSR to launch simultaneous full-scale campaigns. The opening stage of a war would be tremendous in scope and size, with Soviet thrusts outwards in all directions from its borders:

> "In the event of war in 1950 the Soviet plan would be to undertake the following operations:
>
> a) Simultaneously
>
> i. A campaign against Western Europe including Italy.
>
> ii. An aerial bombardment against the British Isles.
>
> iii. Campaigns against the Near and Middle East, including Greece and Turkey.
>
> iv. Campaigns with limited objectives in the Far East.
>
> v. Attacks with limited objectives against Canada and the United States, including Alaska and the Aleutians.
>
> vi. A sea and air offensive against Anglo-American sea communications.
>
> vii. Subversive activities and sabotage against Anglo-American interests in all parts of the world."
>
> b) As soon as possible, after the occupation of the Channel Port areas, a full-scale sea and air offensive against the British Isles.

c) As soon as feasible, campaigns against Scandinavia and the Iberian Peninsula. [The UK disagreed regrading this Iberian assessment.]

d) As necessary, air attacks against Pakistan."

The estimates of Soviet strength and capabilities in the paper suggested the Soviets could launch all of these operations and still keep forces in reserve.

But would the Soviets launch such an attack? And if so, why? Set against this extraordinary list of Soviet capabilities and the list of operations the Soviets could take if war broke out, was a peripheral discussion of whether war would come at all. As the British and Canadians had stipulated on the first page of the report, they considered war unlikely. ABCI 15, in another section, noted that from a "purely economic standpoint," the USSR "would not willingly engage in a major war." In fact, the "Allies possess or hold at their disposal a great preponderance in resources and production in practically every basic strategic commodity, a preponderance much greater than that of the Allies over the Axis power in World War II."[95]

For the purpose of describing likely Soviet military operations, the assessment had filled in Soviet intentions as above: the establishment of Communism throughout the world. But in a subsection titled "Soviet War Aims," there was an important discussion, one that would foreshadow more specific assessments of whether or not the Soviets would, in fact, go to war.

If the Soviet rulers were certain they could achieve, by war, "a communist world order under their own domination," they would not hesitate. Even if the Soviet peoples showed no interest in war, the ABC officers assumed that the power of the Soviet state could whip its citizens into frenzy. But Soviet leaders could have no certainty in 1950 that they would win a war, and so "weighty considerations tend to deter them from this line of action." Somewhat contradictorily, however, ABCI 15 predicted that if the Soviets chose war in 1950, it was because they had "decided that the progressive economic recovery, political coalescence and military rehabilitation of Western Europe pose such an intolerable threat to the Soviet Union, or such an obstacle to the attainment of its ultimate objective, that it could only be overcome by the immediate use of military force."[96]

In this assessment, then, the Soviets would choose war if they were certain they would win; they also might choose war if they felt time was running

out. As ABCI 15 was meant to assist military planning for warfare, and thus inform the requirements necessary for fighting that war, it gave contradictory signals: that a weak West might tempt the USSR into attack, but a strong West might also compel them to strike out as a last gasp.

## Putting ABCI Part 1 to Use

One of the final acts of the conference was to select a tripartite committee to brief the ABC Joint Planners on "Soviet Intentions and Capabilities up to the end of 1950" (that is, Part I of ABCI 15).[97] ABCI 15 was then used to inform an ABC conference at the end of September and into early October 1949.

The ABC planners at the autumn conference worked off a draft of a new US plan called OFFTACKLE. The results were finally approved in December 1949 as ABC 109. ABC 109 was not a single plan for all three states, but the basis for revisions to each state's existing plans.[98] The Canadian plan was renamed HICKORY.[99]

The conference, however, did not meet its full goals, and the representatives of the three states agreed that "[b]ecause of the divergent views expressed by the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canadian Planners in the meetings, it was decided that no single agreed plan could be prepared."[100]

The three planning teams, confirming what had been implicit at the beginning of the conference, agreed that in "view of the North Atlantic Treaty planning, further U.S-U.K.-Canadian planning conferences are considered inadvisable."[101] On October 5, the day after the ABC planning conference ended, the defence ministers of the North Atlantic Alliance met at the Pentagon for the first time as the Defence Committee, and instructed NATO's Military Committee to develop a strategic concept and a medium-term defence plan. But because NATO's early strategic guidance and defence plans were based on OFFTACKLE, they were based in part on the fruits of the 1949 ABC Intelligence conference.

The connections between NATO's planning and the ABC Intelligence conference was a closely held secret. Already, the existence of the ABC Intelligence and ABC Planning efforts were subject to stringent security measures, indoctrination lists, and other measures. When, in December 1949, it became clear that ABCI 15 was to be used in connection with NATO defence planning, the Canadians, for instance, introduced "special security measures" to conceal the existence of combined ABC intelligence.[102] It remained "of the

utmost importance" that in any discussion of NATO, "no reference whatsoever be made to the existence of any ABC documents."[103] This was to avoid any suggestion in the mind of NATO's other allies — and especially the French — that a tripartite directorate was controlling NATO's destiny.

## Aftermath

In autumn 1949, as the Americans and British prepared to use ABCI 15 Part I to guide NATO's strategic concepts, intelligence organizations in Washington, London, and Ottawa considered the fate of Part II of the study.[104] In Ottawa, the acting director of military intelligence (DMI), Lieutenant-Colonel Tim McCoy, summed up the prevailing mood: ABCI 15, because of its mistaken atomic estimates, "cannot be considered an adequate intelligence instrument to place in the hands of the Chiefs of Staff, and thus, irrespective of future international discussions, the need for a revision of the paper is clearly demonstrated."[105] Still, the dissatisfaction with Part II left a gap and, possibly, an opportunity. Even though there were supposedly to be no more tripartite conferences, JIC members assumed that "circumstances will arise whereby Canadian participation in bipartite discussions is inevitable." It was vital, then, that the JIC "give the highest priority to the undertaking of such a programme so that Canadian national intelligence will be able to play its full part by the tabling of its own appreciations in future international discussions."[106] Some, like Bean, even expected that the need to revise Part II might be a good reason for reopening tripartite discussions, which remained desirable for the Canadians.[107] Revising Part II, even if the revisions were not to be formally accepted in a tripartite assessment, were now an "urgent national intelligence requirement." Their preparation would "enable Canadian national intelligence" (this phrase, something of a neologism, was repeated here again) "to play its full part by the tabling of its own appreciations in future international discussions."[108]

In Washington, the Canadian director of naval intelligence, L. L. Atwood, learned that ABCI 15 Part II had "been suppressed" and there were "only three copies in existence" anywhere in the capital. The Americans on the US JIC and JIG were equally critical of Part I, he said, even if they were "prepared to accept it for North Atlantic and planning purposes."[109] The Americans had decided they did not like the approach to assessment used for ABCI 15 (or, clearly, ABAI 5 that preceded it), and were "very definite that intelligence must get out of war gaming and give up trying to time and place campaigns

as was done in ABCI 15."[110] In the future, the Americans wanted intelligence "up to the point of contact," and planners would handle things from there on.

US officers told the Canadians that the US was studying the issues raised by Part II, and believed that upon completion of their revisions, it would be "desirable to arrange for the production of a joint Canadian-United States long-range estimate."[111] Todd, from the US JIG, also told the British and Canadian delegations "that there would be no further tripartite discussions" but agreed on the need for revising Part II, suggesting Canadian participation in bipartite discussions.[112] This was a road back to bilateral ACAI efforts.

The British JIC, for its part, decided Part II would not "receive the authority" of the JIC and would not be submitted to the Chiefs of Staff.[113] Ultimately, there would be "no joint (ABC) intelligence appreciation suitable for long-range planning."[114] But all three states were increasingly concerned about filling the gap left by the ill-starred Part II.

It was the Soviet atomic test that had created the most glaring problems in the product of the ABCI conference. Over the previous two years, Canadian intelligence and, to some extent, military planners, had tended to downgrade the threat to North America from the Soviet Union. A Soviet Union with atomic weapons would change that calculus.

ABCI 15 itself was read to the prime minister and the Cabinet Defence Committee on November 23, 1949 (but went unnamed in the record of the discussion). As the minister of National Defence explained, previous assessments had assumed any Soviet attacks on North America would be "of a diversionary nature." Now, the bomb "could mean that these countries might be subject to raids by aircraft carrying atom bombs." Even one or two atom bombs dropped on Canada would be of devastating consequence. As it stood in late 1949, the Soviet Union did not require long-range aircraft to bomb Europe but would need more and better aircraft to reach North America. If the Soviet Union were to invest in long-range aircraft, it "might imply that the Russians were contemplating long range attacks."[115]

A few days before Christmas in 1949, Robert MacKay of External Affairs summed up the obvious difficulty of "knowing what to do next." It was not desirable, he wrote, to come to "any firm decision on policy . . . as to the appropriate defence programme for Canada over the next five years." The international situation was still "too fluid," Canada's role in the new North Atlantic pact was undecided, and there was doubt among some Canadian officials as to how seriously the US and UK were taking the North Atlantic Treaty. MacKay

warned that "[r]evised estimates of atomic weapons which the USSR may have four or five years hence may well mean that we shall have to concentrate more on the direct defence of North America than we had anticipated."[116]

On December 22, the Cabinet Defence Committee met again and discussed some of the basic findings from ABCI 15: the Soviets would not hesitate to go to war if they believed they could win, but that the new North Atlantic Defence Organization (not yet called NATO) had as its objective building up military power to convince the USSR that "a war would not pay."[117] The prospects for war, it seemed, depended on the Soviet Union.

## Soviet Intentions

In light of the gap left by the abandonment of Part II of ABCI, and the growing questions about Soviet intentions, the JIC directed the JIS to prepare an appreciation of "long-term Soviet intentions." The study was to take "a fundamentally new approach" that should "be based upon a logical appreciation of Soviet intentions." The object of the study, however, was not fundamentally new. It was to determine "broad courses of action open to the USSR for a planned war and the length of time it would take to assemble the resources required for each course."[118]

The JIC explicitly noted that the study was *not* to consider "whether the USSR will in fact undertake a world war," but assume "she will resort to war if other methods fail to achieve her aim of world domination."[119] This assessment would, ultimately, lead to a Chiefs of Staff Committee document, CSC 1(50).

Just how to go about such a study led to debate within the JIS. The working draft rested on assumptions similar to that which had guided ABCI 15: that "the aim of the Soviet Union is world domination."[120] There was "heated debate" between the JIS members over what constituted world domination, and the draft asked the rhetorical question of "what, in the Soviet view, constitutes world domination?" The draft answered its own question by listing two conditions: "communist administrations in at least the major capitalist nations of the west; and . . . the control of these administrations by Moscow." Again, and like ABCI 15, the draft concluded that "military courses of action open to the Soviet Union are not likely to be implemented unless these seem likely to lead to the achievement of Soviet aims."[121]

The Canadian drafters, like their American and British allies, were dealing with an analytic problem: the Soviet Union seemed to be preparing, or

already be prepared, for war. And yet, in drafting CSC 1(50), the Canadians had concluded (as had the ABCI 15 drafters), that the Soviets were preparing for a defensive war.[122] And while the USSR was preparing for a war that might develop from its bid for world domination, there remained "the possibility that a world war is and will long remain undesirable to the Soviet Union in the achievement of its aim."[123]

The Department of External Affairs, in particular, believed the USSR's military preparation was for a defensive war. Canadian military officers, too, were beginning to question whether it could be assumed the Soviet Union was preparing for an offensive war.[124] After reflecting on the initial draft of the paper on Soviet intentions, the director of military intelligence, Colonel A. F. B. Knight, wanted the "probability of the Soviet Union's going to war debated instead of assumed."[125] He wrote to his fellow JIC members to suggest that "since Soviet military strategy is very closely coordinated with political aims, the political objectives in each case should be determined."[126] And since political aims and objectives, he noted, were the responsibility of the DEA, the DEA should study these issues to support the Joint Intelligence Staff's drafting. Knight insisted that "the answer to the above problems must be found before any attempt is made to decide the format and details to be included in Soviet Intentions as a basis for Long-Term planning,"[127] and that this required input from External Affairs.

DEA officials got to work in February and April preparing a "mature departmental opinion" for JIS.[128] As the officials from External Affairs discussed the best approach, their efforts drifted toward the theoretical, including a "study of war in Soviet theory," or "something along the line of Communist theory as to the function of war in bringing about a Communistic society on a world basis."[129] There were, the officials decided, three questions to answer: whether Communist theory believed war with capitalist states was inevitable; whether war was likely to be initiated by capitalist states, and whether Communist theory would require the USSR, as the leader of Communist states, "to resort to force in bringing about a Communist world order."[130] As part of their work, Canadian officials read, and agreed with, George Kennan's article in the *Reader's Digest* entitled "Is War with Russia Inevitable?" (Kennan had answered, emphatically, in the negative.)

Robert Ford, one of Canada's Soviet specialists, was tasked with drafting the External Affairs paper.[131] But the drafting process was bogged down by increasingly lengthy papers between offices in the DEA debating Soviet

theory.[132] The whole DEA draft became "hopelessly long," and needed to be "put on ice" and picked up again on "a rainy day."[133]

## A Fresh Start

At around the same time the Canadians were engaged in a close reading of Soviet theory, UK JIC put it all much more succinctly in a short paper with a long title: [UK] JIC (50)7 (Final) "The Likelihood of War with the Soviet Union and the Date by Which the Soviet Leaders Might be Prepared to Risk It."[134]

The British reached four primary conclusions. First, Soviet policy was based on establishing world Communism and the Soviets believed their goal could be "achieved without the Soviet Union becoming involved in a major war." Second, and related to the first, it was "not therefore in the interest of the Soviet leaders deliberately to start a world war." Third, while the Soviets would press ahead with political, economic, and ideological warfare, they were unlikely "to force any issue to a point where a risk of war with the Western Powers would arise." And finally, the UK JIC warned that "[a] time may come, however, when the Soviet leaders consider themselves strong enough to counter any military action by the Western Powers and they may then press on with their plans to extend their influence and control regardless of Western reactions." A Western world destabilized by political and economic instability, or a serious lag in rearmament, might lead the Soviets to "disregard possible Western reactions to the extension of Communist influence and control."[135]

The British assessment, then, was not a call for relaxation, but a warning that Soviet policy could change if the Western powers failed to unify. In a meeting of the UK JIC, some officials warned that current British assessments predicted the Soviet Union would not reach war readiness before 1955 at the earliest. But previous assessments, and the previous planning date, had put the year at 1956 or 1957. It was "significant that the danger date was advancing instead of receding."[136]

The British passed their paper and minutes of their discussion to Ottawa through the Canadian liaison officer in London. George Glazebrook found it of "unusual interest," and Escott Reid decided it was important enough to send up to Pearson.[137]

The direct result of the British paper was a Canadian "fresh start" on the problem. It was not a JIC paper but, as the DMI had suggested, a DEA paper that would ultimately bear the title "Political Factors in the Likelihood of War with the Soviet Union." An early draft of the paper set its object clearly and

plainly: "Will the Soviet Union go to war? . . . If so, when and why?"[138] This was the question that would consume the rest of the decade. It also represented a fundamental shift from the earlier papers that had focused on what the Soviet Union would do in a war, rather than whether it would start one.

The British model showed that this could be done without the theoretical debates the DEA officers entered into earlier in the year. The Canadians were now ready to conclude that there was "no useful purpose" served in exploring contradictions between Communist theory and the objectives of the Soviet state. It was far better, they concurred, to acknowledge that "[i]n practice Marxism — or communism — is what the Politburo says it is."[139] The "Russians," as the Canadians and British often referred to the Soviet leadership, "do not, however, live in a political vacuum, and are not blind fanatics." While in the long term they were interested in the establishment "of a communist world-order," they were prepared to "compromise between the ultimate goal and the short-term goal: the security of the Soviet state."[140] The Canadians, like the British, concluded that if the Soviet leadership believed the result of a war would be uncertain, the Soviets would not launch a war and would work to strengthen "the Soviet fatherland."[141]

Indeed, the Canadians went one step further, assessing that "[e]ven if the military balance were in their favour, the Soviet leaders would probably not select war as their most favoured method of expansion."[142] While the Soviet leadership often used the threat of a "hostile outer world" to control their citizens, they could not avoid the conclusion that war "would lead to enormous devastation within the Soviet Union."[143]

The Canadians certainly expected the Soviet Union to seek, through political and other means, to "expand its dominion," and that Soviet leaders did believe a clash would come with the non-Communist world. According to the Department of External Affairs, the "inevitability of a clash theory" was, "in Soviet eyes, a very long-term project." The Soviet belief that one day violence would come meant that it could be put off in the meantime. The Canadian assessment was driven by a calculation of Soviet interests, a bit of theory, and some evidence. The Canadians pointed to the often-repeated assertion in the state-controlled Soviet press that Moscow and its declared enemies "can coexist peacefully, and even that a sanguinary clash can be averted."[144]

After several false starts, then, the Canadians finally had an assessment of whether the Soviet Union sought general war: The DEA paper argued that until Soviet leaders "feel that they are adequately prepared for war with the West,

they will actively seek to avoid war." But, crucially, even "[w]hen they feel they are adequately prepared, they will not of preference choose to go to war."[145]

The Canadian paper was finally approved for circulation to the JIC on June 19, 1949.[146] Five days later, tanks from Communist North Korea rolled into South Korea touching off a war. Was this the prelude to general war?