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Leaders in Conflict: Diefenbaker, Kennedy, and Canada's Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis

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Leaders in Conflict:
Diefenbaker, Kennedy, and Canada's Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis

by

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Leaders in Conflict:

Diefenbaker, Kennedy, and Canada's Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis

Thesis under the direction of Roger Sarty, Ph.D., Professor of History.

By Matthew Gurney

While the Cuban Missile Crisis has received a tremendous amount of attention from American scholars, in Canada the historiography concerning the Crisis is quite limited, with few monographs devoted to it. Typically the Crisis might receive a few pages of attention, perhaps a chapter in a book concerned with other topics. This historiographical "blind spot" has allowed misconceptions concerning Canada's diplomatic and military participation in the Crisis to persist in this country's collective memory of the Crisis, which is a disservice not only to Canada's national heritage, but to the thousands of men and women who strove to prepare Canada for the possibility of thermonuclear war against the Soviet Union and its allies.

Making use of the most recent document declassifications and all available secondary scholarship, this thesis examines the true nature of Canada's oft-overlooked contributions to continental security, and the increasingly hostile personal relationship between President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Particular attention is paid to how understanding of these events has evolved with the release of once-classified materials over the nearly five decades since the Crisis.

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To my grandfather, who would have been proudest of all.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will examine the development of personal acrimony between President Kennedy and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and how it affected Canada-US defence relations at a critical time in the Cold War. The Diefenbaker and Kennedy administrations coincided with a period of increasing confrontation between the western and Soviet blocs when, of necessity, the homeland defence forces of the two nations became much more closely interlocked. The agreements for emergency action were extraordinarily complex and, partly as a result of the differences between the two national leaders, still in the course of development when they were tested in October 1962 by the Cuban Missile Crisis. Played out over thirteen long days where mutually assured destruction seemed imminent and perhaps unavoidable, the Cuban Missile Crisis, ended successfully by desperate, secretive last minute negotiations, is recalled as perhaps the most dangerous moment of the nuclear age. By virtue of geography, Canada could not help but become involved.

Though close friendship with the world's greatest military and economic power has brought Canada many significant benefits, it does occasionally put the country in the line of fire, whether that fire is metaphorical or literal. Never was this truer than during the Cold War's long thermonuclear standoff. Canada, an established member of the Western bloc, was not only a target of the Soviet Union on the basis of its alignment with her traditional democratic allies, but because of the country's close ties and historical bond with the primary member of the Western bloc, the United States. The two nations' armed forces worked together to defend the continent and the two economies were

interlinked, furthering the growth of both and the unsurpassed prosperity of Canadians and Americans alike. The close cooperation of the Second World War and the Cold War had begun – particularly in the defence and economic spheres – to tie together the two nations into a single supranational entity, albeit a rather disorganized one.

Had there ever been an exchange of nuclear weapons, geopolitical boundaries would have been meaningless. In this nightmarish – thankfully unrealized – scenario, the missiles and bombers of both sides would have been flying north and south to reach their targets in the most efficient manner possible. Canada, and the state of Alaska, had the misfortune of being the shooting gallery in what would have been the world's most lethal gunfight. "Collateral damage" would have then referred to weapons capable of reproducing conditions over our cities and towns as hostile to human life as the surface of the sun, while leaving behind a cloud of drifting dust to poison the land and account for yet more collateral damage. Even in the unlikely event that the Soviet Union had chosen to spare Canada any direct attacks, and presuming that no warheads were exploded over Canada during the furious air battles a nuclear war would have unleashed, the Canadian population, strung as it is in a thin band along the American border, would have been condemned to a slower and perhaps crueler fate in the days and weeks that would have followed this nightmarish scenario.

It is this shared vulnerability that most tightly bound Canadians and Americans to one another during the darkest days of the Cold War. Given the risks Canada and America faced together, the two leaders should have been capable of working closely together as professionals, if not friends. While there have been some close friendships between Canadian Prime Ministers and American Presidents, during the danger-fraught

days of the early 1960s, personal dislikes at the highest levels of both governments threatened to derail the close relationship at a time of maximum danger.

President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, mutually distrustful and both pursuing what they felt was their country's genuine national interest, when confronted by the spectre of Soviet nuclear missiles in Communist Cuba, hesitated to apply the appropriate pressure to ensure that the balky bi-lateral agreements functioned as effectively as they could. In doing so, they jeopardized not only a strong, mutually beneficial alliance, but also the physical survival of their respective peoples, and perhaps even civilization itself. There are few things in history about which that can be said without being absurdly hyperbolic; the Cuban Missile Crisis' rapid escalation to the very brink of a nuclear war between the superpowers is certainly one of them. President Kennedy's headstrong confidence, perceived by Diefenbaker as arrogance, led the Prime Minister to delay Canada's move to a state of heightened military alert in lock-step with the United States. This left North America vulnerable to a surprise attack. Even worse was Canada's drawn out process of accepting nuclear weapons for use by the Royal Canadian Air Force, which greatly reduced the effectiveness of the country's primary air defences, a weakness that had a direct impact on U.S. security.

The story of Canada's participation in American-dominated continental defence organizations is a long and complex one, and has been well studied by Canadian scholars, though largely ignored by non-Canadians. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the event which first put these arrangements to the test, has in contrast received lavish examination by scholars all across the globe. The story of Canada's modest but not insignificant role in continental defence has evolved with the passage of time and the release of once-

classified documents. This thesis will examine how the gradual release of files and increasing willingness of now-elderly participants in the period to share their experience has reshaped our understanding of these eventful years. It is doubtful that the story of continental defence during the days before and during the Cuban Missile Crisis will ever be fully known, but in its own way, this thesis will highlight what is known about Canada's participation, with specific reference to the earliest monographs, the later, more in-depth analyses, and the most recent possible scholarship, benefiting from the continued release of once-classified documents.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The main source for primary documents for this thesis was the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. Holding the papers of President Kennedy's Administration and donated private collections, the Library is a treasure trove of documents concerning the relationship between Canada and the United States, and also between Diefenbaker and Kennedy. The boxes of material examined were primarily those concerning Canada specifically, held in both the National Security Files series, as well as the smaller Presidential Office Papers series. There was some degree of overlap between the two series, mostly concerning telegrams about Canada that dealt with issues of American national defence that required top-level review by either the President himself or his most senior advisors. Documents related to defence that were sent to the Oval Office would be filed in both the National Security and the Office Paper series. The documents cover the period from December 1960, after President Kennedy's electoral victory but before his Inauguration (therefore representing the work of his transition team) right up to the abrupt end of every file in the fall of 1963.[1]

Also examined were the National Security Files for Cuba, and a box of files relating to the intelligence reports prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency on developments in Cuba and by the United States Intelligence Agency on foreign reaction to the 1962 crisis. The National Security files on Cuba include minutes of the meetings of President Kennedy's *ad hoc* "ExComm" group of top advisors, which while interesting to read, have been extraordinarily well covered by several recent monographs and document

[1] All papers, even those related to Kennedy himself, dated past his assassination on 22 November 1963, are property of the Johnson Library.

collections, released since the public was in 1996 given access to the so-called "Kennedy Tapes." These tapes are audio recordings of conversations amongst the members of ExComm, including President Kennedy, when he was present. The recent Averting the Final Failure: John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings provides a narrative of events and scholarly commentary on those heard on the tapes, but also includes quotations of long passages of transcripts taken directly from them.[2] This and other published versions of the transcriptions were more useful than the frayed, deteriorating records themselves.[3]

The online records of the State Department's "Documents on the Foreign Relations of the United States" proved surprisingly unhelpful. FRUS, typically a treasure trove of information, in this case served only to repeatedly elaborate upon information already covered in the JFK Library collections. There are almost 400 relevant documents contained within FRUS's series on the Crisis, and while reading them it became apparent that many of the most interesting JFK Library documents are essentially these FRUS pieces, stripped of all unnecessary verbiage and reduced to the bare essential facts. The explanation is simple – many of the bureaucrats and diplomats writing the FRUS documents had the time necessary to write witty and detailed memos, while Kennedy's inner circle had just enough time to furiously read through them and compile reports on the content. The FRUS documents are worth reading for context, but in the sense of defining the historiography and appreciating Canada's involvement, the JFK Library

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[2] Sheldon M. Stern, Averting the Final Failure: John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[3] While I did not get access to the original documents themselves, of course, I was using the Kennedy Library's official copies of them. For obvious reasons, they would be a top draw, and this is made clear by the low quality of the photocopies available. Having no doubt been worn out and recopied many times, many of the documents suffer from severe "photocopier burn" and in some cases were bordering on being completely unreadable.

documents were much more helpful.

Also most helpful was a collection of 85 documents released by the National Security Archive, covering all aspects of the Crisis, including State Department telegrams, ExComm minutes, intelligence and military reports, and most importantly, both of Khrushchev's letters to President Kennedy that played such a critical role in first deepening and then ultimately resolving the Crisis. Many of these documents were plucked directly from FRUS, and represented the most tersely informative documents that could be found, free of unnecessary personal commentary and editorializing, something America's diplomats seemed alarmingly prone to.

Most of the documents collected for this paper were either fully declassified or only lightly redacted. A representative example is a memo of conversation between Livingston Merchant, the former American ambassador to Canada, sent to Ottawa as Kennedy's personal emissary on the eve of his address to the world announcing his quarantine of Cuba. The memo is intact in virtually its entirety, except that the name of the United States intelligence officer sent with Merchant to deliver the briefing has been redacted. Similar inconsequential redactions can be found in some of the other documents, and in many cases related files that have subsequently been released have supplied the missing information. Moreover, an informed reader can glean at least the essential elements of what was being discussed with only the slightest of intuitive leaping. Examples include documents on the US-Canadian defence relationship that read along the lines of, "In time of [deleted] the Canadian government has granted permission for SAC [deleted] carrying [deleted] to overfly their territory." It is not difficult to conclude that this document is referring to bombers, carrying nuclear weapons, during

times of war. Names of bases, personnel, and specific weapons systems are redacted, but in the majority of instances, these deletions do not reduce the usefulness of the document.

One significant exception to the generally unobtrusive redaction was a series of documents relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis and the United States military. Four entire boxes were delivered in response to the writer's request. This was exciting, as Library staff stated that these boxes had only very recently been made "open" to the public and that the writer was among the first to examine them. Upon opening it, it became clear that the archivist's definition of "open" was somewhat different than the one the layperson might be forgiven for assuming: while the boxes themselves had been opened to the public, each of them contained a list stating, "The following documents have been removed by order of the Defense Department" followed by a long column of file headings. The boxes contained *only* these sheets.

Canadian government documents were essential to provide a framework for the assessment of the more numerous US documents. In particular, the Documents on Canadian External Relations series of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade provided valuable material regarding Canada's relations with its allies and particularly Canada's evolving, often muddled position on nuclear weapons. While only the volumes to 1959 have been published, these provide essential context on the development of US-Canadian military relations. Inspection of personal papers was at times complicated by issues of ownership and temporary removal of documents from circulation (see discussion of Minister Harkness below).

There is surprisingly little historiography devoted to the Canadian role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Many of the sources that are available touch on it only tangentially;

for example, political surveys of the turbulent period of Canadian federal governance during the early 1960s touch on the Crisis and divisions it brought forth within the Progressive Conservative Party of Diefenbaker. Works focused on the Liberal Party or upon Lester B. Pearson himself also relate to the Crisis from that angle, and how it helped improve Liberal fortunes in the next Canadian federal election. Other works are surveys of Canadian military history and our complex relationship with weapons of mass destruction. While there are some works that focus on the Crisis, such as Peter Haydon's The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered[4] or Knowlton Nash's Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border[5], in the main, much of the Canadian historiography for this paper was gleaned by parsing works written on other topics.

The works on politics came in two distinct waves of scholarship. The first wave, published during the 1960s, can best be described as contemporary narratives and analysis of Diefenbaker's time as Prime Minister. These books vary in their quality and continued usefulness. Given the highly classified nature of the Cuban Missile Crisis' innermost decision-making, and the determined efforts by both Washington[6] and Moscow to keep the details of the eventual resolution secret, the earliest works of Canadian scholarship tend to grope in the dark. In some cases, they report as fact what has since been revealed to have been fiction, particularly as regards Washington's anger at Ottawa's lackluster response to the Crisis, which was concealed from the public so as

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[4] Peter Haydon, The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993).

[5] Knowlton Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990).

[6] An excellent example of the extent of the efforts to mislead is found in Robert Kennedy's monograph Thirteen Days. His description of how the Crisis ended bears little resemblance to the reality.

to present the Soviets with at least the appearance of a united front.

Perhaps the earliest work to make detailed reference to the Cuban Missile Crisis is Peter C. Newman's Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years.[7] Published in 1963, one year after the Crisis, the work is practically a real-time assessment of Diefenbaker as Prime Minister. Given Newman's critical tone, it might be more aptly referred to as an autopsy. It contains no bibliography and only a very few notes, usually offering further narrative or a personal aside, rather than any form of scholarly notation. It must have been literally rushed to the presses in order to hit the bookstore shelves while still timely, and while this can be understood, it certainly diminishes its utility. It is best used not as a source for study, but as a tool which helps to ground the reader in the charged emotions and bitter personal rivalries of the early 1960s, and to shed some light on how Diefenbaker was viewed by both friend and foe. In 1963, he still had plenty of both.

While Newman stresses in his introduction that he has not set out to write the final word on Diefenbaker, or to provide a comprehensive biography of the man's life, he certainly does not pull his punches when addressing what the author considered to be Diefenbaker's many failings as a leader and a politician. Diefenbaker, argued Newman, was a man who believed his own good press, who became "self-charmed" and began to believe that what was best for Diefenbaker was automatically what was best for Canada. While only 20 pages are devoted to the Cuban Missile Crisis and Canada's tortuously slow process of accepting nuclear weapons, these 20 pages reflect the immediate reaction of the Canadian intelligentsia to Diefenbaker's handling of the Crisis. Newman provides devastating criticisms of Diefenbaker, portraying him as deer caught in the headlights of

[7] Peter C. Newman, Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963).

history, totally unable to respond to the pressures of a fast-developing Crisis. Later scholarship has somewhat redeemed the Prime Minister, but Newman's early work certainly helped set the stage for the gradual collapse of Diefenbaker's political legacy.

Broadly similar, if different in tone, is Thomas Van Dusen's The Chief, published in 1968.[8] Van Dusen was both a personal friend and political confidante of the Prime Minister, and thus is a rather more biased source than most. All the same, it is interesting to note the degree that Van Dusen does *not* refute Newman's critical assessment. From Van Dusen, we get a more balanced portrayal of Diefenbaker as a sharply intelligent man being pulled in too many directions at once. The book, almost 400 pages long, lacks an overall thesis, being more a narrative of Van Dusen's time in Ottawa and his relationship with the Prime Minister. While a fine piece of writing, it is not a particularly good piece of scholarship, as it is totally lacking in notes, a bibliography, or even an index.

The Chief is not without merit, as it provides fascinating insight into the world of Ottawa politics during the Diefenbaker years, which provides useful background context for understanding the Crisis as just one among many disasters which threatened to upset Diefenbaker's plans for the country and the fragile balance of power in his minority parliament. All the same, the lack of even basic scholarly guideposts — especially an index — make this work frustrating to historians. When one does track down the sections on the Crisis, they are glib and poorly detailed, offering only the bland cover stories established after the Crisis, and perpetuated by those like Bobby Kennedy (see note above). Whether or not Van Dusen even knew he was propagating a myth is unknown; it is entirely plausible that he truly believed that Crisis had ended exactly as was reported. If

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[8] Thomas Van Dusen, The Chief (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1968).

he knew more, even about how the Prime Minister viewed the situation, The Chief does not make such clear.

The memoirs of both John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson provided insight into what was going on inside the minds of the two men during the Crisis and the events before and after it. Both benefit from direct access to their own personal papers, as well as the willingness of their colleagues to contribute papers and recollections, but of course suffer from the bias inherent to memoirs.

Of the two, Pearson's memoir, Mike,[9] is the more balanced, as he seems willing to offer a more nuanced perspective on the Canadian government's response to the Crisis. While both are careful to hew closely to the established narrative (both memoirs were published in the 1970s, and therefore predate the most revealing archival declassifications), Pearson's work offers insight into a disastrous address to the House given by Diefenbaker the night of Kennedy's famous "Full retaliatory response" speech, wherein he suggests that Diefenbaker was simply fatigued and under pressure, and misspoke.[10]

Diefenbaker's memoir, on the other hand, while witty and highly readable, is transparently a final word against his detractors and an attempt to redeem his battered legacy. He seeks to avoid overtly criticizing President Kennedy, but refuses to take any responsibility for Canada's hesitant response, and seems mystified that anyone would feel otherwise. The words convey tremendous satisfaction with his career, but the insecurity

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[9] Lester B. Pearson, Mike, Vol. II (Toronto: Signet Books, 1975). The volume consulted was the second of three. Pearson died midway through its completion, leaving it in the hands of his editors to complete. The third volume was a collection of essays, diaries, and interviews given, organized as best as possible by the editors.

[10] In the address, it seemed as though Diefenbaker was questioning the President's word. This diplomatic blunder is a central theme in all the literature around Diefenbaker during the Crisis, and is explained perhaps most effectively by later works.

for which he was so well known is clearly between the lines. One Canada is Diefenbaker's last grasp at a legacy, and it is clear that he knew that. [11]

After a long period where the scholarly work was focused on the military, not the political, a glut of document declassifications in the late 1980s, 25 years after the Crisis ended, led to two new major works of relevant Canadian political history. These works, as well as numerous books relating specifically to the military aspects of Canada's Crisis participation, can be said to constitute the second major wave of scholarship. The biography Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker, written by Denis Smith and published in 1995, was the most recent reputable scholarly work available.[12] It made heavy use of all the available archives: the Canadian National Archives in Ottawa, the Diefenbaker Centre in Saskatoon, and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston. Smith also had access to a great number of privately-lent document collections, primarily from members of Diefenbaker's cabinet, and three decades of secondary scholarship, allowing this to be a much fuller examination of the career of Diefenbaker than had before been possible. Indeed, in many ways, this is the complete biography of Diefenbaker that Peter Newman took pains to point out that he was *not* seeking to write in 1963.

In contrast to the earlier works, Newman's included, Smith provides a balanced, sympathetic portrayal of Diefenbaker, stating that he was an unusually skilled populist politician whose strong leadership and vision helped to establish the Progressive Conservative Party's strength in Western Canada. Be that as it may, the book is also

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[11] John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada, Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker: The Tumultuous Years, 1962 to 1967. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977).

[12] Denis Smith, Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker (Toronto: MacFarlane, Walter, & Ross, 1995).

highly critical of Diefenbaker personally, specifically, it calls him to task for his erratic behaviour, his hesitancy and distrustfulness, all issues that paralyzed his ability to lead the country during the turbulent 1960s. Indeed, no doubt President Kennedy would have agreed with Smith's overall conclusion: Diefenbaker was a proud Canadian and a capable politician who brought his promising and generally successful career in politics to ruin by indulging the worst of his personal traits.

Thomas Van Dusen was not the only confidant of Diefenbaker to pen a volume. H. Basil Robinson, a close aide and friend of the Prime Minister, wrote Diefenbaker's World in 1989.[13] This work is a thorough examination of the period of Diefenbaker's leadership, and is not always flattering in its portrayal of the Prime Minister. While not embittered, Robinson's frustration with Diefenbaker, even long after the latter's death, is apparent in the chapters dealing with the Kennedy Administration and the Cuban Missile Crisis specifically. Robinson's tome is particularly useful as regards the so-called "Rostow Memorandum", an American document forgotten after a meeting between Kennedy and Diefenbaker that the Prime Minister kept in his own possession, a staggering breach of diplomatic etiquette. Robinson was uniquely placed to look upon Diefenbaker's machinations with unease and eventually, outright alarm. While Robinson consulted essentially the same archival and personally lent document collections as Smith, he also benefited from the use of his own diary, which he quotes at length throughout the book. Indeed, the diary entries provide an unconventional if welcome narrative framework for the book, with an entry from a given day leading into detailed discussion of what followed, and why it was significant.

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[13] H. Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

An important work in furthering Canada's Cold War historiography is Knowlton Nash's Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border (1990). In brisk, readable, often humourous prose, Nash explores the personal relationship between the Prime Minister and the President, and how hard those beneath them had to struggle just to sustain the alliance in the moment of maximum tension. Nash knew both men personally, and had access to numerous persons who had served in high placed positions on both sides of the borders. Nash utilized his extensive personal contacts to interview many of these individuals, and made heavy use of the JFK Presidential Library, the Diefenbaker Centre, the National Archives of both nations, and numerous secondary sources. His thesis — that Kennedy's ignorance of Canada galled the anti-American Diefenbaker, who responded with stubborn bluster at inopportune times — is well argued and supported.

Nash also provides some of the best overall coverage of the Rostow Memorandum debacle. It is ironic that this is so, since he narrowly missed being able to access the documents himself; they were opened to the public shortly after his work was published. Even so, through personal interviews and exhaustive searches of all available information, Nash was able to assemble an accurate picture of this embarrassing affair, even without direct access to the documents.

Canadian defence historiography has followed a broadly similar cycle: early writings doing their best to make sense of a confusing situation from public documents often designed to conceal unpleasant facts, followed by a surge of new scholarship in the 1980s and early 1990s as archives were opened and participants became more willing to speak on the record to historians and journalists. Two early works covered Canadian

military and foreign policy during that decade. John McLin's Canada's Changing Defence Policy, 1957-1963 (1967) offers a highly detailed, technical examination of Canadian defence policy and the weapons systems acquired to implement them.[14] Drawing upon debates, newspaper records, off-the-record interviews of indeterminable accuracy, and public-domain information concerning weapons and hardware, McLin does his best to assemble a picture of the rapid transformations the Canadian armed forces were undergoing while Diefenbaker was Prime Minister. It contains chapters not only on the Canadian military's response to the Missile Crisis, but also a highly detailed account of Canada's hesitant acquisition of nuclear warheads.

While McLin's book is more focused on building a narrative than analyzing the causes, it is notable that he remarks upon some of the increasingly confusing and contradictory information coming out in the late 1960s about how cooperative Canada truly had been during the Crisis. Admitting that much of the necessary information was unavailable and would be for some time, McLin comments on the "rumours" that the Canadian government withheld permission to commence pre-arranged mutual defence arrangements that the Pentagon had taken for granted when readying American defences. McLin, interestingly, expresses doubt that such is the case, and suggests that the American officers he spoke with (off the record) were either uninformed or overly influenced by inflammatory partisan rhetoric by journalists and politicians on both sides of the border. McLin also references for the first time something that has since become the source of considerable speculation but never been resolved — whether or not, in the heat of the Crisis, some small number of nuclear weapons were indeed given to the

[14] John McLin, Canada's Changing Defence Policy, 1957-1963 (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1967).

Canadian military. Although McLin's suspicions that Canada did receive warheads are frequently cited in later works, there is little hope of ever discovering whether this is a leaked secret or a myth.

The second major scholarly to appear in the 1960s is Peyton Lyon's Canada in World Affairs, 1961-63.[15] This hefty volume is a part of the "Canada in World Affairs" series sponsored by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Like McLin's work, it offers detailed analysis, but more so on the Crisis than the earlier debates about the acquisition of nuclear weapons. It is heavily reliant upon sources now known to have been manipulated: records of debate, public statements and media reports. Published in 1968, this work begins to question the accepted narrative, paving the way for research that would not follow for two decades.

Lyon questions the official version of how well Canada and the United States cooperated during the Crisis, and is the first to unravel one of the bleaker truths of the Cuban Missile Crisis: Canada turned down very few requests from the United States because the Americans knew better than to ask. Quoting an unnamed American diplomatic official, Lyon suggests that Washington "didn't ask for much" because they had been quietly warned by sympathetic Canadian military officials that the government was so deadlocked than any requests would be turned down. Despite being critical of the slowness of Canada's response, Lyon is also the first to suggest that the issue was not necessarily whether or not Canada should have responded differently, but whether or not the United States ever would have deigned to consult us more fully. A fascinating point, Lyon is the first to raise it, bringing a more nuanced approach to the Crisis, and

[15] Peyton Lyon, Canada in World Affairs, 1961-63 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968).

advancing the historiographic narrative considerably.

As archives were opened in the late 1980s, Canadian military and foreign policy historians were quick to react. Jack Granatstein summarized in a chapter in Kennedy's Quest for Victory (1989) the numerous entanglements between the US and Canadian militaries and how Diefenbaker's hesitation to honour prior agreements led to a strong, somewhat impolitic response by the American diplomatic machines in both Washington and Ottawa.[16]

The chapter highlights a key issue — the Canadian Minister of National Defence, Douglas Harkness, did his best to quietly put the Canadian military on maximum possible alert, without the authorization of the Prime Minister. Granatstein's chapter relies heavily upon already published secondary sources and publicly available interviews, but this discussion of Harkness' actions quickly became a focal point of all subsequent Canadian historiography. An example is a chapter in Canadian Foreign Policy by Jocelyn Ghent-Mallet, that expands on the effect of Harkness' raising of the alert: the Canadian military readied itself for battle, but the lack of an official statement from Ottawa had the effect communicating a lack of support to Washington. Nash and Smith also cover this topic in detail.

Douglas Harkness has become something of an object of torment to this writer. His document collections are formidable, and are entrusted to the Canadian National Archives. As Canada's leading voice on defence matters during the period under study,

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[16] Jack Granatstein, "When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States." Kennedy's Quest for Victory. Thomas G. Patterson, ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Jack Granatstein has written several books dealing with at least aspects of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the main, however, those books touch upon the Crisis only in reference to other topics, or examine it from an extremely dry "operational perspective" of military history. This article, in contrast, while still engaging directly with the relevant material, did so concisely, engagingly, and provided the same information and insight.

Harkness' personal papers and notes would have been invaluable, and have mostly been declassified. Regrettably, the collection has been withdrawn from circulation, for restoration and eventual digitalization, so that scholars from around the world can browse the documents and download the ones that suit their fancy. While this will be a boon for future students and historians, it had the effect of taking the entire collection out of play right when it would have been most helpful for this paper. While the same issues are adequately explored in the secondary sources, the missed opportunity is most unfortunate. A doctoral thesis by Patricia I. McMahon, The Politics of Canada's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963, was examined due to its heavy use of the Harkness Papers.[17] While they are frequently cited in the paper, they are focused predominantly on not the politics relevant to this paper, but on purely domestic issues, including various disarmament groups and inter-party bickering for both the Conservatives and the Liberals, and are thus not directly relevant to the topic at hand.

The declassification of documents related to nuclear warfare and continental air defence accelerated after the end of the Cold War.[18] This led to another boom in scholarship, constituting a third wave of Canadian historiography concerning the nation's military participation in the Crisis. Joseph Jockel's works No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States, and the Origins of North American Air Defence[19] (1987) and his recent Canada in NORAD (2007) provided helpful insight into the evolving nature and functional realities of the Canadian and American joint command.[20] The former title,

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[17] Patricia D. McMahon, "The Politics of Canada's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963." (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1999)

[18] Given the anxieties of a post-9-11 world, it is likely that the flow of documents related to continental air defence will soon slow to a trickle.

[19] Joseph T. Jockel, No Boundaries Upstairs (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987).

[20] Joseph T. Jockel, Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007: A History (Montreal: Queen's Centre for

based largely on documents that became available at the end of the 1980s, is a tightly focused account of the origin of integrated US-Canadian continental air defence. He concludes that even while the Canadian government wrung its hands over sovereignty concerns, the military was eager to work as closely with the Americans as possible, and felt that such cooperation was a benefit to Canadian sovereignty, not a threat. The more recent work explores, using NORAD's own archives and papers recently released by the Canadian Department of National Defence, how NORAD was viewed by both the military and the respective national governments. The conclusion, that the military thought it was a logical, useful apparatus, while the governments bogged down the whole operation with unhelpful politics, is no surprise, and fits with the established historiography of the Crisis.

Learning to Love the Bomb (2007), by Sean Maloney, covers the same topics in much greater depth. [21] Maloney has constructed a highly readable history of Canada's agonizingly slow adoption of nuclear weapons, which while too prolonged to please the Americans, proceeded much faster behind the scenes than most Canadians would have been aware. With a daunting bibliography covering a range of archives and military record holdings across the English-speaking world, as well as a long list of interviews, Maloney's work explores whether or not Canada was a staunch ally of the United States, something that the earlier works had always taken as a given, even while conceding that Diefenbaker's personal dislike of Kennedy did factor in the end result. Maloney argues instead that the Canadian government attempted to have it both ways — insisting on

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International Relations & the Queen's Defence Management Program by McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

[21] Sean Maloney, Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons in the Cold War (Washington: Potomac Books, 2007).

Canada's need and right to acquire nuclear weapons from the US, but only on Canadian terms. This bold assertion may have merit, but certainly not during the period of the Missile Crisis, when Canada's lack of atomic ammunition backfired on Ottawa, and was partially responsible for the fall of Diefenbaker's government.

Avoiding Armageddon (2002) by Andrew Richter studies the same issues and the same period, but focuses on Canadian nuclear weapons doctrine, rather than the political battles over their acquisition and the operational details of their deployment.[22] While of limited use in assessing the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was most helpful in establishing how the Canadian government — particularly senior officials — viewed nuclear weapons, as compared to the case-by-case arguments concerning specific missiles or planes more often discussed in the literature. Richter concludes that the government was in agreement that nuclear weapons were not simply another battlefield tool, but the ultimate, final weapon of last resort. The military wanted them badly, so as to gain influence within the western alliance, not just to have the means for keeping the Soviets out of Canadian airspace. At the same time the Department of External Affairs, led in 1959-63 by a disarmament crusader, the minister Howard Green, wanted Canada to spearhead the charge against nuclear arms. Richter richly narrates the tug of war between ministers Harkness and Green that so hobbled the chronically insecure Diefenbaker leading up to and during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Diefenbaker, Richter argues, was a man who wished all to love him, and could not keep the Americans, the military, and External Affairs happy all at the same time. In the end, these conflicting impulses left him wracked with self-doubt and indecision.

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[22] Andrew Richter, Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons, 1950-63 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

It would be no exaggeration to refer to the available scholarship regarding the abbreviated Presidency of John F. Kennedy as mammoth.[23] Historians and biographers the world over have been fascinated by the entire Kennedy family, and especially the "Camelot" of his administration, since the moment Kennedy entered office. In these many and varied works, Canada is seldom mentioned, if at all. In a typical case, Canada might receive a mention as being one of the allied countries to which Kennedy sent an emissary before announcing the Crisis to the world. Perhaps Prime Minister Diefenbaker would warrant a mention by name in such a paragraph, but perhaps not. A rare few mention continental defence, but most ignore Canada entirely. To most American historians, the Missile Crisis was a battle between Moscow and Washington, with Cuba stumbling between the superpowers, little more than an irritant. And Canada merits even less study. Sobering stuff for Canadian nationalists to ponder.

The Crisis Years (1991) is a broad overview of the personal relationship between Khrushchev and Kennedy and how they both plotted and maneuvered against each other so as to drive their agendas forward.[24] Covering not only the Missile Crisis but also other Cold War hotspots such as Indo-China, Berlin, and the Latin American states other than Cuba, the work is useful in providing a means to recall that the Cuban Missile Crisis, as frightening and significant as it inarguably was, was but one gambit among many between the leaders.

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[23] Ironically, this writer took refuge in a local library during noisy renovations to his home while working on this very thesis, and had been comfortably ensconced in a small corner of the library for several hours reading a biography on Kennedy before he realized that the book stacks around him were almost entirely devoted to books on Kennedy and his family, particularly his wife Jackie. The former First Lady's personal fashion choices are seemingly a topic of endless fascination for the patrons of the Richmond Hill Central Public Library.

[24] Michael R. Beschloss, The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Similar is the monograph Kennedy's Wars (2000), by Lawrence Freedman, which addresses Cold War confrontations between the superpowers not chronologically, but geographically, addressing each of the potential flashpoints — Vietnam, Berlin, Cuba — in turn, giving full attention to each in a self-contained chapter.[25] Exhaustively researched and superbly organized, it provides the reader with an excellent overview of the many crises that beset the President during the Cold War, and the factors that led to each.

Former Executive editor of *The New York Times* and Pulitzer Prize winner Max Frankel's High Noon in the Cold War, published in 2005, is a short, highly readable summary of the Crisis and its aftermath.[26] It stands apart from the rest because it focuses on some of the lesser-known personalities that allowed the Crisis to be successfully resolved; rather than viewing the Crisis purely as a confrontation between Kennedy and Khrushchev, it discusses the diligent work of the various ambassadors and advisors to both leaders who helped to defuse the Crisis.

Also vital to the preparation of a coherent thesis on the subject of the Cuban Missile Crisis is a due appreciation for the technical and strategic issues that caused and shaped it. While technical details of the specific missiles and other weapons systems can be found readily online, for proper discussion of the overall strategic situation and the role military necessity played in determining political policy is vital. Examinations of the particular strategic and tactical aspects of the Crisis are numerous, and discussion of overall theories and strategies for nuclear warfare are also abundant. While very useful in immersing oneself into the mindset of a Cold War strategist or tactician, it should be

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[25] Lawrence Freedman, Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[26] Max Frankel, High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York : Ballantine Books, 2004).

recognized that the end of the Cold War essentially ended the scholarly dialogue on nuclear weapons and warfare until very recent post-9-11 anxieties resulted in a return to the prospects for nuclear attacks — of dramatically diminished scale — upon North American cities. While academically sound, it cannot be denied that virtually all available scholarship on nuclear warfare dates back to the 1980s, at the most recent. This is exacerbated by the fact that the militaries of all nuclear states jealously guard their nuclear secrets.[27]

All the same, there is some useful scholarship available. Soviet Nuclear Strategy (1988) provides a fascinating look inside the Soviet Union's Strategic Rocket Forces as well as Soviet long-range strategic bombers as they struggled to overcome enormous American technical advantages with a combination of misdirection and rushed technological developments.[28] Knowing that they were far behind, the Soviet Union sought to create the maximum possible *appearance* of strength while maintaining large, intimidating conventional armies on NATO's doorstep to counter-balance the American nuclear arsenal. As this work capably illustrates, it was only during the reign of Khrushchev that the nuclear weapons delivery systems of the Soviet Union had matured to the point where the size of the Red Army could safely begin to be reduced from a level near its strength at the end of the Second World War.

Other books explore the impact of fears of nuclear war upon the American population during the Missile Crisis. David Detzer's excellent if somewhat dated

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[27] Indeed, while preparing a paper on an unrelated topic earlier during his graduate work, this writer discovered that the United States only began releasing information as to their nuclear forces during the immediate post-WW2 period late in the 1980s. By that measure, detailed information regarding strategic nuclear forces during the Cuban Missile Crisis, while not yet released, is hopefully pending within the next four to five years.

[28] Honore M. Catudal, Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1988), 32.

monograph The Brink discusses how many in Washington's military and political elite viewed the prospect of impending doom, namely, with bleak resignation and gallows humour.[29] The far more recent Awaiting Armageddon takes a somewhat more off-beat view of the crisis, recounting with tongue-in-cheek humour how the American public responded to the threat of instant annihilation: supermarkets saw their supplies of canned goods wiped out, gun stores were emptied of firearms and ammunition so that the survivors could fight over whatever meager resources remained after a nuclear holocaust, and young women and girls were suddenly confronted with a new approach to seduction: "Do you want to die a virgin?"[30] While taking a somewhat lighter view of the Crisis than is the scholarly norm, Awaiting Armageddon still provides fascinating insight into how people reacted to the very real chance that total nuclear war was just around the corner.

The rather more serious and measured response of the United States military to the Crisis, discussing both its preparations for nuclear war with the Soviet Union and a possible invasion of Cuba, is provided by the highly interesting DEFCON-2, a detailed technical study of all military aspects of the Crisis.[31] Published in 2006, it benefits from recent declassifications, and discusses at length two particular instances in which the Crisis almost escalated to war accidentally: the first, when a harried Soviet submarine commander ordered a nuclear torpedo readied for launch against the United States Navy destroyer which was stalking him, and later in the Crisis, when Soviet commanders in Cuba asked permission to open fire on American aircraft if they approached the missile

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[29] David Detzer, The Brink: Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979).

[30] Alice L. George, Awaiting Armageddon: How Americans Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[31] Norman Polmar, DEFCON-2: Standing on the Brink of Nuclear War During the Cuban Missile Crisis (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2006).

sites to photograph them, a step Kennedy had ordered. Perhaps indicative of the regard in which Canada is held, the only Canadian reference in the index is to Diefenbaker himself, and his sole citation is inaccurate, off by several pages. This is a potent demonstration of just how little credit Canada receives (rightly or wrongly) for its conduct during the Crisis.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT - THE COLD WAR BEGINS

The initial phases of the Cold War found the West at a serious disadvantage. The Second World War had destroyed the entire European balance of power. The traditional Great Powers had been left in ruins. This left Europe dominated by non-Europeans.[32] Millions of Soviet troops were thrust deep into Central Europe.[33] The Americans could no longer ignore European security, a tactic historian Thomas Parrish termed staying "hidden behind British skirts."[34]

Harry Truman, newly elevated to the American presidency and a staunch fiscal conservative, was not willing to spend money on a massive army to match the Soviets.[35] The American Army had only two divisions at full strength, and only one in Europe.[36] The various Western European states possessed their own militaries, but these troops were recent conscripts, trained and armed poorly, serving bankrupt, demoralized states.[37] Western deterrence therefore hinged upon America's atomic monopoly. Sadly, the United States Army Air Force (later the United States Air Force) was plagued by manpower shortages and outdated equipment, and would have been unable to drop more than a small handful of atomic bombs onto the Soviet Union.[38]

The Soviets were quick to test their democratic neighbours. In 1948, they broke their pledge to permit free elections in Central Europe, and installed a communist

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[32] Thomas D. Parrish, Berlin in the Balance, 1945-1949: The Blockade, The Airlift, The First Major Battle of the Cold War (New York: Perseus Books, 1999), 101.
[33] Catudal, 32.
[34] Parrish, 102.
[35] Ibid, 105.
[36] Parrish, 138.
[37] Raymond P. Ojserkis, Beginnings of the Cold War Arms Race: The Truman Administration and the US Arms Build-Up (London, Preager, 2003), 32.
[38] Ibid.

government in Czechoslovakia.[39] They sought to restrict Allied access to West Berlin, forcing the Allies to supply the city entirely by air.[40] After more than fourteen fruitless months, the Blockade was suspended on 12 May 1949.[41]

The Soviet Union tested an atomic bomb on August 29th, 1949.[42] The West was stunned, and unprepared.[43] The American Army was down to a mere half-million soldiers.[44] The British had cut back to Depression-era force levels.[45] The Canadian military had all but evaporated back into its pre-war insignificance.[46] Motivated by the Soviet bomb, the Western European allies joined with Canada and the United States in signing the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.[47] President Truman, now fully aware of the need for robust military spending, approved NSC-68, a document prepared for him by his National Security Council calling for a dramatically increased American military strength.[48] This sense of urgency was heightened after Soviet-backed North Korea invaded the western-aligned South in 1950. The Allied forces, despite early reversals, were able to contain the communist forces even after the Chinese committed millions of men, and did so without using atomic weapons, despite the very public suggestions of American General Douglas MacArthur to do exactly that.[49]

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[39] Parrish, 130.
[40] Michael D. Haydock, City Under Siege: The Berlin Blockade and Airlift, 1948-1949 (Washington: Brassey's, 1999), 145.
[41] Parrish, 320.
[42] Greg Herken, "'A Most Deadly Illusion': The Atomic Secret and American Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945-1950," *The Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 49, No. 1, (Feb., 1980): 51.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ojserkis, 7-9.
[45] Parrish, 139
[46] Richter, 15.
[47] Jack Granatstein, Who Killed the Canadian Military (Toronto: HarperFlamingoCanada, 2004), 15.
[48] *NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, April 14th, 1950. Available online at: http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm
[49] A.M Rosenthal, "U.N. Circles Wary On Atom Bomb Use; After Learning of Truman's Statement on

Harry Truman's successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, was disillusioned by the back-and-forth ground campaigns of Korea, and uninterested in burdening the American taxpayer with the enormous cost of fielding a massive American army.[50] His "New Look" policy foresaw American conventional weapons being supplanted by the threat of devastating nuclear attack, a deterrent he considered as real a threat for much less money. Eisenhower, himself a firm believer in the power of strategic bombing, established America's defence policy as one of "massive retaliation." As laid out by NSC-162/2, the defence policy of his Administration commented:

> The risk of Soviet aggression will be minimized by maintaining a strong security posture, with emphasis on adequate offensive retaliatory strength and defensive strength. *This must be based on massive atomic capability...*[51]

Eisenhower, despite being mindful of the need to stand up to the Soviets, was reluctant to spend on expensive military programs he did not consider absolutely vital. In a speech on April 16th, 1953, delivered to the Society of Newspaper Editors, he described military spending as "a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."[52] Military spending would be minimized, and what spending there was would go towards nuclear weapons.

This left the American military curiously impotent in other situations. The cash-starved Army was not ready for war against the Soviet Union.[53] When the Soviet Union

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Atom Bomb," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1950, 5.

[50] Herman S. Wolk, "The 'New Look'," *Air Force Magazine*, (August, 2003): 5.

[51] *NSC 162/2: Basic National Security Policy*, October 30th 1953. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. 2, National Security Affairs, 585-6. Emphasis added.

[52] Christopher A. Preble, John F. Kennedy and the Missile Gap (DeKlab: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 29.

[53] James D. Marchio, "Risking General War in Pursuit of Limited Objectives: U.S. Military Contingency Planning for Poland in the Wake of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol.66, No.3, (July, 2002): 798.

forcibly crushed the Hungarian uprising of 1956, America had two policy options: issue a diplomatic protest, or utterly destroy the Soviets.[54] Eisenhower grasped this, and commented that in a modern war, America had to be prepared to "push its whole stack of chips into the pot."[55] This was a policy of "total war" taken to its furthest extreme.

The Soviet Union, while still maintaining a large army, had begun to develop a long-range bombing force of its own. While possessed of barely a sixth of America's firepower it still represented the beginning of a viable nuclear threat to the American homeland.[56] America began a feverish program of preparing the world's most comprehensive air defence network to counter this threat, in close cooperation with their Canadian allies. The details of these joint measures will be returned to at length later.

The Soviets, however, changed the nature of the game in 1957, when they shocked the world by test firing a missile capable of carrying a nuclear bomb from a launch site in the Soviet Union all the way to a target deep inside North America.[57] This was revolutionary, even though the reliability of the test rocket left something to be desired, missing its target by hundreds of miles.[58] The Soviet Union carefully managed the release of this information to the world, creating the appearance that they were far ahead of the United States in the development of intercontinental-range missiles.[59] The orbiting of Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite, in fall of 1957 further reinforced

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[54] Ibid, 793.
[55] Marc S. Trachtenberg, "Strategic Thought in America, 1952-1966," *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 104, Vol. 2, (Summer, 1983): 332.
[56] Daryl G. Press, Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Asses Military Threats (London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 88.
[57] Catudal, 47.
[58] Detzer, 48.
[59] Catudal, 47.

its appearance of superiority.[60] While these actions would have the undesired outcome of provoking a dramatic increase in American spending on space exploration and long-range missiles, they bought the Soviet Union some much needed time to build up their actual nuclear strength while hiding behind imaginary rockets.

Massive Retaliation was instantly obsolete. Washington and New York were too high a price to pay, even when America had enough firepower to kill a third of the Soviet population in a single day.[61] The Soviet's frightening force of phantom missiles also "threatened" SAC's bomber bases, eroding the credibility of America's deterrent. Europeans began to question whether or not America had the stomach to still protect them when threatened with nuclear attack upon their own country. The American strategist Herman Kahn, working with the RAND Corporation, conducted a series of public opinion polls on this topic. He asked how many Americans could be justifiably sacrificed to defeat communism.[62] Americans on average reported a willingness to sacrifice sixty million of their countrymen, fully a third of the country.[63] When asked how many of his citizens the American President would sacrifice, Western Europeans gave answers ranging from two to twenty million, but trending towards the lower figure.[64] The respondents felt the President would be unable to fight to a war that might see Boston sacrificed to save Bonn, permitting the Soviets to easily conquer Europe.[65] Faith in the alliance was dwindling.

Seeking to restore Europe's faith in America's determination to contain the Soviet

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Richard L. Garwin "New Weapons/Old Doctrines: Strategic Warfare in the 1980s," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 124, No. 4, (August 19, 1980): 263.

[62] Herman Kahn. On Thermonuclear War. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960,) 30.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid, 33.

[65] Ibid.

Union, President Eisenhower traveled to Paris in late 1957 to meet with all the NATO heads of state.[66] He brought along with him a bold proposal — the United States would provide to any interested NATO European ally intermediate range ballistic missiles, with ranges up to 1,500 km, capable of reaching deep into the Soviet Union.[67] While the nuclear warheads themselves would remain in US custody until rising tensions made their arming necessary, the IRBM deal constituted a firm demonstration of America's support of their NATO allies.[68]

The IRBMs, while politically useful, suffered from some very real technical limitations. The early models being offered to NATO were known as Jupiter and Thor. Both were powered by corrosive, dangerously unstable liquid fuel, meaning that they could only be fueled immediately prior to launch.[69] They were also enormous machines, too heavy for easy fortification.[70] This left them vulnerable, attractive targets for a sneak attack, and far inferior to the latest missiles just then starting to roll off American assembly lines.[71] In a very real sense, America was offering these missiles to their allies not as a grand gesture, but simply to get rid of them. *Caveat emptor*, indeed.

Because of these disadvantages, most of the NATO allies decided to pass. Italy and Turkey, however, accepted the offer. Thirty missiles were sent to Italy, becoming operational over the course of 1961.[72] Fifteen missiles were sent to Turkey, but their activation was hampered by the language barrier between the American and Turkish

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66 Philip Nash. The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963. (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 6.
67 Ibid, 7.
68 Ibid, 14.
69 Ibid, 81.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid, 93.
72 Ibid, 78.

personnel, preventing the missiles from becoming operational before February of 1962. While these missiles did not add much to the nuclear strike capability the United States possessed, they were a potent demonstration of American commitment to the cause of European freedom.[73]

Eisenhower, however, was left uneasy. With remarkable foresight, he commented to his cabinet even as the deal went ahead that if Mexico or Cuba fell to the communists and accepted Soviet missiles, "we would look on such developments with the gravest concern..."[74] An aide present at the time of his comments remarked, "He wondered if we were not simply being provocative."[75]

Senator John F. Kennedy made the Eisenhower Administration's national defence policies a centerpiece of his 1960 presidential run against Eisenhower's Vice President, Richard M. Nixon. Coming in for particular criticism was the policy of Massive Retaliation, which Kennedy attacked in a speech by saying, "Under every military budget submitted by [Eisenhower's] Administration, we have been preparing primarily to fight the one kind of war we least want to fight and are least likely to fight."[76]

Kennedy then turned his political ire to the subject of the so-called "Missile Gap." Vanguard TV3, America's first artificial satellite, had failed to reach orbit, casting doubt on America's technical skill in the field of rocketry.[77] The media soon picked up on the public's anxiety and began publishing numerous stories from anonymous sources in the US government and military, all warning that the Soviet Union had a massive lead over

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[73] Ibid, 103.
[74] Ibid, 35.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Jane E. Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response (Oxford: Macmillan Press, 1988), 26.
[77] Preble, 34. "Failed to reach orbit" is a rather understated way of saying, "Exploded in a spectacular fireball while still on the launch pad."

the United States in intercontinental missiles.[78] Public statements by the Eisenhower Administration boasting of America's bomber force did nothing to dampen public concerns.[79]

Eisenhower was caught in an extremely frustrating position. By 1959, America's super-secret U-2 spy planes had proven that the Soviet Union did not possess a massive advantage in the number of missiles; indeed, no missiles at all were spotted.[80] Even so, Eisenhower could not make a public statement explicitly denying that there was a gap without endangering the secrecy surrounding the U-2 missions. He therefore was forced to allow the American people to believe the Soviet charade that they were ahead in missiles, when in fact they had precisely zero operational ICBMS .[81]

Senator Kennedy received classified briefings on this topic after securing the Democratic Party nomination for the Presidency.[82] Kennedy either disbelieved the reports or cynically dismissed them and continued to campaign very effectively on the missile gap.[83] Warning that the US deterrent, principally built around SAC's bomber aircraft, was vulnerable to a sneak attack by Soviet missiles, Kennedy called for an increase in Minuteman Missile development and more Polaris Missile-toting submarines.[84] Both of these missile systems were easily hidden and had long range.[85] Kennedy told the nation

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[78] Ibid, 72.
[79] Ibid, 67.
[80] Ibid, 89.
[81] Press, 87. The handful of rockets the Soviets had built required constant maintenance and were stored unfueled. They would have required hours of preparation before being launched, and therefore are not deemed to have been operational, but rather, on hot standby.
[82] Preble, 109.
[83] Ibid, 87.
[84] Ibid, 114. Kennedy made these alarmist statements despite the fact that SAC had for three years kept a third of its bombers – some 150 aircraft – on so-called "Fifteen Minute Ground Alert", meaning that the planes could escape their doomed bases before even the fastest missiles could possibly arrive.
[85] Ibid, 57.

that they could "not afford not to" deploy these expensive weapons.[86]

After assuming office, Kennedy was angry that there was no missile gap, despite having been told so before the election.[87] In his first meeting with reporters, Kennedy's new Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, confessed there was no gap, leading to a series of outraged reports by irate journalists.[88] In the face of a sharp public backlash, McNamara backtracked, stated that there *might* be a missile gap, and ordered more Minuteman and Polaris missiles.[89] This buildup continued even after a defector from the Soviet Chief Intelligence Directorate, Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, confirmed that the United States was far, far ahead of the Soviet Union in all methods of warhead delivery.[90]

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[86] Ibid, 119.
[87] Ibid, 154.
[88] Ibid, 155.
[89] Ibid, 163.
[90] Ibid, 164.

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES – ALLIES OF NECESSITY

The military relationship between Canada and the United States had evolved rapidly during the Second World War. In 1940, before his own country's entrance into the war, President Roosevelt announced to a graduating class at Queen's University that the United States would never permit a foreign power to invade Canada.[91] A short time later, Prime Minister Mackenzie King made a reciprocal offer.[92] The Permanent Joint Board on Defence, a working group of generals and admirals from both nations, was created that same year.[93] Interestingly, while the Americans sought to quickly establish an overall unified command for North American defence, Canada refused to agree to such an arrangement *except in the worst-case scenario.*[94] Until such a situation presented itself, however, Canada insisted on retaining a military autonomous from American control.

After the war, Canada found that its moves towards closer integration with the United States could not easily be undone. Canada had participated in the creation of the atomic bomb and was thus inextricably intertwined with the bomb.[95] Canadian military leaders were thrilled to enjoy such a close relationship with the undisputed master of modern military technology, which they hoped Canada might gain access to.[96]

But such a relationship came with risks. Canada's position beneath the continental "air approaches" put it directly in the line of fire for any future world war.[97] General

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[91] Granatstein, 38.
[92] Ibid. This was a remarkable development for two nations without a bi-lateral alliance, one of whom was involved in a global war in which the other claimed to be neutral.
[93] Ibid, 39.
[94] Jockel, Boundaries,13.
[95] Richter, 21.
[96] Granatstein, 41.
[97] Jockel, Boundaries, 10.

Foulkes, the Chairman of the Canadian Chiefs of Staff, urged close cooperation with America since "there are no boundaries upstairs." [98] American war planners at the PJBD agreed that cooperation with the Canadians was paramount. A Military Co-Operation Committee (MCC), made up of the military representatives to the PJBD, was formed in 1946, tasked with undertaking studies and issuing proposals on issues relating to continental defence.[99] A radar network was proposed. It would be assigned over a thousand jet fighters, the majority of them belonging to the RCAF.[100] Enormously expensive and requiring years to be built, the plan was a fantasy. Little was done until the Soviets tested their first atomic bomb in 1949.[101] There were no effective defences ready to stop Soviet bombers from reaching North American cities.[102] Finally, the political will was found to take continental defence seriously.

By the time incoming Soviet bombers could be detected and fighters scrambled, the USAF's leadership was worried that atomic bombs would already be raining down upon cities in the northern United States.[103] The Americans therefore offered to construct a series of radar stations on Canadian soil, paid for and operated by the United States to permit early detection of Soviet bombers.[104] Canada accepted the "Pinetree" proposal and offered to man half of the stations in late 1950. Canada also ordered nine squadrons of the Canadian-designed and built CF-100 Canuck fighter. The Americans suggested that fighter aircraft be assigned missions not based on nationality, but on proximity; the

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[98] Ibid.
[99] Richter, 22.
[100] Jockel, Boundaries, 19.
[101] Richter, 29.
[102] Jockel, Boundaries, 35.
[103] Jockel, Boundaries, 51.
[104] Jockel, Boundaries, 2.

Canadians agreed.[105]

In 1952, another line was proposed two thousand miles north of the major North American cities.[106] This would only be possible with the creation of a line of radar bases high in the Canadian arctic.[107] Known as the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, it was a very expensive project, given that the total Canadian military presence in the Arctic Archipelago was 42 men.[108] Desperate to establish the DEW Line, the United States agreed to an extremely generous arrangement, granting Canada excellent financial terms while respecting Canadian sovereignty. [109] The Americans did not entirely live up to their obligations, but construction proceeded regardless.[110]

In 1954, the US established the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), and pondered inviting Canada to join.[111] There was significant support within CONAD for the creation of a unified command, a desire that was shared by the top ranks of the Canadian military.[112] After some cajoling and salesmanship by General Foulkes, Prime Minister St. Laurent agreed to move forward with the proposal, but after the upcoming election, which they expected to win handily.[113]

To the shock of everyone, the Liberals were not reelected, falling to the

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[105] Jockel, Boundaries, 53.
[106] Jockel, Boundaries, 64.
[107] Documents on Canadian External Relations (DCER). Volume #18. Chapter VIII: Relations with the United States. Part 1, Defence Issues. Section M: Project Lincoln. Document 759, subsection 23.
[108] DCER. Volume #18. Chapter VIII: Relations with the United States. Part 1, Defence Issues. Section J: Defence Issues in the North. Document 744, subsection 6.
[109] Jockel, Boundaries, 83. Canadian scientist R.J. Sutherland has claimed that the DEW Line agreement was not simply a military one; it forced America to reluctantly agree to all Canadian claims of territorial sovereignty in the High North as a precondition of being granted the right to use it.
[110] Granatstein, 45.
[111] Jockel, Boundaries, 95.
[112] Jockel, Boundaries, 99.
[113] DCER. Volume #23. Chapter I: United States. Part 2, Defence and Security Issues. Section A: Continental Air Defence. Document 51.

Diefenbaker-led Progressive Conservatives.[114] Foulkes directly lobbied the new Minister of National Defence, an old personal friend.[115] Diefenbaker was convinced, and approved the plan without consulting cabinet.[116] On August 1st 1957, the creation of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) was announced in both capitals.[117]

NORAD was first governed by an *ad hoc* set of agreed principles decided upon by the military commands and known as the Terms of Reference. This was a major step forward in continental defence relations, but posed complex political problems. The conundrum for the ever-fretful sovereignty hawks in the Canadian government was aptly summarized in an internal memo, which warned that the arrangement would see, "the responsibility for the air defence of Canada, including the command of Canadian air defence forces, vested in a United States officer."[118] The military commands in both capitals were eager to work together, but had grown wary of trying to reason with the sovereignty-obsessed Canadian officials, whom they viewed as short-sighted and meddling. Interestingly, this view of the Canadian government as an obstacle to taking necessary and desirable defensive measures was shared as strongly by the Canadian generals as by their impatient American counterparts.[119]

The NORAD Terms brought together disparate military assets on both sides of the border and put them under one officer, an American, with a Canadian as a deputy

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[114] Jockel, Boundaries, 104.
[115] Granatstein 46.
[116] Diefenbaker, 22. The Liberals furiously attacked the Diefenbaker Government over Canada forming NORAD, which shocked Diefenbaker and Foulkes, since it was originally a Liberal plan. Diefenbaker, who felt that he had been manipulated into it and then had to pay a political price, soured on the military and became leery of being perceived as too close to the Americans. The consequences of this will become clear later.
[117] Ibid, 23.
[118] Hilliken and Barry, 109.
[119] Jockel, Boundaries, 95.

commander. The assets available to NORAD were vast: thousands of jet fighters, dozens of anti-aircraft artillery batteries, and numerous radar stations scattered across the northern hemisphere, all reporting to a bi-national headquarters buried under a mountain near Colorado Springs, Colorado.[120] The arrangement was bound to be at times awkward and almost always confusing. The Canadian units assigned to NORAD were kept under Canadian "control", but were under the "command" of an American. Should that American be incapacitated or simply absent from his underground headquarters, however, the entirety of the American air defence command apparatus would automatically be transferred to the command of a Canadian. While Canadian nationalists bemoaned a potential loss of Canadian sovereignty, many in the United States military arched a skeptical eyebrow at the idea that a surprise attack against the United States might see a Canadian, of all things, leading the American charge.[121]

Even after Diefenbaker approved the Terms on his own authority, there was still a need for a formal exchange of diplomatic texts to give a legal backing to what was at that time only a military agreement with the personal blessing of the necessary civilian leadership. This exchange of notes became problematic. Canadian officials at External Affairs immediately expressed concern that the Canadian air defence forces had been essentially handed over to the United States. George Pearkes, Diefenbaker's first Minister of National Defence, eloquently argued for the need for such a headquarters, saying that instead of giving up control of the RCAF to the United States, NORAD put the awesome

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[120] Ibid, 107.

[121] Ibid, 110. It is worth noting that during the September 11th, 2001 air attacks upon Washington, DC and New York City, the watch officer in command was indeed a Canadian. Sadly, most of the details of what must have been a fascinating, albeit horrifying, few hours remains classified.

power of the USAF at the beck and call of Canada.[122]

He also stressed, repeatedly and in clear language, that NORAD would not be able to undertake any action without the express approval of *both* governments, except in response to a direct attack.[123] This was a critical issue, and was well received by the Canadian public, so much so that the language found its way directly into the final NORAD Agreement of May 1958. Despite putting the minds of the Canadian political establishment at ease, and pleasing Canadian popular opinion, the Agreement was essentially meaningless. NORAD was a *defensive* arrangement, and never would have undertaken offensive operations. If it was to be invoked at all, it would be to respond to a Soviet attack. Even if there was sufficient time to get both the President and the Prime Minister on the phone, they would have nothing further to say — NORAD had all necessary contingency orders signed and locked away, ready to be put into effect at a moment's notice.[124]

If North America were to be suddenly attacked, NORAD did not need to ask permission to defend the continent, it needed simply to invoke its standing orders. Consultation was thus guaranteed, indeed, it was pre-approved. In a world where both national capitals might be knocked out by nuclear missiles in a surprise attack, such was absolutely necessary. The Canadian Government knew this; Canadian generals and politicians received ultra-top-secret briefings on nuclear weapons protocols[125], and the Canadian Deputy Commander of NORAD was given authority by the President to use

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[122] Ibid, 110-111.
[123] Maloney, 130.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Hellyer, 19.

nuclear weapons at his discretion.[126] And yet Ottawa continued to expect a courtesy call before any action would be taken. This difference of opinion would have nearly disastrous consequences later.

Now that it had agreed to an integrated continental defence command, the Canadian Air Force needed newer weapons, and in greater numbers, to be a credible partner. Diefenbaker was soon faced with a decision to make regarding the severely over-budget Avro Arrow program, which was inconveniently being built in ridings that had helped to elect him.[127] When the Americans announced that they were scaling back production of fighters in favour nuclear-tipped missiles, Diefenbaker announced that Canada would follow suit and would acquire nuclear warheads.[128] With the BOMARC missiles ordered, Diefenbaker cancelled the Arrow program on February 20th, 1959.[129] The Air Force asked to purchase a smaller number of off-the-shelf American fighter jets, but Diefenbaker put off any decision. As will become clear later, such was his habit.

Other parts of the Canadian military were faring better than the overburdened, beleaguered Air Force. Canada committed a full infantry division to NATO, kept mostly in Canada to be deployed when needed.[130] The troops in Europe were armed with "Honest Johns", short-range cruise missiles.[131] These ground troops were to be supported by an Air Division. This division, based in West Germany and France, totaled another six thousand men and almost 300 combat aircraft.[132]

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[126] Maloney, 131.
[127] Van Dusen, 36.
[128] Smith, 317.
[129] Smith, 318.
[130] Richter, 131.
[131] Maloney, 60.
[132] Ibid.

American troops assigned to the Canadian units retained physical possession of the atomic bombs they were to carry.[133] This allowed Canada to claim it did not possess nuclear weapons.[134] The sheer political cynicism of this move only became clear much later, after a wave of documents was declassified in the 1980s and 1990s, making plain that avoiding the appearance of being a nuclear power mattered more to External Affairs Minister Green than any other military or political arrangement. This is laid bare in the most recent scholarship, particularly that of Richter and Maloney. Much of the earlier scholarship focused more on determining what weapons Canada did possess, rather than examining the hows and whys behind the decisions to acquire certain weapons, such as the BOMARC missiles, while neglecting to acquire the warheads necessary for them to function properly. Minister Green's desperation to avoid being *seen* as being in favour of acquiring nuclear weapons, even while he helped develop protocols for their use by Canadian troops, was duly noted by increasingly bemused American leaders.

While the far-flung radar lines were effective at detecting incoming bombers and missiles, a missile fired from a Soviet submarine might detonate faster than it could be detected and tracked.[135] The Royal Canadian Navy, with a proven track record of sub-hunting, was enlarged and modernized with more sailors, 18 new helicopter-carrying ships, and agreements with the RCAF for joint aerial patrols of coastal waters.[136] By the time of the Crisis, the Fleet possessed 30 modern warships, backed up by 40 RCAF patrol planes.[137] While the ships, planes, and helicopters would not normally carry nuclear

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[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid, 357.
[135] Maloney, 161.
[136] Ibid, 113.
[137] Peter Haydon, The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993), 99.

weapons, they were capable of firing them, if available.[138] The American government quietly indicated that in the event of war, Canadian ships and planes would be welcome to arm themselves with American nuclear weapons, though Canada politely ignored an American offer to store such weapons on Canadian bases, for ease of deployment during emergencies.[139]

After the 1960 American Presidential election, a brash young New England Catholic replaced President Eisenhower, with whom Diefenbaker had enjoyed a warm relationship. Kennedy and Diefenbaker were from far different political and personal backgrounds. Diefenbaker, the conservative, was shy and needy.[140] Deeply insecure, he had a difficult time controlling his frequently turbulent emotions. The personal popularity of Lester Pearson, the leader of the Liberal opposition and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, immensely threatened him. Beset by his emotions and often paralyzed with self-doubt, Diefenbaker would frequently freeze up in critical moments, refusing to make a decision unless he was certain it was the right one.

Kennedy, in contrast, was of the younger generation, and indeed its very manifestation. The son of a wealthy Democratic Party supporter, Kennedy was driven by his father's ambition to the very heights of political power. Handsome, charming, and rich, Kennedy was known for his charisma and womanizing. Very real talent, however, matched his slick exterior. Kennedy was knowledgeable and brilliant, a graduate of Harvard, a combat veteran and winner of the Pulitzer Prize. After time in both the House

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[138] Maloney, 163.

[139] While guaranteed Canadian access to nuclear weapons had been rumoured as far back as McLin's work during the 1960s, it was not until Peter Haydon's monograph in the early 1990s that it became clear just how advanced the preparations for Canadian naval deployments of nuclear weapons had become – the equipment was tested, the sailors trained, and the warheads set aside for Canadian use. Only the say-so of Ottawa stood in the way.

[140] Smith, 377.

and Senate, representing Boston and Massachusetts as a whole, Kennedy became the first Catholic President in 1961, fulfilling the ambition his father had first entrusted to his eldest son, Joe Junior, who was killed in action during the Second World War.

Indeed, bad luck and early death were a part of the chronically unhealthy Kennedy's life. He lost two siblings before taking office, and another was institutionalized due to mental disability. A football injury to his back during college, exacerbated by injuries sustained during the Second World War, left him in constant agony. He suffered from the painful and embarrassing digestive ailment of colitis, and Addison's Disease, an adrenal gland deficiency that left him dependent on steroids to live. Kennedy took numerous, conflicting medications daily. Friends of Kennedy recount that he was always obsessed with the notion of his own mortality, and that he pursued every desire with all his energy. His restless impulse to change the world was utterly at odds with Diefenbaker's hesitant conservatism. Diefenbaker would have much preferred a Nixon victory, as their meetings had been friendly and warm.[141] Each man held the other in high esteem.[142]

The two leaders got off to a rocky start. Diefenbaker telegrammed his best wishes upon Kennedy's electoral victory, and felt the younger man was tardy in responding. Jealous of his popularity, Diefenbaker privately remarked to colleagues that he considered the new President "courageously rash" and felt that he made a world war more likely.[143] Kennedy, when announcing that he had invited the Prime Minister to Washington for a day of meetings a month after taking office, referred to the Prime

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[141] Smith, 378.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

Minister as an "old friend", but mispronounced his name "Diefen-bawker."[144] The Prime Minister publicly accepted the invitation and also referred to the President as a friend but, privately, was outraged. Indeed, Diefenbaker unsuccessfully pressured Cabinet to issue a formal protest to the United States in response to the slight.[145]

Kennedy was well prepared for this initial face-to-face encounter. His Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, wrote a memo for the President covering some of the salient points ahead of their meeting: economic issues between the two countries, an upcoming NATO meeting, the state of continental defence readiness and in particular the continuing Canadian delay in accepting nuclear weapons.[146] Rusk also took pains to stress the correct pronunciation of Diefenbaker's name and informed the President that the Prime Minister was hard of hearing, something that he was embarrassed about and preferred to hide.[147] An attached biography of Diefenbaker refers to him as a shrewd politician, a vigorous, self-confident leader whose electoral victory in 1958 was a personal triumph as much as political.[148] The biography states that while Diefenbaker criticizes the United States to win over nationalist votes, he is not considered inherently anti-American and indeed, values a close relationship between the two countries and is firmly committed to the Western Allies' anti-communist stance.

Attached to the cover letter was a fascinating memo, seventeen pages long, summarizing for the President the state of US-Canadian relations. The memo is largely

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[144] Smith, 380. To those familiar with a New England accent, this is hardly surprising.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Memorandum, Secretary of State Dean Rusk to the President, 17 February 1961. "Prime Minister Diefenbaker's Visit: February 20th, 1961." Document 2, Folder 4, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). Page 1.
[147] Ibid, 2.
[148] Memorandum, The Department of State (Unsigned), December 1960. "Diefenbaker, John (George). Prime Minister." Document 2B, Folder 4, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.

positive, commenting that while emerging Canadian nationalism can prove "annoying", Canada could be expected to side with America on most vital issues.[149] In the area of continental defence, Rusk summarizes the opposition — political and popular — Diefenbaker faced in forging closer links to the United States, but saves some of the blame for Diefenbaker's government, stating that since the politically damaging cancellation of the Arrow, it had been painfully introspective and indecisive as regards defence issues.[150] This frustrated Rusk, for, "Loss [of] the contributions of the Canadian military...would be intolerable in time of crisis."[151] Overall, Canada is felt a close ally in the Cold War, but the hesitancy to increase military strength, as well as "neutralist" sentiments among certain Canadians, is viewed with concern.[152] The topic of Canadian nationalism was also addressed, with one American official commenting before the trip, "I never realized they resented us as much as they do. I didn't realize they felt we were a monstrous, mammoth obliteration of their own identity and of their own arts and culture."[153]

Sadly, that quote would have done more to prepare the President for his meeting with Diefenbaker than any memo or chat with Dean Rusk.

The meeting itself lasted three hours, and consisted of a discussion in the Oval Office followed by a working lunch and a photo opportunity in the White House gardens

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[149] Memorandum, The Department of State (Unsigned), 20 December 1960. "Memorandum for Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker." Document 2A, Folder 4, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.

[150] Ibid, 3.

[151] Ibid, 4.

[152] While Minister Green is not mentioned by name, the inference is obvious.

[153] Jack Granatstein, "When Push Came to Shove: Canada and the United States." Kennedy's Quest for Victory. Thomas G. Patterson, ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 86.

as Diefenbaker was leaving.[154] Smiles for the cameras notwithstanding, the two men were not pleased with each other. Diefenbaker, having viewed the Oval Office's oil paintings of American naval victories, asked why no British victories from the War of 1812 were displayed.[155] The President politely said that if he had such a picture, he would display it; Diefenbaker promised to find one. They then discussed fishing, and the President playfully doubted Diefenbaker's claims to have reeled in a 140-lbs Marlin. While considered by many present to have been an attempt by Kennedy to charm with humour, Diefenbaker was hurt.[156]

The meeting itself was productive, and a formal Presidential visit to Ottawa was agreed upon for the coming months. Regardless, Kennedy found Diefenbaker insincere and remarked to his aides afterwards that he did not find the Prime Minister to be trustworthy.[157] He commented further to his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, that he did not "want to see that boring son of a bitch again."[158] Diefenbaker was struck by Kennedy's intellect and devotion to peace, but bitterly recalled the pro-Nazi leanings of the Kennedy's father directly to the President.[159] The President was unamused. Upon returning to Ottawa, the Prime Minister complained that the Oval Office's selection of paintings suggested the "Americans had won every damn war."[160] He ordered the national librarian to find a painting showing an American defeat, commenting to an aide

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[154] Smith, 382
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Nash, 97-98.
[160] Ibid, 98.

that, "...we must teach [Kennedy] some history."[161]

When President Kennedy arrived via Air Force One in Ottawa on May 16th, 1961, he was a humbled man. The Bay of Pigs fiasco, where American-trained and armed Cuban exiles had failed to overthrow the Castro regime, had humiliated him and only increased Castro's prestige.[162] Nonetheless, he was buoyed by his reception in Ottawa, where 50,000 people lined the streets in Ottawa to see the President and his beautiful First Lady, Jackie.[163] His own government hobbled by a monetary crisis, upon seeing Kennedy's reception by his adoring Canadian fans, a jealous Diefenbaker joked to reporters that he was glad Kennedy had not come to run against him in an election.[164]

The relationship between the two men continued to sour as soon as the welcoming ceremony began. After Diefenbaker welcomed Kennedy to Canada in French, the President joked off-the-cuff that he was no longer embarrassed about his own poor French.[165] Diefenbaker's humiliation was intensified when the crowd of Canadian dignitaries and VIPs present at Air Force One's arrival laughed loudly.[166] Now in a poor mood, Diefenbaker escorted the President to the home of the Governor General, where the Kennedy's would be staying. It was there that the two men partook in a ceremonial tree planting to symbolize the friendship between the two countries.[167] Kennedy, smiling for the cameras and eager to show his youthful vigour, enthusiastically took the proffered shovel, dug into the ground, and ripped a series of muscles in his back as he turned the

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[161] Ibid. It is unclear what Prime Minister Diefenbaker had expected. What else but depictions of American military victories would adorn the walls of the Oval Office?
[162] Ibid, 109.
[163] Ibid, 108.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid, 109.

sod.[168]

Though he continued to smile for the reporters and was able to summon up the willpower to get through the tree planting and that evening's state dinner, Kennedy's injury was actually quite serious. He had undone years of healing to his tormented back, and would henceforth require multiple injections of pain killers each day to function.[169] While able to summon enough charm to get through the evening, Kennedy commented to staff, "The bastard [Diefenbaker] insisted that I get a shovel and dig. It was one of the most painful episodes I've ever had."[170] Given Kennedy's long history of ill health and brushes with death, that is a powerful statement. He later expressed his displeasure in crasser terms; when told that Diefenbaker had referred to the tree planting as having been "exhilarating" Kennedy commented, "If that was an exhilarating experience, I never want to get laid again."[171]

For obvious reasons, the President's health was not a matter of public discussion, and Kennedy concealed his agony so well that almost no one on the trip knew that anything was amiss. It was not until long after his death that his medical records were released to the public, revealing for the first time that the President was, in the words of one television pundit, "a walking pharmacy." Perhaps if the Prime Minister had known that the President was in agony, the meeting of the next morning might have gone more smoothly.

As it happened, the meeting was a mixed affair. Kennedy first irked Diefenbaker by flirting with the Prime Minister's secretaries. Diefenbaker's 140-lbs Marlin was

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[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid, 110.
[171] Ibid.

mounted upon the wall in time for the President's arrival along with a painting of a British victory, from the War of 1812; Kennedy granted the fish was quite large.[172] As before, the President had come well prepared for the meeting, with numerous memos in hand. They succinctly summarized the current state of American and Canadian relations, and were generally positive. A briefing memo on continental defence, for example, called military cooperation between the two countries "excellent."[173] While critical of the Canadian government's procrastination on nuclear weapon acquisition, the memo expressly endorsed deepening ties with the Canadians.[174]

An area the Americans were eager to further develop their relationship with Canada was in the field of defence production sharing. Fearful of having Canada's advanced armaments industry collapse for want of orders after the cancellation of the Arrow, the United States amended its "Buy American" Act to permit Canadian companies to bid on American defence contracts.[175] This permitted the Canadian armaments industry to survive, even though Canada was purchasing half again as much in the United States as the US was in Canada.[176] This issue was one of the meeting's few successes; an agreement was reached where the United States would provide Canada with 66 F-104B Starfighter jets in exchange for Canada assuming the financial cost of the Pinetree Line and providing NATO with additional F-104s to be built and partially

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[172] Ibid.

[173] Memorandum, H.W. Burgess for the President, 4 May 1961. "President's Trip to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961: Continental Defense Background Paper." Document 12, Folder 9, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.

[174] Ibid, 2.

[175] Memorandum, H.W. Burgess for the President, 4 May 1961. "President's Trip to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961: Defense Production Sharing Background Paper." Document 11A, Folder 9, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.

[176] Ibid.

funded by Canada.[177] "Certain weapons" were to be provided by the United States at a later date.[178]

Diefenbaker expressed firm support for Kennedy's strong stance on Berlin.[179] He also offered muted support for American policy in Indo-China.[180] He had no particular comment on the Bay of Pigs invasion, except to comment that he hoped the Americans would consult more closely with Canada in the future; Kennedy assured Diefenbaker that that would be the case, as he had learned much from the debacle and would not make those mistakes again.[181] The most controversial issue was whether or not Canada would finally accept nuclear weapons. Diefenbaker stated his own personal support for the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Canada, but expressed concern that it would be politically damaging for him to do so at that time.[182] He asked for time over the coming summer to travel the country, persuading Canadians of the necessity of acquiring nuclear weapons.[183] Considering this a breakthrough at last on a contentious issue, Diefenbaker's pledge was dutifully recorded by the President's aides and filed away as an official State Department Memorandum of Conversation.[184] This would come back to haunt Diefenbaker.

After covering further issues, most significantly when Diefenbaker told Kennedy flatly that Canada had no interest in joining the Organization of American States (OAS),

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[177] Telegram, Livingston Merchant to Dean Rusk, 28 May 1961. Document 13, Folder 3, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.
[178] Ibid, 4.
[179] Nash, 116.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid, 113.
[182] Ibid, 118.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Memorandum of Conversation, Unsigned State Department Employee to the White House, 17 May 1961. "Conversation Between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker – NATO and Nuclear Weapons." Document 1C, Folder 5, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

the meeting adjourned.[185] The exact details of what happened next remain unknowable, as Diefenbaker's recollection of the event shifted many times. In effect, however, Diefenbaker came to possess a briefing note written by presidential aide Walter W. Rostow, for the President himself, which outlined what the objectives of the trip were. In concise language, it stated that the United States "should push" Canada to take a greater role in Latin American affairs, join the Organization of American States, and increase their foreign aid spending.[186] At various points, Diefenbaker would claim that he found the document himself, that it was left in the trash and recovered by a janitor, or that an aide found it buried amidst couch cushions. Almost two years after this, the Prime Minister's personal assistant at the time, Basil Robinson, would quietly inform US officials that it was indeed found by a janitor, but Diefenbaker, in a foul mood, rebuffed Robinson's urging to return the document forthwith and filed it away for future use.[187]

Diefenbaker's refusal to return the document was a major diplomatic breach of etiquette. While the document was innocuous, using the word "push" in a way synonymous with "urge", Diefenbaker felt it perfectly encapsulated Kennedy's arrogance.

As with the President's back injury, the details of Diefenbaker's acquisition of the Rostow Memorandum were unknown at the time, and are virtually impossible to determine today. Almost every source conveys a different story. Diefenbaker himself claimed, both in person and in his memoirs, that the Memorandum was given to him

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[185] Memorandum of Conversation, Unsigned State Department Employee to the White House, 17 May 1961. "Canada, the OAS, and IA-ECOSOC." Document 1B, Folder 5, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[186] Memorandum, Walter Rostow to the President, 16 May 1961. "What We Want From the Ottawa Trip." Document 1, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[187] Memorandum, William H. Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 20 April 1963. "Canada; Missing US Document." Document 32, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

directly by an American, suggesting that some sympathetic figure in Kennedy's inner circle was perhaps embarrassed by his President's pushy behaviour. Both Robinson and Van Dusen refute this, offering similar versions of the event, wherein the document was simply forgotten in Diefenbaker's office after the meeting. While the details vary — was it found by Diefenbaker himself, or pulled from between couch cushions by a sharp-eyed janitor? — both men are in full agreement that the Prime Minister made a calculated choice to hold onto the document, and hid this from practically everyone.

Knowlton Nash explores this issue at length in Kennedy and Diefenbaker, and largely corroborates this version of the event, but includes far more details and contrasts the differing versions. The underlying conclusion, however, remains the same: when Diefenbaker elected not to return the document immediately, he trapped himself, as he could never again offer it up to the Americans without being asked why he had not done so immediately. Nash points out that Diefenbaker could have simply destroyed the document, or taken the secret with him to his grave, and is clear that he feels that such would have been the wiser, more honourable thing to do. Such sentiments were shared by the contemporary American diplomatic staff in Ottawa and senior administration officials in Washington, as will be discussed at length below.

Diefenbaker's dislike of Kennedy was reinforced that evening when President Kennedy addressed Parliament and publicly repeated his call for Canada to join the OAS, which Diefenbaker took as a personal insult, given that he had already told the President no.[188] After the address, which was received extremely well by Parliament, as well as the Canadian public and press, Kennedy and Diefenbaker dined together at the home of

[188] Nash, 125.

American Ambassador Livingston Merchant. Kennedy, despite being seated next to Diefenbaker, spent most of the evening talking with Mike Pearson, a snub so obvious that Merchant recalled exchanging awkward glances with other attendees while Kennedy and Pearson chatted.[189] Diefenbaker left in a huff.[190] Members of Kennedy's inner circle, including National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, would comment that Kennedy's personal dislike of Diefenbaker led him to act in an intentionally discourteous, insensitive manner towards his host.[191] Such treatment was tailor-made to wound the deeply insecure Diefenbaker.

After the Ottawa trip, Kennedy and Diefenbaker were able to conduct their personal business almost entirely by telegram and letter. Several months after the trip, Secretary of State Rusk urged the President to send a letter to Diefenbaker reminding him of his promise to persuade the Canadian people to a more pro-nuclear position.[192] The letter, signed and sent by Kennedy on August 3rd of 1961, also stresses that a strong North American air defence is necessary to safeguard America's bomber fleet, the backbone of NATO's strength.[193] Diefenbaker received the letter while vacationing in Saskatoon and responded a week later, telling the President that he shared his concern over Berlin, and that, mindful of his earlier promise, he would move forward immediately and had arranged a meeting with his Minister of National Defence, Douglas Harkness, and his Minister of External Affairs, Howard Green.[194]

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[189] Ibid, 128.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid, 125.
[192] Memorandum, Dean Rusk to the President, 30 July 1961. "Proposed Letter to Prime Minister Diefenbaker." Document 10, Folder 1, National Security Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.
[193] Letter, the President to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 3 August 1961. Document 11, Folder 1, National Security Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.
[194] Telegram, Willis Armstrong to Dean Rusk, 15 August 1961. Document 3, Folder 2, National Security

A month later the Embassy in Ottawa reported to the State Department that the Prime Minister and Minister Harkness were "obviously engaged in a well-organized and Cabinet-approved public campaign" to sway public opinion, despite Diefenbaker being ill with a rotten tooth.[195] Liberals and New Democrats were reportedly assailing the government for refusing to announce their decision.[196]

This progress was derailed by a careless leak in late September to Canadian reporters in Washington that Canada had agreed to accept nuclear warheads but had not yet publicly announced it. The Embassy worried — correctly, ultimately — that Diefenbaker would be forced to delay announcing his decision to avoid looking like an American puppet. While the Embassy tersely reported that "determination [to] take right decision not fundamentally shaken," the timing of the announcement is now "difficult to predict."[197] A follow-up report from the Embassy in early October glumly reports that the Prime Minister had suspended any consideration of accepting nuclear weapons for the Canadian military until "the dust has settled."[198] Days later, the Embassy cabled another report, saying that Harkness, America's "best friend" in Ottawa, was so frustrated that he was considering resigning, a prospect the Americans viewed with alarm.[199] For Harkness, this was not the first time a leak from Washington had hurt him politically; nine months earlier, he had unofficially complained that such leaks were making it hard for him to

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Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[195] Telegram, Willis Armstrong to Dean Rusk, 20 September 1961. Document 15&15B, Folder 1, National Security Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid, 1.

[198] Telegram, Francis Linville to Dean Rusk, 7 October 1961. Document 1, Folder 7, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[199] Telegram, Willis Armstrong to Dean Rusk, 12 October 1961. Document 7, Folder 3, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

push forward Canada's adoption of nuclear weapons.[200] These impressions were confirmed by the works of Van Dusen and Robinson, who both suggest that while Diefenbaker was inclined to accept nuclear weapons, he was loathe to do so under even the slightest appearance of American pressure. This purely personal reluctance answers the question of what took Canada so long, something that left McLin and Lyon confused.

Regardless of his motivations, Diefenbaker's constant hesitancy to move forward with the decision to adopt nuclear weapons, without which the F-104 fighters and BOMARC missiles that Canada had deployed were nearly useless, confirmed for Kennedy his initial impression of Diefenbaker as being an insincere, untrustworthy man. As Canada became increasingly viewed as unreliable, its ability to influence decisions in Washington plummeted.[201]

On December 30th, 1961, Ambassador Merchant cabled the State Department with a four-page letter giving his assessment of the current political landscape and its likely ramifications for the United States. Describing the Progressive Conservatives as weak, he foresaw that the ongoing procrastination by the Canadian government to accept nuclear weapons would likely continue until the next election, which he felt would come soon.[202] The Pearson Liberals were deemed friendly to the US except in vital military areas, and the NDP was considered almost inherently anti-American.[203] He followed up two months later with a bleak report criticizing Canada's "failure to own up" to the issue of nuclear weapons, despite the fact that the Canadian military had already deployed

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[200] Telegram, Willis Armstrong to Dean Rusk, 27 February 1961. Document 6D, Folder 1, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.
[201] Nash, 143.
[202] Letter, Livingston Merchant to the State Department, 30 December 1961. "Political Environment of US-Canadian Cabinet Meeting, January 12-13, 1962." Document 22, Folder 7, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 2.
[203] Ibid. How little has changed.

numerous weapons that were "next to useless" without them.[204] Merchant urged the President to write the Prime Minister again, but this step was not taken.

Kennedy did write to Diefenbaker six weeks later, on April 13th, 1962. Kennedy opened by saying, "For some time I have had the uneasy feeling that perhaps the positions of our two countries were becoming increasingly disparate." [205] The President asked for Canada's support against calls for a nuclear test ban treaty.[206] Perhaps surprising given the extent of the personal antipathy between them, Diefenbaker made a strong statement to the press the very next day, which was duly noted in Washington.[207] President Kennedy cabled the Prime Minister immediately with a message of personal thanks for the "authoritative and timely recording of the Voice of Canada."[208]

This brief blip of harmony was soon destroyed by the event that would come to define relations between the two men. Diefenbaker, exhausted by a flagging election campaign against Pearson, was mortified to learn that while attending a White House reception hosted by the President and First Lady for Nobel Prize winners, Pearson had enjoyed a private, 45-minute long meeting with the President.[209] Diefenbaker went into a rage when informed of the April 29th chat, hotly telling his staff that it was clear that the President was conspiring with Pearson to defeat him.[210] To be fair, as Pearson's memoirs make clear, Kennedy was quite open in private about his desire to see Pearson replace

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[204] Telegram, Livingston Merchant to Dean Rusk, 26 February 1962. Document 5, Folder 2, National Security Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1-2.
[205] Letter, the President to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 13 April 1962. Document 3, Folder 2, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.
[206] Ibid, 3.
[207] Press Clipping, Associated Press, 14 April 1962. Document 5, Folder 2, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.
[208] Telegram, Dean Rusk to American Embassy Ottawa, 15 April 1962. Document 4, Folder 2, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1.
[209] Robinson, 267.
[210] Ibid.

Diefenbaker, despite frequent public statements to the contrary by American officials to Canadian press. The Liberals themselves did indeed seize upon the incident as an example of Pearson's statesmanship: even the President of the United States sought his counsel.[211] Already spiteful of Kennedy and constantly jealous of Pearson, this confluence of events would provoke Diefenbaker into a rash act.

When Ambassador Merchant, on the verge of retirement after a long career, called upon Diefenbaker on May 5th to bid him farewell, he was floored by Diefenbaker's state. Having been forewarned by Basil Robinson that the Prime Minister was "extremely agitated"[212] by Pearson's chat with Kennedy, Merchant was still alarmed by the extent of his distemper, considering him "excited to a degree disturbing in a leader of an important country."[213] Indeed, the Ambassador described the Prime Minister as "...closer to hysteria than I have ever seen him, except on one other possible occasion."[214]

Having accused the President of meddling in Canadian affairs, Diefenbaker revealed to Merchant his possession of the Rostow Memorandum, claiming it was given to "someone" in External Affairs shortly after the President's visit to Ottawa, insinuating that there was a mole inside Kennedy's inner circle.[215] Diefenbaker angrily claimed he had every intention of using it in the election to show the Canadian electorate that John Diefenbaker was standing up for Canada.[216]

Aghast, Merchant urged the Prime Minister to reconsider, insisting "in the strongest terms" that any document, prepared by a member of the President's staff and

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[211] Ibid, 269.
[212] Letter, Livingston Merchant to George Ball, 5 May 1962. Document 3, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18, JFKL. Pp. 1.
[213] Ibid, 4.
[214] Ibid, 4. The "other occasion" reference remains mysterious.
[215] Ibid, 3.
[216] Ibid.

explicitly addressed to the President himself, was property of the United States.[217] He warned there would be "serious backlash" in Washington, throwing US-Canadian relations into chaos.[218] Merchant continued to say that if Diefenbaker publicly revealed his possession of a privileged document belonging to the United States, whatever effect it might have on the campaign, the American government would demand to know why it had not been immediately returned in accordance with both protocol and the traditions of allied, friendly governments.[219] Merchant also reminded Diefenbaker that he was an ally of the United States, and urged him not to allow a domestic campaign to divide the Western bloc.[220]

Merchant left that night, feeling as though he had helped calm Diefenbaker, but having "no sense of assurance" that the document would remain private.[221] This apprehension was in part based on Diefenbaker's comment that if he chose to release the document, he would wait until Merchant had returned to America, so as to "not spoil [his] last few days in Ottawa."[222] Merchant immediately cabled Washington, writing, "As is apparent, we have a problem."[223] Seeking to smooth over Diefenbaker's ruffled feathers, particularly as regarded his worry that Kennedy favoured Pearson, Merchant urgently requested that an informal working meeting between the President and Prime Minister be arranged.[224]

Assistant Secretary of State George Ball responded three days letter with a letter

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[217] Ibid, 5.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid, 6.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.

laying out a hard line for Ambassador Merchant to take. While urging Merchant to assure the Prime Minister that he understood how stressful electoral campaigns could be, he also stressed that Merchant must make clear that the United States would respond badly to any leak of a private document addressed to the President.[225] Ball also stated bluntly that the President has "no intention or desire" to meet with the Prime Minister.[226] Merchant delivered the message four days later on May 12th, saying that he had not reported the threat to reveal the document to Washington out of concern for the "catastrophic" impact it would have on relations.[227] Diefenbaker declared that he had no intention of using the Memo, but promised to inform Merchant should he change his mind. Merchant himself cabled Rusk that he felt the "storm had passed" and reported that Diefenbaker seemed to him to be on the verge of exhaustion.[228]

The damage to US-Canadian relations was indeed potentially catastrophic. When told of Diefenbaker's threat, Kennedy went into a rage, decrying it as blackmail.[229] He continued on at some length, at one point declaring the he would have liked to cut "[Diefenbaker'] balls off."[230] Ted Sorensen, Kennedy's top speech writer and close personal confidant, was present, and knew full well that Kennedy always responded extremely badly to being threatened.[231] While urging the President to be calm, even Rusk considered Diefenbaker's actions "unforgivable."[232] While his carefully considered

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[225] Letter, George Ball to Livingston Merchant, 8 May 1962. Document 6, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18, JFKL. Pp. 2.
[226] Ibid, 3.
[227] Letter, Livingston Merchant to Dean Rusk and George Ball, 13 May 1962. Document 8, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18, JFKL. Pp. 2.
[228] Ibid, 3.
[229] Robinson, 270.
[230] Nash, 160
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.

instructions to Merchant helped stabilize the situation, Kennedy swore that he would never again meet with Diefenbaker.[233] The President's intense dislike filtered down throughout the bureaucracy; Canadian diplomats and journalists found themselves cut out of the loop on issues to which they would previously have had access.[234] The entire bi-lateral relationship between the two governments was noticeably chilled, even while the diplomats and military officials in both capitals did their very best to leverage their personal relationships and outright friendships to minimize the disruption.

The election on June 18th did little to rectify the situation. Diefenbaker had run a disorganized, scattered campaign, one that was populist, anti-American, and saw increasingly heated attacks upon Pearson.[235] Despite the intensity of the campaign, however, Diefenbaker refrained from revealing the existence of the Rostow Memorandum, though the Embassy in Ottawa reported having received unofficial reports that the Conservative leadership was incensed at what it considered pro-Liberal interference by America.[236] The Conservatives lost 92 seats, resulting in a very slim Tory minority in the face of strong gains by the Liberals and the NDP.[237] Diefenbaker's political future now hinged upon being able to get along with his archrival, the friend of Kennedy.[238] Personal blows soon compounded the bitter political defeat. Diefenbaker badly broke his ankle while taking a walk in his garden; already depressed by his

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[233] Ibid, 161. This was indeed the case, though probably not for the reasons that President Kennedy had intended.
[234] Ibid, 164.
[235] Smith, 441.
[236] Telegram, Willis Armstrong to Dean Rusk, 31 July 1962. Document 9A, Folder 9, National Security Files, Box 18, JFKL. Pp. 2.
[237] Smith, 442.
[238] Robinson, 274.

electoral defeat and in mourning for a dear friend lost to a car crash, he took to bed.[239] The new Canadian minority government was now at a dead stop.

[239] Smith, 448.

CASTRO'S CUBA

Even while governance in Canada was grinding to a halt, in Cuba, the revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro was as abuzz with activity as it had been in years. Castro had been swept to power in 1959 after three years of guerilla warfare waged against unpopular dictator Fulgencio Batista,[240] having leveraged the civilian casualties caused by Batista's crackdowns to gather around him an army.[241] Even after his brother Raul took US military personnel in Cuba hostage, the Eisenhower Administration recognized that Batista was corrupt and unpopular, and had no particular desire to support him. They pressured him to step down to avoid needless bloodshed.[242]

Castro seized the capital of Havana in 1959, and was recognized as Prime Minister by the United States.[243] Eisenhower even approved an aid package of eight hundred million dollars.[244] The United States was willing to stay friendly so long as Castro did not rule as a communist.[245] Castro wisely refrained from doing so, despite the urgings of Raul and their comrade Che Guevara, both avowed communists.[246]

Early American hopes for a peaceable relationship quickly evaporated, however. Castro, having taken power, began to purge the island. Former members of the Batista regime and members of the military were tried for vague crimes against the people, with

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[240] James A. Nathan, Anatomy of the Cuban Missile Crisis. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 23.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid, 24.
[243] Ibid, 25.
[244] Ibid, 26.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid, 27.

Castro personally involving himself in the process to ensure guilty verdicts.[247] Other possible threats to the revolution were quietly rounded up and "disappeared," though sources in Cuba close to the US confirmed at least three hundred executions.[248]

More worrisome to Eisenhower than these post-revolutionary excesses, however, was Castro's increasingly obvious anti-Americanism. Though careful to avoid overtly provoking the Americans, Castro frequently stated in speeches that they wished to see him removed from power. He also called attention to the extent of America's economic control over Cuba; ironically, then-senator Kennedy was sympathetic to this, having given a speech on the Senate floor pointing out that any country that had so much foreign investment could hardly be considered sovereign.[249] Castro's repeated statements that the United States was staunchly opposed to him ultimately became a self-fulfilling prophecy — his anti-American political rhetoric began to annoy Washington, which soured on the new Cuban leader.[250]

Castro did himself no favours when, in announcing Stalinist agricultural reforms, he expropriated enormous tracts of land owned by American companies in June 1959.[251] Even worse was his decision to accept Soviet military officers as trainers for his new Revolutionary Army, which was to be armed with Soviet-built weapons.[252] Having decided that Castro would never be a stable neighbour, Eisenhower authorized his various intelligence agencies to consider how best to "check" the rise of Castro's power

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[247] Ibid, 26.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid, 36.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid, 34.

in November that same year.[253] In March of 1960, Castro seized upon the explosion of a freighter carrying munitions in Havana's harbour as sign of an American-sponsored counter-revolutionary plot.[254] Castro placed even more orders for Soviet weapons.[255]

When President Kennedy came to office in 1961, the CIA presented him a plan that called for an invasion of Cuba and the removal of Castro. By the time it was presented to the inexperienced President, the plan was fully developed and in a high state of readiness, and had been approved by President Eisenhower.[256] It called for a brigade of pro-American Cuban refugees to invade Cuba, establish a beachhead, and then raise an anti-Castro army. Kennedy refused to go along with the plan as written, insisting that US forces would not come to the aid of the exiles once they were ashore. The CIA continued to support the invasion even though it was becoming increasingly clear that the lack of US support, Castro's tremendous popularity, and the growing strength of the Cuban Revolutionary Army made it a doomed exercise.[257]

The invasion, launched on April 17th 1961, was a debacle. Half the troops were captured when their ship ran aground on a reef, while the half that did land faced a pro-Castro unit twenty times their size.[258] The Cuban Air Force sank the invasion's supply ships while still laden with food and ammunition, and no further ships were willing to proceed without an American escort.[259] Despite being fearful of looking like "a bum"[260], Kennedy, worried about a Soviet retaliation against Berlin, stood firm and refused to

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[253] Ibid, 37.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Freedman,128.
[256] Ibid, 127.
[257] Nathan, 48.
[258] Freedman, 142.
[259] Freedman, 143.
[260] Ibid.

order direct US action.[261] Though he resisted pressure from his generals and the CIA, the President was deeply upset, and spent a sleepless night weeping while the exiles fought.[262]

Alarmed by the invasion, and numerous subsequent attempts by the CIA to assassinate him[263], Castro rushed into the waiting arms of the Soviet Union.[264] The US responded with a trade embargo and low-level guerilla activity that only pushed Castro deeper into the Soviet camp, which readily supplied Cuba with military hardware and advisors.[265] After narrowly surviving an attack by US-supported guerillas, Castro began to give speeches warning his people of an invasion he deemed imminent.[266] Ironically given what was to come, that particular attack killed many Soviet military advisors sent to Cuba secretly.[267]

The exact steps that led to Soviet nuclear missiles being introduced to Cuba are unclear, as both Khrushchev and Castro gave many conflicting statements. Certainly, it provided advantages to both. While the Soviet Union's efforts to develop a reliable ICBM continued to flounder, they did possess many medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles capable of hitting America from Cuba.[268] These missiles dramatically increased the capability of the Soviets to strike America.[269] For the Soviets, they were a

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[261] Ibid, 144.
[262] Ibid, 145.
[263] Detzer, 34. Known as Operation Mongoose, this CIA effort might be the least successful intelligence operation in history.
[264] Ibid, 38.
[265] Ibid, 35-36.
[266] Ibid, 37.
[267] Stern, 26.
[268] Detzer, 48.
[269] Ibid, 50. Though estimates vary by source, the Cuban missiles might have actually DOUBLED the Soviet Union's first strike capability.

stopgap measure to give them time to develop true ICBMs.[270] For Castro, they provided a deterrent from invasion, and represented a demonstration of Soviet commitment to Cuban security.

The United States noted a sudden increase in Soviet naval activity in August of 1962.[271] The same report that tabulated a greater number of Soviet ships than normal arriving in Havana also reported that the cargoes being offloaded were being protected from scrutiny, while also reporting that several large-scale military construction projects had begun.[272] Interestingly, however, as late as the middle of September, the United States intelligence community did not believe that these sites were likely to be for nuclear missiles; they considered that too provocative, and felt that airfields or possibly even a submarine base were more likely.[273] Given that the Soviet's client state, East Germany, had just begun construction on the Berlin Wall, the intelligence analysts thought that Khrushchev would likely try to reduce tensions in the short-term.[274]

Khrushchev himself had sought to allay American fears, having his Ambassador to the United Nations assure his American counterpart, Adlai Stevenson, that the Soviet military shipments to Cuba were of a "purely defensive nature" on September 4th.[275] The Soviet state news agency, TASS, reiterated this claim one week later.[276] President Kennedy, looking to bolster his party's chances in the upcoming Congressional elections,

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[270] Ibid.

[271] Lawrence Cheng and Peter Kornbluh, eds. The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archives Document Reader. (New York: The New Press, 1998.) Document 12, "CIA Intelligence Memorandum, 'Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba,' August 22, 1962." Pp. 67.

[272] Ibid, 68.

[273] Ibid. Document 13, "CIA Special National Intelligence Estimate, 'The Military Buildup in Cuba,' Septmber 19, 1962." Pp. 73.

[274] Stern, 20.

[275] Ibid, 27.

[276] Ibid.

made a strong statement two days later, declaring that if the Soviet Union turned Cuba into "an offensive military base...then [America] would do whatever must be done to protect its own security, and that of its allies."[277]

The first Soviet nuclear missile arrived two days later.[278]

[277] Ibid, 27-28.
[278] Ibid, 28.

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

In late August, before the flurry of diplomacy had led the Soviets to deny their intention to put in the missiles, a stroke of bad luck began undoing their secrecy. An American U-2 plane on a routine reconnaissance mission near one of the construction sites photographed a missile battery that had been so recently deployed it had not been camouflaged. When the pictures were scrutinized, it was revealed to be a SA-2 missile launcher, the most advanced anti-aircraft weapon in the Soviet inventory, only available in limited numbers.[279] The fact that the Soviets were deploying their best anti-aircraft missiles amidst an isolated jungle created a ripple of interest at the CIA. What were they protecting? John McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, believed nuclear missiles were the likely candidate, but could not prove it.

Spies began to report missile-like objects being trucked around the island.[280] Despite earlier doubts and Soviet denials, the increased naval activity, spotting of the SA-2 missiles, and now reports of missile-like objects raised the speculation in Washington to a fevered pitch. On October 9th, U-2 planes began intensive overflights of Cuba. A flight on October 14th passed over one of the construction sites, confirming the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.[281]

When informed first thing the following morning, Kennedy was personally insulted. "They can't do that to me!" he shouted in anger, while his brother is reported to

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[279] Freedman, 166.
[280] Ibid, 168.
[281] Ibid, 169.

have responded more succinctly: "Shit. Shit. Oh....*shit!*"[282] Kennedy felt that Khrushchev had stepped over a personal line by doing this just before the Congressional elections.[283] Seeking perhaps to avoid any political complications, Kennedy included two Republicans in his first meeting on the Crisis, proving that he considered it as much a threat to his Administration as he did America's national security.[284] At that meeting, Kennedy and his hand-picked group advisors — "ExComm" — were sobered to learn that the missiles could be ready for launch in as little as one week.[285] One of his first orders was to increase still further the number of U-2 flights over Cuba to ascertain if there were other missile launch sites.[286]

The news received back from the flights was grim. The presence of SS-4 missiles, capable of hitting Washington, DC and many of SAC's bomber bases, was again confirmed. It became clear, however, that some of the sites under construction were for the larger SS-5 IRBM; this missile had twice the range and explosive power of its shorter-range counterpart and was capable of striking nearly every major American city and many in Canada and Central America.[287] The sites, not all of which yet had missiles emplaced, were heavily defended by SA-2 missiles and were crawling with ground troops and equipment, believed (correctly) to be Soviet personnel.[288] Alarmingly, however, the U-2 flights revealed only the locations for 30 missiles, while the number of ships recently

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[282] Ibid.
[283] Detzer, 104.
[284] Ibid, 102.
[285] Ibid, 108.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Freedman, 163.
[288] Ibid.

sent to Cuba was sufficient to have transported 48 missiles.[289] The Air Force said it was capable of destroying 90% of the known missiles in a sneak attack, but that meant that between surviving missiles and those yet to be found, in the aftermath of a US attack on Cuba, as many 21 nuclear missiles might remain.[290]

Some members of ExComm, including Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, were initially dismissive of the missiles, viewing it as a Soviet propaganda stunt.[291] Kennedy himself rejected this option, saying that the missiles might not impact the strategic situation, but because they had been slipped in right under the nose of America, they certainly hurt its *prestige.*[292] Ambassador Stevenson, considered by many in the Administration to be alarmingly dovish, suggested a diplomatic deal with the Soviets whereby the Cuban missiles would be removed in exchange for a similar removal of the American Jupiter missiles in Turkey; this was rejected as being not only damaging to America's prestige but her credibility with her allies.[293] Other options, such as using airdropped shotgun pellets to *damage* the missiles or sending in commandos to blow them up directly were studied and rejected.[294]

ExComm quickly distilled the remaining options into two: the "fast track" option of air strikes to destroy the missiles or the "slow track" of imposing a blockade upon Cuba until the Soviets removed the missiles. ExComm was split on the issue, with most favouring a sudden air strike to destroy the missiles. There were serious disadvantages to an air strike, however. It ran the risk of provoking a violent response by the Soviet

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[289] Beschloss, 469.
[290] Ibid. The actual number split the difference: There were 40 missiles.
[291] Detzer, 131.
[292] Ibid, 105.
[293] Ibid, 132.
[294] Ibid, 130.

Union.[295] The members of ExComm, even those in favour of an air attack, agreed that the probable Soviet response would have been to attack West Berlin.[296] The President agreed.[297] Any air strike would not simply have been targeting the missiles themselves, but would have killed the Soviet ground personnel who were constructing and guarding the missiles.[298] McNamara asked if it would be possible to attack the missile sites while only *wounding* them. General LeMay of the Strategic Air Command replied simply, "You must have lost your mind."[299]

Robert Kennedy was vehemently opposed to an air strike. He retold in later years how his first thought upon hearing it discussed was, "Now I know how Tojo must have felt," referring to Japan's sneak attack on Pearl Harbor.[300] Robert Kennedy argued that any such sneak attack would be contrary to American tradition and would alienate the entire world. McNamara supported him.[301] US warplanes would first have to destroy Cuba's radar network, then its air force, and finally the SA-2 batteries, before being able to safely bomb the missile sites.[302]

Their favoured alternative — a blockade of all weapons being sent to Cuba — had the disadvantages of giving away the element of surprise for no immediate gain.[303] At its core, the blockade option would put pressure upon the Soviet Union to remove the missiles without violence, and would avoid backing Khrushchev into a corner where he

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[295] Ibid, 135.
[296] Press, 129.
[297] Ibid, 133.
[298] Detzer, 137.
[299] Ibid, 130.
[300] Ibid, 109.
[301] Beschloss, 441.
[302] Detzer, 109.
[303] Ibid, 132-33.

felt compelled to react against Berlin. Sorensen, also in favour of a blockade, wrote a memo to the President stating that a blockade was, "a more prudent and flexible step which enables us to move to an air strike, invasion, or any other step at any time...without the 'Pearl Harbor' posture."[304] Swayed by the memo and the support of the blockade option expressed by Robert Kennedy and McNamara, Kennedy settled upon that option on October 20th, six days after the missiles had first been photographed.

The Administration also began to consider the need to consult with their allies. In the case of Canada, this issue of consultation was particularly complex due to the "consultation" promise within the NORAD Agreement. This insistence on close consultation was unsurprisingly a Canadian initiative, since as the smaller power, the Canadian military was more likely to be swept up in an American alert than *vice versa*. The Americans had accommodated this fully; not only did the NORAD Agreement itself specify the requirement of consultation, but Canada and the United States had subsequently signed two specific, secret protocols reiterating this.[305]

The Cuban Missile Crisis, however, was a kind of crisis that NORAD proved unable to easily face.[306] NORAD's bi-national design conferred many tactical advantages, but was operationally cumbersome. Both countries appreciated that rapid orders would be necessary in the event of a sneak attack. As written in the Agreement, and confirmed by the subsequent secret ones, the Commander-in-Chief of NORAD could issue orders to his squadrons in the event of an imminent or actual attack upon North

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[304] Chang and Kornbluh. Document 24, "Theodore Sorensen, summary of objections to airstrike option and advantages of blockade option, October 20, 1962." Pp. 143.
[305] Ibid, 57.
[306] Ibid, 56.

America, with all necessary paperwork already in place to permit that action.[307] The framework of the various agreements also provided an understanding that in the midst of a major international crisis, the two countries would have sufficient time to consult and if warranted, agree to an increased alert by NORAD as a precautionary measure or as a show of resolve.[308]

The Cuban Missile Crisis, however, was an unforeseen type of crisis. The Americans were able to keep it secret from the time that the U-2 photographs were processed on October 15th until the President's famous televised speech on October 22nd, a full week.[309] A NORAD alert, which would have been detected by the Soviets, would have thrown away America's ability to launch a surprise attack.[310] There is also the issue of how much the Canadians could have hoped to contribute to a NORAD alert. In a military sense, the facts are clear: the participation of Canada would have been helpful, but not significant.

Canada's lack of nuclear weapons had left it largely toothless.[311] The Royal Canadian Air Force's nine squadrons of the subsonic CF-100 Canuck fighters had been withdrawn from NORAD service several months earlier.[312] These had been replaced by supersonic CF-101B Voodoos.[313] Four squadrons were already operational.[314] While

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[307] Ibid, 57.
[308] Ibid, 56.
[309] Freedman, 193.
[310] Jockel, NORAD, 56.
[311] Haydon, 78. Interestingly, Haydon discovered during the research for his book some evidence that Canada did indeed possess nuclear weapons as of late 1962. The evidence, such as it is, consists of several people informing him of their presence at Canadian bases under the care of United States military officers, and one document found by Haydon himself, referring to eight nuclear warheads being *returned* to the United States from a Canadian Air Force Base. (Page 155)
[312] Ibid, 105.
[313] Telegram, Livingston Merchant to Dean Rusk, 28 May 1961.
[314] Haydon, 105.

these 48 aircraft represented a significant technological improvement over the Canucks, they carried non-nuclear guided missiles.[315] Each missile would only have been capable of damaging a single bomber. The Americans had designed these planes under the specific assumption that they would be firing nuclear missiles, and when Canada had accepted them, they agreed the planes would be delivered as built, without modifications to make them more effective if armed with only conventional weapons.[316]

The BOMARC missiles that Diefenbaker had announced after canceling the CF-105 Arrow were even worse; without nuclear weapons, they were quite literally useless.[317] The missiles were not capable of self-correcting their course. They could be aimed at the approaching enemy bombers and told at what altitude to explode, but after launch, were basically time bombs flying in a straight line. It was only by being armed with nuclear warheads that they could have any hope at all of destroying enemy aircraft. Since Canada lacked nuclear weapons and they were not designed to carry high-explosive warheads, Canada's BOMARCs were loaded with payloads of sandbags, for weight.[318]

The Royal Canadian Navy, however, was better equipped to assist in the Crisis. The Atlantic Fleet, based in Halifax, was a sizable force. It possessed an aircraft carrier, eighteen destroyers and eleven frigates.[319] These latter 29 warships were ideal for hunting down Soviet submarines. The RCAF's naval squadrons were also better prepared to make direct contributions to the Crisis, as their 40 long-range surveillance planes were capable

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[315] Haydon, 105.
[316] Telegram, Livingston Merchant to Dean Rusk, 28 May 1961.
[317] Nash, 101.
[318] Ibid, 207.
[319] Haydon, 99.

of feeding valuable intelligence back to Halifax.[320] While there was no maritime equivalent of NORAD insofar as a single overarching agreement, there were pre-existing arrangements between the Canadian and American fleets that permitted close cooperation without having the necessity of securing specific government orders.[321] Even though they lacked a centralized command, the Royal Canadian and the United States Navies were ready and able to function as a combined unit. This was further reinforced by the close personal and professional relationship between the respective national Atlantic Fleet Commanders.[322] The RCN, however, had not been able to acquire the nuclear torpedoes and depth-charges they had requested.

President Kennedy, having settled upon a blockade, dispatched personal emissaries to certain key US allies whose support his Administration considered vital, including Canada. The President called upon Livingston Merchant, the retired Ambassador that Diefenbaker had harangued over the Rostow Memorandum, to be his representative. The President made personal phone calls to External Affairs to make sure that the meeting would be expedited and that Prime Minister appreciated the dire urgency of the situation.[323]

Diefenbaker already knew of the Crisis. In Washington, two Canadian intelligence officials had been informally invited to sit in on a meeting of their American colleagues.[324] These agents of course reported to Ottawa immediately that the missiles existed, but they did not have any information on what the President intended to do about

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[320] Ibid, 99-100.
[321] Ibid, 114.
[322] Ibid.
[323] Nash, 183.
[324] Ibid, 181.

them. Likewise, American military officers at NORAD had quietly revealed the existence of the missiles to their Canadian brothers-in-arms.[325] This was extremely classified. Diefenbaker's knowledge of the Crisis came only via personal friendships in Washington, and from American officers willing to break the law to keep their Canadian colleagues at NORAD up to date. Diefenbaker feigned shock at the revelations so well that many media pundits, and even his closest associates, believed that he had been caught virtually unawares by Merchant's presentation in Ottawa. It was not until Knowlton Nash personally interviewed some of the Canadians who were "in the know" that the extent of Diefenbaker's knowledge became clear. This serves to strip away one of the main defences offered up by Diefenbaker supporters: that anyone would have been taken aback by such frightening news. Diefenbaker, as Nash made clear, had had time for the reality of the Crisis to sink in, and was *still* determined to view it more as a personal insult than an international emergency. This was not a result of shock, where an overburdened mind turned to the comfort of anger to avoid thinking about the unthinkable. It is, simply put, a sign of Diefenbaker's character.

Thus when Diefenbaker received Merchant, he was somewhat prepared for what was to come. With him in his office when he received the Ambassador was Howard Green, his Minister of External Affairs, and Harkness of National Defence.[326] Merchant told the Prime Minister that the nature of the crisis at hand was such that normal means of communication had not been possible, hence the sending of a personal emissary and the relative lateness of the Prime Minister's notification. He did this in part because upon

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[325] Jockel, NORAD, 55.

[326] Memorandum of Conversation, Livingston Merchant to the Department of State, 5 November 1962. "Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker to Deliver Copy of President Kennedy's Letter on October 22 on Cuban Situation." Document 6, Folder 12, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

arrival he found the Prime Minister in a foul mood and sought to placate him from the outset.[327] He then presented to the Prime Minister President Kennedy's personal letter. In it, the President summarized in a few sentences the discovery of the missiles in Cuba, informed the Prime Minister that he had sent a letter to Khrushchev demanding their removal, and that he intended to immediately call for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council.[328] He concluded by stating, "It is most important that we should all keep in close touch with each other, and I will do all I can to keep you informed of developments as I get them."[329]

The vagueness of NORAD's consultation clause proved problematic. Diefenbaker was being "consulted," but only upon decisions that the Americans had *already reached.* The hypersensitive Diefenbaker, already embittered towards Kennedy, was not being asked for advice, but for *approval.* As later written by close Diefenbaker aide H. Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker could do no more than "acknowledge [the letter's] receipt."[330] Diefenbaker's infamous pride was hurt.

He asked for a summary of the speech's main points, which Merchant did before reading the text of it aloud to the Canadians. The men frequently interrupted to ask for clarification of various points. Diefenbaker asked if the blockade was to apply to aircraft bound for Cuba from the Eastern bloc or just vessels at sea, Merchant told him that as of that time, aircraft were not to be included in the blockade.[331] They questioned the President's haste in moving so quickly to impose a blockade — technically an act of war

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[327] Ibid.

[328] Letter, the President to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 22 October 1962. Document 1, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 20 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 2.

[329] Ibid, 1.

[330] Robinson, 285.

[331] Memorandum of Conversation, Livingston Merchant to the Department of State, 5 November 1962. Pp. 2.

— without the prior approval of the United Nations. Merchant responded that the President felt the issue too urgent to defer action any longer.[332] Diefenbaker asked how the British would respond to a blockade, an act they held in particular revulsion; Merchant agreed that they would likely object, but would agree with the Blockade once fully briefed.

Diefenbaker also had strong objections to one particular part of the speech, wherein the President referred to the Soviet Foreign Minister as "dishonest and dishonorable."[333] Diefenbaker, supported by Green, felt that there was nothing to be gained by personally insulting the Soviet politician.[334] Merchant promised to relay that to the President, and, indeed, the President had the line removed from the final version of the speech.[335]

Nonetheless, much of his initial displeasure — Diefenbaker's greeting to Merchant was described by an aide as "extremely cool"[336] — was dispelled once he examined the U-2 photographs. Not only were the Canadians present amazed by the clarity, they were also intensely interested in the sequence of events that had led to the discovery. Merchant summarized the initial reports from spies in Cuba, as well as the noticeable increase in Soviet naval activity. Although Diefenbaker had been skeptical about how certain the Americans could truly be that the missiles were in place, he, along with Harkness and Green, were won over by the photos and the briefing given by a US

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[332] Memorandum of Conversation, Livingston Merchant to the Department of State, 5 November 1962. Pp. 5.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Smith, 456.
[336] Nash, 184.

intelligence officer.[337]

Having been convinced, the men discussed what was to be done. Surprisingly, Green had little else to say. [338] Harkness asked why the United States did not simply invade Cuba and destroy the missiles on the ground, a step that he felt would be less risky than engaging Soviet ships.[339] Merchant assured him that that option had been considered. Harkness, knowledgeable and perceptive of military affairs, immediately saw a flaw in the blockade plan: he asked if Soviet submarines would be included in the blockade. When told that they would be, he expressed concern that any attempt by a US warship to stop and board a Soviet warship could provoke a world war.[340] Merchant acknowledged the concern but stated that he was confident in the United States Navy's ability to effectively enforce the blockade.

The meeting then ended. Merchant reported that he found Minister Green quite calm and surprisingly supportive of the President, and that Harkness was "cheered" by the strong, decisive show of American strength.[341] The Prime Minister, however, refused to give a firm commitment of support for the United States, though Merchant wrote that the impression he had of the Prime Minister was of a man miffed by not having been personally consulted throughout the Crisis, but sufficiently impressed by the evidence presented to offer the United States strong support.[342] This was in part due to the fact that while Canada had not joined in the trade embargo against Cuba, while still Ambassador

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[337] Interestingly, this officer's name is the only part of the document that is still redacted by the United States National Archives.
[338] Memorandum of Conversation, Livingston Merchant to the Department of State, 5 November 1962. Pp. 5.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid, 3.
[341] Ibid, 5.
[342] Ibid.

to Ottawa, Merchant had generally found Diefenbaker in agreement with relevant American policy.[343] Merchant and the unnamed intelligence officer went to brief other Canadian political and military leaders, while Diefenbaker went home to dine and watch the President's televised address.

After the President gave his famed speech, wherein he announced the blockade of offensive weapons to Cuba and threatened the Soviet Union with "a full retaliatory response" if any of the missiles in Cuba were launched, Opposition Leader Pearson telephoned Diefenbaker at home and asked him to return to the House to make a public statement.[344] This caught Diefenbaker off guard. He had not been planning on doing so until the following morning's session, and was unprepared. Nonetheless, he felt he could not ignore a request from the Opposition Leader for a statement, and rushed to the House to give one. In doing so, he made a critical mistake. The only preparation he had received thus far was a memo written to him by Green for use in the *private* meeting with Ambassador Merchant.[345] When the Prime Minister stood up in the House, he had only this memo and some of his own hastily scribbled notes to guide his remarks.[346] Furthermore, he had become increasingly troubled with the President's address; what had seemed to him to be reasonable on paper had, in the live delivery, struck Diefenbaker as ego-driven grandstanding, a reckless course of action that threatened to push the world into a nuclear war so that Kennedy could recapture prestige lost after the Bay of Pigs.[347]

In his hasty ill temper, he erred badly, treating Green's private memo as a public

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[343] Memorandum, R.A. Hurwitch for the President, 4 May 1961. "President's Trip to Ottawa, May 16-18, 1961: The Cuban Situation (The President Might Wish to Raise)." Document 6, Folder 8, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 2.
[344] Nash, 188.
[345] Robinson, 286.
[346] Smith, 456.
[347] Nash, 186.

statement. After brief introductory remarks, standard political fluff about the need for calm and unity, the Prime Minister continued disastrously. Reading from Green's memo, he stated that a team from the United Nations was needed to go in to find an "objective" answer to whether or not there were indeed offensive missiles in Cuba.[348] The Prime Minister hoped that such a mission would help "ascertain what the facts are."[349] This suggested that Diefenbaker doubted the President. His remarks, as well as more supportive statements from Pearson, were immediately reported by the Embassy to the State Department. [350]Diefenbaker quickly worsened an already terrible mistake when, while leaving the House, he remarked to reporters that soon, "the truth would be revealed."[351]

In his memoirs, Diefenbaker is loath to accept any responsibility for this terrible error, and quickly skips past the whole incident with nary a mention of his fumble. Pearson's memoirs, however, tackle the issue directly, but generously. Pearson does not criticize Diefenbaker for his poor performance, instead suggesting that in the spur of the moment, anyone could have slipped up. Robinson is more defensive, stating that Diefenbaker was overwhelmed and simply erred because of how little warning he had had of the Crisis, an interpretation disproved by Nash's ultimate revelation that Diefenbaker had known far more than was generally appreciated. Denis Smith splits the difference, suggesting that Diefenbaker was indeed flustered and pushed into making a mistake, not by the events of the Crisis, but by Pearson's own statement of that evening, which forced Diefenbaker to immediately respond with one of his own, something he had

[348] Telegram, Ivan White to Dean Rusk, 23 October 1962. Document not numbered, Folder 3(1), National Security Files, Box 40A (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 2.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid, 1.
[351] Nash, 189.

not intended to do, lest his opponent steal the spotlight on what was quickly shaping up to be an historic evening. This interpretation, that Diefenbaker was not ill-informed but simply caught off guard by the need for an *immediate* statement, is the most nuanced, and likely the best explanation for what otherwise would be an extremely rare error by a shrewd political veteran.

Even in a White House that had come to expect nothing but trouble from the Canadian Prime Minister, Diefenbaker's remarks came as a shock. President Kennedy already strongly disliked Diefenbaker and considered him untrustworthy.[352] Regardless, the President had been buoyed by Merchant's reports that Diefenbaker was "on side" with the President, and Kennedy specifically mentioned the "full support" of Canada to reporters immediately after his famed speech.[353] Diefenbaker, incensed by this perceived arrogant presumption, refused to order an RCAF alert, and indeed refused to take any action at all that night, abruptly rescheduling a Cabinet meeting until the following morning.[354] Robert Kennedy said his brother was so affronted that his word would be questioned at such a time that this dislike crystallized into genuine hate.[355] Canada's poor response was made to look worse by the hearty and immediate declarations of support from all other major US allies and many of the OAS members.[356] Amidst an outpouring of support, Canada's silence was thunderous.

At the next morning's Cabinet meeting, Diefenbaker was in a foul mood. Overnight, the United States military had stood up to DEFCON 3, and a formal request

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[352] Smith, 457.
[353] Nash, 190.
[354] Ibid, 191. DEFCON 5 is peacetime, DEFCON 4 is an elevated alert, while DEFCON 3 is a maximum peacetime alert. DEFCON 2 and 1 are more serious, with the latter only being issued in the event of an actual outbreak of war. For reference, during the 9-11 attacks, NORAD stood up to DEFCON 3.
[355] Ibid, 187.
[356] Ibid, 189.

had been made for the Canadian NORAD units to do the same so as to establish a prepared, unified continental air defence.[357] Given Canada's lack of nuclear weapons, such a step would have amounted to largely symbolic support.[358] Even so, the Cabinet meeting quickly bogged down on this issue, split between two camps. Harkness led one, and Green the other.

This was not a new situation, as the men were fundamentally quite different. Harkness was a war hero, wounded in action while serving with the Royal Canadian Artillery in Europe during the Second World War.[359] Since being made Minister of National Defence almost three years earlier, he had been a passionate supporter of the military, active in reaching out to the Canadian public to increase support for the armed forces.[360] He was especially determined to see Canada accept nuclear weapons, not only for the obvious military reasons, but also because he knew for a fact that Canada had indeed committed to do so on several occasions.[361] He had grown impatient with Diefenbaker's politically motivated procrastination.[362] As the Minister in charge of military affairs, it was his responsibility to state to the public the Canadian position on the issue of adopting nuclear weapons, and he was becoming increasingly embittered by the necessity of his being forced to be the public face for a policy he found personally maddening.[363]

His pro-American stance was why reports from the Embassy in Ottawa more than

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[357] Nash, 191.
[358] Haydon, 128.
[359] Robinson, 158.
[360] Ibid, 168.
[361] Ibid, 158.
[362] Ibid, 195.
[363] Ibid, 227.

once referred to him as America's "best friend" in Ottawa. Indeed, while in Ottawa for his trip, President Kennedy had managed to take Harkness aside for a brief, informal chat, where he pushed to know if Canada was ever going to accept nuclear weapons.[364] Harkness assured the President that Canada would, as soon as Diefenbaker could be convinced that accepting them was less politically risky than continued procrastination. He even went so far as to say publicly in the House that it was the policy of the Government to ensure that the Canadian military would never enter into a conflict armed with "inferior weapons."[365]

Green, conversely, was ill suited for his post at External Affairs. He had never toured Europe, nor even visited Washington, DC.[366] His main qualification for the job was that he was a close personal friend of the Prime Minister.[367] Although a skilled parliamentarian, Green good-naturedly admitted that even his mother had expressed reservations about his posting to a portfolio that he knew so little about.[368] Green was, however, considered by all, even the Americans he so often annoyed, to be a genuinely good man, charming and friendly, if a bit naïve.[369]

Green was passionate about nuclear disarmament.[370] Horrified by radiation, he wished to see all bomb tests stopped and, eventually, total disarmament.[371] Shrewd

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[364] Nash, 129.
[365] Ibid, 139.
[366] Ibid, 80.
[367] Ibid, 81.
[368] Ibid, 80.
[369] Ibid, 81. A visiting dignitary once asked Green to send a "girl" to his hotel room. Green immediately obliged, dispatching his personal secretary at once, with orders to take down whatever the dignitary wished to dictate. It fell upon more worldly members of External Affairs to not only calm down the shocked secretary, but arrange for the dignitary's needs to be met. The expense was budgeted discretely as "Flowers."
[370] Ibid, 81-82.
[371] Robinson, 111.

enough to know that there was little Canada could do to sway the opinions of the superpowers, Green set about trying to remake Canada's foreign policies to turn the country into the leader of the so-called "middle powers."[372] A US briefing memo on Green, prepared for Kennedy prior to their first meeting, while commenting upon his great personal character and genuine likeability, warned that his positions bordered on "neutralist."[373]

These sentiments were repeated several months later after Green refused to join a meeting of the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany in Geneva so that he could spend more time developing his relationship with the representative from India.[374] The Americans, at first attributing these actions to his inexperience, were reluctantly forced to concede that he was, in fact, simply hostile (albeit politely) to the interests of the United States.[375] Further such examples led Kennedy in October of 1961 to write Diefenbaker a surprisingly blunt letter lamenting Canada's "abandoning the Western position" and warning that such actions threatened to "damage seriously" relations between Canada and the United States.[376]

The day after Kennedy's speech to the world, the Cabinet was leaning towards Harkness' position. Green, however, made an impassioned speech that swayed Diefenbaker enough to convince him to delay further action. The Cabinet meeting

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[372] Ibid.

[373] Memorandum, The Department of State (Unsigned), Undated. "Green, Howard (Charles). Secretary of State for External Affairs." Document 2C, Folder 4, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 1. This is the same word used to describe "certain Canadians" in other documents concerning US-Canadian relations more generally. That these documents refer to Green is apparent.

[374] Memorandum, Dean Rusk to the White House, 15 May 1961. Document 3, Folder 3, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 2.

[375] Memorandum, The Department of State (Unsigned), Undated. "Green, Howard (Charles). Secretary of State for External Affairs." Pp. 1.

[376] Telegram, Dean Rusk to American Embassy Ottawa, 31 October 1962. Document 10, Folder 5, Presidential Office Files, Box 113, JFKL. Pp. 3-4.

minutes offer a fascinating glimpse into the conversation. Though still partially redacted, two full pages are given over to summarizing the principle points of the argument: Canada, while not politically obligated to march in lockstep with the United States was in a very real practical sense forced to do so, but a Canadian decision to go to DEFCON 3 could be interpreted as Canada having been "stampeded" by the United States.[377] Ultimately, the minutes remark blandly "further consideration would be given to the alerting of the Canadian air defence forces after the reactions of other countries, particularly the UK...had been ascertained."[378] It is ironic that a Prime Minister so sensitive to undue influence from the United States would wait on the word of Britain.

For Harkness, this was unacceptable. As early as the night before, he had quietly put the military on alert without a formal announcement.[379] His authority to do this was murky at best. The government's War Book, which specified exactly the proper to steps in such an emergency, was in the midst of being revised and updated.[380] Incomprehensibly, however, the previous War Book had been ordered cancelled before the new one had been issued, meaning that there was no overall Canadian defence plan. Local commanders had authority to respond to direct threats, but otherwise, the Canadian military leadership was frozen.[381] This would have been bad enough even with a proactive, unified Cabinet. As the case was, Cabinet was polarized between Green and Harkness and the Prime Minister, furious with Kennedy, went beyond merely hesitation, and into outright deliberate delay.

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[377] Canadian Cabinet Minutes, October 23rd, 1962. Pp. 4.
[378] Ibid, 6.
[379] Nash, 192.
[380] Haydon, 123.
[381] Ibid.

Whether or not Diefenbaker knew of Harkness' alert is a matter of debate. In his memoirs, Diefenbaker makes no mention of any alerts being issued. Robinson, however, believed it unlikely that a politician as shrewd and well connected as Diefenbaker could possibly have missed the scurrying of his officers to make ready for war. This conclusion is shared by Nash, who feels that Diefenbaker chose to let it go on without comment out of genuine concern of Soviet attack, and by Haydon, who does not believe that the flurry of reports and supply requisitions that suddenly poured in from the Navy's Atlantic squadrons could possibly have gone unnoticed in Ottawa. Unfortunately, no document has yet emerged to settle this issue definitively either way, leaving all such discussion stranded in the realm of pure speculation.

The Prime Minister and the President spoke briefly by telephone on Tuesday, October 23rd, and the conversation — predictably — did not go well.[382] Kennedy repeatedly asked for Canada to stand-to to DEFCON 3, and in each case, Diefenbaker evaded. He demanded to know when Canada had been consulted, as Kennedy had promised to do at the Ottawa meeting. The frustrated Kennedy responded dismissively, saying simply, "You weren't."[383] Diefenbaker's secretary later retold how upset Diefenbaker was after that telephone conversation, convinced that Kennedy would drag the world into a nuclear war. "He wants the Russians out of there, and then they'll bomb us," he complained. He also began to muse to aides and confidants that in the missile age, there might not be enough early warning to evacuate to the government's bunker in Arnprior, outside of Ottawa.[384]

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[382] Nash, 196.

[383] Ibid, 196.

[384] Ibid. Others in the Cabinet were also worried that the situation was truly spiraling out of control, as was evidenced by them rushing to stock the "Diefenbunker" with their favourite liquor. Thus, when the Crisis

The next day's Cabinet meeting went no better. Harkness was able to get agreement for a suspension of a planned troop rotation in Europe, leaving the trained men at their posts within NATO, while also making arrangements for the families of any man stationed in Europe to be voluntarily evacuated back to Canada.[385] After this, agreement was reached on the denial of overflight privileges to Soviet planes wishing to refuel in Canada on the way to Cuba, and that all other Eastern Bloc flights would be searched before being permitted to continue on their way.[386] When the topic of discussion returned once again to the topic of raising the Canadian military's alert level, the meeting devolved into an angry shouting match.[387] The minutes of the meeting record that while some argued that Harkness should immediately announce an alert, others felt it was not necessary at that time, and might even make the Crisis worse.[388] Once again, Cabinet deferred, and the minutes record only that, "The Cabinet agreed to give further consideration, at its next meeting, to the question whether any change is required in the state of readiness of the Canadian forces."[389]

Resolution to the issue was abruptly forced. While Cabinet was meeting, General Power, commander of the American Strategic Air Command, ordered an increase in the alert status to DEFCON 2, or, "enemy attack imminent."[390] Legally, such an increase was within Power's operational mandate. Politically, however, it was a recklessly provocative move; eighty B-52s roared into the skies and began orbiting their "fail-safe" positions

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finally ended, perhaps Canada's only decisive action was this stockpiling of smooth single malt liquor and the finest gin with which Cabinet would have passed the time while waiting for the radioactive fallout to decay to safe levels.

[385] Canadian Cabinet Minutes, October 24th, 1962. Pp. 6.

[386] Ibid, 4.

[387] Haydon, 132.

[388] Canadian Cabinet Minutes, October 24th, pp. 7.

[389] Ibid.

[390] Polmar, 245.

just outside of Soviet territory.[391] In Ottawa, Harkness received this news with near panic, taking it to mean that something had happened that he did not know about. He rushed to Diefenbaker's office and desperately pleaded with the Prime Minister to order DEFCON 3 for Canada. To his surprise, the exasperated Prime Minister agreed with a dismissive wave.[392] After all of the acrimony of the last two days, Canada was indeed pushed into a military alert by an American action, and Cabinet did not make the ultimate decision, after all.

Though the formal declaration of DEFCON 3 — known in Canada as a state of "Military Vigilance" — was two days in coming, the military had not wasted time. Acting on Harkness' orders, the military commanders had done everything within their limited mandate to move the Canadian military onto a war footing. At times, the steps taken were almost ridiculous; one Canadian air force officer, frustrated by the delay in the DEFCON 3 alert, simply ordered a surprise training exercise simulating a DEFCON 3 alert.[393] Other squadron commanders followed suit, with a Canadian squadron even deploying to Florida, where they took part in preparations to bomb Cuba.[394] For training purposes only, of course.

Other Canadian air force officers, seeing that their American colleagues in NORAD had gone to DEFCON 3, got around their inability to order DEFCON 3 by issuing a series of individual orders that accomplished the same things the formal alert

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[391] Ibid, 246. The Fail-Safe system has become an absolute icon in Cold War pop culture, and is easily summarized as a fixed geographical point where US bombers would orbit in wait for orders to attack. Since they could not proceed without a direct coded order, this system of so-called "positive control" was considered fail-safe. Numerous science fiction authors felt otherwise.
[392] Nash, 200.
[393] Ibid, 195.
[394] Ibid.

would have.[395] In this manner, NORAD continued to function effectively, with both air forces at a state of readiness equivalent to the alert, whether that alert was formal or improvised. At no time, however, were the BOMARC missiles or the Voodoos armed with nuclear warheads, meaning that even the improvised state of alert was a mainly symbolic gesture of solidarity.[396] The National Early Warning System was activated, but this was a similarly pointless gesture; Canada had not undertaken any significant civil defence preparations, making early warning somewhat pointless.[397]

So while the Royal Canadian Air Force took what few steps they could, it made little practical difference. Likewise, the Canadian Army also stood up to a maximum alert, but without political approval, few concrete steps could be taken.[398] Plans were drafted to deploy troops to Europe in case the Soviets invaded there, and what few civil defence units that existed were sent into the field, presumably to enjoy better views of the mushroom clouds going up over Toronto and Montreal.[399]

The Royal Canadian Navy, however, was in a position to intervene decisively in the Crisis, and did so gladly. Ironically, while the Air Force and Army commanders moved quickly to go to alert even without political authority, Naval Headquarters dragged their feet in giving orders to Rear Admiral Dyer, commander of the Canadian Atlantic Fleet. Frustrated by Ottawa's lack of clear instructions, Dyer cleverly seized an early opportunity to order an alert on his own authority. On October 23rd, while the first Cabinet meeting was ending inconclusively, an RCAF maritime patrol aircraft on a

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[395] Haydon, 133.
[396] Ibid, 144.
[397] Ibid, 133. It has become something of a joke in my family that my grandmother was so alarmed by the Crisis that she prepared a plan to pick up the kids from school and flee to Orillia, there to stay with relatives. My grandfather was distressed to learn that the plan did not include picking him up from work.
[398] Ibid, 136.
[399] Ibid.

routine training mission spotted a Soviet submarine running on the surface unusually close to the Canadian coast.[400] Dyer seized upon this as a reason to order his ships to sea under the guise of determining if there were any other submarines lurking near Canadian waters.[401]

Dyer was fortunate: the Crisis had begun amidst a major exercise between the American and Canadian fleets.[402] Already, the Navy's warships and Air Force's patrol aircraft were at a high state of readiness, and most were already deployed right where they were needed. One notable exception was Canada's only aircraft carrier, the HMCS *Bonaventure*, and her handful of escorts. Their role in the exercise had them deployed closer to Europe than North America, far too distant to be of immediate use; Dyer immediately ordered her recalled.[403] Dyer also had the benefit of numerous prearranged agreements between his headquarters in Halifax and the American Atlantic Fleet headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, that allowed the two forces to operate effectively as one unit, with a constant flow of classified plans and intelligence reports moving between the two commands automatically.[404] It is ironic that the air forces, with a unified headquarters, were not able to operate as effectively as Dyer and his American counterpart, Vice Admiral Taylor. The personal relationship between these two men, good friends and trusted confidants, was worth more than the entire NORAD apparatus. Responsibilities were quickly agreed upon, patrols plotted, and both fleets went to work.

As a precaution, Dyer and his staff evacuated Halifax, deemed a likely target for a

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[400] Ibid, 129.

[401] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 1, October 24th, 1962. From Peter Haydon's The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered. Pp 240. [Hereafter referred to as "Haydon.]

[402] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 2, October 24th, 1962. From Haydon, 241.

[403] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 4, October 25th, 1962. From Haydon, 243.

[404] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 3, October 25th, 1962. From Haydon, 242.

Soviet nuclear strike.[405] This created some headaches until the chain of command could be reestablished, and hindered his efforts to browbeat Ottawa into releasing needed fuel and provisions.[406] While Dyer was pushing Harkness' personal approval to the very limit, Ottawa's inability to release to him additional support threatened to hinder his efforts. This was particularly problematic with his patrol aircraft, which actually belonged to the Air Force.[407] Dyer's ability to sustain his operation depended in large part on his ability to count on those aircraft, and even while he pushed his ships to sea, the Air Force staff in Ottawa were jealousy hoarding their fuel supplies, causing problems for Dyer.

Despite the efforts of Harkness and Dyer, the Canadian media soon realized that Canada's support of the United States was muted at best. The *Globe and Mail*, benefiting from several well-timed leaks from frustrated military officers, wrote a devastating editorial attacking Diefenbaker for his half-hearted support of President Kennedy. It said his attempt to sit on the fence and avoid a direct commitment of support was a "rebuke" to the United States, which in this time of crisis was "unthinkable."[408] Likewise, *The New York Times* attacked Diefenbaker for his long delay in authorizing what it quite correctly deemed an entirely appropriate increase in Canada's NORAD squadron's alert state.[409] Desperate to turn things around, Diefenbaker had Green give a televised interview to state Canada's steps thus far. It was a disaster. Green was clearly uncomfortable expressing any support of the United States, even during an interview whose purpose was

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[405] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 1, October 24th, 1962. From Haydon, 240.

[406] Royal Canadian Navy Signals Document 7, October 26th, 1962. From Haydon, 247. It is these repeated requests for more fuel that would have made it difficult for the Navy's dramatically increased operational tempo to go unnoticed in Ottawa, though whether or not such observations were reported up the chain of command to Diefenbaker or handled by clerical personnel at Naval HQ is not known.

[407] Ibid.

[408] Haydon, 130.

[409] Ibid, 125.

to express support of the United States. The reporters present quickly perceived his obvious reluctance and pounced on him, pushing him into a corner with repeated sharp questioning. Finally, Green, trapped, said testily, "We are friends of the United States and we are standing beside her."[410] No one bought it.

The next day in the House, the Tories were hammered by the Liberal opposition for their failure to communicate a clear policy. Pearson stood up in the House and made a strong statement of support for President Kennedy's actions and tore into Diefenbaker's indecisiveness. Diefenbaker rose in response and read a list of Canada's contributions, claiming to be firmly in agreement with the United State and "other allies."[411] This speech was the first formal announcement of Canada's Military Vigilance alert, thus making firm Canadian military support for the United States official after a devastating delay of three days.[412]

On the same Thursday that Diefenbaker announced that Canada was at alert, American Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, representative to the United Nations, scored a major propaganda victory against Soviet Ambassador Zorin when he showed pictures to the Security Council of the Soviet missiles sites in Cuba.[413] In Moscow, an increasingly worried Khrushchev began to back off from his prior aggressive rhetoric, with the state-run newspaper *Pravda* calling for reason and rationality to avoid war.[414]

In the waters off Cuba, the United States staged a largely symbolic boarding of a Soviet-chartered ship; the officers who went aboard politely examined the manifests,

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[410] Nash, 200.
[411] Ibid, 203.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Frankel,132.
[414] Ibid, 133.

enjoyed a cup of coffee with the crew, and sailed back to their destroyer, having given the ship their blessing to continue. [415] This companionable encounter at sea was in contrast to the alarm felt by Pentagon war planners and CIA analysts, who were updating their estimates of Soviet military strength on the ground in Cuba to include suspected FROG missiles, short-range rockets armed with tactical nuclear weapons.[416] They were, in the words of CIA Director John McCone, "Very evil stuff," and seriously threatened the success of any contemplated invasion.[417]

Fearful of what a nuclear war would mean for the Soviet Union, Khrushchev cabled to President Kennedy a rambling, sentimental letter on Friday evening, Moscow time.[418] In it, he offered to withdraw "military specialists" from Cuba if Kennedy would offer a public pledge to not invade Cuba, or assist others in the same enterprise. Coding delays prevented it from being delivered to President Kennedy until late Friday evening, Washington time.[419] Kennedy was sleeping. On Saturday morning, Washington time, Khrushchev bowed to pressure from hardliners and sent a second letter, this time insisting that the missiles would only be withdrawn from Cuba if America withdrew its missiles from Turkey.[420] Kennedy awoke to find two letters from the Soviet leadership, saying different things. This created much confusion and fear inside the Pentagon, where a coup was suspected to have taken place in Moscow.

The second letter also promised the United States that the Soviet Union had full control of its military forces in Cuba, and that there would be no accidental escalation.

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[415] Ibid, 134.
[416] Ibid, 135.
[417] Ibid.
[418] Ibid, 138.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid, 141.

Events soon gave lie to this promise. American planes carried out unusually low-level photographic flights, trying to determine if the missiles were operational.[421] Castro, in a state of near nervous collapse, ordered the planes shot down.[422] Several were hit. The situation was set to soon worsen: the commanders of a Soviet surface-to-air missile battery, through a communications glitch, lost contact with their superiors, and heard only the Cuban orders to fire.[423] Fearing the worst, they launched missiles at the only American aircraft in range, a U-2 plane on a reconnaissance mission. Two missiles struck the plane, destroying it and killing the pilot, Major Rudolph Anderson.[424] Meanwhile, an American destroyer fired several warning shots at a Soviet submarine, whose enraged captain ordered the firing of a nuclear-tipped torpedo. After his crew refused this order, the captain settled for surfacing his sub and offering the American crew a universally recognized gesture.[425]

At the same time that Major Anderson's plane was crashing in the Cuban jungle and Soviet and American naval personnel were cursing each other, another U-2 suffered a navigational error and strayed over Siberia. Soviet fighters were scrambled to intercept it and were chased off by American fighters sent from Alaska.[426] Secretary McNamara, normally one of Kennedy's most pragmatic, level-headed advisors, flew into a rage when informed of these near-simultaneous events, and urged the President to launch a massive air attack on Cuba immediately.[427] Given Khrushchev's assurances of only several hours

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[421] Ibid, 146.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid, 147.
[424] Ibid, 151.
[425] Ibid, 156. It is horrifying to think what kind of world we'd live in today if that torpedo had been fired.
[426] Ibid, 147.
[427] Ibid, 148.

before that he had full control of his military, McNamara viewed these actions as deliberate, calculated provocations.

McNamara soon calmed himself and withdrew his recommendation to attack, but Kennedy was left deeply shaken. America was poorly prepared to endure a nuclear attack; the Office of Civil Defense was undermanned and short on funds.[428] Most Americans faced the Crisis with calm, but localized incidences of panic did empty some grocery stores of canned goods and gun stores of high-powered firearms and ammunition.[429] Some fled their homes, many more built fallout shelters in their backyards and basements. Hearing this, Kennedy commented to advisors that after a nuclear war, the Soviet demand to remove the missiles from Turkey might be viewed by the survivors as "a good proposition."[430]

Seeking a resolution, Kennedy dispatched his brother Robert to meet with Ambassador Dobrynin, the Soviets' top diplomat in Washington. Robert Kennedy informed the Ambassador that the United States was prepared to publicly accept the terms of the Soviet Union's *first* offer for a resolution, and would agree also to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in several months time, provided the Soviets kept that guarantee secret.[431] This would allow both Kennedy and Khrushchev to claim victories: the Soviets would have pressured the Americans into offering a no-invasion pledge, and America would have forced them to remove the missiles. Khrushchev, as fearful of war as Kennedy, accepted this offer immediately. The Cuban Missile Crisis thus ended anti-

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[428] George, 73.

[429] Ibid, 80. Interestingly, when asked by local reporters why they felt the need to arm themselves, most respondents reported not fearing Soviet soldiers, but starving neighbours intent on stealing their supplies.

[430] Frankel, 149.

[431] Ibid, 156.

climactically, as both sides heaved great signs of relief and pulled back from the brink.[432] The threat of imminent war was over.

Though he did not know it, so was Diefenbaker's career as Prime Minister. His government's shaky handling of the Crisis had eroded his public support and incensed the opposition. On 3 January 1963, General Norstad, an American on a farewell tour of NATO countries to mark his retirement as Supreme Allied Commander, gave a press conference wherein he stated bluntly that without nuclear weapons, Canada's BOMARC missiles and F-104 fighter jets were near useless. Capitalizing on this opportunity and the pro-American sentiment instilled by Kennedy's strong actions in the Crisis, on 13 January 1963, Liberal leader Pearson gave a speech reversing his party's stance on nuclear weapons, saying that Canada would accept atomic ammunition without delay.[433] The speech was well received, and Pearson himself would later recall that it was his proudest political moment.[434] The tensions within Diefenbaker's Cabinet regarding nuclear weapons for Canada finally broke into the open. On the defensive, Diefenbaker stood up in the House on 21 and 25 January to deny General Norstad's claims and insist that Canada had lived up to all of its agreements with the United States and NATO.[435]

This was too much for the United States. Calling Diefenbaker's statements "a masterpiece [of] deception and persuasion," Walton Butterworth, Livingston Merchant's successor as Washington's Ambassador to Canada, urged a strong, and public, response by the State Department. [436] This came on 30 January, and in plain language refuted

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[432] Ibid, 157.
[433] Pearson, 70.
[434] John English, The Worldly Years: The Lift of Lester Pearson, Vol. II (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopp Canada, 1992), 262.
[435] Pearson, 72.
[436] Telegram, Walton Butterworth to Dean Rusk, 27 January 1963. Document 31, Folder 12, National

Diefenbaker's claims, essentially accusing him of lying.[437] Diefenbaker reacted predictably, calling this an intrusion into Canadian affairs. Not every Canadian agreed: an amusing document in the Kennedy Library archives, with the hand written title of "One Firm Vote", records a telephone call to the State Department from Ms. Margaret Knowles, of Toronto, who telephoned to say,

> ...how upset she was by reading in Canadian papers that Americans were meddling in Canadian affairs. She said she didn't believe a word of it, and knew that as soon as trouble started, Canadians would be begging for protection from the US. She continued with assorted criticisms of the present Canadian administration and then observed how lamentable it was that there were not more Kennedys [sic] around so that Canada could have some, too. Earlier in the conversation, Mrs. Knowles had acknowledged that she was Irish.[438]

The American release was devastating to the Conservatives. Harkness resigned his post as Minister of National Defence immediately, and Pearson called a vote of non-confidence in Diefenbaker on 4 February.[439] The vote, held next day, saw Diefenbaker's government soundly defeated.[440] Diefenbaker immediately launched an anti-American campaign, portraying Pearson as a Kennedy stooge and himself as the only true defender of Canadian sovereignty, even going so far as to leak to the press the existence of the Rostow Memorandum, though he did not release it.[441] Pearson's own campaign was poorly run from the start, and his massive lead in the polls quickly evaporated.[442] The campaign was marked by vicious personal attacks by Conservatives upon Pearson,

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Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[437] Pearson, 73.

[438] State Department Communications Log, Unsigned, 31 January 1963. Document 1&1A, Folder 13, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 1.

[439] Ibid, 74.

[440] Ibid, 75.

[441] Telegram, Walton Butterworth to Dean Rusk, 2 April 1963. Document 21, Folder 4, National Security Files, Box 18 (Canada), JFKL. Pp. 2.

[442] English, 261.

leaving his wife in tears after one rally.[443]

Diefenbaker's strong attacks, combined with the ineffective Liberal campaign and unfortunate comments by McNamara, where he called Canada's BOMARCs useful as decoys for Soviet bombs, reversed the Tory's sliding fortunes enough to hold Pearson to a minority government. Even so, Diefenbaker would never recover from this defeat. Though he continued to serve in Parliament until his death in 1979, he looked back upon the 1963 election with bitterness, writing in his memoirs that the Liberals, "...seemed to mistake this country for the United States."[444] Pearson's victory promised to begin a new era in Canadian politics; his friendship with Kennedy could not have been more different than the loathing mutually shared between the President and Diefenbaker. Tragically, there was little time to reap the benefits of their bond: President Kennedy was cut down by assassin's bullets in Dallas on 22 November 1963, and Pearson and Johnson, while sharing a friendly, amicable relationship, were never as close as Pearson had been to Kennedy.[445]

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[443] Ibid, 264.
[444] Diefenbaker, 188.
[445] English, 357.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the evolving relationship between President John Kennedy and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and how their eventually intense personal dislike contributed to a lackluster response by the Canadian Prime Minister to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The understanding of this weighty matter has evolved considerably over two generations of Canadian scholarship while being virtually ignored by American historians.

In the final analysis, the Canadian military did virtually all that it could do to make itself ready for war despite the leadership vacuum that existed in Ottawa. Whether on the personal initiative of Air Force squadron commanders or Admiral Dyer's creative use of his operational authority, the various branches of the Canadian armed forces prepared to do battle with the Soviet Union in a war that might well have ended with Canada virtually annihilated. Both the Navy and the Air Force were quick to respond with whatever units were available, and worked closely with the United States to help patrol the North Atlantic, and thereby indirectly support the blockade of Cuba. These actions took place while Diefenbaker's Cabinet was still debating what form the Canadian response should take. While this brings into question to extent to which the Canadian government had control over its own forces, the sailors and airmen who rushed into action faster than Ottawa could respond were operating within pre-existing, and pre-approved, orders for bi-lateral cooperation with the United States military. While Canadian policymakers had likely never anticipated the military engaging in defensive operations on its own authority, such was the reality of the thermonuclear missile era –

actions had to be taken in minutes, for minutes might be all that there was.

The Canadian troops, airmen, and sailors, however, were armed with ineffective weapons, and even if fully committed and positioned in the right place to make a difference, would have been in no position to intervene decisively in a Cuban Missile War. Had the shooting started, on the assumption that Diefenbaker would have then been able to stave off an understandable bout of panic and order the Canadian military into battle, Canadian ships and planes would have had mere hours to attempt to load nuclear weapons, or race into battle with far less effective conventional munitions. Some victories would have been scored by Canadian units despite inferior armaments, and perhaps a handful of Canadian planes and warships would have had time to take on American nuclear weapons (as discussed, some are rumoured to have been close to doing exactly this). Of course, this all might be yet another variation on the old story about the time traveler who rearranges the *Titanic's* deck chairs: in a civilization-destroying nuclear war, perhaps it does not matter what unit fired which bomb. The millions of dead would not care one way or the other.

Given all the above, it could be fairly asked what difference Canada's actions or inactions could possibly have made in the unfolding of the Crisis. Had the worst come to pass, it can be conceded that it would have made little difference at all. Given the correlation of forces in 1962, it can be safely assumed that a Cuban Missile War would have left Cuba and the Soviet Union utterly destroyed, and America intact but reeling under a greater death toll in one day than she had endured in all her prior wars combined. In such a nightmare scenario, with America's "full retaliatory response" having cremated the Soviet Union and President Kennedy or a successor coping with pulverized cities and

bases, what Canada had or had not done would have seemed a point of limited importance. The issue here is not whether or not a tree falling in the forest when no one is around makes a sound, but whether the sound of a single small tree falling matters when the entire forest is burning.

Of course, the above deals with counter-factuals and hypotheses. As it happened, the Cuban Missile Crisis was successfully resolved, and a very much un-atomized Kennedy Administration had plenty of time to take stock of how the various participants had responded. Despite the valiant efforts of the Canadian military to prepare for battle, and the very real contributions made by Canadian military personnel to the naval ocean-based aspects of the Crisis, Kennedy and his closest confidants could not help but take note of the near total silence during the height of the Crisis from one of their closest allies. Neither country was entirely in the right, but President Kennedy and his most trusted advisors — already predisposed to dislike Diefenbaker due to his constant procrastination — justifiably felt betrayed. The prompt and effective help of the Canadian Navy and Air Force in monitoring Soviet shipping and submarine activity was, unfairly, overlooked by a Kennedy Administration that had turned to Canada expecting a loud, enthusiastic display of public support, and was instead faced with deafening silence. Is it proper that America should overlook the quick and efficient help of Canadian airmen and sailors? Of course not. Likewise, it was improper of Kennedy to assume that Canada would do his bidding as soon as he deigned to ask for help, without first having gone through the bother of keeping Canadian officials fully up-to-date, as they had a right to expect given the various treaties and agreements between the two governments.

In that sense, America had failed to live up to its obligations. Diefenbaker was

understandably hurt by the lack of consultation, what he interpreted as a personal slight, and spent far too long nursing his own bruised ego while failing to take steps necessary to ensure continental security. For the Americans, it was never about Diefenbaker's sensibilities or Canadian nationalism, but the need to maintain operational secrecy in a period of extreme danger. Both governments could have done better, and both men allowed their mutual dislike to colour their exchanges.

Of the two, however, President Kennedy has the advantage of being able to claim that his actions were motivated by operational security, and an ultimately broken trust that Canada would automatically honour her agreements. The reality, of course, is that the American president never let any thought of Canada's feelings or his promise to John Diefenbaker enter into his mind while plotting the best course to ensure America's physical survival and continued international prestige. John Diefenbaker has no such noble intentions to hide behind. While the earliest Canadian scholars gave him too little credit when they bemusedly asked him why he had done nothing, the more recent scholarship has hardly vindicated him. While it is true that Canadian sovereignty was not America's primary concern, his actions before, during and after the Crisis prove that he had no greater motivation behind his constant provocations of Kennedy. It is disheartening to consider that a mature man, a seasoned politician, could be so petty as to put off ordering a military alert simply to express his displeasure. Yet given what we now know — that Diefenbaker knew in advance of the Crisis, and was still more concerned with standing up to Kennedy than presenting the Soviet Union with a united allied front — no other conclusion is credible.

In the end, of course, Diefenbaker's regrettable personal failings mattered to the

Cubans and Soviets not a whit. Nothing Canada did or failed to do made the Crisis any more dangerous. But for Canadian-American relations, the consequences could well have proven disastrous had Diefenbaker and Kennedy had further opportunity to continue poisoning the well of goodwill that generations of military, cultural and economic ties had created. It is a bitter truth that the swift electoral defeat of Diefenbaker post-Crisis, and the tragic assassination of President Kennedy, did more to salvage the alliance between Canada and the United States by ushering in new leadership than either leader likely would have done of their own accord. The relationship between Pearson and Johnson was never particularly close, but it gave the much-relieved diplomats and bureaucrats a chance to build the ever-deeper ties between the two nations in an environment free of the toxic feelings between two proud and stubborn leaders.

To be sure, the future of Canadian-American relations would not be smooth sailing from that day forth. Johnson allegedly physically grabbed Pearson after the latter publicly called for a halt to US bombing of North Vietnam, and Pierre Trudeau's tenure as Prime Minister, including his rejection of nuclear weapons for exactly the reasons Green had previously advocated, seemed almost tailor-made to antagonize Richard Nixon. All the same, never again were the personal clashes of politicians ever as relevant to the conduct of the bi-lateral relationship, nor were they such poorly guarded secrets as the feud between Kennedy and Diefenbaker. Squabbling over Vietnam, troops for NATO, nuclear weapons and anti-nuclear-weapons weapons, and the status of communist China continued to rankle officials on both sides of the border. Through it all, the two militaries worked ever closer together, tourism continued unabated, the Auto Pact took the nations one large step closer to truly free trade, and the slow blurring of the border

continued. Though never tested to the extent it was in the fall of 1962, the bi-lateral relationship has remained strong.[446]

During those frightful days in October of 1962, the Canadian military stretched every definition to the maximum, and bent every rule to the breaking point, to put itself in a position to assist their much larger allies in the dreadful battle they feared was approaching. It is a terrible shame that all their hard work would not have mattered as much as a few token words of moral support spoken by Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and that the lack of such superficial assurances should have come to define Canada's response to the Crisis in the eyes of the United States. The personal relationship between John Diefenbaker and John Kennedy, well-studied in Canada by successive waves of scholarship, came close to poisoning the bi-lateral relationship between the two nations, and officials and officers on both sides of the border had to scramble under the flimsiest of pretexts to make up for the lack of decisive, productive leadership at the very top. The extent to which they were successful, and the continuing good will between the two nations despite occasional personality clashes amongst strong egos and serious political issues, is a testament to the long-standing, and perhaps unstoppable, drift of Canada and the United States towards ever-greater integration.

[446] During a recent private conversation with a former Canadian government official, speaking off the record, this writer was told that contrary to popular opinion and despite their obvious political differences, Jean Chretien and George W. Bush were quite fond of each other, as were their respective wives, though President Bush was less enthusiastic about Paul Martin.

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