

INTRODUCTION

Cold War concerns continued to dominate Canadian foreign policy during 1959, but the year was notable as a temporary thaw before the heightening of hostilities in 1960-62. The resignation of John Foster Dulles as American Secretary of State in April seemed to mark the beginning of a more relaxed era. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's September visit to the United States and the resulting "spirit of Camp David" were welcomed by members of the Department of External Affairs. Indeed, the main concern of senior officials was that the Americans might not attach enough importance to maintaining détente (Document 345). The reservations about many aspects of American policy which would become ever more pronounced in the next few years first clearly manifested themselves in 1959. In this regard, the appointment of Howard Green as Secretary of State for External Affairs in June (following the sudden death of Sidney Smith in March) marked an important turning-point. Green at first appeared an unusual choice for this post: though an extremely experienced politician who possessed Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's full confidence, he had little direct experience of the wider world. As journalists were quick to point out, he had not travelled outside North America since his service in the First World War. However, Green lost no time in establishing himself as a presence on the international scene. He made an address to the United Nations General Assembly in September, and in October he travelled to Europe, meeting with French President Charles de Gaulle and Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville in Paris (Documents 329-331) and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in London.

In his first few months as minister, Green decided that disarmament and the effects of nuclear radiation were two issues Canada should make its own, thus setting the stage for later controversies about the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Responses to Green and his agenda among members of the Department of External Affairs were mixed, but on the whole favourable. The Canadian ambassador in Washington, Arnold Heeney, considered that "Green, the most pleasant of good simple men, is an innocent abroad, and what is more, obstinate and underneath inclined to a sort of *pacific-isolationism*."¹ On the other hand, Charles Ritchie, Canada's representative at the United Nations, observed, "Those who think that they have got a nice tame Canadian in the new Minister are very much mistaken. He is a very shrewd politician. He is also admirable in his pursuit of objectives in which he tenaciously believes, particularly in the field of disarmament."² Basil Robinson, who acted as liaison between External Affairs and the Prime Minister, conceded that Green was sometimes "naïve" and "stubborn," but the new minister was also "serious and hard working and he knew how to make use of his department." Given the lack of "creative, resourceful" leadership in foreign policy from Diefenbaker, "the

¹ Arnold Heeney, *The Things That Are Caesar's: Memoirs of a Canadian Public Servant*, ed. Brian D. Heeney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 162. Emphasis in original.

² Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1946-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 162-63.