

officials in the Department of External Affairs were more cautious. "If the United States and Canadian Chiefs of Staff should agree on an integrated operational control of our air defences and the deployment of U.S. atomic units in Canada," worried Arnold Heeney, Canada's ambassador to Washington, "I wonder whether the Government would be as free as it should be to take decisions on the merits?" [Document 22]

The debate between the diplomats and the military simmered during the summer and fall of 1956 before Cabinet reluctantly agreed in January 1957 to accept American nuclear weapons with appropriate safeguards. The Department of External Affairs also insisted on safeguarding Canada's position in any integrated continental defence system. "Geography and our willingness to cooperate effectively in joint continental defence efforts," Léger argued, "give us a special right to demand closer consultation." [Document 46] The Department wanted to use the American interest in continental defence to detail Washington's obligations to consult its smaller ally, a position it finally forced on the Department of National Defence in February 1957. [Document 47] The compromise held up through the spring, but when the government was defeated in the June election, Cabinet declined to act and left the matter for the new ministry. [Document 51]

Ministers were increasingly wary of the growing American military presence in Canada. "It was unfortunate," one pointed out in Cabinet "that more and more U.S. forces were being stationed at bases on Canadian soil." [Document 115] Canadians too wondered about the costs and benefits of the close postwar security arrangements with the United States. In the spring of 1957, a U.S. Senate subcommittee on internal security revived the unsubstantiated charges of Communist subversion against Herbert Norman, Canada's Ambassador to Egypt. Acutely distressed at these renewed allegations, Norman committed suicide on April 4, 1957, igniting a firestorm of anti-American protest in Canada. The pressure on Pearson, who told Heeney that he "had never experienced an atmosphere so critical of the United States on all sides of the House of Commons and throughout the country," was intense. [Document 63] Ottawa protested in the strongest terms and sought firm assurances that any confidential information about Canadian citizens supplied to the United States would remain secret. When none was forthcoming, Ottawa threatened to cancel existing arrangements for the bilateral exchange of security information.

A growing number of increasingly testy economic issues also crowded the bilateral agenda in 1956-57. Canadian ministers and their officials continued to worry about Washington's aggressive use of the ill-famed Public Law 480 to sell heavily subsidized American wheat into Canadian markets. They also fretted about unrelenting Congressional demands for import restrictions on groundfish, oil, and alsike clover. Ottawa reacted with exceptional vigour when the White House decided to increase the tariff on lead and zinc, "a most serious breach in the determination of the administration to resist pressures for protection on important items for international trade." [Document 235]

The St. Laurent government was not deaf to the pleas for help from its own domestic interests. The 1956 budget, for instance, introduced controversial measures designed to protect the small Canadian magazine industry from American competition, prompting a sharp exchange of views with Washington. Cabinet was quick to help Premium Iron Ores Limited deal with its American tax problems, anxious to counter