

bi-polar world was undoubtedly the most important factor in the exceptional domestic consensus on foreign and defence policy which characterized the early years of the Cold War. In marked contrast to the pre-war situation, international questions tended to unite rather than divide Canadians. That exceptional degree of public support for the broad outlines of government policy enabled policy-makers to take initiatives and to make commitments which would have been politically impossible before the Second World War.

Perhaps no single involvement illustrates that point more vividly than Canada's role in the negotiation and implementation of the North Atlantic Treaty. A mere decade earlier, participation by Canada in a formal military alliance in peacetime would have been unthinkable, whatever the rationale. For the government which proposed such a radical departure from Canada's traditional stance, the political consequences then would have been disastrous. Even when the post-war negotiations were well advanced, there was some reluctance in Ottawa to focus too narrowly on collective security and some lingering nervousness about public attitudes. Those considerations, not always fully understood or accepted by Canada's principal negotiator, Wrong, or his counterparts in Washington, were factors in Ottawa's determination to secure Article II, which dealt with "economic collaboration." But the fundamental commitment implied by the signature of the treaty on April 4, 1949, was unmistakable and the public support for it unequivocal.

Seen in that light, the failure of Canada to assist in the Berlin airlift is especially remarkable. When Reid suggested reconsideration of this policy in mid-March, Heeney rejected the proposal with the lofty advice that the government "would not wish to raise this question now" (Document 428). But when the Cabinet next met, the Minister of National Defence, Brooke Claxton, raised precisely the prospect that Heeney had discounted (Document 430). With support from St. Laurent and Pearson, a review was initiated one week later. Before it was completed, however, the blockade was lifted. Curiously, one diplomat who was unimpressed by the practical impact of that breakthrough was Canada's senior representative in Berlin, Maurice Pope (Document 441).

Meanwhile, senior officials responsible for immigration in Ottawa were considering "a gradual pulling down of the barriers which keep Germans out" as part of the rehabilitation of Western Germany (Document 739). More generally, the Department of External Affairs reassessed Canada's "policy regarding the West German State" in late July (Document 1007). As another study commented in December, "the [Canadian] Government has supported efforts to bring the Federal Republic [of Germany] into the democratic community and has encouraged relations which would further our commercial interests in Germany." That also prompted a precise distinction between Canadian policy and that of the western occupying powers on the connection between "termination of the state of war" and "conclusion of a peace" (Enclosure to Document 1008).

Such subtle shadings and fine points of drafting were also vital aspects of the most important Commonwealth question in 1949, whether India should be allowed to remain in that organization after it adopted a republican constitution. As Canada's representative at the meeting of Commonwealth leaders in April, Pearson