

*Canadian
prejudice
against
fast-breeder
technology*

tional pride and international uncertainty, such as India's controversial explosion. (India has developed a high level of competence in some "elitist", specialized fields, which is counterbalanced by its difficulty with the techniques of mass production. In addition, most Western governments underestimate the important role that damage to pride and confidence during the imperial period still play in ex-colonial countries.)

While nuclear arsenals have not played a direct military role in the world since the end of the American monopoly, they have played an extremely important diplomatic one. The size of the Chinese arsenal, for instance, has never been considered as at all close to those of the United States or the Soviet Union. But China's position in the world reflects possession of nuclear weapons that cannot be ignored; it does not require great "over-kill" capacity for terrible retaliation to be possible.

If we tend to overlook the fact that far more people in the world have been killed since 1945 by conventional methods of warfare than died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we also overlook the extent to which fuel-short countries seeking nuclear supplies consider this search to be vital to their future. As a matter of policy, Canada is ardently opposed to any method of power-production in which plutonium is a large and growing by-product. This accounts for the strong Canadian prejudice against fast-breeder technology. To a country such as West Germany, however, development of precisely this method of power-production represents a possible escape from its dependence upon external energy supplies. The extent to which vital interests of friendly countries are involved has not played a large role in the formation of the Canadian policy on the export of nuclear fuels, except that it is considered to improve this country's bargaining position.

The Canadian approach suffers from the defect that in other countries it is likely to be construed as hard-boiled rather than hard-headed. It risks the creation of resentments that can be felt in many other ways, and it assumes for this country a position of moral superiority over countries with which we have otherwise close ties - West Germany, France and Japan. They would be unlikely to concede that our concern for the future of the world is superior to theirs. Even the Americans have warned us, politely but firmly, that if we, and they, hope to limit the forms of nuclear technology in the energy-deficient countries, reliability of supply is essential. At this point, rather than demonstrating reliability, we have arbitrarily cut off uranium exports in ways calculated to create an impression of unreliability. Why,

then, should the most important trading countries on the other side be prepared to give way to some of the points Canadian policy seeks to establish?

Article of faith

An underlying article of faith in Canadian nuclear policy is to be found in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is put to work, for instance, to justify our own sales of nuclear technology to unstable countries. Because they were prepared to adhere to the treaty, our officials have argued that our sales must be acceptable. This approach to the treaty, however, runs counter to the analysis of purposes that history is bound to make. It was not intended to reduce the risk of nuclear clear war; if both Israel and Syria, for example, were equipped with nuclear arsenals, it is no more likely that they would choose to employ them for mutual suicide than it was in the American-Russian case. If only one of those countries possessed nuclear weapons, the super-power sponsor of the other would threaten to arm it and the opposite super-power would curb its protégé. The true military risks would probably be considerably less than those that did exist in the tense period of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, but the Hungarian revolt of 1956 and the Cuban crisis of 1962 demonstrated that there were limits neither country would risk of stepping.

It is predictable that history will view the Non-Proliferation Treaty not as an idealistic instrument intended to reduce the risks of war but as an attempt by the super-powers to freeze an important aspect of the diplomatic status quo. The possession of even a small nuclear arsenal gives a nation a changed diplomatic voice. It leads to the re-emergence of great powers in a world of super-powers on one side and third-world powers on the other. China is the chief example, but the position of France in this context is not insignificant. In the latter case, much is heard of the matter now and then. That, however, is much more a function of the disappearance of General de Gaulle, his particular policies and of the emergence of more pressing problems than of any change in the underlying realities of diplomacy in the nuclear age.

In assessing the diplomatic and military role of nuclear weaponry, it should be at least as instructive to examine history to look at the normal human fears for the future. The United States has been more heavily engaged militarily since the Second World War than any other power. It has employed nuclear weapons without hesitation or compunction during the period of its monopoly. Subsequently it accepted severe