

such great importance to Canada should not be handled in this almost perfunctory manner" (Document 491). Finance Minister Donald Fleming agreed that "there was real substance in the present political and economic relationships between the UK and other Commonwealth countries." Accordingly, "there was a great responsibility on the UK in this matter" (Document 522). Following Fleming's lead, other representatives at the meeting of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council in Accra also called for more extensive consultations before a British decision was made. Although some Cabinet ministers felt Canada might be taking too strong a line, Diefenbaker and Drew continued to push for full information regarding U.K. intentions. British officials proved reluctant to supply it. Near the end of the year, Drew concluded there was "little doubt that the decision to join [the] European Community has already been made, subject only to refinement of detail, contrary to the numerous assurances which were given." Canada, he argued, had both sentimental and sound practical reasons to oppose Britain's course. "I suggest that as the country which in fact produced the concept of the modern Commonwealth in 1867, we have special reasons for being devoted to the maintenance and strengthening of [the] Commonwealth," he wrote (Document 534).

However, despite all these controversies and hints of trouble to come, in one area of major international political importance Canada worked constructively with the United States and the United Kingdom. Throughout 1960, External Affairs had resisted the suggestion that the I.C.S.C. for Laos should be reconvened in order to deal with the turbulent and increasingly violent situation in that country. Early in 1961 the Laotian government itself agreed to consider an Indian proposal on the subject. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Home, wrote to Green: "I think we are very much on the water-shed and must set things running towards a peaceful solution if they are not to turn towards a widening of the conflict" (Document 656). Green remained critical of the plan, noting that the I.C.S.C. had been created "to supervise and control an existing cease fire, not ... to negotiate [a new] one" (Document 658). The Americans, too, had reservations, but at a meeting in Washington, representatives of the three countries agreed on a plan of action. The commission was accordingly reconvened, and its members were sent to Laos for a preliminary assessment of the situation. Canada also took part in the international conference held in Geneva. Despite "heavy going" at the conference (Document 717), by the end of the year Green could congratulate the Canadian representatives on having secured terms of reference for the commission's future activities that safeguarded "the principles which we regard as important" (Document 719).

Although relations with the U.S. and the U.K. dominated Canadian foreign policy concerns during 1961, Ottawa was more anxious than ever before to forge strong connections with the developing world. Diefenbaker's reluctance to follow the American lead on Cuba stemmed in part from a concern over Canada's reputation in Latin America; his opposition to South Africa's racial policies reflected his desire to maintain good relations with the non-white nations of the Commonwealth. There were numerous other manifestations of this trend. An External Affairs departmental