

Diem, worked hard to undermine the international commission and foster an indefinite stalemate. As the prospect of a deadlock in Vietnam loomed, Canadian officials were forced to consider Canada's future role on the commissions. Their reassessment, which continued into 1956, was no easy task: "The unhappy dilemma in which we are placed is that there are abundant reasons for our seeking to get the Commissions out of Indochina as soon as possible but on the other hand it would be a terrible responsibility to break the delicate structure on which the peace of Asia might depend" (Document 640).

In contrast to the dangers that lurked in Asia, the prospects for peace and stability in Europe seemed more hopeful in 1955 than they had for a long time. The July summit meeting in Geneva, where American, French, British and Soviet leaders gathered for the first time since 1945, seemed to herald a period of reduced international tension. The respite was short-lived, and collapsed in the autumn of 1955 when the Foreign Ministers of the four Great Powers failed to agree on concrete measures to improve East-West relations. As the substantial collection of documents in the chapter on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) demonstrates, Canada paid close attention to these developments. The NATO consultations, which preceded both the summit and the disappointing Foreign Ministers' meeting, provided Ottawa with an opportunity to discuss and to influence (however slightly) Western strategy at an important point in the Cold War.

The NATO chapter also contains its share of material on more familiar subjects. Canada's determination to secure a voice in any United States decision to employ nuclear weapons reappears here in a new guise. The section on the Tripartite Alerts Agreement records the secret Anglo-American-Canadian search for an effective means of allied consultation in the event of a nuclear crisis. The chapter documents two other persistent Canadian preoccupations in the North Atlantic Alliance: non-military co-operation and mutual aid. In the spring of 1955, over the objections of his officials and fellow ministers, Pearson revived the question of non-military co-operation in an exercise that underlined the ambiguity surrounding Canada's attitude to the provisions of NATO's Article II, the so-called "Canadian article." Diminishing international tensions, a factor behind this initiative, also encouraged Ottawa to reduce its mutual aid contributions. But as the documents on the allocation of aircraft to Germany reveal, mutual aid was becoming a more complex business, involving an uneasy mixture of military, political, and commercial considerations.

Canada's perspective on the Soviet bloc's efforts to normalize relations with the West was unique. In May, a high-level Polish delegation arrived in Ottawa for bilateral trade discussions, a step leading to negotiations on a broad range of issues (Chapter V). More important, Pearson travelled to Moscow in October, becoming the first NATO Foreign Minister to visit the Soviet Union. The Canadian clearly enjoyed his encounter with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, whom he described "as blunt and volatile as only a Ukrainian peasant, turned one of the most powerful men in the world, can be" (Document 537). Even so, as the documentation on wheat sales to the Soviet Union and official visits from Communist countries demonstrate, Ottawa treated Moscow's advances with a great deal of caution and suspicion.

Canada's reserve was prudent. Moscow's overtures to the West were offset by the establishment of the Warsaw Pact (Document 545) and by Communist meddling in the