

Needless to say, this was in marked contrast to the following period.

Party Conflict and Dissension: 1958-1963

The major cause of party conflict over NATO arose as a result of the nuclear strategy adopted by the alliance and the question of Canada's role vis-à-vis this policy; but prior to 1959 there were only a few signs to indicate this would become controversial. Previously all parties had given at least qualified support to the NATO strategy of employing tactical nuclear weapons and on occasions when this subject could have been raised in the House of Commons there was no discussion.¹⁵ There were, however, signs that party positions would soon change. The resolution on foreign policy adopted by the CCF National Council in May, 1958 suggested "that the further distribution of nuclear weapons to the countries of NATO be stopped."¹⁶ This resolution marked the first real step away from the consensus on NATO. The framework for future CCF policy was presented to the Council in a paper prepared by Russell Bell, the Research Director, advocating a two part argument for the disengagement of forces in both Europes, and the denuclearization of NATO as the first step. According to Mr. Bell the concept of regional military alliances was "no longer valid in the context of today's military developments."

Thus while the CCF were having their first real doubts about NATO the Liberals, at their 4th National Convention in January of 1958, continued to support the "fullest Canadian participation in NATO," but advocated "more effective political consultation, economic co-operation and cultural exchanges." The Conservatives, for their part, announced the acquisition of the Bomarc 'B' to replace the Avro Arrow as the first of five weapons systems acquired that could employ nuclear warheads. (Others were the F-101B Voodoo, the F-104 Starfighter, the Lacrosse missile, and its replacement the Honest John rocket.) From the systems acquired it should have been apparent Canada would fulfill a nuclear role in both NORAD and NATO. Mr. Diefenbaker in his statement to the House on February 20, 1959 noted that "the full potential" of the Bomarc and Lacrosse missiles "is achieved only when they are armed with nuclear warheads." The Prime Minister went on to say that the Government was negotiating with the U.S. for the "acquisition of nuclear warheads."¹⁷ At this early stage of the debate the Liberals were still in favour of accepting the prevailing NATO strategy (tactical nuclear weapons), and Mr. Pearson stated that if the decision was made to acquire nuclear weapons then "the government must insist that any such weapons are under Canadian control and operation."¹⁸

By 1960 the picture had changed considerably. In the defence debate of August the Liberals reaffirmed their support for NATO, but now opted for a conventional Canadian role. Mr. Pearson stressed the need for a non-nuclear deterrent, and admitted his views on tactical nuclear weapons had changed.¹⁹ Here he was supported by members of the CCF who were only willing for Canada to remain in NATO as long as it worked toward disengagement in Europe and adopted a non-nuclear role. The CCF parliamentary party was supported at its National Convention of August 8-11, 1960 when the following resolution was passed: "Since NATO has