

APPENDIX II

Kenneth McNaught

NON-ALIGNMENT FOR CANADA

For a long time many people have argued that our membership in the NATO-NORAD military alliance system has acted as a break against serious Canadian diplomatic initiatives, especially if those initiatives would clearly offend the United States. Amongst the stock illustrations in support of this argument was the case of our non-recognition of China and our pusillanimity on the question of Chinese membership in the United Nations. Now that we have begun to negotiate the matter of recognition directly with the Chinese I do not doubt that the proponents of alliance loyalty will point to the Stockholm talks as proof that the alliance is really broad and tolerant and doesn't inhibit us at all. Because of its plausibility I should deal with this very current argument first.

The point about an initiative is that it is something that comes first, that it is something consciously designed to give a lead. Now, while one can only applaud the decision finally to make "honest women" of our wheat dealers one can hardly argue that with forty embassies established in Peking, including those of France and Sweden, and with substantial evidence that Italy is about to follow suit, we are taking a daring initiative. Indeed, to the skeptical eye of an historian who is painfully aware of the revised interpretations of events required from time to time as archives are belatedly opened to researchers, the whole picture lacks perspective. And even before the archives are open a little reflection can add perspective. For years we have listened to those who have been close to the East Block indicate, both implicitly and explicitly, that the reason we did not recognize China was that to do so would unnecessarily offend the United States. Again, as we review our role in the International Control Commission in Vietnam it becomes more and more clear that we accepted the job principally because the United States thought we would be the best representative of the West—that we would be a patsy for the Americans. In this context of occasions on which we have run interference (or information) for Washington our current approach to Peking—as an initiative—is unconvincing. Through the grisly years of escalating horror in Vietnam we served Washington on the ICC, we steadfastly boycotted Peking at the diplomatic level, and we even endorsed the American theory of intervention in Vietnam. Undoubtedly we practised quiet diplomacy and even intimated publicly that it would be useful to stop the bombing. Like Catherine the Great, during the eighteenth century partitions of Poland, we wept but we kept on taking.

What, then, is the context of our decision to negotiate the recognition of China? We do so in the environment created by acute political crisis in the United States. That crisis resulted directly from the insistent need to end the war in Vietnam. And any permanent settlement in Southeast Asia can scarcely be arranged if the United States continues its demand to maintain the faltering diplomatic ostracism of China. Thus, while Mr. McCloskey clucks disapprovingly in Washington, no one in Ottawa takes this as a serious signal to stop the play. Perhaps, but not necessarily, it would be too much to speculate that we had been quietly invited to make our move now. But certainly it would be too much to suggest that the move was a bold assertion of independence and proved that alliance membership does not inhibit us from pursuing policies strongly disapproved by the senior member.

Apart from the China question there remain in full force all the other illustrations of how our military alignment leads to inactivity on many worthwhile fronts and, at the same time, humiliates the Canadian people by associating them closely with some of the most detestable action in the contemporary world. From Greek repression to Portuguese imperialism to American slaughter in Vietnam—we are directly tied by the alliance system. Equally, by that system, we have prevented ourselves from exercising a freedom of action at the United Nations and on other fronts that might well have contributed to a reduction of international tensions. By loyally supporting the American claim that their nuclear superiority must be sustained if there is to be a "balance" of terror we have directly contributed to the continuing "imbalance" and to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. By declaring before the world that we believe we are defended by the American nuclear forces (and thus must concede their strategic demands) we have emasculated our support of a non-proliferation treaty. For how can we say to Israel, or India, or Egypt or anyone else that *they* should forswear nuclear weapons when at the same time we claim to bask in the protection of those very weapons—and add that they are absolutely essential to our security?

The biggest of the credibility gaps, and there are many, in our foreign-defence policies is that between our generally conceded knowledge that there *is* no defence in a nuclear war and our support of an alliance system founded on a dominant nuclear power. Since