

Acheson
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of military
approach
to strategy

Ernest Bevin, then British Foreign Secretary, as follows: "The emphasis being placed in these talks on the establishment of machinery for the solution of common economic and cultural problems . . . might inject considerable confusion in the international picture and slow the progress of the European nations toward union which they all believe is so essential." The Americans, on the other hand, supported the notion embodied in Article 2 of the Treaty that NATO should be a political and not simply a military mechanism. Even Dean Acheson, who created difficulties for us over Article 2 because of his apprehension about the effect on the passage of the North Atlantic Treaty through the Senate, recognized that a military approach to strategic planning was insufficient.

In his *Power and Diplomacy*, written in November 1957, Acheson left no doubt where he stood on this point:

To know less or be less prepared than our opponents could bring disaster. But this does not answer the question of where our interest lies, nor can this be decided from what is sometimes called a "purely military point of view". This phrase is not synonymous with the best military opinion. It usually means a point of view which assumes the willingness and ability of a population to fight, and be prepared to fight, without concern for any consequences except those which it is hoped to inflict upon the enemy. It describes a method of attempting to exclude political and psychological factors from a calculation. In choice of strategy and weapons, no method is more erroneous or disastrous, since the excluded factors have a profound effect upon the political cohesion of a coalition.

If this line of reasoning had been followed by Acheson's successors, the alliance of which the U.S. had been the leader from the outset would not have been subjected to such severe strains and such increasing militarization of its policies. Instead, leadership passed to the Dulles brothers, who ran the State Department and the CIA under Eisenhower. The fracturing of the Communist monolithic structure had already begun with Tito's break from Moscow, but it was not until the Seventies, after its costly defeat in Vietnam, that the U.S. learnt that it could not, as Leonard Mosley puts it, "singlehandedly roll back the Soviet armies in Eastern Europe, restore Chiang Kai-shek to mainland China or keep Ho Chi Minh out of South Vietnam".

Unilateralism, based upon divergent interpretations of the strategy of our ad-

versaries, naturally put increasing strains on the political cohesion of the alliance. Pearson writes in his memoirs: "The difficulty of co-ordinating policy through NATO in defence matters, when decision-making power rested in the hands of one member, was most clearly shown in nuclear matters." In a talk with John Foster Dulles in Paris in December 1954, Pearson urged two things: "First, by continuous consultation keep our policies in alignment, especially if the political situation should deteriorate and, secondly, agree, if possible, on 'alert' procedures so that the military would know what had to be done in an emergency."

Pearson perception

It is interesting that Pearson had already perceived the vital change wrought in Canadian security problems by the advent of nuclear weapons and the increasingly efficient methods of delivery by rockets, missiles, submarines and bombers. He writes in his memoirs:

As I saw it, with the threat of nuclear bombs (and later missiles), defence of the North American Arctic became as much a part of the Alliance's responsibility as the defence of Europe. The Treaty was, after all, more than European and I believed that the North American sector should be considered an integral part of the North Atlantic defence structure. Any continental command should be an alliance responsibility. It seemed to me, for example that Norwegian contingents should operate in our Arctic just as Canadian forces occasionally took part in exercises in Norway. Canada's contribution to Arctic defence, therefore, should be accepted on the same basis as her contribution to overseas defence.

This was not to be. Instead, as John Gellner put it in a *Globe and Mail* article last June:

At the end of the fifties . . . Canada accepted the strike role for the air component of its NATO forces in central Europe. 'Strike' in NATO parlance means attack with nuclear weapons. The idea then propounded at SACEUR headquarters was that a limited war on the continent could be fought with both conventional and tactical nuclear weapons and, even more preposterous, that the latter could be carried by strike aircraft parked unprotected in time of peace on huge airfields the location of which were well known to the potential enemy. Fortunately, this mission was abandoned in 1972, but not before an unconscionable amount of time and ef-