

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War in Asia continued to demand the sustained attention of Canadian policy-makers throughout 1955. Early in the year, the simmering dispute between Communist China and the Republic of China over Formosa (Taiwan) and the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu threatened to escalate into a direct Sino-American confrontation. As the United States prepared to defend Chinese Nationalist forces in Formosa against Communist attack, Ottawa recoiled from the prospect of renewed conflict in Asia. The crisis raised fundamental questions about the nature and limitations of Canada's Cold War alliance with Washington. For that reason, the documentation in Chapter VII traces in some detail Canadian efforts to mediate between the two antagonists, to restrain the United States and, finally, to distance Canada from the American crusade.

The crisis led the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, down interesting pathways—some unusual, others more familiar. American nuclear posturing during the confrontation with Peking forced the minister and his department to confront the difficult issues associated with modern nuclear tactics (Documents 736 to 740), and reinforced the department's determination to come to terms with the constraints on Canadian foreign and defence policy in the nuclear age (Document 789). More immediately, the crisis encouraged Pearson to renew his search for some method to admit Communist China to the United Nations (Document 748).

Formosa dominated discussion at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in February, where Pearson accompanied Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent at the invitation of the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. Pearson's entertaining account of the social, political and diplomatic intrigues of this international gathering (Document 241) belied its importance. In a reprise of their effort to end the Korean War during the 1953 Prime Minister's conference, Eden and Pearson joined the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in an unsuccessful search for a strategy to defuse the Formosan crisis.

Nehru's prominent role at the Prime Ministers' conference was noted in Ottawa, and prompted Canadian officials to conclude "that the Commonwealth ... is to a very considerable extent dependent on the importance the Indians attach to it" (Document 246). This view is reflected in the large number of documents on Canada's relations with India reprinted in the chapter on the Commonwealth. Although these pages cover the normal range of aid-related topics that has characterized Commonwealth relations in recent volumes of *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, it is dominated by documentation on Canada's decision to give India an experimental nuclear reactor. Intended in part to secure New Delhi's support in the Cold War, this gesture also represented an early effort to commercialize Canada's nuclear power industry (Documents 254 to 285). Indeed, economic considerations quickly came to drive Canadian policy in this field.

Despite Ottawa's efforts to reinforce its ties with New Delhi, Indo-Canadian relations deteriorated in 1955, strained by differences over the role of the three international control commissions established in 1954 to safeguard the fragile peace in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (Chapter VII). The commissions also complicated Canada's relations with its closest Western allies, the United Kingdom and the United States. In Laos, Canada came under strong pressure from Washington and London to bring the Pathet Lao to task for refusing to abide by the terms of the Geneva Agreement. In Vietnam, the American-sponsored President of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh