

Introduction

1. Although it is not possible at this stage to foretell the exact conditions under which Canadian-United States defence relations will operate in the post-war period, enough data are available to indicate the broad outline of the problems which Canada will be required to face.
2. It may be assumed that international problems arising from purely Canadian-United States relations will cause no irreconcilable conflict of policies and that therefore any dangerous conflict of policies could only be occasioned through differing attitudes towards events in the rest of the world.
3. It is probable that after the war, a world security organization will be set up. Whether or not this is so it may be assumed that for several years there will be no direct military threat to the North American continent in view of the exhaustion and war weariness of the nations of the world.
4. Nevertheless the victor nations will have to retain considerably larger armed forces than before the war to police Germany and Japan, and to provide a reserve capable of maintaining peace, by force if necessary. The policy of any future world organization for the preservation of peace is certain to be based on military action as a last resort, but to be effective this instrument must be ready for instant use when required. There appears to be general agreement that the maintenance of adequate forces by the victor nations must be an essential element in the world security system.
5. It may be assumed, therefore, that, although there will be virtually no risk of general war for some years, military preparation within the United Nations will not be allowed to fall into neglect, and that the United States will not again allow its military power to become so far out of step with its world interests as before this present war.

Current Situation

6. In the past, Canadian "defence" planning has been based on a strong British Navy, and on the premise that the United States would be a benevolent neutral if not an ally in the event of Canada being at war. Developments of this war have not changed these two fundamentals, but other factors have come into being necessitating a review of certain aspects of Canada's defence planning particularly vis-a-vis the United States.
7. Because of the belief in the immunity of attack to the North American continent provided by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the control exercised by the British and United States Navies, planning for defence against attack on the United States or Canada was considered of minor importance. Both countries could count on adequate time to prepare for war after the actual outbreak of hostilities. While these conditions held, there was no liaison between Canada and the United States for mutual defence planning - there was no apparent need for it.
8. The present war has changed these conditions, and the defence problems of Canada and the United States must now be considered as inter-dependent. While it may be held that the east and west coastal areas are still relatively immune from major attack (as long as the British and United States Navies are in being, which will continue to be a basic assumption), the development of air power has diminished the physical isolation of the North American

Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee,
Volume XVI, July - December 1944, (R.G. 2, 7c, Volume 16)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA