

MILITARY SECURITY - THE NATION'S
LIFE INSURANCE

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individuals readily offer us a panacea for all our problems. I am thinking at the moment of a book published recently...advocating that Canada should withdraw from NATO and the joint defence of the North American continent under NORAD. One newspaper, in its editorial column, described the thesis of this book as being unrealistic, dishonest and unjust. The editorial went on to say that certainly it is true that no one could win a nuclear war. That is the very truth that preserves the peace, for the only defence in the nuclear age is the knowledge that nuclear retaliation would hurt an aggressor as seriously as he hurts his victim. Under these circumstances, nuclear war is only likely to start if one side manages some technological breakthrough which, while ensuring its own survival, would spell certain defeat for its enemy. It follows, therefore, that the free world has a vital interest in America's strength. To talk of unilateral disarmament is to be utterly unrealistic. Only if both sides disarmed simultaneously and with adequate safeguards would real improvement be made. Above all, it is nonsense to think that Canada could remain neutral and untouched by a future war. Geographically, it is located between the Soviet Union and the United States. Whether an ally or neutral, it would certainly be in the nuclear firing-line.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

"Recently we heard a number of other proposals that would involve a drastic change in Canada's defence policy. One of these was that Canada should withdraw, to a large extent, from the active air defence of Canada and the North American continent. This proposal, it seems to me, leaves a number of important questions unanswered. Do the proponents of this plan assume that there is no longer a bomber threat to this continent or do they envisage a situation which would call for the establishment of United States air bases across Canada in lieu of Canadian squadrons? Another question comes to mind in that these United States aircraft would, of course, be more effective if they were armed with nuclear weapons; do they suggest that the United States squadrons should be equipped with nuclear weapons? This must be the case, although I find it somewhat paradoxical in that the same people have fiercely opposed such weapons for the RCAF. Do they also suggest that the stationing of United States aircraft in Canada would be more in keeping with Canadian sovereignty?"

"Another important question arises in connection with Canada withdrawing from an active air-defence role. Do these people really believe that Canada would be entitled to a strong voice in the determination of the defence of the North American continent if we

should withdraw our contribution to its air defence?"

"Then, of course, we hear other voices which propose that, since there is no real defence at this time against the increasing threat of the ICBM, Canada should have no defence at all, and should throw in the sponge right here and now. Do these individuals seriously maintain that, if the United States were attacked, Canada would not be involved and Canadian territory and the Canadian people would not suffer the slightest scratch? These are only a few of the questions that come to my mind and I can assure you that there are many, many more arising from these rather peculiar and often contradictory proposals.

"As one commentator has suggested, once we have cut ourselves adrift from our present allies, the neutrals would rapidly lose interest in us. Devoid of our unique influence in Washington and deprived of the sources of intelligence which make us one of the better-informed middle powers, we should be relegated to the rear ranks of the neutral chorus. At the same time, no country of remotely comparable power has Canada's opportunity to exercise influence in Washington and NATO. The responsible player in the international game makes the most of the cards he has been dealt. We should invite jeers rather than cheers if we attempted to play India's game with Canada's hand.

ARM-CHAIR STRATEGISTS

"In all frankness I must say that I am also more than a little weary of the rantings of some of the arm-chair strategists, or, rather, escapists, who are forever appearing in print at the slightest provocation. I might add that it would probably be a good thing if they did some hard thinking before they sent their letters off to their local editors. Please do not misunderstand me, I am not one who is opposed to controversy about defence matters. Surely if there were no controversy it would mean that our country was stagnating. However, I do think that we should stop kidding ourselves about Canada and look at the facts. We Canadians by geography, by culture, by tradition and by our very sense of freedom are firmly committed to a contribution to the defence of the democratic world. It seems to me that there is very little point hiding our heads in the sand and expecting someone else to do our job for us.

"Of course there may have to be changes from time to time in the structure and composition of NATO. Of course there may have to be changes in the part that Canada will play in this alliance. However, this is no reason for Canadians to say that there is nothing that we can do in defence of the Western world and the North American continent. What we must do is look at the whole picture and decide what we can do best and then go ahead and make our contribution. Isn't this the very purpose of an organization like NATO?..."