

the two tasks separately if this were more convenient.

One sometimes hears the argument that U.S.-Canadian defence co-operation means in practice that the United States calls the tune and Canada goes along. This is said in particular of the only wholly-integrated common organization, the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD). What happened at the peak of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 is invariably cited as an example of the dire consequences that ensue from the integration of the forces of two partners so unequal in strength. In fact, the raising on October 22 of the state of readiness of the NORAD forces to the third rung of the five-rung ladder of alert conditions (Defcon 3) was merely one of the moves in the game — frightening at the time but fascinating in retrospect — of pressures and counter-pressures that was played during the crisis. The Canadian Government approved of that move only two days later, on October 24, when the purpose of it had already been accomplished. In practice, this delay was of no consequence. The then Minister of National Defence, Douglas Harkness, has since made public the whole story of what happened in those critical days. With his consent, but without an announcement, portions of the RCAF and of the RCN (which was not then under integrated command and thus not affected by the NORAD decision) were put on an alert state equivalent to that under Defcon 3. Thus, in terms of military preparedness, the same result was achieved in Canada, where, for political reasons, the matter was handled quietly, as in the United States, where, by design, to impress upon the adversary that Washington meant business, the NORAD alert was announced with a flourish of trumpets. Far from proving that U.S.-Canadian defence co-ordination had failed in time of crisis, the incident showed that it worked very well, and without interfering with the political process.

It may be worth while mentioning that the U.S. components of NORAD were put on alert (with all other American forces) for a somewhat similar purpose on October 25, 1973, in connection with events in the Middle East. The Canadian component of NORAD did not follow suit, nor did anybody expect it to. Defence co-ordination simply does not mean subordination.

*Same results
achieved
in Canada
by quiet means*

Pressures exist

This is not to say that pressures are being brought to bear within the joint North American defence setup, and understandably — more often by the U.S. side, but mainly over operational and organizational matters. Canadian responsibility for the security of the glacis "Fortress North America" demands a certain level of activity and requires certain kinds and quantities of military equipment. As we noted earlier, much of that equipment is "double-tasked", but there are items the Canadian Forces would probably not need if their role on this continent were a purely national one. There is thus always the question of how much must be done for the common purpose, and with what. In this respect, we are even now faced with a major problem. For good reasons, mainly connected with technological progress on the other side and the need to save money (power (always a scarce commodity in a volunteer services) on ours, NORAD planning on supplementing, and perhaps later on, largely replacing, the present fixed, land-based NORAD early-warning and control system with a mobile, airborne one (AWACS). This calls for a large-scale remodelling of the whole defence setup, not least for the purchase of a great deal of new, expensive equipment. The Americans seem inclined to adopt the new system; prototype AWACS aircraft are already flying and, of the other components of the system, the two principal — the over-the-horizon back-scatter radar (OTH-B) and the improved interceptor fighter (IMI) — are in the trial stage. We should do well to go along, but, with a huge expenditure involved, is this possible in these times of financial austerity? And, if we do not go along, what will happen to NORAD as an effective military instrument, an important element in the general deterrent system?

These are practical questions of the kind that arise in connection with joint North American defence. That there should be co-ordinated action is not an issue. The joint defence of North America has been a permanent feature of U.S.-Canadian relations, solidly entrenched because unavoidable and not permitting any "Third Option", for close to four decades now.