

This means forgoing the luxury of making any more perfectionist speeches.²⁶

This difference in approach was so profound that Mackenzie King refused to meet Evatt to discuss their views on the great powers' efforts to secure a veto in the Security Council. Instead, he sent his heir apparent, the stately and dignified minister of justice, Louis St. Laurent. The meeting was unsuccessful. Evatt considered St. Laurent "a pawn in a move to defeat the Australian case" and dismissed him as "an American stooge."²⁷

The bilateral relationship remained tense during the immediate postwar period. This partly reflected the disruptive influence of Evatt, who continued to irritate Canadian diplomats and politicians. His success at pressing Australia's claim to the "Commonwealth" seat on the U.N.'s first Security Council in 1946 was particularly galling. More significantly, this tension reflected very different security concerns. Australia, haunted by the spectre of a reconstructed Japan, was anxious to press ahead with a peace settlement that would remove this threat. At a conference in Canberra in September 1947 it sought the support of its Commonwealth partners to push the process ahead. Ottawa, however, was dismayed by the Australian bid to refashion a Commonwealth bloc. Washington was almost certain to resent the Australian demarche, which seemed likely to jeopardize Anglo-American cooperation as the cold war erupted in Europe. This sharp geographic difference in focus, which only increased in 1948 when Canada joined in the discussions that resulted in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), diminished the possibility of bilateral cooperation. Indeed, by the late 1940s, relations were so strained that they became the object of gentle derision in Ottawa. After a meeting with Princess Elizabeth and the infant Prince Charles, Lester Pearson confessed to his diary the "hope that relations . . . were not further disturbed by the fact that I was able to make the baby laugh while [J.B.] Chifley [Curtin's successor as prime minister] was not."²⁸

The triumph of communism in China and the outbreak of war along the Korean Peninsula in June 1950 transformed the postwar landscape. The cold war spilled beyond its European origins and emerged as a global phenomenon with a unique Asian dimension. Once again, Australian and Canadian troops found themselves fighting together, this time in Korea under the auspices of the United Nations. But good relations remained elusive. The defeat of Chifley's Labour government and the election of Robert Menzies' conservative coalition threatened to make things worse. Ottawa worried that the new government's aggressive anti-communism and its increasingly suspicious attitude towards Indonesia might inhibit the West's ability to secure cold war allies among Asia's newly independent states.²⁹ Australia was equally critical of Canada's cautious approach to the desperate challenges facing Asia. Percy Spender, the coalition's first minister of external affairs, held Canada partly responsible for the