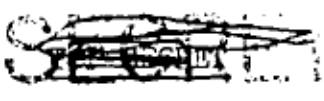


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March 2, 1959

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C. A. H.

To: The Acting Secretary
Through: S/S *[initials]*
From: EUR - Livingston T. Merchant
Subject: Canadian Attitudes toward U.S. Politico-Military Policy

Downgraded To: SECRET CONFIDENTIAL
EO 11652: XGDS @ 2 @ 4
Authorized By: H. D. Brewster
August 4, 1975 *[initials]*

On several occasions recently high Canadian officials have indicated an unrealistic tendency toward softness in their attitude toward the USSR. One manifestation has been over the development of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to attack by the USSR. This difference in attitude between Canadian political officials and our own is one which must be reckoned with in the coming months and which we should endeavor to modify as the occasion arises.

At the meeting in Paris last December 15 of the US-Canada Ministerial Committee on Joint Defense the Canadian Government showed us a draft statement relating to the acquisition and control of nuclear weapons which was somewhat modified and delivered in Parliament a fortnight ago. The Canadians did not accept the Secretary's suggestion that it be specified that nuclear weapons were being acquired for deterrence as well as defense.

Since then the U.S. has asked approval for NORAD training exercises this spring involving a relatively large number of overflights of Canadian territory by planes armed with nuclear weapons. Norman Robertson, Canadian Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, told Mr. Willoughby (BNA) in Ottawa that the request was causing problems at Cabinet level. On February 27 Ambassador Heeney elaborated, in a conversation with me, that Canadian officials were worried about the timing and possible implications of an extensive exercise of this nature while the Berlin situation was acute.

Last week Ambassador Heeney spelt out more explicitly the apprehensions of Canadian officials in connection with a briefing which I gave him on the Berlin situation (Memorandum of Conversation, (attached) February 27). I explained that if our communications with Berlin were severed by force after the Soviets turned the autobahn check

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points over to the East Germans one of our next steps, coincident with diplomatic efforts, might be to increase the state of readiness of our armed forces in ways that would be clearly apparent to Soviet intelligence. Ambassador Heeney indicated considerable concern at this prospect, questioning whether such action, considered in conjunction with SAC bases surrounding the USSR, might not lead the Soviets to attack. He suggested that the Soviets might misread our intentions and believe that we were actually preparing for a nuclear attack on the USSR. Ambassador Heeney feels that Khrushchev is particularly dangerous because he is emotional and that his emotionalism might lead him to take irrational action.

We discussed the general question of tactics at some length. I told Ambassador Heeney that I felt very strongly that the danger of war would be reduced in direct relation to the firmness and unity of purpose demonstrated by the West. I said that I was convinced that the Soviets know the US well enough to be sure, especially as long as Eisenhower is President, that we could not launch a nuclear attack on them.

Ambassador Heeney said that he had consulted with his Minister, Smith, and Bryce, Secretary of the Cabinet among others, and implied that he was reflecting their views as well as his own. He asked that parts of the above be left "off the record" of our meetings and therefore no direct reference should be made to the above.

Copies to: G - Mr. Murphy
RA - Mr. Timmons
W

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EUR:BNA:WWilloughby:smw