

The North Atlantic Triangle and North Atlantic Treaty: A Canadian Perspective on the ABC Security Conversations of March–April 1948

Hector Mackenzie
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa

Abstract

This article examines the secret “security conversations” between the USA, Britain and Canada that took place in Washington DC between 22 March and 1 April 1949. These “ABC” talks produced a document known as the “Pentagon Paper” which played an important part in the origins of NATO. For reasons of both foreign policy and domestic politics the “Pentagon Paper” was portrayed at the time as essentially an American document but in fact it had been considerably influenced by Lester Pearson, representing Ottawa, as well as by Gladwyn Jebb and the British Foreign Office. The ABC security talks therefore provide an example of the significance of the North Atlantic Triangle in the immediate post-war period that witnessed the emergence of NATO as a response to Soviet Communism

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of John Bartlet Brebner’s classic study, *North Atlantic Triangle*, sub-titled “the interplay of Canada, the United States and Great Britain.” It is eloquent testimony to the lasting impact of *North Atlantic Triangle* that its assessment of the trilateral relationship continues to be discussed, though the organizers of the panel in which this paper was originally presented side-stepped the question of the triangle’s utility as an explanatory image by entitling the session “Canada and the Anglo-American special relationship.” In fact, each member of the triangle understandably and perhaps justifiably has believed that it has had a “special relationship” with each of the others, with or without the involvement of the third party.¹

Brebner postulated the existence of a North Atlantic Triangle largely on the basis of developments long before the outbreak of the Second World War. However, the completion of the manuscript in wartime and its publication shortly after victory in Europe undoubtedly reinforced the impression of its

readers that collaboration by these intimate allies to defeat common foes demonstrated the validity of the notion as well as the strength of their alliance. Although the “triangular interplay” of the pre-war years was aptly described by Brebner as “perplexing,” the wartime experience offered abundant examples of trilateral partnership.² Yet, for reasons unanticipated by Brebner but linked closely to the breakdown of the broader wartime alliance, the best evidence for the existence and importance of a North Atlantic triangle may have come after publication of book, in the early years of the cold war.

Two gatherings in the late 1940s merit close attention as manifestations of the significance of the North Atlantic triangle. One was well known at the time, while the other was kept secret for nearly thirty years. The publicized meeting involved the treasury ministers for the three countries, who met in Washington in September 1949 to deal with yet another difficulty in exchange relations between sterling and dollar currencies. One impact of their discussions (or more accurately of the problem that dominated their agenda) was evident immediately, as the British pound and the Canadian dollar were both devalued against the American dollar. More discreetly, the ministers and their advisers discussed a wide range of fundamental issues in their international economic relations. Though the conclusions reached privately by the participants did not necessarily foster confidence in future harmony in finance and trade, the fact that representatives of America, Britain and Canada—the “ABC” countries—had gathered in Washington so deliberately to bridge differences was justifiably interpreted by observers as proof that the partnership forged over the years and tested so recently in war had not been dissolved.³

This paper focusses instead on the other “ABC” talks, which were shrouded in secrecy. These “security conversations” took place from 22 March to 1 April in the Pentagon.⁴ Following soon after the signature of the Brussels Treaty that confirmed “Western Union” and preceding by nearly three months the ambassadorial meetings that ultimately produced the North Atlantic Treaty, the ABC talks generated a document known as the “Pentagon Paper.” That text arguably served as guidance or a template for the later formal accord. Even so, as recently as 1989, the official account of its own origins published by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation did not even acknowledge the existence of the ABC meetings, let alone take into account their impact.⁵ The on-line version, last up-dated in October 2002, devotes even less attention than its printed predecessor to “the origins of the alliance” and it so fudges its language when referring to that “process” that it neither admits nor denies that the ABC talks took place.⁶

As others have noted, the attempt to keep this development secret from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the unmentioned but obvious threat to the collective security of the potential members of the alliance, failed miserably. The second secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, Donald Maclean, assiduously kept notes and prepared reports for Moscow as well as for London. However, it is not obvious that the USSR took advantage of its remarkable knowledge.⁷ Much more successful was the effort to keep the American public and the Senate (and necessarily therefore the rest of the world) in the dark. That secrecy enabled the administration of President Harry S Truman to maintain the fiction, necessary for political purposes, that a resolution in the Senate introduced by Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, inspired rather than simply endorsed or advanced this project.⁸

Unsurprisingly, there are considerable national differences with respect to the depiction of the negotiations leading to NATO. In the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty has been seen generally as a logical development from positions adopted, and speeches delivered at key junctures, by President Truman, Secretary of State George Marshall and his successor, Dean Acheson, as well as by Senator Vandenberg and others.⁹ In this telling of the story, the emphasis has been placed on a critical shift in American policy within the context of the onset of the cold war. Lingering Congressional sensitivity about prior “conversations” involving officials from the Truman administration with counterparts from the British and Canadian governments may explain why the ABC talks were not disclosed until 1974, when documents surrounding them, including minutes of the meetings and the “Pentagon Paper,” were published in the series *Foreign Relations of the United States*.¹⁰

Perhaps because so much was written about the origins of NATO, including memoirs and biographies as well as monographs, before the disclosure of the ABC talks, most analyses, even later, have tended to neglect or overlook the initial tripartite discussions. None of those who met in the Pentagon for eleven days in March and April 1948 lived long enough to discuss their participation frankly and completely in their memoirs, while colleagues who viewed that work more critically from outside the room have tended not to highlight their accomplishments nor to stress the contents and impact of the “Pentagon Paper.”¹¹ This overall assessment was well entrenched before the ABC “conversations” were documented and subsequent analysis has tended to follow the earlier lines of treatment.¹² Not surprisingly, there is still a strong tendency in American accounts to stress the transformation in American foreign policy and consequently the importance of Congressional approval or disapproval

of specific clauses in the eventual treaty. As a result, the ABC talks receive considerably less attention than the subsequent ambassadorial conversations. Even a study of "The Origins of NATO" by the Office of the Historian of the Department of State, which was published twenty-five years after the same unit documented the ABC talks, employed language that minimized the contribution of British and Canadian participants to the contents of the "Pentagon Paper." In effect, the fiction that it was an American document was maintained. By contrast, the same text offers a careful analysis of the Vandenberg Resolution as well as of the internal debate in the Department of State over the alliance.¹³

A British diplomat, Sir Nicholas Henderson, has briefly acknowledged the importance of the preliminary discussions. His book, *The Birth of NATO*, was based on a confidential summary of the sequence of negotiations leading to the treaty that he had prepared immediately afterward. However, the emphasis in his narrative may have been affected by the fact that he replaced Donald Maclean (in only one of Maclean's reporting relationships). Thus, Henderson was not directly involved in the ABC talks. In his account, Henderson attributes the drafting exclusively to Gladwyn Jebb of the Foreign Office and Jack Hickerson of the State Department, without mentioning the third member of the drafting sub-committee, Lester B. Pearson, Canada's Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, nor Ted Achilles, Hickerson's productive subordinate.¹⁴ Most British studies, for understandable reasons, stress the initiatives taken with courage and resolve by the redoubtable British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, first with Western Union and then with NATO – not only his public speeches but also his private discussions with Secretary of State Marshall and French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault. At that political level of analysis, the critical influences concern not only the impact of Bevin's interventions on American and European attitudes but also the need to persuade colleagues in the British government and to deal with critics in the Labour Party.¹⁵ Those interpretative themes were not significantly altered by the disclosure of the ABC talks.

In Canada, much heed was paid then and since to the succession of speeches by Canadian diplomats and politicians that contended that the United Nations Security Council could not meet the needs of collective security and that a regional pact consistent with the charter of the United Nations might be necessary to counteract the growing menace of the USSR. These efforts at public persuasion have been dubbed the "Canadian crusade."¹⁶ Canadian commentators have especially noted the impact of remarks by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St.

Laurent respectively before and after the ABC talks. The latter's address to the Canadian House of Commons has also been acknowledged in British and American accounts as a timely nudge in the direction of a military alliance as opposed to a unilateral American commitment to the defence of western Europe.¹⁷

The most extensive accounts by Canadians of the negotiations leading to the North Atlantic Treaty were both written after the disclosure of the ABC talks. In part for that reason, as well as because these "conversations" cast Canada and its diplomatic representatives in leading parts, the tripartite talks have been examined more closely by a diplomatic participant, Escott Reid, and a scholar, James Eayrs, in their studies of Canada's involvement in the founding of NATO.¹⁸ Later still, the Canadian diplomatic record was published, which shed additional light on the meetings in the spring of 1948, most notably through the lengthy commentaries by the principal Canadian participants.¹⁹ Without any slight to his considerable engagement in the process and his magisterial review of the negotiations, one should note that Reid was in Ottawa, not Washington, during the ABC talks and that he often advocated positions, then and later, that were rejected or qualified by his superior, Pearson, or by Canada's ambassador to the United States, Hume Wrong, both of whom were present in the Pentagon. As a consequence, Reid's assessments of the recommendations arising from the ABC talks and their significance in relation to the subsequent treaty, which have done so much to shape Canadian interpretations of these events, highlighted later phases, when his influence may have been greater.²⁰

In other words, the importance assigned to the ABC talks tends to reflect personal as well as national perspectives, with none of the published accounts providing a frank appraisal by a direct participant.²¹ Canadian commentators have been understandably more keen than their American or British counterparts to highlight the initial tripartite meetings as these assigned a more prominent role to Canada, much as the image of the North Atlantic Triangle has enhanced Canadian prestige by depicting Canada in partnership with the United States and the United Kingdom. As with other questions or topics, the North Atlantic Triangle offers a preferable image from a Canadian viewpoint to the alternative notion of an exclusive "special relationship" between Britain and the United States. Particularly in Canadian accounts, the ABC talks have been vital to any linkage between the North Atlantic Triangle and the North Atlantic Treaty. Moreover, as the analysis which follows suggests, the ABC talks merit attention for helping to lay the groundwork for the North Atlantic Treaty.²²

While the ABC meetings may not have been well known, the circumstances that prompted the American, British and Canadian governments to consult about collective security were certainly obvious. Quite apart from the general disquiet about the breakdown of the wartime alliance, the pervasive pessimism about the capacity of the United Nations and the unease about escalating international tensions, there was a series of specific developments that convinced leaders of the three countries of the need for collaborative action. A crude coup in Czechoslovakia heralded a consolidation of the Soviet Union's dominance of central and eastern Europe. The treaty extracted from Finland, particularly when viewed in conjunction with efforts at intimidation of Norway, suggested a threat to Scandinavia. Fundamental disagreement over the future of Germany, which had broken up the most recent meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, rekindled anxieties about the German economy and access to West Berlin. Though the Marshall Plan promised a significant boost to the prospects for west European reconstruction and recovery, the economic, social and political disarray there seemed to provide fertile ground for the growth of support for Communist parties, notably in Italy, where an election was in the offing, and France, which was afflicted by doubts and divisions left over from the second world war. In other words, there was a sense among the governments and peoples of the three leading western nations from the victorious wartime alliance that something must be done to respond effectively to the direct and indirect challenges posed by Russia in what was becoming known as the cold war.²³ As the world divided, the values and interests shared by the countries of the North Atlantic Triangle fostered a common sense of purpose.

Although the ABC talks may be interpreted as an articulation of the North Atlantic Triangle, the initiative began as an expression of the Anglo-American "special relationship" and it awkwardly cut across a simultaneous approach by the British and French foreign ministers for consultations between the Brussels Treaty powers and the United States. In response to the Soviet threat to Norway, the British Embassy in Washington conveyed Bevin's view that "the most effective course would be to take very early steps, before Norway goes under, to conclude under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations a regional Atlantic Approaches Pact of Mutual Assistance, in which all the countries directly threatened by a Russian move to the Atlantic could participate, for example the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Eire, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, France (and Spain, when it has a democratic regime)." Such a pact would complement the existing Western Union and an anticipated "Mediterranean security system." Accordingly, the British and American governments "should study without any delay" the development of "an Atlantic security system" so as to "inspire the necessary confidence to consolidate the

West against Soviet infiltration” and thereby “remove temptation” from the USSR to test western resolve.²⁴ Marshall promptly approved Anglo-American “joint discussions on the establishment of an Atlantic security system.”²⁵ Although the documents did not refer to Canadian participation, the British Ambassador, Baron Inverchapel, “had spoken of it verbally to [Robert] Lovett [Under-Secretary of State]” when they met and the inclusion of Canada, which Lovett welcomed, was subsequently cleared with Marshall.²⁶ The involvement of Canadian representatives made sense, not only in light of the common outlook of the three countries but also because Canada’s contribution of armed forces and resources to the victorious alliance in the Second World War was exceeded only by the United States, the USSR and the United Kingdom and it was already assisting the recovery and reconstruction of western Europe materially. Both British and American policy-makers viewed Canadian participation in the proposed deliberations as logical and beneficial.

Before the talks began, Canadian principals made informal soundings with American and British counterparts, particularly about the form of security arrangement and potential membership. From Hickerson, Wrong and Tommy Stone, the Minister in the Canadian Embassy in Washington, learned a few days beforehand that the Americans would “not have any specific proposal to bring forward” at the first meeting. Hickerson believed “that the conversations should discuss several alternatives and try to reach informal agreement on what looks best.” Apparently Hickerson was “not enthusiastic about a separate Atlantic Pact,” but instead preferred to link the United States and Canada to the Brussels Pact, along with Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland, “and eventually Spain, together with Iceland and Ireland.” Italy might require special treatment, while Greece and Turkey “should not be included as being not in the general Atlantic region.”²⁷ When Pearson met with Jebb, it was obvious that the British government still had “an open mind” on the likely outcome, whether “a separate Atlantic Pact or accession of the Atlantic Powers to the security clauses of the Brussels Pact or the Brussels Pact countries might join a wider and new Atlantic Security Pact.” Pearson was not keen, however, on what Jebb proposed as a first step, “a Three-Power Pact” which Pearson worried “might be considered by the others as a purely Anglo-Saxon initiative,” thus dimming the prospects for wider accessions. Pearson preferred “a general Atlantic Pact” to an exclusive arrangement for the North Atlantic Triangle. With elections pending in Italy, Pearson was also anxious not to be seen as excluding it. As for Portugal, though Jebb “appreciated” that it would be an anomaly in an avowedly democratic accord, his government regarded the Azores as sufficiently “important” strategically to overcome that objection.²⁸

The tripartite “security conversations,” as they were dubbed in the minutes prepared by Maj. Gen. Alfred Gruenther of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began in the Pentagon on Monday, 22 March 1948. “All participants emphasized the exploratory and non-committal character of the talks,” Pearson promptly reported back to Ottawa, no doubt to assuage King’s anxieties, “and pointed out that they had no clear ideas on specific proposals as yet.” French participation in the talks, which was raised by Jebb at the outset, was opposed by the American representatives as posing a “security risk” and raising the unwelcome prospect of “premature disclosures.” In the circumstances, the participants simply agreed that it was desirable, as Pearson put it, “that the French could be brought in at the earliest possible date.”

The inter-related questions addressed in the first session concerned the nature of the American commitment to western European defence, the form of association of the United States, and possibly Canada, with the Brussels Treaty, as well as the prospect and prospective membership of an Atlantic security pact.²⁹ In his opening remarks, Jebb emphasized the vital importance of American support for the Brussels Treaty as well as for any larger arrangement. The chairman of the meeting, American Ambassador to the United Kingdom Lewis Douglas, and Hickerson both noted that, whether the United States responded with a presidential declaration or participation in a treaty, Congressional support would be essential. The discussions proceeded on the assumption of an American commitment, even though that was explicitly qualified by the need to consult the leaders of the Senate. According to his own report, but not the American minutes, Pearson then identified the three options for the United States, which became the basis for subsequent consideration: a presidential statement; American accession to the Brussels Treaty; and, an “Atlantic Pact on a broad political basis or on narrower military lines,” possibly absorbing “the security provisions of the Brussels Pact.” To this list of possibilities, the American record added “a world-wide pact of self-defense based on Article 51 of the UN Charter, which might be approached initially on the basis of regional arrangements.” In the initial discussion, Hickerson seemed wary of “the broader Atlantic Pact concept,” preferring instead an extension of the Brussels Pact to include Scandinavia, Italy, Western Germany, Western Austria and possibly ultimately the United States. That option posed difficulties, however, as it left no meaningful role for Canada and it enlarged the potential obligations of the current members of Western Union without any assurance of the essential American military backing. Moreover, while that arrangement might be appropriate to deal with the threat to Norway, it was less satisfactory for Italy (though obviously an Atlantic emphasis was even less so), which was now seen as “most directly menaced” by a Soviet threat. As well, the question

naturally arose of how to link any western European arrangement to the security concerns of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The next step was obviously to evaluate the “pros and cons” of these alternatives.³⁰

Before the next meeting, Pearson was assured of political backing for any scheme agreed by the Americans and British “to underwrite the security of the signatories of the Brussels Treaty and the Scandinavian countries,” whether or not it involved Canadian participation in an alliance, though an Atlantic pact that included Canada as a member was evidently what the Canadian government preferred.³¹ Meanwhile, the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department contemplated expanding the membership and enhancing the scope of Western Union. Subject to Italian views, the American advisers favoured an immediate invitation to Italy to join, along with the Scandinavian countries and Portugal, with later enlargement to include the rest of western Europe. In that assessment, the United States would ultimately be associated with or belong to a mutual defence agreement, with Western Union as its core group but possibly including the Middle East as well. At the same time, efforts by Western Union “to deepen its cooperation in all of the aspects foreseen in its Charter, economic and cultural, as well as military,” should be supported by the United States. Evidently American authorities were considering provisions for such an enlarged accord that would deal not only with the need for “collective self-defense” in response to an “armed attack against any one of the parties” but also the threat posed by “indirect aggression” such as a *coup d'état* or encouragement of rebellion. Though the participation of the United States could be justified by its status “as the most powerful nation in the Atlantic and Western cultural community,” there was no mention of Canada.³²

A slightly smaller group of representatives of the three nations explored the possibilities further on the following day, with notes deliberately kept brief so as to preserve the informality and frankness of the exchanges. Early in the discussion “a world-wide Article 51 (UN Charter) pact of the free nations” was dropped as not meeting the immediate need. “It would be too cumbersome and too long in implementation,” the minutes noted, though nothing done in the short term should preclude “an ultimate development in this direction.” Hickerson indicated that he did not favour enlargement of Western Union into a trans-Atlantic pact “since the US hopes to see the eventual development of a United States of Western Europe (possibly later of all Europe) and the Brussels pact offers the hard core for such a development.” On the other hand, an explicitly “Atlantic pact” might exclude Italy, Switzerland and some form of later involvement by Germany. An emphasis instead on “Western,” which was preferable in other respects, likely would leave out threatened states such

as Greece, Turkey and Iran. However, as Jebb noted, that list could be lengthened, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia, so that other means and possibly other pacts, might be necessary.

The participants then assessed the different ways in which the United States could assure others of "military support to free nations menaced by Soviet Communism." As it seemed likely that the American government, whether or not its initial response was a presidential declaration, would ultimately "require reciprocal guarantees from others" that, taken together, would approximate a "pact of mutual defense against aggression," it made more sense to those around the table to aim for such an agreement, which could include Canada, from the beginning. As for military assistance, analogous to the Marshall Plan, that would presumably be easier to justify and to implement within the context of "political arrangements, including US assurances." The delegates were then asked to draft papers by the next morning which would address the "pattern and procedure" to address the different concerns.³³ "By the end of today's discussion," Pearson reported back to Ottawa, "the outline of a plan emerged which seemed to attract general support." According to Pearson, "the immediate threat to Scandinavia could be dealt with by extending the Brussels Treaty to include at least Norway, Sweden and Denmark," with a "firm understanding" of American "military support" in a crisis. There would then be a presidential declaration to that effect which would refer as well to other threatened countries such as Italy, Greece, Turkey and Iran. "To counter the long-term threat of Soviet aggression a wider pact might be entered into by the nations of the Western World," Pearson reported. "These nations would eventually include the free countries of Europe west of the Stettin-Trieste line" as well as Canada and the United States. Perhaps anticipating nervousness from certain quarters in Ottawa, Pearson stressed again at the end of this message "that all of these conversations and suggestions emerging from them are on a purely exploratory and non-committal basis."³⁴

The American paper stressed that implementation of President Truman's "declaration of support for the free nations of Europe" on 17 March³⁵ "will obviously require close consultation with political leaders of both parties in order that whatever policy is formulated is a truly bipartisan American policy." That process would shape the American commitment. As a first step, the Americans favoured enlargement and reinforcement of the Brussels Treaty as well as American military aid and an interim assurance that the United States would "consider armed attack against them to constitute armed attack against the United States." However, the ultimate form of American involvement in the defence of Europe would be participation in "a mutual defense agreement

under the Charter of the United Nations,” whose members would include not only the signatories of the Brussels Treaty but also “Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland and eventually Spain.” Under the provisions of that accord, the members would consult about military threats (and responses), treat an armed attack against one as an armed attack against all, assess how to deal with “indirect aggression” and coordinate responses. The American text stipulated that “each contracting party shall determine for itself whether there has occurred an armed attack within the meaning of this agreement.” This scheme envisaged “parallel public assurances” by the American President and the British Prime Minister to Greece, Turkey and Iran, “pending the conclusion of an eventual Middle East mutual assistance agreement.”³⁶

The Canadian draft treated the Soviet threat to Scandinavia, particularly Norway, as “immediate and urgent,” while the negotiation of a “Western Pact for collective self-defence” was “not so urgent.” However, the situation was “complicated” by Western Union, the vulnerability of Italy, the need to protect Greece and Turkey, and the “advisability of negotiating, subsequently, a Middle Eastern Security Pact and, ultimately, of a general Collective Security Pact under Article 51 open to *all* free peoples.” In the circumstances, the Canadian proposal favoured a similar approach to that advanced in the American paper, but with greater emphasis on the need for a “working paper,” which “would have been agreed on by the U.S.A., U.K., Canada and, possibly, France” to frame the subsequent negotiation of a “Western Pact.” In light of the requirement for prompt action, “it could only be a short paper in broadest outline” and it would have to be preceded by a “unilateral U.S.A. guarantee” as “a temporary emergency measure.” The proposed membership and the prospective elaboration of further security arrangements corresponded to the American suggestions, though without the same reliance on emergency consultation and national evaluation of a threat. Instead, the Canadian draft favoured a “Board for Collective Self-Defence” which would deal with such questions and determine the appropriate response. As well, the Canadians preferred to stress “that this Pact is something wider and deeper than an old-fashioned military alliance,” so that “there might be economic and cultural co-operation clauses” in the treaty.³⁷

On 24 March, there was a further meeting, sandwiched around work by a drafting committee of Achilles, Jebb and Pearson. What emerged from these sessions was a single draft paper “in the form of a unilateral US document, purpose of which is to give effect to the President’s 17 March declaration of support for the free nations of Europe, and the recommendations of which will

require consultation with US political leaders to assure full bi-partisan support.” By this time, the aim of the memorandum was explicitly “a Security Pact for the North Atlantic Area, plus an extension of the Brussels agreement.” The elaboration of this plan would be initiated by another statement by Truman, who would also issue invitations to a “North Atlantic Pact conference.” As the minutes of the meeting specify, the geographic limitation of the agreement “is to prevent efforts of Latin America, Australia, etc., to adhere, which would make the arrangement unwieldy, especially as none of these are now directly threatened by Soviet Communism.” Ultimately, there might be a treaty applying to “all free nations,” but not yet.³⁸

In the interval before the next meeting, Pearson briefed King about the deliberations and analysed the text of the paper which he had helped to prepare and which would be considered by Truman, Lovett “and other Cabinet Ministers over the week-end.” As Pearson explained, the document masqueraded as “a United States proposal” to avoid offending “the French and possibly others” by revealing that such a scheme had already been discussed “with two other Governments” if the text “should leak out.” Pearson did not refer explicitly to the more pronounced American fear of alienating Congress. No doubt King appreciated the incidental benefit that this depiction “emphasizes the non-committal character of the recommendations so far as the Canadian Government is concerned.” Canada’s “privileged position” was one of influence, not obligation. Pearson opined that the “extremely frank” and “friendly” discussions thus far had “disclosed that there was a very great unity of viewpoint among the officials of the three Governments who participated.”

In fact, the “conversations” had considered and eliminated three options put forward at different times by the American participants, none of which had appealed to Pearson: an extension of the Brussels Pact to include western Europe, the United States and Canada; a unilateral declaration by the United States (and possibly Canada) to treat an attack “on any of the free European countries” as an attack on itself; and, absorption of the Brussels Pact by the proposed Atlantic Pact. In light of these less attractive possibilities, the agreed recommendations were seen positively by the Canadians. These proposals included: (1) an approach to the Brussels Pact members about extending the treaty as well as developing a broader security pact “for the North Atlantic Area;” (2) approaches to the Scandinavian countries and Iceland about joining the Brussels Treaty (with American backing); (3) an overture to the Italian prime minister to determine whether Italy would join the Brussels Treaty if asked (alternatively there could simply be “a general Anglo-American promise of support”); (4) an American presidential declaration that would treat an

armed attack on a signatory of the Brussels Treaty (current or prospective) “as an armed attack against the United States to be dealt with by the United States in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter,” without excluding the possibility of similar aid to “any other Western European democracy which was the victim of an armed attack and defended itself resolutely;” (5) an Anglo-American “declaration to be made to the effect that the two countries are not prepared to countenance any attack on the political independence or territorial integrity of Greece, Turkey or Iran;” (6) and, “invitations to be issued by the United States to the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Eire, Switzerland, Italy and Portugal to take part in a conference with a view to the conclusion of a Security Pact for the North Atlantic Area based on Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.”

Under that sixth recommendation, the document also described some of the provisions of such an accord, including: (a) a preamble that highlighted the preservation of “western civilization in the geographical area covered by the Pact” and raised the possibility of further agreements; (b) “a provision that an armed attack by any state against any party to the Pact is an attack against all parties” to which each ally would respond immediately with “all the military, economic, and other aid and assistance in its power” (though members retained the right to determine whether such an attack had taken place and how and where their obligations could be met); (c) some form of “consultation between all the parties in the event of any party considering that its political independence or territorial integrity is threatened” (including the menace of “indirect aggression”); (d) establishment of “such agencies as may be necessary for effective implementation of the treaty, including the working out of plans for prompt and effective action;” and, (e) a term of ten years “with automatic renewals of five years unless denounced.” According to his briefing for King, Pearson had argued “that the document should not be exclusively military in character and that there were economic and even spiritual defences against communist attack which should not be overlooked.” Pearson expected such clauses, along lines that he had drafted, to be included in the text when it was elaborated in the following week. The American stance, Pearson underlined, represented a considerable change in their foreign policy and a significant increase in their global commitments, both of which were welcome developments in the context of recent events.³⁹

As Pearson informed Wrong, “Mr. King expressed himself as greatly pleased with the course that the discussions had taken and the resulting recommendations. He thought that from our point of view they could not be better.”

Evidently King was “anxious to include in them a sentence on economic co-operation in the preamble and an article on the same subject in the Pact itself.” Though he did not intend to return to Washington, Pearson expected the talks to produce “draft recommendations” which could then be generally approved by the British and American governments. After that, “the work of drafting a more complete text will begin.”⁴⁰ In his diary, King recorded that he “liked the idea very much” and that Pearson expected the negotiating conference to follow “in about 2 or 3 weeks,” most likely in Washington. Apparently, Quebec City had been proposed as a venue, but King had opposed that. “It seems to me in every way best,” King reflected, “that the whole matter should become one of U.S. leadership. It puts increasingly on the U.S. the obligation of maintaining peace in the Atlantic.”⁴¹ When King subsequently travelled to Washington, Wrong assured him that Hickerson had drafted a clause along the lines the prime minister had favoured “that was pretty certain to be agreed” in the meetings.⁴²

Although American officials underscored the “tentative” nature of the talks, Lord Inverchapel reported the British foreign secretary’s reaction to the proposed list of invitees at the fourth meeting on Monday, 29 March. Essentially, Bevin questioned whether Italy should be asked to join before the Italian elections, whether Switzerland should be invited at any time (as it would likely turn down the invitation) and whether the Scandinavian countries should be approached about participation in the Brussels Treaty unless and until a “North Atlantic Pact was plainly in the offing” as the latter development would significantly improve the prospects for acceptance. Douglas himself queried the wording of the commitment clause, which should follow an accepted and familiar form such as that in the Rio Treaty,⁴³ and the extent of the military obligations that would be implied in participation. For their part, “the British Chiefs considered the Pact idea a risk,” General Hollis observed, “but that the worse risk was to permit one country after another to be picked off by Soviet Communism until we should face a more and more difficult, and finally an impossible, strategic situation.” To Hickerson, “the objective of the Pact approach was to stop the Soviet Communist advance, and that this would probably be accomplished by the fact of a drawing together of the free nations in their own defense.” As noted in the minutes, that assessment “seemed to be generally accepted by the political conferees, including Douglas.” The participants also agreed with Gruenther that it was necessary to allow for a flexible strategic response to aggression, so that a threat or feint in one location could be met by a counterthrust elsewhere. There was also an inconclusive discussion as to whether or not the preamble to the Pact should refer to countries outside its geographic ambit. Before the next meeting, “each group” was

expected to study “the work done thus far” with the aim of “deciding upon an agreed form of words for the action which would be most desirable.” Meanwhile, the American representatives would seek Marshall’s views. Other than that, “there would be no consultation with American political leaders in the meantime, and hence no increase in the likelihood of security leaks.”⁴⁴

At the fifth meeting, two days later, Hickerson tabled a revised version of the “informal position paper” which reflected input from Douglas as well as anticipated reaction from “Congressional leaders.” The principal changes borrowed wording from the Rio Treaty wherever possible, dropped efforts to define “indirect aggression” (with an emphasis instead on consultation “in the event any party to the pact considers itself thus menaced”) and left to the signatories the determination of “whether there has occurred an armed attack within the meaning of the agreement” and their immediate responses. In this scenario, President Truman would assure Italy and the Brussels Treaty signatories of American support. As the British had advised, Switzerland would not be invited but instead informed that it would be “welcome to participate on its own initiative.” According to Hickerson, this redraft was approved by Douglas and endorsed in principle by Lovett, who had not studied its contents. At this penultimate meeting, the delegates raised various drafting points as well as questions about the “geographic limits” for the pact, particularly whether it would apply only to “metropolitan territories” of the signatories or also to Greenland, Alaska, Hawaii and Spitzbergen. Hickerson went off to revise the paper further before it would be represented on the following day.⁴⁵

As Wrong reported to Ottawa, Hickerson and his colleagues were inclined to accentuate “self-help” aspects, as had been done with the Marshall Plan, so as to secure strong American backing. Apparently, the geographic concerns had been first raised by Jebb, who noted that smaller powers would be anxious about commitments covering too broad an area. Wrong had noted that the Rio Treaty itself dealt with “a defined area” and that it was likely that “the greater the area covered the looser would be the provisions of the Pact.” That would not preclude a series of overlapping or linked agreements, which would consistently involve “the larger Powers.” According to Wrong, the State Department had also completed “a rough draft of a North Atlantic Pact,” from which Hickerson read passages, though it was not circulated. That text evidently included references to “economic co-operation” in the preamble, as well as in one clause of the treaty, which reproduced the wording of Pearson’s proposal “almost verbatim.” One incentive to end the sessions soon, which was omitted from the minutes but mentioned by Wrong, was that “both the French and the Dutch Foreign Offices have some inkling that these talks are going on, but

they apparently do not know that Canada is included in them and believe that they are confined to the United States and the United Kingdom.” Clearly a bilateral discussion from which they were excluded would be more palatable to the Europeans than a trilateral cabal! In that sense, the “special relationship” was preferable to the “North Atlantic triangle.”⁴⁶

Finally, at the sixth and last meeting of the representatives of the three countries, Hickerson presented what has become known as the “Pentagon Paper.” The last session took less than two hours to review this text, which now specified the territory covered by the pact, though participants acknowledged that it would likely be redefined later. All present agreed that “no further meetings were necessary.” After eleven days of intensive trilateral discussions and close collaboration, the minutes recorded a deceptively unilateral outcome. “The State Department now has a position paper respecting the formation of regional security arrangement in the North Atlantic Area,” the record indicated. “The paper appears to be, and will be regarded as, a purely American paper.” That depiction would facilitate the next steps in the process, involving approval within the Truman Administration and then “concurrency of a few Congressional leaders, including Senator Vandenberg” before “implementation of the steps outlined in the paper itself.” Before the group adjourned, Hickerson stressed “that the paper as it now stands represents only a concept of what is desired at the working level.” Even so, there was an obvious consensus in favour of securing a treaty “as soon as possible, the optimum possibility being that it might be accomplished prior to the end of the current session of Congress.” As it turned out, the treaty would not be signed for another year. Perhaps the most vital conclusion reached by the delegates, one that owed much to the persuasive efforts of the British and Canadian representatives, as well as the sympathetic attitude of their American counterparts, was the one found in the last line of the minutes. Such a North Atlantic Treaty as was now contemplated, it was conceded, “would have much greater political effect than a mere declaration of intent, no matter how strongly worded for Presidential delivery.”⁴⁷

What emerged at the end of these discussions was a “final draft” of a paper which made a series of recommendations “to give effect to the declaration of March 17 by the President of support for the free nations of Europe.” Though there would be immediate measures to reassure the signatories of the Brussels Treaty and Scandinavian countries, as well as Italy, of American assistance in the event of a threat to their security, the principal aim of the American initiative would be to convene a conference “with a view to the conclusion of a collective Defense Agreement for the North Atlantic Area designed to give

maximum effect, as between the parties, to the provisions of the United Nations Charter.” To that end, the President would invite the above-mentioned countries, as well as Canada, Eire, Italy and Portugal, so long as it had been determined in advance that the invitees would be prepared to join. At the same time, there would be an Anglo-American declaration of support for the “political independence” and “territorial integrity” of Greece, Turkey and Iran, “pending the possible negotiations of some general Middle Eastern security system.” The paper then outlined the key elements of the likely agreement, including: a preamble setting forth its purpose as “to preserve western civilization in the geographical area covered by the agreement” as well as looking forward to further such arrangements elsewhere, with language and provisions drawn from the Rio Treaty and the Brussels Treaty; a clause under which “each Party shall regard any action in the area covered by the agreement, which it considers an armed attack against any other Party, as an armed attack against itself,” with consequent measures to assist in defence; a clause allowing for immediate assistance as individually determined prior to collective consultation; a stipulation about reporting to the Security Council for the purposes of action by that body; delineation of the area of the pact, to include not only territories of members within continental Europe and North America but also Spitzbergen, other Norwegian islands, Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland and Alaska; a provision for consultation in the event of a perceived threat to the territorial integrity or political independence of any member, whether by armed attack or by “indirect aggression in any part of the world;” a clause permitting the establishment of agencies to implement the accord; and, a “duration of ten years, with automatic renewal for five-year periods unless denounced.”⁷⁴⁸

Other than the delineation of the area of the agreement, the principal changes from the earlier draft dropped wording which had appeared to limit too obviously the automatic nature of the obligation of members to defend one another. Pearson and Wrong had particularly objected to the weasel words in the earlier version, which had left it up to “each Contracting Party” to decide “for itself whether there has occurred an armed attack within the meaning of the agreement.” As Pearson had noted in his instructions to Wrong, such wording “will have a very discouraging effect on those who might wish to sign the agreement and an equally encouraging effect on those who are expected to be deterred from aggression by it.” Wrong conveyed those views to Hickerson before the final meeting and he was pleased to inform Pearson that the amended version was “a distinct improvement.”⁷⁴⁹

In effect, the “Pentagon Paper” in its final version was designed to provide broad guidance for the negotiation of a treaty such as Hickerson had already

sketched, though it was framed more simply as a procedure to be followed by the American administration. Hickerson himself described it as “a pick and shovel draft” that would likely “be changed in a good many respects during the processes of clearance here as well as later on.” Wrong and his colleagues had anticipated delays while political support in the United States was secured, but the eventual timetable was “slowed down” even further than they had expected.⁵⁰ One reason why the process was prolonged was that the American representatives chose not to introduce the draft treaty nor even the Pentagon Paper at the outset to direct the subsequent ambassadorial talks, nor were they prepared to shift formally from “conversations” in the enlarged group to negotiations until after the presidential and congressional elections of 1948. Though care had been taken to develop a bipartisan consensus in the United States in favour of such a departure in American international relations, and the fundamental questions had been posed and answered during the tripartite talks, the momentum slackened and doubts arose about some of the answers in the final few months before the treaty was signed.⁵¹

When he reflected on the negotiations less than a week later, Wrong was especially mindful of the likely complications that would arise from the translation of a diplomatic accord of the kind that had been discussed into an effective military agreement. As he noted, likely the greatest impact of the British and Canadian representatives on the American approach had been to convey the “European point of view” about the need for “a definite commitment from the United States extending over a sufficient period of years” so as to bolster the allies and thwart the USSR. “The British and ourselves took every suitable opportunity,” Wrong informed Pearson, “of emphasizing that [a Presidential] declaration would leave a great deal to be desired in the minds particularly of the European countries, and that what was required was a commitment binding on succeeding Congresses and a new Administration.” Whatever other clauses or considerations attracted the attention of the Canadians in the ABC talks or in the later ambassadorial discussions, the binding nature of the American military obligation was unquestionably foremost in their thinking throughout the deliberations.

However, Wrong appreciated that a North Atlantic accord might also help Canada to deal with continental defence questions. “If an Agreement on the lines that were discussed becomes a reality,” Wrong speculated, “even though the parties might only be the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and perhaps France and the Low Countries, it should considerably ease our problems in handling defence relations with the United States.” Wrong had in mind not only the political sensitivities surrounding American forces and facilities

on Canadian soil but also what he regarded as “too great a concentration of effort and resources on the static defence of the continent.” Within a wider alliance, “the problems of North American defence would become a small part of a larger plan, the purpose of which would be the means of defeating the potential enemy.”⁵² A month later, Wrong underlined the fact that defence planning within a broader agreement “would diminish difficulties arising from fears of invasion of Canadian sovereignty by the U.S.” Moreover, the implications extended to Canada’s relations with our closest allies, the members of the North Atlantic Triangle.

“An Atlantic pact,” Wrong contended, “would go a long way towards curing our split personality in defence matters by bringing the U.S., the U.K. and Canada into regular partnership.”⁵³ In fact, this observation complemented one made by the Canadian high commissioner in the United Kingdom, Norman Robertson, a fortnight earlier. Robertson had detected a particularly favourable drift in trans-Atlantic military and economic affairs, particularly as the Marshall Plan was implemented, from a Canadian perspective. Recent developments offered the prospect of “such a providential solution for so many of our problems that I feel we should go to great lengths and even incur considerable risks in order to consolidate our good fortune and ensure our proper place in this new partnership.”⁵⁴ While there remained significant uncertainties about the final outcomes in both realms of international policy, and global tensions prompted anxieties with respect to the Canadian situation, Canada’s most senior diplomats perceived the circumstances as favourable for the North Atlantic Triangle and particularly for Canada.

Though there remained time and differences before the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty was concluded, the ABC talks displayed the harmony of values and interests that Brebner had identified as the bedrock of the North Atlantic Triangle. Moreover, a closer look at the record of the meetings in the Pentagon has demonstrated that the “security conversations” involved not simply the “special relationship” between the United Kingdom and the United States but also the participation of Canada as a constructive and valuable contributor. It may be argued, with some justification, that the image of the North Atlantic Triangle was a “Canadian conceit” (that is, a notion that has not been reflected in American or British commentaries and scholarship).⁵⁵ However, the ABC talks certainly provide an example of the trilateral (or triangular) relationship at work. To a significant degree, the North Atlantic Treaty was initiated and formulated by the members of the North Atlantic Triangle.

Endnotes

- ¹ John Bartlet Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle: The Interplay of Canada, the United States and Great Britain* (New Haven, 1945); Edgar McInnis, *The Atlantic Triangle and the Cold War* (Toronto, 1959); B.J.C. McKercher and Lawrence Aronsen, eds., *The North Atlantic Triangle in a Changing World: Anglo-American-Canadian Relations, 1902–1956* (Toronto, 1996); David Haglund, *The North Atlantic Triangle Revisited: Canadian Grand Strategy at Century's End* (Toronto, 2000); Hector Mackenzie, "Delineating the North Atlantic Triangle: the Second World War and its Aftermath," in *Round Table* [forthcoming]. See also: Donald Creighton, "John Bartlet Brebner: A Man of His Times," in D.G. Creighton, *The Passionate Observer: Selected Writings* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 160–70. That text was originally the introduction to an edition of *North Atlantic Triangle* published in 1966.
- ² The summary of the final chapter ["Maelstrom"] in the table of contents to *North Atlantic Triangle* refers to "the perplexing triangular interplay during the prelude to war." (xx)
- ³ Hector Mackenzie, "The ABCs of Canada's International Economic Relations, 1945–1951," in Greg Donaghy, ed., *Canada and the Early Cold War, 1943–1957* (Ottawa, 1998), pp. 215–50.
- ⁴ The minutes prepared by General Gruenther identify the meetings as "United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations."
- ⁵ NATO Information Service, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation: Facts and Figures* (Brussels, 1989), pp. 3–13. The various versions of this NATO "handbook" do refer to the discussions between Lovett and Vandenberg preceding the latter's resolution in the U.S. Senate.
- ⁶ "The Origins of the Alliance" at <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb0101.htm> viewed on 30 May 2005. In this abbreviated account, the Vandenberg Resolution also is left out.
- ⁷ Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: the Inside Story of its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London, 1990), pp. 322–6; James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 71–2; Don Cook, *Forging the Alliance: NATO, 1945–1950* (New York, 1989), pp. 129–30. On the network of Soviet agents of which Maclean was a part, see also: Yuri Modin, *My Five Cambridge Friends* (London, 1994). In fact, the British summaries were prepared by Robert Cecil and revised by Gladwyn Jebb before transmission to London. Robert Cecil, *A Divided Life: A Biography of Donald Maclean* (London, 1988), p. 85.

- ⁸ Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., with Joe Alex Morris, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston, 1952), chapter 25. The Vandenberg Resolution was adopted by the Senate by a vote of 64 to 4 on 11 June 1948.
- ⁹ Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: the Entangling Alliance* (Chicago, 1962). This tendency is also reflected generally in American histories of the cold war.
- ¹⁰ Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Volume III, Western Europe* (Washington, 1974). The minutes and documents directly associated with the meetings are reprinted on pages 59 to 75.
- ¹¹ Though Gladwyn Jebb described the meetings, he did not regard it as “proper for me to disclose any details of what was then said” as his memoirs preceded the release of the minutes (as it turned out, by two years). Gladwyn Jebb, *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn* (London, 1972), p. 215. In his memoirs, which were published posthumously, Lester B. Pearson was less circumspect, as he described the Pentagon talks and quoted from his own advice to King. Pearson also conveys the misleading impression that a commitment to include a clause on economic and social cooperation, which the Canadians favoured, was generally agreed. John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis, eds., *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume 2, 1948–1957* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 41–7. According to the foreword, Pearson had “completed first drafts of the first four chapters,” including the section dealing with the ABC talks. None of the American participants wrote an autobiography, though John Hickerson and Ted Achilles were both interviewed for the oral history project of the presidential library of Harry Truman before the documents on the ABC talks were published. Others involved in the elaboration of the North Atlantic Treaty, including Charles Bohlen and George Kennan (who initially opposed the initiative) and Dean Acheson (who was not involved until the final stage of the negotiations in early 1949), wrote about the notion generally and the later discussions, particularly with attention to the need to keep Congress on side.
- ¹² For an exception to the neglect of the ABC talks by non-Canadian writers, see: Cees Wiebes and Bert Zeeman, “The Pentagon negotiations March 1948: the launching of the North Atlantic Treaty,” *International Affairs*, 59, 3 (Summer 1983), 351–63. For an American account which integrates European concerns yet still follows traditional emphases with respect to the development of US policy, see: Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO: the Formative Years* (Lexington, 1984).
- ¹³ Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, *NATO: the Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Washington, 1999), posted at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/nato/9904_nato_brochure.html

(consulted 2 April 2005). The brief references to the ABC talks are on pages 19 and 20 of this study.

- ¹⁴ Nicholas Henderson, *The Birth of NATO* (Boulder, 1983), pp. 16–18. That depiction of the “security conversations” undoubtedly influenced the next major account of the origins of the North Atlantic Treaty by Don Cook more than Escott Reid’s book (see below). The principal reference in Cook’s text to the Canadian participants associated them with a wildly optimistic and inaccurate prediction about when a treaty could be concluded. Don Cook, *Forging the Alliance: NATO, 1945–1950* (New York, 1989).
- ¹⁵ Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, 1945–1951* (London, 1983), chapter 13; Elisabeth Barker, *The British Between the Superpowers, 1945–50* (Toronto, 1983) makes only passing reference to the ABC talks (p. 128). The ABC talks were examined closely from a British perspective in Martin H. Folly, “Breaking the Vicious Circle: Britain, the United States, and the Genesis of the North Atlantic Treaty,” *Diplomat*, 12 (1988), 59–77. Bevin’s contribution is linked by those of Marshall and Pearson by M. Thornton, “Ernest Bevin, George C. Marshall and Lester B. Pearson, January 1947 to January 1949: A North Atlantic Triangle?” in C. C. Eldridge, ed., *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from the Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff, 1997), pp. 205–22. One British participant in the ABC talks, Cecil, has shifted the focus to Henderson’s predecessor: Robert Cecil, “Legends Spies Tell,” *Encounter*, 50, 4, 9–17; Cecil, *A Divided Life*, pp. 85–7.
- ¹⁶ Robert A. Spencer, *Canada in World Affairs: From UN to NATO, 1946–1949* (Toronto, 1959), pp. 245–79; Eayrs, *Growing Up Allied*, pp. 51–62.
- ¹⁷ King’s speech to the House of Commons on 17 March 1948 included the following key line: “The peoples of all free countries may be assured that Canada will play her full part in every movement to give substance to the conception of an effective system of collective security by the development of regional pacts under the charter of the United Nations.” St. Laurent’s speech more than a month later was interpreted privately and publically as prodding the United States to participate in an alliance. For the text of his address to the House of Commons on 28 April 1948, see: R.A. Mackay, ed., *Canadian Foreign Policy 1945-1954: Selected Speeches and Documents* (Toronto, 1970), pp. 182–3. Henderson, *Birth of NATO*, pp 25–6, cites St. Laurent’s remarks and Bevin’s response in the British House of Commons.
- ¹⁸ Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty 1947–1949* (Toronto, 1977); James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied* (Toronto, 1980).

- ¹⁹ Hector Mackenzie, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 14, 1948* (Ottawa, 1994); Hector Mackenzie, "Canada, The Cold War and the Negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty," in John Hilliker and Mary Halloran, eds., *Diplomatic Documents and Their Users* (Ottawa, 1995), pp. 145–73.
- ²⁰ The effective manner in which Pearson made use of the often contradictory advice from Reid and Wrong is highlighted in the treatment of the North Atlantic Treaty negotiations in Geoffrey A. H. Pearson, *Seize the Day: Lester B. Pearson and Crisis Diplomacy* (Ottawa, 1993), chapter 3. The biases in Reid's contemporary engagement as well as his subsequent analysis are discussed in Adam Chapnick, "Making Wrong Right: The North Atlantic Treaty Negotiations and the Coming of Age of Canadian Diplomacy, 1947–1949," in Serge Bernier and John MacFarlane, eds., *Canada 1900–1950, A Country Comes of Age* (Ottawa, 2003), pp. 165–79. Chapnick asserts that the Wrong Papers have been "much neglected" by scholars, though that collection was consulted for the series *Documents on Canadian External Relations* (volumes 14 and 15). Of 29 references in Chapnick's article to the Wrong Papers, 18 cite documents published in *DCER*, 4 cite documents for which an equivalent was published in *DCER*, 3 cite unpublished documents which were not written by Wrong, 3 cite copies of public speeches by Wrong and only 1 cites an unpublished communication by Wrong which adds some personal colour to a known position. Chapnick pays scant attention to the ABC talks in spite of Wrong's leading role.
- ²¹ Of the 17 individuals identified in the minutes as participants in the ABC talks, only three (Jebb, Pearson and Cecil) wrote memoirs, which are discussed in notes 11 and 15 above.
- ²² Although these meetings and their impact are assessed predominantly from a Canadian perspective and with the implications for Canada's international relations foremost, American and British stances will also be taken into account.
- ²³ "We do not know, and perhaps never shall," Alan Bullock has written, "whether these different Soviet moves formed part of a concerted plan (probably not) or what were the Soviet objectives in making them and following them with the blockade of Berlin. But it was impossible for Bevin and the other men in office in Western Europe and the USA not to put the pieces together and act on the assumption that they were facing a calculated challenge by the Russians." Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary*, p. 528. Cook, *Forging the Alliance*, pp. 109–26. For Denis Smith, the absence of a coherent Soviet strategy has been cited as evidence of an over-reaction in the West, particularly in Canada. *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada*

- and the Cold War 1941–1948* (Toronto, 1988), pp. 234–6. See also: Robert Bothwell, *The Big Chill: Canada and the Cold War* (Toronto, 1998). In an interesting article, the same author argues that the absence of significant budgetary allocations in support of its alignment and treaty obligations suggests that Canadian engagement in the cold war began later than 1948–49. Only if one accepts the proposition that financial commitments are appropriate and sufficient measures of international policies does this argument make sense. Robert Bothwell, “The cold war and the curate’s egg,” *International Journal*, LIII, 3 (Summer 1998), 407–18.
- ²⁴ Aide-Mémoire, British Embassy to Department of State, [11 March 1948], Top Secret, *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 46–8.
- ²⁵ Secretary of State to British Ambassador, 12 March 1948, Top Secret, *FRUS*, 1948, III, p. 48.
- ²⁶ Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to High Commissioner for United Kingdom, Telegram 220, 10 March 1948, Top Secret, Personal, Most Immediate (Prime Minister to Prime Minister); Prime Minister to Prime Minister of United Kingdom, Telegram, 11 March 1948, Top Secret (Prime Minister to Prime Minister); Prime Minister of United Kingdom to Prime Minister, 12 March 1948, Top Secret, Personal; Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-761, 13 March 1948, Top Secret, Most Immediate (for Under-Secretary only); Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-766, 13 March 1948, Top Secret, Most Immediate (for Under-Secretary only), *DCER*, 14, 1948, pp. 419–29. British Ambassador to Secretary of State, 14 March 1948, Top Secret, Personal, *FRUS 1948, III*, p. 52. King Diary: 11 March 1948.
- ²⁷ Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-823, 19 March 1948. Top Secret. For Acting Under-Secretary only. *DCER*, 14, pp. 440–1.
- ²⁸ Permanent Delegate to United Nations to Secretary of State for External Affairs, No. 345, 22 March 1948. Top Secret. For Prime Minister and Mr. St. Laurent from Pearson. *DCER*, 14, pp. 442–4.
- ²⁹ Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-843, 23 March 1948. Top Secret. Immediate. For Reid from Pearson. *DCER*, 14, pp. 445–7.
- ³⁰ Minutes of the First Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, March 22, 1948, Top Secret, *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 59–61. Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-843, 23 March 1948. Top Secret. Immediate. For Reid from Pearson. Reid was asked to pass the message on to Prime

Minister King, St. Laurent and the Minister of National Defence, Brooke Claxton.

- ³¹ Draft Telegram (Not Sent) from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in United States, 23 March 1948. Top Secret. Immediate. For Pearson from Reid. *DCER*, 14, p. 448. A marginal note indicates that the views in this message were conveyed directly by St. Laurent in a telephone conversation with Pearson.
- ³² "Report Prepared by the Policy Planning Staff Concerning Western Union and Related Problems," 23 March 1948 [PPS 27], Secret. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 61–4.
- ³³ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, March 23, 1948, Top Secret, *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 64–6.
- ³⁴ Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-852, 23 March 1948. Top Secret. For Reid from Pearson. *DCER*, 14, pp. 453–4.
- ³⁵ "The Threat to the Freedom of Europe," Address by President Truman Before the Congress, March 17, 1948. Reprinted in Department of State, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy Basic Documents, 1941–1949. Revised Edition.* (Washington, 1985), pp. 930–4.
- ³⁶ United States Draft Statement, 23 March 1948, Top Secret, *DCER*, 14, pp. 449–50.
- ³⁷ Canadian Draft Statement, 23 March 1948, Top Secret. *DCER*, 14, pp. 450–2.
- ³⁸ Minutes of the Third Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, March 23, 1948. Top Secret. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 66–7.
- ³⁹ Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, 27 March 1948, Top Secret [enclosed with Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, 29 March 1948, Top Secret], *DCER*, 14, pp. 455–62.
- ⁴⁰ Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in United States, EX-823, 29 March 1948. Top Secret. Immediate. From Pearson for Ambassador Only. *DCER*, 14, pp. 462–3.
- ⁴¹ King Diary: 26 March 1948.
- ⁴² King Diary: 30 March 1948. The prospect of a reference to economic and social co-operation in the Atlantic security pact also reinforced King's determination to shelve the problematic proposal for a free trade deal between Canada and the United States. R. D. Cuff and J. L. Granatstein, *American*

Dollars-Canadian Prosperity: Canadian-American Economic Relations 1945-1950 (Toronto, 1978), pp. 78-9.

- ⁴³ The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, 2 September 1947, which was agreed at the Rio de Janeiro Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security, 15 August to 2 September 1947.
- ⁴⁴ Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, March 29, 1948. Top Secret. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 69-70.
- ⁴⁵ Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, March 31, 1948. Top Secret. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 70-1.
- ⁴⁶ Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-904, 31 March 1948. Top Secret. Important. For Pearson only from Wrong. *DCER*, 14, pp. 463-5. In the same volume [pp. 466-8], see: Memorandum by Participants in United States / United Kingdom / Canada Security Talks, 31 March 1948. This copy of the document circulated at the fifth meeting was brought back to Ottawa by General Foulkes. It was not located in the files of the Department of State and consequently was not included in *FRUS*. Unfortunately, Hickerson's draft treaty of the same date has also not been found.
- ⁴⁷ Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the United States-United Kingdom-Canada Security Conversations, Held at Washington, April 1, 1948. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 71-2.
- ⁴⁸ Enclosure to Minutes of the Sixth Meeting: Final Draft, undated, Top Secret. *FRUS*, 1948, III, pp. 72-5. There was also the privately expressed intention to extend the membership of the organization to Germany (Western or all), Austria (Western or all) and Spain, if and when circumstances permitted. For a detailed analysis of changes between the drafts of 31 March and 1 April 1948, see: Ambassador in United States to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 2 April 1948. Top Secret. *DCER*, 14, pp. 477-80.
- ⁴⁹ Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1 April 1948, Top Secret; Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in United States, EX-850, 1 April 1948, Top Secret, Most Immediate. For Ambassador Only from Pearson; Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1 April 1948, Top Secret ["North Atlantic Security Pact"]; Ambassador in United States to Director, Office of European Affairs, Department of State, 1 April 1948. Top Secret and Personal (Wrong to Hickerson), enclosing Memorandum; Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-925, 1 April

1948. Top Secret. Most Immediate. For Pearson only from Wrong. *DCER*, 14, pp. 468–73.
- ⁵⁰ Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, WA-939, 2 April 1948. Top Secret. Important. For Pearson only from Wrong. *DCER*, 14, pp. 476–7.
- ⁵¹ Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope*, p. 55; Pearson, *Seize the Day*, pp. 35–7.
- ⁵² Ambassador in United States to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 7 April 1948. Top Secret. *DCER*, 14, pp. 483–6.
- ⁵³ Ambassador in United States to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 8 May 1948, Top Secret and Personal. *DCER*, 14, pp. 497–9. David G. Haglund and Stéphane Roussel, “Escott Reid, the North Atlantic Treaty, and Canadian Strategic Culture,” in Greg Donaghy and Stéphane Roussel, eds., *Escott Reid: Diplomat and Scholar* (Montreal & Kingston, 2004), pp. 44–66 (Wrong’s comments are cited on page 54).
- ⁵⁴ High Commissioner in United Kingdom to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Despatch 713, 21 April 1948. *DCER*, 14, pp. 1504–10.
- ⁵⁵ Mackenzie, “Delineating the North Atlantic Triangle”; Haglund, *North Atlantic Triangle Revisited*, pp. 53–5.

