

# **With Friends Like These**

## Entangled Nationalisms and the Canada-Quebec-France Triangle, 1944-1970

David Meren



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FOR MOM, DAD, AND LAURA

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## Note on Language

WITH SO MUCH OF THIS book's content drawn from French-language sources, an issue arises regarding its presentation. After serious reflection, I have decided to translate quotations into English, except in those instances in which the meaning is readily apparent. The one exception to this rule is Charles de Gaulle's speech from the balcony of Montreal's city hall. Given the historical, cultural, and emotional significance of his remarks, I feel compelled to present them in the original French. A translation is provided in the accompanying citation.

# Abbreviations

ACCT	Agence de coopération culturelle et technique
AGFC	Association générale France-Canada
AIJLF	Association internationale des journalistes de langue française
ASI	Associated States of Indochina
ASTEF	Association pour l'organisation des stages en France
AUPELF	Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de la langue française
DEA	Department of External Affairs
EAO	External Aid Office
ECM	European Common Market
EDC	European Defence Community
ENA	École nationale d'administration
EPU	European Payments Union
ERP	European Recovery Program
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
MAE	Ministère des Affaires étrangères
MAIQ	Ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales du Québec
MEC	Maison des étudiants canadiens
MLF	Multilateral Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORAD	North American Air Defence Agreement
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
OFQJ	Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse
PCO	Privy Council Office

PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PQ	Parti Québécois
RIN	Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale
SGF	Société générale de financement
SIDBEC	Sidérurgie du Québec
SNA	Société nationale des Acadiens
SOMA	Société de montage automobile
TCA	Trans-Canada Airlines
UCF	Union culturelle française
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization

# Introduction:

## In the Shadow of the General

THE WORLD HAD COME TO Montreal. Expo '67 was an overwhelming success, drawing visitors from around the globe. Taking place amid the festivities marking the centennial of Confederation, the universal exposition was also a celebration of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, the cultural, economic, and political empowerment of North America's "French fact." Situated on islands in the St. Lawrence River, the geographic feature so prominent in the history of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada, Expo's location was rich in symbolism. The riverain setting was equally a fitting metaphor for the post-war evolution of international relations, since what had been constructed in the middle of the St. Lawrence was quite literally a "global village," to coin the expression that Marshall McLuhan had popularized five years earlier.<sup>1</sup> With its theme *Terre des Hommes/Man and his World*, inspired by the title of a work by French author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Expo '67 was a tangible representation of the "merging of efforts ... uniting in the creation of a single vision: Earth, the creation of Man."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the transportation and communications advances on display testified to how, in the latter half of the twentieth century, a growing portion of the global population was in closer contact, holding out the prospect of the world's national tributaries flowing into one great river of humanity.

Yet, paralleling the enthusiasm over this dizzying proposition were questions, misgivings, and hostility. McLuhan had predicted that the emergence of his global village would provoke the assertion of regional, ethnic, and religious identities. It was thus fitting, given the title *Terre des Hommes* served as Expo's leitmotif, that Saint-Exupéry should have written in this work of the need for individuals to feel that "in placing one's stone, one is contributing to building the world."<sup>3</sup> It was not enough for the world's diverse populations simply to contribute to the human adventure; rather, there remained an abiding need for the uniqueness of that contribution to be recognized, and for assurances that it would not be drowned under waves of homogenization.

Among those visiting Montreal was Charles de Gaulle. The French president was determined to use his trip to send an emphatic message about the enduring importance and relevance of national existence and, linked to this, the necessity of cooperation among the world's French-speaking peoples. Accompanied by Quebec's premier, Daniel Johnson, de Gaulle spent July 24 travelling up Quebec's north shore. Large crowds accorded him a rapturous welcome in the communities along his route. In Montreal, the climactic destination of a journey designed to underscore the ties of history, culture, and sentiment linking the francophone populations on either side of the Atlantic, crowds in the hundreds of thousands lined the streets to catch a glimpse of this towering historic figure. As the motorcade turned off Sherbrooke Street onto rue St-Denis and headed toward the city's old quarter, Montreal's church bells began to peal. An immense and excited throng greeted de Gaulle at the city hall overlooking Place Jacques-Cartier. He was escorted into the imposing building that stands upon what had once been the private gardens of New France's governor.<sup>4</sup> Very quickly, cries of "Le Général, au balcon" and "Le Québec aux Québécois" went up, joining a sea of Quebec flags, French tricolours, and placards proclaiming pro-independence slogans. Answering the calls, de Gaulle emerged onto the balcony. From this vantage point, he took in a panorama that included the teeming crowd gathered in the heat and humidity of a Montreal summer night. Within the General's view was a monument, emblematic of the historic Anglo-French struggle of which the city was so much a product, honouring British admiral Lord Horatio Nelson and his naval victories over French forces. Beyond the square lay the St. Lawrence and the Expo site. After acknowledging the crowd's acclamations, de Gaulle began to speak:

C'est une immense émotion qui remplit mon cœur en voyant devant moi la ville de Montréal française. Au nom du vieux pays, au nom de la France, je vous salue de tout mon cœur.

Je vais vous confier un secret que vous ne répéterez pas. Ce soir ici, et tout le long de ma route, je me trouvais dans une atmosphère du même genre que celle de la *Libération*.

Et tout le long de ma route, outre cela, j'ai constaté quel immense effort de progrès, de développement, et par conséquent d'affranchissement vous accom- plissez ici, et c'est à Montréal qu'il faut que je le dise, parce que, s'il y a au monde une ville exemplaire par ses réussites modernes, c'est la vôtre. Je dis c'est la vôtre et je me permets d'ajouter c'est *la nôtre*. Si vous saviez quelle confiance la France, réveillée après d'immenses épreuves, porte maintenant vers vous, si vous saviez quelle affection elle recommence à ressentir pour les Français du Canada,

et si vous saviez à quel point elle se sent obligée de concourir à votre marche en avant, à votre progrès!

C'est pourquoi elle a conclu avec le gouvernement du Québec, avec celui de mon ami Johnson, des accords pour que les Français de part et d'autre de l'Atlantique travaillent *ensemble* à une même œuvre *française*. Et d'ailleurs le concours que la France va, tous les jours un peu plus, prêter ici, elle sait bien que vous le lui rendrez parce que vous êtes en train de vous constituer des élites, des usines, des entreprises, des laboratoires, qui feront l'étonnement de tous et qui, un jour, j'en suis sûr, vous permettront d'aider la France.

Voilà ce que je suis venu vous dire ce soir en ajoutant que j'emporte de cette réunion *inouïe* de Montréal un souvenir *inoubliable*. La France entière sait, voit, entend, ce qui se passe ici et je puis vous dire qu'elle en vaudra mieux.

Vive Montréal! Vive le Québec! ... Vive le Québec libre!

Vive le Canada français et vive la France!<sup>15</sup>

De Gaulle had just placed *his* stone. As if it had been thrown into a pond – a metaphor the French leader favoured – the shockwaves expanded outward in concentric circles from Place Jacques-Cartier. With the French and Quebec notables behind him still absorbing his words, the crowd erupted in a thunderous, delirious roar of approval. Farther west, in a private railcar at Montreal's Windsor Station, Canada's secretary of state for external affairs, Paul Martin, responded in panicked disbelief at what he had just seen on television. Up the river in Ottawa, the prime minister, Lester Pearson, reacted angrily to the broadcasted speech. The shockwaves reached into homes throughout Quebec, where the reaction was as varied as opinions regarding the province's political destiny; they reached a Canadian populace increasingly anxious about the country's future even as they celebrated its past; they reached across the Atlantic to France, where they provoked reactions from derision to joy; they circled the globe. De Gaulle had just dramatically drawn world attention to the debate raging over Quebec's future, laying bare Canada's unity crisis.

ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH LEADER's remarks provoked astonishment on both sides of the Atlantic, ample signs had preceded his *cri du balcon*. This was a spectacular manifestation of the complex triangular dynamic that had emerged between Paris, Quebec City, and Ottawa. The dynamic, and the tensions that erupted in the 1960s, are best understood as products of the interwoven post-war evolutions of France, Quebec, and Canada, which resulted in the confluence and clash of three nationalist reactions. To be sure, these reactions arose in, and were informed by, the unique conditions found at each point of the triangle.

But they were also shaped and exacerbated by the intersecting of local circumstances with international realities. As such, the nationalist sentiment to which de Gaulle had given voice in Montreal was symptomatic of a much larger phenomenon.

Most broadly, all three points of the triangle were contending with increasing economic interdependence and the proliferation of transnational exchanges. These trends posed challenges to the authority of the state – the fundamental unit of the international system. They also called into question the basis of ethnic, religious, and national identities, and compelled greater attention to the complexity of mediating between the local and the global, the particular and the common, and the parochial and the cosmopolitan. Here lay an apparent contradiction at the heart of twentieth-century international relations: that the proliferation of exchanges transcending state and nation should have occurred in the very moment in history when, as Benedict Anderson observes, “nationness [was considered] the most universally legitimate value.”<sup>6</sup>

More specifically, all three points of the triangle had to respond to preponderant American power – military, political, economic, and cultural. Indeed, the United States bestrode the twin pillars of the North Atlantic world after 1945 like a latter-day Colossus, and it was under the gaze of the American giant that interdependence and transnationalism accelerated. Part of this trend was attributable to deliberate action by Washington, which aimed to establish and consolidate an international liberal and capitalist order. It was also the result of the expansion of American enterprise, as United States-based multinationals and cultural industries expanded their reach throughout the North Atlantic and beyond. But this trend was equally a consequence of governments – including those in Canada and France – that, even while subscribing to a liberal worldview, were seeking to contend with, influence, and constrain American power. By contributing in their own way to the growth of interdependence and transnationalism, the efforts in the triangle to carve out a space for a distinct “national” existence in the cultural, economic, and geopolitical spheres had had the ironic effect of reinforcing American predominance. The result by the 1960s, amid mounting indications of American overstretch, was growing nationalist sentiment and a desire to challenge the post-war status quo.

With these dynamics in mind, in this book I explore relations in the Canada-Quebec-France triangle in the quarter-century after the Second World War. My aim is to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the origins and evolution of the tensions that wracked the triangle in the 1960s. Why did the “special relationship” between Paris and Quebec City suddenly emerge after nearly two centuries of minimal official contact? What did France and Quebec share that encouraged their rapprochement after 1945? What were

the consequences for Franco-Canadian relations? What was Ottawa's response and what considerations informed this? The answers to these questions will shed light on domestic conditions in the three components of the triangle, but they also entail an exploration of how these conditions intersected with international developments after 1945, and how actors in the triangle responded to and were affected by global trends. It is thus crucial to place the Canada-Quebec-France triangle within the broader history of international relations.

A primary task in this regard is, as it were, to put de Gaulle in his place. To be sure, the General casts a figurative shadow over the accounts of the triangle almost as long as the one that he cast in real life.<sup>7</sup> This historiographical trend was encouraged by the numerous works written by participants in the events in question, upon which many of the subsequent academic accounts have been based. It was reinforced by a second generation of works sparked by the renewed debate over Quebec's political destiny in the 1990s. Inevitably, this literature has been shaped by the authors' beliefs and the political climate in which the works were produced, and it has faithfully reproduced the various linguistic, cultural, and political cleavages marking Quebec and Canada. But the preoccupation with the admittedly dramatic events of July 1967 tends to reduce actors other than de Gaulle to little more than passive observers (or perhaps bit players) and obscures the broader national and international trends at play. Taken to its logical conclusion, this "de Gaulle-centric" analysis ironically reduces the French leader's *cri du balcon* to little more than a historical footnote. However, what occurred in Montreal's Place Jacques-Cartier – and, indeed, what took place in the Canada-Quebec-France triangle – was far bigger than de Gaulle. To understand the larger significance of these events and the triangular tensions, it is essential to widen the scope of exploration. Such an approach leaves room to acknowledge the significant role played by de Gaulle, but situates his actions and the triangular dynamic in which he operated within a larger analytical framework that includes events prior to 1960, a period crucial to the origins and nature of the triangular tensions. It also involves going beyond traditional political-based narratives to engage with the cultural dimension of events.

Once again drawing upon Saint-Exupéry, what follows is my effort "to place one's stone" in the building of a greater understanding of the history of the Canada-Quebec-France triangle, its components, and its situation in international history. It is not my purpose to provide a catalogue of slights, nor do I intend to discuss only what divided Canada, Quebec, and France; rather, my objective is to demonstrate what they had in common. I thus reveal that the triangular tensions were not idiosyncratic; on the contrary, they were situated in larger international and transnational narratives. This is in keeping with the related presumption that "national" histories can be written effectively only if

one pays heed to the impact of global forces upon them, and that exploring international history compels the study of developments at the state and sub-state levels.<sup>8</sup> Even though the devotion of so many pages to exploring four words (“Vive le Québec libre”) may appear to be a classic case of academic parsing, the approach that I employ brings a new perspective to bear on the subject matter by unpacking the mythology surrounding this event – arguably the most dramatic and enduring symbol of the triangular dynamic – to reveal what it and the tensions of the period have to say about the evolution of international relations in the twentieth century and the entangled histories of Canada, Quebec, and France.

This book is divided into three parts. In the first part, I explore the Canada-Quebec-France triangle in the fifteen years from the Second World War to the advent of the Quiet Revolution. Chapter 1 delves into the geopolitical dimension of the relationship, as rising nationalist sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic to post-war challenges triggered a growing divergence between Ottawa and Paris. This division was even more apparent in the economic aspect of the bilateral relationship that is discussed in Chapter 2. With both Canada and France responding to the United States’s economic strength, Ottawa saw its efforts to construct a liberalized, multilateral economic order frustrated by French protectionism and Paris’s contribution to Europe’s economic integration.

But the record was by no means wholly negative. Even as global trends and the linked challenge of American economic power tended to undermine the official relationship, they also encouraged a rapprochement – especially between France and Quebec. The ascendance of a new, Quebec-centric variant of French-Canadian nationalism resulted in a growing Quebec appreciation of France as an indispensable ally in preserving the province’s majority francophone society in the face of the sociocultural changes accompanying urbanization and industrialization, along with intensifying interdependence and transnational flows. Informed by a discourse of “modernization,” the shift in Quebec attitudes was welcomed in Paris, which sought expanded relations to ensure French Canada’s cultural survival. More fundamentally, Quebec neo-nationalist preoccupations corresponded to misgivings in France over the ramifications of American economic power.

Such misgivings point to the cultural dimension of the relationship, which is explored in Chapter 3. The increasing Quebec openness toward France did not mean that contacts were free of controversy; consistent with Quebec neo-nationalist preoccupations, there were demands that France acknowledge French Canada as an equal partner and producer of francophone culture, boasting a unique contribution shaped by its North American reality. Nevertheless, there

was an unmistakable trend toward increased cultural contact between France and Canada, encouraged by concerns over American cultural power. In addition to anxiety in France and Quebec over “Americanization,” nationalist elements in English Canada were preoccupied with the United States’s impact on Canadian life. With governments moving to support and safeguard the “national” culture at each point of the triangle, culture became more and more politicized. Paris was drawn into an increasingly rancorous intergovernmental dispute in Canada, as the collision between Canadian and Quebec nationalisms exacerbated latent tensions over the relationship between the country’s two principal linguistic communities. As the 1950s drew to a close, the triangle was ripe for both cooperation and conflict.

A host of mutually reinforcing ethnocultural, political, and geopolitical motivations, combined with Canadian constitutional ambiguities, was the brew from which an increasingly fraught triangular dynamic would rise. In Part 2 of the book, I examine each of these motivations and how they shaped the triangular relationship during the 1960s. In Chapter 4, I explore how the concern with protecting and promoting North America’s *fait français* – its French fact – became bound up in nationalistic projects at all three points of the triangle. Such concern fuelled notions of francophone solidarity between France and Quebec while leading to Ottawa’s growing marginalization, notwithstanding a heightened English-Canadian appreciation of French Canada as a shield against Americanization. Indeed, cultural questions lay at the very core of the triangular tensions. In Chapter 5, I discuss how the acceleration of Quebec political life – and Ottawa’s apparent inability to respond to this acceleration – attracted a French attention conditioned by decolonization and the primacy that Gaullism accorded to national independence. Paris, convinced that Quebec was destined to achieve a new political status, adopted an increasingly explicit position in favour of Quebec autonomy and, ultimately, independence. Ottawa faced the daunting prospect of confronting Paris and Quebec City without reinforcing their cooperation and thus harming the federal position and Canadian unity. Ottawa’s response was thus confused, and this confusion was exacerbated by its having to contend with a moving target as the internal challenge of Quebec neo-nationalism and the external challenge of Gaullist nationalism progressively moved the bar. In Chapter 6, I describe how these ethnocultural and political considerations became bound up in larger geopolitical manoeuvrings, as Franco-Canadian differences spurred Gaullist France’s “Quebec policy” and led to a Canadian foreign policy failure.

In Part 3, I explore how this complicated triangular relationship was manifested in the political, economic, and cultural spheres over the course of the

1960s. In Chapter 7, I discuss the early phase of the official rapprochement between Paris and Quebec City and how federal efforts to build up Franco-Canadian relations fanned the flames of rivalry between Ottawa and Quebec City, and thus spurred efforts by Paris and Quebec City to strengthen their ties. Triangular tensions were at a fever pitch and the stage was set for confrontation by the time of de Gaulle's visit, which ushered in the period of acute crisis that is the subject of Chapter 8. Following the dramatic events of that summer, Paris and Quebec City moved to strengthen relations and cooperated to achieve Quebec's distinct and autonomous participation in the Francophonie. Ottawa continued to struggle to respond to what it considered a fundamental challenge from within and without to its constitutional prerogatives and to Canadian unity.

Ultimately, the passing of the triangular crisis would owe less to the effectiveness of the immediate federal response than to other factors. In Chapter 9, I discuss the triangle's economic dimension, demonstrating the challenges and contradictions that nationalist forces encountered in altering the structure of the relationship and broader international economic conditions. In Chapter 10, I explore the cultural component that proved to be a driving force of the triangular dynamic, including the emergence and consolidation of cooperation between France and Quebec, and Ottawa's parallel efforts to assert itself as a viable interlocutor in the cultural sphere. My examination in Chapter 11 of developments in the triangle and the Francophonie after de Gaulle left the political stage, and after changes of leadership in Ottawa and Quebec City, reveals how the special relationship between France and Quebec was set to endure. All of this, along with understanding the Canada-Quebec-France triangle's broader relevance to international history, makes it essential to shine more light on this complex relationship by moving it out from under the shadow of the General.

PART 1

Best of Times, Worst of Times:  
The Canada-Quebec-France Triangle,  
**1944-1960**

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## CHAPTER ONE

# Atlanticism in Common, Atlanticism in Question

THE NORMANDY VILLAGE OF Courseulles-sur-Mer lies at the centre of what, on June 6, 1944, was Juno Beach, the Canadian sector of Operation Overlord. An imposing silver cross of Lorraine graces this stretch of shore where, days after the Allied landings, Charles de Gaulle returned to the France from which he had fled four years before. Emblematic of the change that the years of fighting had wrought on Franco-Canadian links, the Free French leader was greeted by Canadian soldiers.<sup>1</sup> As the war entered its final months, relations between Canada and France appeared poised to enter a new phase.

Canadian and French responses to Cold War realities, not the least of which was preponderant American power, shaped the relationship in the fifteen years after the Second World War. Bilateral contact and cooperation were greater than ever, as Ottawa and Paris viewed one another as useful and necessary allies in the realization of their respective foreign policy goals, and the two countries were bound together by a common adherence to Atlanticism. For a time, it appeared this foreign policy response, an amalgam of realist geopolitical calculations and liberal internationalist aspirations, would promote more substantive relations. However, Ottawa and Paris viewed the Cold War world through different prisms. Conditioned by diverging interpretations of the nature and organization of the international system, and the respective places that Canada and France occupied in it, the two capitals had embraced Atlanticism with unique expectations. To be sure, both recognized that circumstances had pushed them into the United States's geopolitical orbit, and both viewed Atlanticism as a means to influence and even constrain Washington. From the outset, however, there were fundamental differences between Ottawa and Paris over how close one could come to the American sun without getting burned. This divergence was increasingly apparent as it became clear that rather than controlling the American giant, the Atlantic framework was in many respects facilitating its predominant position in the West.

By the mid-1950s, the discrepancy between the Canadian and French understandings of Atlanticism was making it a source of discord. Paris, wrestling with reduced international stature and with decolonization, chafed under the constraints of Atlanticism and resented the realities of an alliance increasingly perceived as a thorn in the side of French interests. Such frustration fuelled a progressively more nationalist foreign policy and culminated in the Fourth Republic's collapse and de Gaulle's return to power. The shifting French position presented Ottawa with a dilemma. Nationalist concern over Canada's thickening web of links with the United States grew throughout the post-war period, in parallel with the declining importance of relations with Britain and the Commonwealth. As the 1950s progressed, Ottawa continued to consider Atlanticism an essential tool for managing Canada's asymmetrical relationship with Washington and maximizing an international influence that was in decline as Europe recovered. Boasting a foreign policy establishment oriented culturally toward the Anglo-American world and inclined ideologically to engage in the Cold War, Ottawa strove to act as a linchpin and reconcile France with its allies, in the hope of preserving the transatlantic framework at the heart of Canadian foreign policy. The result was a growing Franco-Canadian divergence on an array of global issues and a deterioration of the bilateral relationship in the geopolitical sphere that was crucial to the origins and evolution of the triangular tensions of the 1960s.

IN THE NEARLY TWO CENTURIES from Britain's conquest of New France to the German occupation of France in 1940, official links between France and Canada were tenuous. Formal contact between British North America and France was established only in the 1850s, and Confederation had little immediate impact on the relationship – the fledgling Dominion remained a colony in international affairs, so that relations were conducted chiefly through London. However, in the decades after Confederation, contacts with France proved instrumental to Canada's gradual emergence as an autonomous international actor – notwithstanding occasional fears in Paris about provoking British annoyance. The Quebec and Dominion governments, in turn, opened offices in Paris. Quebec premiers Adolphe Chapleau and Honoré Mercier were feted in the French capital, as was prime minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The First World War saw tens of thousands of Canadians spill their blood at the Somme, Vimy Ridge, and beyond. These losses on French territory ultimately spurred Canadian bids for international autonomy. After the Balfour Declaration (1926) recognized Canada's right to conduct its own foreign relations, Ottawa and Paris established equivalent diplomatic representation. France – after Britain and the

United States – was the third country in which Canada operated a diplomatic mission. Even after this, however, relations remained anemic.<sup>2</sup>

Franco-Canadian links took on unprecedented importance following France's collapse before the German blitzkrieg in 1940. Ottawa suddenly confronted the dilemma of which rival French authority to recognize: the Vichy regime headed by Marshall Philippe Pétain, or de Gaulle and his Free France movement. The question quickly became bound up in Canadian domestic affairs as the conflict between the rival Frances was transposed onto Quebec's ideological and political debates. The prime minister, Mackenzie King, responded to the situation with characteristic caution, guided by his overarching goal of avoiding a recurrence of the national disunity that had rocked Canada during the First World War. Ottawa pursued its "Vichy gamble," maintaining relations with the increasingly collaborationist regime until late 1942. Beyond domestic considerations, the decision was motivated by the urgings of London, which wanted to keep open a line of communication with Vichy, and by Washington's maintaining relations with Pétain's government. Canada's wartime links with France were thus influenced heavily by the Anglo-Americans' complicated and shifting relations with Vichy and the Free French. This was apparent in the Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon affair at the end of 1941, when, to American consternation, Free French forces acting on de Gaulle's orders seized these French islands off the Newfoundland coast. The dynamic was similarly evident in Canadian efforts, with Ottawa shifting toward a pro-Free French stance, to have Washington and London recognize de Gaulle's Gouvernement provisoire de la République française as France's legitimate government.<sup>3</sup>

Ottawa and Paris emerged from the war believing that they could expand and employ their strengthened links to mutual benefit. The symbolic elevation of their diplomatic legations to full embassies after Canada, in tandem with the other allies, recognized France's provisional government in October 1944 signalled the importance that both capitals assigned to the relationship. Ottawa's enhanced appreciation of France stemmed from recognition of that country's centrality to the post-war settlement, not least its role in a restored European counterweight to the United States. Paris's support of Canadian claims to "middle power" status were appreciated in Ottawa, where it was envisaged that the country's alleged vocation as a linchpin between Britain and the United States could be expanded to an intermediary role between those two countries and France. French diplomats noted their country's increased stature in the Canadian capital, evident when the secretary of state for external affairs, Louis St. Laurent, described France as an "indispensable element" of Canada's international life during his 1947 Gray Lecture at the

University of Toronto, remembered as the most comprehensive declaration of Canadian post-war foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

Paris certainly recognized Canada's enhanced international position. When de Gaulle visited for the first time, in July 1944, his briefing notes described Canada as an interpreter between Europe and North America by virtue of geography, and between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin worlds owing to its ethnic origins. During a second trip, in 1945, de Gaulle used a press conference in Ottawa to refer to Canada's rise in the global ranks as justification for taking the bilateral relationship to a new level, and he asserted that Canada and France could only benefit from close cooperation. A report prepared by the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (MAE) in 1949, perhaps the most comprehensive account of Paris's post-war attitudes regarding Canada, emphasized the country's increased importance and argued that this could only grow with immigration and the development of its natural resources. The report even suggested that Canada could displace Britain as the Commonwealth's centre of gravity and predicted that, with an increasing population, it would not be long before Canada was one of the world's most powerful countries.<sup>5</sup>

Paris was especially impressed by Ottawa's growing international assertiveness. The MAE saw Ottawa's positive disposition toward France as stemming partly from a Canadian concern with counterbalancing American influence, and French attention was drawn to Mackenzie King's declaration that Canada would act more and more independently of the Commonwealth in pursuing its national interests.<sup>6</sup> Such claims to independence resonated in Gaullist ears. Paris recognized that this increasingly powerful, autonomous Canada could be a very useful ally. France's ambassador to Ottawa, Francisque Gay, described Canada as exerting a certain French influence in the Commonwealth that London had to acknowledge. French interest similarly arose from Ottawa's links with the United States, reinforced by King's claims that Canada could serve as an intermediary between Paris and Washington. Gay suggested that by virtue of France's close relations with Canada, Paris could call upon Ottawa to intercede with the Americans when necessary.<sup>7</sup>

Ottawa's perceived influence with the British and Americans meant that Paris considered Canada well placed to advance French interests in international forums. On the eve of King's March 1945 visits to Washington and London, Paris sought to use his influence with Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill to advance the French position regarding the emerging United Nations organization. France's ambassador emphasized to King the similarity of French and Canadian policy, as well as the fact that Paris's proposals would enhance the influence of middle powers such as Canada. Although they differed somewhat over the question of the veto for the permanent members of the Security Council,

the Canadian and French delegations generally supported one another at the subsequent San Francisco conference.<sup>8</sup> This cooperation endured at the United Nations. Francisque Gay claimed that there was no other country with which France found itself “more commonly, more completely, and more amicably in agreement.” He also remarked upon the Canadian efforts to serve as intermediary between the French and Anglo-American delegations.<sup>9</sup>

The Cold War provided additional incentive for cooperation: faced with the deteriorating international situation, Ottawa and Paris embraced Atlanticism, reflected in their participation in the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Atlanticism was meant to bind North America and Western Europe together against the perceived Soviet threat. As such, it was a manifestation of realist calculations about the global balance of power. At the same time, however, Atlanticism was grounded in liberal internationalism – the belief that peace and stability were best promoted by states ceding a portion of their sovereignty to act collectively to confront common challenges. The tension between Atlanticism’s realist and liberal internationalist dimensions was apparent in the complicated role that the United States played in the alliance and in the relationship between it and other members. As the apotheosis of the liberal project undergirding Atlanticism, the United States was considered a crucial source of protection and support; however, alliance members were also preoccupied with influencing and curbing American power. Reflecting the reality that, “as with all faiths, the tenets [of Atlanticism] were understood differently by its adherents,” Ottawa and Paris adopted this foreign policy with differing motivations and expectations.<sup>10</sup>

In the immediate post-war period, Paris had hoped to regain international influence by serving as an intermediary between the Soviets and Anglo-Americans, its foremost concern being to block any German revival. Such aims were soon overtaken by events. French efforts to cultivate the Russians were revealed to be a failure by the testy Franco-Soviet exchanges during the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1947. This was quickly followed by the Soviet-backed coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin blockade. In France, meanwhile, de Gaulle had resigned in early 1946, fed up with the machinations of France’s political parties. Anxiety over the communists’ political strength and mounting labour strife throughout 1947 resulted in the expulsion of the Parti communiste français from the government, and the emergence of the Third Force coalition of socialists, liberals, and Christian democrats arrayed against the communist and Gaullist extremes of French political life. Evidence of Paris’s shift from a quasi-neutralism into the Western camp was its concluding the Brussels Treaty, a mutual defence pact – and, more broadly, an appeal for North American assistance – with Britain and the Benelux countries.

As the talks leading to the North Atlantic treaty got underway in mid-1948, the foremost French concern, beyond securing American aid, protecting against a Soviet invasion, and resisting Anglo-American pressures for German rearmament, was to use the nascent alliance to regain Great Power status and establish itself as the pre-eminent continental power. For Paris, such status required having a voice in the strategic direction of the West equal to that of London and Washington, along with arrangements to help France retain its overseas possessions, especially in North Africa. The realist hue to French Atlanticism was evident in Paris's irritation at not being included in secret preliminary talks between American, British, and Canadian officials in March 1948. The exclusion, a result of American security concerns, rankled all the more since Paris had been pushing for joint strategic planning and some form of alliance with Washington.<sup>11</sup>

This early dispute pointed to a fundamental tension at the core of French Atlanticism. If Atlanticism appeared to be the best means available to promote France's geopolitical interests, concealing French weakness under the cloak of North Atlantic solidarity, France's past as a Great Power ill prepared it to accept second-tier status in the alliance.<sup>12</sup> Yet the shift in the global balance of power ruled out French predominance, as did the fact that Atlanticism was grounded in the ties of history and culture linking the United States, Britain, and Canada. Indeed, the core personalities involved in NATO's founding were overwhelmingly "Anglo-Saxon," making the new alliance "an Anglo-American concept, an Anglo-American creation."<sup>13</sup> All of this rendered problematic Paris's bid for a privileged partnership with the new American hegemon and parity with Britain. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that shortly after the North Atlantic treaty was concluded complaints could be heard that France had become the "tail to a kite flown in Washington."<sup>14</sup> Although France boasted staunch Atlanticists such as Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, and Raymond Aron, ambivalence marked French attitudes about the new transatlantic order; the nationalistic aspects of French Atlanticism overlapped with the neutralist sentiment popular among France's intellectual left, along with enduring desires for a Europeanist "third way" between the two superpowers.

In contrast to France's ambivalent embrace of Atlanticism, Canada's experience as the junior member of the "North Atlantic triangle," along with the Anglo-American cultural orientation of its diplomatic corps, conditioned Ottawa to seize what the Department of External Affairs (DEA) under-secretary, Norman Robertson, described as the "providential solution" of Atlanticism – a reasonable compromise of sovereignty in exchange for an autonomous, nominally equal voice in the West's councils of power.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, following the wartime

acrimony between English and French Canada, Atlanticism stood as the best prospect for a consensus on the country's international life.

A ribbon of liberal internationalism ran prominently through Canadian Atlanticism. The debate over article 2 of the North Atlantic treaty, intended to facilitate economic, cultural, and political cooperation, reflected Canadian desires that NATO be more than a military alliance – that it serve as a rejoinder to the Soviet worldview and promote an integration culminating in the emergence of an “Atlantic community.” Not too far behind such lofty ambitions, however, lurked more prosaic geopolitical calculations. Certain members of Canada’s foreign policy establishment – notably Ottawa’s ambassador to Washington, Hume Wrong – gave short shrift to Atlanticism’s idealistic dimension and were more concerned with responding to the more immediate challenge of the post-war balance of power.<sup>16</sup> The exponential growth of American power and Britain’s concomitant decline had upset the delicate balance that Ottawa sought to maintain between Washington and London. Matters were not helped by Canada’s failure to secure a tangible “middle power” status at the United Nations, considered the surest vehicle for autonomous Canadian international action. Combined with Ottawa’s concern over the Soviet threat and what this portended for relations with Washington, Atlanticism appeared an attractive option indeed. It offered Ottawa the ability to influence the Americans while safeguarding Canada’s autonomy: NATO would expand the traditional European counterweight from a weakened Britain to include France and Western Europe. Canadian nationalism thus “marched hand in hand with internationalism.”<sup>17</sup>

Even as Paris and Ottawa embraced Atlanticism, their differences over what this entailed were evident. In addition to French indifference and lip service to article 2, the St. Laurent government was discomfited by Paris’s insistence that the NATO treaty should cover North Africa, fearing that it would make the alliance a vehicle for the perpetuation of colonialism. Ottawa overcame its reticence only when faced with Paris’s *sine qua non* that Algeria be included in the treaty. Amid French hesitation about the emerging alliance, Lester Pearson, recently appointed secretary of state for external affairs, instructed Georges Vanier, Canada’s ambassador to Paris, to “talk some sense into his French friends, who, of all people, should be the most enthusiastic.”<sup>18</sup> Although the NATO shield provided an arena for greater Franco-Canadian contact, it was apparent early on that it was also a multilateral sword that could cut both ways.

The peak in Franco-Canadian cooperation during this Atlanticist moment occurred during the Korean War. Although Paris and Ottawa backed the United Nations resolution condemning North Korea’s invasion of South Korea, both

capitals were concerned about the United States-led action on the peninsula and feared a larger conflict. By the end of 1950, Ottawa and Paris had recognized their common concerns over Korea, and used their influence to counter “the more impetuous aspects” of American policy.<sup>19</sup>

The strength of the relationship was evident throughout 1951. Against the backdrop of Canada sending an army brigade and air division to Europe as part of NATO’s integrated force, France’s prime minister, René Pleven, travelled to Ottawa, where he commented to Canadian officials “upon the remarkable extent to which French and Canadian views coincided on the most important world problems.”<sup>20</sup> Pleven’s visit had been preceded by Louis St. Laurent’s first trip to France as prime minister. French officials interpreted the sojourn as a signal that Ottawa viewed relations with Paris as equal in importance to those with London and Washington, and as a means to emphasize Canadian autonomy from the British and Americans. The MAE took advantage of St. Laurent’s presence to demonstrate Paris’s desire for a strong collaboration, especially regarding relations with the Americans, since it considered Canada better placed than any other country to present views not easily accepted in Washington. During their talks, Pleven complained to St. Laurent about what he decried as American and British attempts to establish an “Anglo-Saxon leadership” of NATO.<sup>21</sup>

In April 1951, France’s president, Vincent Auriol, became that country’s first head of state to visit Canada. The trip took place amid heightened anxiety over Korea, following American General Douglas MacArthur’s threats to expand the war to China if Beijing did not negotiate with the UN. During the visit, Pearson reiterated to his French counterpart, Robert Schuman, that Ottawa and Paris had similar misgivings about the trend of American policy. Referring more than once to Canada’s “courageous policy,” Auriol and Schuman affirmed that Ottawa could criticize Washington much more emphatically than Paris dared given France’s reliance on American military and economic aid.<sup>22</sup>

Pearson’s subsequent speech to Toronto’s Canadian Club, in which he declared over the era of “easy and automatic relations” between Canada and the United States, was welcomed in French official circles as an expression of concern over the bellicose climate in Washington and the prospect of the Korean War escalating into a global conflagration. France’s embassy characterized Pearson’s remarks as a bid to maintain Atlantic solidarity, sending the Americans a message that likely would have been ignored had it come from another ally. The ambassador, Hubert Guérin, even claimed that Pearson deserved some credit for American president Harry Truman’s subsequent firing of MacArthur, and remarked upon the community of interests and intentions between Canada and France.<sup>23</sup> Guérin cited Canadian public opinion’s support of France’s “peace offensive” at the 1951 UN General Assembly, and the fact that Auriol’s opening

remarks on this occasion were better received in Ottawa than in Washington as proof of a greater Canadian understanding of Western European positions on the Cold War.<sup>24</sup>

Yet storm clouds were already gathering over this common ground. Although France and Canada shared an Atlanticist response to Cold War realities, this masked and even exacerbated their differences. There was French disappointment over Ottawa's decision in 1949 not to recognize the Associated States of Indochina (ASI), owing to Canadian doubts about the viability and independence of the Paris-backed regime. Despite repeated French requests and fears that Ottawa was signalling non-confidence in French policy and a lack of sympathy for Paris's domestic challenges, Canada withheld recognition until 1952. News of the Viet Minh's growing strength prompted Ottawa to grant recognition as a way to encourage Franco-Vietnamese forces and support France to show Atlantic solidarity.<sup>25</sup>

The episode demonstrated that a shared Atlanticism by no means guaranteed harmony; to the contrary, it had sown discord. Paris was preoccupied with re-establishing France as a Great Power, which entailed regaining control of its overseas possessions, and it expected support from its Canadian ally. Such expectations clashed, however, with Canadian liberal internationalism and Ottawa's quest for middle power status, one based partly on its Commonwealth ties. Indeed, the withholding of Canadian recognition had been informed by the fact that India, with which Ottawa sought a "special relationship," questioned the ASI's legitimacy. To Ottawa's subsequent surprise, New Delhi was influential in arranging to have Canada serve on the International Commission for Supervision and Control established in 1954 to oversee the Geneva settlement of the conflict in Indochina. As Canadian diplomats prepared to take up the task, Lester Pearson warned them to be cautious in their dealings with the French.<sup>26</sup>

Differences over Indochina were the harbinger of a growing divergence between Ottawa and Paris over foreign policy approaches and objectives. To be sure, by the early 1950s, the idealistic dimension of Canadian Atlanticism had declined in relative importance, as reflected in Ottawa's failure to propose concrete measures regarding article 2. Yet Canada's foreign policy establishment continued to view Atlanticism as the best available way to respond to the Cold War and contend with American power, even though such an approach was reinforcing American predominance.<sup>27</sup> Across the Atlantic meanwhile, with the acute phase of French vulnerability past, Paris assumed an increasingly nationalist stance. French Atlanticism was predicated on Paris having an equal voice in Western decision-making, yet this appeared increasingly unattainable given the "growing hegemonic impulse" in Washington being fed by pessimistic appraisals of Western European military capabilities.<sup>28</sup> French nationalist disenchantment

encouraged Ottawa to pursue a “helpful fixer” role to mitigate transatlantic dis-sension. When Auriol told Vanier of the growth of “a violent anti-American sentiment” in France, the Canadian ambassador was moved to warn Ottawa that the president’s thinly veiled criticism of the United States in an October 1952 speech revealed a “growing [French] impatience in foreign policy matters.” This made it urgent, Vanier argued, for Ottawa to act as a linchpin between Paris and Washington; an active Canadian presence in NATO would reinforce French faith in the alliance and strengthen the hand of Atlanticist politicians in Paris.<sup>29</sup>

Canadian concern with maintaining Atlantic solidarity was evident during the acrimonious debate over the European Defence Community (EDC). The deepening Cold War and the fighting in Korea had increased the sense of urgency regarding Western European defence. Responding to European calls for an integrated NATO force in Europe that included a North American troop commitment and an American commander, Washington began pushing for West German rearment within NATO under a single, unified command. These developments jeopardized France’s entire post-war strategy. Beyond posing a security risk, German rearment would upset the European balance of economic, political, and military power and raised the spectre of an eventual Anglo-American withdrawal from the continent. Paris responded with the Pleven Plan, the EDC’s progenitor; German rearment was to be realized under the supranational cloak of European integration, although in practice the EDC would come under NATO control. The scheme was fatally weakened, however, by its ambitiousness and British non-participation. Paris’s objectives throughout the ensuing protracted debate were consistent: ensuring French parity with the Anglo-Americans and integrating West Germany into the Western camp on terms favourable to France. Despite the EDC’s French origins, fears grew that the scheme threatened French interests. De Gaulle and his Rassemblement du peuple français condemned the plan as an excessive concession of sovereignty that relegated France to second-tier status relative to Britain and the United States. The project was depicted as a plot to ensure that the Anglo-Americans would become the sole possessors of independent armed forces, with the continental European powers falling under their control.<sup>30</sup> The EDC soon became a foundling, adopted by a Washington that also wanted to be midwife to the birth of a united Europe.

The Atlantic ideal guided Ottawa’s response, informing its attempts to reconcile Paris and Washington and see the EDC realized. Although Paris was aware of Canadian desires for a prompt ratification of the treaty, it also appreciated Ottawa’s linchpin efforts as proof of understanding and moderation. Pearson’s sympathetic remarks at the December 1953 meeting of the North Atlantic

Council that saw the United States's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, threaten an "agonizing reappraisal" of American policy if the EDC collapsed, earned Pearson his French counterpart's deep gratitude. Georges Bidault, France's foreign minister, found it "moving that a Canadian of British origin should express the French position with such clarity, understanding and good-will."<sup>31</sup> Bidault was perhaps drawn more to the sympathetic elements of Pearson's remarks than to the deeper Atlanticist message that he repeated in acknowledging Bidault's thanks:

Because of our history, our traditions and our origins we are ... able to understand somewhat more clearly than our American neighbours the feelings of our friends in France, especially when questions of Franco-German relationships are under consideration. It would be surprising if it were not so.

At the same time, because we are North Americans, we also appreciate and share the anxiety of ... Washington that European arrangements should soon be completed which will make it easier for us on this continent to cooperate to the full within the North Atlantic coalition by associating Germany in some form.<sup>32</sup>

The EDC, however, was doomed. After France's new prime minister, Pierre Mendès-France, failed in the face of American opposition to remove the treaty's supranational components, he refused to engage his government's future over it. This prompted the National Assembly to block ratification, effectively killing the project. Ottawa welcomed the subsequent compromise arrangement of the Western European Union;<sup>33</sup> however, it was anxious that this should not undermine the Atlanticist framework by encouraging a "Europeanist" solution.<sup>34</sup> Notwithstanding such concerns, there was official optimism in Ottawa about Mendès-France, who was perceived as more capable than his predecessors in responding to France's challenges. For his part, Mendès-France regarded Pearson as a useful ally who could explain French actions to the Americans. Paris had appreciated Pearson's sympathetic reaction to the EDC's failure, and Guérin was instructed to ask him to use his influence in Washington to help with the difficult situation. Pearson did so, lobbying Dulles in advance of Mendès-France's November 1954 visit to the American capital. Stopping in Ottawa en route, Mendès-France acknowledged, in talks with St. Laurent, the reality of American leadership of the West, but he emphasized Western Europe's need to lessen its dependence on the United States as a prerequisite to a more flexible foreign policy. St. Laurent offered his empathy in reply, explaining that Canada, possibly more than any other country, was aware of and had to contend with American public opinion.<sup>35</sup>

With the EDC debate resolved after providing opportunities for cooperation between Ottawa and Paris, it was not surprising that Canada's ambassador, Jean Désy, should have claimed that the relationship had "never been more active or useful."<sup>36</sup> The transatlantic bonhomie, however, hid the broader trend: rather than sympathy for the French position, Ottawa had been motivated by its concern to preserve the Atlanticist framework. For France, meanwhile, the debate had constituted a national reawakening that included a growing antipathy for Atlanticism. Notwithstanding the EDC's French parentage, Washington's intense pressure for ratification had made it appear to be an American *diktat*. Rejecting it constituted an assertion of independence from Washington, a refusal to accept what had come to be seen as an excessive concession of sovereignty in pursuit of the Atlantic ideal, and a rejection of a two-tiered NATO that would see France treated differently.<sup>37</sup> Although Ottawa and Paris continued to operate within the Atlanticist framework, they were increasingly working at cross-purposes.

THE DIVERGENCE BETWEEN Canada and France was increasingly apparent as events in North Africa spilled into the North Atlantic. Part of the French calculus for NATO had been to shift part of the rearmament burden onto Washington, freeing up resources that Paris could use to shore up control of its overseas territories. This was all the more important given that the war had enhanced the importance of empire in French minds as a guarantor of Great Power status and pre-eminence in Europe. North Africa loomed large in this regard, but France's collapse and the arrival of Anglo-American forces in 1942 had disrupted French authority, encouraged local nationalist movements, and attracted international attention to the region's future. The Fourth Republic's attempts at reform were no match for the rising anti-colonial tide in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. Nationalist calls for "internal independence" were quickly overtaken by demands for full sovereignty, and a vicious cycle of popular unrest, repression, and nationalist appeals to international opinion further eroded France's position.<sup>38</sup>

Canada's support for decolonization in the abstract was conditioned in practice by the priority that it attached to Atlantic solidarity and broader Cold War considerations. Initially, Ottawa was indulgent toward Paris and its actions in North Africa; however, as French difficulties began to have a deleterious effect on Western interests and NATO unity, Ottawa attempted to reconcile France to the broader priorities of its allies, particularly Washington. The dynamic was evident during the Pinay affair of autumn 1952, when the American delegation to the UN abstained on a vote regarding inscription of the Tunisian situation on the General Assembly's agenda. Paris considered the abstention a betrayal that, combined with Washington's reduction of offshore procurement aid to France, provoked the French prime minister, Antoine Pinay, to decry American

interference in his country's affairs. In contrast, the Canadian delegation's votes against resolutions urging France to recognize Tunisian and Moroccan independence earned Pinay's gratitude. French diplomats ascribed Ottawa's sympathetic reaction to its own challenges with Washington.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, the more immediate reason for Canada's stance was Ottawa's fear that criticizing France could provoke Paris to reject the EDC or withdraw from Indochina, or that it could even bring an anti-NATO government to power. The Atlanticist preoccupation informing Canadian policy was apparent in the fact that during the same period, Ottawa supported inscription of the Tunisian and Moroccan issues on the General Assembly agenda, in the hope that such a discussion would mollify Arab and Asian members and thereby safeguard Western interests in North Africa and beyond.<sup>40</sup>

If Ottawa drew satisfaction from Paris's subsequent adoption of liberal policies that led to Moroccan and Tunisian independence, it was increasingly alarmed as France grappled with its most vexing colonial challenge: Algeria. The idea of France's *mission civilisatrice* in Algeria was long in dying; the bloody French reaction to the 1945 Sétif uprising, combined with events in Morocco and Tunisia, stoked an Algerian nationalism that erupted in a full-blown anti-colonial insurgency in November 1954. For Paris, accommodation was a non-starter. France had been humiliated in 1940 and in Indochina, its position had become untenable in the rest of North Africa, and the EDC's collapse had announced a heightened nationalistic sensitivity. France's military and a vast swath of the political class were adamant that Algeria would not – could not – be another defeat.<sup>41</sup>

Ottawa had been loath to extend the provisions of the North Atlantic treaty to Algeria, but even if it harboured a certain sympathy for the Algerian desire for self-determination, its preoccupation with Atlantic unity and belief that NATO interests were best served by French control of the Mediterranean littoral prompted it to support the attempt by Paris to crush the insurgency. This support included indirect funding of the French war effort, as Canada sent military equipment to France under the auspices of NATO's Mutual Aid program. However, mounting evidence throughout 1955 of French difficulties, along with the Bandung Declaration on self-determination that fuelled Canadian fears of a rift between the West and the Third World, provoked second thoughts in Ottawa. When Paris weakened the NATO deterrent by transferring an army division from West Germany to Algeria, Pearson became convinced that French actions were undermining the Atlanticist cause.<sup>42</sup> France's ambassador to Canada, Francis Lacoste, was soon reporting on the deepening anxiety in Ottawa over Algeria and the Canadian predisposition toward the anti-colonial position.<sup>43</sup>

As the French government of Guy Mollet adopted an all-out war effort in 1956, Canada's Paris embassy warned that a French defeat would unleash extremism and bitterness transcending anything witnessed since the end of the Second World War. Canadian hopes of satisfying Algerian aspirations without harming French (and, by implication, NATO) interests were stymied by Paris's adamance that fighting in Algeria – by law an integral part of France – was a domestic affair. When Ottawa attempted to use the 1956 North Atlantic Council meeting to push Paris to embrace a liberal solution similar to that in Morocco and Tunisia, it was pre-empted by France's request for the NATO allies to foreswear interference and declare unqualified support of French efforts.<sup>44</sup>

France's deteriorating position in Algeria precipitated the Suez Crisis. It is fitting, given the growing divergence between Ottawa and Paris over Atlanticism, that what is remembered as a Canadian diplomatic triumph – Lester Pearson's contribution to defusing the crisis – should have occurred in conjunction with what was arguably the foreign policy nadir of the Fourth Republic. Paris's response to Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956 was motivated partly by a concern with safeguarding French investments. There was also a general aversion to Egypt's president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, particularly his anti-Israeli position and pan-Arabism; democratic Europe's failure to confront the totalitarian challenge in the 1930s could not be repeated with what was viewed as a quasi-fascist regime. The foremost French aim, however, was to use the crisis to halt Cairo's material aid to the Algerian insurgency. Increasingly exasperated over what it considered a temporizing American approach, Paris was determined to remove Nasser and halt Egyptian arms shipments to the insurgents, and it began acting as an intermediary between the British and Israelis in organizing a military riposte.<sup>45</sup>

The Canadian response recalled that of the EDC debate – the objective being to defuse the crisis and preserve Atlantic solidarity. Ottawa was all too aware of the growing strains within NATO; the previous year, Pearson had reiterated Canada's desire to enhance the alliance's civilian dimension and achieve greater consultation between its members. Even as the Suez Crisis unfolded, Pearson was promoting these objectives as a member of NATO's "Three Wise Men" committee that had been established to find ways to strengthen non-military cooperation and reinvigorate the Atlanticist cause.<sup>46</sup> Aware that the French blamed Egypt for the fighting in Algeria, Ottawa viewed Paris's and London's actions as a dangerously flawed bid to destroy Nasser. The French and British veto of the American resolution in the Security Council condemning Israel for its prearranged attack on Egypt at the end of October, followed by the Anglo-French military intervention, was the nightmare scenario for Canadian Atlanticism: an open split in NATO between its foremost allies. Ottawa used

the General Assembly to facilitate a solution that would extricate the British and French while minimizing damage to Atlantic solidarity and the Commonwealth. Initially, therefore, there was no Canadian public condemnation of Paris or London for violating the UN Charter; rather, Pearson built support for a peacekeeping force to defuse the explosive situation. His efforts bore fruit when the Security Council mandated the secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjöld, to assemble an emergency military force to act as a buffer between Egyptian and Israeli forces. The crisis deepened, however, following the landings of Anglo-French paratroopers, an action that led Moscow to threaten an atomic attack on Paris and London. Before Anglo-French military objectives could be realized, intense American financial pressure forced Britain's prime minister, Anthony Eden, to inform his French counterpart, Guy Mollet, that he was compelled to accept a ceasefire and the deployment of a peacekeeping force without British or French participation.<sup>47</sup>

Atlantic solidarity was shaken to its core. The debacle meant that Paris sank further into the Algerian quagmire, having enhanced Nasser's prestige in the Arab world at a corresponding cost to French influence. Mollet believed that he had been betrayed by Eden and abandoned by Washington. Indeed, the American economic coercion and refusal to respond to Soviet sabre-rattling confirmed French suspicions that the alliance was a fig leaf concealing a naked American bid for hegemony. Referring to the "undercurrent of satisfaction that Nasser ha[d] been shown up ... and that France had reacted vigorously" and independently of Washington, Canada's Paris embassy warned against underestimating French nationalist sentiment; although NATO was still considered indispensable to France's security, this was paralleled by a growing determination to safeguard French independence within the alliance.<sup>48</sup>

News from London was even more alarming. Canada's high commission cited a Foreign Office source in reporting that senior French Cabinet members, including Mollet and foreign minister Christian Pineau, had seriously considered the "emasculated, if not the actual break-up, of NATO" to free France from the American embrace.<sup>49</sup> Such reports heightened Canadian anxiety over French intentions; DEA officials feared the ramifications of Paris's increased assertiveness for European integration in the wake of Suez. St. Laurent was reminded that it was "axiomatic" for Canada that "Western Europe should develop and integrate as part of the Atlantic community ... in every major field of policy."<sup>50</sup>

Suez and its aftermath were thus a dramatic illustration of the Franco-Canadian dynamic, already apparent during the EDC debate, arising from the divergence over Atlanticism. In both situations, Ottawa had sought to minimize the damage to Atlantic solidarity in response to an increasingly pronounced French nationalism. But there was a crucial difference between the two episodes:

whereas Canadian efforts had earned French gratitude regarding the EDC, these were less appreciated in Paris two years later, as their aim was to preserve the solidarity of a transatlantic alliance that a growing portion of French decision makers criticized as unresponsive, even hostile, to French interests. Indeed, Suez was crucial to France's subsequent relations with "les Anglo-Saxons," fueling nationalist frustration over preponderant American power, concern over decolonization, and a belief that French interests were ill served by the structures of Western strategic decision-making.<sup>51</sup> Although French bitterness toward Ottawa was not as intense as it was toward London and Washington, Paris's ambassador did relay St. Laurent's reproach of France and Britain for their unilateralism, notably his assertion that the era when the "supermen of Europe" ruled the world was over. Lacoste ascribed the remarks to St. Laurent's Irish blood, combined with the vehement anti-colonialism, egocentrism, and isolationism linked to his French-Canadian heritage.<sup>52</sup>

With Suez having undermined France's position in Algeria, the Franco-Canadian divergence over Atlanticism was exacerbated. Although Ottawa continued to respond to Paris's growing alienation, it was frustrated over what it viewed as French intransigence and the consequences of this for NATO. The DEA did not disguise its annoyance over Paris's "stubbornness ... [to] not ... face certain basic facts," and the under-secretary of state for external affairs, Jules Léger, warned that it was "becoming very difficult" for Ottawa to support French actions in Algeria.<sup>53</sup>

The Fourth Republic collapsed amid this growing transatlantic exasperation. The Eisenhower administration's attitude toward Paris was considerably less indulgent after Suez, as Washington continued to bring its economic power to bear to hasten a resolution of the Algerian conflict. French outrage over an Anglo-American arms shipment to Tunisia, due to fear the weapons would fall into Algerian hands, was followed in early 1958 by French forces bombing the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef to strike at Algerian insurgents in the border community. Washington made clear to France's ambassador its deep anger over the attack that had resulted in considerable civilian deaths, and ratcheted up the pressure for a settlement by establishing an Anglo-American "Good Offices" mission to address Franco-Tunisian tensions.<sup>54</sup> In Ottawa, Léger suggested to Lacoste that Paris should take advantage of the mission to resolve not only the immediate crisis but the broader Algerian issue. The ambassador reluctantly agreed to relay the message after Léger emphasized Ottawa's worry that Tunisia would use the Sakiet affair to bring the Algerian question before the Security Council, in which case Ottawa would be forced to consider its response jointly with the other allies.<sup>55</sup> The exchange revealed a growing official Canadian impatience: Ottawa was siding with London and Washington and

bringing its own pressure to bear on Paris, hoping to avoid another public transatlantic rupture, less than two years after Suez, that would result from a Security Council debate.

French opinion interpreted American president Dwight Eisenhower's April 1958 letter to French prime minister Félix Gaillard as supportive of Algerian independence; combined with Washington's ongoing economic pressure that threatened a French balance-of-payments crisis, the Gaillard government's subsequent acceptance of the Good Offices mission was viewed as a sell-out. The result was explosive: a protracted ministerial crisis culminating in de Gaulle's return and the demise of the Fourth Republic. The dramatic events were in many respects an "anti-American revolt" – a nationalist rejection of the United States-dominated Atlanticist framework.<sup>56</sup> Canada's embassy reported on the prevalence of anti-American and anti-NATO sentiment, reminding Ottawa that the nationalist reaction was not "just the isolated rantings of right-wing extremists," but present "in a wide segment of French public opinion."<sup>57</sup> The assessment of the embassy's Henry Davis was that "there are many in France and many more in Algeria who want to show that France still has courage and determination ... that France is still vigorous and master of its own destinies."<sup>58</sup>

Despite misgivings about de Gaulle's attitude about Atlanticism, Ottawa considered the General the best hope for French political stability and a solution in Algeria. Ottawa therefore continued to support France at the UN and refrained from applying pressure privately; however, Canadian concern over the French leader's ability and willingness to settle the Algerian issue continued until his September 1959 announcement that Algerian Muslims would be called upon to exercise their right to self-determination in a referendum. Although the announcement by no means resolved the matter, it ended the period during which North African decolonization affected Franco-Canadian relations most directly. Lacoste reported on Canadian satisfaction over de Gaulle's decision and the DEA's eagerness to assist France at the UN. Paris had generally recognized in the months preceding the announcement that Ottawa was torn between its position on decolonization and a desire not to add to French difficulties; however, tensions had not been avoided. The Diefenbaker government had refused to employ Canada's Commonwealth links to prevent African and Asian members from recognizing the Cairo-based Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne. And the news in the summer of 1958 that Jules Léger was to meet with representatives of the Conference of Independent African States lobbying on behalf of Algerian nationalists provoked a strong French reaction. A senior French bureaucrat even warned against undue Canadian interest in Algeria by suggesting that this was tantamount to Paris involving itself in the political destiny of part of Canada.<sup>59</sup>

De Gaulle's return to power also meant that even as the conflict in Algeria lurched toward a conclusion, Ottawa had to contend with a determined French effort to provoke fundamental change in the transatlantic framework. The issue of nuclear proliferation provided an example, early in the life of the Fifth Republic, of the implications of the Franco-Canadian divergence over Atlanticism. The potential for atomic issues to split Ottawa and Paris had been illustrated in 1955, when French officials expressed interest in Canadian uranium for France's nuclear energy research program. Complicating the proposed sale was the question of command and control. Guided by its liberal internationalism and proliferation fears, Ottawa favoured international controls as a condition of the sale. The position was equally informed by a concern to avoid the disruption to NATO that it was felt France's atomic military capability would provoke. The Canadian stance was at odds with a French nationalism quickly approaching critical mass; reflecting a growing resentment over its second-tier status in NATO, Paris rejected any external controls, and no deal was concluded.<sup>60</sup>

Franco-Canadian differences over nuclear proliferation were exacerbated by Paris's decision after Suez to pursue a nuclear weapons program. This was meant to obtain for France the influence that it desired in NATO, thwarting the apparent Anglo-American condominium over the Alliance. Washington's lack-lustre response to Soviet threats during the crisis had also confirmed French fears over the reliability of the American atomic deterrent. Returned to office, de Gaulle ordered the weapons program accelerated and made it clear that France would have an independent nuclear capability. This Gaullist position clashed with an increasingly avowed Canadian disarmament stance.<sup>61</sup>

A confrontation came in 1959, when the Afro-Asian bloc at the UN protested France's first atomic explosion in the Algerian desert. Lacoste invoked Atlantic solidarity in urging Ottawa to vote against any resolution linked to French testing, but the appeal was ineffective. Paris regarded it as a betrayal when Canada's delegation supported calls for France to refrain from nuclear tests in the Sahara. Charles Lucet, the MAE's second-ranking official, raised the issue with Canada's ambassador, Pierre Dupuy, asking why, after years of large American, British, and even Soviet tests, Canada had chosen the occasion of a "little French explosion" to censure France.<sup>62</sup> Dupuy warned Ottawa of the potential consequences of the dispute, after the head of the MAE's European division told him that de Gaulle would see Canada's vote as further proof of the hollowness of Atlantic solidarity. The disarmament issue resurfaced during de Gaulle's visit to Canada a few months later. When the prime minister, John Diefenbaker, reiterated Ottawa's opposition to atomic testing, de Gaulle was unrepentant, stating that France could stop testing only if all nations destroyed their warheads.<sup>63</sup>

Beyond heralding a French nuclear capability, the mushroom cloud that rose over the Sahara was an ominous testament to a more explicitly nationalist French foreign policy. Despite repeated French efforts since NATO's inception, the alliance was not a partnership of equals entailing global solidarity. What had been adopted in a bid to overcome a French sense of inferiority had ultimately reinforced this; the effective exclusion of Paris from the Anglo-American inner circle of strategic cooperation fuelled a sense that France's "association with NATO ha[d] required her to make concessions, even sacrifices, without being compensated by comparable advantages."<sup>64</sup> Although the Three Wise Men committee on which Pearson served had taken into account French concern about the operation of the alliance and the need for members to discuss matters outside the NATO area, this concern was watered down in its final report, which contained a thinly veiled rebuke of the French and British for their actions regarding Suez.<sup>65</sup>

Strikingly evident in the dying days of the Fourth Republic, French dissatisfaction with the Atlantic status quo only increased amid the birth of the Fifth. In 1944, de Gaulle had groused that the United States was "already trying to rule the world."<sup>66</sup> The Yalta Myth, positing France's exclusion from the superpowers' divvying up of the globe, with a compliant Britain as junior partner to the Americans, figured prominently in Gaullist thought. The rapidity with which Washington and London had apparently healed their rift over Suez only reinforced this belief. De Gaulle scorned the Fourth Republic's Atlanticism as an effort to please others, claiming that it had used Atlantic solidarity to camouflage France's "self-effacement," subjecting France "to the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxons."<sup>67</sup>

Gaullist thought held that French independence required the prevention of any de facto collusion among the superpowers that would enable them to maintain hegemony in their spheres of influence. In practical terms, this led to de Gaulle's challenge of the Cold War order as he strove to end what he considered an unhealthy subservience to Washington. This included building on the Fourth Republic's efforts to achieve reconciliation and a partnership with West Germany, meant to facilitate France's leadership of a Western Europe that would be an equal partner of the United States. De Gaulle's return to power did not change so much the substance of French international action as the world-view underpinning it: a realist approach according the nation-state the highest political value supplanted Atlanticism's liberal internationalism. France would continue to confront the Soviet threat alongside the United States and the NATO allies, but a foremost Gaullist aim was to ensure that, in so doing, France would recover its rightful geopolitical rank in the West and increase its influence with and autonomy from Washington.<sup>68</sup>

As the Gaullist storm broke, Ottawa lashed itself to the mast of Atlanticism and its self-appointed linchpin role. Notwithstanding NATO's apparent shortcomings, a persuasive combination of culture, ideology, and geopolitical circumstance encouraged Canada's foreign policy establishment to keep faith with the Atlantic ideal. The DEA believed that "careful diplomacy and delicacy" were the order of the day, and that Ottawa should help calm the waters between France and its allies. There was even discussion about reappointing Georges Vanier to Paris given his wartime friendship with de Gaulle. Canada's embassy warned of the "fissiparous tendencies" that a failure to consult Paris would provoke; Ottawa was therefore urged to "take every opportunity to consult the French" and to encourage London and Washington to do likewise.<sup>69</sup>

Such anxieties were borne out by de Gaulle's annoyance over not being consulted prior to the July 1958 Anglo-American military interventions in Lebanon and Jordan, and by Washington's handling of the Second Formosa Straits crisis that erupted the following month. Both events had the potential to escalate into a larger conflict involving the NATO allies, and the Lebanese operation had involved American forces based in France. Consistent with Paris's efforts since NATO's creation to possess an equal voice in allied strategic planning, de Gaulle responded by proposing a US-UK-France "directorate" through which France would transform the structure of transatlantic relations and achieve the political equality with the British and Americans that it had sought since the 1940s.<sup>70</sup>

The response in Ottawa to de Gaulle's proposal was cool – coming, as it did, as Canada was itself experiencing a nationalist reaction to Cold War realities, notably its deepening relations with the United States. If anti-American sentiment in Canada was less pronounced after the Second World War than it had been in earlier periods, by the mid-1950s nationalist rumblings were increasingly audible. It was all too apparent that, notwithstanding the rhetoric that had surrounded NATO since its creation, the actions and inaction of its members – Canada included – had ensured that it was "an alliance of the old kind."<sup>71</sup> Although Atlanticism had offered Ottawa opportunities to influence Washington, it had also contributed to American predominance in the West and institutionalized Canada's asymmetrical relationship with the United States. Ottawa's failure to support London during the Suez Crisis had provoked a considerable section of anglophone Canadian opinion, which condemned the St. Laurent government's response as indicative of its continentalist predilections. Many suggested that Canada had become the "chore boy" to Washington, a better friend to Nasser than to London and Paris. The nationalist charge that Liberal governments since the 1930s had led Canada into the American embrace was reinforced by the release of the Gordon Commission's preliminary report outlining the

scope of the American economic presence in Canada.<sup>72</sup> It was in this charged atmosphere that the Norman affair erupted. Commentators blamed the suicide of Canadian diplomat Herbert Norman on American communist witch-hunts. The controversy, described by Pearson at the time as the most severe instance of anti-Americanism that he had ever experienced, galvanized nationalist anxieties and led to the emergence of modern Canadian anti-Americanism as a potent political force.<sup>73</sup>

John Diefenbaker and his Progressive Conservatives reaped the electoral benefit, incorporating the nationalist angst into a larger narrative about a Liberal government that had overstayed its welcome and lost touch with Canadians. However, despite Tory accusations that the Liberals had undermined Canada's independence by tacking too closely to Washington, there was a foreign policy continuity between the Diefenbaker government elected in 1957 and that of its predecessor. The core preoccupation continued to be finding a counterweight to the United States, as demonstrated by the new government's concern with reviving links with Britain and the Commonwealth. Ottawa therefore continued to adhere to Atlanticism. Indeed, this policy took on even greater importance after the Diefenbaker government approved the North American Air Defence Agreement (NORAD), which provided for a joint military command between Canada and the United States in air defence.<sup>74</sup>

Diefenbaker reacted "very strongly" to de Gaulle's proposed directorate, dismissing it as "a totally unrealistic assessment of France's power and influence in NATO."<sup>75</sup> The sense in the DEA was that even if the General had correctly identified the challenge of preponderant American influence in NATO, his "remedy could well kill the patient."<sup>76</sup> Ottawa feared that a directorate would lead to a formalized, two-tiered NATO at odds with the rationale for Canadian Atlanticism: a US-UK-France strategic partnership would reduce Ottawa's ability to use the alliance to influence the Great Powers; the decline of Canada's international stature since 1945 would be institutionalized; and Ottawa would effectively be denied its European counterpart, leaving Canada more vulnerable in its relations with the United States.<sup>77</sup> The scope of the divergence over Atlanticism was laid bare: what to Gaullist eyes was a means to ensure French independence and international influence was, refracted through Ottawa's Atlanticist prism, a threat to Canada's autonomy and ability to act internationally.

Meeting de Gaulle for the first time in Paris in 1958, Diefenbaker expressed Canada's opposition forcefully. The French leader responded by declaring it unacceptable that Washington alone should make decisions affecting NATO allies and that the organization's strategic planning be carried out by the American and British high commands. When Diefenbaker claimed that Ottawa

wanted greater consultation in NATO, but not at the price of a two-tiered alliance, de Gaulle rejoined that Canada already accepted this in practical terms, citing Ottawa's acquiescence to the Great Powers' decisions regarding the Middle East, Asia, and disarmament. Diefenbaker did not address this charge but intimated that if the directorate were established and NATO's geographic scope extended to reflect French extra-European interests, Ottawa would have to reconsider its NATO commitments.<sup>78</sup> The exchange was emblematic of the evolution of the bilateral relationship since 1945. The cooperation stemming from the two countries' shared Atlanticism had faded; Paris now felt that its interests were better served by challenging the Atlantic framework, whereas Ottawa continued to believe that this framework was the best means to safeguard and promote Canadian interests.

The dispute contributed to a growing concern in Ottawa over the state of a relationship that, despite being "regularly described as close and sympathetic due to ... ties of culture and history," had been subject to "recurring difficulties and frictions."<sup>79</sup> A DEA report to Diefenbaker warned that Ottawa and Paris tended to take their bilateral links for granted; it expressed concern that Canada's complex relations with Washington and London were poorly understood in France and that Ottawa had failed "to convince [Paris] of our independent involvement in international affairs."<sup>80</sup>

The DEA analysis skirted the core issue. A fundamental – and growing – difference existed between the cultures of the two countries' foreign policy establishments over exactly *what* constituted the best means to achieve "independent involvement in international affairs," a point that Canada's ambassador to France, Pierre Dupuy, emphasized:

Many Frenchmen, even in government circles, tend to think that Canada, in the Washington-Ottawa-London triangle, is more often than not the recipient of advice, which we usually act on ... Only by emphasizing Canada's independent course in international political and economic affairs, and her initiatives, could one hope to gain that measure of influence likely to enable us to "sell" our policies to [Paris].<sup>81</sup>

Paris was certainly aware of the growth of Canadian nationalist sentiment and the concern with not appearing to be an American satellite. Indeed, the Progressive Conservatives' election had been interpreted in French circles as a symptom of this nationalist reaction. As the Diefenbaker government continued in office, however, French officials were struck by the disparity between its nationalist rhetoric and continentalist reality. Francis Lacoste argued that after eighteen months, "Conservative" Canada had scarcely reduced, and

certainly not eliminated, the American influence for which the Liberals had been reproached. To the contrary, the ambassador considered the new government to have markedly *increased* Canadian dependence on Washington through its hasty acceptance of NORAD and a joint ministerial defence committee.<sup>82</sup> Such developments, given the Diefenbaker government's stated intentions, fuelled a French belief that Canada was locked into the United States's orbit.

The extent to which Franco-Canadian relations had deteriorated was reflected in the doubts in both capitals when de Gaulle visited Canada in 1960. Beyond a concern that the trip would be cancelled as a result of Canada's vote at the UN regarding France's atomic testing, the DEA wondered if Ottawa was being sent a signal when, despite prior French knowledge, the visit was scheduled for dates that conflicted with Diefenbaker's planned trip to Mexico. Conversely, the apparent lack of warmth and enthusiasm in Ottawa during the visit drew comments from a French delegation perplexed at the public indifference and an absence of pomp that contrasted poorly with extraordinary receptions in Britain and the United States. Lacoste gamely attributed the difference to a Canadian temperament shaped by its ethnic origins, history, and even the northern climate, and claimed that even the most popular royal visitors did not attract the crowds that France's president had drawn.<sup>83</sup>

THE AMBASSADOR'S VALIANT, if questionable, effort to assuage the presidential ego aside, the reality was that the hopes at the end of the Second World War for a more substantive relationship between Canada and France had been buffeted by rough Atlantic seas. Although membership in NATO had facilitated increased contact and cooperation between the two countries, their differing post-war experiences meant that Atlanticism had evolved into a source of divergence. As it became apparent that this foreign policy response was reifying rather than restraining American hegemony in the West, Franco-Canadian relations were gradually hollowed out. Notwithstanding growing doubts and anti-American sentiment, Ottawa remained wedded to Atlanticism. Indeed, for members of Canada's foreign policy establishment, the evolution of the Cold War international order and Canada's place in it seemed to leave Ottawa little alternative. In France, by contrast, the Gaullist government accepted the necessity of transatlantic cooperation, but demanded that it be a true partnership among equals that did not impinge on French sovereignty. Combined with developments in the economic and cultural spheres of Franco-Canadian relations, this nationalist-inspired divergence over Atlanticism – and, more broadly, relations with the United States – would loom large in the ensuing triangular tensions.

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