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A Question of North Atlantic Security:

Canada's Reaction to the Independence Movement in Algeria, 1954-1962

by

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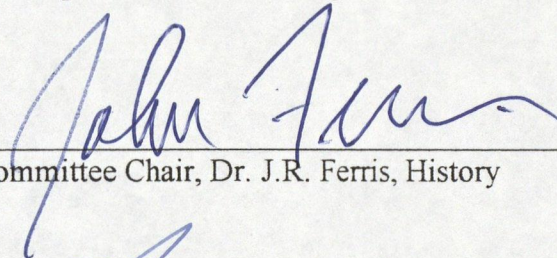
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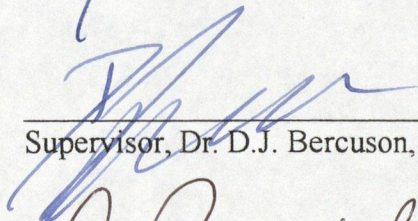
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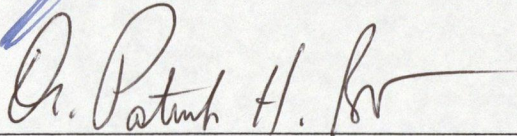
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Question of North Atlantic Security: Canada's Reaction to the Independence Movement in Algeria, 1954-1962" submitted by Robin S. Gendron in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



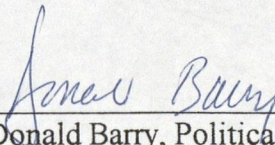
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Canada's reaction to the Algerian war for independence from 1954 to 1962. It reveals that, while sympathetic to the ambitions of colonial peoples to be free, the Canadian government judged colonial issues after the Second World War by what impact they had on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Canadian security interests and the Cold War. Given that the Algerian war threatened France's ability and willingness to contribute to N.A.T.O. during this period, Canada was compelled to give France political and even covert military support through the Mutual Aid programme for its efforts to retain the French colony.

Chapter one examines the years from 1954 to 1958, when Canada's policy towards the conflict in Algeria was established. Chapter two examines the years after 1958 when France resolved the Algerian question. The thesis concludes that Canada displayed little independence in its policy towards Algeria, but modified its position to reflect the sensitivities of one of its principal allies, France.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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being with them during the course of the writing of this thesis. In a perfect world the University of Calgary would have been located in Muskoka.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBC-	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
DCER-	Documents on Canadian External Relations
DEA-	Department of External Affairs (Canada)
FLN-	<i>Front de libération nationale</i> (Algeria)
GPRA-	<i>Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne</i>
HHW-	Hume Wrong Papers
NAC-	National Archives of Canada
NATO-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCO-	Privy Council Office
SACEUR-	Supreme Allied Commander -Europe
SSEA-	Secretary of State for External Affairs (Canada)
UN-	United Nations
UNHCR-	United Nations High Commission[er] on Refugees
USSEA-	Undersecretary of State for External Affairs (Canada)

## INTRODUCTION

Canada was in a very favourable position at the end of the Second World War. It and the United States were the only two major combatants to escape massive territorial destruction and to have their industries emerge from the war more developed and prosperous. More importantly for Canada, the war had not fatally divided the country along linguistic lines as some Canadian leaders, William Lyon Mackenzie King first among them, feared it would.<sup>1</sup> By mid-1945 Canada was industrially, and even militarily, one of the strongest countries in the West. Demobilization and the paring of the defence budget reduced Canada's military importance after 1945 but its new prominence in the world could not be overlooked. Though never a Great Power Canada possessed new stature and responsibilities in the international community.

During the 1930s the Canadian government had shunned international commitments for fear that foreign involvement would undermine Canada's national unity.<sup>2</sup> This position had not prevented Canada from being drawn into the Second World War and Canadian leaders became convinced that Canada should work with the international community after 1945 to prevent the outbreak of another war. "Security for this country," said Louis St. Laurent, then Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, "lies in the

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Granatstein. Canada's War. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975). Granatstein gives a good description of King's fears that Canada's participation in the war would lead to conscription and thereby to a rift between English and French Canadians and the destruction of the Canadian polity as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> James Eayrs. In Defence of Canada: volume 2 - Appeasement and Rearmament. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964). chs 1-3.



development of a firm structure of international organization.”<sup>3</sup> Canada hoped that the United Nations would ensure peaceful relations between the countries of the world. The growing hostility between the Western countries and the Soviet Union after 1945, however, undermined the effectiveness of the United Nations as an instrument of peace. This led Canada to turn to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] for protection from the Soviet Union. No longer afraid of international commitments, Canada entered into a formal alliance with the United States, the United Kingdom, France and some of the small nations of Western Europe. For Canada, this military alliance complemented the already established importance of its close relations with the United States, Britain and, to a lesser extent, France. Through the United Nations, NATO and its relations with the principal Western powers Canada hoped that another collapse of the world order such as had taken place in 1939 would be prevented.

The main components of Canada’s post-war foreign policy were thus established. The Canadian government was to judge all international questions against the standard of their impact on the United Nations, NATO or Canada’s relations with its principal Western partners. In the atomic age, Canada’s very survival depended upon the strength of the international order upheld by these three pillars of its foreign policy. It is not surprising, therefore, that these principles guided Canada’s approach to the Algerian situation, and to colonialism and decolonization more broadly, from the 1940s through to the 1960s.

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<sup>3</sup> As cited in Munro and Inglis. p. 26.

Beginning in 1947 with the independence of India and Pakistan from Britain, dozens of new countries emerged from the remains of the old empires. Colonial peoples everywhere rejected European rule as the war-weakened European states no longer possessed the resources to hold onto their colonies indefinitely. This process of decolonization challenged the West to adapt to a new world environment. The newly-independent countries had begun to exert their influence in the United Nations by the 1950s and, what was worse, threatened to alter the balance of power between the West and the Communist-bloc by allowing the expansion of communism into Africa and Asia. Decolonization, therefore, struck at the heart of the principles guiding Canada's post-war foreign policy.

The American, British and French reaction to decolonization after 1945 has received a great deal of attention from historians in those countries.<sup>4</sup> There has not been, however, an extensive examination of either the Canadian government's reaction to the end of colonialism or its approach to colonial issues in the post-war period. Scholars have studied Canada's role in the evolution of the British Commonwealth after the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, and there have been books on Canada's post-independence relations with some of those former colonial states.<sup>5</sup> Yet Canada's attitude

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<sup>4</sup> For example: Edward W. Chester. Clash of Titans: Africa and U.S. Foreign Policy. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974) and Miles Kahler. Decolonization in Britain and France. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> See Munro and Inglis. pp. 98-107. and Escott Reid. Envoy to Nehru. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981). pp. 14-29.

towards the independence movements in the colonies of Africa and Asia remains unexplored.

This thesis uses the Algerian war for independence from 1954 to 1962, one of the era's most bitterly contested struggles for national liberation, to analyze the Canadian government's reaction to colonial questions. It is neither an examination of the war for independence itself, nor of the situation in France from 1954 to 1962 since these issues have been extensively examined elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> It is rather an analysis of the factors that shaped Canada's policy towards the conflict in Algeria. It will demonstrate that Canadian policy towards the Algerian war for independence was motivated by the threat which the war posed to the international system upon which Canada relied for its security during the Cold War.

When the Algerian war began in November of 1954 Canada and France were both members of NATO. France's preoccupation with the rebel uprising in Algeria from 1954 to 1962 limited its ability to contribute to the Western alliance. This situation undermined NATO's ability to deter the Soviet Union from attacking Western Europe. Thus, for Canada, the Algerian question was not about the desire of the Arab nationalists in the colony for independence; it was about how best to deal with the uprising in order to preserve NATO's strength and security. Other considerations had next to no impact on Canada's approach to the Algerian problem during this period. Trade between Canada and

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<sup>6</sup> See for example John Talbot. The War Without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980). and Jean-Pierre Rioux. The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

the French colony was negligible and there were no prospects for an improvement in this situation.<sup>7</sup> Canada had nothing to gain or lose economically from Algeria's independence. Nor were domestic politics a determining factor in Canada's approach to the Algerian question during this period. Only after its independence in 1962 would relations with Algeria become politically important for Canada as a result of the growing nationalism of French-Canada.

Purely strategic concerns, therefore, motivated Canada's interest in France's affairs in Algeria during the 1950s. Canada was only concerned that the Algerian war would have a negative impact upon NATO. There were two ways in which France could deal with the situation in Algeria. It could either crush the nationalist rebellion or it could grant Algeria independence. Canada did not care which path was chosen as long as NATO's global interests were not impaired. That the Canadian government eventually came to support the independence of Algeria was not a moral decision based upon the desire to see colonial peoples emancipated from European rule. Canada, rather, recognized that the West needed the cooperation of the countries of Africa and Asia in its ideological struggle with the Soviet-bloc. Independence for Algeria, according to the Canadian view, simply resolved an issue that alienated the vehemently anti-colonial Afro-Asian states from the West over an eight-year period. But even Canadian support for the idea of Algerian independence was sacrificed in the name of NATO unity.

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<sup>7</sup> See the statistics on Canada's international trade as given in Department of Trade and Commerce. Annual Reports, 1954-63. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954-1963).

From 1955, when Canada decided to encourage France towards granting some measure of independence for Algeria, to 1959, Canada disagreed with France's policy in Algeria. Until 1959 France was determined to eradicate the nationalists and retain its rule over the colony. Because France resented any interference over Algeria from its allies, Canada abandoned the idea of pressuring France towards a solution to the conflict. Canada did not want to risk upsetting France enough to cause it to withdraw from NATO in the 1950s and early 1960s. To demonstrate the value of the NATO relationship, Canada even supplied France with military equipment through the Mutual Aid programme, some of which was used to combat the nationalist rebellion in Algeria. To keep NATO strong and united meant tolerating France's repression of nationalism during the Algerian war.

A prevalent interpretation in the historiography of Canadian foreign policy holds that Canada often acted with a great deal of independence on the world stage during the post-war period.<sup>8</sup> Canada's response to the Algerian war, however, reveals that Canada's foreign policy operated under certain constraints that limited its independence. Canada was concerned for its very survival during the Cold War. Fear of the Communist-bloc dictated that Canada's first concern in all matters was for the strength and unity of the North Atlantic alliance. Nothing could be allowed to undermine NATO. The sustained efforts that Canada made to support France during the Algerian war, even though it did not

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<sup>8</sup> See for example John English and Norman Hillmer eds. Making a Difference?: Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order. (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1992), J.L. Granatstein and Hillmer. Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), and David Dewitt and John Kirton. Canada as a Principal Power. (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 1983).

agree with French policy, reveal that Canada felt it could not afford an independent foreign policy in matters of national security.



## CHAPTER 1: THE ALGERIAN QUESTION

The United States, Britain, Canada and the Soviet Union had all cooperated to defeat the Axis powers during the Second World War. In early September 1945, however, Igor Gouzenko, a clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, revealed that Moscow was operating a spy ring in Canada to learn about the development of the atomic bomb.<sup>1</sup> This ended the hope that the war-time co-operation between East and West would continue in peace. Hostility towards the Soviet Union grew in Western countries, particularly after the establishment of Soviet-dominated governments over the countries of Eastern Europe occupied by the massive Soviet army. Nor did the obstinacy of the Soviet Union in the United Nations, with its use of the veto to block Security Council actions, diminish the growing fear of Soviet aggression against Western Europe. Canada, the United States and the other Western countries now saw communism as the greatest threat to their security. There was even a danger that Communists would take power in France and Italy through the electoral system in 1947 and 1948.<sup>2</sup> The Communist coup in Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin by the Soviets in 1948 gave farther indications that Europe was under siege by Communist forces.

The Soviet threat inspired the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries to create the Brussels Pact for mutual defence in March of 1948. The following month the

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer. For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd. 1991). p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Endicott Osgood. NATO: the Entangling Alliance. (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1962). p. 28.

Prime Minister of Canada, Louis St. Laurent, proposed that Canada and the United States join the Brussels powers in an alliance protecting Western Europe and North America.<sup>3</sup> Fear of the Soviet Union compelled Canada to sacrifice an independent foreign policy for security from Communist aggression. The resulting negotiations that led seven European and North American states to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] have been extensively examined elsewhere and will not be further investigated here. However, one aspect of the negotiations that has not been examined in great detail from Canada's perspective is that of France's demand that NATO offer protection to the French colonies in North Africa.<sup>4</sup> Before the NATO negotiations neither the United States, Britain nor Canada were willing to commit to the collective defence of an area beyond the North Atlantic.<sup>5</sup> None of the three countries wanted to be called upon to help defend one of Europe's colonies from aggression. Yet during the NATO negotiations in July of 1948, France was intent upon ensuring the inclusion of their North African territories within the treaty's protected area.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Escott Reid. Time of Fear and Hope: the making of the North Atlantic Treaty 1947-1949. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1977). Reid provided the best analysis of the creation of NATO from Canada's perspective. He also provided the only substantial description of Canada's reluctance to include Algeria in the Treaty area, though he only lightly touches on why Canada was reluctant to do so.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 213-214. The attitude of the three countries was revealed at their tripartite security discussions held in Washington in March 1948.

<sup>6</sup> Minister, Embassy in United States to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. 30 July 1948. Department of External Affairs [DEA] file 283(s). *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. [DCER] vol. 14. p. 547.

French North Africa extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the West to Libya in the East, stretched south into the Sahara Desert and encompassed three political entities: Tunisia and Morocco had been French protectorates since 1882 and 1912 respectively; and between them was Algeria. France had wrested Algeria from nominal Turkish suzerainty in 1830. From then on French settlers and capital flooded into the colony. By 1954 over one million Europeans resided in Algeria out of a total population of ten million.<sup>7</sup> The northern coastal areas had been annexed into France in 1871 and the Europeans in those areas enjoyed the same rights, privileges and responsibilities enjoyed by the citizens of Metropolitan France. Algeria north of the Sahara was thus as much a part of France as was Normandy and France considered its protection a vital national interest.

Canada recognized the close ties that existed between France and North Africa, especially Algeria. Nevertheless, the Canadian government opposed the attempt to have France's colonial territories included under the protection of the North Atlantic treaty. It did not want NATO involved in supporting colonial regimes.<sup>8</sup> Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent sympathized with the dependent peoples of the world who were prevented from exercising self-government by their European rulers, but this does not explain Canada's opposition to the inclusion of French North Africa in the NATO area.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Talbott. The War Without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980). pp. 10 and 15.

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum from Lester B. Pearson to Prime Minister. 4 January 1949. DEA file 283(s). *DCER* vol. 14. p. 480. and Minute by Ambassador in United States. 4 January 1949. H.H. Wrong papers [HHW] volume 6. *DCER* vol. 15. p. 489.

<sup>9</sup> Dale C. Thomson. Louis St. Laurent: Canadian. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968). pp. 203-205.

On the contrary, Canada's opposition stemmed from its desire to avoid involvement in North Africa if, in the future, a movement for national liberation erupted in any of the French colonies. The government feared that NATO would compel the dispatch of Canadian soldiers to protect France's rule of a rebellious colony. The United States was also unwilling to help defend Europe's colonies, but for reasons, unlike Canada, of America's long history of anti-colonialism.<sup>10</sup>

The NATO negotiations were thus at an impasse over the issue of French North Africa that lasted until the Working Group meetings of 10-11 January 1949. France then relented somewhat by insisting that only the three northern departments of Algeria, which had been legally annexed into France in 1871, need be covered by the guarantee.<sup>11</sup> The other European participants at the Working Group meetings were persuaded to endorse the scaled-down French demand. Only Canada and the United States still expressed misgivings. The Canadian government maintained that Algeria should be excluded from NATO's protection since Canadians would not tolerate the association of their government with the support of a colonial regime.<sup>12</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the Canadian people cared at all about protecting Algeria under NATO. That claim was just used to justify continued opposition to France's demands and allowed Canada, like the United States, to project an image of sympathy for colonial peoples.

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<sup>10</sup> Minutes of Working Group. 17 December 1948. HHW vol. 5. *DCER* vol. 14. p. 748.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram WA-76. Ambassador in United States to SSEA. 12 January 1949. DEA 283(s). *DCER* vol. 15. p. 493.

<sup>12</sup> Minute by Ambassador in the United States. 4 January 1949. HHW vol. 6. *DCER* vol. 15. p. 489.

French intransigence finally settled the matter when French negotiators stated they would not sign any treaty that did not protect the three French administrative departments in Algeria. Canada and the United States gave way. "Algeria," said Louis St. Laurent, "was not a matter of great importance in relation to the main purposes of the Treaty, but France was essential."<sup>13</sup> When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in mid-1949, Article 5 pledged the members of the alliance to mutual self-defence in the event of an attack upon any one of them. Article 6 extended that pledge to cover the three Algerian departments of France. For Canada, agreeing to protect Algeria from communist aggression was a small price to pay for an alliance with France.

As St. Laurent had feared, NATO promptly involved Canada in France's colonial difficulties. In the summer of 1952 French forces were fighting a communist-inspired rebellion in Indo-China. In June of that year France asked Ottawa for permission to divert Canadian Mutual Aid equipment to South-East Asia.<sup>14</sup> The *Defence Appropriation Act* of 1950 authorized the gift of military supplies from Canada to help NATO members defend Western Europe. France, however, wanted to ship Canadian anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns and ammunition to Indo-China, beyond the specified area of the Act. Lester Pearson agreed to the transfer, though it violated the intent of the Act, because he felt that France's battle against communism in Indo-China deserved Canada's support. Louis St. Laurent and Minister of Defence Brooke Claxton, on the contrary, worried about the political

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<sup>13</sup> As cited in Munro and Inglis. p. 55.

<sup>14</sup> James Eayrs. In Defence of Canada, Volume 4: Growing Up Allied. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). p. 150.

consequences of Pearson's decision.<sup>15</sup> They brought the issue before the Cabinet in July and August 1952 to try to find a solution that did not implicate Canada in the use of force against France's rebel colony. St. Laurent himself proposed two alternatives: that the French purchase the equipment outright, or that France replace the Canadian equipment sent to Indo-China so that French forces in Europe were not deprived of adequate supplies.<sup>16</sup> Neither of these options proved practical, so the Cabinet, including St. Laurent, eventually approved the transfer of equipment to Indo-China but only after the NATO Standing Group indicated that it would benefit French forces in Europe, thus fulfilling the intentions of the *Defence Appropriations Act*.<sup>17</sup>

By the next Cabinet Defence Committee meeting Louis St. Laurent had changed his mind and rejected that plan. His renewed opposition stemmed from assurances he had made to the House of Commons in 1948 and 1949 that Canada would not support the defence of European control of their dependencies through NATO.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Prime Minister, according to his biographer, looked with disfavour upon the continuation by force of European rule in their colonies.<sup>19</sup> His Cabinet, however, supported France in its efforts to subdue the communist-inspired independence movement in Indo-China and they forced St. Laurent to compromise. Ultimately, the Cabinet agreed to send the Mutual

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> Cabinet Minutes. 31 July 1952. Privy Council Office Records RG 2 [PCO] series A-5-a. *National Archives of Canada* [NAC].

<sup>17</sup> Cabinet Minutes. 14 August 1952. PCO series A-5-a. NAC.

<sup>18</sup> Cabinet Defence Committee Minutes. 26 August 1952. Department of External Affairs Records RG 25 [DEA] file 50030-L-5-40. NAC.

<sup>19</sup> Thomson. pp. 203-205.



Aid equipment to France. But the French were told that what they did with the supplies once they arrived in France was not to be of any concern to the Canadian government.<sup>20</sup> St. Laurent allowed the transfer of Canadian military equipment to Indo-China but he insisted that Canada distance itself from the use of its military equipment against movements for national liberation. If France simply transferred the equipment without telling Canada of its intentions, Canada could deny any responsibility for France's actions. It was not a noble compromise, but given France's need for the equipment Canada had few other options.

France had always expected more from NATO than just protection from communism. It also wanted "increased financial and material aid for rearmament of the French army and some assistance in holding on to France's shaky colonial empire."<sup>21</sup> Defence assistance of over \$4 billion from Canada and the United States from 1950 to 1962 satisfied the French request for help in rearming.<sup>22</sup> Failure by NATO, however, to help France maintain its empire risked diminishing France's already uneasy commitment to NATO. Once France was a member of the alliance Canada could not allow it to become disillusioned enough to withdraw from NATO and weaken the West in its ideological confrontation with the communist East. It would also end any hope of France participating

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Michael M. Harrison. The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> The actual figure in Mutual Aid for France was \$4,158,000,000 from the United States and a further \$128,500,000 from Canada from 1950 to 1962. Harrison. p. 33. and *Reply to Question re NATO in Senate*. CJ Marshall. 29 May 1963. DEA file 50030-40. NAC.

in the greater Atlantic community bound by political, economic and cultural ties to which Canada was committed in the 1950s.<sup>23</sup> France had a role to play in the Atlantic alliance, even if its importance was largely symbolic given the concentration of its military efforts first in Indo-China and later in North Africa. It was inconceivable in the face of the Soviet threat that France would have withdrawn from NATO at this time, but Canada was not willing to test France's resolve. Canada was thus compelled to help defend France against the growth of nationalism in its colonies.

By 1954 the French protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco were also in revolt against French rule. The only major haven of imperial power remaining to the French lay in Algeria, or so it seemed. The rising of the Algerian nationalists on 1 November 1954 shattered that illusion. On this date a band of from 700 to 3,000 Arab guerrillas, sensing France's weakness after its defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China, opened its war to free Algeria from France's rule.<sup>24</sup> These rebels drew their inspiration from the surge in Arab nationalism that had recently taken place throughout the Arab world and in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt in particular. The nationalists' expectations of a quick victory over France, however, were not realized. Because of its large European population, over ten percent of the population of Algeria, and massive French investments Algeria, occupied a very special position in the life of France. Neither the French government nor the majority

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<sup>23</sup> Kim Richard Nossal. "A European Nation? The Life and Times of Atlanticism in Canada," in John English and Norman Hillmer eds. Making a Difference? Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order. (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1992). p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> Alistair Horne. A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962. (New York: The Viking Press, 1977). p. 79.

of its people accepted the possibility of Algeria's independence.<sup>25</sup> France's prestige, they felt, would not recover from the loss of its greatest colony and the country would lose its right to claim Great Power status.<sup>26</sup>

As a result, the politically powerful European settlers demanded the suppression of the Algerian nationalists. The French army, still reeling from its defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China in the spring of 1954, also advocated crushing the revolt. As events proved, however, France never succeeded in extinguishing the nationalist ambitions of the Algerian rebels. The bitter struggle for independence in Algeria lasted from 1954 to 1962 and exacted a stiff toll for both France and Algeria. It also seriously undermined the political stability of France and threatened NATO's unity.

Canada was not a disinterested observer of events during the Algerian war for independence. Anything that jeopardized the ability of France to contribute to the struggle between the East and the West was of great concern to Canada. Yet there also existed sympathy for the national aspirations of the Algerians within the Canadian government. In 1952 National Health and Welfare Minister Paul Martin had explained to the United Nations that Canadians knew "the irresistible strength - because we have felt it ourselves - of the urge for freedom which develops in all national groups still subject to external

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., chs. 2-4. These chapters give a complete analysis of the roots of French resistance to an independent Algeria.

<sup>26</sup> Despatch 1091. Ambassador in Paris to SSEA. 6 June 1955. DEA file 6938-40. NAC. Some members of the foreign policy establishment in Ottawa, such as Henry Davis of European Division, also believed that losing Algeria would diminish the influence of France in world events.

control.”<sup>27</sup> This sympathy for dependent peoples had allowed Canada to advocate peaceful evolution towards self-government for Tunisia and Morocco earlier in the 1950s.<sup>28</sup> The only difference between the two protectorates and Algeria, apart from the almost semantic difference between “protectorates” and a “colony,” was the strength of the French reaction to the independence movement in Algeria against the almost eagerness of France to relinquish its hold on Tunisia and Morocco. The principle of self-determination applied equally to all three North African territories.

M.N. Bow of the European Division of the Department of External Affairs acknowledged that Canada’s Department of External Affairs sympathized with the aims of the Algerian nationalists in July 1955. But morality and emotions alone were not enough to shape Canada’s foreign policy. The attitude of the government towards the Algerian independence movement, argued Bow, must “be anchored in the basic fact that the outcome of events in French North Africa directly affects European and North Atlantic Security.”<sup>29</sup> Two events of early 1955 convinced the Canadian government of the threat that the Algerian situation posed to Canada’s national interests. In April of that year a group of twenty-nine African and Asian nations met in Indonesia for a conference that inaugurated the non-aligned movement in world affairs. Attending the Bandung Conference were such states as India and Pakistan whose support against communism, or

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Martin. Statement on Tunisia in First Committee, United Nations. 12 December 1952. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum. M. Cadieux to European Division. 26 July 1955. DEA file 5475-DW-43-40. NAC.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum. European Division to USSEA. 21 July 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

even benign neutrality, was so crucial for the West. The Department of External Affairs was worried that the African and Asian countries would unite around opposition to colonialism and racialism, which would mean the adoption of an anti-Western attitude.<sup>30</sup> Such an attitude would defy the West's long-term interests.

By the 1950s Canada was beginning to realize it could no longer rely solely upon the United States, Britain, NATO and the United Nations for the protection of its interests. Relations with the newly independent colonial states were becoming very important because of their influence over world affairs, particularly at the United Nations, and because the East and the West were beginning to compete for influence in Africa and Asia.<sup>31</sup> The commitment of the Bandung states to anti-colonialism did not bode well for Canada's relations with the Afro-Asians since Canada was allied, through NATO, with the colonial powers. The debate on Algeria at the United Nations later in 1955 revealed the bitterness that separated the Bandung states from NATO over colonialism, a situation that would last throughout the Algerian war for independence.

In mid-1955 there were two alternative courses for Canada to follow concerning the Algerian war for independence. The first was to back France in its bid to eradicate nationalism in Algeria, thus maintaining French power there at least temporarily. The second option was to find a solution that satisfied the ambitions of the rebels but preserved NATO's position in North Africa and in the anti-colonial states of Africa and Asia. The

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<sup>30</sup> Memorandum. USSEA to SSEA. 13 April 1955. DEA file 12173-40. NAC.

<sup>31</sup> Message S-437. SSEA to Ambassador in Paris. 24 April 1956. DEA file 50115-J-40. NAC.

Canadian government adopted the second position. That did not mean, however, that Canada would support the efforts of the Afro-Asian states to win prompt independence for Algeria from France. Canada was determined to encourage France from within the confines of the NATO relationship to resolve its Algerian difficulties.

The second event that guided Canada's initial approach to the Algerian war for independence occurred in May of 1955 when France notified the Supreme Allied Commander - Europe [SACEUR] that it was moving one of its Divisions from Germany to reinforce the 100 000 French troops already in Algeria.<sup>32</sup> The Division was only one of some thirty NATO Divisions in Europe, a far cry from the one hundred Divisions that NATO hoped to station under SACEUR, but the removal of the seasoned French troops to Algeria weakened NATO along the all-important Western European front.<sup>33</sup> Worse yet for Canada was that the French troops were removed from a NATO sector where Canadian troops were stationed. France, however, did not need NATO's consent to move its own troops; there was nothing the Atlantic Council could do but accept the situation. But Lester Pearson, Jules Léger and others in Ottawa's foreign policy establishment began to worry that the French position in Algeria could only be maintained at the expense of France's commitments to Europe.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Memorandum. RAD Ford to Defence Liaison 1 & 2 Divisions. 25 May 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>33</sup> "Current Military Situation of the Atlantic Alliance," in *NATO Annual Review 1955*. 10 November 1955. DEA file 50107-E-40. NAC.

<sup>34</sup> See the comments made by Jules Léger to Lester Pearson in Memorandum. USSEA to SSEA. 15 February 1956. DEA file 3618-C-40. NAC. which reflected comments made by MN Bow to Léger in Memorandum. European Division to USSEA. 23 August 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.



The removal of French troops from the NATO umbrella and the anti-colonial attitude adopted by the Bandung Conference clearly demonstrated that Canadian interests were involved in the Algerian war. They also persuaded Lester Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Jules Léger, his Under-Secretary, to take a broad view of the Algerian situation. According to Léger the end to colonialism was inevitable. Within a generation all of Africa, including French North Africa, would be independent self-governing states.<sup>35</sup> Once independent, they would be in a position to influence profoundly the balance of power in the world.

Pearson and Léger believed that the repressive, anti-nationalist policies of France in Algeria would have disastrous effects, leading to bloodshed, chaos and weak North African states turned against the West by the Arab League.<sup>36</sup> Crushing the rebels might shore up France's and NATO's position in Algeria temporarily but that situation could not last indefinitely. As Pearson asked in 1956, "if we hold colonial territories against the wishes of their inhabitants, are we going to be stronger or weaker in the long run?"<sup>37</sup> Instead of opposing the Algerian nationalists, Léger proposed that France give Algeria autonomy while retaining influence over its defence and foreign policies. Such a solution would keep North Africa oriented to the West while allowing French troops to return to Germany to contain the Soviet threat and avoiding the alienation of the non-aligned states of Africa and

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<sup>35</sup> Memorandum. USSEA to European Division. 6 September 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Lester B. Pearson. Transcript, C.B.C. Press Conference. 21 March 1956. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.

Asia from the West. Léger had correctly predicted the development of the new world order, then on the horizon, in which European and North American national interests could no longer be secured through the use of naked force or the strength that vast colonial territories conferred upon an imperial power like France.

More importantly, however, this attitude towards the Algerian situation corresponded to the American position. Prior to mid-1955 the United States, like France's other allies, had been prepared to tolerate France's colonial aims in North Africa as long as the nationalist troubles were disposed of quickly and quietly.<sup>38</sup> But the Bandung Conference and the massive increase in the Afro-Asian membership of the United Nations led the United States to take a much stronger attitude towards decolonization after that date. The United States was concerned that its links to the colonial policies of its European allies through NATO tarnished its reputation in Africa and Asia. The United States would not abandon its French ally. Nor would it press for the immediate independence of Algeria. But the days of unquestioned American support for French initiatives in Algeria had passed.

Not everyone in Ottawa or in Washington, however, adhered to this broad view of the Algerian situation. In determining Canada's approach to the Algerian war, Pearson and Léger disregarded the advice of M.N. Bow and External Affairs' European Division. For Bow, French power depended upon the successful suppression of the Algerian rebels. Because France was an important member of the Western alliance, Canada should give as

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<sup>38</sup> Jean-Baptiste Duroselle. France and the United States. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). p. 204.

much support as possible to help France crush the rebel uprising short of direct military involvement.<sup>39</sup> Bow suggested that Canada follow the British and pledge complete political and moral support for France's position in Algeria and North Africa.<sup>40</sup> This had also been the policy of the United States before the Bandung Conference revealed the intensity of Afro-Asian anti-colonialism. After the Conference, both Canada and the United States were determined to pressure France away from its policy of repression in Algeria. When the question of Algeria's struggle for liberation came before the United Nations in the fall of 1955, however, Canada recognized the difficulties it would have in encouraging France to ease its hold on the colony.

In August of 1955 thirteen Afro-Asian states tried to have the subject of French colonialism in Algeria inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations.<sup>41</sup> The Canadian government knew that France was sensitive to its position in Algeria but it did not know the intensity of that sensitivity until the debate on inscription. The United States and the United Kingdom opposed letting the United Nations debate the Algerian situation because Article 2(7) of the U.N. Charter prevented the organization from interfering in the domestic jurisdiction of any of its member states.<sup>42</sup> Unlike its allies,

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<sup>39</sup> Memorandum. European Division to USSEA. 21 July 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>40</sup> Telegram. United Kingdom Commonwealth Relations Office to DEA. 8 October 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>41</sup> See Department of External Affairs. Canada and the United Nations, 1953-54. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956). p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> *Weekly Divisional Note*. European Division. 26 January 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. This note contained a statement on the American views and Telegram. United Kingdom Commonwealth Relations Office to External Affairs. 8 October 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. expressed the British views.

however, Canada had always adopted a flexible interpretation of Article 2(7). In 1946 Louis St. Laurent, then Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, had expressed the view that the "United Nations should review any situation, no matter the origin, which it deems likely to impair general welfare or friendly relations among nations."<sup>43</sup> Strict adherence to St. Laurent's policy would have compelled Canada to support a U.N. debate on Algeria. Yet, when Canada had agreed to include Algeria in NATO's protected area in 1949, it had inherently accepted France's argument that Algeria was a part of France. Canada thus could not support that Algeria should be discussed in the United Nations by reason of Article 2(7), the domestic jurisdiction clause.

Caught between the two positions, the Cabinet decided to let political considerations determine Canada's vote on the inscription of the Algerian question on the U.N.'s agenda.<sup>44</sup> It was, concluded the Cabinet, "not in our interests at this stage in world affairs that France's power and influence in Europe and NATO should be weakened."<sup>45</sup> Discussion of Algeria at the U.N. would certainly weaken France's stature with the Afro-Asians. And given that France would greatly resent a Canadian vote in favour of

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<sup>43</sup> *Charter of the United Nations Review Studies*. 54/21 paragraph 28. as cited in Memorandum. V.C. Moore to John Holmes. 9 September 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>44</sup> Letter V:I. USSEA to Canadian Delegation 10th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. 21 September 1955. DEA file 10880-40. NAC. This letter outlines the Cabinet's instructions to the Canadian delegation that political needs should dominate over the legal aspect of the competence of the U.N. when voting on the inscription of Algeria on the U.N.'s agenda.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum to Cabinet. *General Instructions for the Canadian Delegation at the 10th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations*. 14 September 1955. DEA file 5475-DW-43-40. NAC.

inscription, the direction of Canadian policy on Algeria at the United Nations was assured. Canada joined the United States and Britain in opposing the inscription resolution.

By the slimmest of margins, that resolution passed; Algeria was included on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>46</sup> Embittered, the French delegation withdrew from the General Assembly. Only when the General Assembly decided not to proceed with the actual debate on Algeria itself was France enticed to rejoin the organization. This episode revealed the depths of France's feelings about Algeria that determined Canada's approach to the Algerian question in the years to come. Even Canada's interest in maintaining amicable relations with non-aligned countries like India would not take precedence over the importance of mollifying France over Algeria.

In an attempt to appease the still bitter French, Lester Pearson announced while in Paris in October of 1955 that the Canadian government "opposed and regret [sic] this unfortunate decision to inscribe on the agenda a question which, under the Charter, falls so clearly within the domestic jurisdiction of France."<sup>47</sup> Canada had expected France to resent the interference of the United Nations in the Algerian situation. France's reaction to the debate on Algeria in the U.N., however, indicated that it would also resent anything less than wholehearted support from NATO for its Algerian policies. Canada was given decisive proof of France's attachment to Algeria. The Canadian government would not

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<sup>46</sup> Department of External Affairs. Canada and the United Nations 1954-55. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956). p. 19. By a vote of 28 for to 27 opposed (including Canada) with 5 abstentions the motion to place the Algerian question on the agenda of the 10th session was adopted.

<sup>47</sup> Statement reprinted in: Weekly Divisional Note (European Division). 6 October 1955. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

abandon the idea of encouraging France to accept self-determination for the Algerian people, but it realized the actions it could take in that vein would be severely limited by France's intransigence over the issue. In the meantime, Article 2(7) allowed Canada to cloak its support for France in terms of respect for its domestic jurisdiction. This was similar to when Canada had implicitly allowed France to use Canadian Mutual Aid equipment against the nationalists in Indo-China. Canada hid its ultimate support for France's position in Algeria behind legal terms and expressions of sympathy for the plight of colonial peoples.

The French had good reason to be sensitive about the way their allies treated the Algerian problem after 1955 because the Algerian war for independence was beginning to divide France itself. The Communist Party in France advocated complete independence for Algeria but the parties of the Right were committed to maintaining *l'Algérie française*. Neither side would accept anything less than the complete satisfaction of their demands. Between them they scuttled all attempts at reforming the administration in Algeria; reforms short of independence did not go far enough to satisfy the Left, while any reform at all was too much for the Right. The impasse between the two sides undermined the political stability of France to such an extent that the British Foreign Office worried in early 1956 that a coup might bring the Communists to power in Paris.<sup>48</sup> An open rift between the

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<sup>48</sup> United Kingdom Report. Gladwyn Jebb to Selwyn Lloyd. 30 January 1956. DEA file 6938-40. NAC. Jebb called the long-term prospects for France 'thoroughly disturbing.'



French government and its allies over Algeria would only exacerbate France's internal turmoil.

By 1956, however, France experienced greater and greater difficulties convincing its allies that Algeria remained a problem for France to solve by itself. By this time the war in Algeria had become a symbol of the struggle between the East and the West.<sup>49</sup> The Soviets were already trying to win influence in Tunisia and Morocco, and Egypt was susceptible to anti-Western ideas in its bid to unite the Arab world. Egypt's support for the Algerian nationalists raised the spectre of the loss of Algeria to anti-Western forces.<sup>50</sup>

The involvement of Egypt in Algeria increased sympathy in Ottawa for France's difficulties in North Africa and the Middle East. External Affairs recognized that Colonel Nasser of Egypt posed a grave threat to the French position in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.<sup>51</sup> But Egypt, as well as India, accused NATO of supporting France's military campaign against Algerian nationalism.<sup>52</sup> Canada feared the impact such allegations had on Western influence with the non-aligned states. The longer the Algerian war lasted, the more the West's prestige in Africa was tainted by association with France. As a result,

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<sup>49</sup> Message S-437. SSEA to Ambassador in Paris. 24 April 1956. DEA file 50115-J-40. NAC. According to Pearson, "Arab nationalism is clearly one of the key battlegrounds in the new competition which is emerging between the Soviet bloc and NATO."

<sup>50</sup> Horne. p. 158. In October 1956 the French navy intercepted a shipment of arms bound for the Algerian rebels. The shipment had originated in Alexandria.

<sup>51</sup> Despatch 941. Ambassador in Paris to SSEA. 31 August 1956. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Ambassador Jean Desy explained to External that the extravagant denunciations of the nationalization of the Suez Canal by French Prime Minister Guy Mollet and Foreign Minister Christian Pineau owed their origin to Egyptian influence in Algeria.

<sup>52</sup> Draft Background Paper. *North Africa*. MA Macpherson. 23 April 1956. DEA file 3618-C-40. NAC.

External Affairs began in 1956 to consider plans to resolve the Algerian problem multilaterally before the area was lost to communism or to the Arab League. One proposal that reached the Canadian Cabinet advocated the creation of an independent but Western-oriented Magreb state in North Africa encompassing Algerian, Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>53</sup> The proposals, however, never got past the Cabinet. France pre-empted any discussion of multilateral solutions to the Algerian problem.

In March of 1956 France withdrew another division from Europe to cope with the deteriorating situation in Algeria.<sup>54</sup> At the same time France asked the North Atlantic Council to declare its unqualified support for French aims in Algeria and North Africa while leaving France to pursue its own settlement in the area. In concert with the Scandinavian members, the Canadian delegation to the Council spent its energy on preventing NATO from issuing the declaration because it gave the impression that NATO supported the armed suppression of colonial nationalism.<sup>55</sup> Even if the Canadian Cabinet had been persuaded by the Department of External Affairs to endorse NATO action, France gave Canada no opportunity to propose that NATO cooperate with France to resolve the conflict in Algeria.

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<sup>53</sup> Cabinet Documentary Note (Supplementary). *North Africa*. 23 May 1956. DEA file 3618-C-40. NAC. In October and November of 1956 a Canadian mission went to Tunisia and Morocco. Their report stated that the West should “plan with a view to relieving France of some of her burdens and thus checking any communist initiative to take over France’s role in this area.” Report. *Canadian Mission to Morocco and Tunisia*. P. Beaulieu. October-November 1956. DEA file 50378-40. NAC.

<sup>54</sup> *Notes for the Use of the Minister*. 14 March 1956. DEA file 3618-C-40. NAC.

<sup>55</sup> Message S-252. Lester Pearson to Canadian Delegation North Atlantic Council, Paris. 20 March 1956. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

In the end, though NATO never endorsed the removal of French troops from Europe, two French Divisions and three Air Battalions were withdrawn from NATO command and transferred to Algeria. By late 1956, 400 000 French troops were fighting in Algeria but to little apparent effect since France's military efforts were not succeeding in ending the rebel threat.<sup>56</sup> The concentration of troops in Algeria, however, left only two understrength French Divisions in Germany and no regular troops in France.<sup>57</sup> Despite this, the withdrawal of the French troops only slightly diminished NATO's ability to deter a Soviet invasion; NATO forces in Europe were already well below the level SACEUR deemed necessary for adequate defence. Nevertheless, it was important to Canada to keep the French Army as strong and well-equipped as possible to help deter the Soviet Union from attacking Western Europe, so Canada continued to equip the French military through large gifts of Mutual Aid.

From 1955 to 1958 the Canadian government gave France Mutual Aid that included 300 000 rounds of 20mm ammunition; 1 000 000 rounds of .303 ammunition; trucks; dynamite; sub-machine guns; 90 mm shells; pistols; and Harvard training aircraft. From January of 1957 to March of 1958 alone Canada donated \$14.6 million in Mutual Aid to France.<sup>58</sup> Given the positioning of a majority of the French army in Algeria the Canadian

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<sup>56</sup> *Commentary for the Guidance of the Canadian Delegation to the 11th Session of the General Assembly.* 12 November 1956. DEA file 5475-DW-48-40. NAC.

<sup>57</sup> *Background Paper on North Africa.* April 1956. DEA file 3618-C-40. NAC.

<sup>58</sup> Department of National Defence Document. *Deliveries of Materials and Supplies.* DEA file 50107-H-40. NAC. The breakdown of the equipment shipped to France from 1 January 1957 to 31 March 1958 was as follows:

Deliveries from stock: \$2,400,000 in aircraft engines.  
\$2,480,000 in armaments.

government had to have known the true destination of some of the equipment. How, then, could the government provide France with the arms that it required while avoiding the appearance that it supported the repression of independence movements in France's colonies, Algeria in particular? Order-In-Council 1956-507, passed by the government in March 1956, resolved this dilemma.

The Order-In-Council stated that once the recipient nation accepted Mutual Aid from Canada it also accepted the responsibility to use it to strengthen NATO's capacity to deter aggression.<sup>59</sup> The exact use of the equipment was of no concern to Canada. France could transfer Canadian equipment anywhere it wanted with no need to ask Canada for permission. The desire to maintain the strength of the French Army, wherever it happened to be, was the primary motivation behind this unscrupulous policy. But Canadian officials also suspected that, had Canada opposed the use of its Mutual Aid in Algeria, France would have considered this blatant intervention in France's Algerian affairs. Rather than antagonize the French, the Canadian government tacitly accepted the use of Canadian military equipment against the Algerian nationalists. In the mid-1950s, the United States also gave France defence assistance in amounts the equivalent of up to one quarter of France's defence budget even though it also knew that some of it would be used in

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	\$790,000 in ammunition.
	\$50,000 in aircraft and engines.
Transfers to France:	\$6,301,000 in new armament production.
	\$1,267,000 in ammunition.
	\$1,289,000 in aircraft and engines parts from stock.

<sup>59</sup> Cabinet Minutes. 15 March 1956. PCO series A-5-a. NAC.

Algeria.<sup>60</sup> Both Canada and the United States, therefore, had contrived to support France while maintaining a public position that allowed them to look with disfavour upon the use of force to suppress nationalism in Europe's colonies.

Even with such disguised support from its allies, France was not close to ending the conflict in Algeria in the fall of 1956. Nor did the events of that season improve matters. On the 22nd of October 1956, the French military forced an aircraft to land in Algiers where French authorities promptly arrested its passengers, five of the leaders of the rebel *Front de Libération Nationale* who had been travelling from Rabat in Morocco to Tunis in Tunisia. Anti-France riots erupted throughout the enraged Arab world.<sup>61</sup> What was anti-French in nature quickly became anti-Western. For arguably little benefit the French had only succeeded in antagonizing numerous Arab and Afro-Asian states.<sup>62</sup> Canada, which wished to strengthen ties with the Afro-Asian states, regretted the rise of anti-Western feeling in the Arab world.<sup>63</sup> But what could Canada do? France tolerated no interference in Algeria from its allies. Canada could not raise its concerns about France's tactics in

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<sup>60</sup> Harrison. p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> See for example the coverage of these outbreaks in The Globe and Mail. 23 October to 2 November 1956.

<sup>62</sup> British Foreign Office Document. *The Arrest of the Algerian Nationalist Leaders*. 31 October 1956. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. At the time, the British Foreign Office considered the arrest of the five F.L.N. leaders a great feat for the French authorities, believing them to have struck a valuable blow against the influence of Cairo over the Algerian rebellion.

More recently, however, doubts have been raised about the true influence the five wielded over affairs in Algeria due to the fact that they had all been out of Algeria for several years. See for example: Horne. pp. 159-161.

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum. *The Question of Algeria*. European Division to USSEA. 29 October 1956. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. RAD Ford found it "unfortunate" that France had arrested the rebel leaders.

Algeria without placing the Franco-Canadian relationship at risk. Canada had no time to dwell on this disagreement, however, because the Suez Crisis focused the world's attention away from the arrest of the five Algerian rebels.

On the 29th of October 1956, Israel invaded Egypt. The next day Britain and France issued an ultimatum to end the fighting. They also prepared to send their troops into Egypt to protect the Suez Canal. Contrary to what Britain and France had expected, they did not receive the support of Canada and the United States for their attempt to punish Egypt for nationalizing the Canal zone.<sup>64</sup> On the contrary, Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent condemned both Britain and France, the fading 'Supermen of Europe,' for trying to reassert their authority in the Middle East.<sup>65</sup> The Americans were also furious with Britain and France for taking action without consulting the United States.<sup>66</sup> The timing of the invasion of Egypt only enhanced the anger of the American government, coming as it did just as the Soviet Union brutally crushed an anti-Soviet revolt in Hungary. By their actions, Britain and France had demonstrated that the Western powers treated the rights of weaker, dependent peoples with as little respect as the Soviet Union.

The Suez Crisis opened the biggest rift between Britain and France and the United States to that point in the Cold War. The bitterness lasted for months. The French never

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<sup>64</sup> For a more complete analysis of the Suez Crisis and Canada's role therein consult Lester B. Pearson. Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume 2. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973). pp. 226-274. and William Roger Louis and Roger Owen eds. Suez: 1956: the Crisis and Its Consequences. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>65</sup> Thomson. pp. 485-6.

<sup>66</sup> Marvin R. Zahniser. Uncertain Friendship: American-French Diplomatic Relations Through the Cold War. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1975). p. 281.

completely lost their sense that the United States betrayed them and that Britain deserted France at the first sign of disapproval in Washington.<sup>67</sup> Britain would never again differ from the United States over basic foreign policy but France, on the contrary, became increasingly convinced that the United States had little respect for France's national security interests.<sup>68</sup> The usefulness of the American relationship to France was called into question. Though it also disapproved of the British and French actions in the Suez War, the Canadian government and Lester Pearson in particular, tried to repair the damage done to America's relations with Britain and France over the next year. NATO unity depended on it.

It had become clear by late 1956 that the United States and France each had different conceptions about NATO's role in combating communism. The Americans wanted it to contain Communist forces along the front in Western Europe, believing the alliance could not be used to stop Soviet efforts outside of Europe. The French, on the other hand, believed that NATO should oppose the Soviet Union wherever it was trying to outflank the West from areas outside Europe.<sup>69</sup> The Soviet Union, according to France, was using movements for national liberation in Europe's colonies to weaken the West. Because communism lay behind the rebellion in Algeria, France was actually serving Western interests by fighting the Algerian nationalists. France, accordingly, wanted greater support from NATO for its anti-nationalist efforts in Algeria. For the United States,

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<sup>67</sup> John Newhouse. De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons. (New York: The Viking Press, 1970). p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Harrison. p. 40.

however, communism was not behind Algerian nationalism. It was simply a part of the movement, upon which the United States looked with favour, to end the outdated system of European rule in the colonies.<sup>70</sup> Like the United States, Canada discounted France's claim that the Algerian rebels were inspired or led by communists.<sup>71</sup> The differences between Canada and the United States and France over the Algerian war did not greatly matter; they could be disguised or ignored in the interest of allied unity. The gulf between the American and French world views, however, was becoming hard to ignore, and it was widening.

The French sense of betrayal after Suez magnified their sensitivity over Algeria. According to General Gruenther, the retiring Supreme Allied Commander (Europe),

the feeling was such, ..., that if the United Nations were to condemn France over her policies in Algeria, he thought it quite possible that she would withdraw from NATO. It was illogical for the French to feel this way, but they did and the fact had to be recognized.<sup>72</sup>

If nothing else, the Suez Crisis at least forced France's allies to tolerate France's Algerian policy to ensure its cooperation in NATO. In late 1956 France continued its efforts to eradicate nationalism in Algeria without any dissension from such countries as Canada. Militarily, France even seemed to be achieving some success. Though not defeated, the Algerian rebels were increasingly confined to areas away from the major cities of Algiers,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

<sup>71</sup> Telegram S-48. USSEA to SSEA at Canadian Delegation in New York. 28 January 1957. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>72</sup> Record of Cabinet Decisions. *Cabinet Discussion with General Gruenther*. 22 November 1956. DEA file 50102-P-40. NAC.



Oran and Constantine.<sup>73</sup> Yet, the intransigence of the European settlers and the support they mustered in France itself prevented the wholesale reform of the administration in Algeria that might have satisfied the majority of Algerians and ended the war. The Left in France had also hardened its demand for the independence of Algeria. Algeria was precipitating the internal division of France. Either France's allies stepped in to help France resolve its Algerian problem or they risked watching it pull France apart.<sup>74</sup>

Concerned about the political stability of France, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Jules Léger, proposed in January of 1957 that Canada try to persuade France to declare itself in favour of the eventual independence of Algeria as the basis for a cease fire and a negotiated end to the war.<sup>75</sup> Lester Pearson, however, disagreed with his Under-Secretary. Pearson believed that neither Canada nor any other country could exert enough pressure to change France's policy towards Algeria. Any suggestion otherwise underestimated the strength of French national feeling over Algeria and the bitterness that remained from the Suez Crisis.<sup>76</sup> Pearson did not want to jeopardize France's willingness

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<sup>73</sup> Beginning in January 1957 French troops began an operation to clear rebels from the city of Algiers. The Battle of Algiers lasted until October 1957 but was ultimately successful in forcing the rebels from the capital. For a complete analysis of the events of 1956 and 1957 in France and Algeria and the pressures under which the French government operated consult Jean-Pierre Rioux. The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). ch. 14.

<sup>74</sup> Telegram 364. Ambassador in Paris to External Affairs. 7 May 1957. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. HF Davis observed that "... the conflict in Algeria is beginning to divide the nation itself with all the attendant evils of political bitterness and intolerance."

<sup>75</sup> Telegram S48. USSEA to SSEA at Canadian Delegation at the United Nations. 28 January 1957. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>76</sup> Telegram 402. Lester Pearson to USSEA. 29 January 1957. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

to contribute to the Atlantic alliance by an ill-considered attempt at peace-brokering in Algeria. Neither Canada nor the United States were yet willing to envisage NATO minus France.

Pearson's cautious attitude towards France and the Algerian problem governed Canadian policy until June 1957 when the Liberal Party was defeated in a general election after twenty-two years in power. John Diefenbaker and the Conservative Party assumed the direction of Canada's affairs. Diefenbaker and his Secretaries of State for External Affairs, first Sydney Smith, then Howard Green, had no experience in foreign affairs. They lacked the confidence with which the Liberals, led by Pearson, had directed Canada's foreign policy.<sup>77</sup> Diefenbaker did, however, renew Canada's commitment to traditional alliances, friendships and associations.<sup>78</sup> The continued importance of NATO, combined with the Conservative government's inexperience in international affairs, guaranteed that Canada would continue its cautious approach to Algeria's relationship to France and NATO after June of 1957.

Despite Canada's avoidance of the issue, the pressure for a solution in Algeria was mounting by the end of 1957. France's refusal to consider self-determination for Algeria defied the trend towards decolonization which had seen Tunisia and Morocco achieve their

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<sup>77</sup> H. Basil Robinson. Diefenbaker's World. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). p. 6. Robinson was the former liaison officer between the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of External Affairs.

<sup>78</sup> John G. Diefenbaker. Statement by the Prime Minister in the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York. 23 September 1957. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.

independence from France in 1956. How much longer could France deny the aspirations of the Algerian nationalists? Expressions of sympathy for Algerian nationalism began appearing more frequently in internal External Affairs documents during this period.<sup>79</sup> It was, according to Jules Léger, “becoming very difficult for us to continue to support the French on the Algerian issue” in the fall of 1957.<sup>80</sup> Canada was losing its patience with France’s inability to resolve the Algerian problem. The French tried to ease the international pressure over Algeria in November 1957 by passing a *loi-cadre*, a framework law, that promised Algerians greater internal autonomy and contained the hint of a move towards a federal relationship between Algeria and mainland France. The *loi-cadre*, however, contained no real substance and could not be implemented until three months after the end of hostilities in Algeria.<sup>81</sup> It did not persuade many countries of the sincerity of France’s efforts to find a settlement in Algeria before another acrimonious debate in the United Nations.

In July of 1956 Senator John F. Kennedy asked the President and the Secretary of State of the United States to use their influence “to achieve a solution which will recognize

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<sup>79</sup> Letter S-258. A.J. Pick for the Acting-USSEA to Embassy in Oslo. 24 September 1957. DEA file 12177-40. Pick expressed the Department’s considerable sympathy with Algeria’s aspirations for independence while also claiming that “we do not think their best interests would be served by France’s giving in to their demands now.”

<sup>80</sup> Memorandum. *The Algerian Question*. USSEA to SSEA. 11 September 1957. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>81</sup> Rioux. p. 295. An attempt to enact a *loi-cadre* had been rejected in September 1957 by the National Assembly by a vote of 279 to 253. Its rejection resulted in the resignation of the government of P.M. Bourges-Maunoury. Another governmental crisis inspired by Algeria then ensued. Only when the *loi-cadre* was so watered down as to become ‘innocuous’ did it pass the French legislature.

the independent personality of Algeria.”<sup>82</sup> Even by 1957 President Eisenhower’s government was not yet willing publicly to abandon its pro-France policy, though its private rejection of France’s Algerian policy became very heated. American anger erupted at a NATO meeting in December 1957 when John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, denounced French efforts to involve the United States in a show of support for French aims in Algeria.<sup>83</sup> Dulles’ hostility dashed France’s hope about eliciting support from NATO for its Algerian policies.

By late 1957, Canada had also begun to overcome the caution that had guided its Algerian policy since the Suez Crisis. External Affairs again began to consider whether NATO should assume some of France’s burden in Algeria.<sup>84</sup> It could do so, for example, by initiating a foreign aid scheme for North Africa; or it could advocate the creation of a Western Mediterranean Confederation of the North African states with France and Spain. For the first time French politicians even appeared to welcome the intervention of their allies in the Algerian situation. At a private luncheon on the 6th of March 1958, former French Prime Minister Guy Mollet invited France’s allies to take the initiative in proposing solutions to the Algerian problem.<sup>85</sup> Though Mollet’s views were yet far in advance of

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<sup>82</sup> Duroselle. p. 210. and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House. (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1965). pp. 553-4

<sup>83</sup> Telegram 2511. Dana Wilgress to External Affairs. 18 December 1957. DEA file 50105-G-40. NAC.

<sup>84</sup> *General Assessment of the 12th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*. 14 February 1958. DEA file 5475-DW-52-D-40. NAC. and Telegram G-32. Jules Léger to Canadian Delegation North Atlantic Council, Paris. 3 March 1958. DEA file 50105-G-40. NAC.

<sup>85</sup> Telegram 267. Embassy in Paris to External Affairs. 6 March 1958. DEA file 6938-40. NAC.

France's official position, Canada and the other NATO members were becoming exasperated enough with France's inability to resolve the Algerian problem to consider confronting France over its policies in the territory. Events in France, however, denied Canada the opportunity to exercise its new-found determination.

A political crisis paralyzed France in the first half of 1958. Governments fell. Party after political party attempted to form a government capable of maintaining power but all failed. Then, on the 8th of May, Pierre Pflimlin assumed the office of Prime Minister. He did so after having publicly called for negotiations to end the conflict in Algeria.<sup>86</sup> The French army in Algeria reacted immediately to Pflimlin's plan to negotiate with the Algerian nationalists. A Committee of Public Safety under General Salan, the commander in Algeria, was organized to oppose the Metropolitan government's plan to end the French presence in Algeria. The generals in Algeria even threatened to stage a coup from Corsica, endangering the life of the Fourth Republic itself. At one point during the crisis Canadian and British officials in London discussed the possibility of strengthening Pflimlin's fragile hold on power through the provision of foreign assistance to maintain France's economic prosperity.<sup>87</sup> In the end, however, neither Canada nor any other country could do anything to help France weather this storm. Canada was forced to

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<sup>86</sup> Miles Kahler. Decolonization in Britain and France. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). p. 5.

For further analyses of the events in France in early 1958 please see Rioux.; and Charles S. Maier and Dan. S. White eds. The Thirteenth of May: the Advent of de Gaulle's Republic. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>87</sup> Telegram 1001. High Commission in London to External Affairs. 16 May 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

watch as events in France unfolded. When the dust from the crisis finally settled in June of 1958 Charles de Gaulle, war-hero and former Prime Minister of France, had again emerged to lead his nation in its time of need. His rise to power forced Canada to re-evaluate its position on a range of issues of concern to both France and Canada, not the least of which was the continuing war for the independence of Algeria.

## CHAPTER 2: THE DE GAULLE YEARS

Charles De Gaulle had been a familiar figure to many officials outside of France since the Second World War. De Gaulle had then believed that despite defeat and occupation by Germany, France remained a Great Power and he devoted himself to reaffirming France's equality with the Anglo-Saxon powers. His belief that France was being denied its rightful role in the war led de Gaulle to clash with many British and American officials, Franklin Delano Roosevelt in particular.<sup>1</sup> His suspicions of the United States and Britain continued after 1945 and often set him at odds with the other Western powers. By 1958 Canadian officials deemed him to be anti-U.S., anti-German, anti-British, anti-European and anti-NATO.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, Ottawa anticipated more difficult relations with France after de Gaulle's rise to power in 1958. Despite these misgivings G.G. Crean, Chargé d'Affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Paris, observed that de Gaulle had a better chance to end France's political instability and France's problems in Algeria than any other person in France.<sup>3</sup> The United States, Britain, Canada and the other NATO members expected some benefits, therefore, from de Gaulle's term in office to balance what they expected would be strained relations with their ally.

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<sup>1</sup> John Newhouse. De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons. (New York: Viking Press, 1970). ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This view was expressed by Canadian Embassy officials in Madrid following a discussion with Ramon Sedo, the Political Director in Spain's Foreign Ministry. Despatch 238. Embassy in Madrid to External. 28 May 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>3</sup> Despatch 561. GG Crean to USSEA. 9 July 1958. DEA file 6938-40. NAC.

De Gaulle's first act as Prime Minister was to write a new constitution for France and abolish the Fourth Republic.<sup>4</sup> In 1946, fearful of creating an opportunity for dictatorial rule in France, the Fourth Republic had been endowed with a very weak executive. After 1946, the executive had been dominated by the National Assembly with the result that governments in France were very unstable. De Gaulle had hated the constitution of the Fourth Republic from its inception and was determined to devise a new constitution for France that provided for a strong President. In September of 1958, the new constitution received overwhelming approval in a referendum, in both France and its overseas territories like Algeria. As president of the new Republic after 1959, De Gaulle had the power and the means to end the chronic political instability that had plagued French governments after 1946 and which had led to the crisis that had swept de Gaulle to power earlier in 1958.<sup>5</sup> Canada had been asked by France to provide officials to observe the voting in Algeria on the new constitution, but the Canadian government turned down the request.<sup>6</sup> It did not want to become too closely linked to French policy in Algeria. Even without Canada's help, however, a new era in the political history of France had begun.

While de Gaulle had not yet indicated in which direction he would lead the new Republic in late 1958, the government in Ottawa had settled into its position. John Diefenbaker and his Conservative colleagues had been in power for almost a year, during which time the general outlines of their foreign policy had become clearer. Primarily,

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<sup>4</sup> Charles de Gaulle. Memoirs of Hope: renewal, 1958-1962. (sl: sn, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> Maier and White. pp. 351-360.

<sup>6</sup> Message S-329. External to Embassy in Paris. 8 September 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.



Diefenbaker looked to revitalize Canada's relations with Britain.<sup>7</sup> The Liberals, he felt, had abandoned Britain during the Suez Crisis and only Britain, in his view, offered protection from complete absorption into the American sphere. In other words, the Conservative government wanted a foreign policy that was not so dominated by the position and dictates of the United States.<sup>8</sup> The Conservatives also recognized the need for close relations with the Afro-Asian states, particularly those who were also members of the Commonwealth.<sup>9</sup>

Canada's primary aim of preserving the North Atlantic Alliance, however, limited Canada's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy under the Conservatives as it had so done under the Liberals. In September of 1957, Diefenbaker said, "there is more need today than ever before for the maintenance of the unity of NATO."<sup>10</sup> Canada could not afford to distance itself too far from the United States or its other NATO allies without undermining its own security in the volatile bi-polar world of the late 1950s. Thus, the Diefenbaker government, like its Liberal predecessor, viewed Algeria's war for independence through the NATO lens.

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<sup>7</sup> J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer. For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992). ch. 7. and Robinson. pp. 10-24.

<sup>8</sup> William Kilbourn. "The 1950s." in J.M.S. Careless and R.C. Brown eds. The Canadians, 1867-1967. (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1967). pp. 330.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. In 1961 Canada would side with India and the African members of the Commonwealth against Britain and Australia over the issue of apartheid. The result was that South Africa left the Commonwealth.

<sup>10</sup> John G. Diefenbaker. Statement by the Prime Minister in the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York. 23 September 1957. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.

The Canadian government had been considering possible NATO initiatives to resolve the conflict in Algeria in early 1958 before the political crisis that brought de Gaulle to power. By late 1958, however, the pressure for NATO to broker a solution in Algeria had largely dissipated. Weak governments in France were a thing of the past and Charles de Gaulle inspired great confidence among a majority of the French people. The need, therefore, for a solution in Algeria to prevent political chaos in France had disappeared. NATO action might still be needed in the future, but in late 1958 de Gaulle could be left to find his own settlement to the war in Algeria.<sup>11</sup> Canada was just as unwilling to become directly involved in Algeria in 1958 as it had been in 1948 during the negotiations to create NATO.

Other countries did not share Canada's desire to give France another chance to resolve the Algerian question itself. In August of 1958, the Canadian government was informed that the Conference of Independent African States wanted to send three representatives to Ottawa to explain the position of the Algerian nationalists. External Affairs officials wanted the opportunity to ask the Afro-Asians to be patient while de Gaulle made clear his policy for Algeria, and so they were prepared to receive the delegation, but they had again discounted the force of France's reaction.<sup>12</sup> A counsellor at the French Embassy in Ottawa informed the European Division that his government opposed Canada's reception of the pro-Algerian nationalist delegation.

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<sup>11</sup> Backgrounder. *Question of Algeria*. 15 August 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum for the Minister. 11 August 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

This reaction confirmed that de Gaulle's government displayed a sensitivity to France's interests in Algeria equal to, or exceeding, that of any of the preceding French governments.<sup>13</sup> Any participation by Canada in an exploration of the nationalist sentiment of the Algerians was a betrayal of France. Yet Canada's susceptibility to French pressure tactics over Algeria was diminishing in this view.<sup>14</sup> The Department of External Affairs planned to meet with the delegates of the African states despite France's objections. Only the postponement of the African tour prevented this episode from causing a minor crisis in Franco-Canadian relations. Nevertheless, France's allies were beginning to tire of France's use of diplomatic blackmail to enlist support for its Algerian policies.

Relations between France and the U.S. after the Suez Crisis deteriorated to the point where some influential Americans such as Senator John F. Kennedy were convinced that only Algeria's independence could restore friendly relations between the two countries.<sup>15</sup> Even Britain, which had formerly supported France's colonial aims in Algeria, followed the American lead by 1958 and resisted France's appeal for support for its policy in Algeria.<sup>16</sup> Only the fear of disrupting the workings of NATO still prevented Canada, the United States and Britain from pressuring France towards granting independence to

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<sup>13</sup> Telegram 905. Ambassador Dupuy in Paris to External. 18 August 1958. According to Dupuy the seriousness of the matter over the reception of the African delegation in Ottawa was due to the "over-sensitiveness of General de Gaulle and his followers."

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum for the Minister. HF Davis to SSEA. 21 August 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Davis decried the 'lingering colonialism in French relations with us' that led the French to believe that ties of friendship and sympathy required unswerving Canadian support of France's position in Algeria.

<sup>15</sup> Duroselle. p. 211.

<sup>16</sup> Newhouse. p. 79.

Algeria. Yet France was even more intransigent over Algeria in 1958 than before because oil had recently been discovered under the sands of the Sahara Desert. In January of 1958 the first of the oil flowed to France.<sup>17</sup> Enough of the resource lay under the Algerian Sahara to meet all of France's oil requirements by the year 1980 and end France's reliance on foreign sources of supply, but only if Algeria remained French in one form or another. It was France's very desperation to maintain its position in Algeria, then, that was beginning to alienate the other members of NATO.

Privately, the gulf between France and its allies was increasing. Publicly, they still endeavoured to support France. When the rebel *Front de Libération Nationale* [F.L.N.] established an Algerian government-in-exile in Cairo in September of 1958 to attract international support for its cause, NATO united behind France in rejecting its claim to represent the Algerian people. None of the allies recognized the rebel government. Even the Soviet Union delayed recognizing the F.L.N. government to avoid provoking France. On the other hand, Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco and Tunisia all extended their official recognition. For Canada the decision not to recognize the rebel government was straightforward. According to international law no group of insurgents could be recognized as a *de jure* government. Nor could the F.L.N. be recognized as *de facto* ruler of Algeria because it lacked a valid claim to the control of the territory of Algeria, did not demonstrate that it was supported by a majority of the people and could not ensure law and order in the area. In other words, it could not meet the international obligations incumbent

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<sup>17</sup> Horne. pp. 241-2.

upon an independent government.<sup>18</sup> There were thus excellent legal reasons for Canada to deny recognition to the Algerian government-in-exile.

Legal reasons in this instance merely masked the underlying political motivation for Canada's decision. Any recognition of the F.L.N. 'government' by Canada would have been an insult to France and would surely have crippled Franco-Canadian relations, just as de Gaulle's "*Vive le Québec libre*" speech would do after 1967. The decision not to recognize the so-called government was therefore an easy one for Canada and for the next four years the Canadian government took measures to deny the F.L.N. even the smallest degree of recognition.<sup>19</sup> Despite this fact the Diefenbaker government did not intend to jeopardize its relations with such Commonwealth countries as Ghana or Pakistan on a vain attempt to persuade them not to recognize the rebel government.<sup>20</sup>

Afro-Asian support for the Algerian nationalists had been growing over the last three years, particularly at the United Nations. Canada could not have persuaded them to abandon the cause of Algerian independence. On the contrary, the growth in skill, organization, forcefulness and numbers of the Afro-Asian states made their support of

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<sup>18</sup> Memorandum for the Minister. *Recognition of the FLN Government-in-Exile*. 24 September 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>19</sup> Message S-380. Jules Léger to Ambassador Kilgour in Cairo. 29 September 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Léger expressed grave doubts about the Canadian Ambassador in Egypt's intention to receive the F.L.N.'s representative in Cairo on a personal and informal basis. Kilgour was instructed, therefore, to avoid all contact with F.L.N. agents which may be misconstrued as recognition of their government.

<sup>20</sup> Message S-378. SSEA to Commonwealth Capitals. 28 September 1958. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

Algeria more effective after the early years of the war.<sup>21</sup> In the fall of 1958 they placed a resolution recognizing Algeria's right to independence before the United Nations General Assembly and its First Committee, which dealt with political issues. France, characteristically, boycotted the discussion in both the Assembly and the First Committee. Canada voted against the resolution because its wording, without referring to the possibility of a continued association with France, implied that if given the right to choose their future Algerians would choose outright independence.<sup>22</sup> Though a majority supported the resolution, it did not secure the two-thirds support needed for the Assembly to adopt it. The United Nations, therefore, took no formal action over Algeria in 1958.

This U.N. debate was not without repercussions for the West. During the voting on the Afro-Asian resolution the United States abstained. It did so because of the principle of self-determination involved, but also because of growing American impatience with the slow pace of reform in Algeria.<sup>23</sup> France interpreted the abstention as a clear betrayal that hurt the French and Western cause in North Africa. De Gaulle became so angry that he decided early in 1959 that, in the event of another war, the French Mediterranean Fleet would not serve with other NATO forces. Henry Davis of External Affairs' European

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<sup>21</sup> *General Assessment of the 13th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations*. 8 April 1959. DEA file 5475-DW-58-D-40. NAC.

<sup>22</sup> Final Report - United Nations 13th Session. *The Question of Algeria*. JGH Halstead. 19 February 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. The substance of Charles Ritchie's statement to the First Committee explaining Canada's vote is contained in the final report.

<sup>23</sup> Newhouse. p. 87.

Division believed that France's Algerian difficulties lay at the heart of the problems that France created in NATO in 1958 and 1959.<sup>24</sup>

Charles de Gaulle's problems with British and American statesmen had their origins in the Second World War when Britain and the United States had seemed to slight the interests of France in the conduct of the war. The end of war had not diminished de Gaulle's suspicions for the Anglo-Saxon powers and by 1958 he resented the degree to which the United States and Britain dominated NATO planning.<sup>25</sup> This situation, he felt, denied France its rightful position of equality with the Anglo-American powers. To increase France's role in NATO, he proposed in September of 1958 that France, the United States and the United Kingdom form a steering committee overseeing the strategic affairs of the alliance. Canada and the smaller members rejected the proposal because it would have meant a downgrading of their influence.<sup>26</sup> The United States rejected the idea of sharing the leadership of NATO with any other power, and even Britain rejected the plan, not wanting to lose its 'special relationship' with the U.S.<sup>27</sup> Thwarted, de Gaulle nurtured a strong resentment for the lack of respect for France shown by the United States and the United Kingdom. This was only exacerbated when the U.S. refused to provide a nuclear reactor for a French submarine despite the fact that the British had just received one. This,

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<sup>24</sup> Message S-303. HF Davis to Embassy in Paris. 21 July 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Davis attributed de Gaulle's decision to his bitterness over the American abstention in the debate on Algeria at the United Nations.

<sup>25</sup> Charles de Gaulle. Memoirs of Hope: renewal, 1958-1962. (sl: sn, 1971).

<sup>26</sup> Trevor Lloyd. Canada in World Affairs, Volume X: 1957-1959. (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs). pp. 156

<sup>27</sup> Newhouse. pp. 78-79. and Zahniser. p. 272-285.

following the abstention of the United States on the Algerian question at the United Nations further demonstrated that the Americans did not support the defence of France's national interests. De Gaulle was becoming more and more convinced that France could no longer rely on the United States and NATO to satisfy France's national needs.

In response to the perceived slights from the United States and the rest of NATO, France became reluctant to cooperate with NATO and resisted integrating French air forces more fully into the NATO command structure. In opposition to American strategic policy, France also undertook an independent nuclear programme which cost billions of francs. This became a very contentious issue between Canada and France. Howard Green, who became Minister of External Affairs in June of 1959, strenuously opposed the French nuclear programme. When, later in 1959, the subject of nuclear testing in the Sahara Desert was debated in the General Assembly of the United Nations, Canada voted against France.<sup>28</sup> This anti-France vote by Canada further strained France's relations with its Western partners. But France was pursuing a conception of the world that neither corresponded with the views of the U.S., the U.K. and Canada nor with the real limitations of French power in a world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. The difference between the positions of France and the rest of NATO was an almost insurmountable break.<sup>29</sup> As a result, Canada made sacrifices to ensure that its position on

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<sup>28</sup> Department of External Affairs. Canada and the United Nations - 1958. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1959). pp. 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> The difficulties between the two sides would keep building until finally France withdrew from the military aspect of NATO in 1966



the Algerian war did not exacerbate the growing list of problems that was already threatening France's enthusiasm for the NATO alliance.<sup>30</sup>

France continued to pressure its allies to support its position in Algeria. When, in May and June 1959, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interviewed representatives of the F.L.N. on two separate occasions, French Ambassador Francis Lacoste complained to the Canadian government. He was outraged that the C.B.C. allowed the F.L.N. "*l'occasion d'exposer devant des millions de spectateurs-auditeurs canadiens de langue française les thèses d'un mouvement subversif en révolt contre l'autorité du Gouvernement français.*" Lacoste went on to say that "*la passivité du Gouvernement canadien est incompréhensible et ne peut manquer de heurter profondément le sentiment national français.*"<sup>31</sup> France wanted the Canadian government to prevent the C.B.C. from airing anti-France arguments again. One of new Secretary of State Howard Green's first acts in office was to suggest to George Nowlan, Minister responsible for the C.B.C., that External Affairs co-operate with the broadcaster to avoid antagonizing the French Embassy in the future.<sup>32</sup> The directors of the C.B.C., however, dismissed both the Ambassador's accusation of an anti-France bias in the network and the government's proposal to guide its reporting of events in France and Algeria. The independence of the public broadcaster ensured that the government's

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<sup>30</sup> Message S-303. HF Davis to Embassy in Paris. 21 July 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>31</sup> Letter. French Ambassador in Ottawa to Norman Robertson. 5 June 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>32</sup> Draft letter. JG Diefenbaker to George Nowlan. 29 May 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

attempt to influence the C.B.C.'s coverage of the war in Algeria was only an empty gesture.

In fact, Canada was not sure what France expected it to support since Charles de Gaulle had not yet defined his policy towards Algeria. All Canada knew was that France remained determined in 1959 to resolve the Algerian war without any international interference. A large step in that direction was finally taken in September of 1959 when de Gaulle announced how he hoped to settle the question of Algeria's ambitions. He promised to hold a referendum within four years in which Algerians would determine their own future. The Algerians were offered three choices: complete independence; the complete integration of Algeria into a greater France that stretched across the Mediterranean; or de Gaulle's preference, an internally autonomous Algeria associated with France in matters of economic development, defence and foreign policy.<sup>33</sup> His predecessors had fought to keep Algeria French to protect the rights of its European settlers and its French investments and for reasons of national prestige. But for de Gaulle, these reasons no longer justified the enormous burden that France was carrying in Algeria.

The war was crippling France economically, militarily, politically and psychologically, and France could not afford to keep paying such a high cost for Algeria. Even if Algeria chose complete independence, France would be better off than if it had to rely on an indefinite military occupation of the colony to preserve its position there. De Gaulle recognized that the days when extensive colonial territories made a country great

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<sup>33</sup> A more complete description of de Gaulle's pronouncement is contained in Talbott. pp. 151-3.

and powerful were gone. Algeria no longer contributed to France's prestige or power.<sup>34</sup> On the contrary, the repression of nationalism in the colony was undermining France's position internationally. The transition would be difficult, but for the good of France as well as for the good of Algeria the time had come to loosen France's grip there.

France's allies greeted de Gaulle's new policy with a sense of relief. At a stroke, de Gaulle had removed one of the sources of tension in the NATO alliance by bringing French policy in Algeria line with the views of the other members, but principally with those of Canada and the United States. After almost five years of being pressured to support policies in Algeria they did not feel were best for France or for NATO, Canada and the United States could now come out in open support of the plan to apply the principle of self-determination to Algeria.<sup>35</sup> To compensate for voting against France over the issue of nuclear testing in the Sahara Desert, Canada had again been prepared to support France in the U.N. debate on Algeria in the fall of 1959.<sup>36</sup> Yet, because of its new policy in Algeria, France did not need to pressure Canada into opposing the Afro-Asian resolution pressing for Algeria's independence in the United Nations. For the first time since 1955, Canada agreed with the direction of French policy there.

Not everyone was as satisfied as Canada with de Gaulle's offer of self-determination to the Algerian people. Most of the European colonists in the territory did

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<sup>34</sup> De Gaulle. ch. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Memorandum. *Algeria*. Yvon Beaulne to HF Davis. 25 September 1959. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>36</sup> The close connection between the Canadian vote on Algeria and its vote on nuclear testing in the Sahara was referred to in: Final Report - 14th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. *Algeria*. 18 December 1959. DEA file 12177-40.

not like it at all. They resented the prospect of losing their *Algérie française* and on the 24th of January 1960, militant settlers erected barricades against the government in Algiers.<sup>37</sup> The leaders of the French army in Algeria did not relish using violence to put down the revolt of the very people whose interests they had been defending since 1954. The colonels of the elite paratroop regiments in particular refused to have their men do more than set up a protective ring around the barricades.<sup>38</sup> This time, however, the *colons* ran into an obstacle they could not surmount. Charles de Gaulle refused to moderate his plan for Algeria and in the face of his determination the insurrection collapsed. The rising of the settlers confirmed the sharp turn France had taken in its Algerian policy. France was no longer interested in prolonging the war in defence of the rights of the European settlers.

Led by de Gaulle, the majority of the people of France had tired of the war in Algeria by 1960 and wanted only peace. France, however, would not hold the referendum on self-determination until after the end of hostilities in Algeria. The F.L.N., suspicious of France's sincerity, kept fighting to gain a better position at the negotiating table.<sup>39</sup> Soon, the *Organisation de l'armée secrète* [O.A.S.], a French terrorist group founded in January 1960 to sabotage the peace process, was also contributing to the violence in Algeria. Despite the opening of negotiations between France and the Algerian nationalists in March of 1960, the French Army still faced an armed threat in Algeria.

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<sup>37</sup> Horne. pp. 362-372.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>39</sup> Talbot. chs. 7-10.

The continued use of force by France in Algeria caused much concern in Ottawa. Rumours persisted that France was using Canadian Mutual Aid in Algeria during its war for independence.<sup>40</sup> In March of 1960, Douglas Anglin, a left-wing professor of Political Science at Carleton University in Ottawa, asked the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Norman Robertson, if France used Canadian equipment in 'repressing' the Algerian rebellion.<sup>41</sup> This question had the potential to embarrass the government, if it could be demonstrated that Canadian military equipment was being used against the nationalists, especially after they had been granted the right of self-determination by de Gaulle. Norman Robertson replied that, as per Order-In-Council P.C. 1956-507, "the recipient nation ... accepts responsibility for use of the [Mutual Aid] equipment ... to strengthen the capacity of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to deter or resist aggression." In essence, Canada did not care what its allies did with Canadian Mutual Aid. They could use it for whatever purpose they chose, including the suppression of nationalism in their colonies. Canada just did not want its role in such a transaction to be revealed publicly.

The government's hands-off policy regarding the destination of Mutual Aid equipment prevented it from knowing how much, if any, of the \$127 679 000 in military

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<sup>40</sup> Letter. Sheila Young, Secretary of the Vancouver Branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to JG Diefenbaker. 5 April 1961. Diefenbaker Papers file MG 01/vi/845/A395, vol. 558. Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon. Ms. Young referred to rumours which sprang from several quarters and enquired after the truth to the accusation that NATO supplies were being used against the Algerian rebels.

<sup>41</sup> Memorandum. WH Barton to USSEA. 3 March 1960. DEA file 50030-L-5-40. NAC.

equipment Canada donated to France from 1950 to the 31st of March 1960 had indeed found its way to Algeria.<sup>42</sup> Canada had made it clear as early as 1952 that it did not want to know the true destination of its Mutual Aid. The truth of the matter, concluded F. Houde of Defence Liaison I Division, was that Canada could neither confirm nor safely deny the presence of Canadian arms on Algerian soil.<sup>43</sup> In the end, however, it was a moot point. Whether Canadian supplies went directly to Algeria or went to replace supplies in Europe that France had sent to its forces fighting in Algeria made no difference at all. By ignoring the ultimate use of Canadian materiel against the Algerian nationalists, Canada had refused to acknowledge its actions publicly, but was still responsible for contributing to France's efforts to suppress nationalism in Algeria.

By 1960, the war in Algeria was in its final stages and the nationalists were close to satisfying their ambitions. This prompted a change in Canada's approach to dealing with the Algerian question in the international sphere. De Gaulle's policy of self-determination seemed an adequate guarantee that Algerians would achieve their independence if that was their choice. France no longer needed to be encouraged in that direction. Once it seemed

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<sup>42</sup> The figures for the amount of Mutual Aid given to France were taken from Memorandum. LP Tardif, Defence Liaison I Division. 28 November 1960. DEA file 50030-L-5-40. NAC. The breakdown in the figures was as follows:

Armaments:	\$26,698,000
Ammunition:	\$27,813,000
Mechanical Equipment:	\$8,151,000
Electrical Communications Equipment:	\$13,516,000
Aircraft and engines:	\$20,080,000
Ships:	\$26,421,000

<sup>43</sup> Memorandum. *Algerian War and NATO*. F. Houde. 20 October 1960. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

that peace in Algeria was closer to reality, Canada began to support France to prevent the Afro-Asian states, or any other outside influences, from endangering the still precarious settlement. Thus Canada opposed United Nations' interference in the Algerian situation after the fall of 1959 because, it said, efforts by the international community to bring a prompt end to the war in Algeria might jeopardize the prospects for its solution.<sup>44</sup> In 1960, Canada was also worried about possible Communist incursions into Algeria. In November of that year a group of NATO experts had issued a report on the situation in the Middle-East and Africa that declared that Africa "had emerged as the most immediate area of conflict between the interests of the West and of the Soviet Union."<sup>45</sup> Then, beginning in July of 1961, the fighting that broke out between French and Tunisian forces at Bizerta similarly threatened the peaceful solution to the war in Algeria. Tunisia wanted the last French forces in Tunisian territory removed from the naval base in Bizerta. Once again, the question of France's colonial presence in North Africa was raised, and given Tunisia's political and military support for the Algerian nationalists, Canada worried that the conflict would spread across the border to Algeria.<sup>46</sup> Canada's fears on all counts were groundless, however. Not even a revolt by the French military in Algeria in April of 1961 could derail the peace process between France and the Algerian nationalists.

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<sup>44</sup> Department of External Affairs. Canada and the United Nations - 1959. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960). p. 9. This would be Canada's position on the Algerian question for the remaining three years that it was debated at the United Nations.

<sup>45</sup> Draft Report. *The Situation in the Middle East*. NATO Expert Group on the Middle-East. 16 November 1960. DEA file 50105-G-40. NAC.

<sup>46</sup> Cabinet Minutes. 10 July 1961. PCO series A-5-a. NAC.

In the interim between the announcement of self-determination for Algeria, the cease-fire of March 1962 and the referendum in July 1962 when the Algerians voted in favour of independence, Canada and the West had to decide how to cope with the consequences of Algeria's forthcoming independence. Algeria's importance in North Africa had long been recognized in both the European and the African and Middle Eastern Divisions in Ottawa. Its population, resources and number of skilled personnel almost guaranteed that Algeria would soon be the dominant country in North Africa west of Egypt.<sup>47</sup> As such, NATO's interests dictated that Algeria be kept friendly to the West. NATO members were encouraged by its Expert Group on the Middle-East to establish diplomatic relations with Algeria, and to extend the new country economic or cultural aid, in the hope of keeping Algeria oriented to the West after its independence. Despite this encouragement from NATO, Canada did not do much in either area to keep Algeria friendly to the West.

As the East and the West were battling for influence in the developing countries of the world by the early 1960s, establishing friendly relations with the new countries of Africa could pay big dividends in the ideological struggle between the two sides. The Soviet Union had already moved to cultivate ties of friendship with Algeria through educational exchanges for Algerian students and by allowing Algerian trade unionists to study Soviet labour practices in Moscow. The Soviets were also helping Algerian refugees

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<sup>47</sup> Briefing Note. *Algeria*. BA Keith. 18 March 1960. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.



in Tunisia and Morocco.<sup>48</sup> Other Communist countries, like China, North Korea and North Vietnam, provided similar moral and political support for the Algerian nationalists and their 'government-in-exile,' the *Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne*.<sup>49</sup>

Canada could do little to help avert this growing threat in Algeria from the Sino-Soviet bloc before mid-1962. Both the United States and the United Kingdom had wanted to recognize the Algerian government as early as possible so that they could prevent the Communist countries from gaining too great a head start in establishing relations with Algeria.<sup>50</sup> From the creation of the G.P.R.A. in 1958, however, Canada had denied it recognition.<sup>51</sup> Canada had not wanted to impinge on France's sovereignty in Algeria before the colony was officially granted its independence. This political motivation, however, only partly explains why Canada did not make great efforts to establish diplomatic contacts with the leaders of the Algerian nationalist movement after 1960. The other, and more important, limiting factor was Canada's economic situation in the years after 1960. In 1958 and 1959 the Canadian government had contributed a total of \$43,500 to relief efforts aimed at the Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco. But by 1961 the

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<sup>48</sup> Letter 1098. D. Johnson in Moscow to External. 25 October 1960. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>49</sup> Excerpt. *Trends and Highlights of Communist Bloc Broadcasts*. 8 June 1960. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

<sup>50</sup> Letter 193. Canadian Permanent Mission in New York to USSEA. 19 March 1962. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. As part of the government of the United States' practice of maintaining contact with the Algerian rebel leaders "the U.S. Mission has been in touch with the Algerian office."

<sup>51</sup> Message S-253. External to High Commission in Accra. 20 June 1960. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Social contacts between Canadian diplomats and Algerian representatives were later recognized to be desirable and this order was discontinued.

government rejected a request by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for another \$90,000 for the Algerian refugees. The government required all of its resources to stimulate the faltering Canadian economy.<sup>52</sup> What money was left over for international initiatives was already dedicated to peacekeeping operations and to the Colombo Plan, the Commonwealth's economic aid plan for African and Asian members to which Canada's development assistance was almost exclusively devoted in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There was nothing left for Canada to use to foster good relations with Algeria or the other non-Commonwealth African states.

With the coming of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec French-Canadians began to realize that Canada was neglecting the French aspect of its character in its international relations.<sup>53</sup> Thus it became politically desirable in the late 1950s and the early 1960s for the Canadian government to enhance its international efforts in the French-speaking part of the world. The government, however, just did not have the money to devote to such projects as relief efforts aimed at the Algerian refugees. Even the programme of cultural aid it did initiate, a \$300,000 programme in 1961 to distribute educational assistance to the former French colonies of tropical Africa, represented nothing more than a gesture compared to the funds Canada gave to Commonwealth countries.<sup>54</sup> On a per-capita basis,

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<sup>52</sup> Message V-385. USSEA to Canadian delegate in Geneva. 24 July 1961. DEA file 5475-EA-7-40. NAC.

<sup>53</sup> See the essays collected in Paul Painchaud ed. Le Canada et le Québec sur la scène internationale. (Montréal: les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1977).

<sup>54</sup> Letter. NFH Berliss to M. Cadieux. 2 December 1960. DEA file 8260-15-40. NAC. In 1960 Secretary of State Howard Green approved a programme of educational assistance for French-speaking African countries as the most appropriate way to meet the

aid to the francophone countries in tropical Africa would have needed to be at a level of \$3,000,000 per year to equal the amount that Canada gave to African members of the Commonwealth.<sup>55</sup>

American aid to Africa totalled \$365 million in 1962 of which \$146 million was given to the strategically important French-speaking countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>56</sup> Yet unlike the United States, Canada excluded the former French protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco from eligibility for funds from its new programme because, ostensibly, they were more developed and did not need the help.<sup>57</sup> The Canadian government justified its exclusion of Algeria from eligibility for the educational assistance because it was not yet an independent state. Canada still had no desire to impose upon France's sovereignty before Algeria became independent. But even immediately after its independence, Algeria did not receive funding from Canada's programme to help the French-speaking African states. The best explanation for why Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria did not receive educational aid from Canada in the early 1960s was that they would have diluted the \$300,000 available for the francophone countries to such an extent that the

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political objectives of demonstrating the responsive of Canada's foreign policy to the needs of the French-speaking world to French-Canadian sentiment.

<sup>55</sup> Memorandum. DS McPhail. 29 March 1962. DEA file 12354-B-40. NAC.

<sup>56</sup> Chester. *Table 5*. p. 303.

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum. GE Cox to Information Division. 28 March 1962. DEA file 12177-40. NAC. Cox here expressed the Department's opinion that "in view of the present touchiness of the political situation in Algeria we would prefer that the question of Canadian educational assistance for Algeria be left in abeyance."

political value of the programme would have been greatly lessened.<sup>58</sup> Algeria's size and population would have required a greater amount of developmental assistance from Canada in order to produce results justifying the aid. Canada had decided to allocate the meagre resources it had available for economic aid to the French-speaking countries of Africa to the smaller countries of tropical Africa where limited amounts of money would have a positive impact, and thus a positive political effect on Canada's burgeoning problem with Quebec's establishing of an international presence.

Similar economic constraints affected Canada's diplomatic representation in Algeria and indeed in the rest of Africa in the early 1960s. NATO recognized the need for Western countries to increase the number of their missions in Africa to counteract the growing Communist efforts there.<sup>59</sup> Yet Canada's Department of External Affairs simply did not have the resources or the trained personnel needed to establish diplomatic offices in even a small percentage of all of the African countries which had recently achieved their independence or would, like Algeria, be doing so in the near future.<sup>60</sup> In most cases it was

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<sup>58</sup> Memorandum. DS McPhail. 29 March 1962. DEA file 12354-B-40. NAC. McPhail recognized that making Algeria eligible for education assistance would place great strains on the adequate division of the \$300,000 available for the French-speaking African countries.

<sup>59</sup> Telegram 125. Canadian delegation to the North Atlantic Council to External. 20 January 1961. DEA file 50102-A-40. NAC. The Report of NATO's Committee on Africa found that the Sino-Soviet bloc "are making increasing efforts to gain ground in Africa and that they have met with considerable success." The report also suggested, among other things, that NATO members increase their diplomatic representation in African countries.

<sup>60</sup> John Hilliker and Donald Barry. Canada's Department of External Affairs - Volume II, 1946-1968. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). CHs 5 & 6.

left to the United States or the United Kingdom to establish a Western presence in the new countries. This was certainly true of Algeria. A Canadian Ambassador was not appointed to the Republic of Algeria until 1965, and it was not until 1971 that a resident Canadian mission was opened in Algiers.<sup>61</sup> French sensitivity to their position in Algeria had prevented the Canadian government from becoming directly involved in and with Algeria prior to its independence. After Algeria's independence in mid-1962, considerations of economy limited the degree of Canadian involvement in Algeria and the rest of the area.

On 1 July 1962 the people of Algeria voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence from France. Two days later the Republic of France proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Algeria. That same day John Diefenbaker welcomed the new country to the community of nations. He said that "It is with a deep sense of satisfaction that, on behalf of the Government and people of Canada, I welcome Algeria to the comity of free and independent nations."<sup>62</sup> The days of colonialism had passed. Canada, like the rest of the West, had struggled to cope with the effects of decolonization on the world. Canada's attitude towards the Algerian war for independence had not been particularly noble. What it had been was a sober reflection of Canada's national security interests as reflected by its relationship with NATO and its need for national security which only NATO could provide. The constraints of the Cold War had compelled Canada to sacrifice morality and nobility for security.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>62</sup> Press release. Office of the Prime Minister. 3 July 1962. Diefenbaker Papers file MG01/xxii/458 vol. 7. Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon.

## CONCLUSION

Independence did not end Algeria's problems. The withdrawal of the French administration left a vacuum which the F.L.N. and its *Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne* attempted to fill. Yet, with the external enemy gone the ideological and temperamental differences within the nationalist camp quickly became apparent. The establishment of the Republic of Algeria was followed by a struggle for control by three different groups.<sup>1</sup> By late September 1962 Ahmed Ben Bella defeated his rivals and became the country's first president but Algeria's difficulties continued. Government machinery was virtually non-existent and the economy had been strangled during years of war. Moreover, given the massive flight of the skilled Europeans and their capital, the prospects for a recovery did not look good. In the face of these persistent problems Jean Fournier of Canada's Department of External Affairs ventured "to guess that Algeria will continue to fare ill" for a while yet.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Algeria took its place among the community of nations.

The new republic was established at a time when domestic considerations began shaping Canada's foreign policy. During the 1960s and into the 1970s the government of Quebec was increasing Quebec's cultural and political contacts with other French-speaking

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<sup>1</sup> See Horne. ch. 25. for a description of the post-independence problems experienced by the Algerian Republic.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum. J. Fournier to USSEA. 5 September 1962. DEA file 12177-40. NAC.

peoples, including those in the former French colonies of Africa. Under the British North America Act the federal government alone was empowered to establish and maintain relations internationally, so Quebec's external activities undermined the authority of the Canadian government.<sup>3</sup> Canada's relations with, and bilateral aid for, the French-speaking states in Africa, therefore, became important tools in the effort to keep Quebec from establishing an international presence to the detriment of Canadian national unity and Canada's influence abroad.

When Canada was forced to deal with the end of colonialism in French North Africa in the 1950s, its foreign policy towards the French-speaking states had not been motivated by the political situation in Quebec. The primary consideration for Canada then was how colonial issues affected the balance of power between East and West during the Cold War. In 1961, a Radio Tunis reporter asked Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Howard Green, if Canada had a double standard on anti-colonialism because it opposed the repression of the Hungarian people by the Soviet Union, but it refused to support the Algerians in their struggle for independence. In reply, Green denied that Canada had a double standard on colonialism and he was, for the most part, telling the

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<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the international efforts of Quebec and the reactions they provoked from the federal government and the resultant impact the issue had upon relations with Africa in particular please see, for example, Paul Painchaud ed. Le Canada et le Québec sur la scène internationale. (Montréal: les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1977.) and John P. Schlegel. The Deceptive Ash: Bilingualism and Canadian Policy in Africa, 1957-1971. (Washington: University Press of America, 1978).

truth.<sup>4</sup> What he had not said, however, was that Canada judged colonial issues not with an eye to promoting freedom for all dependent peoples, but by what impact the colonial question had on NATO and the Cold War. Canada supported the right of the Hungarian people to be free because the Soviet crackdown in Hungary rallied international opinion against the Soviet Union. Canada's opposition to Soviet tactics in Hungary was thus calculated to strengthen the West vis-à-vis the Communist-bloc. In Algeria, however, anti-colonialism threatened NATO's interests, and Canada was forced to support France in its opposition to the independence movement.

Beginning with Louis St. Laurent, Canadian officials had expressed sympathy with the nationalist aims of the people of Algeria. This sympathy, however, could not overcome Canada's fear of communism. It was vital for Canada from the 1950s to the 1960s that NATO remain strong enough to ensure the security of the North Atlantic countries. Issues such as the Algerian war for independence which undermined NATO's effectiveness had to be minimized.

The Algerian war for independence threatened not only the strength of NATO but its integrity as well. The war drained France's economic, political and human resources and kept the majority of French military forces away from their NATO posts from 1954 to 1962 and thus adversely affected its ability to contribute to the alliance militarily. More importantly, however, the Algerian conflict threatened to alienate France itself from NATO. France expected complete support from its allies for its position in Algeria. Every

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<sup>4</sup> Howard Green. Review of Canadian Foreign Policy - Transcript of the C.B.C. Programme "Inquiry". 14 November 1961. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.



indication that the allies did not completely back France, such as when the United States abstained on the Algerian question in the United Nations in 1958, diminished France's enthusiasm for NATO and made relations within the alliance more difficult. During this period, Canada was still committed to the idea of an Atlantic community bound by more than a military alliance. It was essential, therefore, that France remain closely tied to NATO. This meant that France's allies had to show support for France's position on Algeria.

Canada first took a position towards the Algerian war for independence in 1955. It would try to encourage France to satisfy the aims of the Algerian nationalists whenever possible, but at the first sign that the French resented the intrusion into their affairs, Canada would retreat to its policy of quiet political support for France. Meanwhile, Canada would continue to equip the French military from Canadian supplies. Though well aware that France intended to use at least some of the Mutual Aid against the rebels in Algeria, Canada sent \$128.5 million worth of Mutual Aid equipment to France from 1950 to 1962.<sup>5</sup> Canada hoped that this concrete demonstration of support for France would solidify that country's allegiance to the North Atlantic community.

The Canadian government was sympathetic to the aspirations for self-government of colonial peoples, as indicated by Paul Martin in 1952.<sup>6</sup> Sympathy alone, however, was

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<sup>5</sup> The figure was quoted in *Reply to Question re NATO in Senate*. CJ Marshall - Defence Liaison I Division. 29 May 1963. DEA file 50030-40. NAC.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Martin. Statement on Tunisia on First Committee, United Nations. 12 December 1952. Reprinted in DEA. *Statements and Speeches*.

not enough to convince the Canadian government to overlook the strategic concerns at stake during the Algerian war for independence. Not even Canada's growing interest in developing close relations with the anti-colonial Afro-Asian states persuaded Canada to abandon France and its NATO connection over the issue of independence for Algeria. The Cold War dominated Canada's foreign policy concerns in the 1950s and the 1960s and Canada's relations with NATO and its principal Western partners like the United States and France still offered the best option for protection from Communist aggression. Support for the principle of self-government for colonial peoples had a place in the foreign policy of Canada during this period, but its place was behind Canada's interest in national security which included the strength of NATO, the partnership of Canada's principal Western allies and security from domination by the communist powers.

Historians like J.L. Granatstein, Norman Hillmer and John English have long debated how much independence Canada has exercised in its foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. This is one of the great historiographical questions in the study of Canada's post-war external affairs. Canada's response to the Algerian war for independence was not noble, but it did reflect the constraints placed on Canada's foreign policy by the hostile, bi-polar global environment of the post-war period. From 1954 to 1962 Canada made great efforts to ensure that its position on Algeria offended neither France nor its other allies, notably the United States. This often required Canada to abandon its own beliefs, such as that France should grant Algeria some measure of independence or that Canadian military equipment should not be used against the

nationalists in Algeria. Canada's actions throughout the Algerian war demonstrated that in matters of national security, especially those that touched upon NATO and the Cold War, Canada had almost no opportunity to practice an independent foreign policy.

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