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Canadian Belief Systems in Context

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In seeking to broaden our understanding of defence decision-making and Canada’s support – or lack thereof – for selected NATO commitments, this study outlines the belief systems of influential policymakers within a conceptual framework. Such an approach necessarily raises theoretical questions and methodological issues that need prior clarification.

**Why is it necessary to explore the factors affecting Canadian defence policy-making?**

Assuming that the study of defence policy-making will deepen our understanding of Canada’s approach to its NATO commitments, why is it necessary to explore the factors affecting defence policy-making? Perhaps Canada’s record of commitment might be more satisfactorily explained by studying other factors, such as developments arising out of the international system or the domestic environment?

Let us look at a variety of other “systemic-level,” “state-level,” and “individual-level” variables in light of their effect on Canada’s approach to NATO. At the “systemic-level” of analysis, for instance, international crises, historical developments, and systemic-level power configurations might be analysed for their effect on the country. It could be posited that, as a result of the Cuban missile crisis, the Pearson government decided to acquire nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces. Alternatively, one could say that, owing to the relaxation of tensions between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, the Mulroney government withdrew Canadian Forces from Europe and closed its bases. Historical developments, such as advances in technology, might also help explain Canada’s record of commitment. One
could hypothesize, for example, that the emergence of Soviet bombers capable of reaching Canadian territory contributed to the country’s decision to acquire nuclear-armed Bomarc missiles as part of its commitment to preserving NATO’s deterrent capabilities or, similarly, that Soviet development and deployment of the SS-20 missile led to Canada’s decision to test the cruise missile as part of NATO’s “two-track” strategy.

One might also group bilateral pressures under the general rubric of international variables affecting Canada’s NATO commitments. It could be hypothesized, for instance, that it was the United States’ request that Canada acquire nuclear-armed missiles and interceptors that prompted the government to acquire Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors, or that it was American pressure to equip the Bomarcs and Voodoos with nuclear warheads that contributed to the Canadian government’s disinclination to acquire these systems. Alternatively, it might be postulated that it was American pressure that compelled Canada in the early 1980s to test the cruise missile or, conversely, that a surfeit of American pressure pushed Canada, a few years later, into taking an intermediary role between opposing alliances.

One could also examine the influence of international organizations such as the NATO Council and the United Nations. Perhaps the NATO Military Committee’s recommendation in 1952 that military authorities make plans based on the assumption that nuclear weapons would be used in NATO’s defence from the outset prompted the Canadian government to acquire nuclear weapons systems? Negative allied reaction to Canada’s 1969 announcement of a two-thirds cut to Canadian Forces in Europe may have contributed to the government’s subsequent decision to cut the Forces by only one-half. The effect of UN directives could be considered another possible stimulant, for Canada has frequently supported various arms control and disarmament resolutions at the United Nations. For instance, did the “Irish resolution,” with its recommendation for restraints on the spread of nuclear weapons, prompt Canada to reconsider acquiring nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces?

In fact, many systemic-level variables probably affected Canada’s record of commitment. For example, systemic changes in power configurations might well account for Canada’s contrasting approaches to the Alliance. Paradoxically, allied requests that Canada contribute to the defence and rebuilding of post-war Western Europe may have led to the strengthening of Canada’s NATO commitments, whereas the gradual recovery and growing ability of Western Europe to defend itself may have contributed to a weakening of Canada’s overall commitments. Clearly, further exploration of systemic developments and
pressures might well broaden our understanding of Canada’s support, or lack thereof, for various NATO commitments.

Turning to other possible factors operating at the state level, perhaps economic pressures affected Canada’s NATO record. It could be argued, for example, that the Bomars or cruise missiles were a relatively less expensive alternative to the mounting cost of fielding trained military personnel in Europe, or that financial imperatives contributed to the Trudeau government’s interest in withdrawing some of the Forces stationed overseas. As well, the Washington Summit’s recommendation that each NATO ally increase its percentage of GNP devoted to defence spending may have affected Canada’s NATO spending. On the other hand, the prospect of a “peace dividend” could have enticed Canada into reassessing its commitments.

Also at the state level, domestic pressures may have influenced Canada’s approach to NATO. Growing domestic criticism, for example, could have contributed to Canada’s decision under Diefenbaker not to fulfill its nuclear commitments, whereas later, under Trudeau, domestic interest groups representing defence and industrial interests appeared to pressure the government to strengthen its NATO commitments. It seems evident that different state-level variables, including financial imperatives, domestic pressures, and domestic interest groups, may well have influenced the resources Canada earmarked for NATO.

These sorts of systemic- and state-level variables all suggest promising areas for further analysis. Why, then, does this study focus on factors affecting defence policy-making at the level of the individual? Although it makes sense to argue that it was the interplay of many different factors which contributed to Canada’s overall record of commitment to NATO, this position does not help in developing a conceptual framework that is sufficiently parsimonious, explanatory, and illuminating. In any conceptual model, complex reality needs to be partitioned into boundaries; humans cannot deal with too much information at once. In a project of this nature, boundaries of inquiry need to be drawn. Therefore this book does not purport to explain all the reasons for Canada’s support, or lack thereof, for select NATO commitments. It merely suggests that studying the factors affecting defence decision-making can significantly deepen and broaden our understanding of Canada’s overall approach to the Alliance. Let us begin with the premise that factors affecting individual-level decision-making need to be explored.

One problem to date with much of the analysis of NATO and Canadian defence policy has been the attribution of individual human assumptions and inclinations to actor units, such as the state
or government, when, in effect, it is only individuals who are subject to these kinds of beliefs. Phrases such as "Canada decided" or "the federal government committed" beg the question of who decided for Canada, and who committed. To speak of actors, governments, and systems obscures the fact that it is leaders who usually make decisions on behalf of the collectivity called Canada. The individual level of analysis – with its focus on discerning the psychological factors that affect policy-making – presumes that there is merit in focusing on the phenomenal field of individuals who participate in the decision-making process. The idea is that people are subject to experiences, images, and fears, while institutional abstractions such as "Canada" or "the government" are not, except in a metaphorical sense. In other words, this book is premised on the assumption that understanding the factors working on individual defence policy-makers can significantly contribute to our understanding of Canada's overall approach to, and role within, the NATO Alliance.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO EXPLORE WHETHER BELIEFS AFFECTED CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY-MAKING?

This book does not purport to explain all the factors affecting Canada's overall approach to NATO. It does, however, suggest that individual-level factors in the form of beliefs and assumptions have played a significant role in defence policy-making with regard to Canada's NATO commitments. Of course, a variety of other influences may have had an equal, if not greater, effect on decision-making, including international crises, technological developments, bilateral pressures, and historical trends. It could be posited, for instance, that Prime Minister Diefenbaker's perception of a relaxation of superpower tensions in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis led him to delay fulfilling his government's commitment to acquire nuclear weapons, or that the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia prompted some Cabinet ministers to advocate that Canada strengthen its forces in Europe. Alternatively, it could be suggested that technological developments, not international crises, had the greater impact on policy-making. The perception of some policy-makers that Canada should have the best weapons available may have inclined some politicians to favour the acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces. By the same token, confusion over whether the cruise missile could be used in a first-strike role may have contributed to some Cabinet ministers' inclination to oppose cruise testing.
Bilateral pressures may also have affected defence decision-making. For example, the US State Department’s press release taking the Diefenbaker government to task for not fulfilling its nuclear commitments was a form of bilateral pressure that had a contrary influence on the prime minister’s inclinations. As well, decision-makers could have been particularly influenced by UN and NATO directives during select time periods. For instance, NATO’s Harmel report of 1967 (stressing the need for allied consultation and the reduction of East-West tensions) or the Reykjavik Declaration of 1968 (in which the allies pledged to seek mutual and balanced force reductions) may both have contributed to the perception among decision-makers that Canada could ease tensions by withdrawing its forces from Europe. On the other hand, a decade later, UN initiatives reflecting increased worldwide interest in arms control and disarmament may have incited Prime Minister Trudeau to propose his “strategy of suffocation” and, later, to undertake a peace initiative.

Clearly, while a wide range of international factors may well have affected policy-makers, other state-level variables, such as domestic pressures and financial concerns, may have affected them equally. For example, shifts in the public’s support for NATO, both for and against, could conceivably have led some decision-makers to recommend either increases or cutbacks in defence expenditures. On the other hand, changes in the overall defence budget may have prompted others to advocate either new equipment or cuts in spending. As well, representations from domestic interest groups and interested academics may have influenced some Canadian leaders to either support or criticize Canada’s NATO commitments. It seems self-evident that a wide variety of subjective factors arising from the international and domestic environment, including changes in perceptions of the threat, changes in allied attitudes toward Canada, fluctuations in public opinion, and ebbs and flows in defence spending, impinged on the attitudes of influential decision-makers toward Canada’s NATO commitments.

But again, if it is so evident that the interaction of international and national factors affected decision-making, why does this book nonetheless focus on individual leaders’ beliefs and assumptions? First, that there were some influential decision-makers who favoured, while others simultaneously opposed, select NATO commitments suggests contrasting attitudes on the part of the various high-level defence policy-makers. After all, they were all influenced by the same international developments, bilateral pressures, domestic concerns, and political imperatives. And yet many emerged still diametrically
opposed in their attitudes toward NATO. Second, a preliminary survey indicated that the various leaders’ underlying ideas and convictions frequently influenced high-level decision-making. Indeed, many heretofore classified documents — including confidential correspondence, secret memoranda, and restricted Cabinet meetings — referred to decision-makers’ own beliefs, fears, and assumptions. Third, this particular line of inquiry is, to date, relatively unexplored as an area of analysis. Thus, given the availability of many formerly classified documents pertaining to Cabinet discussions, I feel now is the time to ask whether certain beliefs and assumptions have consistently affected defence policy-making. In the end, outlining some of these commonly held beliefs within a conceptual framework can only enhance our understanding of defence decision-making and Canada’s support, or lack thereof, for select NATO initiatives.

**WHAT IS A BELIEF OR AN ASSUMPTION?**

For the purposes of my research, a belief is conceived of as “the mental concept at the basis of an argument or action,” while an assumption is “the taking of anything for granted as the basis of an argument or action.” For example, the very lack of war between NATO and the countries of the Warsaw Pact for over fifty years might be used to support a belief in the strategy of deterrence. Implicit in this kind of reasoning is the assumption that the possession of nuclear weapons deters war.¹

A great deal of the literature that treats NATO has ignored the beliefs and assumptions of leaders and NATO decision-makers. Although beliefs and assumptions are important for increasing our understanding of those who hold them, they are often difficult to discern. Since they are the initial links in a chain of reasoning, they may seem obvious, not at all contentious, or at times even unworthy of notice. They can also often be hidden from view in the guise of images, analogies, and metaphors. Decision-makers, for example, may justify Canada’s membership in NATO as a kind of “insurance policy.” Just as the payment of an insurance premium entails no risk for the policyholder, Canada’s membership in NATO is then deemed risk-free and responsible. But the presence of an important belief or assumption is also sometimes indicated by an omission. If, for example, decision-makers rarely mention the Soviet threat to the Alliance, this would suggest either that they assume it to be of little consequence, or that the threat is accepted as axiomatic of international affairs, thereby providing the context for decision-making.²
WHO WERE THE DECISION-MAKERS?

In general, decision-makers are defined as those individuals who have the greatest opportunity to act on their preferences and fears; those individuals whose attitudes, concerns, fears, and belief systems most affect the outcome of decision-making processes regarding national defence and NATO issues; and those individuals who possess the power both to commit the government and to prevent other decision-makers from reversing that commitment.

"Influential" decision-makers have been categorized still further, according to their relative distance from the centre of decision-making. Paul Pross first suggested that a "policy community" could be represented by means of a diagram of concentric circles illustrating the position of various institutions and pressure groups, with the "Cabinet," the "Central Policy Structures," and the "Lead Agency" at the centre of the diagram. This study builds on that idea, suggesting that influential decision-makers can be subdivided into concentric circles consisting of individuals (not roles) positioned in the "centre," the "inner" and "outer" core, the "periphery" or "margins," and outside the policy community (the "marginalized"). In this study, I focus on those individuals at the centre of decision-making, those who wield the most influence. However, I also pay attention to decision-makers within the inner and outer cores of decision-making. Excluded are those on the periphery of defence and alliance policy-making, as well as the marginalized.

DO LEADERS POSSESS CLUSTERS OF INTERCONNECTED BELIEFS?

This study suggests that certain beliefs and assumptions have played an important role in influencing policy-making. Like ideologies, which act as guides to action, certain beliefs – related to the dangers of abandonment or entrapment, the nature of the threat, and the utility of NATO's strategies and weapons to deter war – shaped and constrained decision-making. Over time, these belief systems exerted a major impact and contributed to Canada's support, or lack thereof, for select NATO commitments.

Initially, it was thought that one type of belief would dominate at a particular time, within a certain context, or even within a particular group of decision-makers. During the course of my research, however, it became apparent that different leaders possessed different clusters of assumptions and beliefs. These interconnected ideas
related to the dangers of abandonment, the perils of entrapment, the threat to the Alliance, the utility of nuclear and conventional weapons, and the merits or demerits of deterrence doctrine. For some leaders, these clusters of beliefs and assumptions seemed more akin to ideologies or world views at the opposite ends of a pole. Some leaders possessed coherent, all-encompassing world views, of which certain beliefs — such as their fears about possible abandonment or entrapment — were important elements. Others had less coherent schema through which they filtered and organized information. All leaders, however, did have mindsets that revolved around several core assumptions, although some mind-sets were highly interrelated while others seemed less coherently connected. Finally, I settled on the term belief system as the most appropriate to describe these sets of core beliefs and assumptions.⁵

**Which belief systems are delineated?**

Two sets of beliefs and assumptions typical of Defenders and Critics, respectively, were developed inductively and deductively. The choice of just two belief systems was based on the frequency with which the components of these belief structures were encountered in my research. Indeed, there seemed to be a good deal of agreement (or disagreement) among high-level decision-makers on either one set of pivotal assumptions or the other. Chapter 3 explains the beliefs and assumptions of Defenders by referring to pertinent historical examples drawn from the classified records of Canadian decision-making. Chapter 4 describes the beliefs and assumptions of Critics using new information pertaining to high-level decision-making processes. In effect, the typical profiles of Defenders and Critics are painted with broad brushstrokes in chapters 3 and 4. The obvious question then becomes whether profiles of merely two belief systems will result in a vast oversimplification or, conversely, an amplification of our understanding.

In this book, the Defender and Critic profiles, as outlined in chapters 3 and 4, may seem to portray these decision-makers as more single-minded and intolerant than they actually were. The real world, as decision-makers perceived it, was infinitely complex; indeed, the actors were driven by a multiplicity of beliefs, assumptions, and motives. Nevertheless, categorizing leaders’ beliefs and assumptions about a variety of important concepts — ranging from the nature of the threat, to the intentions of the allies, to the utility of nuclear and conventional weapons — into two broad categories can help simplify the issues and increase one’s understanding. Indeed, by deriving the
profiles from historical evidence arising out of an extended time span (chapters 3 and 4) and an in-depth case study (chapters 5, 6, and 7). I tried to avoid imposing dangerously simplistic psychological distinctions on any one category. In the end, the classification of influential decision-makers’ beliefs and assumptions into two broad categories – Defenders or Critics – provides a useful conceptual framework with which to help explain Canada’s approach to NATO over selected time periods.

CAN TWO DIFFERENT BELIEF SYSTEMS PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION?

Throughout my research, I recognized that most decision-makers’ beliefs and assumptions were more complicated than two, three, or more profiles would suggest, especially in the abnormal and stressful situations in which the decision-makers frequently found themselves. I presumed, too, that the leaders involved were intelligent people who had thought deeply about Canada’s NATO commitments. In other words, my intention is not to suggest that Canadian leaders did not think through the issues carefully. Rather, the research suggests that their beliefs and assumptions owed a great deal to the past – to the lessons learned from events and history, to views conditioned by war, and to perceptions of nuclear reality.

Although this book will demonstrate that the presence of two different types of belief systems or mindsets can help explain Canada’s support, or lack thereof, for various NATO commitments, one might still ask whether three, four, or even five categories might not have provided a better explanation. Certainly, the proclivity of scholars to situate policy-makers in two or more neat categories can be seen in a wide variety of scholarly analyses regarding defence policy-making.6 Indeed, while this study suggests that the descriptive labels of Defender and Critic are more illuminating than others – such as dove versus hawk, realist versus idealist, isolationist versus internationalist – it does recognize that typecasting decision-makers into two categories can oversimplify and underestimate the complexity of some leaders’ beliefs. Moreover, whereas it was important to broaden understanding by categorizing the main elements of two different mindsets, not all leaders could be categorized once and for all as either Critics or Defenders. At times, some espoused important elements of both belief systems, others were undecided or ambivalent, or the categories themselves proved to be too rigid. I have tried throughout, then, to explain any apparent confusion of the leaders,
as well as their conversion from one set of beliefs to another. Chapter 9, the conclusion, considers whether this book would have been improved, for instance, by positing a third or fourth belief system.

**Methodological Issues**

Chapters 3 and 4 show that many high-level Canadian decision-makers possessed entire belief systems, or elements of belief structures, that were typical of Defenders or Critics. The case study in chapters 5, 6, and 7 illuminates the extent to which these sorts of beliefs influenced high-level decision-making processes. The following three approaches were used to assess whether these belief systems affected the decision-making process pertaining to Canada’s NATO commitments.

*First Approach: Assessing evidence arising out of the psychological milieu*

This study focuses on discerning different leaders’ beliefs and assumptions in order to understand their impact on defence decision-making. Thus the evidence collected required a focus on the psychological milieu (the world as leaders saw it) rather than the operational milieu (the world in which defence policy was carried out). As a result, it was critical to examine evidence arising out of defence policy-making processes in which the leaders themselves were involved in discussing what should be the measure of Canada’s NATO commitments. It was not important to study time periods in which there was little or no high-level debate. Whereas in the real world, where defence policy was carried out, many Canadian commitments to NATO remained unchanged, in the world as various leaders saw it, different kinds of NATO commitments came to the fore. For example, the issue of whether Canada should fulfill its nuclear commitments dominated defence decision-making in the period between 1959 and 1963 under Diefenbaker, while questions about how many military personnel Canada should deploy in Europe took precedence in secret discussions beginning in 1968. During different time periods and under different governments, the type of commitment that was the topic of high-level discussion and debate shifted. For that reason, this book does not explore defence decision-making as regards one kind of NATO commitment over time (for example, the Canadian Forces in Europe between 1957–92). Nor does it attempt to fully explain the factors affecting decision-making apropos all of Canada’s NATO commitments during one select time period (for
example, the Diefenbaker government’s commitments to nuclear and conventional equipment as well as military and diplomatic personnel, and its related commitments to NORAD). Instead, I have focused my analysis on defence policy-making with regard to the particular NATO commitment that preoccupied decision-makers during the time period in question.

The instrumental model: assessing evidence with a view to its context The “instrumental,” as opposed to the “representational,” model of analysis works on the assumption that the speeches and public documents of a politician and bureaucrat may be designed to influence the general public and may, therefore, be a less than accurate reflection of the speaker’s or writer’s true beliefs. I have therefore given more weight to handwritten notes, diaries, personal memoranda, letters, and secret Cabinet documents than to departmentally prepared speeches, policy papers, ex post-facto interviews, and memoirs.7

Based on an instrumental model of analysis, I assessed the material for this study with attention to its particular context. Highly-classified documents (e.g., top secret, secret, for Canadian eyes only, confidential, and personal) were accorded more credibility than papers written for wide distribution by the Department of External Affairs (DEA) or the Canadian delegation at NATO headquarters.8 Similarly, handwritten drafts of speeches and scrawled amendments to notes and memos were studied with greater care than were final drafts, while personal letters to friends and colleagues were considered more reflective of a decision-maker’s beliefs than were standard departmental replies. The original version of a carefully prepared speech to a specialist audience, for example, received greater attention than newspaper articles reporting the speech. And a contemporary diary was accorded more validity than an autobiography or recollection of events written years later. Finally, verbatim responses to journalists and transcripts recorded in Hansard were considered more representative of a decision-maker’s underlying beliefs and concerns than were interviews conducted months or years later.

Second Approach: Using research questions to draw out the main elements of each belief system

To militate against the possibility of biased evidence selection and researcher subjectivity, as well as to clarify the research agenda, I derived two sets of questions inductively and deductively. The context is the following. Many documents describing high-level discussions indicated, for example, that some important decision-makers
believed that the Soviet Union posed an opportunistic and aggressive threat, while others assumed the threat was exaggerated and misunderstood. Some leaders feared that if Canada did not fulfill its NATO commitments the country would abandon its allies, while other policy-makers feared entrapment in a nuclear war much more than they feared abandonment. Beliefs about the reliability or unsuitability of nuclear deterrence doctrine also conflicted. Accordingly, questions pertaining to these contrasting core beliefs were posed, and the evidence was examined to answer these research questions. For example, the tendency to fear abandonment rather than entrapment was caught in the form of two questions: “Did decision-makers fear abandonment?” and “Did decision-makers fear entrapment?” Similarly, to discover whether belief in deterrence strategy was a salient consideration for decision-makers, the evidence was evaluated according to two questions: “Did decision-makers believe deterrence doctrine was suitable and reliable?” and, alternatively, “Did decision-makers believe deterrence doctrine was unsuitable and unreliable?” Once it was found that many decision-makers held substantive interrelated beliefs, two sets of five questions each were posed. The two sets of questions, again derived inductively and deductively, are summarized below. The book was written, then, to answer these questions. In doing so, it profiles the Defenders and Critics, using evidence from different decision-making processes over the periods 1957–63 and 1963–89. Much of this evidence is documented so that others can review and confirm the findings.

Research Questions: Mapping Canadian Thinking about NATO

**NATO defenders**

- Did decision-makers fear abandonment?
- Did decision-makers believe Canada should pursue closer ties to its allies through established kinds of military commitments?
- Did decision-makers believe that the external threat to the Alliance was opportunistic and aggressive?
- Did decision-makers assume both Canada’s and the Alliance’s weapons were necessary and non-threatening?
- Did decision-makers believe that deterrence doctrine was suitable and reliable?

**NATO critics**

- Did decision-makers fear entrapment?
- Did decision-makers believe Canada’s established military ties to the allies should be restructured and de-emphasized?
• Did decision-makers believe the external threat was exaggerated and misunderstood?
• Did decision-makers believe that both sides’ weapons were unnecessarily threatening?
• Did decision-makers believe deterrence doctrine was unsuitable and unreliable?

These two sets of questions effectively guided the research process and can be conceived of as maps to Canadian thinking about NATO. Of course, no one decision-maker can be held up as a perfect example of the Defender or the Critic (just as none can be described as perfectly rational). The evidence, however, shows that many influential decision-makers possessed beliefs and assumptions typical of Defenders or Critics, and that these belief structures significantly affected Canadian defence decision-making regarding the country’s NATO commitments.

Third Approach: A historical case study

For the third approach, I conducted a historical case study – an in-depth analysis of the Diefenbaker period in office, 1957–63 (chapters 5, 6, and 7). The premise was that such an approach could help in assessing the influence of various kinds of intervening variables. As well, it would aid in refining deductively derived abstractions by linking them to inductively deduced conclusions. Moreover, the results would allow for the incorporation of additional, initially unconsidered factors into the discussion of the evidence, thus producing a stronger explanation. In effect, chapter 5 reviews the defence decision-making process during the Diefenbaker period, while chapters 6 and 7 provide historical examples from the period to demonstrate that contrasting belief systems not only influenced decision-making but also contributed to the Cabinet’s shifting nuclear commitment.

Selection of the historical case study

The selection of the case study fulfilled several requirements. First, the research had to focus on defence policy changes apropos one type of Canadian commitment to NATO. The concept of commitment could be used broadly, in the sense that Canada is committed to the Alliance. Or it could be used narrowly to describe a particular commitment to NATO, such as the government’s undertaking to provide equipment such as the Honest John missiles for the Canadian Forces
in Europe. To enable a rigorous comparison, it was decided to focus the case study on narrowly defined commitments to NATO.

Second, the case study had to focus on a single Canadian government’s decision – to either strengthen or weaken its commitment to NATO – that was subsequently reversed. It was deemed important that the case study focus on a decision-making process that involved the same influential decision-makers and contrasting decisions over time. In the end, it proved impossible to satisfy these requirements entirely. Some of the key players resigned, died, or lost interest in the decision, while others suddenly came on the scene and proceeded to wield considerable influence. Nevertheless, as long as it was essentially the same sample group of influential decision-makers at the centre of defence policy-making who stayed in power, the requirements of a controlled comparison were considered to have been reasonably satisfied.

Third, the case study had to cover a time period that generated considerable empirical evidence so that underlying beliefs and assumptions could be discerned using an instrumental model of analysis. Many primary documents, personal letters, memoranda, diaries, off-the-record commentary, minutes of in camera meetings, as well as handwritten drafts of speeches were necessary; this in turn created a number of problems, mainly because of access restrictions to NATO-related documents, especially information associated with high-level decision-makers’ beliefs about nuclear weapons, the nuclear threat, and the other countries in the Alliance. Another problem was the size of the information pool, which shrank through the 1970s, ’80s, and ’90s. Alternative information sources in the form of ex post-facto interviews were not a good source of evidence because of the nature of the research.

In the final analysis, two historical periods proved adequate for the case study. One, encompassing the defence decision-making process under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau between 1968 and 1971, provided much of the evidence for the broadly delineated categories of Defenders and Critics depicted in chapters 3 and 4. Another, encompassed an earlier decision-making process that transpired under Prime Minister Diefenbaker between 1957 and 1963.

THE CASE STUDY: NEW SOURCES OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EVIDENCE

Today, a wealth of primary and secondary material related to defence policy-making between 1957 and 1963 is available for research purposes. Indeed, despite restrictions on access to NATO-related documents,
particularly information on nuclear weapons, a few collections have recently been opened. As a result, journalists, retired government officials, and academics have returned to explore the period. Despite such valuable resources, however, obtaining access to relevant documents and archival sources is still a problem. For example, even after repeated requests, many of Howard Green’s papers at the National Archives (NA) remain inaccessible, and the Privy Council Office (PCO) continues to excise large sections of the Cabinet minutes or “Cabinet Conclusions.” At times, therefore, a very few references have had to serve as representative of a decision-maker’s particular beliefs, while other instances saw a plethora of comments which then had to be assessed for their sincerity and representativeness.

**SUMMARY**

In summary, chapters 3 and 4, with their overviews of the substantive beliefs and assumptions of each belief system, demonstrate that many influential decision-makers held beliefs typical of Defenders or Critics and that these, in turn, affected decision-making between 1963 and 1987. The two distinct belief structures helped to shape high-level discourse and, in particular, to show that competition between the two significantly affected defence decision-making regarding Canada’s overseas troop contributions to NATO.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 reveal that some of the most influential decision-makers in place between 1957 and 1963 possessed belief systems typical of one or the other profile, and that these mindsets, in turn, affected decision-making regarding Canada’s nuclear commitments. As well, the case study explores the onset of Critics’ belief systems and the commencement of new ways of thinking about Canada’s nuclear weapons. By documenting within a conceptual framework many of the underlying ideas and convictions that led the government to acquire nuclear weapons – and then to disarm – the book attempts to broaden our understanding of some of the reasons for nuclear acquisition and the subsequent disarmament. After all, Canada was the only country during the Cold War that sought to acquire its own stockpile of nuclear weapons and then to disarm them.

Chapter 8 considers deeper questions: What were some of the underlying reasons for such opposing world views? What led some policy-makers to defend and others to criticize Canada’s NATO commitments? This chapter delves still further into the issue, asking what particular events, crises, and dilemmas impelled Canadian leaders to take a stand in favour of (or against) the acquisition of nuclear weapons, the deployment of more Canadian troops overseas, the
testing of cruise missiles for the United States, and the withdrawal from Europe. By considering key antecedent factors that contributed to the prevalence of these two belief systems, we can better appreciate the reasons for their predominance. Indeed, although the Cold War has ended, the kinds of reasoning and arguments put forward by NATO policy-makers and Canadian decision-makers—for example, during the bombing of Kosovo—would indicate that many of the same events, incidents, and lessons of the twentieth century, including the lessons of Munich and Vietnam, continue to affect the belief systems of Canada's leaders today.

By explaining why Canadian leaders sought to increase, maintain, or decrease Canada's past commitments, we may be better able to understand some of the important influences that have shaped defence policy-making in this country. Over the years, Canada, although a founding member of the Atlantic Alliance, has faced continual controversy about the measure of its military commitments to NATO. The final chapter, which briefly examines the forty-year dilemma of Alliance membership for Canada, concludes with an analysis of the theoretical and policy-relevant implications of this research for international relations theory and Canadian foreign and defence policy.