

up. It's an easy step from cloud-seeding and herbicides to more subtle and crippling techniques. The U.S. has so far advanced no "national security" defense of such weapons. Yet it must be aware that this is an area where, because of the advanced state of U.S. technology, the U.S. Government looks suspect if it doesn't take the lead in protecting peace and the environment—or at least share that lead. The appearance of foot-dragging creates an image of a nation hedging on its stated moral ideals.

Jim Castelli

Washington reporter for National Catholic News Service; former associate editor of National Catholic Reporter.

EXCURSUS III

Regional Proliferation: Ministers Shrink From the Nuclear Crystal Ball

Ottawa—The Canadian Government is deeply split over the sale, virtually completed, of advanced nuclear reactors to Argentina and South Korea. The projected deals would net a total of \$1,080 million; but neither of the intending buyers is a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and both can be expected to follow India's path toward regional domination by using the plutonium by-product of their reactors for the construction of relatively cheap nuclear weapons.

Canada has consistently refrained from committing its sophisticated nuclear energy industry to military purposes, but it has emerged as one of the major offenders under the NPT. The treaty, which is to come up for review in the spring and which Canada supports, provides for international inspection and safeguards and outlaws the provision of specialist technology or fissile materials to countries which refuse to be bound by its rules. India, whose nuclear device, constructed with considerable Canadian technical assistance, may yet shatter the entire framework of the treaty, is not a signatory.

Some aspects of the Canadian dilemma, presenting a clear choice between immediate financial gain and the long-term interests of mankind, confront all nations in this age of nuclear proliferation in which isolated regional interests condemn humanity to extinction. Like their fellow executives in most countries, even the "moralist" ministers in the Canadian Cabinet have shrunk

from the awful long-term implications of the decision they must make.

The Trudeau Administration has managed effectively to postpone the whole issue since the Indian explosion last May by dispatching an interdepartmental team of officials to canvass opinions in friendly capitals. They have now returned with three rather obvious options, splitting the Canadian Cabinet between the "commercialists" and the "moralists." The Prime Minister himself is inclined to support the "moralist" camp, but there is so much money involved that he might change his mind.

The three alternatives, each of which is equally unattractive for different reasons, are (1) continuing the present policy of selling reactors at competitive prices and against the promises of good behavior, (2) restricting sales to customers likely to remain peaceful and stable during the lifetime of the reactor and willing to facilitate rigorous international checks, and (3) banning the export of nuclear reactors, materials, and technology altogether.

In a carefully worded statement that can be read any way you like, the "moralist" External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen has promised to the United Nations that "until more adequate internationally agreed measures are instituted, Canada intends to satisfy itself that any country using Canadian-supplied nuclear technology or materials will be subject to binding obligations that they will not be used in the fabrication of nuclear explosive devices for whatever purpose." The arms merchant's logic is expressed more simply by the "commercialist" Energy Minister Donald MacDonald, who asserts that the issue of nuclear safeguards is "an international problem, not a Canadian one. After developing a viable system, should we not sell it internationally?"

Civil service advisors, usually the source of ministerial inspirations, tend to favor the "commercialist" camp. Only the Canadian Atomic Energy Control Board, charged with the task of defining those "binding obligations," has a professional commitment to a sane nuclear export policy; while all the powers in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Export Development Corporation, Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., and even the Department of External Affairs measure their personal success in terms of sales secured abroad. Their success could wreck the NPT by demonstrating that nuclear power for any purpose is available without the nuisance of international inspections.

"Unless there is a strong pressure from Canadian public opinion," comments a senior

spokesman for the Atomic Energy Control Board, "we are going to sell Argentina a reactor under conditions that are completely unsafe."

Argentina has signed, but did not ratify, the Treaty of Tlateloco, which provides for a nuclear-free zone in Latin America; and it has publicly stated its intention of becoming a nuclear military power. Less than a fortnight after the Rajasthan explosion it obtained an agreement with India for the exchange of nuclear secrets. Well endowed with uranium ores (which need not be enriched for the Canadian-supplied CANDU-type reactor), Argentina already has a nuclear research organization and one power station; and it plans to buy at least two more. Nuclear proliferation in Latin America would be a quick affair, with Brazil and Chile following suit.

The proposed South Korean contract is the bigger of the two involved in the Canadian confrontation. The country where the issue of democratic government nearly provoked the outbreak of World War III is run by a president who has appointed himself to office for life and whose political survival depends on the constantly invoked military threat from the north. South Korea has signed, but failed to ratify, the NPT; and many Canadian diplomats believe that even ratification would provide scant guarantee against nuclear proliferation in the area.

A change of policy by Ottawa to the proposed alternative of weeding out unstable customers would disqualify several countries currently flirting with the CANDU reactor, including Iran, which is also publicly flirting with the bomb. This is the course favored by the "moralists," but its terms are just not possible. The life span of a nuclear reactor is something like half a century. While diplomats are reluctant to make predictions on political behavior beyond half a decade, Canada's original deal with India was made twenty years ago, signed by the peace-loving Pandit Nehru. There was no question then of his militant daughter Indira ever attaining power.

This takes the Canadian nuclear dilemma to the proposed third alternative of banning sales altogether, giving up an estimated \$3,000 million in exports within the foreseeable future. Not even the "moralists" inside the Cabinet imagine that they would survive such a political decision, yet they might be wrong. For there is growing skepticism of the economic benefits derived from the CANDU program, since, as the influential, conservative *Financial Post* of Canada points out, the industry is capital- rather than job-intensive, and sales tie up vast export credits often extended to customers who are poor financial as well as political risks.

Incredibly, the debate has wholly bypassed

the crucial issue of the storage of nuclear wastes produced by atomic reactors and the ability of recipient countries to stockpile them indefinitely without a risk to environmental contamination. There is no problem here for the "commercialists" in the Canadian Cabinet, since in MacDonald's words they do not consider themselves bound by international responsibilities. However, unless the "moralists" are prepared to assume responsibility for the plutonium wastes manufactured by Canada's clients in increasing quantities, to be consistent they would have to make accurate predictions on the political stability of prospective buyers not just within the lifetime of the reactors but over the next 24,400 years during which the radioactive wastes must be kept secure from insane governments, terrorists, wars, and natural disasters.

Thomas Land

London Correspondent for the Financial Post of Canada.

QUOTE / UNQUOTE

Crunch Point in Africa

. . . we are seeking now to coordinate the U.K. policy towards Rhodesia with the policies of the other African countries. Indeed, as President Nyerere said to me . . . "Our policies are now converging," and that it is very important in handling this problem of Rhodesia. . . .

We are now at a crunch point in the future development of Southern Africa. If things go well we could get a settlement in Rhodesia that would lead to peace and cooperation, to justice, to majority rule. If things go wrong, then I believe we shall be in for a period of increasing armed struggle. . . . It will be fought out with growing bitterness on both sides. . . .

Britain's relations with the independent Commonwealth African countries are at a higher level now than they have been at any time since the independence of those countries. Rhodesia has dogged our relationships even though our personal relationships have remained good. The fact that our policies are now converging, that we are discussing them with each other, that we are exchanging views on the initiatives and on the next steps, I think is important not only for the settlement of the Rhodesian problem but also for our own bilateral relationships.

—James Callaghan, British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, in Nairobi, January 8