An Apocalyptic Moment: Mackenzie King and the Bomb

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Historians of Canadian foreign policy have not much troubled themselves with the debate over the wisdom of dropping the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. This is perhaps understandable given that Ottawa had little say in how, when, or where the weapons would be used. Instead, historians have focused their attention on a single passage in Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King's diary and concluded that he supported the American decision to use the bomb because he was an uncaring racist who gave as much thought to winning the Glengarry by-election as he did to the 80,000 Japanese who perished under the nuclear cloud over Hiroshima. "Mr. King, in particular," Stephen Salaff has contended, "was armoured against moral and ethical restraints by a lifetime of political trade in prejudice – with racial and social class stereotyping of immigrant Japanese."[1]

A closer examination of the evidence reveals that Mackenzie King did not support deploying the atomic bomb on racist grounds. In fact, it is questionable that he supported using the bomb at all. The prime minister did not view the bomb as a legitimate weapon of war and he looked forward to the day it would be used with a strong sense of impending doom. Nevertheless, despite these misgivings, it would be a considerable oversimplification to portray Mackenzie King as the embodiment of moral wisdom. By the time the bomb was dropped, the prime minister had manoeuvred himself into a position from which he could afford to express doubts about

using it. He had no intention of allowing Canada to play a large role in the final invasion of Japan and, unlike American leaders, he did not have to face the question of what that decision might cost.

Mackenzie King's attitude toward the atomic bomb took shape gradually after he learned in June 1942 that Canada had deposits of the mineral necessary for building a nuclear device. At that time his major preoccupation was winning the war and the side which possessed the mineral, he noted in his diary, "in time would unquestionably win the war with its power of destruction."[2] The actual development of the atomic bomb, however, proceeded slowly. In August 1943, for example, Sir John Anderson, lord president of the council, told Mackenzie King that it would be at least two years before an atomic weapon could be produced.[3] The prime minister's interest in the bomb was sporadic throughout 1943 and 1944, probably because he left the details of Canada's role to the 'minister of everything,' C.D. Howe, and the president of the National Research Council, C.J. Mackenzie. Nonetheless, in April 1944, he made the first of many references in his diary to the "appalling possibilities of enormous destruction."[4]

Mackenzie King used these words, "appalling" and "destruction," with increasing frequency in the months before Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But there was something else that began to play on the prime minister's mind. After learning in early February 1945 that the atomic project was nearing completion and Japan would be the likely target, he began to express a strong sense of impending terror and doom. On 24 February, Mackenzie King and Malcolm MacDonald, the British high commissioner in Canada, discussed the bomb over dinner. The conversation revolved around the question of "what the mere possession of it is likely to mean in perpetuating dread among the nations through years to come once its existence and powers are known." Mackenzie King's answer was not optimistic. "It could mean," he wrote in his diary, "the destruction of civilization."[5]

The themes of personal horror, mass destruction, terror and doom started to dominate the prime minister's thinking by the summer of 1945. On 15 July, he recorded in his diary that "I learned

from Howe tonight very secretly that we might within a couple of weeks see the new weapon in use which would be terribly destructive. It appals me to think of what may be involved in even attempting its use."[6] The next day the United States successfully detonated the first nuclear device at Alamogordo, New Mexico. A week and a half later, on 27 July, when rumours were circulating to the effect that Japan would reject the Potsdam ultimatum to surrender, Mackenzie King was convinced that the ultimatum itself had been delivered with an ulterior motive, namely, "to prepare the world even more than the Japanese for their certain doom in the immediate future." His thoughts on that occasion are worth quoting at length:

> Within a few days at the latest the power of the atomic bomb will be disclosed and with it Japan will be faced with either immediate complete surrender or complete devastation within a very short time. It is well that the world itself is being prepared for the revelation which the knowledge of the existence of this new weapon will disclose. I feel that we are approaching a moment of terror to mankind, for it means that, under the stress of war, men have at last not only found but created the Frankenstein which conceivably could destroy the human race.[7]

Just two days before the explosion over Hiroshima, Mackenzie King was again, as he put it in his diary, "thinking a great deal of the moment for the dropping of the atomic bomb." He had hoped that the American president, Harry Truman, and the British prime minister, Clement Attlee, would manage to convince the Soviet Union to help end the war quickly and avoid using the bomb. Increasingly that seemed unlikely.[8] To the sense of doom was now added a feeling of remorse. "It makes one very sad at heart," he wrote, "to think of the loss of life that it [the bomb] will occasion among innocent people as well as those that are guilty."[9]

Clearly, the evidence does not support the picture of the prime minister as an uncaring racist that is so often painted by historians.

That assessment emerges from the unfortunate diary entry Mackenzie King penned the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. "We can now see," he wrote, "what might have come to the British race had German scientists won the race. It is fortunate that the use of the bomb should have been upon the Japanese rather than upon the white races of Europe."[10]

There are two basic points to be made with respect to this passage. First, historians caught up in the narrow obsession with sniffing out racists have misread it; the second sentence cannot be divorced from the first. If the Germans had developed the bomb before the allies there can be little doubt that Hitler would have used it on Britain. Hence, in the second sentence Mackenzie King was really only remarking how fortunate it was for the allies that the bomb was released over Japan instead of upon Britain. Historians have assumed that because the prime minister referred to "the white races of Europe" he was alluding to the use of the bomb on Germany; that is simply not the idea that flows from the first sentence.

Second, it cannot be denied that Mackenzie King functioned in a historical context that was, in contemporary terms, racist. That he supported dropping the bomb on racial grounds is less certain. As James Eayrs has pointed out, Mackenzie King was more sensitive than most of his countrymen to the fate of the victims of the atom.[11] Some of that sensitivity was evident when the second bomb was dropped and when he learned of the losses incurred in the Hiroshima explosion. Mackenzie King described the destruction as "appalling." His sense of doom was now perhaps stronger than ever: "We have certainly reached the moment of frightfulness which has been the ambition of German philosophers. They have come to the acme of the creation of the Frankenstein monster. Nothing but Christianity can now save the world."[12] Accordingly, the Prime Minister turned to the bible in an effort to come to terms with the bomb:

> I again had the book of Isaiah and again it seemed to have been specially sent. It opened out at Chapter XIV with the words: 'How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city

> ceased! .... The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.' Then the words; 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning' which marked fittingly the fate of Hitler and equally the fate today of Japan's Emperor. ... Looking anew at the book, I see I have underlined the lines: 'And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.' Then too were the words related to the serpent: 'For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.' And a little further down: 'There shall come from the north a smoke and none shall be alone in his appointed times.' 'What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.' 'From the north a smoke' – there is something that foretells the atomic bomb.[13]

In this regard, Mackenzie King's attitude contrasted starkly with that of many of his compatriots. C.J. Mackenzie, for instance, later recalled that he did not "remember feeling anything special. It's difficult to be philosophical when you're in action. And you must remember we were all out for blood at that particular time. I didn't have to ponder the rights or wrongs of the bomb."[14]

Nevertheless, for all the guilt and remorse Mackenzie King expressed in the privacy of his diary, some caution must be exercised before concluding that he was a person of deep humanitarian instincts. He may have believed that the dropping of the bomb was unnecessary and perhaps even immoral – there can be no doubt of his sincerity on that score. It fits well with his Christianity and his strong personal aversion to war. But the prime minister had some not altogether altruistic reasons for expressing himself the way he did.

Throughout 1944 and 1945 Mackenzie King had received reports from various sources pointing to the rapid decline of Japan. In July 1944 Norman Robertson, the under-secretary of state for

external affairs, sent Mackenzie King a copy of an intercepted telegram from the Japanese foreign minister to his representative in Rangoon. The foreign minister reported that the "whole war situation has become still more serious and tense." The United States had penetrated Japan's "special zone of defence" and continued bombing raids would destroy its resources and reduce war production. The minister claimed that the situation was compounded by the "deterioration of public order" in the Greater East Asia area and signs that collaborating nations would abandon the fight.[15] In forwarding this piece of news, Robertson pointedly noted that it was "very encouraging." The prime minister also received reports from London, especially after March 1945, which painted a similar picture. The administration in Tokyo seemed to be changing overnight, imports into Japan had nearly been cut off, air raids were overwhelming Japan's civil defence, war production was seriously hampered, and as early as May 1945, there was talk of Japan accepting "peace tantamount to unconditional surrender."[16]

It was a bleak picture indeed. However, against these accounts Mackenzie King had to balance other reports which told a different story. For example, in November 1944, Lester Pearson, then serving in Washington, sent Ottawa a report of a meeting he had arranged with Admiral Somerville, chief of the British naval mission in Washington. According to Pearson, Somerville said that the American claims of victories over Japan were "greatly exaggerated." Although Somerville conceded that the Japanese fleet was "greatly weakened" he warned against underrating Japanese capabilities. He pointed out that the Japanese fleet had come perilously close to scoring an important victory over Admiral Halsey south of Formosa and only sheer good luck had saved the Americans.[17]

In a similar vein, Winston Churchill informed Mackenzie King in late February 1945 that it would take eighteen months to defeat Japan after the defeat of Germany.[18] Some of the sting in that figure was removed when Mackenzie King visited President Roosevelt in early March 1945. The president told him that it would take only three months to bring Japan to its knees. Although the former American ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, warned the prime

minister that the allies would be in for a tough fight, Mackenzie King seemed, rather uncharacteristically, to look at the bright side.[19] In a June conversation with the South African prime minister, Jan Smuts, he mentioned a telegram he had received from Victor Odlum, Canada's ambassador to China. Like Grew, Oldum warned that the war against Japan would last some time because the Japanese were so "fanatical." Mackenzie King disagreed. He told Smuts that he "did not see how with the bombing what it would be, that the war could very well run on much beyond this year."[20] Over the next month the prime minister revised that figure so that by mid-July he was forecasting a much earlier defeat:

> Japan is getting a thoroughly good pounding. My own feeling is the war might conceivably end within a fortnight either through use of new weapons destroying naval ports and threatening to destroy all other industrial cities of Japan in quick order, or through word that Russia has decided to come into the war. ... the main island Honshu is almost certain to be all but blasted out of existence within a month, should the war continue that long.[21]

Mackenzie King's belief in the rapid demise of Japan and the hopes he pinned on an eventual Russian entry into the war deserve some attention because there is so much controversy surrounding these developments and the subsequent use of the atomic bomb. A number of scholars have been extremely critical of Truman's decision to use atomic weapons on the grounds that such a show of strength was completely unnecessary. American leaders, so the general argument goes, knew Japan was on its knees and therefore near surrender. After all, Tokyo had made peace overtures. Moreover, given the state of Japan's military capabilities, the planned invasion would have cost few American lives and certainly fewer lives than were lost at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[22] Material in the Canadian archives casts some, but by no means sufficient, light on these matters.

Ottawa had been receiving various reports and rumours of

Japanese peace feelers from American, British and even Australian sources since September 1944.[23] All turned out to be untrue. The last of these reports arrived from London just four days before the bombing of Hiroshima. In it the secretary of state for dominion affairs informed the Canadian prime minister that the Soviet Union had received from Japan a request to act as mediator between Japan and Britain and the United States. A former Japanese prime minister, Prince Konoye, was to act as envoy with the special authority of the emperor. According to British authorities, Stalin dismissed the approach as "simply a further attempt to obtain the collaboration of the Soviet Government in the furtherance of Japanese policy."[24]

The failure of Japanese attempts to sue for peace helps explain why Mackenzie King wanted the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan. He believed it would mean an early victory which would mean little or no use of Canadian forces. Canada had played a very limited role in the Pacific war and Mackenzie King was determined to keep it that way. He had no desire to suffer another disaster like Hong Kong. True, Canada had agreed to participate in the Pacific war at the second Quebec Conference in 1944. It was also true that the prime minister made a considerable fuss about this decision in the House of Commons in April 1945. The following month he gave a speech at Edmonton, promising a "build up in the Pacific as rapidly as possible" to a total army and navy force of some 43,500 ranks.[25] However, he opposed sending Canadian troops to India, Burma or Singapore and he fought tooth and nail with his inner cabinet over the strength of a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) contingent. Moreover, he told his colleagues and the British that Canada would participate as a "North American Nation."[26] The prime minister was extremely reluctant to go even that far. In early March 1945, when Roosevelt suggested that Canada contribute troops to help defeat the Japanese in China, Mackenzie King was outraged. He recalled at a meeting of the cabinet war committee at the end of the month that he "had felt indignant at his [Roosevelt's] even proposing anything of the kind." At that same meeting the prime minister told his colleagues that "the mere desire of having [a] token contribution for prestige purposes was not suf-

ficient reason for raising the conscription issue or indeed needlessly sacrificing lives." Regarding conscription, Mackenzie King was blunt: "Certainly there will be no conscription for the Far East in any government of which I may be the head."[27]

There was one other factor regarding Canadian participation in the Pacific War that troubled Mackenzie King and that was his fear of the potential backlash Canada would suffer if it appeared to be sending troops to help resurrect Britain's Asian empire. As the prime minister noted in his diary in September 1944, "[t]he point I kept urging was that the Canadian people could not countenance our men serving in India, Burma or elsewhere to enable Britain to reconquer her colonial possessions.... [I]t would raise a political issue in Canada out of all proportion to the good that could be rendered."[28] The British were certainly trying to wring a commitment from the prime minister to contribute to a British Commonwealth force, but to no avail. Mackenzie King refused to commit Canadian troops to the British cause.[29]

Mackenzie King's reluctance to involve Canada in the war against Japan explains, in large part, the immense relief and joy he expressed when he learned that the Russians would enter the war on 9 August 1945. In fact, one of the first things he did was tell a press gathering that the war would soon end and that "Canada would continue with what she had been bearing with her part [sic] until the final word of peace came." He then visited the Soviet ambassador to thank him profusely.[30] From Mackenzie King's point of view the Soviet Union was the key to victory, and he hoped the war would end before Canadian troops saw action – all of which seemed to strengthen his belief that the bomb had been unnecessary.[31] In the end his hopes were half-realised; the atomic bombs were dropped but Canadian forces never saw action.

What conclusions can be drawn from a brief examination of Mackenzie King's attitude to the atomic bomb? Clearly, he expressed considerable misgivings about the use of nuclear weapons on Japan and he certainly did not support their use on racial grounds. The prime minister, however, was not entirely altruistic in expressing his apprehension. It was one matter to question the use

of the bomb on moral and other grounds, and quite another to question it when he was doing all that he could to prevent sending troops to defeat Japan. There is little evidence to suggest that he wrestled deeply with the question of how many lives would be lost in the final invasion. Only once, on 4 August, did he note that the bomb could "be justified through the knowledge that for one life destroyed, it may save hundreds of thousands and bring this terrible war quickly to a close."[32] Mackenzie King had effectively placed himself in a position which allowed him to take the moral high ground. This was hardly surprising. In the prime minister's late-Victorian outlook, technology could only improve the human condition if it were firmly guided by Christian values. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which brought the image of Frankenstein to Mackenzie King's mind, signalled the final defeat of those who held that there need be no conflict between science and religion. Forced to choose between these two sets of competing values, Mackenzie King instinctively chose the spiritual values which had defined his world-view since the late 19th-century.

Notes

1. Stephen Salaff, "The Diary and the Cenotaph; Racial and Atomic Fever in the Canadian Record," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 10 (April-June 1978), p. 38. See also Denis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948* (Toronto, 1988), p. 93; Carl Mollins, "The Bomb," *Maclean's* (7 August 1995), pp 21-22. Even Christopher Thorne, in his magisterial study of the Pacific War, used Mackenzie King as an example of the blatant racism of the West. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945* (London, 1978), p. 534.

2. J.W. Pickersgill, (ed.), *The Mackenzie King Record Vol. 1*, [*MKR*] (Toronto, 1960), p. 413.

3. Ibid., p. 523.

4. Ibid., p. 657.

5. National Archives of Canada [NAC], W.L. Mackenzie King Papers, Diary, 24 February 1945.

6. *MKR*, Vol. II, p. 447.

7. King Diary, 27 July 1945.

8. Ibid., 26 and 27 July 1945.

9. Ibid., 4 August 1945. Salaff, in "The Diary and the Cenotaph," argues that Mackenzie King and others "falsely ascribe the indifference to human life of the Japanese military-fascist leaders to the Japanese people as a whole." Mackenzie King at least was able to make the distinction.

10. King Diary, 6 August 1945.

11. James Eayrs, "Clio and Jack," in his *Greenpeace and Her Enemies* (Toronto, 1973), p. 234. It is also worth recalling Mackenzie King's comments after learning that Seijiro Yoshizawa, the former Japanese minister to Canada, was leaving Ottawa. He recorded that he "felt a great pain in my heart that I should have let him and his wife go without a word. ... Must remember that when all this war is over, we may wish to bind together the different countries and Yoshizawa might be helpful in that way, if his faith in me were not destroyed." These were not the words of an uncaring racist. See *MKR*, Vol. I, pp. 412-13.

12. King Diary, 9 August 1945.

13. Ibid., 11 August 1945. It should be noted that Mackenzie King was not the only one to make use of biblical references. President Truman likened the bomb to "the Second Coming in Wrath." "It may be the fire destruction [sic] prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era after Noah and his fabulous Ark." Quoted in Alonzo L. Hamby, "'The Most Terrible Weapon Ever Known': Truman and the Bomb," Paper presented to the 1995 International Symposium, World War II: What It Took To End The War, Seattle, Washington, 23-27 August, 1995, p. 8.

14. Quoted in Eayrs, *Peacemaking and Deterrence*, p. 276.

15. NAC, King Papers, J4, vol. 360, pp. c249117-8, Robertson to King with attached intercept, 8 August 1944, intercept dated 24 July 1944.

16. See NAC, Department of External Affairs Records [DEA], vol. 5742, file 28-c(s) for a series of such reports, but especially secretary of state for dominion affairs to Mackenzie King, Dominions Circular D. 767, 6 May 1945.

17. NAC, King Papers, J4, vol. 408, pp. c287772-3, Pearson to Robertson, 4 November 1944.

18. Ibid., vol. 408, pp. c287768-71, Churchill to King, 27 February 1945.

19. King Diary, 9 and 10 March 1945.

20. Ibid., 29 June 1945.

21. Ibid., 16 July 1945.

22. See Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory," *Diplomatic History* 19 (Spring 1995), pp. 227-73.

23. Material in NAC, DEA Records, vol. 5771, file 162(s), esp. secretary of state for dominion affairs to King, 26 September 1944; Malone to Glazebrook, 20 November 1944; C-3 Report no. 3777 from American Secret Sources, 16 February 1945; secretary of state for dominion affairs to King, circulars D. 872, 19 May 1945 and D.912, 25 May 1945.

24. Ibid., Circular D. 1357, 2 August 1945.

25. NAC, King Papers, J4, vol. 369, p. C255294-5.

26. NAC, Privy Council Office Records, Cabinet War Committee Minutes, 14 September 1944; *MKR*, Vol. II, p. 447.

27. King Diary, 29 March 1945.

28. Ibid., 6 September 1944.

29. J.F. Hilliker, (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 10* (Ottawa, 1980), p. 465. See also material in Public Record Office, London, War Office Records, WO 106/4901; and Prime Minister's Office Files, PREM 3/142/5.

30. King Diary, 8 August 1945.

31. Ibid., 29 March 1945.

32. Ibid., 4 August 1945.

Japanese in the interests of national security. With the receipt of this message, completely reversing the Command's previous stand," the minister of national defence, Colonel J.L. Ralston, "was anything but pleased."[36]

The evidence simply does not support Pope's account. While it is clear that the Department of National Defence's representatives on the Special Committee on Measures to be Taken in the Event of War With Japan agreed in mid-1941 with the Committee's recommendation to Cabinet that "the bulk of the Japanese population in Canada can continue its normal activities,"[37] and while it is equally certain in mid-December the Chiefs of Staff Committee told the Cabinet War Committee that fears of a Japanese assault on BC were unwarranted,[38] there is absolutely no doubt that the military commanders *in* British Columbia and the military members of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence were seriously concerned about the possible threat posed by the Japanese-Canadian population both before and after 7 December 1941. The real question that remains unanswered is why in this instance the generals, admirals and air marshals in Ottawa were so ready to ignore the advice of their commanders in the field.

Certainly the military advice from BC was completely unambiguous. The Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, the key coordinating military body that brought together the three service commanders in British Columbia, had prepared plans in July 1940 for preventive actions directed at the Japanese Canadians in the event of war with Japan.[39] The Committee also recommended on 17 June 1941 that "the Japanese population [of approximately 230] residing in the vicinity of the Royal Canadian Air Force Advanced Base at Ucluelet [on the West Coast of Vancouver Island] should, in the event of an emergency, be evacuated for reasons of security. It was felt that similar steps should be taken in connection with Japanese resident near other important defence areas, and particularly those established near air bases." There were about two hundred Japanese Canadians living at Port Alice near the Coal Harbour RCAF base and the same number in Prince Rupert near another air station. The Committee's recommendations had been forwarded to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in Ottawa no later than 20 September 1941.[40]

In addition, the RCN on the coast had long been concerned with the fleet of up to 1,200 fishing vessels operated by Japanese Canadians. In 1937, for example, the Navy's staff officer (intelligence) at Esquimalt

had said that "The fact that there are a large number of Japanese fishermen operating in British Columbia waters ... and having a thorough and practical knowledge of the coast, is in itself a matter of some concern to the Naval authorities."[41] In August 1941, the naval officer commanding on the coast asked Ottawa for authority to round up the fishing boats in the event of war. The Department of External Affairs refused to agree to this *in toto*, however, and in October orders were issued for seizure only of boats "owned and operated by Japanese *nationals*." "Vessels owned and operated by British subjects of Japanese origin," the RCN was told, "will only be interfered with where there are positive grounds for suspicion, comparable to those which would justify the internment of a British subject of Japanese origin."[42] When war came five weeks later, those orders would be overridden in the urgency of the moment.

Furthermore, before the outbreak of war in the Pacific, both the Canadians and the Americans worried about the concentration of Japanese Americans and Canadians living along the common coastline. The Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, had urged Ottawa on 20 September 1941 to coordinate any actions with Washington. In its opinion, "inequality in the treatment of persons of Japanese race in the territories of the Dominion of Canada and the United States would be liable to prove a source of danger to the effective prosecution of such measures of control as may be ordered by either government and to furnish grounds for grievance by the persons immediately concerned."[43] The Permanent Joint Board on Defence at its meeting on 10-11 November at Montreal had also considered the question of the "population of Japanese racial origin." Just as the Joint Service Committee on the West Coast had urged, the Canadian and American members agreed that there should be consultation to produce "policies of a similar character in relation to these racial groups" if war with Japan broke out. The aim was "a practicable coincidence of policy."[44] That did not imply evacuation from the Pacific Coast, but it did suggest that there was a shared realization of a "problem." And as John Hickerson, the senior State Department official regularly concerned with Canadian affairs, noted after that PJBD meeting, it would "cause the Canadians considerable political difficulty in British Columbia if we adopted more rigid treatment of Japanese in California than that prescribed in British Columbia." That, he added, is why the Canadians suggest "that at the proper time there be consultation" between the two governments "with the view to adopting similar policies in Canada and in continental United States."[45]

After Pearl Harbor, but before the Conference in Ottawa, the three senior officers on the coast wrote to Ottawa with their views. Major-General R.O. Alexander, the GOC of Pacific Command, told the chief of the General Staff on 30 December that he believed "internment of Japanese males between the ages of 18 and 45, their removal from the coast and their organization into paid units on public works ... would be advisable." Such action, Alexander added, "might prevent inter-racial riots and bloodshed, and will undoubtedly do a great deal to calm the local population." There is no doubt that General Pope saw this letter, because he sent a copy of it to Hugh Keenleyside of the Department of External Affairs and Keenleyside wrote back to him with suggestions on 3 January — before the "Japanese Problem" conference in Ottawa took place.[46]

The senior RCAF officer in BC shared the view of his army colleague. Air Commodore L.F. Stevenson informed RCAF headquarters in Ottawa on 2 January that security "cannot rest on precarious discernment between those who would actively support Japan and those who might at present be apathetic." If the government had doubts about the wisdom of moving the Japanese out, Stevenson said, "I suggest a strong commission be appointed immediately to ... obtain the opinion of a good cross section of the BC public and the officers charged with the defence of the Pacific Coast." The senior naval officer agreed, Commodore W.J.R. Beech telling his headquarters on 27 December that "Public opinion is very much against the Japanese all over the Queen Charlotte Islands and in view of the strategic position of these Islands I would strongly recommend that all the Japanese be removed."[47]

All three officers stressed public opinion at least as much as military needs, and it is reasonable to assume that their positions often put them in close contact with politicians and journalists likely to be pressing for stern action. But this does not alter the fact that the responsible military commanders in British Columbia, after 7 December and before the Ottawa conference, called for removal of the Japanese Canadians from all or part of the coastal region; so too had their staffs urged removal before 7 December from the vicinity of military bases and after Pearl Harbor from coastal areas of the province.[48] Moreover, on 13 February 1942, the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast, decided that in view of "the deterioration of the situation in the Pacific theatre of war ... the continued presence of enemy aliens and persons of Japanese racial origin [in the coastal areas] constitutes a serious danger and prejudices

the effective defence of the Pacific Coast of Canada."[49] And as late as 26 February, the RCN commanding officer on the coast was advised by his security intelligence officer that "The removal of all Japanese from this coastal area would undoubtedly relieve what is becoming more and more a very dangerous situation from the point of view of sabotage and aid to the enemy as well as the great danger of development of inter-racial strife."[50] Again, public opinion was given equal weight with the fear of sabotage, but it is significant that this advice was proffered after adult male Japanese citizens living on the coast had been ordered inland.

Even after the great majority of Japanese Canadians had been cleared from the government's designated defence zone, moreover, substantial concern was expressed repeatedly by the American military and by the US members of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence on 26-27 May and 1 September 1942 at the relocation of Japanese Canadians inland to road camp sites near railway lines or other strategic points. Under pressure, the Canadian government then acted to resolve matters to reassure its ally. Similar concerns had been expressed in June 1942 in the British Security Coordination report.[51]

An additional factor that played an unquantifiable but important part in events in BC were the reports that Japanese living in Hawaii, Hong Kong and Malaya had helped the attacking Japanese forces.[52] Undoubtedly the lurid tales of fifth column activities from Europe in 1940 also fed popular fears. The Hawaii stories eventually proved to be mere rumours, but their impact was great in the first months of 1942. In Hong Kong and particularly in Malaya, however, there was substantial truth to the reports in January and February that local Japanese had hidden arms and ammunition, planted explosive charges at military installations, docks and ships, and sniped at troops, as well as providing information to the invaders.[53] It is virtually immaterial if the stories were true; what is important is that they circulated widely among a generally anti-Japanese public and a fearful military that were prepared to believe them. As the *Vancouver Sun* put it on 2 January 1942, "we may expect Japanese civilians to do all in their power to assist the attacker."[54]

Finally, the stories, all too true, of the brutality of the Japanese victors towards captured Allied servicemen and civilians had substantial impact on both the public and political leaders. As early as 12 February, telegrams from London to Ottawa spoke of atrocities against captured

Hong Kong prisoners and of deplorable conditions in the POW camps. Within the week, Cabinet ministers in Ottawa were talking about the fate of the Hong Kong force with their intimates, and on 10 March, the widespread rumours were given official sanction by statements in Parliament in London and Ottawa. The "devilish" Japanese, or so M.J. Coldwell of the CCF said in the House of Commons, would be punished after the war for their atrocities. The Canadian Japanese, wholly innocent of the crimes of the Imperial Japanese Army, nonetheless were denied sympathy as a result.[55]

Was There a Military Threat to the Coast?

Whether there was a direct military threat to the coast from the Imperial Japanese forces is also worth some consideration, if only because the received version denies any. In September 1941, RCAF headquarters in Ottawa had been confident that the United States Navy was the ultimate guarantor of the safety of the Pacific Coast: "Unless the United States Navy is seriously defeated or loses its northern bases," Air Vice Marshal G.M. Croil told his Minister, C.G. Power, all Canada had to do was remain in "watchful readiness" on the West Coast.[56] With that attitude in the ascendant, the coast of British Columbia was left "poorly defended," the words employed to describe matters by Robert Rossow, Jr., the American Vice-Consul in Vancouver, in August 1941.[57] After Pearl Harbor, however, the worst possible case seemed to have occurred, and Canada was largely unprepared. Certainly there were few modern aircraft, few ships and relatively few trained soldiers in the area until the outbreak of war,[58] and it took some time before more could be rushed to the coast.[59] That caused concern.

So too did the course of the war. The Japanese hit Pearl Harbor on 7 December and simultaneously attacked Malaya, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Wake and Midway Islands. On 8 December, Japan occupied Thailand, captured Guam on 13 December, Wake on 24 December, and Hong Kong on 25 December. Manila fell on 2 January, Singapore followed on 15 February, a staggering blow to the British position in Asia (and something that frightened British Columbia[60]) and the Imperial Japanese Navy crushed an allied fleet in the Java Sea on 27 February, the date that the Canadian government's decision to move all Japanese Canadians inland was in the newspapers. Closer to home, a Japanese submarine had shelled Santa Barbara, California on 23 February, two days later the "Battle of Los Angeles" took place with

much ammunition expended against (apparently) imaginary targets, and there were submarine attacks on points in Oregon. (On 20 June a Japanese submarine shelled Estevan point on Vancouver Island.) The Dutch East Indies and most of Burma were then captured in March, capping an extraordinary four months of conquest.

At the beginning of June, the Japanese launched what H.P. Willmott, the leading historian of Pacific war strategy, called "their main endeavour, a twin offensive against the Aleutians," designed to draw the American fleet to battle to protect their territory, "and against the western Hawaiian Islands," intended to lead to an invasion once the Americans' Pacific Fleet had been destroyed. At least two plans for such an invasion existed before and after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and one plan saw the capture of Hawaii "as preparatory to strikes against the United States mainland."[61] (Whether attacks against the Canadian Coast were intended remains unclear until such Japanese military records that survived the war are searched.) Dutch Harbor, Alaska was attacked by carrier-based aircraft on 3 June as part of this plan. Four days later Kiska and Attu in the Aleutian Islands were taken.

Although in retrospect the American naval victory at Midway in June, aided beyond measure by "Magic" intercepts, put an end to the Hawaiian adventure and truly marked the beginning of the end for Japanese imperial ambitions as a whole, its significance was not quite so apparent in mid-1942 as it has since become. Certainly the Canadian government did not slacken its defence efforts on the coast after the American victory. In mid-February 1942, a military appreciation prepared by the chiefs of staff for the minister of national defence's use at a secret session of Parliament noted that "probable" Japanese strategy included containing "North American forces in America" by raids on the North American Pacific seaboard. "Possible" enemy aims included an "invasion of the West Coast of North America," although the chiefs noted that "Under present conditions" such invasion was "not considered to be a practicable operation of war."[62]

The next month, with the Japanese forces seemingly roaming at will throughout the Pacific and with the politicians anxious to satisfy the public clamour for stronger local defences in British Columbia, the chief of the General Staff in Ottawa was estimating the possible scale of a Japanese attack on the Pacific Coast to be two brigades strong (i.e., two Japanese regiments of three battalions each or approximately 5,200 to

6,000 men), and he was recommending the raising of new forces.[63] At the beginning of April, President Roosevelt used the occasion of the first meeting of the Pacific Council, made up of representatives of all the belligerent allies, to say that he had invited Canada because "he thought that Canada might do more than she was now doing."[64] That disturbed Ottawa, perhaps because it mirrored British Columbia public opinion so clearly, and Mackenzie King hastened to discuss the matter with the president.[65]

Later that month, after Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle's B-25 bombers, launched from the carrier *Hornet*, had hit Tokyo, Canadian intelligence reports predicted that enemy aircraft carriers would launch retaliatory attacks against the West Coast in May.[66] By June, there were nineteen battalions on the coast, a response to Japan's invasion of the Aleutians and continued and growing public concern. Even so, the military commanders were far from satisfied. The Joint Canadian United States Services Committee at Prince Rupert believed that military strength in the area was "entirely inadequate against many types of attack that are possible and probable from the West."[67] The air officer commanding on the coast asked for sixteen squadrons to deal with the maximum scale of attack by battleships, cruisers and carrierborne aircraft. There were also blackouts and dimouts, and active plans underway in July and August 1942 for the evacuation of Vancouver Island and the lower mainland in the event of a Japanese attack.[68]

The Cabinet War Committee was assured by the chief of the General Staff in late September that he saw "no reason to fear any invasion from the Pacific Coast at present time,"[69] but two months later the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the highest Allied military authority, determined that while "carrier-borne air attacks and sporadic naval bombardment" were the most probable form of attack, the possibility of "a small scale destructive raid cannot be ignored." By that, the British and American planners meant "a force comprising 10/15 fast merchant ships carrying up to two brigades."[70] And as late as March 1943, there was a flurry of reports of Japanese activity in North American waters that stirred fears about a possible attack of the precise sort the planners had anticipated.[71] In other words, and contrary to the arguments of those who have argued that there was never any threat from Japan to the coast and hence no justification on grounds of national security for the evacuation of the Japanese Canadians, there *was* a credible — if limited — military threat into 1943.

The intent of this paper was to present some new and re-state some old evidence on several aspects of the Japanese-Canadian question. What has our account done to the received version? It has pointed to the gross weaknesses of and wishful thinking in RCMP and military intelligence about the Japanese Canadians. It has demonstrated irrefutably that the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver had orders from the Foreign Ministry to employ British Columbia *Nisei* in information collection or spying. It has called into question the advice of the military planners in Ottawa, brought forward once more the widespread concerns of the senior officers and staff planners of all three armed forces in British Columbia, and argued that there was a limited but credible military threat to North America from early 1942 into 1943 from the Imperial Japanese forces. It has noted that the attitudes of some Japanese Canadians by their support for Japan's war with China before 7 December 1941 raised understandable concerns on the part of British Columbians and Canadians generally. And although the attitudes of Japanese Canadians before and during the war have yet to be thoroughly studied despite all the work on the subject, Nakano's memoir is important for its account of the wartime attitudes and divisions in the community and especially so because of its resonance with Stephan's account of Hawaii. Finally, although little has been made of this here, it is certainly germane to recall that there was a war on and that Canada and its Allies were losing it at the beginning of 1942. As the civil libertarian and historian Arthur Lower wrote in October 1941, "The temper of the Canadian people seems to be becoming more and more arbitrary and we are fast losing whatever tolerance and magnanimity we once possessed."[72] That explains much that happened.

None of this alters the conclusion that the Japanese Canadians were victims of the racism of the society in which they lived and an uncaring government that failed to defend the ideals for which its leaders claimed to have taken Canada and Canadians to war. Even so, this paper does maintain that there were military and intelligence concerns that, in the face of the sudden attack at Pearl Harbor, could have provided Ottawa with a justification for the evacuation of the Japanese Canadians from the coast. The government in December 1941 was unaware of much of the data that has since emerged, and even if it had had it all, it simply lacked the assessment capability to put it together. If it had had the information and the intelligence capacity to appraise it properly, the arguments for evacuation would certainly have appeared far stronger than they already did.

However arguable this case, there is, of course, no necessary connection between the later confiscation of property and the still later effort to deport the Japanese Canadians and the reasons for the evacuation that seemed compelling to some in January and February 1942. The anger that persists at the evacuation might be misplaced; that at the confiscation of property and the attempt at deportation still seems wholly justifiable. In any case, this paper should demonstrate that there remains ample room for further work, broader interpretations and, perhaps, a changed emphasis in this area of research.

Notes

1. National Archives of Canada (NA), Department of National Defence Records, mf reel 5257, f. 8704, "Instructions for the Guidance of General Officers Commanding-in-Chief Atlantic and Pacific Commands," 26 February 1941

2. NA, Department of External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 2, "Report on the State of Intelligence on the Pacific Coast with Particular Reference to the Problem of the Japanese Minority," 27 July 1941; Department of National Defence Records, vol. 11913, "Japanese" file, Cmdr Hart to R.B.C. Mundy, 21 August 1940

3. PAC, RCMP Records, declassified report, "Japanese Activities in British Columbia" and attached correspondence. See also External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 2, "Report on the State...."

4. External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 1, Keenleyside to H.F. Angus, 28 June 1940. After the order to remove the Japanese from the coast, Keenleyside noted that American "control of enemy aliens seems to be rather more severe than ours while their action with regard to their own citizens is somewhat less severe than ours." *Ibid.*, Acc. 83-84/259, box 171, f. 2915-40, pt. 1, Keenleyside to Wrong, 14 March 1942

5. See, e.g., Robert H. Keyserlingk, "'Agents Within the Gates': The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada During World War II," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVI (June 1985), 216-17; J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence* (Ottawa, 1981), pp. 81ff; Reg Whitaker, "Official Repression of Communism During World War II," *Labour/Le Travail*, XVII (Spring 1986), 137 and *passim*.

6. NA, W.L.M. King Papers, "Note on a War-Time Intelligence Service," 27 November 1939, f. C257903ff. We are indebted to Professor W.R. Young for this reference.

7. Department of National Defence Records, Declassified Examination Unit Files, memorandum for chairman, Supervisory Committee, 15 August 1941, Lt C.H. Little memorandum, 18 April 1942, Draft History, chapter VI, "Japanese Diplomatic Section," 1

8. The spy scares in British Columbia sound much the same as those in Britain before the Great War. See Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service* (London, 1985), 34ff.

9. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 11917, f. 5-1-128, 1938-9, RCMP report, 3 June 1938; *ibid.*, vol. 11913, "Japanese" file, "Vancouver" [an agent] to Cmdr Hart, 30 June and 13 July 1940; External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 2, RCMP report, 29 July 1941; Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism* (Toronto, 1981), 23

10. See Roy Miki, ed., *This is My Own: Letters to Wes & Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-48 by Muriel Kitagawa* (Vancouver, 1985), 98-9.

11. RCMP Records, declassified material, Commissioner S.T. Wood to Stephenson, 5 August 1942

12. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 3864, f. N.S.S. 1023-18-2, vol. 1, memorandum, F/L Wynd to senior air staff officer, 24 June 1940

13. External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, RCMP report, 29 July 1941. Under a Japanese law of 1899, Japanese men liable for military service did not lose Japanese nationality upon naturalization abroad unless they had performed their military service. After 1934, Canada would not accept Japanese for naturalization without certification that they had completed military service. See *ibid.*, Acc. 83-84/259, box 171, f. 2915-40, pt. 3, memorandum, "Postwar Treatment of Japanese in Canada," n.d.; John J. Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun* (Honolulu, 1984), 24; and Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was* (Toronto, 1976). Adachi, 175, says that in 1934 86 percent of *Nisei* were dual citizens. The population numbers used here are those in the *Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia, December 1940* (copy in NA, Privy Council Office Records, vol. 1, f. C-10-3), not those of the 1941 Census which were, of course, not available at the time.

14. External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 2, "Report on the State...." See also the pamphlet by the Vancouver unit of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, "Canada's Japanese" (Vancouver [1942?]), 7-8, with its explanation of the role of the Consulate.

15. External Affairs Records, f. 28-C(s), Massey to prime minister, 28 February 1941. This telegram was discussed by the Cabinet War Committee, the key comment being that by Angus L. Macdonald, the minister of national defence (naval services), that there was "little danger of serious attack by Japan" on the Pacific Coast. Privy Council Office Records, Cabinet War Committee Minutes, 5 March 1941. This type of attitude presumably was responsible for the fact that, as late as July 1941, as we have seen above, the RCMP still had only three people responsible for Japanese-Canadian questions. For a plausible hypothesis on how the information might have reached Massey — from US under secretary of state, S. Welles, to the British ambassador, Halifax, to London and thence to Massey — see Ruth Harris, "The 'Magic' Leak of 1941 and Japanese-American Relations," *Pacific Historical Review*, L (1981), 83.

16. Andrew, 261, 353; Ronald Lewin, *The American Magic* (New York, 1982), 44ff

17. *Ibid.*, 45-6

18. United States National Archives (USNA), General Records of the Department of the Navy, RG 80, "Magic" Documents, box 56, Tokyo to Washington, 30 January 1941 (2 parts); *ibid.*, Tokyo to Washington, 15 February 1941; *ibid.*, Los Angeles to Tokyo, 9 May 1941; *ibid.*, Tokyo to Vancouver, March 1941. USNA, Records of the National Security Agency, RG 457, "Magic" Documents, SRH 018, SRDJ nos. 1233-4, 1246-9, 1370, 1525, Vancouver to Tokyo, 7, 14 July, 11, 19 August 1939. Some of this information is contained in *The "Magic" Background to Pearl Harbor* (Washington, 1977), I, no. 131, and especially no. 135, which is the Tokyo to Vancouver, 14 February 1941, telegram referred to. See also *New York Times*, 22 May 1983, and Gregory A. Johnson's doctoral research paper, "Mackenzie King and the Cancer in the Pacific" (York University, 1984).

19. Indeed, as late as 21 October 1941, and despite the Massey telegram referred to above, Hugh Keenleyside, the assistant under secretary of state for external affairs, told the under secretary that "While it might be possible to find Japanese nationals in British Columbia against whom some meagre suspicion exists, there is certainly no Japanese national at large in that Province or elsewhere in Canada against whom any really convincing case can be made out." That comment likely reflected both RCMP advice, which is suspect, and Keenleyside's own extensive knowledge. Whether his certainty was justified — in the light of the Consulate's activities — is another question. D.R. Murray, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. VIII: *1939-41*, pt. 2 (Ottawa, 1976), 1169

20. External Affairs Records, vol. 2007, f. 1939-212, pt. 2, "Report on the State...." Cf. H.F. Angus' critique of this report in Department of National Defence Records, f. 212-39c, 15 August 1941, and his memorandum of an interview with the officer, F/O Neild, 15 August 1941. We are indebted to Professor Patricia Roy for the Angus critique. It is worth noting that even missionaries shared alarmist views. A United Church China missionary, in Vancouver in January 1941, wrote that "I have had too much experience with the Japanese to trust them ... there is a war in progress and we in Vancouver are in the front line. And the front line is no place for thousands of enemy citizens." United Church Archives, Board of Foreign Missions, Honan, box 11, f. 174, Stewart to Reverend Armstrong, 20 January 1942

21. Adachi, 184-5. Membership figures for the Canadian Japanese Association are in University of British Columbia Archives, Japanese Canadian Collection, Miyazaki Collection, f. 6-4. A copy of the pamphlet is in *ibid.*, P.H. Meadows, Japanese Farmers Association Papers.

22. Granatstein, 98ff; King Papers, f. C144716ff, contains petitions and other material on Canadian policy to Japan after 1937. See also Murray, 1203ff, for extensive documentation on metals export policy.

23. Ed Ouchi, ed., *'Til We See the Light of Hope* (Vernon, BC, 1982[?]), 70. *The New Canadian* is available in the UBC Archives. For support for the war, see the 20 October 1939 issue; on the consul, see, e.g., 8 September 1939. The rotogravure

section began in late 1939 and ran well into 1940. On the economic boycott launched by Chinese groups, see UBC Archives, *Chinese Times* translations for 1937.

24. NA, J.W. Dafoe Papers, Angus to Dafoe, 15 October 1940. Mackenzie King told the Japanese minister to Canada in January 1941 that Japanese Canadians would not be called up for NRMA service: "he must remember that Japan and China were at war and we might be encouraging a little civil war if we supply both Chinese and Japanese with rifles etc., in BC at this time. He laughed very heartily at that." King Papers, Diary, 8 January 1941

25. University of British Columbia, Special Collections, H.F. Angus Papers, vol. 1, folder 2, draft memoir, 320-1; H.L. Keenleyside, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside*, vol. II: *On The Bridge of Time* (Toronto, 1982), 171

26. University of British Columbia Archives, Special Collections, MacInnis Papers, Box 54A, f. 8, MacInnis to the Canadian Japanese Association, 11 December 1937; *ibid.*, f. 12, MacInnis to T. Umezuki, 18 April 1939. The CCF did not live up to its ideals once the Pacific War started and the BC party supported removal of Japanese Canadians. See Werner Cohn, "The Persecution of Japanese Canadians and the Political Left in British Columbia, December 1941 — March 1942," *BC Studies*, LXVIII (Winter 1985-6), 3ff.

27. H.F. Angus, "The Effect of the War on Oriental Minorities in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, VII (November 1941), 508

28. Harvard University, J. Pierrepont Moffat Papers, "Memorandum of Conversations with Mr. Norman Robertson ...," 8 December 1941

29. John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York, 1986), 36. See also Christopher Thorne, *Racial Aspects of the Far Eastern War of 1941-1945* (London, 1982) and chapter II of his *The Issue of War* (London, 1985).

30. Canada, House of Commons *Debates*, 4 August 1944, 5948; Adachi, 276

31. RCMP Records, "Japanese Activities in British Columbia," Appendix 6, lists the names. Adachi, 199, says 38 were arrested. Sunahara, 28, agrees.

32. Takeo Nakano, *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* (Toronto, 1980), 8; Sunahara, 70; Stephan, 171

33. Nakano, 44-45. Sunahara, 69, says that many *Nisei gambariya* had been educated in Japan.

34. Stephan, 177

35. To what extent the post-7 December military response was a reflection of pre-war contempt for Japanese military capabilities remains unknown. Dower, 98ff, discusses the responses of the American and British military and civilians both before and after the outbreak of war.

36. Maurice Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians* (Toronto, 1962), 176-8. Escott Reid, who attended the Conference for the Department of External Affairs, later wrote that delegates from BC "spoke of the Japanese Canadians in a way that Nazis would have spoken about Jewish Germans. I felt in that room the physical presence of evil." "The Conscience of a Diplomat: A Personal Testament," *Queen's Quarterly*, LXXIV (Winter 1967), 6-8

37. External Affairs Records, Acc. 83-84/259, box 115, f. 1698-A-40, "Report of Special Committee ...," 28 July 1941. Ottawa had not always been so calm. The Joint Staff Committee at Defence Headquarters on 5 September 1936 had foreseen circumstances in which "the Western Coast of Canada will be within the area of hostilities and is likely to be attacked not only by Japanese naval and air forces, but, in the case of important shore objectives, by Japanese landing parties operating in some strength." An abridged version of the document is in James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, vol. II: *Appeasement and Rearmament* (Toronto, 1965), 213ff. Two years later Defence Headquarters had concluded that "there was a problem of possible sabotage in wartime and recommended that Japanese Canadians not be allowed to purchase property adjacent to areas of military importance." Cited in John Saywell, "Canadian Political Dynamics and Canada-Japan Relations: Retrospect and Prospect," 26, a paper published in Japanese only ("Nikkakankei No Kaiko To Tembo," *Kokusai Seiji* (May 1985), 121-36)

38. W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force*, vol. II: *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Toronto, 1986), 405. The British and American planners meeting at the Arcadia conference later in December agreed. *Ibid.*, 410. On 29 December 1941, the chief of the General Staff told the Cabinet War Committee that he had just returned from the Pacific Coast where he found the military and police more concerned with the possibility of attacks on Japanese Canadians than with subversion. Cabinet War Committee Minutes, 29 December 1941. The enormous difficulties that the military would have faced in dealing with racist attacks on Japanese Canadians should not be underestimated: the limited number of trained troops in the area and the very real problem of using white troops against white British Columbians in defence of Japanese Canadians would have frightened any realistic commander.

39. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 2730, f. HQS-5199X, "Memorandum of the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, on the matter of the Defences of the Pacific Coast of Canada," 12 July 1940

40. *Ibid.*, vol. 3864, f. N.S.S. 1023-18-2, vol. 1, N.A. Robertson to LCol K.S. Maclachlan, 14 August 1941; *ibid.*, vol. 2730, f. HQS-5199X, "Memorandum of the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, on the Subject of Dealing With Persons of Japanese Origin in the Event of an Emergency," 20 September 1941. See Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever* (Montreal, 1978), 145, which notes that as early as June 1938, the military were thinking of widespread wartime internment of Japanese Canadians. The numbers near RCAF stations are from NA, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 32, f. X-81, Commander Parsons to Attorney General Maitland, 17 February 1942.

41. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 3864, f. N.S.S. 1023-18-2, vol. 1, "Extract from Report on Japanese Activities on the West Coast of Canada," 10 March 1937. See also Privy Council Office Records, vol. 3, f. D-19-1 Pacific Area, for AVM Croil's "Appreciation of the Situation Likely to Arise on the West Coast ...," 11 September 1941.

42. External Affairs Records, Acc. 83-84/259, box 115, f. 1698-A-40, memorandum for Robertson, 21 October 1941. London soon urged that as many Japanese fishing vessels as possible be seized in the event of war. External Affairs Records, f. 28-C(s), secretary of state for dominion affairs to prime minister, 23 October 1941

43. National Defence Records, vol. 2688, f. HQS-5199-1, vol. 1, "Memorandum of the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, on the Subject of Dealing with Persons of Japanese Origin in the Event of an Emergency," 20 September 1941

44. USNA, Department of State Records, RG 59, PJBD Records, box 14, meeting 12

45. *Ibid.*, 842.20 Defense/140 1/2, Hickerson to Hackworth, 2 December 1941. We are indebted to Professor Robert Bothwell for this reference.

46. RCMP Records, vol. 3564, f. C11-19-2-24, General Alexander to CGS, 30 December 1941; *ibid.*, Keenleyside to Pope, 3 January 1942

47. Mackenzie Papers, vol. 32, f. X-81, "Extracts from Secret Letters," 30, 27 December 1941. See also C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War* (Ottawa, 1955), 169, and W.A.B. Douglas, "The RCAF and the Defence of the Pacific Coast, 1939-1945," an unpublished paper presented to the Western Studies Conference, Banff, Alberta, January 1981, 8.

48. Department of National Defence, Directorate of History, f. 193.009 (D3), Pacific Command, Joint Service Committee, minutes, 9 January 1942

49. Department of National Defence Records, Acc. 83-84/216, f. S-801-100-P5-1, minutes of Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, 13 February 1942

50. *Ibid.*, vol. 11767, f. PC019-2-7, P.A. Hoare to commanding officer, 26 February 1942. The Joint Service Committee recommended on 20 February that all aliens and all Japanese regardless of age and sex should be removed from certain areas on the coast, particularly those near defence installations and in isolated areas. Cited in Patricia Roy, "Why Did Canada Evacuate the Japanese?" unpublished paper, 6-7

51. USNA, Records of US Army Commands, RG 338, box 4, f. 291.2, contains ample evidence of US concern from April 1942; RCMP Records, declassified material, "Japanese Activities in British Columbia." See also Department of National Defence Records, mf. reel 5258, f. 8704-11, for indications of National Defence's concern about sabotage in August 1942 and especially the vice chief of the General Staff's fear that the RCMP lacked "a realistic appreciation of the present danger of sabotage." *Ibid.*, General Murchie to Ralston, 19 August 1942

52. Mackenzie papers, vol. 32, f. X-81, BC Police Commissioner T.W.S. Parsons to Attorney General Maitland, 17 February 1941: "With these people neither Canadian birth nor naturalization guarantees good faith. Something to remember in the case of invasion or planned sabotage."

53. On Pearl Harbor, see Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York, 1972), 36-8 and Gordon W. Prange, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York, 1986), 348ff; on Hong Kong, see Stacey, 467, Oliver Lindsay, *The Lasting Honour* (London, 1978), 28, Carl Vincent, *No Reason Why* (Stittsville, 1981), 137, 139 and 146, and Ted Ferguson, *Desperate Siege: The Battle of Hong Kong* (Toronto, 1980), 57, 127-8, 137-9; on Malaya, see Ian Morrison, *Malayan Postscript* (London, 1942), 32-3, and the book by the British official historian of the war in Asia, General S. Woodburn Kirby, *Singapore: The Chain of Disaster* (New York, 1971), 30, 37, 152, 251, as well as the British Security Coordination report cited above from declassified RCMP records.

54. *Vancouver Sun*, 2 January 1942

55. External Affairs Records, Acc. 83-84/259, box 160, f. 2670-D-40, high commissioner in Great Britain to secretary of state for external affairs, 12 February 1942; Queen's University Archives, T.A. Crerar Papers, Crerar to J.W. Dafoe, 20 February 1942; Montreal *Gazette*, 11 March 1942. See also *Times* (London), 13 March 1942.

56. Privy Council Office Records, vol. 3, f. D-19-1, Pacific Area, memorandum, AVM Croil to minister for air, 11 September 1941

57. Department of State Records, 842.20 Defense/100, "Observations on the General Defense Status of the Province of British Columbia," 1 August 1941

58. See Stacey, 165ff, and Department of National Defence Records, vol. 2730, f. HQS-5199X, "Memorandum of the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, on the Matter of the Defences of the Pacific Coast of Canada," 12 July 1940; Privy Council Office Records, vol. 3, f. D-19-1, Pacific Area, appreciations of 18 November 1941 and 10 December 1941.

59. See, e.g., Dafoe Papers, Bruce Hutchison to Dafoe, January 1942; Mackenzie Papers, vol. 30, chief of air staff to minister for air, 16 March 1942 and various memoranda.

60. Dower, 112, notes that, as the Japanese victories continued through early 1942, "Suddenly, instead of being treacherous and cunning, the Japanese had become monstrous and inhuman ... invested in the eyes of both civilians and soldiers with superhuman qualities."

61. The best accounts of Pacific war strategy are H.P. Willmott, *Empires in the Balance* (Annapolis, 1982) and *The Barrier and the Javelin* (Annapolis, 1983). On the Aleutian and Midway plans, see Willmott, *Barrier*, chapter 3; Stephan, chapters 6-7. Note, however, Willmott's cool assessment of the difficulties Japan would face in trying to take Hawaii. *Empires*, 437. The importance of the Aleutian

thrust was seen by the Americans' Special Branch, Military Intelligence Service, based on an analysis of "Magic" traffic. See USNA, RG 457, box 2, SRS-668, supplement to Magic summary, 30 July 1942, and on the Special Branch, Lewin, 141ff. One interesting assessment of the Japanese attack in the Aleutians was offered to Japanese Ambassador Oshima in Berlin by General von Boetticher, a former military attaché in Washington: "the Aleutian attack has closed the only practicable route for an attack on Japan and is a serious threat to Canada and the West Coast." *Ibid.*, box 1, SRS-640, Magic summary, 26 June 1942

62. NA, J.L. Ralston Papers, vol. 72, Secret Session file, chiefs of staff appreciation, 19 February 1942

63. Stacey, 171. See also Cabinet War Committee Minutes, 18 February 1942, and National Defence Records, vol. 2688, f. HQS-5159-1, vol. 2, "Report of Meeting Held at Headquarters, 13th Naval District Seattle, ... 6 March 1942," where Canadian and American commanders agreed with the Canadian estimates of scales of attack and suggested that "nuisance raids" were most likely. Additional information on defence preparations is in John F. Hilliker, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. IX: *1942-1943* (Ottawa, 1980), 1162ff. For a good example of hindsight 20/20 vision on the impossibilities of a Japanese attack on the coast, see Adachi, 207-8.

64. Privy Council Office Records, vol. 14, f. W-29-1, "First Meeting of the Pacific Council in Washington," n.d. [1 April 1942] and attached documents

65. *Ibid.*, "Memorandum re Prime Minister's Visit to Washington, April 14th to 17th, 1942"

66. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 11764, f. PC05-11-5, naval message to NOI/C, Vancouver and Prince Rupert, 29 April 1942

67. *Ibid.*, vol. 11764, f. PC010-9-18, memorandum, "Defence of the West Coast," 7 July 1942

68. See *Vancouver Sun*, 10 August 1942; *Vancouver Province*, 13 August 1942; documents on External Affairs Records, Acc. 83-84/259, box 216, f. 3942-40; Douglas, *Creation*, 354. We are indebted to Professor John Saywell for his recollections of this period on Vancouver Island and to his father's book, John F.T. Saywell, *Kaatza: The Chronicles of Cowichan Lake* (Sidney, BC, 1967), 197-8, which briefly details the role of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, a force largely of skilled woodsmen and hunters.

69. King Papers, f. C249469, memorandum for file, 25 September 1942. See also Cabinet War Committee Minutes, 25 September 1942, where the chief of the General Staff said he would be "surprised" if the Japanese attacked the coast.

70. USNA, RG 218, Records of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, mf. reel 10, f. 39322ff, Combined Chiefs of Staff, "Probable Maximum Scale of Attack on West Coast of North America," CCS 127, 29 November 1942. See also *ibid.*, f. A4024ff, CCS 127/1, "Probable Scale of Attack on the West Coast of North America," 16 January 1943. Not until August 1943 (in CCS 127/3) did the Combined Chiefs

declare the possibility of any serious attack on the coast "very unlikely." Douglas, *Creation*, 368-9. C.P. Stacey's comment in *Arms, Men and Governments* (Ottawa, 1970), 46, that "No informed and competent officer ever suggested that the Japanese were in a position to undertake anything more than nuisance raids" seems exaggerated in the light of the CCS papers. It is worth recalling that the Canadian raid on Dieppe involved about 5,000 men and was intended, among other purposes, to lead the Nazis to strengthen the French Coast at the expense of the Eastern front. The Japanese planners could (and should?) have been thinking similarly. Certainly a raid in force would have resulted in a massive public demand for the stationing of more troops on the coast; indeed, the simple prospect of such a raid did lead to the strengthening of defences.

71. Department of National Defence Records, vol. 11764, f. PC05-11-7, naval messages, 30-31 March 1943. This may have been based on false information. A secret US Federal Communications Commission project had reported on landing barges in the area; Washington discounted these reports but turned the information over to Canada, which sent them to the West Coast and then back into the American intelligence net where "they were believed to be authentic. Hence military action was ordered." See USNA, RG 457, SRMN-007, memorandum, 19 April 1943.

72. Lower to Frank Underhill, 15 October 1941, quoted in Doug Owram, *The Government Generation* (Toronto, 1986), 263