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In *Camelot and Canada: Canadian-American Relations in the Kennedy Era*, Asa McKercher makes an important, and refreshing, contribution to the scholarship on the Canadian-American relationship by challenging the long-held assertion by Canadian historians that the relatively poor state of relations between the two countries was the fault of the Kennedy administration. Instead, McKercher argues that the Americans tried to placate Canadian concerns by recognizing the public's angst at the growing power of the United States and escalation of the Cold War. It was Prime Minister John Diefenbaker who was responsible for the public breakdown of the Canadian-American relationship.

McKercher avoids emphasizing the age-old debate over whether Canadians were "anti-American" and instead turns his attention to how American policy leaders, particularly "the New Frontiersmen" who surrounded President John F. Kennedy, interpreted Canadian public opinion and responded to nationalist sentiment. By turning his attention to quiet diplomacy rather than the bombast of public statements, McKercher depicts a White House and State Department that was generally tolerant of Canadian public opinion and specifically wary of provoking a nationalist backlash. Canadian policymakers, for their part, often used the specter of anti-American nationalism as a bargaining chip during negotiations with their American counterparts.

On the main areas of tension between the Canadians and the Americans—trade with China and Cuba, Britain's application to join the European Economic Community (EEC), and the allowance of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil—Diefenbaker was motivated primarily by domestic opinion rather than a desire to maintain friendly relations with the United States. The selling of western Canadian wheat to China was pursued as a boost to farmers who made up a significant portion of the Progressive Conservative voter base. Diefenbaker chose to appease Canadian nationalist sentiment by opposing Britain's entry into the EEC and arming the BOMARC missiles with nuclear weapons. The Americans, despite these policies being direct challenges to the "Grand Design" (liberalizing trade and tying Western Europe with the United States) and defending North America from Soviet aggression, had, for the most part, sympathized with Diefenbaker. Waivers were granted to Canada to avoid retaliation for trading with China, and a trade deal between Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand was proposed. When the Canadian government triggered an economic crisis by devaluing the currency, rather than using this as an opportunity to further damage the Diefenbaker government's repu-
tation with voters, the Kennedy administration provided loans. Nevertheless, it was on trade policy, particularly the "Grand Design" of trade liberalization, where tensions between Kennedy and Diefenbaker surfaced.

McKercher writes that Diefenbaker's initial opposition to the Trade Expansion Act puzzled the Americans. The Kennedy administration assumed that Canada, being heavily reliant on exports would be a natural supporter of trade liberalization. Diefenbaker came to office promising to reduce Canada's reliance on American trade and insisted that there was potential for Canada to become "economically independent" by boosting trade with the United Kingdom. Therefore, in his mind, the Grand Design was a direct threat to his vision that threatened to lead to the absorption of Canada into the United States. Indeed, McKercher argues that it was Diefenbaker's refusal to "think inter-continentally"—as Kennedy urged Americans—along with his distrust of Kennedy due to his friendliness to opposition leader Lester Pearson, that ruined his relationship with the American president (p. 146).

Historians have conventionally viewed the Cuban Missile Crisis as a period that marked a crisis, or collapse, in the Canadian-American relationship. McKercher admits that Diefenbaker's public dithering on how to respond did hurt the relationship, but the story behind the scenes was remarkably different. Canadian officials actively assisted the Americans by providing intelligence on Fidel Castro's intentions and applying diplomatic pressure on the Cubans. The initial public reluctance of the Diefenbaker government to support the United States was not a betrayal of an ally but a reflection of domestic opinion that was supportive of the containment of Communism yet reasonably wary of escalation into armed conflict. By this point, however, Diefenbaker's inaction served to reinforce the negative views of him held by American officials and the president.

The Canadian-American relationship is ultimately shaped by how the American president and Canadian prime minister get along. From the beginning, Diefenbaker was suspicious of Kennedy, both personally and politically. The two men, from opposite backgrounds, simply did not like each other. While American officials were sympathetic to Canadian concerns of American economic dominance, and the escalation of the Cold War, and actively sought to curtail anti-American sentiment, it was Diefenbaker's public attacks on American policy on the campaign trail and his threatening to release a secret memo to the press that led to Kennedy desiring a change of government.

McKercher contends that Diefenbaker lost the 1963 election because voters were frustrated at his indecision on arming the BOMARC missiles and were generally disgusted with the government's track record. Public opinion warmed to the Americans on military matters, but it was economic concerns and the rise of economic nationalism that shaped the relationship between Camelot and Canada and would, in fact, shape the relationship between president and prime minister in the ensuing decades. *Camelot and Canada* is a meticulously researched and well-written interpretation of an important episode in Canadian-American relations. It should be required reading for any scholar of Canadian and American political history and foreign policy.