

The Address—Mr. Pearson

a people who were asking only for freedom from communist colonial domination and the right to run their own affairs. The recent actions of the Soviet union in Hungary throw a lurid light on the protestations we have heard that Stalinism is now dead and peaceful coexistence is here. But there has been no more significant exposure of the underlying, and I am afraid enduring, purpose and methods of Soviet power. Soviet tanks and Soviet guns have killed Hungarian freedom fighters, but they did not and they cannot kill Hungarian freedom.

What can we do here in Canada and at the United Nations? Well, we can help the victims of this terror, and we learned last night of what we are doing in that regard. We can keep, through the United Nations as we are trying to do, the spotlight of world public opinion, the conscience of the world, the moral force of world opinion, on the savage actions of the Soviet union. We can do our best to help Hungarians in that way and to bring the United Nations into Hungary in the role of observers and investigators. We must continue our efforts toward that end; but we would not be helping the Hungarian people—I think we might be hurting them—if we held out promises of liberation by force which at this time we would not be able to fulfil. There is, however, I think, some hope in the growing evidence that eastern Europe is now beginning to free itself from the shackles of Russian slavery and oppression, and that development is expressing itself at the United Nations assembly at this time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come to the Middle East. The debate in this house—and we have been meeting for only a few hours—has already shown that a very real difference on policy has developed between the government and the official opposition. The speeches of the Acting Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, who has just preceded me, have made that quite clear. The official opposition—and I think we can assume that the speakers in question had the support of all the members of the official opposition; they should have, to judge from the applause they received from their colleagues—now apparently support every move made by the United Kingdom and France in their intervention in Egypt after the attack on Egypt by Israel, an intervention brought about with army, navy and air forces after a 12-hour ultimatum. They claim, I have the right to conclude, that we as a government should have approved of those moves at once and should have backed up the United Kingdom and France at the United

[Mr. Pearson.]

Nations even on those matters and on those resolutions where not a single member of the United Nations supported the resolutions in question.

Mr. Green: Some abstained.

Mr. Pearson: I gathered that abstention was not very popular in my hon. friend's mind when Canada abstains.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we did not follow that particular line of policy in this matter, and I shall try to explain why. To do so it is, I think, relevant to give, as other speakers have given, some background which may help us to understand recent events. It is, for instance, important in order to keep things in perspective to understand the policy of the Egyptian government in recent months. That policy has been unfriendly to the western powers. It was arbitrary and was denounced in this house as arbitrary in the seizure of the Suez canal company. That policy has witnessed a gradual increase of Russian influence in Egypt and the Middle East, and it did culminate in the seizure of the canal. We recall that after weeks of effort and frustrations to bring about an international solution by international means no such solution was brought about.

It is quite obvious—it was quite obvious by the summer—that there was no meeting of minds between Washington and London and Paris in these matters. And, of course, the fault was not by any means entirely on the side of London and Paris, and no one on this side of the house has ever tried to take a one-sided view of this situation. The vital importance of the Suez to western Europe is perhaps not appreciated in Washington, and it might have been better appreciated there if this situation could have been related by them to the Panama canal.

Now, our own attitude in this matter was—and we expressed this attitude in the House of Commons and in a good many messages to the United Kingdom government during the summer—that we did not stand aloof and indifferent, and we did appreciate the importance of this development not only to western Europe but to Canada itself. Our attitude was that this question should be brought as quickly as possible to the United Nations and a solution attempted there; that at all costs there should be no division of opinion, no division of policy, between Washington and London and Paris on a matter of such vital importance, and that there should be no action taken by anybody which could not be justified under the United Nations charter; otherwise the country taking that action, no matter how friendly to us, would be hauled before the