

The Address—Mr. Pearson

prey to confusion, to disorder and to those subversive forces which try to provoke, and certainly know how to exploit, such a situation.

At the present time the countries of south and southeast Asia are making impressive efforts toward the establishment of strong modern nation states, and we of the western world should do what we can to encourage and to assist these efforts. This surge of nationalism in Asia has resulted in political independence for twelve—and if you include Indo-China for fifteen—Asian states in less than twenty-five years. The political danger from this is that, exploiting this movement, communist expansionism may now spill over into southeast Asia as well as into the Middle East. In my opinion there is no more important question before the world today than this possibility.

The social and economic danger arises out of the fact that the people out there are learning that independence is not enough. The agitation for freedom has stirred up in them other desires; for improvements in their conditions of life; for a change from distress, privation and even starvation; for a change from a life expectancy of twenty years and an average income of less than \$50 a year. These new democratic governments are attempting to meet these new hungers, these new hopes, these new demands. There is danger not only to their own countries, but to the rest of the world, if they do not succeed in that attempt. But they are meeting these dangers as responsible, free, democratic governments, proceeding stage by stage, without, as they progress, destroying the framework of society or of government.

Communism, however, in Asia as elsewhere, is irresponsibly trying to capitalize on misery and distress and the understandable impatience for change, by promising not only immediate freedom where colonial status remains, but, where freedom has been achieved, a better life at once if only the people will rise in their might and create the chaos out of which communistic rule may emerge. In India, China and Burma, which are now free states, the appeal is to a fuller and better life at once; in Malaya and Indo-China it is to political freedom. Both appeals are strong, for millions of Asian people do not know that from communism both appeals are false.

It was in the light of these conditions that we discussed the situation in various Asian countries at our conference in Ceylon. Malaya, where the situation is now better—although communist bandits, and it is right to call them

that in Malaya, are doing their best to dislocate economic life—is moving ahead to ordered independence under the fine and distinguished leadership of a man we know both well and favourably here in Ottawa, Right Hon. Malcolm MacDonald.

In Burma, which is now free, but which is rent, not by civil war but by civil wars, the position is difficult indeed. Indonesia, now free, and recognized by Canada as a free state, is being attacked by forces from the right and forces from the left. It is having a difficult time. Then there is Indo-China which I propose to discuss separately, because it is a very important point in that part of the world.

It seemed to all of us at the conference that if the tide of totalitarian expansionism should flow over this general area, not only will the new nations lose the national independence which they have secured so recently, but the forces of the free world will have been driven off all but a relatively small bit of the great Eurasian land mass. In such circumstances it would not be easy to contemplate with equanimity the future of the rest of the world.

That, then, Mr. Speaker, was the background against which we held our discussions in the lush and lovely island of Ceylon. Now a few words, if I may, about the understandings and conclusions we reached as a result of those discussions.

In the first place we agreed at Colombo that the forces of totalitarian expansionism could not be stopped in south Asia and southeast Asia by military force alone. They cannot be checked, if, through stupidity or shortsightedness on the part of the democratic powers, totalitarianism is able to ally itself successfully with the forces of national liberation and social reform. If southeast Asia and south Asia are not to be conquered by communism, we of the free democratic world, including the Asian states themselves which are free, must demonstrate that it is we and not the Russians who stand for national liberation and economic and social progress.

The problem, then, for these states is to demonstrate that they can improve, by democratic methods, the standard of living of the masses of their people. That is their problem—one of self-help. But there is also our problem, that of mutual aid.

The conference discussed that problem. We agreed, for instance, to recommend financial help for the state of Burma which had been a subject of discussion among the sterling countries before the conference met. The Canadian government was not included