

GOVERNMENT  
OF CANADA

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## THE PRICE OF PEACE

A broadcast by Mr. L.B. Pearson,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
made on May 26, 1951, in a United Nations  
series on this subject.

It is paradoxical but true that Korea, which has suffered so terribly from war in the past year, is also the centre of the hopes of mankind to prevent a third world war, and ultimately to establish a world community under the rule of law. For the first time in history, military action against aggression is being conducted, not nationally, but internationally. It is to Korea, then, that we should turn first in considering the price we must be willing to pay for peace.

Essentially, the mission of the United Nations in Korea is to defeat aggression, so that the lesson of that defeat may help to prevent a third world war. If the aggression in Korea had been allowed to succeed without any attempt being made to resist it, other acts of aggression against small countries on the borders of the free world would certainly have followed. The strength of the free peoples would have been eaten away piece-meal in accordance with the plans of the Politburo and the Cominform. Eventually, a stage would have been reached when the remaining countries which were still free and independent would have realized that they had either to wage war with fewer resources and with much slighter hope of success, or else be enslaved by Communist imperialism. Because they would certainly have chosen to fight, rather than to submit, a third world war would in those circumstances have been inevitable.

To the infantryman slogging over the muddy paddy fields of Korea it may seem odd to say that his mission is to prevent a third world war. He may well be forgiven for not seeing much difference between such a war and the bloody business in which he is engaged. That viewpoint must certainly command our sympathy. But we mustn't forget that a third world war would be very different from the campaign now being fought in Korea. It would be an atomic war which would result in the death of hundreds of thousands of people at one stroke and which would leave the earth pock-marked and infected with radio-activity for years to come. That is the night-mare which we are trying by every means in our power to avoid. When viewed in that light, I believe that the men of the United Nations in Korea will see that their task, disagreeable and dangerous as it is, is supremely worth-while. Indeed, it is indispensable if we are to be successful in avoiding a general conflict.

But the courage being displayed by the United Nations forces in Korea may be in vain if the conflict there is enlarged and extended, and, especially if we bring on the very