

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE UNITED NATIONS, THE MIDDLE EAST AND CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Address by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to a Joint Meeting of the Men's and Women's Canadian Clubs, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 5, 1957

On October 31 last the world faced with uncertainty and fear developments in the Middle East which seemed to threaten the peace; and not only peace in that area. The United Nations Assembly in New York faced a crisis in its existence because of those developments. The Canadian Government and Canada's delegation to that Assembly, caught, as other delegations were, by surprise and with little time for consultation with Commonwealth or other friendly governments, faced the necessity of making some quick and difficult decisions in dramatic, even distressing circumstances.

The threat to world peace, of course, arose out of the possibility that the conflict between Israel and Egypt would be exploited by the U.S.S.R. for its own purposes and in a way to widen and deepen the conflict.

Today, the danger of a war of general atomic obliteration - because that is what it would be - comes not so much from calculated all-out military aggression as from a miscalculation of forces and of reactions to actions which may be meant to cause local trouble only. As long as the Western coalition maintains its strength and the unity which is an essential part of that strength; as long as the aggressor knows that an attack by him will meet with swift, sure and smashing retaliation, the atomic deterrent will probably work and peace, such as it is, will continue to balance itself uneasily on terror; while we search, as we must strive to do, for a more secure foundation for it.

The greater danger is that some accidental or miscalculated, but fatal, move may be made by the forces of communist imperialism in Moscow, or that bitter and uncompromising governments in countries which have only recently acquired control of their own affairs - morbidly suspicious and assertive - might invite to their assistance those same communist forces with results as unforeseen as they would be disastrous.