

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For some reason that you will no doubt find as baffling as I do, the newspapers you represent, and particularly the cartoonists that you employ, have no difficulty in identifying me with what has come to be known as our "open-mouth policy" in Viet-Nam.

Perhaps it has something to do with my physical characteristics. As Doug Fisher once remarked, I have a face that reminds him of oatmeal porridge.

Perhaps also the press is finally beginning to notice that during the period it has been my privilege to be Secretary of State for External Affairs there has been a new openness in the Government's conduct of foreign policy. We have been making an effort to encourage public awareness and public debate.

This is a relatively new development. Yet I would be less than objective if I did not admit that it has been part of an evolutionary process that began some time ago and that I have been pushed in this direction by the logic of events.

One of my very distinguished predecessors as Foreign Minister, the late Mike Pearson, acquired an enviable reputation for working with the media. He was well known for the candour with which he spoke to the press, particularly in background briefings, but also in his more formal encounters with your representatives. But the world in which he operated was a much different one from that in which we are working today. Our relationships with other countries, and particularly with the United States, were, if I may say so, a good deal simpler than those with which we are concerned now. It was, of course, Mr. Pearson himself who, in the 1950 s, noted and commented upon the ending of the days of what he described as our easy and automatic relationship with the U.S.A. Nevertheless even ten years ago Canada's foreign policy might still have been roughly described, as it was somewhat earlier by a cynical young member of my Department, as U.K. plus U.S. over 2 (U.K. + U.S.).

Moreover, international affairs was not a subject which appeared to touch directly upon the lives of very many Canadians except when global war involved us if the prospect of such a war threatened to involve us. Consequently, until relatively recently, the great majority of the Canadian people were prepared to leave the determination of these issues in the hands of a few foreign affairs buffs like you and me. In short, foreign affairs were things that concerned other people. Canada's own relationships seemed to be secure and tidy. We supported virtue in the United Nations and performed many useful functions throughout the world as a matter of duty, not of national necessity. This very satisfying role was largely made possible by the virtual absence of any serious problems in the international arena that directly affected the lives of Canadians simply because they were Canadians.