

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 51/20 A STATEMENT ON CANADIAN EXTERNAL POLICY

A statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made in the House of Commons on May 7, 1951.

...One of the cardinal facts in the world today is the emergence of the United States to a position of unquestioned leadership in the free world. A great shift of power and influence has occurred within the last few years, with the result that the United States now stands pre-eminent. By any test it is not only the most powerful of the free states of the world; it is immensely the most powerful. We in Canada know the United States so well that we can view this great and historic development without apprehension, and feel indeed relief and satisfaction that power is in the hands of a nation which has such a deeply rooted democratic tradition, whose people have no desire to dominate other countries, and which has shown its good will towards less fortunate peoples on so many occasions by acts of magnanimity and generosity.

This feeling, I think, is increased by a consideration of what our position would be today if the United States had not decided to assume the responsibilities throughout the world which its new position has thrust upon it. We have good reason to believe that it will discharge those responsibilities with conscience, courage, and respect for the interests of others. The predominance of the United States, however, is bound to raise new problems for all those countries which share its values, and which are associated with it, and proud to be associated with it, in the defence of freedom. These new problems must be understood and must be solved if friction is to be kept to a minimum and the forces of freedom are to be strong and united.

In considering, for instance, Canada's relations with the United States it is not enough to take refuge in thought or in words, as I see it, in the usual clichés of 135 years of peace or the unguarded boundary. Certainly in my view any spokesman for the Canadian Government or the Canadian people on external affairs has a duty to go deeper than this in the examination of this important question. Such an examination can also lead to a clarification of issues only if it is made within the wider framework of the position of the United States as the leader of our free alliance against the dangers which threaten us. The maintenance, let alone the strengthening, of an alliance of free nations is never easy, and requires tolerance, patience and great understanding. It is not easy in war; it is not easy in times of normal peace. It is especially difficult, I think, in a period such as the present of part war and part peace, with all its frustrations, tensions and anxieties.