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CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Canada's foreign policy must be Canadian, based on Canadian considerations, Canadian values, and Canadian interests, the greatest of which, apart from freedom itself, is peace.

Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, told Members of Parliament January 14 that this conclusion had been reached by the Government following a reassessment in the light of recent events, especially events in the Middle East, of the principles which have underlined Canadian policies in external affairs and the factors which influence them.

No country can afford the luxury of, or run the risk of, a policy of independence in foreign affairs in the sense that independence means isolation from one's friends or immunity from the effect of their decisions and their actions, Mr. Pearson said. Pointing out that we should not and do not automatically or unhesitatingly follow the policy of the United States or the United Kingdom or any other country, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, however, that Canadian decisions and policies should not be made without consideration being taken of the policies of the United States or the United Kingdom or those of other friends and allies with whom this country is associated.

Mr. Pearson went on to deal with the four principal factors which influence Canadian foreign policy. He said, in part:

"The first is our membership in the Commonwealth of Nations, four-fifths of the people

of which are now Asian, 443 million out of 530 million. Action by any of the Commonwealth nations which seems likely to foster and strengthen the ties which bind us together is almost certain to deserve, and certainly should receive, our support. The reverse, of course, is also often true.

"In actual practice, there have been over the last 10 years or so since World War II very few international occasions when we have not been on the side of Great Britain, the centre of our Commonwealth. But the rarity of dissenting occasions stems not from our automatic acceptance of the policies of Great Britain but from the fact in the vast majority of international questions our interest and hers have happily been almost invariably identical. When that does not happen we, of course, regret it deeply and we do our best to reconcile our differences without delay and without recrimination. We experienced such regret indeed to the point of distress when we differed, not perhaps in objectives but in methods and procedures, with the United Kingdom on certain occasions at the United Nations Assembly meeting last autumn in connection with the Suez crisis. The Commonwealth was indeed deeply split on that issue and our relief was therefore correspondingly great, a relief shared in full measure by the Asian members of the Commonwealth, where the separation pressures were most intense, when this danger to the Commonwealth was removed by the Anglo-French decision to accept the cease-fire

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CONTENTS

Canadian Foreign Policy	1
Progress In The North	3
Motor Vehicles	4

Citizenship Day	9
Familiarization Tour	9
Fisheries Research	10