



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Statement, by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, made in the House of Commons on February 2, 1951.

....We all know that these are fateful days in the relations between nations. Those relations involve many complicated and indeed dangerous issues which at times divide even friends. In dealing with some of them today--and I certainly shall not be able to deal with all of them--there are certain general considerations which I think we should keep in mind.

The first consideration seems to me to be absolutely fundamental: Our belief that freedom is valuable and precious in itself, and that the loss of freedom anywhere in the world means an impairment and indeed endangering of our own freedom. We may not always be in a position to defeat attempts to reduce the area in which men can breathe freely, but we should never voluntarily give our consent to that process, because we know that by so doing we would be betraying the principle which is one of the chief inspirations of all free men. Freedom cannot be cloistered in one country, in one continent, or indeed in one hemisphere. To the limit of our resources, therefore, we must try to maintain and even hope to extend the jurisdiction where the writ of freedom runs. Only in that way can we be true to ourselves and to the inheritance we have received.

The second general consideration which I should like to mention is our faith in the United Nations. The aggression against the Republic of Korea has tested the United Nations in a searching way and has led to a re-appraisal of its role in maintaining the peace of what it can and cannot do in a divided world of two superstates around which all others tend to group, on the one side willingly and on the other side by compulsion. It has certainly been made clear by recent events that our world organization is not yet in a position where it can safely undertake all the tasks which may be imposed on it by resolutions, and I think it is dishonest to pretend that it can. Whatever may be the result of this re-examination, however, it is certain that the United Nations still fulfils a number of functions which are indispensable if peace is to be maintained on any tolerable basis. For one thing, it holds out the promise of freedom to all. Second, it provides a framework in which men of good will can work for their collective defence and for the coming of the day when the rule of law will replace the rule of force in international relations. Third, by reason of its universal character it keeps alive the idea of the human community.