

VERNMENT



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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made at the annual dinner meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, at North Bay, on January 21, 1952.

We are entering another year in the "terrible 20th century", as that towering figure, Mr. Winston Churchill, called it in his speech last week at Ottawa, where we were proud and honoured to receive him. It is a good time to look back and to look forward. Looking back - well back - we may draw some useful lessons from history to help us as we face the problems ahead, though I suspect that historical insight often consists, as someone has said, of backing winners that have already won.

A knowledge of history does, however, help one to realize that there have been, in recent years, fundamental changes in the international scene. An appreciation of these changes is essential if we wish to solve contemporary international problems and a refusal to understand them is, I think, responsible for a good deal of the confusion and frustration which so often plagues us now in the relations between states.

In the first place, there has been in the last 50 years a fundamental change in the pattern of distribution of world power until now the centres of such power are in Washington and Moscow.

The power in one centre, the U.S.S.R., rests on and is directed by a totalitarian police regime which has brought about the submission to it, by conquest or subversion, of a group of satellite states. It represents everything that is hateful and reactionary, and its efforts to extend its sway over other peoples must be and are being resisted. If this resistance is to succeed, however, it is just as important to know your opponent as to know yourself. Yet it is extremely difficult for anyone to feel confident that he knows much about, to quote Mr. Churchill again, "the enigma wrapped in a mystery" that is Moscow under Communist rule. We do know, of course, that this regime is controlled by a small group of men who do not believe in international friendship or international co-operation, except on their own terms, and who have given us no reason to think that they understand the compromises and adjustments which are required if the relations between states are to be conducted in a normal way. We also know that these men are in complete control of the minds and bodies of nearly two hundred millions of human beings; that they are distorting history