

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 51/14 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN A TWO-POWER WORLD

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made before the Empire and Canadian Clubs of Toronto, on April 10, 1951.

I suppose there never has been a time when the conduct of foreign policy has been more complicated and difficult than at present; or one when the consequences of a mistake could be more disastrous; or indeed when even the wrong kind of speech could make more mischief. One reason is obvious. Our scientific achievements have so far out-stripped our social and moral development that while we, in Toronto, can learn in a few minutes of what has happened in Peking, or in Timbuctu, but are not always able to assess the knowledge with objectivity and act on it with mature intelligence. Indeed, too much of our intelligence seems to be devoted to the discovery and perfection of the techniques which bring the news to us; and not enough to the problem of what to do about it.

The formulation of foreign policy has special difficulties for a country like Canada, which has enough responsibility and power in the world to prevent its isolation from the consequences of international collective decisions, but not enough to ensure that its voice will always be effective in making those decisions.

Today, furthermore, foreign policy must be made in a world in arms, and in conflict. In this conflict there are two sides whose composition cuts across national and even community boundaries. The issues have by now been pretty clearly drawn, and at the risk of over-simplification can be described as freedom vs. slavery. Moreover, the two powerful leaders of these opposed sides have emerged - the United States of America on the side of freedom and the U.S.S.R.

The struggle has not yet become a shooting war, except in Korea, but is still one of policy. It goes on in the field of economics, finance, and public opinion, and extends far beyond any military or even political operation. It is the more terrifying because, if it breaks into fighting, science will be harnessed to its prosecution as never before - with results almost too horrible to contemplate. Our defence in this conflict must be one of increasing and then maintaining our strength, while always keeping open the channels of negotiation and diplomacy; arms must go hand in hand with diplomacy. Strength, however, cannot now be interpreted in military terms alone, but has also its economic, financial and moral aspects. We must not forget that while we are building up this kind of force now so that armed force may not be necessary in the future for the protection of our society, the situation which faces us may erupt into an explosion at any time. We have to face that fact as a possibility - though not, of course, an inevitability. It may be a deliberate and controlled explosion brought about by the calculated policy of the despots in the Kremlin, men hungry for power and world domination. Or more likely it may be an accidental one. In either case, it will result in World War III, with all its infinitely horrible consequences. It is essential, indeed elementary common sense, to make ourselves