

The story may be frivolous but its overtones are indeed sobering. The outbreak of a war is the signal that diplomacy has failed; for the task of diplomacy is to preserve the peace.

I have been struck -- and this thought came into my mind as I reflected on what I might say to you today -- by the relation which exists between those who, like yourselves, minister to the moral and spiritual needs of mankind, and those who, by their pursuit of settlements of disputes among nations, are also engaged in and dedicated to the search for, on earth, peace, goodwill toward men. Our two callings have some requirements in common -- requirements, I may add, which apply in equal measure to the profession of education. All three of them call for devotion to abiding ideals, for patience, hard work and refusal to accept discouragement. In all three groups, progress is for the most part gradual, sometimes indiscernible, whether the aim is spiritual betterment, intellectual improvement, or peace among the nations. I know that in your vocation the value of unspectacular effort needs no underlining. It is the same in the conduct of foreign policy.

What are some of the most important channels through which Canadian foreign policy finds its direction and its expression?

United Nations

I begin with the United Nations. Some seven or eight years ago, at one of the most uncomfortable stages of the Cold War, the United Nations had fallen into serious discredit in much of what we call the Western world. The monotonous and ominous chorus of vetoes had arrested the intended growth of the Security Council, and small comfort could be drawn from the few modest successes the Organization had attained in the political and security field - in Indonesia, in Greece, in Palestine and Kashmir. The action of the United Nations in Korea, prompt and effectual as it was, did not greatly raise our hopes in the United Nations as an agency for maintaining international security. For intervention by the United Nations in Korea would almost certainly not have been possible had the Soviet representative been in his chair at the critical moment.

Then again, the character of the Organization was changing before our eyes. The membership was expanding and the new members immediately made their presence felt. As the numbers of this new "uncommitted" group increased, there emerged a new factor of prime importance in the United Nations. In Western countries, some voices were to be heard regretting the good old days of automatic majorities for Western resolutions, and prophesying doom for Western interests. But it has become abundantly clear that the "uncommitted" countries are genuinely uncommitted and are capable of making decisions according to their individual judgments. And the result is that these countries seldom vote as a bloc.