

Then I went on to say:

It is less important at the present moment to dwell on the difficulties of the task than on ways and means of avoiding them in the future. A Canadian may, I think, be pardoned for emphasizing that this is particularly true in the case of consultation and co-operation between Washington and London and Paris. It is imperative, in our dangerous and disturbed world, that the lines of contact between these three capitals be repaired and renewed and reinvigorated.

Apart from the actual preservation of the peace, and indeed, related to it, there is no more important objective for western policy than this, and every possible effort must now be devoted, with understanding, with good will and with energy, to its achievement.

Jordan and Syria

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would my hon. friend allow a question at this time? I have mentioned the matter to him in advance. It has to do with the grave situation that arose today in Jordan and also the even graver situation in Syria. Would he, before concluding, say something with respect to the situation over there which today has become so critical, and also whether in view of what is taking place there the United Nations force will have to be increased over and above the numbers provided for under the present arrangements?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend was good enough to tell me before I came into the house that this matter was very much on his mind and that he proposed to ask a question about it. I am anxious not to say anything, without pretty careful consideration, about a matter which is of immediate gravity because, as I understand the reports we have received, this is a matter of immediate gravity. I do not want to be panicky or unnecessarily alarming about it, but there are reports that Russian penetration is going on in Syria to an alarming extent and that there are moves inside Syria which might result in the domestic control of that country by a group which seems quite willing to work with the Soviets in this matter. That is not a prospect that can cause anything but alarm. There are the same elements in other Arab countries, but we must hope that these countries themselves will take some steps to prevent that kind of development.

As for the other part of his question, whether the United Nations force should be increased to take care of a situation of this kind, the numbers of that force are not yet determined. I suspect that before long we will find it very greatly increased over its present number, but it has been set up to deal with a situation arising out of a cessation of hostilities between Israel on the one side and the United Kingdom and France and Egypt on the other, and its present terms of reference would not authorize it to intervene in any other dispute