

Specific policies must reflect a return of global perspective

By J. King Gordon

To spend time discussing Canada's response to recent developments in the United Nations is trivial compared to examining Canada's response to recent developments in the world, in and through the instrumentality of the United Nations. What concerns — or should concern — Canada are world developments that are naturally reflected in some measure in the United Nations but possess reality and significance extending far beyond.

I confess to being something of a traditionalist. Back in the mid-Forties, I was a close observer of the UN, from the days it opened its doors in Hunter College and then moved into temporary quarters in the old Sperry plant at Lake Success. I was a correspondent for *The Nation* and later for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In those informal days, you got close to national delegations, and I was particularly close to the Canadian one. I had the impression, in that first decade and beyond, that Canada's foreign policy was firmly grounded on an appraisal of the main features and main developments in the total world situation. It is a simplification, of course, to say that Pearson's goals for Canada's security and prosperity were inexorably linked with the achievement and maintenance of international peace and security. Nevertheless, that is essentially true.

Let me give an example. The date is 1950 and the scene Korea. MacArthur had capitalized on the brilliant military stroke of the Inchon landings by driving north and bombing near the Yalu despite the warnings of Chou En-lai that the pursuit of this policy would be regarded as a threat of China. He persisted. The Chinese counterattacked and drove the forces of the UN Command south across the Thirty-eight Parallel. Truman made some reckless remarks about the possible use of atomic weapons, which Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, challenged as dangerous and irresponsible. At the UN General Assembly in New York, Pearson was named to a three-man com-

mittee to attempt to bring about a ceasefire and draft terms for an armistice. The other two members were Nasrollah Entezam, President of the General Assembly, and Sir Benegal Rau of India.

I saw quite a bit of Pearson at this time. I saw quite a bit of Rau too. They were working round the clock in consultation with other delegates, with General Wu, a representative from the Chinese Government, and with Peking through consultations between St. Laurent, Nehru and the Indian Ambassador in Peking, in an effort to get an agreement and head off an American resolution to brand China an aggressor. They almost succeeded, but not quite. The Americans, after the first rebuff to the committee from China, insisted on driving through their resolution. As a member of NATO, Canada felt obliged to support the resolution but Pearson voted with an expression of reluctance, regret and downright disagreement with a premature and unwise action that was to determine the shape of Asian international politics for years to come.

The statement of Canadian foreign policy within a global frame of reference was also demonstrated in Pearson's action through the UN General Assembly in introducing a resolution to establish a peacekeeping force as a means of stopping the Suez war in 1956. Here Pearson showed characteristic realism, as well as diplomatic skill, in linking Canada's security as a middle power to the maintenance of world peace and also to the re-establishment of the Western alliance, which had been shattered by the British and French adventure in Egypt.

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Canada's vote marked by reluctance and regret