

But how new is this change of outlook in North America! Not eleven years have passed since the attack on Pearl Harbour demonstrated for the first time that the defence perimeter of North America was no longer safe from disastrous penetration. Only seven years have gone by since the Charter of the United Nations brought together for the first time the United States with most of the countries of the world in an international organization designed for the solution of international differences by peaceful means or, as a last resort, by collective sanctions. Only three years have passed since for the first time the United States and Canada entered into an alliance of twelve free countries in the North Atlantic area, countries which had become vividly aware that the United Nations, however useful its works, could not provide for their security. Just two years have passed since for the first time a flagrant armed challenge to world security, in the far distant country of Korea, was met by collective military action by the United Nations under the leadership of the United States, whose forces have been joined by combat forces contributed by the United Kingdom, Canada, Turkey and twelve other countries. Only eighteen months have gone by since for the first time an integrated international force, built from the armies, navies and air forces of the North Atlantic countries, was set up to act as a deterrent to war, and was placed under the command of a great American general.

These are great achievements -- in the perspective of history, revolutionary achievements. A common element in them all is the recognition that security can only be found through collective action, a doctrine much talked about for many years but not hitherto acted upon effectively except in the heat of war.

Power politics is a phrase which often invites condemnation, but in truth, as someone has said, power politics are the politics of not being overpowered. What the free world is now striving to do is to establish a safe balance of power with its potential enemies. Even if there were no military secrets in the world, even if the size, the weapons and the capabilities of the forces of all countries were known in detail, it would be extremely difficult to secure agreement among the experts on whether at any particular time such a balance had been achieved.

The achievement and maintenance of a safe balance of power involve a prolonged and painful effort. There have been, and there will be, mistakes and miscalculations and recriminations between allies. Success can only be attained under the leadership of the United States. It is, of course, by no means wholly a North American responsibility, but the North American part is essential to success. The Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent, has put the aim, and the special responsibility of the United States and Canada for achieving it, as follows:

"We in the free world have to create now, and then to maintain, military strength too substantial for our opponents to dare challenge it with any prospect of final victory...We in North America are so much more fortunate in a material sense than other nations that we must expect to contribute more proportionately from our abundance than can be expected from those of our partners who are still recovering from the dislocation and destruction of the last war..."