

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Excerpts from an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, to the Women's Canadian Club, Vancouver, B.C., August 25, 1955.

The general improvement in the international situation - at least so far as tactics and attitudes are concerned and which was most strikingly illustrated at the Geneva conference - is seen also in the Far East.

In that part of the world we have had cause to fear the threatening and bellicose words and actions of the Communist Government in Peking. It would certainly be unrealistic and premature to say that this government has abandoned all aggressive plans and intentions. We can say, however and with evidence to support it, that their behaviour now is less aggressive, less threatening than it has been. There is less talk, for instance, about attacking Formosa, and more about peaceful solutions; insistence on the fact that the dispute over that island and Quemoy and Matsu is a purely Chinese matter which is capable of settlement by discussion between the two Chinese Governments. Indeed, on July 3 Chou en-Lai formally proposed such discussions with the Government of Chiang Kai Shek.

While we should not read too much into this improvement or draw overly-optimistic conclusions from it, we would also be unwise to ignore it; or to get into the position where we seem to be demanding positive proof of utter purity from this or any other regime before we could consider giving it formal diplomatic recognition.

We recognize, after all, the Bulgarian Communist Government and its armed forces - or some of them - have been behaving like barbarians.

It is also important in considering this matter, not to confuse any form of recognition with approval of the government or regime we recognize. If and when we take a step of this kind, it would be in our own national interest - not that of Peking - and for our own national advantage. Our attitude towards communism as a system of government would remain unchanged.

We should also remember that in present circumstances and in all important negotiations concerning the situation in the Far East we have already recognized that the Government, which is now apparently firmly in control in Peking and all of continental China, has to be present and participate if any agreed solutions are to be reached.

This just happens to be the fact of the matter. It was recognized as such when the Chinese representatives from Peking - including the Foreign Minister - attended the Geneva conference last year on Korea and Indochina. It was recognized as such when Peking and American Ambassadors began to meet at Geneva a few weeks ago in formal bilateral talks.

Furthermore, it is becoming clearer that if the U.N. is to play the part that it should in the solution of certain Far Eastern problems, the de facto government of China has to be present in its discussion of these problems. If it is not, then the political conferences and negotiations concerning them will often have to be held outside the United Nations -- which is unfortunate.