

GOVERNMENT  
  
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## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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### INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Commencement Day Address by Mr. L.B. Pearson,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
at Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.,  
on June 6, 1949.

On this occasion you are conferring on me a double honour. You are making me a member of this famous University. You are also giving me the opportunity of addressing your graduating class, and I consider this a mark of confidence equally important to the degree which I now bear. Both these honours carry also their responsibilities. Henceforth, I shall have to act in the decorous and judicious manner that you expect of your graduates, and uphold the traditions of learning which you cherish. I promise that I will take this responsibility seriously. I make only this qualification, that you will not expect me to let it inhibit me too much in the course of the election campaign which I am now conducting in Canada. After June 27 I may become the complete scholar, but please do not expect perfection before that date.

I have the more immediate obligation of saying something worthy of this distinguished company, and particularly, of my fellow graduates. Because I also take this responsibility seriously, I intend to depart from the usual precedents set by generations of convocation speakers. I shall not attempt to set forth a philosophy of education, nor talk about the role of the university in the life of the nation. I shall not dwell upon the rich promise which the future holds in store for you -- nor, for that matter, shall I even discuss my own future, though that is now a matter of almost daily communication between myself and the electors of a certain constituency in Canada. I intend instead to talk to you about one aspect of world affairs, as I see it from the position which I occupy in my country. In the divided world in which we find ourselves, what are the possibilities of success in our efforts to develop an international organization for the maintenance of peace?

Let me begin however by reaffirming my belief in the creative role which the scholar plays in human affairs. It is, I suppose, always a question to what extent political theory precedes rather than follows the growth of political institutions. One must admit also that the creations of the scholar are not necessarily good. There have been moments in history when large sections of mankind have been led astray by the dishonest or mistaken theories of their intellectual leaders. There is, for example, the infamous record of bad and dishonest scholarship in Germany. A small group of perverted but persuasive scholars had an extraordinary influence upon the German people, leading them to believe in false doctrines of racial superiority and national destiny, and thereby encouraging them to follow their political leaders over the most catastrophic precipice that a nation has ever encountered. We see evidences of comparable perversion under communist dictatorship. The cultural purges, the political attacks upon artists, scientists and scholars, the pathetic spectacle of intellectual leaders forced to prostrate themselves