

*External Affairs*

although because of the danger of such wars spreading it gives us the right and the duty to express our concern, not only in Washington but also in London or in the United Nations or in NATO, over situations or policies that might lead to conflict. It also makes it imperative on all of us to prevent local conflicts, not only because they are war—war is war whether local or general—but also because they can spread and cover the world. In that case there would be no future for any of us, because a war that covered the world would be a nuclear war.

This view that we could not be neutral in a major war when the very existence of the people of the United States was at stake, far from representing an abdication of responsibility for our foreign policy, extends and deepens that responsibility. It underlines our right and our obligation to concern ourselves with and make our views known on the policies of others, especially of the United States, when questions of peace and war are involved. Its possession of the greatest power in the world gives us, I think, the right to be especially preoccupied with the policies of the United States. It makes consultation and a continuous exchange of views imperative. It emphasizes our obligation to do everything possible to avoid every kind of war, big or little.

That is one reason why we were so glad to welcome to Ottawa in recent days the secretary of state of the United States, and to discuss with him very frankly and very fully United States policy and our own policy on these matters. It has been argued—I commend this to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—that if the Americans know we accept the proposition that in the circumstances I have mentioned Canada and the United States must stand together, Washington will no longer pay much if any attention to anything we say; they will, if I may use a colloquialism, feel that they have us in the bag. Of course the exact contrary is the case, as is shown by the reply Mr. Dulles made to a question asked at his press conference in this city last Friday. I should like to put this question and answer on the record, and I quote:

Q. Mr. Pearson said that in the event of a major war it would be impossible for Canada to stand aloof if the United States was at war. Some people interpreted that to mean the United States can now count on Canada in an emergency and therefore you will not pay as much attention to any protest against American foreign policy you get from Ottawa.

A. It is decidedly not true. The extent to which our countries can count upon each other depends

[Mr. Pearson.]

primarily upon whether or not we each conduct ourselves in a way which wins the moral approval and support of the other.

Then he went on:

Now there are, to be sure, explicit engagements which are expressed in the North Atlantic treaty. Aside from that, the question of whether we support each other depends on the judgment that each country has of the other. I would not expect that Canada would blindly support the United States and I suppose the Canadian people would not expect to count on the support of the United States if they should engage in a venture which alienated public opinion in the United States.

It is highly unlikely that those contingencies will occur, because we do have the same ideals, and because we do keep in touch with each other. Common action depends, for its mainspring, upon what our declaration of independence calls "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind". That relationship makes it sure that each of our countries will seek and pay heed to the views of the other.

Mr. Dulles also had something interesting to say in reply to one other question at the same conference, and I quote:

Q. Mr. Secretary, in the present situation around Formosa and the offshore islands, if something should arise does the United States count on the support of Canada?

A. That is entirely a matter for the Canadians to decide for themselves. There are no treaty engagements of any kind other than perhaps the United Nations charter which create any obligations on the part of Canada in relation to that part of the world. Therefore, we do not count on them in the sense that there is any obligation or undertaking. Naturally, we always hope and believe that our conduct will be such as to win the moral support and approval of other free nations, and particularly of the Canadian people.

While believing strongly in the view that the destinies of our two countries are intertwined in the way I have already indicated and as Mr. Dulles has indicated, as well as many others, I want to reaffirm my view that we could not stand aloof from a major war which threatened the very existence of the people of the United States; but I must add in all frankness that I do not consider a conflict between two Chinese governments for possession of these Chinese coastal islands, Quemoy or the Matsus, to be such a situation, or one requiring any Canadian intervention in support of the Chinese nationalist regime. That view has already been made known more than once to our friends in Washington.

What I fear most in this matter is that even limited intervention, defensive in purpose, by the United States might have a chain reaction with unforeseen consequences which would cause the conflict to spread far beyond the locality where it began, and even across the ocean. If a little war were to spread like this it could become literally the little war before the last. That is why, may I repeat, we in Canada are definitely and deeply concerned in this particular issue, as we would be in any other peripheral conflict involving