

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Text of an address by Mr. L.B. Pearson,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
to the Rotary Club of Montreal, in the
Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal, on Tuesday,
July 19, 1949.

In the best of circumstances the conduct of foreign relations is a difficult, complicated and, often, an unrewarding process. There are over seventy nations in the world today, varying greatly in size, strength and resources; presenting a complex pattern of objectives, and methods for securing these objectives. The rule of law which ordinarily makes it possible to do business within a nation in an orderly and peaceful manner has not yet been adequately accepted or applied amongst sovereign states. We have certainly not yet succeeded in putting into operation machinery which we know will prevent violence between nations.

In spite of these difficulties, we may normally count on one advantage in the conduct of international affairs. In ordinary circumstances, a nation believes that its best interests are served when the world is at peace, and when economic and social conditions generally are stable. At the moment, however, the conduct of international relations is grievously complicated by the fact that one group of states, directed and controlled by one of the world's great powers, does not seem to believe in the principles of social stability or peaceful progress. These states, led by the U.S.S.R., have committed themselves to the reactionary and destructive principles of revolutionary communism. No matter what their leaders may occasionally say to foreign journalists for outside consumption, their own considered words and actions prove beyond doubt that it is an article of their faith that conflict between Communism and free democracy is inevitable. They, therefore do not believe that anything should be done to increase the security or the prosperity of any state which is not a communist state. On the contrary, they follow the doctrine that in the non-communist world disorder must be provoked and encouraged; that discord amongst groups in society must be fostered; that nation must be set against nation, and every co-operative effort for peace and stability must be hindered and frustrated to the fullest extent possible.

These circumstances often give a distorted and, at times, even ludicrous character to the conduct of international affairs, like the image that you see of yourself when you walk through the Hall of Mirrors at the Circus. You find that negotiations which you undertook with the object of securing agreement on some subject are being prolonged and twisted not for the purpose of reaching agreement, but for the purpose of preventing it. You find that words which you have uttered in good faith are torn out of their context and used to prove that you have intentions you never even remotely considered. You find in negotiating with the Communists at international meetings that an offer which you made as a genuine concession in some process of negotiation is quoted back to you as a proof that you didn't really believe in your case in the first place and is interpreted as a confession of hypocrisy and weakness

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