



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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No. 65/20 TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF OGDENSBURG DECLARATION

Address by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Ogdensburg Declaration in Ogdensburg, New York, August 18, 1965.

We are gathered in Ogdensburg today to commemorate the historic meeting which took place here 25 years ago. That meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister King represents - and will always represent - a watershed in the relations between our two countries. For it marked the beginning of our active partnership in the defence of this North American continent which we share between us.

We pride ourselves on the thousands of miles of undefended border that demarcate without dividing our two countries. But we sometimes forget that this has not always been so. We sometimes forget that, as far as Canada is concerned, much of the history preceding our Confederation as a nation was punctuated by fear of invasion from the United States. We sometimes forget that, to the extent that Canadians in those days were concerned about defence, they were concerned about maintaining their own political identity against any possible threat from the United States.

That is one perspective from which we must look at the Ogdensburg meeting. It is the perspective of a past which may have shrunk so far back into history that it seems unreal to all but historians. But it is a past, nevertheless, which we cannot leave out of account if we want to take the real measure of the progress we have made in developing a sane and sensible pattern of continental co-existence. Nor must we forget that it took another 70 years or so - a period of relative withdrawal and isolation for both our countries - before the events which were then taking shape launched us on the course that was first charted at Ogdensburg.

The meeting at Ogdensburg which we are today commemorating had two important results. First, it put an end to any thoughts there may have been on either side of the border that we should - or could - continue independently to plan and conduct each our own defence against the threat of the forces which were then ascendant in Europe. We in Canada - caught unprepared as were most of the Western allies - had committed almost all our slender resources to the battle in Europe, leaving little behind to defend our shores. The United States, caught off guard much the same as we were, was apprehensive that the enemy might obtain a foothold in Canada, thereby posing a direct threat to the North American continent as a whole.

In these circumstances, we were driven to recognize that our defence was indivisible. The recognition of that principle marks the real significance of the Declaration to which this city of Ogdensburg has lent its name. And it is a principle which - enlarged to conform to the changing configurations of the world in which we live - continues to this day to govern our approach to the problems of defence.

The second result of the Ogdensburg meeting was the setting up of a Permanent Joint Board on Defence. For many years, this was to serve as the main focus for co-operation between our two countries in the realm of defence. If we scan the Ogdensburg Declaration carefully, we find that it has, in fact, only one operative sentence. And that is the sentence which says that "it has been agreed that a Permanent Joint Board on Defence shall be set up at once by the two countries". And so, in this unspectacular way, Canada and the United States marked the transition from friendly association to positive alliance.

The Permanent Joint Board on Defence has taken its firm place in the institutional pattern of relations between our two countries. There were those, in the early years, who looked upon it as essentially a creature of war which would not long survive the cessation of hostilities. But events proved them wrong. For, when our two governments decided in 1947 that military co-operation between us would continue, they also decided that, within the framework of that co-operation, there would continue to be an important part for the Board to play. Thus the Board has served to confirm the confidence of the men of Ogdensburg who, from the outset, invested it with the title of permanence.

The Board, then, is the real celebrant of this anniversary occasion. The Prime Minister of Canada has, therefore, asked me to convey this message to the members of the Board:

"Throughout its quarter-century of dedicated service, the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board on Defence has symbolized the spirit of friendly co-operation which characterizes relations between our two countries. Created to meet the requirements of wartime, it has continued to fulfil a valuable role in North American defence. On this, its twenty-fifth anniversary, I congratulate the Board and wish it continued success."

I am glad to convey this message to Mr. Dana Wilgress, one of the present joint Chairmen, and, through him, to Ambassador Matthews, who unfortunately could not be with us today. I also want to pay tribute on this occasion to the many eminent personalities on both sides who have lent their prestige to the work of the Board. I must resist the temptation of citing them by name. But, being on the soil of the State of New York, I may be forgiven for recalling that the first United States Chairman of the Board was Fiorello LaGuardia, a man who will not soon be forgotten, especially by New Yorkers. And perhaps I may also recall that one of the early members on our side was the then Lieutenant-Colonel Vanier, who is today the distinguished Governor General of Canada.

Over the past 25 years, the perimeters of defence have changed beyond all recognition. The advantages of dimension and distance have in large measure been eclipsed. The time scale of any potential attack has been compressed to a fraction of what it once was. The destructive power we are able to unleash has compelled us to abandon the very notion of war except in legitimate defence against aggression. And the cost of effective defence today is such that few countries in the world are able to shoulder it on their own.

The changes that have taken place have served, if anything, to confirm the principles to which we subscribed at Ogdensburg. These principles are as valid today as when they were first formulated. If our defence was recognized to be indivisible then, it is surely no less indivisible in the circumstances of the present day. The development of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them accurately over intercontinental distances has placed North America, for the first time, in the front line. Indeed, there is every likelihood that, in the unthinkable event of war, we should bear the brunt of the first devastating attack.

Against this new and terrible threat it was already in our common interest to plan our defences jointly. And so, throughout the 1950s, we planned and built the northern radar lines and fighter defences against the threat from the air. It could not have been otherwise. Canada could not have built these costly defences alone. And the United States could not have been defended without them.

It was part of this same recognition that our defences could only be conducted in common which led us, in 1957 and 1958, to integrate our air-defence forces in a single command under NORAD. The danger of attack by strategic bombers is now giving way to the even more terrible threat from intercontinental missiles. But, whatever the changes in the strategic situation as long as the threat to the security of North America exists it will clearly remain in our mutual interest to co-operate intimately in the defence of the continent we share. It should be recognized, of course, that in defending North America we are protecting the strategic deterrent of the NATO alliance. We are thus helping to guarantee that measure of stability between the leading powers which is our best hope for preserving peace until an effective programme of international disarmament can be realized.

Just as the military defence of North America has been recognized as a single problem, to be approached jointly, so has the military industrial base of our two countries come to be regarded as a single entity. That is as it should be. The cost of developing modern weapons is enormous. Only a handful of highly industrialized countries can today afford to maintain an independent productive capacity for the full range of weapons required in modern warfare.

We in Canada have long purchased very substantial quantities of military items in the United States. In particular, we have purchased from you costly and sophisticated equipment which it would not be economical for Canada to try to produce itself. Unless these purchases are balanced by comparable United States purchases from Canada, they would sooner or later

impair our ability to contribute fully to our common effort. I am glad to say that this principle was accepted in the Canada-United States Defence Production Sharing Programme which was inaugurated in 1959 and which has helped greatly to open the United States military market to the Canadian defence industry.

In the final analysis, however, we cannot look at the Ogdensburg Declaration from the perspective of North American defence alone. We must look at it from the perspective of the total relation between our two countries.

Canadians tend to be preoccupied with that relation. I know that is something which Americans find it difficult to understand. But there is really no parallel in the American experience to compare with the impact of the Canadian-American relation on virtually every sector of our national life.

I think there are two aspects of the relation between Canada and the United States which, more than any others, are a cause for Canadian preoccupation. The first is the sheer disparity in power between our two countries. We sometimes like to identify that disparity in terms of population and physical wealth, but that, of course, is only part of the story. The significant fact is not only that the United States is today a great power by any standard but that the impact of power in the modern world tends to be vastly more pervasive than in any previous period of history.

Canadians, of course, welcome the fact that the United States enjoys this position of leadership, and are not preoccupied by the disparity of power as such. What preoccupies us are the very great effects which that disparity can have on Canadian interests where they diverge from yours.

The second point of preoccupation for Canadians is the effect of your preponderant influence on the development of Canada as a distinct and separate entity on the North American continent. This preoccupation has, of course, been with us from the days of our founding fathers. It is part of the process of Canadian nation-building. No doubt it has been magnified by the vast range of contacts and exchanges between us which modern communications have made possible.

But, when all is said and done, the problem of Canadian development is a matter for Canadians to solve. For my own part, I suspect that we are moving steadily closer to solving it. I am confident, in particular, that the great debate over cultural and constitutional matters which is engaging Canadians at this very moment will serve to strengthen our national purpose and deepen our sense of identity.

The whole range of relations between us has recently been surveyed by two of our distinguished former ambassadors. They undertook their survey at the request of the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada. Their objective was to formulate a set of principles by which our two countries might be guided in giving practical effect to our partnership, and their study throws a most interesting light on the matters I have been discussing.

It is inherent in our partnership, as is indicated in this study, that we should seek to orient our policies in broadly the same direction. But there are levels of divergence which we should regard as not only permissible but desirable if we are each to play our distinctive parts in discharging our international responsibilities. Where there are differences between us, we shall naturally be concerned to minimize their impact on our total relation. But I do not think it is in the tradition of either our countries or in the long-run interest of our partnership that we should be afraid of putting our policies to the test of honest dialogue conducted with restraint and responsibility.

The conception of partnership is central to our relations. Twenty-five years ago, here at Ogdensburg, a new dimension was added to that partnership. In the intervening years, our partnership has broadened beyond the confines of this continent. We are allies in NATO. We are joined in the expanding family of the United Nations. We are engaged together in the great enterprises aimed at achieving world peace and prosperity. On this anniversary occasion we can, I think, affirm confidently that a vigorous and vital partnership will continue to be part of the prospects before us.

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