

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 54/52 Comments by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, on the article, "Expanding the United Nations Community" by Dr. van Wageningen, in the November 1954 issue of the "Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science".

The further development of our sense of community is unquestionably, as Dr. van Wageningen emphasizes, the crucial need of our time. In a sense, this has always been man's crucial need - the history of political actions and social relations in any period may legitimately be regarded as that age's attempt to work out answers to the basic question "who is my neighbour?". But though the essential problem is as old as history, the technical advances which we have made during recent decades in communications and in the power of weapons, have faced our generation with the need for a decisive and fairly rapid advance in the scale and level of community organization and attitudes -- as the only alternative to serious risk of unparalleled destruction.

I like Dr. van Wageningen's point that the expansion of community should be considered in terms of two dimensions - breadth and depth. There will also, I think, be agreement that progress is desirable in a third and qualitative dimension - for the community which we seek must be something more than the ant colony or the regimented monolithic society of the totalitarians. Cohesion is necessary but not enough.

As to expansion in breadth, I agree that the United Nations would benefit if it included more of the sovereign states which exercise influence in their parts of the world. I do not agree with the view of the United Nations as a form of anti-communist alliance, which would be much improved if the few communist members were ejected. The United Nations was not designed to be such an alliance, nor is it needed for that purpose. It is the invaluable role of the United Nations to serve as the constitutional framework for international co-operation: a unique forum and focus for negotiations, which as I see it, requires as wide a membership as possible of states which qualify under the Charter.

The United Nations, as a focus for negotiations, is I think most useful if, like an honest mirror, it reflects the political face of the world as it is.

To those who complain that the United Nations provides communist nations with an opportunity for propaganda, I would point out, as Mr. Lodge did at a recent hearing of a United States Senate Sub-Committee, that the U.N. arena provides us with an invaluable chance to refute false communist propaganda before an audience which includes those nations whose sympathies are uncertain.

If vetoes, or the threats of vetoes, continue to prevent the entry into the United Nations of new members, we might in time have to explore ways in which qualifying non-member nations might be associated with United Nations work. But I do not think we should abandon the far preferable possibility of reaching some agreement on the entry of applicants. I would not be opposed to a "package deal" as such. Where moral principles are not betrayed, compromise is the civilized and traditional method of making progress with competing interests. This is as legitimate in politics as in business. Where "package" deals are objectionable, it is the contents, and not the wrapping together, to which exception is sensibly taken.

I certainly agree with Professor van Wageningen's point that deeper or more far-reaching and precise commitments to narrower groupings such as NATO or regional organizations need not in any-way conflict with loyalty to the United Nations and can indeed strengthen it.

As I have already suggested, the primary value of the United Nations flows precisely from the fact that it is so nearly universal, that it does embrace within one constitutional system, however embryonic, both sides in the cold war, and many nations whose attitude to that prevailing tension is "neutralist". It is precisely this near-universality that can make the United Nations valuable if we are ever to move toward the gradual relaxation of tension and lowering of temperatures essential to any secure peace.

Meanwhile, the United Nations can also serve effectively for international police actions, as the Korean example illustrates. The "Uniting for Peace" resolution gives added flexibility for this function, should it be needed. Where more fully articulated and more highly organized collective security arrangements are necessary, these can be and are achieved through such arrangements as NATO or ANZUS.

Conflict is no more inevitable in the multiple loyalties which simultaneous membership in the United Nations and in other organizations entails, than it is in an individual's loyalty to family, school, town, and nation.

I agree wholeheartedly that we must broaden our community in depth, and agree too that this is above all a problem of psychology - of political habits, intellectual outlook, and moral attitudes.

As Professor van Wageningen says, the sense of commitment is an important element in the sense of community. This is why threats by one party to withdraw from the community if outvoted on some question, tend to jolt and weaken the community as a whole: for threatened withdrawal implies so limited a commitment, so feeble a loyalty, to the international system itself.

Probably the most important contribution which political leaders can make to any "expansion in depth" of international community lies in the field of more adequate consultation between friends. For it is consultation alone that can produce democratic unity, and that distinguishes free allies from reluctant camp-followers. In this connection I was somewhat puzzled by Dr. van Wageningen's statement that "the habit-forming effect of international relations has been neither proved nor disproved". Surely the attitudes of awareness, consideration and understanding generosity which prompt consultation with others, can become habitual in international society as elsewhere. These qualities never come easily, but on them the unity and therefore the fate of the free world may well depend.

There is another way in which the United Nations community can be increased in "depth". Although its members are national states, its success depends in the last analysis on the support of the peoples who are in the widest and truest sense the U.N. community. That is why the work done by private organizations within member states, to educate the public about the United Nations, and to enlist their thinking support, is a significant but often overlooked pillar of that community. The present studies connected with a review of the Charter may themselves, by stimulating and increasing public interest, in the United Nations, aid in this vital work.

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