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## CANADA'S ASIAN POLICY

A Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
at the Fourth Annual Banff Conference on  
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1966.

... I understand that your discussions have centred chiefly around those Asian nations on the Pacific Coast or facing the Pacific. I shall, of course, devote my main attention to that area also. Nevertheless, I should like to define in the broadest terms what correctly should be called Asian policy. It is Asian because it deals with events of this current era, mainly in China and Southeast Asia, which cast their shadow and send their political and economic reverberations across that mighty continent and down to the islands of Australasia.

The extent of Canadian involvement and public interest in Asian affairs, either in the Pacific region or elsewhere, has grown markedly over the years. It is important to remember, however, that official Canadian awareness of the nations over the Pacific, interest in their affairs and involvement in international questions in which the interests of Canada and of Asian and other nations were at issue, has origins early in our history.

I do not need to remind a group with a close interest in Canadian and international affairs of the nature of some of those interests. It is enough to say that Canadian Governments have long been aware of the necessity of formulating some guiding principles for the advancement of Canadian interests in Asia and of following closely the developments there likely to have a significant bearing on our external policies generally.

A short time ago, I read an article by Professor A.R.M. Lower, which dealt with the role played by Loring Christie and Arthur Meighen in persuading the British Government to abandon the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. In this, one of Canada's first ventures into the waters of the Pacific, the Canadian Government's tightly-reasoned argument prevailed in London and cleared the way for the Washington Conference of 1921-22. In his memorandum to Mr. Meighen, which Professor Lower has brought to light, Christie recognized that the United States might take credit for this major change in British policy, and boast about "assuming the moral leadership of the English-speaking world". Christie curtly dismissed this possibility in the following terms: "Let them. If our

policy is sound from our viewpoint such things cannot injure it. . . . We can afford to "take the cash and let the credit go".

The nature of our interest and of our objectives in that part of Asia has changed very considerably in the decades which have elapsed since that time. The search for a sound policy, however, reflecting our conception of our own interests and of world interests and enabling us to bring to bear whatever means we have to influence events there has not been abated, even when our role has not been a major one and our interests have been indirect.

In order to understand the main lines of our current Asian policy it is important to note the various ways in which our involvement in Asian affairs has grown. Our bilateral relations with most of the leading nations and with a number of the other nations have expanded steadily. The change in the nature of the Commonwealth has brought us into closer contact in most fields of interest with several Asian nations. Trade and economic assistance have opened up channels for political contact. We have committed troops to a war in Korea under the United Nations flag and participated in United Nations peace-keeping operations on the borders of India and Pakistan.

Our membership on the International Control Commissions for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia since 1954 has extended our involvement in Asian affairs beyond bilateral relations and beyond participation in the United Nations operations I have mentioned. We did, of course, accept a task, in effect, on behalf of the world community but under unique political conditions which made it necessary for us to maintain impartiality in Control Commission affairs in a political and military situation of very great complexity and which steadily involved us to a greater extent in judging the clash of interests in Southeast Asia. It is natural at present that definition of an Asian policy for Canada should tend to begin with the Vietnam conflict and the closely-related question of the position of Communist China in the world community, before it goes on to deal with the other considerations which influence our deliberations.

Now that we have a fairly wide involvement in Asian affairs, we can, in order to delineate policy, point to some general characteristics of our relations with nations in that area and to activities and attitudes with respect to the main Asian problems.

When I speak of an Asian policy, I do not, of course, use the term in the old-fashioned and rather grandiloquent sense in which the rulers of empires or leading powers tried to pursue masterly strategies designed to capture the opponents' pieces one by one and move remorselessly, if indirectly, towards a clear-cut objective. No nation, large or small, should have illusions as to the extent to which it can steer events by force, pressure, influence or guile towards desired but hypothetical international goals.

In a more modest and pragmatic sense, we must relate one specific policy objective to another to ensure that we are not working at cross purposes. Beyond that we can only hope that, in addition to stating what our own specific interests are, we shall be able to set forth principles and objectives which will meet with a response from many other nations and which will help to create a consensus leading to effective action by the world community.

I believe that our relations with Asian nations and our attitudes towards the great problems of the day in that area are guided or determined by these principles and objectives:

(1) We have no reason arising out of geography, previous commitment or military security at present to consider participating in regional security arrangements or regional military action in Asia.

(2) We recognize, however, that war and revolution in Asia, the partitioning of nations and basic changes in the balance of power since 1939 have created fundamental threats to world peace in Asia. We have, therefore, been willing to assign a high priority to our participation in United Nations operations in Korea and in India-Pakistan and to compliance with the request of the Geneva powers so far as service in the International Control Commissions is concerned.

(3) We consider that the isolation of Communist China from a large part of normal international relations is dangerous. We are prepared to accept the reality of the victory in mainland China in 1949. In the trade field we have significant contacts of a fairly normal nature. We consider, however, that the effective political independence of Taiwan is a political reality too.

(4) So far as the situation in Vietnam is concerned, Canada is more likely to contribute to peaceful settlement by its membership on the International Control Commission and by diplomatic assistance in the stages of preliminary negotiation or final settlement at a conference than by any other means.

(5) In that situation, we believe that ideological conversion by force, either through domestic subversion or foreign infiltration, will lead inexorably to great-power intervention, to the extension of military pacts and to the escalation of risk of a world conflict.

(6) Economic development cannot by itself end conflict or guarantee peace, but we find it hard to envisage any steady progress towards political stability and peace which is not accompanied by the increasing satisfaction of material needs by the peoples concerned. Our expanding assistance programmes have been undertaken in recognition of this relationship as well as in recognition of other considerations.

(7) Although we belong to the NATO, or Western, group of nations for historic and security purposes, and although our own political beliefs are clear, we do not consider that these facts should inhibit us from seeking friendly, and often close, relations with nations in other areas. Our membership in a multi-racial Commonwealth, our interest in countries retaining particular connections with French culture, our economic contacts with developing countries and our contacts with Asian countries in the United Nations are all intended to help develop a world community in which there will be no harsh lines of division between regional, racial or economic blocs

(8) Finally, we believe that the events of the last world war, the initial problems of a change from colonial to independent status, revolutionary turmoil and economic problems have delayed the assumption by some leading Asian nations of their proper role in regional and world affairs. We have confidence that Japan, India, Pakistan and Indonesia can, along with China, do much to end abnormal situations in Asia and achieve a better balance of power and political influence in the world generally. We can scarcely speak of Canada being able, by itself, to promote such broad developments to any significant degree. To the extent, however, that this approach can have a bearing on specific policy decisions of our own or can be reflected in joint action, this is our viewpoint.

These are considerations which can usefully be listed to indicate general directions of policy. Their application in any given circumstances cannot, however, be predicted by any hard and fast formulas.

It would be appropriate, therefore, to turn now to some of the specific policies pursued at the moment with respect to central issues of Asian affairs. I propose to make these comments under three headings:

- (1) current policy with respect to recognition of Communist China and UN membership;
- (2) the Vietnam situation;
- (3) the relevance of other developments in our relations with other Asian nations to the chief problems of peace and stability in Asia.

### The Chinese Question

I believe that few subjects cause greater concern at present to Canadians reflecting on foreign affairs than the position of Communist China in the world community. That is one reason why this question is the object of constant review and reappraisal on the part of the Government generally and on my part as Minister of External Affairs.

Canada recognizes the Republic of China, sometimes called Nationalist China. At the United Nations, most recently in November of last year, we voted against a resolution which called for the seating of representatives of the People's Republic of China and for the expulsion of the representatives of the Republic of China. I am aware that there is a substantial body of opinion in this country which disagrees with this policy. I think, however, that those who urge a radically different position on us sometimes neglect the thornier aspects of the problem of China. Alternative policies are, of course, possible; but those who advocate them should explain clearly how they propose to overcome some of the serious difficulties which the choice of those alternatives inevitably entails.

Those, for example, who urge the diplomatic recognition of Communist China must face the uncomfortable fact that the Government of that country demands that it be recognized as something which it patently is not: that is, the Government of the island of Taiwan

Canada would welcome the opportunity to see Communist China take a seat in the United Nations. I said so last fall. In the General Assembly, I said as well:

"... I hope that as events in Asia unfold, it may prove possible in the interests of this organization, and of mankind, to make progress toward what the Secretary-General in his annual report has described as the imperative need for the United Nations to achieve universality of membership as soon as possible."

But how to achieve this is another problem. Here, too, alternative policies are, of course, possible. But they are accompanied by similarly uncomfortable facts.

Those, for example, who would have us vote for the resolution which has until now been presented on this subject must accept the fact that it calls not only for the seating of Communist Chinese representatives but also for the denial of any status in the United Nations to representatives of over 12 million people on the island of Taiwan. Those who wish to be realistic and would give formal consecration to what they see as a situation of fact, by promoting a so-called "two Chinas" solution to this dilemma, must face the fact that it is no realistic solution at all so long as both governments which lay claim to China reject it indignantly.

In view of the dilemmas I have noted, therefore, we have been forced to the conclusion that, until now, no acceptable means of bringing Communist China into the United Nations has been offered or, indeed, has seemed possible. The Canadian Government has long advocated and striven to encourage the establishment of mutually beneficial contacts between Communist China and Canada, as well as with the rest of the international community. It has not so far seen it possible to establish relations of diplomatic recognition with the government of that country. At this particular juncture I cannot say what the immediate future holds. The matter is, however, very much on our minds.

The weighing of alternatives on these questions must continue and informed public debate on them is to be welcomed. But, while such study and discussion goes on, we still continue to take those practical steps which are possible to reduce the dangers which must inevitably arise from the continued isolation, whether self-imposed or not, of a country of the size and potential power of Communist China. Canada has sought to do its part in promoting the contacts which may in the long run reduce that isolation. We are glad that in extensive trade transactions the two countries have found mutual benefit. Canadians welcome signs that the United States, in particular, is moving also towards greater contact. It is to be hoped that Communist China will recognize the value of engaging in such contacts.

In a question as difficult as that of China's present and eventual place in the world, the modest beginnings involved in discussions of a few routine matters can develop the mutual knowledge and the reciprocal respect on which peace must eventually rest.

### The Vietnam Situation

If the position of Communist China in the world community is a source of underlying concern to many Canadians, the conflict in Vietnam creates open anxiety and leads to controversy.

The Canadian involvement in Vietnam arises from our membership in the International Commission for Supervision and Control, which was created by the 1954 Geneva Conference to supervise the Cease-fire Agreement between the French Union Forces and the People's Army of Vietnam. The Commission was given no executive role, and has always worked within the mandate given to it to supervise and report to members of the 1954 Conference on the implementation by the two parties of the provisions of the Agreement. It is sometimes overlooked that it has never had the power to bring about compliance with its recommendations.

It could be argued, and, indeed, it sometimes is, that, in the new and unforeseen situation now existing in Vietnam, the Commission serves no useful purpose and should be disbanded. The Government has examined this possibility on a number of occasions in the past, and has rejected it for what I consider to be sound reasons. None of the parties involved in Vietnam has, at any time, suggested that the Commission should be withdrawn. Both North and South Vietnam continue to look to the Commission to consider and adjudicate their charges, and the Commission is still able to conduct some investigations.

I should hope, for example, that the Commission would be able to establish the facts about recent violations of the Demilitarized Zone and take action designed to deter any future violations and to re-establish its demilitarized status. Success in ensuring that both sides respect the zone as a form of cordon sanitaire could be a first step, however modest, on the way to de-escalation and might serve as a pilot project for the sort of supervised settlement which must eventually be achieved.

The Commission also exists as the only remaining symbol of the 1954 Geneva settlement. We cannot discount the importance of the Commission as a reflection of the continuing interest of the Geneva powers in a situation which engages their international responsibilities. Finally, I continue to hope and to work for a situation in which the Commission might be able to assist in the achievement of a peaceful settlement. For all these reasons, therefore, we consider that the maintenance of the Commission is both necessary and desirable.

The war in Vietnam began as a symptom of the instability of Asia. As it goes on, however, it can become the cause of instability not only in Asia but in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, all attempts to bring about negotiations have been unsuccessful. We remain convinced, however, that the time for negotiations will come, must come, and that Canada has an obligation to contribute to the search for ways to bring them about.

Our Commission role has one further and very important advantage in that it gives us a special opportunity, available to very few others, of access to the capitals most directly concerned in the conflict. We have used this access and will continue to do so. Most of you will be aware of the two visits to Hanoi made by Mr. Chester Ronning as a special representatives of the Canadian

Government. I scarcely need to tell you, in his home province, of his long and excellent service to Canada in previous years and of the significant contribution he is making now and which the Canadian Government knows he is prepared to continue to make in the field of Asian policy.

We have also explored with our Commission colleagues India and Poland the possibility of a useful role for the Commission in bringing the opposing parties closer together. Our efforts have not yet borne full fruit. Despite this, we intend to continue - either alone, or as a member of the Commission, or with other countries - our efforts to bring about peace talks and to find a path which may lead us out of this increasingly dangerous situation. Indeed, I feel that we have an obligation to continue to make every effort possible towards a settlement.

We are often urged to "demand" this or "insist upon" that with respect to some hypothetical solution of the conflict. I think we must recognize that to proceed along these lines is unlikely to be productive. Those who call for dramatic action on Canada's part, in the apparent expectation that we could help bring about some quick solution to the Vietnam conflict, either provide little analysis of the main trends in Asian affairs or they make assertions about these trends which scarcely fit the facts as we know them.

I think it important, in explaining the policies of the Government in these matters, to give some indication of how we view the developments in Vietnam and in Asia generally.

There is some danger that, faced with the constantly increasing scale of hostilities in Vietnam, and with the complexities of internal affairs in South Vietnam, we might conclude that the situation there is quite unique, that it has been created only by miscalculation or overwhelming ambition on one side or the other in one limited area and that a simple solution could be found regardless of developments elsewhere. We must, however, relate certain aspects of the situation in Vietnam to the problems of Asia as a whole - the lessons to be drawn from the unhappy situation must be placed in a broader perspective.

There are several characteristics of the Vietnamese problem which are common to other parts of Asia and, indeed, in some cases, to other parts of the world. It is, for example, a partitioned state, a victim of what has been called "this century's awkward form of compromise". The Seventeenth Parallel in Vietnam is certainly not the only one which has produced international crises. What has happened there provides further confirmation of the risks inherent in any attempt to remove agreed dividing lines by force, whether this force is manifested in open aggression or by subversion and infiltration. We can only work towards some realistic and relatively stable settlement comparable to those which have had to be accepted elsewhere.

The indirect methods of the Vietnamese war are a manifestation of the Communist doctrine of "wars of national liberation" so vividly described by Marshal Lin Piao last September. A future such as that envisaged by Lin Piao, consisting of a series of "liberation wars" supported by China, obviously will not bring about the stability and security which the states of Asia so desperately need. There are disquieting signs of developments elsewhere which point up the continuing danger of eruptions such as we now face in Vietnam.

Thailand, for example, is experiencing the same kind of terrorist attacks which characterized the early stages of the insurgency in South Vietnam. In Laos the areas under Pathet Lao control are being freely used for the movement of men and material from North to South Vietnam, and, as is shown by the latest report of the International Commission in Laos, made public earlier this week, members of the North Vietnamese armed forces have engaged in attacks against the armed forces of the Royal Government of Laos - all in contravention of the undertakings given in Geneva in 1962. The Pathet Lao have, for their part, protested alleged bombings by United States aircraft of the territory they control. The Commission has indicated its desire to investigate these allegations but the Pathet Lao have not so far been willing to facilitate such a legitimate exercise of the Commission's functions.

In the context of Asia, therefore, Vietnam is not a special case, either as a partitioned country or as a proving-ground for the doctrine of "liberation wars". In a third role - as a new developing country groping its way towards a sense of national identity - South Vietnam shares the plight of nearly all the countries of Africa and Asia.

It is sometimes argued that the shortcomings of successive governments in Saigon are somehow at the root of the tragedy that has befallen Vietnam - that the nature of government in the South provides the basis and excuse for Northern intervention. This argument is not adequate as a justification of aggression, since its application throughout the world obviously would soon result in international anarchy.

Furthermore, it is possible to recognize the inadequacy of governments in South Vietnam, and the existence of internal dissent, without concluding that the present war is in any significant measure the product of these. Internal dissent is something we must expect in any new country where the people live on the margin of subsistence. We must never forget, either, that the difficulties experienced by countries like Burma, Indonesia and Pakistan have shown that the achievement of a viable nationhood, as we in the West are sometimes inclined to forget, is never easy or quick, even in a relatively serene and secure international environment. In the atmosphere of war and subversion fomented from without, the difficulties become almost insurmountable.

We should turn for a moment, however, from the difficult problems which Vietnam shares with other nations and which sometimes make solution of the conflict seem almost impossible to some considerations about the general situation in Asia which offer seeds of hope.

First of all, the "war of national liberation" has not proven to be an effective instrument for the extension of Communist power in Asia. It can be a powerful weapon when used against single states groping their way towards social and political stability. In Vietnam, however, countervailing measures have been taken to redress the military balance and to meet the outside support essential to the success of the technique.

One of Peking's most important foreign-policy objectives has been the removal of American influence from Asia; by now, however, it must be becoming apparent to the Chinese that the sort of situation which was fostered in Vietnam has, as in Korea, led once again to the involvement of United States forces in

a conflict on the Asian mainland. The clear determination of the South Vietnamese, the United States and others to prevent a forcible takeover by North Vietnam, must at some stage be taken into account in Hanoi and Peking. We can hope, therefore, that a realistic appraisal of the efficacy of "national liberation wars" eventually will lead to their abandonment.

Some would argue that if development towards a genuine balance of power was one of the hopeful aspects of the current situation in Asia, Canada might best serve the cause of peace by sending troops to participate in the Vietnam conflict. They would wish to see us take a position comparable to that of some nations in the area or of the great powers. They would be willing to abandon hope that the International Control Commission or any of its members could help towards a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam conflict.

I think that the reasoning which lies behind such proposals is quite unsound. It is essential that a balance of power be achieved by the nations of the area and by nations already deeply involved in the security and well-being of that part of the world. It is also essential that a balance which is quite possibly in the making within the next year or two should not be prejudiced by a wider and wider involvement of nations likely to make the central problems of Far Eastern affairs even more difficult to solve.

It is because we see some prospects of an eventual settlement which recognizes the realities - military, political, economic - in the Far East that we consider it particularly important to maintain all the efforts which I have already described to facilitate a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam conflict.

We have also urged the international community to accept its responsibility to see that situations such as the one which has arisen in Vietnam are brought under control. As the Prime Minister said in March 1965:

"If a single power has to undertake this task, there arises the danger of widening the struggle into general war. So the nations of the world must be ready to produce an alternative."

#### Canada's Involvement in Other Asian Developments

It is evident that military action alone does not provide an adequate answer to the concept of "people's war", and that the long-term stability and security of China's neighbours will depend on their ability to find solutions to the multitude of political, social and economic problems confronting them. In this field, too, there is reason for optimism, and I should like to turn at this point to other trends in Asian affairs and to Canada's interest and involvement in them.

When Indonesia first instituted its "confrontation" of Malaysia, Canada deemed it advisable to come to the aid of its Commonwealth partner with offers of military equipment and training facilities designed to help Malaysia preserve its territorial integrity. We now welcome the end of this wasteful and destructive confrontation which will enable both Indonesia and Malaysia to exert their influence on behalf of peaceful progress in Asia. Further to the north, the signing of the Normalization of Relations Agreement by Japan and Korea has removed another source of friction.

Many of the smaller countries of Asia have achieved remarkable rates of economic growth. Despite the unsettled conditions in the area, the development of the basin of the lower Mekong is proceeding at an encouraging pace. The establishment of the Asian Development Bank, more than half of whose capital of \$1 billion has been subscribed by the regional members of ECAFE, will provide a solid base for the accelerated development of the region. The recent establishment of the Asian and Pacific Council joined together nine Pacific countries in an effort to achieve greater co-operation and solidarity in political and economic fields. Although the participants announced their intention to safeguard their national independence and integrity against any Communist aggression or infiltration, they made clear their desire to avoid any further polarization of Asia into Communist and non-Communist groupings.

Canada, in every appropriate way, is making substantial contributions to the process of building a stable and self-reliant Asia. Canadian contributions under the Colombo Plan alone have totalled more than \$500 million. Canada has just ratified the agreement setting up the Asian Development Bank and as a charter member we have subscribed \$25 million. We have participated in the Mekong basin project from its inception, and have only recently pledged \$2 million to the Nam Ngum hydro-electric project in Laos. It was in the light of the importance that we have always attached to regional developmental programmes of this nature for their contribution both to economic progress and to increased stability that we welcomed President Johnson's billion-dollar co-operative regional development programme for Southeast Asia and said we would play our full part.

All these developments, political and economic, contribute to the elimination of the splintering of the countries of the Pacific area which has made them so vulnerable to outside pressures. It is possible to see, in addition to increasing international co-operation in Asia, the emergence of an economically strong and prosperous Japan in an active diplomatic role and the creation of a wholesome balance of power which hitherto has been possible only as the result of United States commitments.

Canada and Japan see eye to eye on many of the problems which the Pacific powers face today. I like to think that the excellent relations which we enjoy are a good example of the concrete results which can be achieved by the pattern of close consultation which has been built up between our two governments in recent years. Early in October we shall be having talks in Ottawa with five Japanese cabinet minister's on the occasion of the fourth meeting of the Canada-Japan Ministerial Committee. These consultations enable us not only to deal with bilateral problems but to increase our co-operation in Colombo Plan development programmes and to act together in international situations to our mutual benefit.

It is this kind of co-operation which I hope we shall see develop amongst the countries of Asia, all of which must eventually assume primary responsibility for the peace and stability of their own area. India, Pakistan and Indonesia will be important factors in this new Asia. It is for this reason that Canada has been so concerned to encourage the peaceful settlement of the disputes which have had such adverse effects on the economic progress these countries must make to take their rightful position in the Asian scene.

We are confident also that links between Asian and other members of the Commonwealth, the active roles of Australia and New Zealand, the important influence of France in Asia (and we share with France a real interest in nations retaining close associations with French culture) will all contribute to the development of those conditions of stability which the world desires.

### Conclusion

These are some of the highlights of our policies, and of our convictions about Asian affairs. It is impossible to discuss all the aspects of this vital subject, but I have tried to indicate where the Canadian Government stands with respect to some of the greatest issues you have been discussing this week.

I think that most of you would agree that all such discussions tend to come back to one central question - what are the intentions of mainland China and what are the prospects of coming to a realistic, to a mutually beneficial and I hope friendly, understanding with that country?

Whether one considers the situation in Vietnam or in its neighbouring states, on the borders of India and Pakistan, or throughout the continent, so far as general stability and peace are concerned the question of Chinese attitudes arises.

I can envisage interim measures which could serve to reduce tensions in Asia and perhaps to re-introduce an uneasy peace. I firmly believe, however, that central to all the issues you have been discussing in Banff this week is the question of China's position in the international community. I suggest to you that the working out of a modus vivendi with China will be the real test of the next decade, perhaps even the next generation, for both the governments and the peoples of the West and Asia. Developments in the past year, particularly amongst our good neighbours to the south, reveal a growing realization of the urgency of this central issue. And it is this issue, I suggest, which governs the formulation of our policy towards Asian problems, even where Canadian actions may seem unrelated or even inimical to this long-term aim.

This is why we have to search for some equitable solution in Vietnam; why we must encourage the end of disputes which sap the strength of China's neighbours; why we have lent support to India in that country's efforts to protect its territory against Chinese pressures. But this is also why we urge that China be brought into disarmament talks and that some equitable way be found to seat its representatives in the United Nations, and why we encourage trade and work to increase contacts with the Chinese people.

It will obviously be a most difficult and slow process at best to move towards a real understanding with the government of the mainland Chinese. But I would borrow a Chinese maxim - "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". If both we and the Chinese are willing to embark on this long journey, in spite of its obvious difficulties and hazards, then we can hope for a new era in Asia's history worthy of the greatness of its past.

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