



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Sidney E. Smith, M.P., to the Churchmen's Seminar on International Affairs, Chalmers United Church, Ottawa, February 12, 1958.

I wish, at the outset, to express my pleasure in meeting with you here today and to say that I welcome the opportunity afforded by this Seminar to speak to you about some aspects and the shape of our foreign policy.

It is, as you know, only a few months since I assumed a professional interest and a political responsibility in the field of international affairs. In that short period, I have been able to take a close look at the important types of problem with which the Canadian Government is confronted in its relations with other Governments and with those international organizations to which Canada belongs. My purpose today is to proffer a few observations on some of these international relationships, from the point of view of one who has recently come upon the scene.

The conduct of diplomacy among nations is a complex enterprise. It is extremely difficult to describe. Nothing is easier, of course, than to make fun of the profession of diplomacy. There are innumerable stories about the absurdities of protocol (not a very important subject, I admit -- until you make a mistake!), about the antics of the boys in top hats and striped pants and so on. Perhaps I can risk reminding you of one of these rather slanderous stories since I do not see any striped pants in this audience.

Just after the First World War, half a dozen young men sharing a compartment on a European train were swapping, not without boast, stories of their wartime experiences and exploits on land, at sea, and in the air. Only one was silent. Finally, one of the group enquired politely where he had served during the War and he was forced to admit that he had spent it behind a desk in the Foreign Ministry. "But just remember this", he added waspishly, "if it hadn't been for us, you'd never have had your old war."

The story may be frivolous but its overtones are indeed sobering. The outbreak of a war is the signal that diplomacy has failed; for the task of diplomacy is to preserve the peace.

I have been struck -- and this thought came into my mind as I reflected on what I might say to you today -- by the relation which exists between those who, like yourselves, minister to the moral and spiritual needs of mankind, and those who, by their pursuit of settlements of disputes among nations, are also engaged in and dedicated to the search for, on earth, peace, goodwill toward men. Our two callings have some requirements in common -- requirements, I may add, which apply in equal measure to the profession of education. All three of them call for devotion to abiding ideals, for patience, hard work and refusal to accept discouragement. In all three groups, progress is for the most part gradual, sometimes indiscernible, whether the aim is spiritual betterment, intellectual improvement, or peace among the nations. I know that in your vocation the value of unspectacular effort needs no underlining. It is the same in the conduct of foreign policy.

What are some of the most important channels through which Canadian foreign policy finds its direction and its expression?

United Nations

I begin with the United Nations. Some seven or eight years ago, at one of the most uncomfortable stages of the Cold War, the United Nations had fallen into serious discredit in much of what we call the Western world. The monotonous and ominous chorus of vetoes had arrested the intended growth of the Security Council, and small comfort could be drawn from the few modest successes the Organization had attained in the political and security field - in Indonesia, in Greece, in Palestine and Kashmir. The action of the United Nations in Korea, prompt and effectual as it was, did not greatly raise our hopes in the United Nations as an agency for maintaining international security. For intervention by the United Nations in Korea would almost certainly not have been possible had the Soviet representative been in his chair at the critical moment.

Then again, the character of the Organization was changing before our eyes. The membership was expanding and the new members immediately made their presence felt. As the numbers of this new "uncommitted" group increased, there emerged a new factor of prime importance in the United Nations. In Western countries, some voices were to be heard regretting the good old days of automatic majorities for Western resolutions, and prophesying doom for Western interests. But it has become abundantly clear that the "uncommitted" countries are genuinely uncommitted and are capable of making decisions according to their individual judgments. And the result is that these countries seldom vote as a bloc.

In Canada we have not, of course, been unaffected by the criticisms which have been directed against the United Nations. Yet, on the whole, the tendency here has been to avoid harsh judgments on the Organization. It may be that we should be less tolerant if, like the United Kingdom and other countries administering territories overseas, we found ourselves exposed to irresponsible criticism, or if, like the United States, we collected abuse and requests for economic and financial aid, in almost equal quantities.

But I think that there may be less pessimism about the U.N. as an institution among Canadians than in many other countries because, although we have always looked upon it as an essential framework for international collaboration, we have taken the view, from the beginning, that in the present state of the world there is a limit to what we should expect of it. Whatever our aspirations for its future, we have thought that it is a mistake to conceive of the United Nations as anything in the nature of a world government which could enforce world law with a kind of universal world police. It is not a supra-state. Its imperfections reflect the imperfections of its member nations. It is rather an agency for reconciliation and negotiation; a forum where opponents can maintain communication and eventually reach compromises and solutions. It is not a substitute for diplomacy; it is a place where, at least in some situations, diplomacy can be more effectively conducted. If it did not exist, mankind would find it necessary to invent a comparable forum.

I remarked earlier that diplomacy is unspectacular work. I can think of no better recent illustration of this truth than the successful efforts made during the twelfth session of the General Assembly last Autumn to calm the passions aroused by the dispute between Syria and Turkey. The net result of the long debates on the floor of the Assembly, and of the even longer deliberations behind the scenes was, in terms of resolutions, nothing. Yet, a potentially explosive situation subsided without either side losing much of its self-respect. This was a considerable success for what the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Hammarskjold, has called the "diplomacy of reconciliation" and it provides in my opinion a good example of the United Nations at its best.

I was very much impressed, during the period which I spent at the General Assembly, by the high reputation which Canada enjoys in United Nations circles. I found it particularly gratifying that the Canadian Delegation was so frequently invited by other delegations from every corner of the world to consult on items on the agenda of the Assembly. That is a tribute to the calibre of the Canadian people: it is a recognition of the growing prestige of Canada: it is a realization of the fact that Canada seeks peace without any ambitions for territorial expansion or selfish domination of other peoples. Apart from the satisfaction of helping in the work of the United Nations, there is something more.

And that is that increasingly the United Nations, under the wise influence and unobtrusive guidance of Mr. Hammarskjold, is proving its value as the central market-place of world diplomacy. You and I can remember all too vividly the days when, because of the crippling chill of the Cold War, conversations between groups of nations were virtually at a standstill. We can all be deeply grateful that those days are gone, and while I am perfectly well aware that the change is attributable to many factors beyond the purview of the United Nations, yet I am convinced that it is in the United Nations that the benefits of the change can best be exploited. As I have already indicated, it is important to encourage the new nations of Asia and Africa to participate with a full sense of their growing opportunity and responsibility in the United Nations' search for peaceful settlements. There are already signs that the deliberations of the United Nations are being enriched by a flow of new ideas and fresh viewpoints from this source.

There are two very significant and powerful trends among the peoples of these countries of Asia and Africa -- a surge of newly-awakened nationalism, and a quest for a position of their own between the two ideological camps into which the world is divided. A recent, and, I think, very important manifestation of these two trends -- nationalism and the desire for non-alignment, or, as they call it in the Middle East, "positive neutrality" -- is the sudden union of Egypt and Syria, which may be a step towards that wider Arab unity which has long been the goal of Arab nationalists. We have no way as yet of judging how the new union will develop, or how far it may ultimately extend; but the tide of history is running fast in all these countries, and it would be unwise, I think, to adopt hasty attitudes with respect to a development which may in fact represent the pattern of the future. Canada will be watching with interest the evolution of the new union and we pray that the forces which have brought it into being will be channelled along constructive lines. Meanwhile, we must work to ensure that the general tranquillity of the area of the Middle East is preserved.

Our continued participation in the United Nations Emergency Force, on the borders of Egypt and Israel, and our support for the humanitarian work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees -- recently supplemented by a large gift of flour from Canada -- are examples of our efforts under the aegis of the U.N. to preserve the peace in this turbulent area. It will interest you to know that a few days ago I had a letter from Mr. Labouisse, the Director of UNRWA. Mr. Labouisse said, in part: "The decision of the Canadian Government to make a special supplementary contribution to UNRWA of 20,000 tons of flour, valued at \$1,500,000, has brought great joy to all of us concerned with the problem of the Palestine refugees. This very generous additional contribution will go a long way toward enabling us to continue our basic services for the refugees."

Colombo Plan

I desire now to refer to another field in which we are engaged in an enterprise of international co-operation. I refer to the Colombo Plan.

Canada is now giving significant assistance every year to the Colombo Plan countries of South and South-East Asia. The Colombo Plan is a scheme under which some of the wealthier countries of the world are able to give very tangible evidence of their concern for the well-being of the peoples of less fortunate countries. Under this scheme, Canada, Japan, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom are joined with the countries of the Colombo Plan area in seeking ways in which our economic resources and technical skills can be mobilized for the common good. The Colombo Plan provides us in Canada with a means of aiding the under-developed countries in South and South-East Asia in their unceasing struggle to raise standards of living and to seek a better way of life for their people. In this manner we can show that our humanitarian professions are matched by humanitarian deeds.

One of the features of the Colombo Plan in which, as a Canadian, I take pride, is that it was a concept initiated and brought about by the free association of nations in the Commonwealth. The Colombo Plan has the Commonwealth trademark on it, although of course it now extends beyond the Commonwealth area.

Our Colombo Plan contribution now involves Canadian participation in a number of capital development projects, of which electricity-generating stations and transmission lines and the atomic reactor for peaceful purposes being built for India are perhaps the most significant. It involves training over two hundred Asian students here in Canada every year and in sending a number of Canadian experts and engineering firms to work abroad. We have proposed that for 1958-59 Parliament should vote \$35 million toward these Canadian Colombo Plan operations. This is \$600,000 more than in the current financial year; and it is a recognition that Canadians in all walks of life support this national effort. Recently the Government announced grants to two countries outside the ambit of the Colombo Plan--Ghana and the new federation in the West Indies -- to enable these countries to train personnel for their administrative, educational and industrial activities. These initial grants may well be the prelude to larger grants to these new nations. Increased assistance for UNICEF -- the United Nations Children's Fund - is contemplated.

Another aspect of international assistance which is of great importance is relief to the victims of great disasters. This is particularly important when disaster strikes a country which lacks the financial resources or the physical resources to cope with an extensive emergency. You will recall that at the turn of the year there was a drastic and tragic flood in Ceylon

which inundated large areas and destroyed crops and homes. Canada provided two plane-loads of urgent medical supplies, some from Canadian Government stocks and some from the Canadian Red Cross. These were flown direct to Colombo by the RCAF. Subsequently, we considered the request of the Government of Ceylon for a more substantial volume of assistance once the immediate emergency was over. We decided that we would make available to Ceylon \$3 million worth of flour. This will provide food to replace the destroyed crops and also, when sold by the Government of Ceylon, will provide local currency which will assist them with their reconstruction budget. This \$3 million worth of flour is part of a \$15 million grant which has been announced in Parliament and which makes it possible for Canadian wheat and flour to be used to meet acute food shortages in India, Ceylon, and Pakistan.

UN Aid Programmes

Another important way in which we are able to give assistance to less fortunate countries is through the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies. The most important of the United Nations aid programmes now in operation is the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme. This has an annual budget of \$30 million a year, to which Canada's annual \$2 million is the largest per capita national contribution.

A new and encouraging development in the field of United Nations aid is the proposal to establish a new UN fund to finance certain more substantial projects which are basic to economic development, but which have been outside the scope of the existing programme. Canadian representatives last autumn indicated in the UN discussions on this proposal that if suitable administrative arrangements are made and if the fund is broadly shared by the UN membership, we will be prepared to make an appropriate contribution. Canada has been chosen a member of a Preparatory Committee which will be considering the detailed arrangements necessary to call this new fund into operation. Next month these important discussions will begin in New York. I think we can confidently expect that the next General Assembly will see a stronger UN instrument ready to help the under-developed countries.

NATO

I have left to the end my remarks about our role in NATO. The importance that we attach to our relations with the United Nations, and to our co-operation with the nations of Asia and Africa should not be left unqualified. In the face of the uncertainty created by the enigma of Soviet power, and because we could not rely on the United Nations as a collective security agency, we had no alternative but to join in building NATO with nations who felt the same apprehensions. NATO was conceived as a response to a strategic threat, and it remains the main foundation of our defence policy. It is not pleasant to think

in terms of deterrents and retaliatory power. It is not pleasant to pay the annual bill for them, but I am convinced that it is no more than elementary prudence to keep our defences strong, modern, and adapted to our best evaluation of possible future needs.

I must confess -- although I wish it were otherwise -- that I see no present justification for dismantling any significant part of our defence structure. That step must depend on the result of negotiations with the U.S.S.R. I greatly regret that no significant reduction in our defence commitments is at present possible, because the disadvantages are obvious. There is first the increasing expense of competing in the production of arms; and indefinite extension of this competition could lead us to national bankruptcies. Secondly, there is the task of explaining not only to the Soviet Government but also to our friends in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia that, although we continue to build up stocks of ever more destructive weapons, we have no intention whatever of using them except in response to aggression. That is a fact. We in the West must not find ourselves so preoccupied with our own defence that we fail to recognize and exploit opportunities to narrow the gulf of tension and distrust which now divides the two great world powers.

From these words, you will know that foremost in my mind is the aim of finding some basis for peaceful settlements on outstanding issues. This I am sure is the positive aim of all NATO Governments.

Does there exist today a probability or some possibility of a mutually satisfactory settlement? I must say frankly that I see no present prospect of an all-inclusive settlement. On such issues as German reunification and the Soviet position in Eastern Europe, the Russians appear to be as intractable as they ever were. On the other hand, it is probable that the Russians, sufficiently fearful of the dire consequences of space-age warfare, do desire an easing of tension. One can detect a note of genuine anxiety in some of Mr. Bulganin's latest public correspondence, and while this note in itself should not cause us to relax our vigilance, we should be alert to any openings for negotiations which it may foreshadow.

One possible avenue of progress is in disarmament, whether along the lines already followed in the United Nations -- if the Soviet Government will agree to participate -- or on a limited regional basis such as in Central Europe. It may be that other possibilities exist. Let us continue to look for them.

A meeting at the summit with the leaders of the Soviet Union is approaching. There is a clear prospect that it will be held in 1958. I have already had occasion to say that so far as the Canadian Government is concerned, we attach cardinal importance to the preparatory stage. We welcome indications

that the United States and Soviet Governments have agreed to exchange views on the formulation of the agenda and on other important procedural questions. We await with close interest the outcome of this preliminary planning. We are seeking to promote its success.

The United Nations, the Colombo Plan, NATO, and, of course, the Commonwealth -- these are four international associations to which we belong. That they overlap in membership, that they differ in scope and purpose, is merely a sign of the times, and a sign that Canada's international interests are widespread and must be harmonized. Our membership in NATO, for example, is of course entirely consistent with our other associations; indeed NATO's part in resisting the Soviet challenge to free institutions in Europe and elsewhere has helped to strengthen the United Nations. Conversely, currents of thought circulating in the United Nations inevitably have their impact in NATO.

The term "interdependence" has been widely used in recent months. It has been applied to the Atlantic Alliance, and there is of course no doubt that the nations of that alliance are interdependent. But I wonder if there is not a risk in giving that term a restrictive definition. Dare we delude ourselves in this nuclear age that to a degree interdependence is anything other than global?

In the declaration of NATO issued on December 19, 1957, it was proclaimed to the world: "We are prepared to examine any proposal, from whatever source, for general or partial disarmament". Canada, at Paris, had no small part in fashioning that attitude. Your Government is probing for and seeking in many national capitals the ways and means in preparing for a Summit Meeting or meetings which would hold some promise of attaining some agreement on some points and thus pave the way for progressive solution of remaining critical problems and the steady building up of understanding and trust. The alternative to that policy might be a nuclear war - in which the stake would be the survival of our democratic civilization -- indeed, the survival of mankind.