

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA AND COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

A statement by Prime Minister Diefenbaker
to the House of Commons on January 18.

All of us know . . . that the problem of defence remains with us the major cause of the tremendous expenditures that we in the free world are obliged to make. . . . A rigid or final course would have no regard to the changes that are taking place internationally. Indeed, in the last three days a speech has been made by Mr. Khrushchev to which I also intend to allude and which in every way bears out the views expressed by the Minister of National Defence over and over again in the House at the time of the cancellation of the contract for the CF-105, that the day of manned bombers was about to be over and that in the 1960's we would be in the missile age.

The day before yesterday Mr. Khrushchev outlined in detail almost exactly the viewpoint expressed by the Minister of National Defence, his information having been secured from those in responsible positions among the Chiefs of Staff and also from the various portions of the free world which gather information in this regard. Indeed, when he took that stand there were many people across Canada who could not believe that the U.S.S.R. was about to bring about an end to the manned bomber.

I mention that matter because in defence the uncertainty to which all of the free world is subject arises from the fact that it can never be finally determined whether or not the U.S.S.R. means to go to war or whether, if it does so, the war will be a nuclear one. This debate on the question of what should be done in respect of defence is taking place not only in Canada, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the free countries in Europe but everywhere in the world. The United States has been following a course which is based on the fact that if war comes it will be a cataclysmic nuclear war, the result being that ground forces and conventional weapons will take second place.

Defence policy cannot be certain. If it could be certain, and if we could determine today the course for the next three or four year, great savings might be made. . . . If we could anticipate what the U.S.S.R. would do, naturally we would be able to look into the future as to the course that should be followed with the same clarity that all of us can look into the past.

The attitude of the Canadian Government and its stand on defence was clearly set forth in detail in the Defence White Paper in April 1959. That Canadian defence policy derives directly from our foreign policy and is designed to ensure national security and the preservation of world peace. These objectives are reached through collective arrangements within NATO and the United Nations. It is the defence policy of Canada to provide forces for defence against an attack on the North American continent; the collective defence and deterrent forces of NATO in Europe and the North Atlantic; and to support the United Nations in attaining its peaceful aims.

Then there is set out in detail the course to be followed. It is stated that the knowledge that an act of aggression would in all likelihood occur with little or no warning requires that Canadian defence forces be at the maximum state of readiness. The course to be followed is there set out in detail and it deals with the attitude of the Canadian Government based on the best information that we could secure. In this White Paper, it is stated that it is now considered that the threat of the manned bomber is not as great as was originally anticipated and that, furthermore, by 1962, when the CF-105 would have come into operational use in the R.C.A.F., the main threat is expected to consist of long-range missiles rather than manned bombers.

Those were the words in the White Paper of April 1959. Those are words that have been borne out in the declaration made two days ago by Mr. Khrushchev. As I said a moment ago, our defence policy is for the purpose of contributing to the maintenance of peace. We know that there will be no victor in the next war. Gone are the days when a nation could consider war as a means of enforcing a certain policy and of furthering its political aims. The whole purpose of armed forces today and of defence expenditure is to create a state of preparedness which would enable a country under the imminent threat of all-out nuclear attack to retaliate with a knock-out blow of equal force or at least of sufficient force to meet the aggressor.

In other words, our policy has been one of collective defence. Aware as we are of the changing concept of defence in this age of thermonuclear weapons, of rockets and space ships, we have endeavoured to bring about in Canada the attainment of the largest degree of defence that can be attained in the fields in which we anticipate defence will be important two, three or

four years from now, to the end that expenditures shall be maintained at a minimum for those materials that cannot reasonably be expected to be other than obsolete in the days ahead.

I am going to refer to Mr. Khrushchev's speech in more detail when I come to refer to international affairs. The fact remains that he has declared that the U.S.S.R. has a bountiful supply of rockets and missiles, that it is going out of the manned bomber and that it possesses a new secret weapon which makes it the most powerful nation in the world.

Our principle is to secure the largest return possible in defence, the decision being a matter to determine according to the nature of the weapons, on the basis of the best information procurable. . . .

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