

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## A CANADIAN VIEW OF POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

An address by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Lucien Cardin, M.P. at the Kiwanis Club, Belleville, Ontario, March 27, 1956.

The close attention which is being paid by this country and by so many other countries to events that are now going on in the Near and Middle East is a further indication of a fact that has been increasingly apparent over the last few years - the fact that none of us can be indifferent to foreign affairs, just as none of us can hope to escape their consequences. The dismissal of General Glubb in Jordan, the Soviet sale of arms to Egypt, the continued unrest and violence in North Africa, the grave differences between Egypt and Israel - all these and other matters which normally might seem somewhat remote from Canada have occupied prominent places in our newspapers over the last few months. I do not suppose that we have yet got quite used to the notion of Canada as an important international power or to the idea that an event on the frontier between Israel and Egypt might very well involve us in the gravest consequences. But both these things are nonetheless true. With the progress of communications and of transport which has been phenomenal since the war, we live in a world that has been shrinking very rapidly, and our own affairs are increasingly intermingled with those of other states, almost anywhere in the world. Increasingly too, Canada has been invited to assume a growing measure of responsibility in international affairs. We have, as you know, Canadians serving in Indo-china on the International Truce Commissions; a Canadian is supervising the U.N. Truce Organization on the borders of Israel; a Canadian is Director General of the U.N. Technical Assistance Administration; Canada has been elected to serve on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; our High Commissioner in London is sitting with the representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France and Russia on the Disarmament Subcommittee of the United Nations; we are taking a vigorous part

in the work of NATO and we have, of course, considerable forces on the NATO defence lines in France and Germany. We, as Canadians, therefore, are very much engaged in the business of international affairs and it seems very likely that this business will increase in its complexity and in the demands it makes upon us.

It occurred to me that you might find it interesting and even useful to consider something of what the difficult events that have been going on in the Near East mean for Canada, and might mean for us. And it has seemed to me also that it might be valuable to try to consider these varied events not as isolated examples of unrest but as parts of a much larger pattern which, in my view, makes many of these turbulent and distressing happenings more intelligible.

There are one or two important points with which I should like to deal in an introductory way. The first and the more important of these is to recall to you that since the war, that is to say, within the last ten or eleven years, very large numbers of people inhabiting old and densely populated countries of Asia have attained complete political independence - Indonesia, Burma, India, Pakistan and, in Africa, the Sudan. Malaya is rapidly approaching a state of political independence, as is the British Gold Coast, and Nigeria. All these vast lands containing so many scores of millions of the world's inhabitants have, then, within this remarkably short time, emerged from their former status as colonial dependencies, and are now seeing as best they can to their own affairs, whether political or economic.

A very considerable part of these peoples is of the Moslem faith, particularly, of course, in Indonesia, Pakistan and the Sudan, although, of course, there are large Moslem minorities in India, Burma and elsewhere. In brief, since the end of the last war, probably 200 million people of the Moslem faith have reached in their various countries the status of political independence and, as a consequence of this remarkable evolution, there have been strong and even violent reactions against any semblance of continuing colonialism, notably, of course, in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The grave disorders of French North Africa should be thought of in the light of the emergence to independence of so many people of the Moslem faith in other lands, for of course the population of French North Africa is about 90% Moslem; it is not unnatural that these further millions of people should be restive, knowing as they do that so many more of their coreligionists in the East and the Far East have emerged from their former dependent condition.

The second point to bear in mind is that most of these newly-independent countries are dreadfully over-populated in relation to their existing resources, and that most of them in consequence have neither the necessary capital nor the

technical knowledge to improve their own standards of living. In consequence, both in these areas and, of course, in other parts of the world too, such as South America, the United Nations and its various specialized agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization have been conducting various projects of technical assistance financed from United Nations funds. Also, of course, and more particularly, to help the countries of the East and Far East there has been developed the Colombo Plan of technical assistance and to this project we in Canada this year will be giving more than \$33 million; at the same time, we will be sending Canadian technical experts abroad, and will be receiving students from these various countries to acquire scientific and technical training in Canada. A good deal therefore over the last few years has been done and more has been projected. But something new and potentially ominous has been added - the recent intervention of the Soviet Union on a very great scale in these operations of capital and technical assistance to the less-developed countries. To this I should like to refer in greater detail later.

We have seen so far, then, that since the war there has emerged a number of densely populated countries to political independence, and it might be added that these various countries have no intention of remaining in a state of economic inferiority. We have noted too that the disorders in French North Africa have to some considerable degree been prompted by this new and unprecedented surge of self-determination. I referred a little earlier to the increasingly dangerous disagreement between the Arab states and Israel. All these matters as you see form parts of the same general pattern, and the new design that has been added to this pattern has been Russian intervention in the economic affairs of the East.

What then is our concern in Canada with these matters that are taking place in countries so far removed from us? Well, first of all, we, along with 14 other countries, are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and this alliance we believe is fundamental to our security. Anything which weakens it is a direct menace to us. To deal with the disorders in North Africa, the French have had to move from the continent of Europe most of their best defence forces, and to this extent we are more vulnerable. The dispute in the Island of Cyprus between the British and the Greeks (with the Turks, of course, also involved) has involved members of NATO in unfortunate disagreements. In the dispute between Egypt and Israel, we have certain very special interests. First of all, in the deliberations and the decisions of the United Nations in 1947 and 1948 which led to the creation of the State of Israel, we Canadians played an extremely important part. The present Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable L.B. Pearson, was Chairman of the General Assembly's Political Committee which arranged to send a committee of

enquiry to Palestine in 1947. Mr. Justice Ivan C. Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada was an influential member of this committee. Canada was at that time a member of the Security Council (as we may be again next year) and under the leadership of General McNaughton, the Canadian chief representative, the Canadian Delegation played a very active role in the various negotiations and resolutions which led to the creation of Israel. We have, moreover, in Canada a very considerable Jewish minority (about 1.5% of our total population) and this minority of hard-working people has been extremely generous to the members of their own faith in the new State of Israel. Not long ago, for example, they contributed one of the most important buildings to the new Jewish University in Tel Aviv. The welfare of the people of Israel and of the Arab states is threatened by the continued quarrel between them. It is essential, therefore, that a solution to this problem be found. On this point I might refer you to a statement by the Honourable L.B. Pearson in the House of Commons on January 24th of this year. In dealing with the crisis in the Middle East, Mr. Pearson spoke as follows:

"We can sympathize with and understand the fear felt in Israel when they hear across their borders threats of destruction; and, of course, the United Nations did not establish the State of Israel in order to see its obliteration. Similarly, we can understand the feelings of Arab peoples at the alienation of land which was occupied by Arabs for centuries; we can sympathize with the sufferings of the many thousands of Arab refugees who have been made homeless. But surely to both sides the advantages of a confirmed and secure peace, instead of the present condition of precarious armistice, are so great both economically and politically that a negotiated settlement should not be impossible...

"The important question is, however, how can an honourable and satisfactory solution be brought about? The main issues are now commonly known. It seems clear that both sides, if they recognize the desirability of a settlement, must give something to achieve it, must make some compromise. There can never be a negotiated settlement where one side or the other remains adamant. Each must enter into negotiations prepared for some sort of give and take although, of course, no one would expect one of the sides to make prior or unilateral concessions.

"It seems to me that an essential, indeed, a first requirement, is that the Arab states should recognize the legitimate and permanent existence of the state of Israel. That, as I see it, necessitates abandonment by them of the impractical stipulation that we must return to the United Nations resolutions of 1947 which provided for a divided Palestine. The Arab states took up arms to prevent these resolutions becoming effective and I do not see how they can claim the right to have them accepted now as the price of

peace in that area. The people of Israel have the right to know that their national existence is not at stake. That seems to me to be fundamental. Efforts to bring peace and all its benefits to the Middle East will be of no avail unless Israel and the people of Israel are released from the over-hanging fear which naturally envelopes the country as a result of the threats of destruction and of the political and economic warfare directed against it by its neighbours. Deep fear leads to desperate acts which, though they cannot be condoned, may at least be understood. Surely it is essential, therefore, that this basic cause of fear must be removed if there is to be a solution of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

"Just as we should like to see Israel freed from the fears and economic pressures which are being imposed on her, we must also hope that the Arab populations will be enabled to move forward toward their goals of economic betterment and social progress. There have, indeed, been concrete proofs that this is the hope of the west...

"The Arab states on their part are, however, entitled to certain assurances. There must be a fair and honourable solution to the problem of Arab refugees. That is a subject which my Hon. friend touched on the other day. The unhappy plight of these refugees is of serious concern not only to the Arab countries and to Israel because it poisons their relations but also, for humanitarian and political reasons, to the whole free world. These unfortunate people have largely been maintained by the United Nations, and Canada has contributed its share toward their support. But that cannot go on much longer. Shelter and a dole are pitiful substitutes for a permanent home and opportunities for gainful work. As I see it, some compensation should be paid these refugees by Israel for loss of land and home. But it is clear that so large a number cannot return to their former land, which is not in the State of Israel whose total population is less than two million; nor in all probability would many desire to live in what would now be to them an alien country. A limited amount of repatriation might be possible such as that which would be involved, for example, in the re-uniting of families. For the rest, resettlement of an international operation, to which Israel among others would make a contribution, seems to be the only answer."

It seems apparent, then, that to help maintain peace in the near East, we may well be called upon to assume grave responsibilities. I would remind you of my earlier observations on the fact that we Canadians are deeply involved in these matters and that we cannot be indifferent to them. Our membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and in the United Nations forms the cornerstone of our foreign policy, and this membership has brought to us not only a community of safety and of interests with our allies, but also duties which we cannot reject.

The Western power, whether Great Britain, or France, or Italy, or Denmark, or Norway, or the United States, or ourselves, have decided that our security is a community enterprise and that none of us can be secure without the others. Hence it must follow that the interests of Great Britain and France are partly ours, or even largely so, and that a threat to any of our allies becomes perilous to ourselves.

I should like now to return briefly to the point I was making above that the recent intervention of the Soviet Union into the fields of capital and technical assistance confronts us with new and possibly dangerous dilemmas. Until about a year and a half ago, the Soviet Union showed no particular interest in providing capital and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries (apart from China). But beginning toward the end of 1953 and continuing at a pace accelerated particularly since the autumn of 1955, the leaders of the Soviet Union have shown a very great interest and a very great activity in these matters. There has been, of course, the familiar arms deal with Egypt; the offer of a \$100 million steel mill to India; even Pakistan, one of our best friends in the East, has sent a trade mission to Moscow; and in so small a country as Yemen in Southeast Arabia the Russians have made an agreement to exchange Russian machinery for coffee, cotton and dried fruit. The Russians are active in Indonesia and Burma and it may be expected that this Russian economic penetration will continue and will provide us with increasingly severe competition. We must of course remember that the Soviet leaders can do for political purposes what they wish, without any sanction from a Parliament, and that they are quite prepared to make uneconomic agreements for the sake of gaining political advantages. The Russians throughout the Middle East have made very generous offers to bring in to Russia young students for training in scientific and technical matters, and we must not delude ourselves into thinking that this training will not be thorough. The Russians too can provide on a very great scale technical assistance to the underdeveloped countries, and have no difficulty in finding the necessary scientific and technical experts, who are simply instructed to take up their duties abroad, in a manner with which of course we of the Western world with our notions of freedom cannot compete. Into the turbulence of the Near and Middle East there has been injected this new and powerful element - the obvious Russian determination to try to outmatch us in the provision of capital, of capital goods and of technical assistance in a wide variety of fields.

This then, in brief, completes the pattern of which I spoke to you a little time ago - the emergence of the new countries (many of them Moslem) to independence; the reaction of this emergence upon the Moslem overseas possessions of France; and, finally, the appearance of the Russians upon this stage, prepared to exploit the long existing sentiments of anti-colonialism and the very great need for technical

assistance. We should, it seems to me, try to consider these problems as one whole and the essence of these problems is what we are going to do when faced, as we are now, with this intense Russian competition for the goodwill of people whom we would like to have and whom we need as allies.

I do not think that anyone, whether in Ottawa, or in Washington, or in London, or in Paris, has a ready-made answer to this problem. It seems evident that we must be prepared for long and serious competition with the Russians, and it must be admitted that they have many immediate advantages in their favour - vast resources which can be used precisely as their leaders direct, and a hungry one-third of the world which may not be sufficiently mature to enquire into the motives of its benefactors. Already, for example, it seems evident that on the basis of a few promises, and not very much else, the Russians have won a considerable propaganda victory; it seems equally evident that they are prepared to stir up any sort of mischief in the East which will bring trouble to the Western alliance of free nations. We must clearly remain united. We must remain strong, and probably we must be prepared to be much more generous to those areas of the world which have long accepted starvation, disease and ignorance as their normal lot. It is quite certain that they are prepared to accept these conditions no longer, and that whether on a basis of humanity and kindness or on one of enlightened self-interest, or on both, we must be prepared to do much more than we have considered doing in the past.

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