

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of the Jonathan Peterson Lecture, by
the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered at Town Hall,
New York, April 15, 1953.

It is a privilege for me to be asked - as a Canadian - to give the Jonathan Peterson lecture at Town Hall. This lecture series, which has included, in previous years, so many distinguished speakers, commemorates a great citizen of New York who, for his success in life, drew upon a rich heritage of character and achievement which reached far into the past and linked him with a long and distinguished record in public life of his forbears.

The lecture each year is devoted, in the terms of its endowment, to the promotion of a better understanding among the English-speaking peoples and to the advancement of those principles upon which modern English-speaking civilization rests - namely, respect for human personality, justice for all with individual freedom under law. These are principles of which we should keep reminding ourselves these days when there are so many pressures and persons that would deny them.

These are worthy aims, close to the hearts of English-speaking and, indeed, to all free peoples. You will know, of course, that in the neighbouring country from which I come, English is only one of our two official languages, and that in the General Assembly of the United Nations, over which I have been presiding, we have five official languages, to say nothing of the other languages spoken in the sixty countries which make up our membership. Today, therefore, I will interpret "English-speaking" in a liberal sense!

Language, after all, is only a rough guide to mutual understanding. At times a common language may even be a contributor to misunderstanding by making it too easy to read the less desirable headlines that are written, or to listen to the less complimentary things that are said.

In a talk which I gave at this same Town Hall some weeks ago, I spoke of the friendly partnership which existed between Canada and the United States, and I said:

"In some parts of the world where smaller countries lie next to more powerful neighbours, the dominant keynote is fear and subordination. In North America, it is friendship and confidence, founded on a free and fruitful association. Proximity arising from the facts of politics and geography can often breed mistrust. In the case of our two peoples, it has bred

deep and mutual respect. Proximity does not for us mean the imposed leadership of the master or the enforced obedience of the reluctant satellite. It means partnership, based on consultation and co-operation, and it includes the right to agree - or to disagree.

"This tradition of the good neighbour derives not merely from the fact that we are the joint occupants of a continent endowed with great material resources and developed by the industry and spirit of Americans and Canadians. Nor is it due only to the fact that we know - and act on the knowledge - that our defence recognizes no national boundaries; that it lies in collective measures shared with our neighbours and our friends, and in the pledges we have made - and which we are honouring - as members of the United Nations.

"The sources of our good neighbourhood lie deeper. They are found in the faith which illuminates our search for the security and the welfare of our own peoples, and of others as well; in respect for freedom, and for the rights and dignity of individual men and women."

This problem of deepening and strengthening understanding among the English-speaking peoples, of which Jonathan Peterson was so deeply conscious, is part and parcel of the wider problem of strengthening the unity of the whole free world, which includes more than the Atlantic world, or even the Western. Hence Canadian-American relations or those between the English-speaking countries do not exist, and could not exist, in a vacuum. In addition to the general responsibility of interdependence, each of our countries has specific ties and obligations which extend across the earth's surface.

Canada, for instance, is a member of a world-wide and multi-racial Commonwealth of Nations. As such, she is linked to the peoples of other continents, not by constitutional instruments or legal forms, but by sentiment, long association and a common love of freedom and free institutions.

The United States, in its turn, has assumed global responsibilities matching its material and moral strength, and is the leader of a powerful defence coalition on whom the free world counts heavily now, as it will in years to come. We are both associated with other countries for many purposes, and not least for the common defence. And we are pledged by our membership in the United Nations to strengthen the fabric of international co-operation, and to fulfill our obligations as members of the world community.

This wider co-operation, however, need not prevent or prejudice a closer and more intimate association between the members of smaller groups where the natural conditions for such closer association exists. Indeed it may have the opposite effect for it has been frequently the case in history that men confronted with a particular problem have found it to be soluble only in the context of far-reaching

and imaginative solutions on a larger scale than the original problem which faced them. It may therefore be found that the strengthening of the special bonds between the English-speaking peoples - or between the NATO members - will be assisted rather than hindered by our common endeavours to face constructively the greater issue of co-operation between all free peoples; of every race and culture and creed.

This broader co-operation and growing unity must now rest on the unqualified acceptance of and ultimate realization of national freedom and self-government. There is no other alternative. It is because of the necessity for accepting this as a prerequisite to good international relations that I have called my lecture this morning "National freedom and international co-operation".

I do not know of any more important problem than that of bringing together in a constructive relationship these two political concepts, unless it be that of the reconciliation of personal liberty and national security in the modern state.

"National freedom and international co-operation" is a subject in which a Canadian may be expected to have a special interest and on which, because of the history and experience of his country, he may even have some special claim to speak.

Canada is a country which has gained its national independence by evolution from colonial status, rather than revolution against it. This is, of course, not the most exciting method of nation-building; by conference, rather than by convulsion; by the signing of papers, rather than the flashing of sabres. It has, however, been completely effective with us, though its result in the Canada of today is not yet fully realized in all other countries; even in the United States, where we are still supposed, in certain quarters, to be some kind of advanced British colony.

The fact that Canada sealed its nationhood by fighting with, rather than against British soldiers, and for the cause of human freedom which transcends national boundaries or national rights, is one reason, I suppose, why so many people in the United States still think that we are governed by Downing Street and that great man, Mr. Winston Churchill.

It might conceivably be a good thing, if we did not have so many other more important preoccupations, to arrange a sham battle with some British Red Coats, suitably televised over every American network, to prove beyond any possibility of doubt in the deep south or the middle west, that Canada is indeed now a fully self-governing state, as independent as any state has the right to be in this interdependent age. But, as I have said, we have more important things to do; and furthermore, if this sham battle were to have the desired effect, the British soldiers would have to agree to be defeated and capitulate to the Canadians. Then we would be faced with the problem of the voluntary repatriation of the prisoners back to the United Kingdom. Canada is such a happy and fortunate land in which to live!

The nature of and the experience gained from Canada's national development, and the circumstances under which it took place, have taught us two things, at least.

One, the inevitability, and the permanence, of gradualness.

Two, an awareness that national freedom is not enough; that independence and interdependence are inseparable.

As to the first; "gradualness" is not now a popular principle in political evolution or, indeed, in any other manifestation of modern life. A wave of impatient and insurgent nationalism, especially throughout the Asian and African world, has resulted in the emergence, in some case the very sudden emergence of new independent states. This has created unrest and confusion in some areas; and, indeed, has prompted some premature and unrealistic decisions in those international agencies, especially the United Nations, where national feeling now has a powerful platform on which to express itself. In the name of the sacred principle of independence, the United Nations, for instance, has decided that a former colony like Italian Somaliland, weak and poor and primitive, is to be given in seven years the privilege and the responsibility of governing itself as a sovereign state. It may prove to be unequal to the responsibility, in which case the ultimate result would be a set-back for national freedom itself.

This national urge cannot be stopped, nor should it be, though it might usefully be guided and its pace controlled in some cases. Perhaps, however, it is right, as it is probably inevitable, that nationalism must find its expression in political freedom before its limitations are realized, and its relationship to international co-operation fully understood.

This is, I think, more easily appreciated in a country like Canada which has developed slowly towards freedom, without losing its political and sentimental contacts with the older lands which had once directed and assisted its growth and gave that growth depth and stability.

The other lesson we have learned from our own history is that independence is not enough, and that isolation from international developments is impossible. If our history has taught us this, geography and the emergence of our North American neighbour, the United States, as the greatest of the world powers, has driven home the lesson. It may have been possible for the United States to be isolationist in the XIXth century. It is not possible for a neighbour of the United States, in the last half of the XXth.

No country in the world, in fact, through the inescapable facts of history, geopolitics and economics has less chance of an isolated national existence than Canada. No country, therefore, has more cause to be concerned with her relations with other countries.

Today, we in Canada and you in the United States find ourselves in a world in which narrow nationalism - an insistence on the full recognition of every aspect of national sovereignty - could spell disaster. It would certainly make international co-operation, if not impossible, at least unrewarding and sterile. The value of such

co-operation, for instance, in deterring aggression or defeating it if it occurred, would be greatly reduced if insistence on the formal and legal equality between states were pushed to the point where it prevented any delegation of authority, which might be required to make collective action effective. On the other hand, co-operation which means that the weaker members of a coalition of free states must automatically accept all the decisions of the leader or of any smaller body, without adequate consultation, is not reconcilable with national freedom and is inadmissible.

Soviet Communism has its own solution to this problem, its own simple blueprint for unity. The design is found in the rigidity of Communist orthodoxy, and the strict obedience of communist satellite states and communist satellite individuals to the Kremlin. Within the Soviet state there is a unity superimposed from the top through party discipline; in the Soviet borderlands there is a unity through the subservience of the "people's democracies" to Moscow.

According to Lenin's interpretation of Marx - an interpretation taught as gospel to millions of young communists - our Western civilization has reached its inexorable climax and is bound to achieve self-destruction in a succession of internal capitalist crises and wars. The only escape route is through proletarian revolution. After its violent triumph, world unity will be achieved in the form of a global union of communist states.

The nations of the non-Communist world, however, demand other terms than these on which international co-operation and unity can be achieved. They reject this blueprint which provides only for the loss of their freedom and their absorption in a swollen and monolithic empire.

In seeking their own form of unity the nations of the free world are not, however, wedded to any single formula. Their outlook is based on the principle that there is not a simple and single answer to every question, that all human solutions are fallible, and that the right answers can often only be found through practical experience.

The United Nations action in Korea is one such experience in the field of international collaboration. It also illustrates the complexity and the difficulty of such collaboration when it expresses itself in collective military and political action, and not merely in words.

The problem, however, as we have faced it in Korea, however, is to some extent modified by the fact that because of the exigencies of military operations, the full consultation and participation in decisions, which would be essential in an international association for non-belligerent purposes is not in all cases demanded.

The action against aggression in Korea is in theory and in principle United Nations action. But that theory is substantially modified by fact. To begin with the Soviet Communist group in the United Nations have from the beginning opposed this United Nations resistance to aggression and have actively assisted the aggressor. Then

of those Member States that have accepted the United Nations resolutions establishing the aggression, only a minority of 16 have participated in collective military action - and that participation has varied from a few hundred soldiers to the great military, naval and air effort made by the United States.

The Government of the United States - designated as the Unified Command by the Security Council and representing the country which has made by far the largest military contribution - apart from the soldiers of the Republic Of Korea - has, in fact, and because of these special circumstances, directed and controlled operations in Korea. Yet it is impossible to control military operations in modern war without making decisions that are political in their result.

Today, for instance, the truce negotiators in Panmunjom on the United Nations side are American, and their day to day - which, at times, must have more than military implications - instructions come from Washington. To take just one illustration, no representative from a nation of the British Commonwealth which has supplied troops, ships and aircraft, sits in on these discussions and no report of them can be made to any United Nations member participating in the Korean conflict, except through Washington.

I do not criticize these arrangements in the circumstances that exist and I think it would be unwise now to change the pattern that has been established. I also have good reason to know that a great deal of information is regularly given on Korean developments by the United States authorities to the representatives in Washington of those United Nations members who have forces in Korea. Nevertheless, from the point of view of international co-operation, this is obviously not the best way to carry on a genuinely collective operation by a group of freely associated states. If the reply is made that a greater military contribution by more of those states would have brought about more genuine collective control and supervision of the Korean war by the United Nations, I can only express some doubt whether this, in fact, would have occurred; at least in a way to satisfy all the states directly concerned.

I recall, for instance, that in World War II my own country had a million men and women in the armed services, and made a significant contribution to the common victory. Yet it was not a member of the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff who dictated the strategy of the war, nor did it participate directly in the big political discussions which laid down the basis for that strategy.

We did not complain about this, because when national survival is at stake, efficient and centralized control of operations and policy is far more important than matters of prestige or equality.

But what is accepted in a war of survival may not be as acceptable in a United Nations collective police action or in the work of a coalition to prevent war such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In these less

critical situations, such things as national autonomy and prestige; the desirability of consultation with all before a decision is taken by one, become an essential element of international co-operation. This is inevitable as long as such co-operation is between free states which are, in theory, equal, however much they may vary in power and responsibility.

Let me again use the present situation in Korea as an illustration.

The American military negotiators at Panmunjom (who have shown so much wisdom and patience in the past) will decide on instructions from their Government, and within the limits of the resolutions passed by the United Nations, what can be included in any armistice agreement to make it acceptable. They presumably will also decide whether new proposals put forward by the Communists on the prisoner-of-war question are worthy of discussion at all and whether they are in conformity with United Nations principles and resolutions. But such decisions far transcend military factors, as do the consequences of any armistice agreement which may be reached. If and when the present draft armistice arrangement goes into effect, important political consequences would immediately begin to operate. For instance, the present draft provides for a political conference within 90 days of the end of fighting. For what purposes, and by whom - on the United Nations side? The draft is vague about all this, and possibly wisely so; but if and when that vagueness has to be clarified, presumably in the United Nations Assembly, we will be face to face again with difficulties of reconciling national and international considerations.

So far I have been dealing with the strictly political aspects of international co-operation between free and sovereign states. There is, however, an economic aspect of this question where the reconciliation of independence and inter-dependence provides almost equally formidable difficulties. Theoretically, every free country has control of its own economic and commercial policies. Practically, the complete exercise of that control without reference to the interests of other states is difficult, even for larger countries; and quite impossible for smaller. In Canada we have had to realize that in this sphere also, national freedom has to be qualified by the necessities of international co-operation. Those necessities quite effectively limit in practice our theoretically unlimited sovereignty. If we tried to act without reference to the position of others, we would soon discover that the national interest would be hurt rather than helped by the action we had taken.

It is, I suppose, not so easy for a country like the United States, with its tremendous economic power and its varied resources, with its high standard of living, and its enormous domestic market, to make the same discovery. Yet it is essential for the United States to draw the right international conclusions from her dominating economic and creditor position in the world. If the wrong ones are drawn, the free world coalition is unlikely to survive in any really effective way. International co-operation in the political field and international conflict in the economic field are not reconcilable. NATO agreement,

for instance, on collective military policies can hardly be carried out if there is disagreement on commercial and economic policies.

To take a concrete illustration: how can we expect Denmark, for instance to accept pressure to increase its NATO defence expenditures, if pressure is also successfully exerted at the same time by groups in the United States to exclude Denmark's dairy products on which she depends so much for that economic stability, which is the basis of her defence effort.

I could give another example nearer home. Canada is being urged, and quite rightly, by her colleagues in the North Atlantic coalition, including the United States, to develop defence industries and defence production. We are short of the electric power which is essential for this development, and yet are unable to secure a decision in Washington which would make new development of such power from the international rapids section of the St. Lawrence River possible.

There is a third and final aspect of this problem of international co-operation which I can merely mention; namely, the impossibility of divorcing it from the social and political ideals of the co-operating states. Co-operation is, of course, possible between states which have different forms of government. Indeed, such differences are not particularly important. What is important is that the governments and peoples concerned accept and apply the same basic principles of social and political belief and organization; that they uphold the fundamental freedoms of speech, of worship, of opinion; practice tolerance and the rule of law; support the dignity and worth of the individual and his right to immunity from persecution for holding unpopular views and for heresy.

It is difficult for co-operation to be deep and genuine between states and peoples which have not the same approach and the same devotion to these fundamental principles. It is true that in a crisis or emergency, fear of a common foe, or of a common danger can join people in a co-operative effort for their own salvation who normally would not be able or willing to work closely together. But that is an ephemeral bond of unity.

It is also true that we have this common danger now. As a result, fear has brought together states in a way, to an extent, and in a period of time which would not have been possible in more normal conditions. Fear, in fact, was one of the chief ingredients which brought about the formation of the North Atlantic association on its present broad basis of membership. Something more than fear will have to keep it going.

Fear and crisis, then provide no permanent or solid foundation for international co-operation or for the development of sound international organization. We must have something stronger and more enduring than that. That is why in NATO we are trying to build up an association which is better and deeper than a military alliance; one which will survive the crisis which, in the first instance, may have brought it into existence.

This association is now being subjected to new strains which may well determine its strength and its permanence. In the first four years of its existence it has stood the test of threat, bluster and direct political assault. It is now, apparently, to be subjected to the test of peaceful blandishment and disarming gestures.

The purpose in both cases may well be the same; to weaken the strength and unity of a group of free states, whose determination to come together and pool their growing strength for collective defence is, at the present time, the strongest obstacle to aggressive communist imperialism.

This co-operation, however, I repeat, must express itself in some more enduring form than a military association of sovereign states. If such a development is impracticable now on a broad international basis, then the way should be shown, and a good example given, by strengthening further the ties which have already drawn together the English-speaking members of the free world; ties of sentiment, history, geography and national self-interest.

However it may be done, on a broader or on a narrower basis; slowly and gradually through the evolution of events, or more speedily under the spur of fear and insecurity, the trend is towards closer co-operation and greater unity, especially between those states, such as the English-speaking ones, where the conditions already exist that make such a development natural and practicable.

The physical basis for such greater unity already exists, the political compulsion for it grows, the necessity for it on grounds of security and stability becomes more and more apparent. The facts of modern national life combine to minimize national boundaries and make unrealistic and out of date many of the ordinary manifestations of national sovereignty.

Professor Toynbee has recently shown us how the revolution in technology and communications has operated to "shrink the geography of the globe". The former English Channel, he writes, which was still an effective strategic obstacle as recently as 1940, has now become almost as invisible as the jet plane that now streaks across it at 40,000 feet and at 600 miles per hour. The British Isles have been reduced to the former dimensions, and have been parked in the former location of what used to be called the Channel Islands. North America has now succeeded Britain as an island moored between two oceans. The Atlantic Ocean is now the channel, and the West is now surrounded by the world.

It is as futile, and as dangerous, to ignore the effect of these changes on international political developments as it was for Canute to try to hold back the tides.

Will this inevitable development towards closer unity among the English-speaking and other free states be postponed by the removal of that fear of aggression from Soviet imperialism which, as I have said, has been one of its main incentives?

We do not know because we do not know whether anything has happened to make the danger more remote or the fear less menacing. Time alone will tell us whether any real change in Soviet policy has occurred or is likely to occur. The countries of the free world cannot, however, sit back and wait for time to bring its answers, in the hope that the answers will be happy ones. We must consider what our own policy should be, after the best analysis we can make of the circumstances we face. We must meet new situations as they develop, without being unduly elated or unduly excited by phenomena which should be interpreted as representing only a shift in tactics, designed to achieve the same old objectives in a new way; until results in action prove to us that there has been a real change in the direction of strategy and policy.

We should, I think, be unwise to alter our own policy of strengthening co-operation between countries of the free world on the likelihood that the members of the international communist conspiracy will, in the near future, enter whole-heartedly into the peaceful and friendly family of nations. It would be folly to think that it would be safe now or in the months ahead to abandon or weaken the collective defensive arrangements which have been necessitated by the common danger we face.

It would, of course, be equally foolish not to seize any and every real chance to relax the tension that has existed since the last war, however slight and however temporary that relaxation might be. But we should never relax our vigilance. The Russians are very fond of that word "vigilance". It is a good word for us too.

We should be firm, then, and we should be vigilant. We should not be provocative and we should not be gullible. We should be ready to welcome changes for the better, and to meet genuine initiatives for peace in the future, as we have always done in the past, half way. But above all, we should not abandon our efforts to build up our defence - military, economic and moral; or be lured away by some mirage from the policy of strengthening the co-operation and increasing the unity of the nations of the free world.

In this way we will not bring peace or security overnight; or the one co-operating free world of which we dream. But we shall at least have helped to create a situation of political confidence and physical strength; a basis on which the settlement of issues which now so tragically divide the world may one day become possible.