

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

56/18

SOME ASPECTS OF CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Excerpts from a speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, in the House of Commons, August 1, 1956.

In the House in January last, I made a fairly comprehensive statement on some of the major aspects of our policy. At that time I dealt more particularly with an analysis, in so far as we were able to make it, of the recent changes in Soviet leadership. I discussed the situation in the Middle East and also, at that time in January, the situation in the Far East.

So far as the latter subject is concerned, there has been no substantial change in the situation in the Far East since I spoke in January; nor has there been any change in Canadian policy with respect to it. That situation, particularly in and about the Formosan straits, remains potentially dangerous as long as two Chinese armies face each other only four or five miles apart, but it has not in recent weeks or even in recent months deteriorated.

The Middle East - Suez

So far as the situation in the Middle East is concerned, the long and bitter dispute between the State of Israel and its Arab neighbours continues. That situation, while still tense, has not—and this is as far, I think, as anyone would dare go,—has not grown worse since I talked about it last. Incidents, which continue on the frontiers and which are likely to continue in the present atmosphere, have not, at least, exploded into war. The United Nations Secretary-General in two visits to the area has made a useful and constructive effort to lessen tension in that area, and by his intervention he has, I think, succeeded in strengthening the truce. I know that on the cease-fire and the truce which he has helped to strengthen he hopes to build an arrangement which will be more permanent.

I think we can also pay tribute at this time to the activities of the United Nations Truce Commission in Palestine, in which several Canadian officers are now serving. That Commission is playing a courageous and selfless part in difficult

and indeed--as we know from the tragic incident of last week--often in dangerous circumstances. It is operating under the objective, patient and very efficient leadership of a Canadian, General Burns, whose work, I think, deserves the highest commendation on the part of all those who are genuinely interested in establishing security and a just peace in that part of the world. Certainly there is not peace there yet, for there has been no political settlement made between the contending parties. That must come if there is to be peace, because in the long run such a political settlement under the United Nations, rather than arms, will be the foundation of security for Israel and the Arab States.

In recent days a new situation—I was going to say "a new crisis"—has developed there in connection with the Suez Canal. A sudden arbitrary move on the part of the Egyptian Government has aroused fears that the right to use this international waterway in peace and war without discrimination may be prejudiced, a right which, as Hon. Members know, is guaranteed by an international treaty. Far more than the nationalization, or, if you like, the expropriation, of the Suez Canal Company is at stake in this matter; it is the future use for all nations without arbitrary or unnecessary interference of an essential international artery of trade and of communications, a waterway which was constructed by international agreement and with international co-operation and is now maintained, and operated internationally.

As Hon. Members know, steps are being taken at the moment in London, by three powers very directly and importantly affected by the Egyptian decision, to bring about a satisfactory solution to this problem, the problem created by this action of the Egyptian Government, by establishing some form of permanent international control for this international waterway, by which the legitimate rights of all countries can be protected. Until the results of this London meeting are available—and the meeting has not concluded yet—I think I should say nothing more about this matter, except possibly to express the support of our government for the principle of such international control with the countries having the greatest interest in the operation of the canal sharing in that control, preferably, if this turns out to be practicable, under the aegis of the United Nations.

Relations with Soviet Union

The third subject I dealt with last January is one which will occupy our attention and at times our anxieties, namely, the relations between the Soviet Union and the coalition of free states in which Canada is playing a part. In so far as the possibility of an all-out war is concerned, I think it can be said, as it has been said on more than one occasion, that we are now reaching, if we have not already reached, a deadlock of mutual deterrence through the certainty of mutual destruction. That is in a sense, I suppose, effective but it does mean reliance by both sides on the fear brought about by thermo-nuclear power used for destructive purposes. Therefore national

security and international peace are becoming merely the probability and the hope that we will get through any year without being blown to bits.

At the very same time that we rely on this deterrence, and we have to rely on it, there is a frantic search going on on both sides for the intercontinental ballistic missile which will remove or certainly will minimize this mutual deterrence by the discovery of an annihilating weapon against which, if used aggressively, there may be no defence or indeed no warning. Therefore, I do not think any of us can get very much permanent comfort out of a security resting on a balance of terror. Indeed, in that situation there are certain advantages possessed by the Soviet Union. With its despotic government, without the restraints of public opinion, it can, if it so desires, use this situation for political blackmail in peacetime and for what have been called brush fire wars which would throw on our side the responsibility of converting these limited wars into thermo-nuclear ones.

That possible situation certainly has a bearing both on our defence and on our diplomatic policies and it leads me to the conclusion that atomic defence and atomic deterrence are not enough. It also leads me to stress the importance of diplomatic defences, of political unity on our side, of economic strength, of moral purpose. These things are becoming more and more important as developments occur, but while we seek them on our side the drive to extend Soviet influence by a wide variety of means still continues.

The emphasis now in tactics and perhaps in policy has been shifted, I think, since the new leadership came into power in Moscow from the military to the economic and the political. How much this shift represents a change of heart and how much is a revision of thinking forced upon Moscow by the H-bomb and the strength and unity of NATO, I am not prepared to say. I think that the latter factor, our strength, may have been if not the dominating at least a very important consideration in any changes that have taken place.

But whatever the reason, the Soviet Union may now have decided to abandon for the time being at least the open and direct use of armed force for the extension of its influence lest this should lead to the outbreak of global and thermo-nuclear war. Yet while such a thermonuclear war is recognized by the Soviet Union, as it is by us, as a calamity of unthinkable proportions, nevertheless until such time as a condition of greater mutual trust has been established between the two worlds any weakening in the defensive capabilities of the free democracies might provide a serious temptation to the Soviet Union to revert to the use of armed force for the pursuit of policy. They certainly have the capacity for this. Their tactics may have changed but their military strength has been maintained. Indeed, their industrial strength has been greatly increased and that industrial and economic strength is now becoming an important agent of their

foreign policy. The armed strength of the Soviet Union, which is now in process of being revamped and modernized, is a central fact which I suggest we cannot and must not ignore, especially when we consider our own defence plans and defence policies.

Mr. Khrushchev, speaking at the recent 20th party congress in Moscow, said:

We must resolve to take all measures necessary to strengthen further the defence potential of our socialist state.

It is well to remember this when we read of Soviet proposals to demobilize soldiers and when we receive appeals to take it easy and to throw away our arms because the danger has now disappeared. This strengthening, moreover, applies not merely to the Soviet State itself but to what the Soviet leaders call—and they never seem to weary of referring to it—the international camp of socialism, something which, of course, is quite peaceful and respectable although our own coalitions are always referred to by them as aggressive military blocs.

Therefore, I think that all Members will agree with me that we in the Western world must remain on guard. But while all this is true, and it certainly is true, I think it is also true that since the death of Stalin the Soviet Government and the Soviet regime have begun to eliminate some of the more objectionable features of both their foreign and domestic policies. There have been relaxations at home, and as a result I believe that certain internal pressures may be developing in Russia which could have a restraining influence on the activities of the Soviet leaders. These Russian leaders may have started a train of events which, under normal conditions, should be welcome to the bulk of their population with whom the dynamism of revolutions has probably run down. That process may become increasingly difficult to reverse at home if it is permitted to gain momentum there, but it is certainly not likely to lead, as we sometimes hopefully think, to parliamentary democracy or to any kind of democracy as we understand it because that is possible in a communist state and Russia under its new leaders remains determinedly communist.

Also it is too soon to say, I think, that irresistible forces of freedom have been set in motion, and that this means a great triumph for the Western world. Indeed, these relaxations and their results, both at home and among their satellite communities, may frighten the new rulers who may try to reverse the trend, and out of this effort a new Stalin, Khrushchev or somebody else may arise as the old Stalin arose out of the ruins of the new economic policy in the twenties. This accession of one man to power is consistent both with the Slav tradition of autocratic rule and the communist doctrine of what they call democratic centralism.

So we would be wise, I think, to welcome and exploit any changes that seem for the better in both domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union without exaggerating their extent or being bedazzled or deceived by them. At the same time, we must

not be too tightly bound by the analysis which we made of Soviet policy under the Stalin regime, nor must we leave the initiative in the present period always to the new Soviet leaders, and they are adept, indeed, in taking advantage of the initiative.

But one thing we can be sure of, that any changes of this character, and there certainly have been some, are not the result of weakness or lack of confidence of the new rulers in the future of the Soviet system. They are certainly as fanatical on that score as ever Stalin or his contemporaries were. Let us not be deceived by the illusion—I think we are in the process of tearing it away—that the Soviets are a backward people, 150 million feudal, downtrodden peasants in an oxcart civilization because, as we know, nothing could be further from the truth. We are beginning to appreciate that fact as more of us visit the Soviet Union. It is true that in that country individuals have not the luxuries which we consider to be necessities nor often even the necessities which we take as a matter of course. But the regime there has converted the poverty of the people into the power of the state. On individual deprivation they have built great national strength and great national confidence and pride. Two United States commentators are not always too encouraging in their prognosis of what is going to happen. The Alsop brothers have warned us that we had better drop the favourite Western parlour game of searching for imaginary Soviet weakness. In an article which one of them wrote a few weeks ago he had this to say:

... it is one of history's little jokes that this demonstration of the Soviet society's superior efficiency, on its terms,—

That is the terms of centralized, autocratic, communist power and control.

—should come at a moment when the Western societies are also demonstrating their superior efficiency on their terms, in the form of Britain's all-embracing welfare society and America's gorged plenty. But history does not suggest, alas, that great power contests can be won by free false teeth or even by platoons of air-conditioned Cadillacs.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, this strength and power of the Soviet under its new leaders has not been affected as I see it, by the de-Stalinization of the regime. In fact, while Stalin has been repudiated, the essentials of Stalinism remain. We know what they are: one party-despotic government; control of every expression of free thought and free action by that government; induced fear and hostility to every form of non-communist rule, especially through education; subordination of the individual to the ruling communist group; unqualified belief in the ultimate overthrow of free democracy by communism; and refusal of any form of political freedom to subject or satellite peoples who are incorporated into the Russian political system for power political purposes, except on the basis of complete acceptance of the rule of the communist junta in Moscow itself.

It may be of developing significance—I hope it is—that there have been signs of change in this latter situation in the satellite border states. But there is no sign of change in respect of the absorption of subject peoples like the Ukrainians and the Balts inside the communist centralized empire. While they and other subject peoples remain under the heel of Moscow, we certainly have the right to reject any protestations by the leaders in Moscow of their belief in self-government or the rights of peoples. Indeed, this Russian system is a new colonialism which is far more terrible, far more reactionary and far more widespread than was any form of colonial rule in history. Moreover, it is practised by men who have managed to get too many other men to accept them as champions of national freedom against the old colonialism which is now fast disappearing. Their claims to such a role in twentieth century development of national freedom represent one of the greatest perversions in history.

Then finally, Stanlinism meant the use of communist parties in non-communist states as agents of Moscow policies. These parties I think have been shaken by the overthrow of their great god Stalin; but they are recovering from this shock and they are now beginning to rally with traditional submission—as so often in the past—to the new dictates from Moscow and to become its agents as before. Their attitude to this change that has taken place will be a conclusive test whether they have any claims to national allegiance or national status at all or whether they are merely, as they were formerly, the tools of Moscow for any purpose that Moscow may decide to follow.

Hence a question which has exercised us in the past is, I think, exercising us even more at the present time. The question to which I refer is this. Have the Moscow communist leaders abandoned the cult not only of personality, as they claim, but the cult of international revolution, of the violent overthrow of our system? They, of course, insist that there is no such cult, no such design, or no such danger. Khrushchev, Shepilov and the others, it is true, have admitted—indeed they have insisted—that the capitalist and the socialist-communist systems cannot be reconciled, that one or the other must go; and they are confident that it will not be the communist system that will go. But, they add, this can be done peacefully. As Mr. Khrushchev put it in the twentieth party congress in Moscow, and his words were repeated by other Soviet leaders on that occasion:

There is nothing more absurd than the fiction that people are forced to take the path of communism under pressure from without. We are confident that the ideas of communism will triumph and no "iron curtains" or barriers erected by the bourgeois reactionaries can halt their spread to more and more millions.

That is the fairy tale, namely that these things develop from within, peacefully and without force. The fact is, as we all know, that no single country in history has become communist by

the declared will of its people. In every case force was used and force was decisive. Mr. Khrushchev really let the cat out of the bag last February when he wrote—and some of his colleagues repeated it at the last party congress—as follows:

Of course, in those countries where capitalism is still strong, where it has in its hands an enormous military-police apparatus, there the serious opposition of the reactionary forces is inevitable. There the transition to socialism will take place in conditions of sharp class, revolutionary struggle.

What this means, in plain English, is that communism will use force when it considers it necessary to do so, and if it can, in order to destroy parliamentary democracy and establish the dictatorship of the communist party. In effect, the new position in Moscow is exactly the same as it was when Stalin, some years ago, said that the communist parties would be quite happy to achieve power by parliamentary means, by peaceful means, but that they would use force if they had to and in any event they would achieve power peacefully for the same purposes as if they had achieved it by force.

A question arising out of this which concerns us in this country and in other countries, is this. Does this mean that Moscow is still willing and anxious to assist any and every foreign communist party in its revolutionary plans, in its determination to overthrow free parliamentary government? That, Mr. Chairman, seems to me to be a vital question, the test of Soviet sincerity. It is for them to demonstrate that they are not concerned now with international revolution. I do not expect—nor can any of us—that these people in Moscow and elsewhere should abandon their revolutionary slogans. That probably would be too much to hope for. But we can expect, and indeed we can insist as a test of good faith, that they show that in fact they are keeping out of our domestic affairs. We have no assurance on this score in this country or in other countries. Nor have we any reason to believe, changing to another aspect of Soviet policy, that they have abandoned or weakened in any respect what has been for some years now the primary objective of Soviet policy, the weakening and destruction of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO is still a major target for Soviet attack; that is still the great tribute to its value and strength. It certainly should counsel us to preserve that strength.

Re-assessment in NATO

So far as the military side of this question is concerned it may well be, as has been indicated, that new developments both political and strategic may make a reassessment of NATO's plans and NATO's defence policies desirable. It may even make desirable some reassessment of plans and strategy to meet new circumstances. But that, I suggest, must not imply any weakening of NATO's deterrent and defensive forces.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, I think it is important, indeed I think it is essential, that this reassessment and any changes which may result from it should be made inside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and should be the result of collective discussion and collective agreement. Unilateral decisions, without such discussion or agreement, would weaken and indeed might even destroy NATO. We must then work together as members of this coalition, if unity and strength are to be preserved. That is the very essence of the NATO concept, and without it NATO is not likely to last very long. Yet, this kind of close and continuous co-operation may be more difficult now in NATO than it has been, now that the fear of direct all out military aggression against Western Europe seems to have lessened. That is one of the dangers confronting us. It is also, Mr. Chairman, the reason why the non-military aspects of co-operation are becoming more and more important. Indeed that form of co-operation, and we are beginning I think to recognize this more and more, is an important aspect of collective defence in the new situation.

I hope that the committee of three which has been set up by NATO will be able to make some recommendations in this field which will strengthen this side of NATO. This committee hopes to be able to finish its work and make its report some time in October.

The United Nations--disarmament

But while, Mr. Chairman--this will be the last matter that I will be discussing in my general statement--NATO is important and is essential to our security and the development of the Atlantic community, the United Nations, with all its disappointments and its weaknesses as well as with all its accomplishments and its strengths, remains the basis of our general international policy. One of the most important things to be discussed through the United Nations now is, of course, disarmament. As members of the committee know, the Sub-Committee of the United Nations. Committee on Disarmament, of which Canada has for some years now been a member, met in London last Spring and the Western side did produce proposals at that meeting which provided for the limitation and reduction of armaments by stages under control in each stage. It is also true that at that time it was proposed on our side that at the beginning of the second stage there should be a limitation on nuclear tests, a matter which is of very great and understandable interest to all of us, a limitation of nuclear tests supervised by a special branch of the international control organ.

At the meeting comprehensive agreement was not possible, and therefore an effort was made to bring about a more limited agreement as the first stage to making a more comprehensive agreement. The more limited agreement would have dealt primarily with conventional forces, but there was also a provision dealing with nuclear tests. But agreement on that was also not possible. Therefore, the Sub-Committee reported in July to the full Committee in New York and its report, one

must admit, was one of progress only in a strictly academic and possibly parliamentary sense. In July the full Committee met and at this meeting, at which Canada was represented by my colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the four Western members of the Sub-Committee introduced a resolution reaffirming the six basic principles which they accepted for a disarmament convention. I think it is important, in view of the interest in this matter, that these six basic principles be put on the record. I believe they have been found acceptable by a great many other countries.

They are:

1. A disarmament programme should proceed by stages. Progress from one stage to another must depend upon the satisfactory execution of the preceding stage and upon the development of confidence through the settlement of major political problems.
2. The programme should begin, under effective international control, with significant reductions in armed forces to such levels as are feasible. There should be corresponding reductions in conventional armaments and in military expenditures. Further reductions would be carried out as world conditions improved.
3. The programme should provide that, at an appropriate stage and under proper safeguards, the buildup of stockpiles of nuclear weapons would be stopped and all future production of nuclear material would be devoted to peaceful uses. These would also be a limitation before that took place, of nuclear tests.
4. The programme should provide for a strong control organization with inspection rights, including aerial reconnaissance, operating from the outset and developing in parallel with the disarmament measure.
5. Preliminary demonstrations of inspection methods on a limited scale would help to develop an effective control system and could bring nearer a general agreement on a disarmament programme.
6. Finally, there should be provision made for the suspension of the programme, in whole or in part, if a major state failed to carry out its obligation or if a threat of peace under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should occur.

Well that, Mr. Chairman, is the position taken by the West at the recent meeting. I emphasize that in that position, which we have supported, even a partial agreement must contain some nuclear components. The representative of the United Kingdom at this committee in New York went even farther and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom repeated in essence the other day in the House of Commons what Mr. Nutting said on this point in New York. Mr. Nutting said:

If limitation of nuclear test explosions is not possible under a disarmament agreement, we are prepared to try other methods, without delay, and without waiting for agreement on a comprehensive disarmament programme.

This means that while the abolition of tests would be part of a broader agreement, the limitation of tests could begin independent of the achievement of any such broader agreement. I can say, Mr. Chairman, that we warmly support that position taken by the United Kingdom. We feel that it is of the most vital importance to press ahead both with arms limitations and with political settlements wherever there is any hope of reaching such a settlement with the other side. To adopt any other policy would be to accept the proposition that security rests, and must continue to rest, merely on the fear of common annihilation. That policy--some people call it realism, but I think it is realism based on despair--is not a policy which I am sure will commend itself to the members of this committee, or indeed to the people of Canada. A substitute for that policy which may be essential at the present time for the avoidance of war something which is even more permanent and in the long run more satisfactory, would be a policy of mutual agreement, mutual trust and mutual co-operation. I hope that in the effort to reach that objective the Canadian Government will play a good part, and I am quite sure that if it succeeds in playing such a part it will have the support not only of all Members of this House but of the people of Canada.

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