



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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No. 65/26 THREE LINES OF APPROACH TO CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Notes for an Address by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, at a Concert
Celebrating the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the
Ukrainian Canadian Committee in Winnipeg, on October 10,
1965.

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to thank you and other members of the Executive of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee for the invitation you extended to me to attend the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your organization. I am very pleased to be present on such an important occasion and to be able to greet all of you who are taking part in the celebration.

In looking back over the activities of these 25 years, you will undoubtedly derive great satisfaction from the accomplishments of your organization in helping to preserve the finest in Ukrainian traditions.

The contribution of this important element to Canada's national life dates back much longer, of course, to the time, almost 75 years ago, when Ukrainian settlers first came to Canada. Their devotion to the centuries-old culture of their homeland enabled them to transplant it successfully in Canadian soil.

You, as the descendants of the first settlers, have given your first allegiance to Canada and your devotion to the general traditions on which this country is based. You have combined with these loyalties the preservation, in pride and dignity, of unique cultural values from European civilization, which are of interest and benefit to us all. I can speak for Canadians of other origins in commending you for the contribution which you are thereby making to our national life.

I am also particularly aware, from contacts with your representatives, of the keen interest shown in world affairs. You have undoubtedly reviewed your own activities of the past 25 years in the light of world developments during that period. It might be appropriate, therefore, for me to indicate the part played by our own country.

First, pending the attainment of universal collective security, we must maintain regional security, strengthen those traditional associations with other free nations on which a good deal of world security and progress depends and pursue all the normal interests, such as trade and immigration, on which our own national well-being has also depended.

Second, at the same time, we must pursue vigorously in the United Nations the objectives of peace, economic and social welfare and human rights. We must cultivate friendly relations with the newly-independent nations and with all states in the spirit of enlightened internationalism.

Third, Canada and like-minded nations must take all opportunities in direct relations with the Communist nations to make our intentions clear, to respond to changes in the Communist world which offer possibilities of a more normal relationship and to advance specific interests of trade, information and protection of individuals. In this way, some of the basic tensions affecting the world generally may be lessened.

Most aspects of the external policies of the Canadian Government can be related to one or more of these basic requirements. Some of the more important of these policies might be mentioned by way of illustration.

The North Atlantic Alliance, which Canada helped to create, has completed 16 years of existence, and there is general agreement among the members that the need for such a defensive association remains very great. With the security and self-confidence which this Alliance provided for the area it covered, Western Europe has effected a remarkable recovery from the effects of the war. The nations of Western Europe have gone ahead with the North American members of the Alliance to make their contribution to security and welfare elsewhere in the world.

There are, as you know, debates and disagreements within the Alliance about the exact nature of the organization required to fulfill the purposes of the agreement, about the degree of integration of forces required and about control of nuclear weapons. These questions pose major problems of policy; they also provide evidence of the seriousness with which members view matters affecting their security and of their desire to have the structure of the Alliance reflect changing conditions. In spite of differences over method and procedure, all NATO leaders are agreed about the danger of aggression which makes an alliance imperative.

A few days ago, I had the pleasure of meeting the Secretary-General of NATO, Signor Brosio, in New York and of discussing matters of mutual interest with him. I shall have the privilege of acting as Honorary President at the next NATO Council meeting in December. I can testify, therefore, to the importance which is attached by the Government to a relationship among nations which transcends the idea of a mere military alliance and will continue to develop, we trust, into a permanent association of peoples with common traditions and ideals. I can also testify to the basic unity of purpose of the Alliance.

Our defence links with the United States are closely related to our NATO commitments. Since we are looking back together over 25 years of Canadian and world affairs, we might recall another significant anniversary. On August 18 of this year, the Honorable Averell Harriman represented the United States Government and I represented the Canadian Government in a ceremony at Ogdensburg, New York, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the declaration on defence partnership between Canada and the United States made in that city by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister King.

We made use of this occasion on behalf of our two governments to reaffirm the necessity of continuing to co-operate intimately in the defence of our continent within the broader framework provided by our joint membership in NATO.

These, then, are a few examples of our response to the first of those imperatives of foreign policy, that of securing regional security and reinforcing traditional associations.

It has always been clear to us, however, that we could never protect our own interests properly or help to obtain the type of international community we wanted if we limited our efforts substantially to the Atlantic, North American or Commonwealth areas or associations. The experience of the past pointed to the necessity of collective effort at a universal level in an increasingly inter-dependent world. The very associations I have mentioned logically demanded action on a wider scale, because ultimately none of their objectives can be met in any other way.

A little over two weeks ago, the Canadian Government set before the General Assembly of the United Nations what it considered to be the most urgent and important objectives of the organization in the current session. In communicating these views to the General Assembly in a speech on September 24, I pointed out that the Assembly had an opportunity, after a year and a half of frustration and inaction arising from a dispute over peace-keeping costs, to enter into a new period of creative action by dealing with the most challenging of the problems before it. I should like to emphasize again what these problems are.

It is our deep conviction that, although we would fight to defend ourselves, a new world war could mean the end of our civilization. For this reason, the prevention of war by deterrent force and by all the means of collective action or conciliation remains our highest duty. The war in Vietnam and the dangerous situation involving India and Pakistan are not only tragic in themselves but could initiate wider conflict.

The United Nations had to take urgent action to deal with the dispute between India and Pakistan and, in doing so, has had, as you know, the declared support and practical assistance of Canada. In the Vietnam conflict, we appealed to the Assembly to use whatever influence it had to bring about a negotiated settlement which would guarantee that the people concerned would be able to proceed, with the support and encouragement of the international community, to choose for themselves the path they wish to follow.

Bringing open conflicts to an end is only one part of the United Nations role, of course. We have stressed the necessity of dealing with underlying causes and of strengthening the ability of the United Nations to act decisively at an earlier stage in conciliation, and also as soon as local conditions make peace-keeping intervention essential.

In the field of disarmament, we have not allowed the obvious difficulties impeding rapid accomplishment of general disarmament to deter us from trying to make progress with various collateral measures which could lessen tension and create confidence. Canada has worked with other Western and unaligned nations to introduce measures limiting the spread of nuclear weapons, stopping all test explosions and finding methods of verifying explosions.

On the basis of our own experience in all United Nations peace-keeping operations and of our recent initiative in stimulating study of the technical problems involved, we have stressed before the Assembly a number of principles concerning the costs of such operations and the respective responsibilities of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We have insisted that progress in this field was obligatory if members were to live up to the commitments they had undertaken in signing the Charter.

Finally, our response to our global obligations must include action on a broad front in the field of economic development. The Canadian statement expressed concern at the widening gap between the per capita incomes of the developing and developed countries and called for resolute action by members, collectively and individually, to increase the flow of development assistance. We have ourselves doubled our bilateral aid programme last year and we expect to increase it again this year. In addition to programmes already under way in Colombo Plan countries and in other Commonwealth and French-speaking African states, we have now made more funds available for development in Latin America and we expect to join the Asian Development Bank.

In speaking of this international assault on poverty, ignorance, disease and injustice, I know that I can count on the sympathy of Canadians. How many people have arrived here in the course of our history seeking relief from these very conditions! How much hard work and hardship have been necessary to make our land flourish! Our relations with the rest of the world must always take into account the economic and social facts of great concern to the developing countries.

But there are other causes, too, which move us because of our own experience, our own deepest convictions and the rich cultural fabric of our nations.

In speaking to the General Assembly I emphasized these convictions to the delegates of other nations in these words:

"We cannot, however, concentrate only on material progress as if this were the only key to human welfare. The dignity and unique value of the human spirit are even more fundamental and can flourish only under conditions of equality and freedom.

"The determination we, therefore, express in the Charter 'to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights' is a vital part of the total crusade in which we are engaged. Canadians attach particular importance to the maintenance and extension of individual rights, to the protection of the institutions of family and faith, and to the removal of all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, sex or religion.

"Our concern for human rights arises also from our diverse national origins. Many Canadians still retain a profound interest in the lives of their kinsmen in other lands. Where respect for human rights and freedom and self-determination is not fully assured or where it is deliberately denied, Canadians deplore these conditions -- believing, as we do, that those rights and freedoms must be of universal application.

"Because of these convictions, we are particularly concerned that the role of the United Nations in the human rights field should be enhanced, and that recent proposals to this effect should be pursued. We support the appointment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights as proposed by Costa Rica, and will join in co-sponsoring any resolution to this effect. Human rights are of universal significance; their violation must be of universal concern."

In conveying these beliefs of the present Government to the United Nations, I was able to maintain, in terms appropriate to the present world situation, a Canadian emphasis on the universal validity of certain principles of human rights, political freedom and self-determination.

On other occasions, in the period we are considering, under the stress of events which shocked the Canadian public, Canadian leaders have made their devotion to those principles clear. I am thinking, for example, of the eloquent warning delivered by Mr. Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, before the General Assembly in 1949, at a time when a Communist takeover, or the fear of it, darkened the lives of many. Not all the "impassioned eloquence" of Soviet representatives, he said:

"... can convince us that these peoples, of their free will, happily and confidently have entrusted their destinies and their persons to the Soviet Union.... The fact that the Soviet Government finds it necessary to cut off the inhabitants of its territories from all normal contacts with other countries is to us convincing evidence to the contrary."

I recall the words of the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, then Prime Minister, when he wrote to Marshal Bulganin in November 1956 about the tragic events in Hungary. "I can assure you," he wrote, "that I speak for the whole people of Canada in expressing our horror at the suffering of the Hungarian people as a result of their efforts to obtain the freedom to choose their own type of government.... The Government and people of Canada have no desire to influence the form of government chosen by the peoples of Eastern Europe. Our only aim is that they should be free to do so and that the governments so chosen should steer their own independent courses...."

Since the times I am referring to, there have been some improvements. There have been greater contacts with the West and easier internal conditions. There has developed among the smaller Communist nations in Eastern Europe a greater freedom of action in defining national interests. The appeals of Western leaders have played a part in this process. And yet situations remain which are the most shocking examples of injustice and which throw a peculiar light on what Communist leaders may mean by coexistence.

Last year, in visiting Berlin, I had occasion to see how the most elementary human rights of free movement and family association are denied by that Wall which cuts a great city in half. In speaking at the West Berlin City Hall, I said that the Wall appeared to me, a Canadian, as the "cruel and desperate act of a regime which feared, for good reason, competition with a free society and could only resort to force".

In expressing their attachment to what they consider to be elementary principles of social justice, Canadian leaders have been influenced by the experience and insight of many groups making up Canadian society -- the Ukrainians, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Hungarians, Roumanians and many others who have had vivid experience of injustice. But I am not pledging the faith of the Government to any principles of human rights which do not also emerge from the beliefs of the founding races - the British and French, - or from the beliefs of other races who have entered into our society. The expression of strong feeling and the choice of a wise national policy to give effective expression to that feeling can only come from a national consensus of conviction and wise judgment.

I turn, therefore, to the third theme of my address, to the question of how, under present circumstances, we are to conduct our direct relations with Communist countries. The differences between us and them are only too obvious. Is there hope of achieving some amelioration of conditions which could be significant in the terms of the convictions which you and other Canadians share?

The firm insistence on maintaining our own defensive capacity is part of the relationship between ourselves and the Communist countries, but we cannot sit back behind our lines and neglect opportunities to lessen tension and change some political realities. Nor can we, unfortunately, count on common membership in the United Nations to achieve a better understanding without a considerable supplementary effort in bilateral relations.

In this area we cannot, of course, allow ourselves to lose sight of the stubborn issues still at stake between us and the Communist world: fundamental issues such as German reunification, European security and general and controlled disarmament. There is little visible evidence that the Communist world will be ready to co-operate in resolving these issues in the near future. These are hard facts.

But it is equally a fact that, since the Cuban crisis of 1962, there has been a tendency, at least on the part of the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries of Eastern Europe, to work towards a certain easing of tension -- the development of an atmosphere in which a realistic policy on both sides could produce some positive results.

The Soviet Union clearly expects favourable results for itself from this development, since we can be sure that its leaders are acting from a shrewd calculation of self-interest. We, too, intend to be hard-headed in dealing with the opportunities and risks involved. If we are cool-headed as well in assessing the realities that lie behind propaganda and ideological language, there can grow up a recognition on both sides of common interests on which further agreements could eventually be based.

We can see this happening in the growing willingness of Communist countries to expand trade, contacts and exchanges with the rest of the world. In the past, many Communist leaders feared that it would be dangerous for their own people to be allowed too much contact with the more economically-advanced countries of the non-Communist world. But now some Communist countries begin to see that they have to take that risk since those who isolate themselves from technological and scientific advances may fall further behind.

There are also fields in which we can learn from them. On both sides, there are advantages in knowing what is going on in the technical field abroad, regardless of social and political systems. As a result, growing numbers of Communist leaders have recognized that they can no longer maintain the traditional barriers and we Canadians who have always prided ourselves on our open society are, of course, prepared to open our doors on a basis of reciprocity.

Certainly, state authorities in Communist countries try to extract immediate political benefits from these growing contacts, sometimes in ways unacceptable to us. This is where a hard-headed assertion of our interest is our best defence. We can and will co-operate if the advantages are reciprocal. But we do not intend to allow political action by visitors here, for example, when anything comparable is obviously ruled out for Canadian visitors to their countries. Nevertheless, experience shows that, in practice, over and above the immediate benefits which trade and exchanges confer on both sides, such contacts have set in motion long-term trends whose importance could be very great; in the short term, we must have no illusions about quick results.

In considering the value to us in the long term of contacts with the Communist countries, we must take account of some developments within Communist society, particularly within the Soviet Union. It seems obvious that the Soviet Government has become sensitive not only about some questions of individual rights or about real economic incentives or more relaxed conditions for artistic expression but also about the position of various racial groups within the country.

It is not unnatural that this should happen, since theoretical Communism can scarcely solve all problems of this latter type. If these developments can be attributed not only to internal causes but also partly to outside influence, then we might well consider what could be the consequences for the racial groups I have just mentioned of prolonged and more varied contacts with non-Communist countries. I have no doubt of our ability, given the reciprocity in contacts on which we insist, to manifest our values in peaceful competition in such a way that the desired humanization of Communist societies could be advanced. We should, therefore, seek appropriate contacts because there are discernible long-term benefits in terms of the humanistic goals to which you and I and most Canadians subscribe.

Even under present political conditions, we do whatever is possible to make limited advances towards those goals. Through diplomatic channels we try to effect improvements in contacts and communications and in the solution of the personal problems of individuals and families.

I am happy to be able to tell you that we have, over the past 18 months, been able to make distinct progress toward resolving the long-standing and tragic problem of the reunification of families separated by the Second World War and its aftermath. Our consultations with the Soviet Government have met with a positive response, with the result that the number of people coming from the Soviet Union to rejoin their families in Canada after years of separation has more than doubled.

Many families remain divided still, but we are maintaining our efforts, encouraged by the emerging Soviet readiness to work with us in eliminating this legacy of past miseries. We can be hopeful that before long those still waiting will be happily reunited at last. Such an outcome will not only resolve a tragic human problem, but will do much to consolidate the basis for sounder relations between Canada and the Soviet Union.

In considering questions of particular interest to groups in Canada, we are very much aware also of their profound attachment to the culture of their homeland and could only lament, as an irreparable loss, the destruction by fire of the library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences at Kiev last year. I am sure, however, that interested groups will lose no opportunity of maintaining contact with the abiding elements in that culture and with their kinsmen.

In ending my remarks on some of the main aspects of Canadian external policy, I return to the question which must be in the minds of all of us in thinking back over the past 25 years. Have we applied the lessons of our experience in the formulation of policy and are we in a better position than we were in the years immediately preceding and following the Second World War? The answer is an unequivocal yes.

I do not want to underestimate the dangers and disappointments of the contemporary world or the magnitude of unsolved problems. I do say, however, that the response of the Canadian people and of successive governments to the challenge of world affairs has been the right one.

We have recognized common dangers in the world, admitted our dependence on others in meeting those dangers and thus developed our real strength in collective action. We have made a contribution to world affairs arising less from traditional attributes of power than from a desire to achieve a world community in which all nations could find a secure and prosperous place. We have met dangers and serious problems with a vigorous but controlled response. We can all take some pride in this.

Beyond our own borders, I am heartened to reflect that Canada is associated with nations in every part of the world genuinely committed to peaceful change, to the rights we cherish and to welfare sought co-operatively. Regardless of their individual size, wealth or power, these nations have in their hands the moral leadership of the world.