



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 65/18

NEW WORLD, NEW PROBLEMS

An Address by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Manufacturers Association, Toronto, June 8, 1965.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is credited with the saying that "all things flow". He was the first to identify the nature of things with change.

Of course, change goes on all the time. But I take it that that is not quite what you had in mind when you asked me to speak about a "new world" giving rise to "new problems". And I think you were right in suggesting that what we are confronted with in our day goes beyond the traditional conceptions of change.

I suppose that man has always looked towards progress, towards a gradual betterment of his condition. But what is new -- as James Hester, the President of New York University, recently put it -- is that "the expectation of change -- rapid, revolutionary change -- is becoming part of our frame of mind". What is new are the tensions and the ferments that go with the expectation of dynamic change in our lifetime.

And so, if we look at the world around us, we can genuinely say that it is a "new world". It is also a paradoxical world. In one sense, we can say that the world that matters has expanded. Of course, as Arnold Toynbee said in one of his volumes, "the West has never been all of the world that matters". Nevertheless, it is a fact that, for many centuries, the West was pretty well the only part of the world that entered into our practical concerns. That is no longer the case.

In another sense, we can say that we live in a contracting world. A world in which there has not only been a virtual "eclipse of distance" but also a tremendous compression in the scale of time. A world in which the whole pace of experience has been quickened. A world in which communication is nearly instantaneous and in which knowledge and ideas are disseminated with a rapidity unprecedented in history.

This revolution in communications has had the effect, as James Killian put it so well in a recent essay, of "making the entire human community an 'interacting whole', a global neighbourhood, wherein almost all people find themselves involved together, their aspirations mutually stimulated and amplified, and their tragedies, triumphs... and anxieties transmitted to all".

In that, perhaps, lies the resolution of the paradox of which I spoke a moment ago. In the process of contraction, the whole world has come within the focus of meaningful reality.

Time and space are not the only elements over which our control has been greatly enhanced. Almost wherever we look, whether it be the conquest of outer space or the great advances in medicine or the release of power from the atom or the control of the processes of production by automation, science and technology have enabled us to increase our mastery over the human environment. They have unlocked vast new promises and opportunities which have never before been within the grasp of man.

In short, change within the last generation or so has been on such a spectacular scale that we can fairly speak of living in a "new world". But change has also, inevitably, brought in its wake "new problems". And it is important -- as Senator Fulbright reminded us in his excellent little book -- that we tackle these "new problems" on the basis not of old myths but of the new realities.

I should like to begin by saying something about the realities of power in the modern world. We were used to think of power as an aggregate of certain factors -- the dimensions of a country, the size of its population, the wealth of its resources. But those are not the ingredients of power today. Any country, once it has developed an independent nuclear capability with the means of delivering the weapons in its nuclear arsenal, has acquired power which does not necessarily bear any definable relation to either size or resources.

The nature of modern power rests in the capacity of a country to inflict an unacceptable degree of damage on an opponent. This presents us with another paradox. For it means that, as we are coming within the range of absolute power, absolute security recedes from the realm of practical possibility.

It also means that power on that scale has made war obsolete as an instrument of policy. It has done that because the application of such power is disproportionate to almost any policy objective we can conceive. As Henry Kissinger has argued, "a basic discontinuity is established when a statesman is compelled to risk tens of millions of lives instead of thousands, when his decision no longer involves the loss of a province but the survival of society itself".

Those, at least, are the assumptions that lie behind the conception of modern nuclear power as a deterrent. But this is a very tenuous basis on which to construct a system of international security, for two reasons. First, because this kind of power is irrelevant to most of the situations of conflict and instability with which we are confronted in the world today. And second, because the assumptions themselves on which the whole conception of the nuclear deterrent is based are not necessarily immutable.

I say that because the prospect of proliferation is always with us and we cannot be sure that the nuclear powers of tomorrow will form the same appreciation of the elemental risks inherent in the use of nuclear weapons as

the present nuclear powers have shown. This points up the need for early progress towards an agreement which would have the effect of arresting the further spread of independent nuclear capabilities. As I have recently suggested, such an agreement will probably have to form part of a wider complex of measures. It may have to include undertakings by the nuclear powers to reduce -- and, in due course, eliminate -- their own stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It may also have to include guarantees to non-nuclear powers in return for their agreement to forego the option of developing an independent nuclear capability.

But I should go on to say that, just as the prospects of security in the present-day world do not lie in a primary reliance on the instruments of military power, so disarmament itself can only go part of the way towards solving the security equation. As I see it, there is a concurrent need not only to develop international machinery for maintaining peace and security but to expand the whole range of positive efforts which are directed at strengthening -- as David Lilienthal put it some years ago -- "the sense of community and commonwealth of interest in the world in which lies the real hope of making weapons less relevant".

This sense of community of interest is another significant feature of the "new world" we are discussing. It is sometimes suggested that it was something that developed logically and sensibly in the wake of two destructive world wars. But it is also, of course, a direct result of changes in the whole configuration of the world in which we live. Whether we look at the facts of security, whether we look at the facts of technology, or whether we look at the facts of social and economic development, we arrive at the same conclusion. And that conclusion is that we are becoming increasingly interdependent.

This interdependence finds expression in a degree of international organization which is surely unprecedented in human history. Over the past 20 years we have co-operated internationally over the whole range of human concerns and we have created the machinery to serve as the focus of that co-operation. We have co-operated to preserve peace and security; we have co-operated to meet the problems of poverty, hunger and disease; we have co-operated to spread the benefits of science and education; we have co-operated to define and defend the rights of man. In short, we have created a whole new dimension in international relations.

The cornerstone of this structure has been and continues to be the United Nations. At this very moment, the United Nations is going through a serious crisis. It is a crisis which has developed over the matter of peace keeping. In essence, however, it is a political and constitutional crisis. Its outcome will be important for the whole future direction of the United Nations.

What concerns me in the present context are the implications of this crisis for international organization as such. I am particularly concerned that we should not draw false conclusions on the basis of false premises.

In a recent article, Professor Hans Morgenthau suggested that there was an "insoluble contradiction between national sovereignty and an effective international organization". This is not a premise to which I can wholly subscribe. Nor did the framers of the United Nations Charter subscribe to it. On the contrary, they explicitly assumed that the United Nations would be "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members".

In essence, therefore, the United Nations is and remains an instrument of governments. If it is to be a dynamic instrument, as the late Dag Hammarskjöld saw it, this will depend on the continuing commitment of its member governments to a dynamic world order. On the face of it, I can see nothing irreconcilable between such a commitment and the conception of national sovereignty. Indeed, I should think that if the facts of interdependence are realistically accepted a dynamic world order becomes a matter of enlightened national interest to all nations.

There are those who feel, with Senator Fulbright, that "the sovereign nation can no longer serve as the ultimate unit of personal loyalty and responsibility" and there can be no doubt that this conception has a firm basis in fact. At the same time, we cannot discount the continuing hold which nationalism has on men's minds. Indeed, Senator Fulbright himself regards it as "the most powerful single force in the world politics of the twentieth century".

I am not here concerned with an assessment of nationalism as such. Certainly, we cannot say that we disparage the resurgent sense of national identity and interest in Eastern Europe for example. Nor can we discount the contribution which nationalism is making to the nation-building process in scores of new countries. These countries have been propelled to independent nationhood on the current of nationalism and nationalism is now helping them to achieve cohesion by developing a body of national attitudes, institutions and ideals.

What we have to recognize, I think, is that nationalism is a source of energy which can be tapped for good or for ill. So long as it does not cut across the development of a sensible international system of order and security, so long as it does not inhibit international co-operation in the attainment of common ends, so long as it does not exclude a broadening of the frontiers of loyalty -- there is no intrinsic reason why nationalism should not be harnessed to the "new realities".

Nationalism has been one of the forces at work in the essentially bi-polar world that took shape in the immediate post-war period. It has been one of the forces which have helped to bring about a greater diffusion of political and economic power in the world. We are having to take account of that diffusion in the North Atlantic partnership. We also know that the trend towards what is sometimes called "polycentrism" has had its impact on the Soviet world. And it has substantially altered the conditions of non-alignment, which has been the course of policy adopted by most of the new nations on attaining independence.

The non-aligned countries are deeply concerned about the prospect of a new division of the world. As President Nasser pointed out at the Cairo Conference last autumn, the pattern of division that is now emerging is between "a bloc of the poor and a bloc of the wealthy; a bloc of the advanced nations and a bloc of the developing nations; a bloc of the North with the rights of prosperity and a bloc of the South living in deprivation; a bloc of whites and a bloc of coloured". If we are honest with ourselves, as we must be, we are forced to acknowledge that this is something that is already in the process of happening. But it is a process which we cannot allow to go very much further.

Over the past 20 years, some 60 new countries have entered upon the world stage. We sometimes tend to assume that, when these new countries have achieved their independence, the international community can safely divest itself of responsibility for their well-being. This is a false assumption. It is false because independence does not in any perceptible way diminish the problems these countries are facing. On the contrary, more often than not, independence has accelerated the pressure for change and heightened impatience with the pace at which it is possible for the new countries to move forward.

Barbara Ward has put this point as well as it can be put:

"... let us have no doubt about this. So far, we have been living through the more comfortable phase of transformation in the under-developed areas; we have seen them during a time when their concentrated effort to get rid of colonialism gave them political unity and a sense of national purpose which they may well lack now that independence is achieved. Now that they are running their own affairs, all the grim problems of life face them in the raw: their bounding birth-rates, their lack of capital, their desperate poverty and, above all, the rising expectations of their own people. Every leader who has led his nation to the overthrow of Western influence or colonial rule is now faced with the stark problem: 'What next'?"

The main responsibility for providing an answer to that problem will, of course, continue to lie with the new countries themselves. But the international community also has an abiding responsibility to help these countries carry forward the process of development, to help close the widening gap between affluence and poverty. We have accepted that kind of responsibility in our own communities and societies and have devised the means for discharging it. Surely, in a contracting world, it makes good sense for us to accept an extension of that responsibility to those of our global neighbours who are in need of help.

This is something that is in our own enlightened self-interest. What we have to realize is that the development process in the new countries involves immense dislocations in the whole structure of society. We also have to realize that people in these countries are aware that conditions of life can be changed in this generation if the will and the resources to bring about those changes are effectively mobilized. In such a situation, failure to make visible progress will inevitably lead to frustration.

If we fail to help the governments of the new countries to meet the urgent aspirations of their peoples, we must accept the fact that others will exploit our failure to do so. And we must also, I think, accept the fact that we shall not be able to construct any viable system of international peace and security on a basis of social injustice and economic stagnation over a large part of the world.

Much is already being done by way of meeting the challenge that is represented by poverty in the world around us. In particular, substantial resources are being channelled each year by way of aid into the development efforts of the new countries. But we have to recognize that aid - however important - is only one part of the answer. We have to recognize that these countries continue to rely on their own export earnings for the bulk of their foreign-exchange requirements. It is right, therefore, that international attention should now be focussed more and more on the contribution which trade can -- and must -- make to the development process.

The new countries argue that, if trade is to be able to make its full contribution, the rules of trade must be reviewed in the light of their relevance to the problem of development. They feel that the present rules do not make adequate allowance for the lack of economic power of the developing countries. They say that, in our own internal arrangements, we have accepted the principle that fairness demands that, in certain cases, some should receive more than the share due to them under the strict laws of the market and that others should receive less. They would like to see that principle applied in the international context. They look to a new international division of labour which would be more responsive to their own special needs.

A good beginning has now been made in that direction. But more will undoubtedly need to be done for the new countries in the years ahead. And I should ask you to consider whether this, too, is not in our own long-term interest. If we accept the fact that high levels of production and employment depend on the existence of adequate demand, can we really afford to ignore the millions upon millions of disenfranchised consumers in the developing regions of the world whose potential demand upon our productive facilities remains to be unlocked? Surely, the realities of interdependence operate in this area as they do in others. Surely they have taught us that any depressed area, anywhere, is "a drag on the prosperity and well-being of every country in the world".

That concludes my conspectus of the new world and its problems. I need hardly say that it has immensely complicated the matter of policy-making. This is because a changing world demands a much greater flexibility of policy than ever before; because the significant area to which policy must be relevant has immeasurably expanded; and because the problems that are the concern of policy in this age of rapid advance on all fronts are themselves becoming highly complex and sophisticated. As I yield the general ground I have covered in my introduction to this conference, I look forward to the contributions of my colleagues who will be looking at some of these problems in sharper focus.