

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



CANADA

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 64/14

DIPLOMACY FOR PEACE

Convocation Address by the Secretary of State
for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin,
at the Commencement Service, Wayne State University,
Detroit, Michigan, June 18, 1964

It is a great privilege for me to be here this evening and to participate in this Convocation. Since its foundation in 1868, Wayne State University has compiled a distinguished record of service to the cause of higher education in the United States and it is for me a particular honour to be awarded a degree from this great university.

All over the United States and Canada, this is the season when people of my generation are telling graduating classes, with a good deal of solemnity, that they are going out into a difficult and dangerous world.

I wish I could tell you it wasn't true. I wish I could tell you, as my generation of graduating students were told by some of my fellow Canadians, that in North America we live in a fireproof house isolated by our geography and our history from the need to worry about other peoples' wars. Yet by the time you reach graduation in this year of grace 1964, you have all heard, so many times that you may begin to believe it, that there is no place on this planet, and certainly not on this continent, that would be immune from nuclear war.

You have probably also heard too many speakers warn you of the danger that man's new knowledge has unleashed forces he has neither the strength of character nor the consciousness to control. These forces, in other words, may not only run away with man but destroy him. Perhaps some of you are getting just a little allergic to the repetition of this alarmist advice for the perfectly healthy reason that you do not see what you can really do about it anyway.

Keys to Hell and Heaven

At the same time you are already fully aware that your generation are being given the keys not only to a nuclear hell but to a material heaven also, inaccessible to any previous generation on this earth. With the incredible releases of energy, electrical as well as nuclear, made available to man for the first time in this century, it is already possible that by the end of the century (that is within the life time of most of you), freedom from

hunger will have been attained for humanity in spite of the enormous increase that we expect in its numbers to something like six billion people. If this freedom can really be attained for the hungry third of humanity, it would be the most revolutionary material achievement since the dawn of human history.

Both these great keys to the world's heaven and hell will work. We do not know which will be used - it will be one or the other. We are all in God's hands, but these great keys have today been placed in our hands; and it is the task of our diplomacy to do all that is humanly possible to serve the peace. Some of you have just graduated and are perhaps still undecided what you want to do with the lives now opening ahead of you. All you can do something significant for the peace of the world by spending ten minutes a day taking an intelligent interest in the foreign policy of your country, instead of glued to the television. Some of you can do more than that. Even though only a few of you may perhaps become diplomats, I want to talk to you about diplomacy and the opportunities for service which diplomacy affords those who can keep a balance between ideals and realities. Although I can only speak as the foreign minister of Canada about Canadian diplomacy, I expect much of what I will have to say has a bearing upon your diplomacy also, because in these days there is only one kind of diplomacy for free societies and that is what I would bluntly call "peace diplomacy" - since the only other kind would have to be called "suicide diplomacy". For if we agree that there is no alternative to peace, then - whatever stop-gap military measures may be needed here and there to prevent a situation from deteriorating into full-scale war - we must agree also that there is no alternative, sooner or later, to negotiations, or in other words to diplomacy.

Indeed, I would go so far as to say that, since the Cuban confrontation in October 1962, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the Russians have also come to pretty much the same conclusions about nuclear warfare as we have. But there is one major grouping, the Chinese Communists, that do not come to these sensible conclusions. No doubt they would agree that nuclear warfare is clearly undesirable, but the risk is by no means excluded by a war whose leader, Mao Tse-tung, in 1957 analyzed the problem in this way. He looked back to the First World War and pointed out that after it was over the Soviet Union and about 200 million Communists had emerged. After the Second World War, according to his analysis, the Communist world had grown to 900 millions. Therefore, he goes on, after the third world war the same trend will probably be accentuated, and there will then not be enough non-Communists left to make very much. So he foresees, if there is another war, the emergence of a Communist civilization. This is a concept which even Mr. Khrushchov has derided as recently as January last year, when he scoffed at those who dreamed of building a Communist world "on the ruins of a world deserted and poisoned by nuclear fallout".

Conventional Labels Falsify

In addition to disagreeing with the Russians about the unacceptability of nuclear war, the Chinese Communists, it is now apparent, are actually engaged in a determined take-over bid to wrest the leadership of the Communist parties at least of Asia and Africa, away from the Russians. In these circumstances you see how misleading it is for our diplomacy and our thought to be shackled with the old labels that we still use too often, such as "East and West",

the reality is that we are today dealing with at least two Communist worlds, not one. Even with regard to the Soviet world, there is, in fact, a great deal more diversity, just as there is in the West, than we could ever have expected a few years ago.

In objecting that the term "East-West relations" is no longer adequate, I am not merely playing with words. The words are not important in themselves. But by sticking to a phrase that has outlived its usefulness we limit or distort our thought, often unconsciously; ideas are very important, in diplomacy and indeed in the world. One aspect of diplomacy is the battle for the minds of men; and that battle is fought with ideas. Therefore let us make sure our weapons, our ideas, are not obsolete.

The "Iron Curtain" is another conventional diplomatic tag in need of revision. For 15 years after the war it conveyed vividly a bitter truth. Even today, if you were to visit Berlin as I did last month, you would see the Wall - that horrible monument to the failure of the Communist system, erected to make it easier to shoot people fleeing to freedom from East Berlin. The Communists could not accept the scandal that 2,000 to 4,000 of their people each week should be risking their lives to get out of the "People's Paradise". So they built the Wall; and it is indeed an Iron Curtain of barbed wire and blood.

Rust on the Iron Curtain

However, I think we can all rejoice that elsewhere the Iron Curtain is getting pretty rusty in spots - so much so that it is no longer a very apt description of the frontiers which divide the Western world from the European Communist countries. That there are still important barriers, no one would deny; but there is no longer today the impenetrable wall that the term Iron Curtain suggests. Indeed, there is now a passage of persons and ideas, both ways, sufficient to make Stalin turn over in his second resting place.

Another term we might think about bringing up to date is the expression "satellites" used to describe the countries which are supposed to be cringing behind the Iron Curtain. It suggests regimes of slavish obedience to Moscow, who follow every dictate of the master's voice in every aspect of their internal and foreign policy - in other words, a group of countries marked by a uniformity which blots out such national characteristics as at one time existed. If this was ever true, it is certainly much less apparent today, though it would, of course, be an exaggeration to assert that the Eastern European regimes have wide freedom of action or that their leaders (as distinct from their peoples) wish to break away from the U.S.S.R., though Tito may not be the last to make the break. These countries are linked by a military treaty with the Soviet Union; their economic systems are closely integrated; and they profess the same kind of Communist credo as the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, within these limits, in the last few years the Eastern European countries have applied - and have been allowed to apply - their Communism in a way which takes into account more than heretofore the differing conditions and national characteristics of the peoples concerned. They have also been allowed more trade and other contacts with the West.

Western Response Intelligent

Western diplomacy has, I think, reacted intelligently to the new opportunities offered in this situation - opportunities for contacts and understanding, for a supple, diversified range of policies to meet each case, instead of an ineffective, precast formula to "roll back the Iron Curtain" that increases fears behind it and therefore only serves to re-establish the Curtain in all its severity. I only wish that in respect of Far Eastern policy there was as wide a measure of agreement on both sides of the Atlantic as there now is about our policies towards Eastern Europe, for, where there are serious differences among us, the left hand may undo what the right hand is labouring to accomplish. The result is waste of effort, bitterness, disunity and danger.

To return to Europe, however, the idea of Europe - and not just Western Europe - still has power. President Johnson said last month that lasting peace depends on "rebuilding an all-European civilization within its historic boundaries". I expect that this is true, especially if in the process of remaking Europe as a whole we can take a corresponding step towards an Atlantic community. For it is fundamental to a Canadian point of view, and I hope also to yours - that the lesson of interdependence is applied not on a continental basis alone but by moving towards an Atlantic community.

The Western Europeans are on the move. They want to transcend their warring national histories; and the pull of this big idea is felt also in Eastern Europe. But can there be any doubt that free Europe has far more in common with us in North America than it has with the Communist countries of Eastern Europe?

All that is so far lacking is sufficient interest and will on the other side of the Atlantic to move from a military alliance towards building a community with Western Europe. We in Canada, and you in the United States, will pay a high price for our shortsightedness if, because we did not see the opportunity, the tides of continentalism on both sides of the Atlantic come crashing in again, bringing new kinds of nationalism and isolationism in their wake.

Diplomacy - the "peace diplomacy" our countries are trying to follow - requires a broad vision and a sense of history. But it also demands day-by-day attention to the dangers, large and small, that threaten the path to peace. The big dangers, like Cuba in October 1962, must be confronted by the big powers, by you. But the more frequent little dangers, that could grow into big ones if not checked, are where we come in.

Peace Role of Canada

Canada has in fact taken an active part in almost every United Nations peace-keeping operation since they began. We are a middle power, as the phrase goes, neither colonial nor yet aggressively anti-colonial, neither too strong nor too weak. So when the United Nations fire alarm sounds, it happens that Canada is usually asked to go.

Two weeks ago, in Ottawa, your Assistant Secretary of State for International Affairs, Mr. Harlan Cleveland, told the annual meeting of our United Nations Association: "Since 1948, Canada has assigned Canadians to every peace-keeping operation of the UN except one - the only country which has done so". Yes, we have responded in Kashmir, in Israel, Gaza, the Congo, Yemen, and now Cyprus. It is a long and expensive list; it is politically difficult at home because of the risks; and we get small thanks abroad for our work. We do it not for the glory but as our duty, since there are not many who are both willing and able to move in quickly with an effective force. Only five other countries have so far joined us in earmarking part of our regular Army as stand-by forces ready at any time to go anywhere we may agree to send them at the request of the United Nations and the governments concerned.

At the same time we have been playing a similar international role politically as one of the three members of the Truce Commissions in Indochina for ten long and frustrating years.

To keep up the momentum of the peace-keeping idea, we are trying to take steps outside the UN, since efforts to make progress in the UN have for years been blocked by the Soviet veto, to ensure that in future there may be less improvising and strain and risk in this recurring UN need. To this end, we are planning to hold a conference in Canada later this year of those countries with experience of peace-keeping operations. United Nations peace keeping, we feel, has come to stay. It is now no longer an exceptional phenomenon but a regular feature of the United Nations repertory of possible answers to a dangerous situation or threat to the peace. In the world of tomorrow it is probably the key to both international and even national security.

Disarmament Essential to Peace

Of all the roles of peace diplomacy, however, it is disarmament that tackles the central problem most directly. Here again Canada has, since I first went to the League of Nations in Geneva 28 years ago, been playing a serious and constructive part in the collective effort to achieve disarmament on terms that would reduce rather than increase present risks for all. On these criteria, we believe it would be folly simply to give up the nuclear deterrent, unilaterally or on both sides, without some means of knowing that there was no cheating. We therefore want inspection and control, not before disarmament but progressing with it as required technically for the satisfaction of both parties to know pledges are, in fact, being kept. Progress is really being made, painfully slowly it is true, but I think already the improvement in Western relations with the Soviet Union which I mentioned earlier is due in part to the patience and sincerity of our collective work on disarmament over the years.

But it is due to something more. Since the war, we in the West have shown the Asian and African majority of the world's peoples that it is possible for white rulers to leave before they have to, and for independence - economic as well as political - to be given to hundreds of millions of these ancient peoples who were civilized long before North America had been, as we say, "discovered". It is also a salutary lesson for some people to see that Western countries are willing to give large amounts of aid for the economic development,

even of non-aligned countries, without exacting any kind of trade, political or military concession in return. Aid alone is not enough, but aid and trade together are building bridges for our ideas in Asia and Africa and indeed among all the developing countries. With this "third world" there is no more important aspect of our modern diplomacy. It is helping to reduce the gap and therefore the tensions between the rich and the poor in the world - and this gap may, in the long run, be as great a source of worry for the peace of the world as the gap between the Communist and non-Communist worlds is today.

I have, I hope, spoken long enough to earn my degree, for which I am deeply grateful, and yet not too long to make you wish you had not conferred this honour upon me. Before I leave you, may I add just one thought to another that must have been an important one to the late President Kennedy, since he put it in his first inaugural. You remember his great exhortation, not only to Americans -- "do not ask what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". If you add to this - and I am sure it is in the spirit of your great President - that we should also ask what our countries can do for the peace of the world, you have a hierarchy of service that can stand as the ideal of diplomacy for all free peoples everywhere.

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