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THE NORTH ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, delivered at a meeting of the Commercial Club at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on January 26, 1952.

You undoubtedly have heard of the elderly member of the British House of Lords who dreamt that he was making a speech in that august chamber, and then woke up and found that he was. Well, I have dreamt for a long time of the day when I would be able to speak in Halifax. Now I am awake and speaking. I hope the result will not be to put you to sleep!

I am, for the time being, the member of the Government whose special ministerial responsibility is External Affairs and the international relations of our country. The work of a Foreign Office and the diplomatic service was once considered to be somewhat glamorous and not too exacting. The glamour has departed (there is nothing romantic about being called a pig by Mr. Vishinsky), and any leisure that might have once existed has gone too. Furthermore, the curtain of mystery that previously surrounded diplomacy and foreign relations, sometimes with deplorable results - but sometimes with good - has been torn away. The green baize table, the subdued lights, the formal attire, and the courteous confidential consultations in the conference room have been replaced by the United Nations committee with its business-suited members wrangling, sometimes violently, not only in front of 200 or 300 newspapermen, which is terrifying enough, but in front of a battery of television cameras, which is far worse.

I am not sure that we haven't overdone our deep rooted suspicion of secret diplomacy. I base my feeling on my experiences of the other kind during the last five or six years. Calm and quiet and confidential deliberation could usefully be tried in connection with some of the problems that face the world today. But I am not too sanguine that we will be given the opportunity. The Russians, who are secretive enough in other respects, have now become for propaganda purposes, the ardent champions of open covenants openly arrived at; or, rather, open covenants, openly argued - because we don't arrive at many; at least many which are unanimously accepted.

There is another change in diplomacy which affects even the international relations of the smallest countries. In 1952 quite literally "the world is our parish", and everything that happens, from Cape Resolution to Cape Horn, or from Korea to the Azores, has some interest and importance for every country, and that includes Canada.

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The international scene on which we have to gaze as we enter 1952 is not a particularly bright one though whether you think it is better or worse depends on whether you think the glass is half full, or half emptied. There is more in the picture to discourage than to encourage. So much of the news is depressing. I even read the other day that the leaning tower of Pisa would collapse by 2115 A.D. I also read in the same newspaper that a United States Congressman had proposed that Canada should be bought from Great Britain and annexed to the United States, a proposal which if it were to be taken seriously would be very funny. When I was tempted - as I was - in reading that report to get all hot and bothered over such ignorance, the temptation was removed in part at least by the Canadian headlines to the story which called the Congressman a Senator. Ignorance of other countries is not the exclusive preserve of any one country. But such ignorance is a shaky foundation for respect and understanding. That so far as understanding is concerned applies also to ignorance and indifference of the foreign policy of one's own country. This, in its turn, means that those who are concerned directly with the formation of such policy should tell the people to whom they are responsible what they are trying to do. That is one reason why I am here today.

In a sense, though not in any exact sense, the foreign policy of Canada can be divided into two categories. The first part is concerned with the preservation of peace and the establishment of security through collective international action. This includes our policy within the United Nations and within NATO. The other category deals more specifically with relations with other states. Very often, I admit, the two categories overlap and run into each other.

In the latter category we think primarily of our relations within the Commonwealth and with the United States of America. As far as the former is concerned, the Commonwealth association is as loose as ever, and, I think, as strong as ever. It should be and is a first principle of Canadian policy to maintain and strengthen that association, under the Crown, which is and will remain not only its symbol, but which also demonstrates the continuity of our own history and the depth of its roots. With the United Kingdom, which is the centre and heart of the Commonwealth, our political relations were never better. Of course, we deplore the present financial situation which prevents the fullest realization of the trade possibilities between our two countries. At the same time, we appreciate and try to understand the difficulties of the United Kingdom in this regard, difficulties which arise in large part from the unparalleled sacrifices that the British have had to make in two wars, and from the burden that they are bearing at the present time. We can only hope that these difficulties will be overcome and that the short-range plans essential for this purpose will not weaken the possibilities of strengthening further long-range economic and trade relationships between us.

Our Commonwealth of Nations is continually renewing its usefulness in different forms. It is of particular value at the present time in that it acts, through its three Asian members, as a bridge, one of the few bridges, between the East and the West. We cannot, I think, stress too much or too often the importance of our family of nations in this regard. It is one of the great new services that the Commonwealth is giving the world.

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So far as the United States is concerned, there are no two countries in the world whose relations are closer and more intimate than those between our two countries. We have our problems and our differences and will continue to have them; problems which arise not only from strictly bilateral questions, but also, and this is new and important, others which derive from the position of the United States as the strong and courageous leader of the free world coalition of which Canada is a part. Naturally, as the United States possesses so much the greatest power in that coalition, and as its influence is correspondingly, and rightly, greater than the others, the rest of us are preoccupied, at times intensely preoccupied, as to how that power will be used and how that leadership will be exercised. This is, of course, a perfectly natural reaction. This actual disparity of power, however, has to be reconciled with the legal equality of all states inside the coalition. We are all free and equal in theory, and we cherish that theory on which our national freedom is based. So, naturally we speak and act as free states, not as the communist satellites in a Kremlin camp. I am quite sure that the United States would not have it otherwise, because otherwise our support would not be worth having. As Walter Lippmann put it the other day in his column:

> "For our own sakes we must wish to live among equals, among peoples who trust us but do not fear us, who work with us but do not fawn upon us. Only equals can really be trusted, only governments that speak candidly and do not say what they think we want to hear, what they believe will keep the dollars flowing. There is no health in satellitism, and even the most ruthless imperialism can never trust the satellite."

One problem for Canada in her relationship with the United States as the leader of our coalition, and it is sometimes a difficult one to solve, is to know when we should give up our own particular views in the interest of general agreement, and when we should persist in support of our own case even if it means an open disagreement of the kind which gives so much aid and comfort to the Communists. In seeking the right solution for difficulties of this kind there are many factors to be taken into consideration; the first is responsibility to our own people; a second is the impossibility of maintaining the peace in the face of the menace that confronts us if we do not maintain the unity of the groups; a third is recognition of the great part and the special responsibility that the United States is bearing in this effort for peace. I hope that in international matters, the Canadian voice will be frank and clear, and in a recognizable Canadian accent, but I hope also that it will be always possible for that voice to be in harmony with the other members of the chorus. This is not the time for solos or discordant notes if we can possibly avoid them.

This brings me to the other part of our foreign policy, that which concerns the role we are playing in the United Nations and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I have often talked about the United Nations, and, having attended not many weeks ago the Sixth Assembly, I could talk about it now for hours and not too cheerfully. However, today I will resist that temptation as I would like to say something about the more limited collective security system which we now know as NATO. In doing this, I would like to concentrate on one or two special aspects of NATO which are not always in our minds

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when we discuss this organization, what we usually think of as designed particularly in fact exclusively to prevent war by creating enough military strength among its members to act as a deterrent to aggression.

But there is another side to NATO, that of non-military co-operation. Here we are trying to lay the foundation of an association which will last far beyond the emergency which created it, and will go far deeper than a military alliance could ever go. This is the idea in our minds when we talk about building up the North Atlantic community.

That term "the North Atlantic community", has been widely used recently in speeches and editorials and there is a growing interest in the significance to be attached to it. Mr. Churchill, that towering and majestic figure, in the speech he made at the time of his recent visit to Ottawa, said that the North Atlantic Treaty was not only a solemn compact that was the surest guarantee of the prevention of war but also that "it is broadening out into the conception of the North Atlantic community of free nations, acting together not only for defence but for the welfare and happiness and progress of all the peoples of the free world."

But what do we mean by this term "North Atlantic community"? I admit it often seems to be vague and imprecise. As it concerns a basic movement in the affairs of men, it cannot, perhaps should not, be too rigidly defined.

I think, however, that three general meanings can be attributed to it. In one sense it is the feeling of sharing things in common that already exists among the peoples of Western Europe and North America, a feeling that we become more conscious of as the threat from Communist imperialism spreads and deepens. The Atlantic peoples have common traditional and spiritual values derived from the same Greek, Roman and Christian sources. They share a common culture and civilization. There already exists, therefore, a natural and permanent foundation for a community of interest and action.

In the second sense, the term may be applied to the process of closer intercourse and integration which we can readily detect is operating among the countries on both sides of the North Atlantic. This is a slow, almost instinctive development going on without being deliberately willed or planned.

Thirdly, the term is now being used increasingly to mean a deliberate and positive programme to speed up the creation of a working partnership between the governments and peoples of the countries concerned in order to serve better their common political, economic and security interests.

It is the third meaning, of a creative programme to strengthen the NATO association, that I would like to say a word or two about.

It is particularly appropriate that I should dwell a little on the developing North Atlantic community in speaking to a Halifax audience, for this historic port and city has played a large part in the affairs of the Atlantic community for two centuries. Indeed, no city in Canada is so closely linked with the destiny of the Atlantic seaboard. In peace and war, Halifax has made a great and honourable contribution

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to the security and prosperity of the Atlantic area and will, I know, continue to do so in the future.

The North Atlantic Treaty has been regarded mainly till now as the legal basis for building a defensive military alliance to protect the peace and deter aggression. This is, of course, the most urgent and immediate task confronting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and until our security is placed on a sure and unassailable basis, it is difficult to give nearly as much attention as we would like to other aspects of the Treaty. But apart from its short-term military aim, the Treaty has the long-term and important objective of promoting the economic stability and social well-being of the peoples of the countries concerned. This objective is laid down in Article 2 of the Treaty which has rightly been regarded as being largely of Canadian inspiration. NATO now has a Committee of five ministers which is directing its attention to the concrete steps that might be taken to implement this Article, including the co-ordination of foreign policies and means to promote the economic and social welfare of the peoples of the North Atlantic area.

What we are working on and for however is not some elaborate scheme of North Atlantic federation, which might distract us from the immediate needs of the joint defence programme, but rather for more efficient co-operative working arrangements and practices.

Up to the present, NATO has been regarded as an association of equal, sovereign states. But from time to time it is suggested that if we cannot have a formal federation, we should at least create some kind of central political executive authority. This, however, also presents its problems for the members of NATO. It may be that eventually we will decide to share and pool our national sovereignties in some kind of federation to a greater extent than we do at present, not only for the more effective and speedy building up of our common defences, but also to further our common political and economic interests. But this is not in the realm of practical politics at this time. At present therefore we should be and are more concerned with the reorganization and streamlining of NATO in its present form as an association of states. Our experience of the last two years shows that this is desirable and necessary. I hope that it will take place at the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Lisbon, so that in the future important decisions can be reached more speedily than at present, and necessary action taken without undue delay. As a matter of fact, some of those decisions will have to be made soon. One of the most important of these is that concerning the European army and its relation to NATO.

The European army is one aspect of a very important move, that towards European unity. There are those on this side of the Atlantic who, drawing false analogies with the American colonies of 200 years ago, are impatient with the progress that has been made in this direction. Far from being impatient, however, they should be pleased and surprised at how far this movement has gone. After all, the countries concerned are not new colonial settlements, but nations with long histories and a deep pride in those histories; nations which have had a separate existence for centuries which cannot easily be abandoned, as some appear to think, overnight.

In this movement towards European unity the position of Germany is all important. If she can be included in it -

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and I think she will be - without reviving German militarism, which we have so much reason to dread or exciting the fears and suspicions of her neighbours, then not only will we have added greatly to the defence of the West, under NATO, but a great step will have been taken to end the long and bloody quarrel between Gaul and Teuton.

It has been alleged that Great Britain by its aloof attitude is delaying these developments. It is true that the British - with their eyes across the ocean as well as across the Channel - have let it be known in no uncertain terms that they cannot become members of the European Defence community or the European Army. They will support it, they will work with it, but they will not join it. To adopt a slogan used once in a far different connection in this country, it is a case of "co-operation ever, amalgamation never".

I do not think that we have any right to quarrel with this decision of the United Kingdom which is her own, and not a Commonwealth decision especially as she is already making through NATO such an important contribution to the defence of Europe. The important thing is that union, the European Army, should be linked with NATO - closely linked - and steps to this end will, I hope, be taken at Lisbon. If this can be done, and it should be done, then North America, the British Isles and the Continental European group become the three parts of this growing and impressive whole, the Atlantic community. This is the grand design of the 20th century.

For Canada, it is, I think, the best solution from every point of view, political and economic and strategic. We support therefore, the move towards European unity, but not in a form separate from or divorced in any way from NATO. We understand the British reluctance to join the European Army, but we would be worried if that meant which it does not British withdrawal from the NATO forces in Europe. We would be reluctant to merge into a North American union, but we are happy to join the United States in a North Atlantic Organization, the members of which may get closer as the years go by.

In that broad grouping, with the United Kingdom, France and the United States, we can be comfortable and secure. We will be far happier there, if I may put it this way, than we ever could be in a double bed with any-one of the three. I hope this does not leave us open to the charge of polygamy!

These are all considerations that we have to keep in mind in working out the best policy for our country. Many of them are long-range and may even seem remote from the stark realities of immediate dangers.

Our grand design must not be allowed to obscure those dangers. That there are such dangers is obvious enough. In Europe, with growing NATO strength and unity, there is some improvement in the situation; some of the tense fear of immediate crisis has been lifted. It is true that against this there is greater worry in Europe about economic and social difficulties, which the Communists will, of course, exploit and try to increase. Yet, on the whole, the picture is somewhat brighter there than it was a year ago. In Asia, on the contrary, especially in Southeast Asia, where Communist

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aggression and subversion feed on poverty and despair and intense national feeling, the situation is menacing , and solutions for its problems are hard to find - and hard to apply. With NATO guarding Western Europe more and more effectively the centre of danger may now have shifted to Asia; to Indo-China, to Burma, to Malaya and to Korea, and at the moment perhaps most of all to the Middle East, in the Suez Canal zone..

So we will still require, in Canada, in the months ahead, strength and steadiness and a singleness of purpose in our foreign policy which will keep it above the claims of party, or section, or class. If we can achieve this with our friends of the free world then, we can look forward to the day when peace is more than a prayer in our hearts and has become a reality in our national and international life; when instead of a $5 billion programme for defence, we will have a $5 billion programme for the development and improvement of a country this Canada, whose dominion extends from sea to sea and which has before it as bright a destiny as any of the nations of this earth.

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