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ORIENTATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES TOWARDS A WORLD ORDER

An address by Mr. L. B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, at Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., May 17, 1947.

You all know, I'm sure, that feeling of virtue which comes from accepting an invitation to speak on some subject on which you have long felt you would like to do a solid piece of work; how distant the day seems; how infinite the opportunities appear, to collect, collate and marshall the ideas that have come and gone on that very subject over a period of years. You all know what happens - the sudden recognition that the "deadline" is here - that there is no further time; that the ideas and random notes are either unintelligible, illegible, or seem to have lost the inspiration you once thought they had - and when at last a few bare thoughts have been conscripted, they look for all the world like Falstaff's ragged army.

Well, I can't hope to disown them, so I might as well bring them on parade, knowing well that efforts to be profound - without the opportunity for solid research - tend to degenerate into excursions into the platitudinous.

Before parading my random thoughts, however, I would like to say how much of a pleasure, and indeed relief, it is to leave that dusty arena of the Applied Social Sciences which has been established at Lake Success, for the relative calm of a University like Syracuse; to examine with you one or two of the major political and economic problems which stand in the way of the establishment of a genuine world order.

It is particularly appropriate to be examining these problems in University surroundings, because the University has been in a very real sense the cradle of both the democratic state and of the idea of the world community. Any ex-professor like myself can recognize in the atmosphere of the "universitas magistrorum et scholarium", in the community of teachers and scholars, more of the essence of the universal community than is frequently visible to the harassed diplomat at the United Nations conference table. This is perhaps not to be wondered at, for the itinerant scholar of the middle - and all other - ages has always remained unimpressed by territorial boundaries or indeed other local ground rules. To him it was as natural and inevitable as the seasons, that social science should transcend national prejudices and national prides and work toward the larger order of the world community.

While the search for truth is above and beyond contemporary historical and geographical accidents, those accidents, however, often get in the way. Nor do they have the good sense to stay put for even a few centuries in order that the searcher may have time to observe them properly. Besides, the scholar, until comparatively recently, did not have the modern deluge of passports, identification cards, visas and all that, to draw these geographical and political hazards to his attention.

I am not attempting to paint a nostalgic picture of the past. I am only trying to point out that Universities have been engaged in the business of developing a universal point of view for a longer time than parliaments or congresses or soviets.

That there are still many sceptics who doubt whether these political assemblies are really contributing as much as they should to a "one world" outlook, is ample evidence that Universities still have a job to do. That they are trying to do it, our programme here today will testify.

I would like, if I may, to interject a personal word at this point and express my admiration for the work in this field which the University of Syracuse and its School of Citizenship and Public Affairs has done. My personal association with Syracuse has, I fear, been confined to encounters with some of your most stalwart athletes on the lacrosse field. But I know and am grateful for the emphasis you have placed and the work you have done on Canadian-American relationships. Those relations bear study in their connection with the larger field of international relations generally. Too often they are dismissed by graceful phrases about the "unguarded boundary" and "the hundred and twenty-five years of peace". Their real significance is deeper than that and lies in the fact, not that we have had peace - any one or any nation can keep the peace when there is nothing to quarrel about - but that we have had friction without fighting. In the past the interests of our two countries have often diverged, and even clashed, but the clash of interests has not degenerated into the clash of arms. We in Canada have, so we think, been more than once the victims of the play of forces between the United States and the United Kingdom. You may remember, for instance, the Alaska boundary award, by which Canada lost territory which she thought was hers and which was an arbitration in name only, because your President had let the British-Canadian side know that if he didn't get what he wanted by an arbitral decision, he would take it anyway. Canada was bitterly disappointed at the time over this decision, but no "terra irredenta" result. No Canadian now stands to attention, salutes, and sings a martial song every time the "Panhandle" is mentioned. The friendship between our two countries has become too strong to be spoilt by temporary set-backs. We have, in fact, acquired the habit of peace to such an extent that the idea of war between us has no meaning. The process by which this has been achieved is worth careful study by the social scientist.

May I add one further personal word. I can think of no better man to build on the traditions which he has inherited in Syracuse, than my friend Paul Appleby, who has already done so much - in a very practical way - to orient the social sciences to the world order.

Now I still retain enough of my academic training to be extremely tentative in discussing in the present company the subject you have given me. Scholars, while they can be very charitable towards human weaknesses, are notoriously tough on loose thinking. The method they like to adopt for avoiding one another's censure, I notice, is to put forward one or two hypothesis. I will do the same. But in this case not to avoid criticism - to look for it. The subject is just about the most important of our time and if any remarks I can make will provoke a more thorough examination of it, I will be more than content.

My first postulate, which must seem an obvious one, is that the great problem of our day, the problem of peace or war, is basically a political one. No one who has seriously followed the events of the last few years can dispute that. I am naturally not unaware of the extremely important economic and other factors which complicate the political problem. No one could attend the meetings of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and remain unaware of the other factors which are constantly bedeviling the hopes of a political solution. No one who from the early days of UNRRA has had some opportunity of observing what happens when we attempt to apply relatively pure economic solutions to critical problems of widespread human distress, and who has seen the political factor creep in and take over, can doubt that it is basically in the political area that a solution must be sought.

From time to time I have heard complaints that the very important work of the Economic and Social Council, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, World Health Organization and the

others do not attract the attention from the press and public which it deserves. The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Atomic Energy Commission get all the attention and the headlines. I think that this shows a very sound instinct on the part of press and public. Nor does it imply that we should neglect the work of the specialized agencies; work of great value, and even greater promise.

It is true, of course, that there can be no peace, and hence no order, universal or national, in a world half-fed, half-starved. It is also true that the welfare approach to international organization, through the successful functioning of specialist bodies designed to bring about a higher standard of life for all men, has great possibilities of progress and achievement. Nevertheless, there is no escape from the fact that freedom from want would hardly be worth achieving, even if it were possible, in a world which did not have freedom from war and the fear of war. This problem of war and peace is the central problem of our time; now more than ever since the harnessing of atomic science to the chariot of destruction has made total war, total destruction. Until it is solved, until the political keystone can be wrestled into place over the doorway of our international establishment, there is going to be a certain hesitancy on the part of people to pass through the archway - and for obvious reasons.

My first hypothesis then is that the problem of war and peace today is basically a political, even a spiritual one, and that it can never be solved by materialist remedies alone - whether Marxist or capitalist. If this is true, then the core of the problem is to be found first, in the relation of the individual to his state and secondly, in the relation of the state to the international order. The first I have not the time to discuss. When we consider the second we are faced at once with the seemingly impossible task of reconciling the absolute sovereignty of the state with the demands of interdependence in the community of nations; of reconciling loyalty to our own state with loyalty to all peoples. To anyone who has followed the proceedings of the Atomic Energy Commission, many of the pros and cons of this question will be painfully, if not agonizingly, familiar. But to me the answer is so clear that no time need be wasted in searching for it, though much time will elapse before it can be put into effect. The reconciliation is to be found in a voluntary surrender of some measure of sovereignty to a world authority in the interest of peace and security. I suggest that the social sciences should orient themselves in that direction and preach the doctrine of the necessity of this surrender, a surrender which at present is unacceptable to many states, especially to the most powerful ones who would substitute for it the principle of unanimity of the great powers, a principle which tends to find its implementation only in the lowest common denominator of international action - that is, inaction.

At the present time, in our world organization of the United Nations, we are committed to this principle of unanimity - the scarcest commodity in a hungry world - and we must now do what everyone has to do when he reaches a dead-end; retire, and look for another approach. We have to ask ourselves what function or functions a world authority should exist to perform and, as we find the answer to that, we have then to ask what contribution each of the member parts can bring to the performance of that function. The immediate function which the world authority should exist to perform, I have suggested, is the preservation of peace. This is not, of course, an end in itself. It is, however, essential to the performance of any other function. Peace - which is far more than the absence of war - must be established before international law and order can be established. The second function is that of providing for the progressive extension to nations and

individuals of justice within a framework of law. These two purposes, of a world order seem to me the only ones which have a hope of commanding the allegiance of those whose effort, sacrifice and vision will be necessary to bring it into being.

Now, when we ask what contribution each of the members of our United Nations can make to the performance of these functions, we come face to face with one of the difficult inheritances of the past. The modern aggregation of sovereign states, resulting from a series of historical and geographical accidents, lacking long term economic or political stability, are obviously incapable of being related in any way known to the social scientist to the effective performance of the functions I have mentioned.

We are, for instance, all conscious today of the anomalous position of sovereign states whose voting weight in an international organization is not paralleled by any moral or physical equivalent. We are further conscious of the fact that no state in the modern world, no matter how powerful, can be morally, physically, or even in the long run, economically, independent. I hope I shall not be accused here of overlooking the great contributions, moral, religious, scientific and cultural, which have been made by small peoples. I am not overlooking these facts, but they bear a surprisingly small relation to geographic boundaries and the territorial accidents of history. What we must seek is a solution which will increase the contribution of all peoples for our joint salvation by diminishing the limitations that are placed on their development by the shackles of the modern nation state. A solution to this conflict between the sanctity of inadequate geography as represented by most nation states and the functional or political principle of world interdependence must ultimately be found, or there can be no effective world order. The Prime Minister of Canada was, I think, the first contemporary leader of a government to espouse the idea of the functional principle as the operative one in international relationships. On July 9th, 1943, speaking in the Canadian House of Commons on the problems which were likely to face us in the post war period, he said:

"It is too early for me to attempt even a shadowy outline of the form of the international settlement, political and economic, which may follow the ending of hostilities. It may be useful, however, to say a word about one of its aspects. The strong bonds which have linked the United Nations into a working model of cooperation must be strengthened and developed for even greater use in the years of peace. It is perhaps an axiom of war that during actual hostilities methods must be improvised, secrecy must be observed, attention must be concentrated on victory. The time is approaching, however, when even before victory is won the concept of the United Nations will have to be embodied in some form of international organization. On the one hand, authority in international affairs must not be concentrated exclusively in the largest powers. On the other, authority cannot be divided equally among all the thirty or more sovereign states that comprise the United Nations, or all effective authority will disappear. A number of new international institutions are likely to be set up as a result of the war.

"In the view of the government, effective representations on these bodies should neither be restricted to the largest states nor necessarily extended to all states. Representation should be determined on a functional basis which will admit to full membership those countries, large or small, which have the greatest contribution to make to the particular object in question. In the world there are over sixty sovereign states. If they all have a nominally equal voice in international decisions, no effective decisions are likely to be taken.

Some compromise must be found between the theoretical equality of states and the practical necessity of limiting representation on international bodies to a workable number. That compromise can be discovered...by the adoption of the functional principle of representation. That principle, in turn, is likely to find many new expressions in the gigantic task of liberation, restoration and reconstruction."

There are remarkably few changes which I would like to make in that statement after almost four not uneventful years, because I believe profoundly in the principle which the Prime Minister of my country announced. Nevertheless, the experience of the United Nations has proved to be discouraging in regard to its acceptance. National prides, national sensitiveness, and other influences have been preponderant and representation on practically every United Nations agency, where a few had to be chosen from all, has been determined by other than functional consideration. I venture to make the rather pessimistic prediction that if the United Nations Assembly had to choose a committee for planting flowers in the grounds of Lake Success, the Big Powers would claim automatic representation and the others would be chosen on the basis, as they call it, of "equitable geographic representation", with two or three from Latin America. If the greatest botanist in the world were a delegate, he might have to be omitted because he came from the wrong country.

This difficulty, which I have put before you in a somewhat exaggerated form, springs from the legal equality of states and their actual inequality. One effort to overcome this difficulty is found in the developing tendency to classify states, not only as members of geographic blocs, but as great, middle or small. I must confess that I have never been much impressed with the "three-decker" international structure which is so loosely talked about today. Canada has, from time to time, been included in this structure as a middle power. I do not know, however, just what this means. In these international fields in which the Canadian people have functions to perform and the capacity to perform them, they should be, and we must find out how they can be, recognized in terms of their ability to deliver the goods. Those goods may be as tangible as wheat or uranium or military manpower, as intangible as a capacity for conciliation and compromise, or as influential as discoveries in the fields of science. You will note that most of the attributes I have mentioned do not come within the sphere of sheer physical power. I hope, therefore, I won't be accused of weighing influence in terms only of great natural resources or great populations, though I would be the last to deny that material factors ought to weigh very heavily indeed. What I am suggesting here is that we must find the relationship between the realities of moral and physical power and the principles governing representation in the world order we are talking about. That we have not made too much progress in this respect within the framework of the United Nations is not to be wondered at. The fact is, however, that no yard-stick has yet been developed which can even roughly equate the potential contribution of peoples with the representation of states in the world order. The social scientist of the University can do much in helping to find such a yard-stick.

This, and much else, remains to be done before all nations - or even a sufficient number of nations - will accept limitations on their sovereignty, within a framework of law, as a better guarantee of their interests and their security than insistence on the dubious advantages of full and individual autonomy in a world of international anarchy.

It seems to me at times that in our present form of international organization we are subsidizing relatively low forms of political development at the expense of relatively high ones. It seems

to me further that those of us who have achieved relatively high forms of political development within the concept of the nation state are now in danger of frustrating our task of building the world state, by failing to recognize not only that the absolutely sovereign nation state must be modified, but also that effective law must precede absolute justice. This idea I put forward is one which has, I think, an important bearing on the orientation of the social sciences toward a world order. It is an idea, however, which can easily be misunderstood and prostituted to base ends and I therefore advance it with some misgiving.

We seem at times unwilling to recognize that we may not be able to bring into being a world state complete with all the social gains that have been developed by the most advanced of the nation states. Our impatience causes us to make the best an obstacle in achieving the good. If my mythology is correct, I seem to remember that Athena sprang full armed from the head of Zeus. If my history is correct, this miracle has never happened since - and I, for one, would find it a little disconcerting if it were common practice.

I am not, of course, arguing for law based on injustice or that any system of law can be permanently and firmly established on any other foundation than justice. What I am suggesting is that in the initial stages of any new society the establishment of law, acceptable and effective law, is the only guarantee that people will have the opportunity to struggle for a greater and ever increasing measure of justice within the framework of law. This, of course, is one of the most difficult and dangerous problems of our time, for there is always the possibility that people may agree to, or be made to agree to, a system of law which is essentially repressive and not expansive. That to my mind is the essential difference between the democratic and totalitarian concept of law. It is not that we can claim for our law that it guarantees justice. Such a claim would be absurd, as there are, and I expect always will be, injustices to be remedied and inequities to be attacked. What we can claim for it is that it does provide the opportunity for people to struggle against injustice and, as history has shown, to achieve some remarkable victories in their struggle. That same opportunity must be given to nations to struggle against injustice in the world organization. In doing so they have the obligation to accept the law of that organization as embodied in its Charter, as well as the right - and this is important - to try to alter that law, that Charter, into something far better than it is now.

I should like in the above connection to quote from the Report of the American Delegation to the San Francisco Conference to the President of the United States:

"On the frontiers of democratic society - not least upon the American frontiers - the instruments of order have always been in one form or another, an agency to enforce respect for law with moral and physical power to prevent and to suppress breaches of the peace; a court in which the differences and disagreements of the citizens could be heard and tried; and a meeting place where the moral sense of the community could be expressed and its judgments formed, whether as declarations of law or as declarations of opinion. To these three fundamental and essential instruments of order, time and the necessities of advancing civilization have added a fourth institution through which technical knowledge and accumulated experience can be brought to bear upon the social and economic problems of society - problems with which learning and science and experience can effectively deal.

"These four fundamental instruments - the enforcement officer, the Court, the public meeting, and the centre of science and of knowledge - are instruments to which free men have become adept over many

generations. They are instruments the efficacy of which has been demonstrated by the whole history of human civilization. Their establishment in the international world, though accompanied by limitations upon their scope, will not alter their quality nor diminish their prestige. To transplant vines and trees from familiar to unfamiliar environments, is necessarily to cut them back and prune them. To transplant social organisms from the world of individual and group relations to the world of international relations, is necessarily also to limit them and cut them back. Nevertheless, instruments of proven social value taken over from the domestic to the international world carry with them qualities of vigor and of fruitfulness which the limitations placed upon them by their new condition cannot kill. They have behind them an historical momentum and a demonstrated usefulness which mean far more, in terms of ultimate effectiveness, than the precise legal terms by which they are established in their new environment."

However, before these instruments "of proven social value" can function effectively in the international field, there has somehow to be developed the international mind.

The international mind means, in its turn, the re-creation, in some way or other, of the sense of philosophical unity which, with all its defaults, lingered in Europe up to the 19th Century.

In his "Education", Henry Adams recounts how, in 1903, he believed that the new discoveries of science had dealt a final blow to this philosophical unity; how, in fact, science had apparently shattered the universe into a multiverse.

It had become "radioactive"; it was no longer stable and reducible to standard philosophical formulas. Even more terrifying, its technology had so far outstripped our social resources as to create a culture lag in Western civilization that was obviously growing more ungovernable with the passage of each decade. There are times when it now seems to be completely out of control.

Our dilemma, however, cannot be attributed to science and its atomic fission any more than to the law of gravity. Henry Adams was too close to the new discoveries of 1903 to be able to grasp more than a small fraction of their implications. The instability of radio-active elements appeared to him to point to a chaotic universe destroying what had been an orderly society. Today the situation appears rather the reverse. Natural law still reigns supreme, and science still demands a basic unity of operation and control. But it is our present-day society - and especially our national state system - which is basically anarchistic. That is the dilemma which is at the centre of all our contemporary difficulties.

Natural law is obviously no respecter of persons or national boundaries, and science, with its employment of natural law, is no respecter either. Whether we like it or not, science is international. If we attempt to reduce and confine its global potential in national containers, the result will still be international; but international annihilation.

Therefore, present-day science confronts us with a categorical imperative. We must reduce, and even eliminate, the contemporary culture lag existing between science and technology on the one hand, and our political and social institutions on the other. We cannot make scientific knowledge conform to our wishful thinking any more than Canute could make the waves recede; our only alternative is to bring our political and social thinking abreast of the implications of science.

In that essential process toward our world order the Universities - and more particularly their social scientists - can play a vital part. I hope that discussions - such as we are having today - may help them play that part.