

Text of CBC Dominion Network Broadcast "Press Conference" Monday, January 11, 1954, on which the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, was interviewed by Blair Fraser (Maclean's Magazine), Miss Ann Francis (Independent Commentator), Mr. Robert McKeown (Weekend Magazine), Mr. Jacques Lambert (CBC French Network), and Mr. Raymond Daniell (New York Times).

Mr. McKeown: Russia has recently consented to a Big Four meeting in Berlin on January 25. I think the Soviet Government has also expressed its willingness to exchange views at a conference on President Eisenhower's idea of an atomic energy pool. Now, does this really indicate a change of attitude? In other words, is there reason for hope that the cold war is about to cool off?

Mr. Pearson: Well, it may indicate a change of attitude and that is about as far as I would like to go. But it is, as far as it goes, encouraging that agreement has been reached at least to discuss things in Berlin and to talk about the President's atomic proposals in Washington. I think before we become too happy about this, however, we had better wait and see what results from the conferences. The fact that they are taking place is encouraging.

Mr. McKeown: What exactly are they going to talk about in Berlin, Mr. Pearson?

Mr. Pearson: Germany, I should think would be the main topic of conversation!

Mr. McKeown: Is that determined or is that speculative? That is really what I meant.

Mr. Pearson: I think it is more than speculative that they are going to talk about Germany and Austria. What else they are going to talk about, I really don't know.

Mr. McKeown: Would you say also that this Soviet willingness to talk may be a stall to prevent France from joining the European Defence Community.

Mr. Pearson: If you want to take a pessimistic view of Soviet politics and tactics, you could interpret it that way but I would hope that such an interpretation would not be justified.

Miss Francis: Do you think that it is going to be possible for the Western Powers and Russia to reach any agreement on Germany or are they too widely divided in their aims. Will this just be another discussion which will come to naught?

Mr. Pearson: They are widely divided in their aims and there is no reason to go overboard with optimism that they will be able to close that wide gap in one discussion. However they are at least going to make the attempt and we must hope for the best.

- Mr. Daniell: I have just come from Europe recently and I have the feeling that people's hopes are being very greatly played up about the possibilities of this conference. Don't you think that the net gain, if the conference is held and fails to reach agreement, will be offset by the disillusionment psychologically?
- Mr. Pearson: That is always the danger, of course, at international conferences, that hopes may be raised that cannot be and are not fulfilled and the resulting disillusionment means a setback rather than progress in the easing of international tension. Now that might happen in Berlin and that is why I say we should not go overboard with optimism. But that is no reason why we should not, all of us, do our best to make things work out successfully.
- Mr. McKeown: Well, it seems to me that there have been two communist views of relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. One is that communist and capitalist states could live together and the other is that they could not and one must dominate the other. Is there any hope that Malenkov holds the second view - that we can get along together. Or, sorry, the first view!
- Mr. Pearson: I hope he doesn't hold the second view! We must hope that any Russian leader may hold the more cheerful view because if you accept the other view as an inevitable and automatic directive for all Soviet policy then there would be no hope, unless that Soviet regime were overthrown.
- Question: You mentioned a few minutes ago that the West and the Soviet bloc were widely apart on the future of Germany and on European policy generally. It has seemed to some observers that the West itself is pretty badly split on just what should be done. Is there a concerted Western view and, if so, what is it?
- Mr. Pearson: I think that the Western nations - and when I talk about them we are thinking of the United States, the United Kingdom and France and other western countries - I think the three countries most concerned in formulating a western policy have come much closer together in recent months as to what should be done about Germany.
- Question: What about this dispute over the European Defence Community?
- Mr. Pearson: That is another, though of course related, question but I am thinking now of the German question as such - the unification of Germany.
- Mr. Daniell: I believe, Mr. Pearson, I read somewhere the other day that you were quoted as saying that you felt that the E.D.C. - that is the European Defence Community - was perhaps the best way of bringing Germany into the defence of Europe but not the only way. What alternatives did you have in mind, because our thinking has been that the only alternative was perimeter defence that is exposing Europe to attack and occupation.

Mr. Pearson: Of course, there are alternatives to E.D.C. but I do not think it is advisable to dwell on them too much too publicly at the present time; if you believe that E.D.C. is the best proposal for the purpose. As a matter of fact, it is the only proposal before us at the present time and that is why we are anxious to get some decision. It has been before us for a couple of years but I think it is a mistake to take the view that it is E.D.C. or nothing.

Miss Francis: At a recent press conference, Secretary of State Dulles told the French that the United States would have to make an "agonizing reappraisal" of its present policies if France did not pass the E.D.C. Now what is your personal opinion about that method of approach to the problem?

Mr. Pearson: I think that if the E.D.C. did not turn out to be a practical solution in the sense that the French did not feel that it was practical from their point of view - and we must consider France - then France and all western European countries would have to make a reappraisal of foreign policy because we would have to think again as to how to bring Germany into the western system; that is essential. All reappraisals of foreign policy are "agonizing".

Question: Just for clarity's sake it might be a good idea to state briefly just what the E.D.C. is - what France, I believe, originally proposed but now is hesitating "agonizingly" about getting into.

Mr. Pearson: It was a proposal to build up a European army which would be apart from national armies - it would be a European army with national contingents from the various member countries under European control and European direction, and behind which there would be certain European controlling political agencies. That is, in very brief outline what E.D.C. means.

Miss Francis: I understood that one of the objections that France has put up is that Great Britain would not be a member of E.D.C. and neither would the United States. Now would an alternative proposal be that Germany would be part of NATO in which the stronger powers would act as a check.

Mr. Pearson: That would be an alternative and it has been suggested by various people - that Germany could be brought into the western defence system by membership in NATO. But there are people who would object to that because it would mean a German national army under the German General Staff.

Question: Could the approach be to have a bilateral treaty with the United States and Germany?

Mr. Pearson: That is another way it could be done - to rearm Germany and bring her into association with the west by special treaty arrangements; special treaty arrangements, if you like, between Germany and the NATO countries. However there are objections to that too.

Mr. McKeown: Well, would not this idea of a separate and independent German army really play upon French fears more than ever. This is the thing that France really fears, isn't that right?

Mr. Pearson: We all are naturally worried about the revival of German militarism and about any proposal which would seem to make that easier. France - and I cannot speak with authority on French fears and policies - France is, however, also worried about the loss of sovereignty that would be incurred in E.D.C.

Question: You are just back from the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris where, I am sure, you have had opportunity to speak to the French. You have explained to us about their fears of the E.D.C. and their fears of making Germany a member of NATO, but what about the positive side - what do the French want? What will they accept?

Mr. Pearson: I think the French would prefer, and I am sure we would all prefer, a Germany that, while associating with the West, would be disarmed completely; but while we might like to see that personally I do not think that is a very practicable proposition.

Mr. Lambert: It has been appearing lately that the Americans now are more concerned with achieving European political union rather than just raising German divisions - is that the case now?

Mr. Pearson: There is some evidence of that. Mr. Dulles mentioned in Paris that the value of E.D.C. to him was not only in the military association of Germany with the west through E.D.C. but also that it would bring the European countries, especially Germany and France, together for other purposes - non-military purposes.

Mr. Lambert: The main obstacle right now to the French ratification seems to be the lack of guarantee. Now if the Americans are so anxious to see this E.D.C. become a concrete thing why is there such hesitation to give such a guarantee?

Mr. Pearson: Wouldn't you think the presence of British, American and Canadian troops on European soil a pretty effective guarantee of the association of those countries with France and the other Western European countries in ease of aggression? It is true that they are not there under treaty for 50 years or anything like that, but they are there. Isn't that something that French Governments in the Twenties would have given a lot to bring about?

Mr. McKeown: Well, isn't this one of the fears at the moment that the Americans are planning some sort of withdrawal from Europe. They haven't fulfilled or are not going to fulfill their commitments for another armoured division in Europe this year and, as well, there is the statement that Admiral Radford made in Paris that they were going to base their strategy on a system of peripheral bases rather than on troops in Europe and that this withdrawal of troops was going to take place whether or not there was an E.D.C. or whether or not France joined E.D.C.

Mr. Pearson: I appreciate the fact that there is some fear in Continental countries that United States policy in that regard may be changing but if you studied the President's Congressional statement yesterday, you would find that he made it very clear that - I think he said - "as long as we can foresee we shall stick close to NATO".

Mr. Lambert: To come back to the question of the Big Four Conference, what do you think the West would propose on the unification of Germany?

Mr. Pearson: I would not know, but they have already laid down certain principles which would be essential to bring about that unification and the first principle is a government chosen by the German people - free elections in all Germany.

Miss Francis: I just wonder how we are going to get both E.D.C. and German unification. I think that Russia might permit one but not both. What is your own opinion about that?

Mr. Pearson: You have certainly put your finger on a very difficult aspect of the whole problem. If Russian policy is anxious to make a move to real friendship with the west - co-operation and all that - they might be able to agree to some proposal by which a unified Germany would be free to choose its own political alignments and then it would be left to the unified Germany as to how it would be worked out.

Miss Francis: And do you think we would consent to that?

Mr. Pearson: I would not like to say but that is a possible proposal on which they might agree. It is only a possible proposal.

Question: Surely Russia could not be expected to agree to that. It is obvious from the June riots that East Germany is solidly on our side and that would have all of Germany against them rather than just two-thirds of Germany as at the moment.

Mr. Pearson: In other words, in your opinion, the Russians would not be able to agree on any kind of unification of Germany which gave Germany a free choice as to its political alignments in the future?

Mr. Daniell: I was just wondering in view of the great difficulties of the German situation if it would not be better to bypass that for a time and concentrate on getting an Austrian treaty. After all, the measure of disagreement there is practically non-existent except for the introduction of the Trieste issue.

Mr. Pearson: That is true. And that might be the tactics which the Western countries might put forward in Berlin - to start with what seems to be the simplest problem. The gap between the two sides on Austria is, on paper, a very narrow one. That might also be a test of the reality of the Soviet pretensions that they do want to close gaps.

Miss Francis: I think a lot of people get rather confused about President Eisenhower's proposal for an atomic energy pool. I wonder if you could perhaps explain it for us.

Mr. Pearson: It is pretty hard to explain in a short answer but I think we ought to be very clear in our minds that the President's proposal for an atomic pool does not directly affect, although it might indirectly affect, the abolition of the use of atomic bombs. It is the internationalization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes but it would not directly and immediately have anything to do with the use of atomic energy for war. That is another problem. Now, when I make that statement I am not attempting to minimize the President's proposal but a lot of people, quite understandably, think that this has a direct and immediate bearing on atomic disarmament - well, it hasn't.

Question: What does it mean exactly? He suggested a building up of a common international pool of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Does that simply mean that countries like Canada that produce atomic fuel would send a bit of it to some previously agreed Pacific Island, or would they send scientists to show natives of the island what to do with it?

Mr. Pearson: I don't know, of course, what it means in that sense because the details haven't been worked out. But it seems to me that it might mean that under the United Nations or some international agency, there would be set up an Atomic Energy committee which would be international in character, which would direct international research and the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It might even have a reactor to which contributions would be made in material from various countries. It also might help to establish reactors in other countries who have not the scientific or other resources which would make it possible for them to do that sort of thing themselves. In that respect it is a pretty imaginative and far-reaching and, I hope, beneficial proposal.

Mr. Lambert: Do you think that the United States and the West should go ahead with the plan even if Russia does not accept it?

Mr. Pearson: I would think that, if Russia cannot come into this kind of scheme, those of us who can should.

Mr. Lambert: In the hope that they will come into it later on?

Mr. Pearson: And keep the door open. But we shall not allow the Russians to veto the implementation of this proposal by other countries. There is no indication that they are to be allowed to veto it.

Mr. McKeown: Then if this co-operation did work and Russia were to accept it and go along, would the hope be that this would lead us into co-operation on control of atomic weapons as well?

Mr. Pearson: It would be encouraging to have the Russians co-operate in this field. This might make it easier for them to co-operate with us in the other field; the use of atomic energy for war.

Mr. Daniell: I wonder now that Russia has the atomic and hydrogen bomb if there isn't a great deal of value in the western nations exchanging what information they have. Are we not defeating ourselves by not exchanging information?

Mr. Pearson: I think a lot of the argument against the exchange of information has been removed by the spread of knowledge of atomic energy amongst so many countries. Surely, as you say, it is sensible to bring about the widest possible exchange of information.

Mr. McKeown: If I might move on to another topic, about four years ago we had the impression that Canada favoured recognition of Communist China and I think a change came about when the Korean War started and we thought we would have to wait until it was over before we could recognize Communist China. If a peace is reached in Korea, should Canada move in the direction of recognition?

Mr. Pearson: We certainly couldn't recognize Communist China as long as they were considered as an aggressor state; in aggression against our forces and the United Nations. Nor do I think that we should recognize Communist China as a reward for having stopped fighting against us. But, if there could be a satisfactory peace made in Korea and if the Chinese Communist Government has purged itself - if I may use that expression of its aggression - and things are improving in the Far East, then of course it becomes a problem of having another look at this whole issue of recognition or non-recognition. But we have not yet made peace in Korea.

Question: What do you think the hope is of making peace?

Mr. Pearson: I am always hopeful in these matters but, as you know, this is a very difficult and complicated question. If a satisfactory peace settlement can be made in Korea it would seem to me a big step forward towards the settlement of many Far Eastern problems. They are all tied up together and Korea is just one aspect.

Miss Francis: Even if we made what we thought was a satisfactory peace in Korea, can we be sure of what Mr. Syngman Rhee might do the next day?

Mr. Pearson: You cannot be sure of anything in the world these days - not even Mr. Syngman Rhee.

Question: You say "a satisfactory settlement in the Far East". What kind of settlement would you regard as satisfactory. I don't want to be difficult with hypothetical questions but there is that big island of Formosa there with Chiang Kai Shek established and a half-million troops and yet everything we have ever heard in the last five years indicates that Canada would be in favour of recognizing the Communist Chinese Government, shall we say, as soon as possible or as soon as it seems reasonable and plausible. What are you going to do with Formosa in that case?

Mr. Pearson: That is one of the difficulties and one of the obstacles in the way of a general Far Eastern settlement - the relationship between the Chinese Government in Formosa and the Communist Government

on the mainland. That would have to be settled before you could have a settlement in the Far East.

Question: But how could that be settled? Give us the theoretical side of it.

Mr. Pearson: I really shouldn't even attempt to answer that because that would be a statement of policy in this matter and I don't think I should try that.

Mr. McKeown: Would you interpret the United States decision to withdraw two divisions from Korea as an indication that they thought that another aggression or any breach of hostilities in Korea was unlikely?

Mr. Pearson: That is a possible interpretation but the United States authorities have been careful to explain when they announced that withdrawal that they are still determined to resist a renewal of aggression along with the United Nations countries that are in Korea now.

Question: Could you interpret this also as indicating that the United States was going back to its pre-Korea strategy in the Far East and depending upon bases around China and the mainland to protect her interests there?

Mr. Pearson: It is a possible interpretation but you must remember that there are still strong U.S. forces in Korea and the two divisions that, it was announced, would be withdrawn are the two divisions that were moved over from Japan about a year or so ago when the situation was so desperate. There is still a good deal of United Nations strength in Korea to deal with any renewal of aggression.

Mr. Lambert: While we are in the Far East, Mr. Pearson, I wonder if you would tell us how you feel about this new rift between India and the United States on the American aid programme to Pakistan. Do you think that the danger is as serious as Mr. Nehru says it is?

Mr. Pearson: I would not like to say very much, or indeed anything, about that. I do not like the use of the word "rift" in that connection and I am quite sure that this difference of opinion in regard to United States aid for Pakistan between India and the United States and Pakistan will be worked out alright.

Question: But Mr. Nehru has said that the United States offer of Military aid to Pakistan greatly increases the danger of a third World War starting in the Far East. Do you regard that as a possible or sensible statement, or as an exaggeration?

Mr. Pearson: I would not want to criticize anything that Mr. Nehru may have said in regard to matters of that kind but I would not have placed the danger so high myself.

Mr. Daniell: I am going back to the subject of a moment ago because something that Mr. Pearson said interested me very much philosophically - that is, the apparent difference in approach between Canada and Britain to the question of recognition. The British take the view that any government that is in de facto control of a country should be

recognized. The Americans rather tend to put a moral issue along with it. I gathered from what you said that you lean to the idea that there should be a moral connotation.

Mr. Pearson: I think recognition or non-recognition of a country is a political matter. I do not think it is primarily a moral matter. If it were, we would not recognize any Communist government because of what we feel about their methods of government. It is a political matter but it has moral overtones - and undertones. The element of morality in this is that this particular Communist Government has been an aggressor against the United Nations and, therefore, we should hesitate before we recognize it.

Question: Would it be going too far to say that, if the recognition had taken place before the aggression began, there would be no occasion for withdrawing it?

Mr. Pearson: We have recognized governments who have later taken aggressive action - not against us directly - but aggressive action and we haven't withdrawn recognition. Recognition is something you do in your own interests and that is why I think it is a political matter rather than primarily a moral matter.

Miss Francis: Mr. Pearson, I wonder if I could change the subject. I wanted to ask about a statement made by President Eisenhower in his State of the Union address last week. He said that the United States was going to increase spending on continental defence by about a billion dollars. Now how is that going to affect us, because we live on this continent too?

Mr. Pearson: We are, of course, just as interested in continental defence as the United States because, as you say, we are part of the continent - the northern part, too. There is a renewed interest in continental defence, I think, derived in large part from atomic developments in the U.S.S.R. We have in the last six months or so increased our attention and our efforts in Canada, and in the United States, towards continental defence.

Mr. McKeown: If the United States are to spend an extra billion dollars, will we have to spend a proportionate amount on continental defence?

Mr. Pearson: That billion dollars is, of course, a figure that has been mentioned but it doesn't indicate over how many years it will be spent or what kind of continental defence is envisaged. A lot of it may be spent in the United States.

Question: Oh, I understood him to say that he had asked for an additional billion dollars to be appropriated this year.

Mr. Pearson: For continental defence - but that might be spent in the continental United States.

Question: It doesn't necessarily include a large addition of United States forces on Canadian soil?

Mr. Pearson:

Not at all. It may or it may not include certain facilities but it certainly doesn't necessarily mean that there will be any additional United States forces on Canadian soil at all and it might even mean that practically all of it will be spent in the United States.

Mr. Fraser:

Thank you very much, Mr. Pearson.

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