



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 51/16 CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: NEIGHBOURS
AND ALLIES

An address by the Deputy Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Escott Reid, delivered to the Opening Meeting of the Conference on Canadian-American Affairs, at the University of Maine, on April 19, 1951.

On August 24, 1949, less than two years ago, a fundamental change took place in the relations between Canada and the United States. Before that day we had been good neighbours. On that day we became allies - I hope good allies. For on August 24, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty came into force. We had been partners in the development of a continent - North America. We now became partners in the defence of a civilization - the North Atlantic community.

Twice in the previous generation we had found ourselves, after a world war had broken out, fighting side by side in a temporary coalition. Now we found ourselves in peacetime in an alliance set up not to win a world war which had already broken out but to prevent a world war from breaking out.

For both of us this constituted a revolutionary change in foreign policy. We North Americans had resolutely refused up to 1949 to enter in peacetime into a military alliance either with each other or with any other country. In Canada we had, for example, special links with Great Britain but we were under no legal obligation to send troops overseas to help Great Britain if Great Britain became involved in war. You in the United States had special relations with us in Canada but you were under no obligation to come to our aid when we became involved in war overseas in 1914 and 1939.

What caused us both in 1949 to make this revolutionary change in our foreign policies?

The cause was the remorseless expansion of Soviet power in Europe by methods of direct and indirect aggression culminating in the seizure of Czechoslovakia in February 1948 by the forces of Cominform imperialism. It was the seizure of Czechoslovakia which finally convinced the governments and peoples of Western Europe and of North America that the time had come to put a stop to the further expansion of Russian power in Western Europe, since if Russia were allowed to continue to pick off its victims one by one, a third world war would become inevitable and defeat in that war probable. It was therefore essential to make clear to the Russians that any further aggression by them in Western Europe would mean war against the whole North Atlantic community.

The interest, however, of the North Atlantic countries in collective security is not regional. This has been demonstrated by the assistance which many of them are now giving to your forces and those of the Republic of Korea in the fight which the United Nations is now waging against aggression in Korea. Under the flag of the United Nations in Korea there are, in addition to the forces of the Republic of Korea, forces from fourteen member states of the United Nations. Seven of these are members of the North Atlantic Alliance (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Canada). Three are non-Atlantic members of the British Commonwealth (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa). Two are Mediterranean countries (Greece and Turkey). Two are South-East Asian countries (the Philippines and Thailand).

The United States is the leader of these forces of the United Nations in Korea. For a time its forces fought alone alongside the South Koreans in a gallant rear-guard action against the North Korean aggressors. Even today the United States provides about three-quarters of the total number of the men serving in the land, air and naval forces which are operating under the United Nations in support of the forces of the Republic of Korea.

Korea is only one example of the way in which the United States has, since the end of the Second World War, shouldered the heavy burden of the leadership of the free world. There are many other examples: Greece, Marshall aid, the establishment of a North Atlantic Peace Force in Western Europe under the command of General Eisenhower.

The United States is today the leader and by far the most powerful member of a world-wide association of free nations which includes the nations of the North Atlantic. The leader of the opposing side and by far the most important member of that side is Russia. The two sides are now engaged in an armaments race. They are engaged in a struggle for potential allies. They are waging so-called cold wars throughout the world for men's minds. They are fighting a shooting war in Korea. Each side appears to fear that the other is able and willing to launch at any time a so-called preventive war against it. Each appears to fear that the other side may by accident precipitate the world into a third world war with all its imaginable and unimaginable horrors.

We live from day to day poised precariously on the edge of catastrophe. This, as Mr. Acheson has said recently, "twists and tortures all our lives".

Under conditions of such tension, frustration and bitterness, it is not surprising that governments and peoples should be faced with problems of peculiar difficulty in their relations with each other. This applies even to governments and peoples so friendly, so understanding of each other, as those of Canada and the United States.

Let us look at some aspects of the problem from the Canadian side of the border - remembering that you and we are neighbours, friends and allies, bound together in an indissoluble partnership for better or for worse.

It seems to some of us in Canada that one difficulty in our relations may arise out of the way in which the great differences in population and wealth between our two countries tend to blur the reality of our common lot.

If in another world war one family in four in both Canada and the United States lost a member as a result of enemy action, your losses would run to the staggering figure of about ten million, ours to less than a million, since our population is only one-eleventh of yours. In one sense your losses would be greater than ours. But in another sense - and in the sense that really matters to the men, women and children of North America - the loss would be the same on each side of the border. This is the kind of significant truth which is sometimes in danger of being obscured by the great differences in the size of our populations.

Take another example. This year you will probably spend on defence about forty-seven and a half billion dollars - we, about one billion, seven hundred million dollars. You will be spending about twenty-nine times what we will be spending but your national income is 17 or 18 times ours. Your expenditures will represent 16.5 per cent of your net national income, ours 11 per cent. Your average standard of living is, however, higher than ours. Your national income per capita is over \$1500 a year; ours about \$1050. Therefore the deprivations which comparable families on both sides of the border will suffer as a result of the defence effort will probably be much the same. This is the kind of human reality which is sometimes in danger of being obscured by the great differences in the wealth of our two countries.

The fact of fundamental significance in the relations today between our two countries is that while your nation is so much greater than ours in population and in wealth, our peoples are in the same lifeboat together, confronting the same dangers, sharing the same hopes and fears. One possible source of difficulty in the relations between the Canadians and Americans in the lifeboat - and it is a difficulty which is inescapable and not one about which we are complaining - arises out of the fact that the captain of the lifeboat, the Government of the United States, is elected only by the Americans in the boat, and must be so elected in the nature of things.

This difficulty is, as I have said, inescapable. Because of its vast preponderance of power there is only one possible leader for the free world - the United States. If the United States was not willing to accept the burden of leadership of the free world, there would not for long be any free world - or any United States for that matter. That is why every man in the world who loves freedom thanks God that the United States has accepted the burden of leadership.

Theoretically, there is a way out of the difficulty created by the fact that the captain of the lifeboat which contains citizens of all the free world is elected only by the Americans in the boat. The free world could federate, elect a common legislature with, say, one member for each million people, have a common executive, a common foreign policy, a common army, and a federal system of taxation. But the free world is not now a federation and it is not likely to be a federation for many years to come. What we have to deal with now is the present situation, with one nation, the United States, the leader of the free world, with special burdens imposed on it by that leadership but also with a special privilege of having vastly more influence than the rest of us in determining the common objectives, the common strategy, the common tactics of the Grand Alliance.

The other members of the Grand Alliance may make mistakes in their foreign policies. These mistakes may be

serious. If serious, they will endanger us all. But because of its power and its leadership, mistakes made by the United States - even less serious ones - may give rise to graver dangers for all members of the Alliance, for all the men, women and children who make up the Alliance.

It is for this reason that all the nations of the free world, all the citizens of the free world, have a direct and vital interest in your foreign policy. Governments are usually discreet in giving public evidence of that interest. Private citizens in democracies are not always so discreet.

It must at times be irritating to you to have private citizens in other countries taking sides in your debates in your own country on your own foreign policy. But that is the penalty of greatness in a democratic community of free nations living on the edge of catastrophe where the foreign policy of each directly affects the lives of all citizens of the community. And if the interest seems sometimes ill-informed and the criticism seems undeserved -- that is a difficulty which we face in all our countries in this abnormal world.

The problem for you of the United States differs in degree but not in kind from the problem with which your allies are confronted. The United States, because it bears the heavy burden of the leadership of the free world, has the right and duty to bring its views to the attention of its allies in an effort to convince them of the wisdom of the policies which the United States considers should be adopted by the members of the Alliance. Usually those views are expressed privately through diplomatic channels, with moderation and studied courtesy. Sometimes they are put more forcefully. Occasionally - very occasionally - the argument breaks out into the open as it did at Lake Success on the issue of Chinese intervention in Korea. When that happens, we, your allies, find out in our turn what it is like to be on the receiving end of public criticism from citizens of an allied and friendly country - criticism of the inadequacy of our actions, our lack of common sense and our lack of resolution. And we may sometimes feel, as you would do in similar circumstances, that the interest of some members of your public in our views is ill-informed, and your criticism undeserved.

What it comes down to, I suggest, is this. If the North Atlantic Alliance is to be fully successful, it must be firmly based on a broad measure of agreement between the North Atlantic nations and peoples, not only on the objectives of the Alliance but on the major questions of international political strategy and international political tactics. Agreement on objectives is relatively easy to secure for we share in the North Atlantic community the common heritage of Western Christendom, we believe in the same virtues, we share the same values.

But agreement on how to reach those objectives is less easy to secure. For each of our countries sees the world from a different point of view and any view of the world from any point of view is distorted in some respects just as any map of the world has some distortions. Each of us does not always see the same world; each of us does not always look with the same eyes; or interpret what he sees with the same brains; at times interpretation is even affected by different prejudices.

This may appear to be a weakness in the Alliance; but it is not necessarily so. Indeed it may be one of the great sources of strength of the Alliance.

Certainly we know that one of the great sources of strength of each democratic country is that we reach general agreement on national policy by the democratic method of free discussion and compromise. It would not therefore be surprising if we found that in an alliance of democratic countries the method of free discussion and compromise is also appropriate.

For the more the foreign offices of the North Atlantic nations exchange information - exchange their views of the world, their interpretation of what is happening - the more the governments consult; the more they debate together on what should be done; the greater is the chance that each will be able to correct the distortions in his own private view of the world; the greater the chance that each will follow a wise policy and that the policies of each will be very much the same.

I doubt very much whether the monolithic totalitarian Cominform world possesses this source of strength. My guess is that the Cominform states look at the world through one pair of peculiarly distorted Moscow spectacles.

My guess also is that the absence in the Cominform world of open differences of opinion over foreign policy is not a sign of strength but a sign of weakness. We know that this was the case with the Nazi totalitarian world.

I do not say that by a mere process of exchanging information, exchanging views, discussing, consulting, the North Atlantic nations can automatically reach agreement on policy. I do say that by doing all this they greatly improve their chances of reaching agreement on a sound policy. In order to reach agreement, however, something more is necessary - a common determination to reach agreement.

There comes a point on every issue in foreign affairs when a decision has to be made by the government of each ally. The processes of consultation have taken place; the response to the issue can no longer be delayed. Each national government must then exercise its own independent judgment. It is at that point that the strength of the alliance is tested. For it is at that point that a national government must take into account not only the direct effects of its decision on its own country, but its effects on its allies. This is indeed an old problem in alliances and one never easily solved.

Two and a half years ago (September 21, 1948), Mr. Pearson, in his first speech as Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, put this point as follows:

"The only course of realism today for the North Atlantic democracies is for each of them to consider problems arising out of their relations with one another as problems between friends and associates. This does not mean that each of us should do everything that any other member of the group says is in the interests of the whole association. It does, however, mean that each of us, before taking action in the political, economic or military field, must consider what the effect of its action will be on the total strength of the group as a whole - its total military, economic and moral strength."

The fact that this is appropriate in any alliance - indeed that it is essential to the full success of any alliance - does not mean that it is easy to accept. For it

means that a government responsible to the voters in one nation must, in determining its policy, take into account the effect of its action not only on the people of its own country but on the people of its allies. The government of Canada may, for example, on a certain issue have to weigh in the balance the direct interests of a section of the Canadian people, who may be adversely affected by a certain decision, against the interests of a section of, say, the people of France. And the people of France have no votes in Canadian elections!

This is a difficult position for any democratic government. But is it not the kind of position which we in Canada and you in the United States have for generations expected our governments to take when they are dealing with problems arising out of the direct relations between Canada and the United States? Is not this the kind of position which we expect a good neighbour to take when he is dealing with a good neighbour?

At the beginning of my address I said that before August 24, 1949, the date of the coming into force of the North Atlantic Treaty, we had been good neighbours. On that day we became allies - I hoped good allies. I now suggest that we will be good allies of each other and of our partners in the North Atlantic Treaty if we apply to the everyday work of the alliance the principle of the good neighbour.

This does not mean that we will not from time to time have differences of opinion. It does not mean that there won't occasionally be bickerings between us. We had lots of differences of opinion, lots of bickering during the period when we were merely good neighbours. Our accomplishment during that period was that from 1814 on we preserved peace between us in spite of occasional friction. Our task now is, even if occasionally frictions may develop between us, to co-operate to ensure the peace of the world. That will be the easier because of the fundamental and deep friendship between us.

During the past, Canada and the United States have been like two farmers who settled on adjoining farms in a pioneer community. For a time the smaller farmer feared that the larger was trying to get possession of his farm. Later he had an uneasy feeling that the larger almost always got the better of him in every dispute over where the line-fence ran. Even when the boundaries between the farms were established, the farmers had constant line-fence disputes. One by one, by constant reflection, restraint, forethought and watchfulness, they reduced the major areas of disagreement between them. They became good neighbours. They still had their line-fence problems but they had learned how to deal with them.

Lately a co-operative society has been formed in the community and the two farmers have joined it. Whereas previously their differences were concerned only with line-fence disputes, now they have differences of opinion about the policy of the co-operative, and the smaller farmer sometimes has the uneasy feeling that his neighbour gets his own way too often in the co-operative and doesn't always pay enough attention to the smaller farmer's views. The larger farmer in his turn may think that the smaller is too touchy and too demanding in support of his interests.

The task of the two farmers now is to reduce any new areas of disagreement which may arise between them in the same way as they reduced the old - that is, by constant reflection, restraint, forethought and watchfulness. The task should be easier because of the very large area of agreement between them.

I have spoken in parables about the existence of areas of disagreement between Canada and the United States. It is a matter of public knowledge that in recent months there have been some differences between us about Far Eastern policy. Speaking in the House of Commons on February 2, Mr. Pearson said:

"While I do not gloss over these differences, I should like to warn against exaggerating their importance, because they have not weakened the basic good understanding between us, resting as it does upon a harmony of abiding interest and on the recognition of common values and common rights, one of which is the right to disagree as friends with each other, and the other the obligation, again as friends, to resolve these disagreements peaceably."

Mr. Pearson in his speech went on to indicate that in his view these differences between the Canadian and the United States Governments should be looked at in the perspective of the broad measure of agreement on fundamentals which has existed between our two governments ever since the Korean war started. We agree that world peace is now in jeopardy. We agree that the extension of Soviet imperialism must be opposed. We agree that the principles of collective resistance to aggression must be maintained. We agree that the main front of the free world is Western Europe. Our disagreements have arisen in deciding how our agreement on these fundamentals should be translated into immediate policy and action, taking into account the present relative military weakness of the Western World.

Any differences between us over foreign policy should be looked at not only in the perspective of the broad measure of agreement between us on fundamentals but also against the background of the full recognition by the Canadian Government and people of the great debt of gratitude which they owe to the United States for the way in which it has during the past ten months rallied the whole of the free world to defend its common liberties against the increasing danger of Soviet aggression.

Three years ago when the Cominform seized Czechoslovakia, the United States and its fellow members of the North Atlantic community embarked on a process of strengthening their armed forces and their unity. Looking back at this period of the last three years, it is clear that up to the time of the attack on Korea ten months ago, none of us in the North Atlantic community was moving fast enough. The result, I am afraid, was that, instead of the gap between our strength and Soviet strength narrowing, it may well have been widening; if so, the inevitable result would have been disaster.

This policy has been reversed because of the leadership which the United States gave to the free world after the attack on Korea. The United States doubled

and then quadrupled its defence effort and its example is inspiring its North Atlantic allies.

The result is that for the first time since the end of fighting in the Second World War, there is good reason for believing that time is on our side and that if we continue our present defence policies and pursue a patient, restrained and firm diplomacy, we may succeed in averting war and finally in reaching with the Soviet Union some tolerable way of living side by side in peace.

In the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty our two nations, along with ten other nations, affirmed their determination "to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."

You in the United States and we in Canada share a common faith in that freedom and in that heritage and civilization. We share a common hope that we can preserve them against the assaults of their enemies. Let us share also a common sense of charity to each other. With faith, hope and charity we can accomplish the task that lies before us.

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