

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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No. 63/17 Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., M.P., at the International and Athletic Day Luncheon, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, August 24, 1963.

I am pleased and happy to have this opportunity of speaking to you at this International and Athletic Day at the Exhibition. The Canadian National Exhibition seems to be getting bigger and better year after year. May I take this opportunity of expressing my congratulations to many of the directors here today? As you have increased in size and in scope you have never sacrificed quality.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of my reflections on the contemporary world scene. I have decided to do so for two reasons - first, because I am acutely aware that foreign affairs are not just my business but yours as well, as, indeed, they are the business of every citizen of this country. Modern means of communication have brought into every home the facts of international developments as they occur, and modern technology in warfare has simultaneously exposed every home to the consequences of these international developments if they should lead to conflict. The result is that each of us has a personal stake in how the external relations of Canada are conducted.

Careful Response Required

My second reason for these reflections is because recent months have witnessed new and significant developments in the world which have reduced international tension. In these happy circumstances, I stress to you that we in the West will have to react with no less care and balanced appraisal than we have reacted in the past to periods of dangerously high tension. The major developments of which I speak, of course, are the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty earlier this month and the recent manifestations of the split which have been developing within the Communist camp - developments which I am sure you will appreciate are by no means unrelated.

Why has it suddenly become possible for two apparently irreconcilable ideologies - international Communism and Western democracy - to discover areas of common interest after years of apparently fruitless discussion and intermittent negotiation?

The answer to this question is of critical importance in understanding our present situation. The answer lies in part in a mutual recognition of the incalculable consequences of modern war, so dramatically brought home by the Cuban crisis of last October, when, for a few perilous days, the world stood on the brink of thermonuclear war. I think, perhaps, that near catastrophe brought home a realization that traditional conceptions of victor and vanquished have been overtaken by technological advances in the art of war. In an age when war has become so totally and indiscriminately destructive, self-interest dictates that war be set aside as a rational instrument for the furtherance of national aims. Paradoxically, this fact has given both sides in the Cold War a common interest in the avoidance of conflict, without any change in the circumstances which give rise to the tensions of the Cold War in the first place, and without any abandonment of the goals of international Communism.

Comprehending Communist Change

The second factor, of equal consequence, which has put some degree of East-West accord within easier reach is the changes which are occurring both within the Soviet Union and in Moscow's relations with other Communist capitals. We must try to understand these changes, for without that understanding we shall be unable to assess the nature of our opponent and of the contest. Having made some assessment of what these changes may mean, we must search diligently but without illusion for such opportunities as they may offer of finding a means of living sensibly in this world without jeopardizing either our security or our fundamental democratic values.

The myth of a monolithic, centrally controlled and directed international Communist movement is daily being exposed by despatches emanating from Peking and Moscow. The main centres of power in the Communist world are beginning to act more and more as national entities impelled mainly by national rather than ideological considerations. Moreover, they are speaking in the tones not of friends and allies who have had a difference of opinion but in the harsh language of enemies. While we have long known that Communist China has never truly been a satellite of the U.S.S.R., the new element is the unrestrained public disclosure of the depth of the rift, revealing as it does the extent to which national interests within the Communist world are now in conflict.

New Alignment Means New Problems

General de Gaulle described this development well in his July 29 reference to "the beginning of an opposition between a European (Communist) empire and the empire of China". Given the unreasoning militant nature of Chinese Communist policies and the fact that views on the inevitability of war are at the very root of Sino-Soviet differences, the gulf that is opening within the Communist camp itself may perhaps offer new common ground between the Western world and some of the older Communist states. With

these developing circumstances, we shall have to ponder very carefully whether an answer to the rising power of Asian Communism is to be found in its further isolation and containment, or whether it lies in broadening contacts at a variety of levels in an endeavour to penetrate the curtain of ignorance and blunt the edge of ideological differences.

We must proceed forward, but without illusion. We must not assume that all the barriers to a détente are down. The basic problems remain. Our way of life is still challenged on a massive scale by a materialistic philosophy which denies the spirituality of man and subordinates the individual to the requirements of state and party. That philosophy is still backed by the national power of countries who in the past have not hesitated to have recourse to armed force to subjugate their neighbours and whose leaders still proclaim their goal to be the expansion of Communism to the whole world, even though those leaders may differ as to method.

Power Must be Maintained

We must not forget that the cohesion and military preparedness of the nations which make up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have undoubtedly played a major part in bringing about the more hopeful climate that now exists. By the same token, the maintenance of that strength, pending more reliable and sustained evidence of a durable détente, is one of the best guarantees that international Communism will not have recourse to military adventures in the continuing pursuit of its stated goal. There is still a need to maintain in the West the collective military power to deter aggression, and Canada's action in rendering its forces capable of making an effective contribution to the collective deterrent should be seen as part of the equation which for the time being keeps the peace.

A More Civilized Relation

But an understanding of the military might of the Soviet Union and of the consequent necessity of military might in the West to maintain what I have called "military equipoise" is not in itself enough. Under the umbrella of mutual deterrence, as I said recently to the Special Parliamentary Committee on Defence, the major nations have been groping towards a more civilized relation. Now, someone once said that countries do not have friends, but only interests. While I do not entirely agree with that somewhat cynical aphorism, I do believe that in a world of nuclear stalemate, which is bringing about changes in the thinking of leaders and in the alignment of states, common interests are perhaps as sure a guide to peace as traditional friendships. If we are to exist in peace, as we must, alongside nations whose political philosophy we reject, as we do, it is in finding areas where the interests of the two sides happen to coincide that the key to peace will lie rather than in some vain hope that the other side will suddenly abandon its global objectives.

It was recognition of a community of interests which made possible earlier this month the signature of an agreement to ban nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. This agreement not only removes a serious source of radioactive contamination of the atmosphere and the seas, which constitutes such a hazard to human health and future generations, but is a most important step on the long road away from war. Moreover, this first step has been taken without any sacrifice of principle. It has required no retreat in our stand on the need for "on-site" inspection, since the treaty deals only with the three environments in which adequate verification can be obtained by other means, and the mechanics of its signature have been so arranged as not to alter the relations between states which do not recognize each other.

Limitations of the Treaty

We in Canada have no illusions about the extent of this first step in itself for we recognize the limitations from which it suffers. It is not a comprehensive test ban, since underground testing is still not prohibited, and it is not a disarmament measure, since it will not in any way reduce the levels of armaments now held. What the treaty does do, however, is help to create an improved climate of confidence in which the total prohibition of testing may, it is to be hoped, become negotiable. Even though it is not a disarmament measure, it should have the effect of restricting both the quality and quantity of nuclear weapons which can henceforth be produced, and thus may help to bring about a levelling-off in the arms race which might make real measures of disarmament more readily negotiable. But above all it demonstrates that, where a community of interests can be uncovered through patient exploration, agreement beneficial to all can be achieved. Herein lies the true significance of the agreement signed in Moscow on August 5 and since adhered to by about one-half of the nations of the world - and more can be expected to follow suit. It may well be that scholars, from the perspectives of history, will say of this treaty: "Here is where the nations of the world made a crucial turn, away from war, toward recognizing the interests of all humanity."

It is, of course, a matter of profound regret that this treaty has not been signed by the largest nation in the world, Communist China, a nation of some 700 million people, which is expanding annually at a rate roughly equal to the population of Canada. I repeat that we must begin to formulate realistic and far-sighted policies for dealing with this Asian giant.

I do not at all regard as in the same category the decision of our great friend and ally, France, to withhold its signature from this treaty, for her motives are entirely different. France threatens no one, and in the very act of announcing his country's decision to stand aside from the test-ban treaty, President de Gaulle solemnly reaffirmed that "there never will be a French aggression". France's failure to sign may have occasioned some disappointment, but nowhere could it have occasioned fear. Given certain conditions

which have much to do with relations within the Western family of nations and nothing to do with aggressive intent, I still should not rule out the possibility of French acceptance of the spirit and intent, if not the letter, of this instrument. In fact, General de Gaulle did express his approval of the Moscow agreement.

A False Comparison

There have been attempts to draw a comparison between the reactions of Communist China and France to the signature of the test-ban treaty, and, indeed, to go farther and to see in the relations between France and the Western alliance some parallel to the rift which has developed between Peking and Moscow. I would remind those who have indulged in these superficial judgments that they should re-examine the recent pronouncements of the leaders of France and China. General de Gaulle's statement of July 29 was less a pronouncement of his views on East-West relations than a ringing reaffirmation of the enduring character of Franco-American friendship and of the Atlantic alliance. Contrast this with the charges of treason that are daily being levelled by Peking at Moscow. For an explanation of the position of France on these great international issues we must look not outside the Western alliance but at the changing relations which are taking place within that alliance as a consequence of the re-emergence of Europe as a major centre of power within the world. This development itself was in turn in large measure made possible by the enlightened policies of the U.S. over the last 15 years, and it is inconceivable to me that in the moment of success of policies so persistently pursued there should not be an acceptance of the consequential change in relations that inevitably had to ensue. But I stress that these are fraternal problems, which can and will be resolved without straining the fabric of the Western alliance, and certainly without harmful consequences to any outside nation.

There is no doubt that we are living in an age of revolutionary change and great expectations. The striving of individuals all over the world for greater freedom is a fundamental fact of modern historical times. Any régime, whatever its ideology, which ignores this fact for very long, does so at its peril. No matter how limited in extent, the trends in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries away from the Stalinist terror are evidence of this fact. We rejoice that the first faltering steps toward greater individual freedom have been made. We rejoice not only for the sake of individuals concerned but also for the opportunities this may eventually provide for more normal relations between ourselves and them.

Implications for Canada

What, then, are the implications for Canada in the developments which I have been discussing? First it must be understood that Canada is bound by treaty obligations and by traditions and national interests to the Atlantic world, and to those other

countries which derive historically, economically or politically from Western Europe and North America. We live in an inter-dependent world and ultimately our relations with the Communist world are governed by the general state of East-West relations and particularly by the climate and the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Because of these facts, it is neither possible nor desirable that our relations with the Communist world should be at wide variance with those of our closest friends and allies.

Yet within these limits there are possibilities open to us which serve our interests and the interests of our allies. There are possibilities for increasing trade in non-strategic goods. There are possibilities for more cultural, scientific and personal contacts which we will also encourage in the firm belief that they will help to break down the barriers of mistrust.

We are far from the point in East-West relations where we can relax our vigilance. We must not be misled by recent developments. The threat of Communism is still great and ever greater if we underestimate its potential. But we must recognize that in all things change is the law of life. Communism itself is undergoing great changes as are relations within the Atlantic community.

Here in Canada we must recognize the changes which are occurring around us, and must formulate policies which will take count of them.

I believe that the next few years will be crucial. If we in the West possess the courage, the resourcefulness and the foresight, if we remain true to our fundamental values and if we proceed forward with a realistic and yet progressive attitude, I have no doubt that future historians will mark our time as one of the great eras of change in history.

S/C