NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE
20:00 HOURS, MAY 2, 1973

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT
DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS
BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE MITCHELL SHARP,
TO THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE CANADIAN PRESS
MAY 2, 1973, IN TORONTO

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For some reason that you will no doubt find as baffling as I do, the newspapers you represent, and particularly the cartoonists that you employ, have no difficulty in identifying me with what has come to be known as our "open-mouth policy" in Viet-Nam.

Perhaps it has something to do with my physical characteristics. As Doug Fisher once remarked, I have a face that reminds him of oatmeal porridge.

Perhaps also the press is finally beginning to notice that during the period it has been my privilege to be Secretary of State for External Affairs there has been a new openness in the Government's conduct of foreign policy. We have been making an effort to encourage public awareness and public debate.

This is a relatively new development. Yet I would be less than objective if I did not admit that it has been part of an evolutionary process that began some time ago and that I have been pushed in this direction by the logic of events.

One of my very distinguished predecessors as Foreign Minister, the late Mike Pearson, acquired an enviable reputation for working with the media. He was well known for the candour with which he spoke to the press, particularly in background briefings, but also in his more formal encounters with your representatives. But the world in which he operated was a much different one from that in which we are working today. Our relationships with other countries, and particularly with the United States, were, if I may say so, a good deal simpler than those with which we are concerned now. It was, of course, Mr. Pearson himself who, in the 1950 s, noted and commented upon the ending of the days of what he described as our easy and automatic relationship with the U.S.A. Nevertheless even ten years ago Canada's foreign policy might still have been roughly described, as it was somewhat earlier by a cynical young member of my Department, as U.K. plus U.S. over 2 $\frac{(U.K. + U.S.)}{2}$.

Moreover, international affairs was not a subject which appeared to touch directly upon the lives of very many Canadians except when global war involved us if the prospect of such a war threatened to involve us. Consequently, until relatively recently, the great majority of the Canadian people were prepared to leave the determination of these issues in the hands of a few foreign affairs buffs like you and me. In short, foreign affairs were things that concerned other people. Canada's own relationships seemed to be secure and tidy. We supported virtue in the United Nations and performed many useful functions throughout the world as a matter of duty, not of national necessity. This very satisfying role was largely made possible by the virtual absence of any serious problems in the international arena that directly affected the lives of Canadians simply because they were Canadians.

...2

I would not like to suggest that at a certain hour on a certain day all this stopped and we suddenly realized that Canada's foreign interests could no longer be adequately protected through multilateral activity and by relying on our special relationship with our great southern neighbour. Mike Pearson foresaw it and we began to see in practice that even Canada was not immune from having its own vital national interests in the external area, and that these could at times be quite different from those of the United States, or our NATO partners, or even from any grouping within the United Nations. As Canadians came to realize that they had a direct individual interest in what was done on their behalf outside the territorial limits of Canada, I discovered when I took over this portfolio some five years ago, that not only the Canadian public, but even some of my colleagues, were taking an unaccustomed interest in activities that had traditionally been very largely the concern of my predecessors alone.

For example, the only promise made by the Trudeau administration in the election campaign of 1968 was to review our foreign policy and in particular our position in NATO and to negotiate for recognition of the People's Republic of China. After the election we set about to fulfil that promise.

Looking back five years I am free to admit that we in the Government were a bit ham-handed in the way we handled the NATO issue but it was fortunate that we made our mistakes early and had time to profit from them. The intention was clear: we wanted to involve the public in the decision-making process. We actively sought the views of the academic community, of Members of Parliament, of groups like the CIIA. We invited the House of Commons Committee on External Affairs and Defence to made a report. I personally spoke throughout the country explaining NATO and the terms for Canadian membership.

It all sounds reasonable enough except that there was very little leadership from the Government. In fact the trumpet spoke with a most uncertain sound; publicly I advocated continued membership in NATO; publicly my then colleague, Mr. Kierans, advocated withdrawal. The result was that our consultations with the public lacked focus. This was particulatly true of our consultations with the academic community who wanted some Government position to criticize; they were not accustomed to being asked to formulate policy.

In the end we reached a reasonable and acceptable decision to continue in NATO but to reduce the numbers of our troops in Europe.

In retrospect it would have been preferable to have given an early indication of the government's thinking - a sense of direction - and to have avoided the impression of division and inactivity. To put the matter bluntly, we should have reached agreement in Cabinet, at least in principle, before seeking the reaction of the public. This, I suggest, is basic to our form of responsible government in a parliamentary democracy.

After that experience with handling the NATO question, we followed a different procedure. Recognition of the People's Republic of China was a case in point. From the outset we declared our intention to negotiate to

...3

establish diplomatic relations with Peking and invited the reaction of the public. The negotiations with the Chinese were, of course, carried on in secret and the resulting agreement took a form that could not have been exactly foreseen. But there was never any doubt about our intentions, either at home or abroad.

These early experiences and the increased public interest in foreign affairs led the government to attempt something unique - the formulation of a set of basic principles underlying Canadian foreign policy. This finally emerged after months of preparation and debate within Cabinet in a series of brochures entitles "Foreign Policy for Canadians". You will recall that a number of newspapers criticized the cover - I am told that the female sex is inadequately represented, and there is not a smile on the face of any of the Canadians that appear there. I am not sure under what government the picture was taken. Other commentators, it is true, went beyond the cover, and although there was no lack of criticism of the content I think it was generally agreed that the effort to produce an outline of Canada's foreign policy within a conceptual framework was timely and justified. It was, I think, the first time that any Canadian Government, at least, had attempted to lay before the people of the country an outline of the considerations that were involved in the establishment of their international priorities. It was the first time that any Canadian Government said clearly and methodically how Canadian foreign policy was intended to promote Canadian objectives. May I add, parenthetically, that it was the first time in my ten years as a member of the Government that the Cabinet as a whole deliberately considered the basic lines of our overall foreign policy.

"Foreign Policy for Canadians" attracted a good deal of useful discussion but, more important, it helped to set this country on a course from which I doubt any government will depart for a long time to come. As long as foreign affairs were something that could be taken for granted, and as long as the man in the street did not feel directly involved in these decisions, it was safe to leave discussions for editorial writers and public servants and, possibly, the occasional Cabinet Minister. The publication of "Foreign Policy for Canadians", if it did nothing else, brought the genie out of the bottle and placed the arcane mysteries of foreign policy formulation under public scrutiny, for any who might wish to scrutinize. There could be no going back. Indeed, it became very clear, very soon, that we had to go forward.

The most common criticism of "Foreign Policy for Canadians" was that, lacking a separate booklet on Canadian-U.S. relations, it was like producing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Without exception the press from Coast to Coast jumped on us. The erudite and not so erudite columnists had a field day. Where, we were asked, was the "missing"book? It had, I must confess, occurred to me and my colleagues that the absence of the book bearing this title would be noted. As I said at the time, the U.S. relationship permeated all other aspects of our foreign policy and the Government's view's on the relationship were to be found under appropriate headings within the individual books that had been published. While this was (and is) undoubtedly true, it became clear that it was not considered enough and, partly in response to these public attitudes, and partly because our relations with the United

...4

States had reached another juncture (I refer to the events of August, 1971), it was decided to attempt to bring together a single statement of the general principles we think should apply to what must surely be the most complex - and productive - bilateral relationship existing in the world.

My Department had, in the meanwhile, gone into the publishing business itself in a modest way. The old "External Affairs Bulletin," which was intended purely as a source of reference material, was superseded just over a year ago by a new publication called "International Perspectives". This venture was something of a calculated risk. I gave instructions that it was not to shy away from controversial material merely because it was controversial; that it was to be stimulating, to encourage debate, and to allow free expression of representative points of view, without regard to what the government policy on the issue might be. We hired an experienced newspaper man on a part-time basis as editor to ensure that these instructions would be carried out.

I doubt if any other Foreign Ministries in the world have publications comparable to it. In any event, we used a special edition of "International Perspectives" to present our three options for the future of Canada-U.S. relations and, in subsequent editions, we have published reactions.

I cannot say that the appearance of that long-awaited, loudly demanded and - if you will permit me - lucid study of Canada-U.S. relations produced a sensation compared to the publication of Xaviera Hollander's memoirs. In fact the study was barely noticed when it appeared in October of last year. Of course, there were minor competing events such as the general election campaign which revolved around more easily understood issues than Canada-U.S. relations, such as the length of the Prime Minister's hair and the variety of his vocabulary.

But it has by no means been ignored and I venture to predict that to an increasing extent the debate about Canada-U.S. relations will revolve around the three options discussed in that paper. It is even beginning to have some effect upon the direction of Canadian Government policy! Just the other day for the first time a report to Cabinet passed under my eye which referred to the Third Option in support of its recommendations.

At any rate I make this submission to you: far from reluctantly meeting the demands of public opinion in the area of foreign relations, the Government has actually stimulated demand, invited criticism, acknowledged it when it came, and even, if you can believe it, applied these public expressions of view to the conduct of our foreign operations.

I do not suggest that foreign policy can be conducted in the full glare of television klieglights. The process of negotiation depends to an enormous extent on confidentiality. Premature public exposure of a negotiating position can only serve to harden attitudes and a completely open negotiation would very quickly resolve itself into repetitious declarations of rigid positions until some way could be found of getting out of the glare and back to closed and confidential discussions. On the other hand, once

decisions have been reached, and sometimes while various options are still open, it is important to submit them to public examination to see if they command the public support because, in the long run, public support is the only guarantee that an international commitment will be honoured. To submit a tentative proposal or options being examined helps the Government make up its own mind and enables the public to take part in the decision-making process.

In the paper on Canada-U.S. Relations published last October in International Perspectives, for example, the Government came out in favour of what has been termed the Third Option. I confess that there were some misgivings in government circles about opting for any particular direction in our relations with the United States. Why take a public position? Why not play it by ear? Why not leave all options open? Why give the Opposition something else to criticize? After all, it was argued, we have got along for years without any such statement of policy. Remember what that durable practitioner of the political art, Mackenzie King once said: "I made only one memorable speech in my career and I always regretted it."

It was tempting politically to follow this cautious advice but we finally came to the conclusion that a sense of direction had to be given to our relations with the United States. Economic integration with the United States as a direction of policy we ruled out as unacceptable to the Canadian people. The choice was then between continuing on a more or less ad hoc course, reacting to events in our great neighbour to the south, as we have been doing - with some success - or - and this is the third option - pursuing a comprehensive long term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of our national life and in the process to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability.

Is this the right direction for Canada? This Government thinks so. But do the Canadian people? That question can only be answered if it is put before the people. That is what we have done, just as Prime Minister Trudeau opted for federalism and invited the people of Canada in Quebec and elsewhere to follow him. Would it have been better for Trudeau and the Government to have blurred the issue as some of his critics did in order to leave all options open, such as special status for Quebec, the concept of two nations?

Surely there is fundamentally the same rationale for giving a sense of direction to foreign policy, particularly in relation to a great friendly giant like the United States beside whom we want to live distinct but in harmony.

In the address to the Associated Press last week Dr. Kissinger - inadvertently - underlined the very real significance of this third policy option to Canadians. First let me say that because of our close ties with the United States and the members of the European Economic Community, Canada welcomes wholeheartedly what appears to be a serious and constructive effort by the United States Government to open consultations designed to redefine and revitalize the Atlantic relationship. There are inevitably questions about

...6

interpretation and implementation which remain to be answered - but the approach recalls responses to earlier international crossroads: the Atlantic Charter, the Marshall Plan and the Canadian efforts when NATO was born to give the Alliance political and economic as well as military significance. The Canadian Government has underlined on several occasions the inevitable interaction between developments on the economic and political fronts. While we continue to believe that consultations and negotiations on economic issues should take place in the appropriate multilateral bodies, we would agree with Dr. Kissinger that the broader association we have as members of the NATO Alliance provides a convenient forum for developing a measure of political understanding on the broader perspectives of our individual national policies. I have myself used the NATO forum on several occasions to make this point. The importance of the trading relationships between Europe, Japan, Canada and the USA as well as the needs of the developing countries will all be prime issues at the negotiations in the new GATT round starting this year. They will also receive attention in the continuing discussions in the OECD in Paris where the countries mentioned by Dr. Kissinger are well represented. Canada's participation in and support for these efforts to liberalize trade has been steadfast and unreserved. We agree that NATO should continue to function as an instrument of collective defence. Like the United States we see NATO's collective strength and the present situation of strategic parity as opportunities for developing a basis for political détente with Eastern Europe.

Thus I can assure our friends to the South that the Canadian Government views Dr. Kissinger's speech in its broad outline as a welcome reaffirmation and redefinition of an outward looking and responsible American foreign policy.

But looking at it from a Canadian perspective, as I must do, there is a potentially disturbing feature, and this may be as much a feature of our polarizing world as of Dr. Kissinger's address. And that is: where do Canadians fit into the developing pattern? Dr. Kissinger has identified three main power centres in the non-Communist world - the United States, Europe and Japan. While we have no illusions about being declared a fourth power centre we think we have a distinctive contribution to make and we don't want to be polarized around any of the main power centres.

We can take some comfort from the fact that in his speech, Dr. Kissinger called on Canada along with Europe and, ultimately, Japan to join the United States in working out a new Atlantic Charter, To that call I have no hesitation in saying we will respond most willingly, the more so because it is within such a framework that Canada will have the best chance of avoiding polarization and of achieving the diversity in our economic, cultural and political relations that is fundamental to the strengthening of the Canadian identity.

This is exactly the sort of issue which I would like to see fully and vigorously debated by the press. We will need clear heads and wise judgements as this debate proceeds - and the press has an important contribution to make.

...7

Even with these issues properly identified and policy direction given, decisions have still to be made on the individual questions that present themselves almost daily in relations between Canada and the United States, questions about trade, about exchanges of energy, about cross-border investment, about industrial policy, about broadcasting policy. And as our study of Canada-United States relations points out, that pursuit of the Third Option "does not seek to distort the realities of the Canada-United States relationship of the fundamental community of interest that lies at the root of it."

When the question of Canadian participation in the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Viet-Nam was first broached, it seemed to me that here was a question on which large sections of the Canadian public were passionately concerned. Many of us had our own points of view, but there were also a large number of peripheral considerations to be taken into account. However, Canada was not itself directly involved in the negotiation and the need for confidentiality was secondary, in my opinion, to the need of keeping the public informed. If people tell you things in confidence, you cannot make them public the next day. But, to the extent that we were dealing with Canadian responses, I decided that at every new turn of events the Canadian public would be kept informed of what had happened and what the Government proposed to do next. I even tried with only partial success I regret to say, to enlighten the Opposition parties by offering them a chance to see for themselves what was going on in Indo-China. Naturally, I was very pleased to see that the general lines we were following commanded a wide measure of approval and this became a source of great comfort to me in making the decisions as they became necessary. Unless we had taken the public into our confidence we should never have known its response.

Among the details of the proposed arrangement, we learned that the anticipated Commission would operate on a rule of unanimity. As the Prime Minister had said on this subject, Canada did not intend to be frustrated by such a rule. It became clear that we would have to find a way of applying our policy of keeping the public informed of the operations of the new Commission when it came into existence. Thus, to try to offset the worst features of the rule of unanimity, we first tried to have the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Viet-Nam act, not as a negotiating body where the rule of confidentiality would be essential, but as an international forum where all the facts and all the points of view of the parties concerned would be placed publicly on the record for all to see. We were not able to persuade our colleagues in the ICCS to go along with this, so we determined that at least Canada's position would be a matter of public record. Accordingly, I instructed the Head of our Delegation that he should, to the best of his ability, see that Canadian positions taken in the Commission were publicly available. This has become known as the "open-mouth policy", to which I have already referred.

It is, I think, a somewhat new departure. It is, of course, subject to the law of diminishing returns and can be a strain on our bilateral relations with other countries involved who may not share our own view of what can legitimately be put in the public domain. Nevertheless, it has served a useful purpose during the formative period of the Commission's life and will no doubt continue to be of use for the immediate furure. But it will not transform the sow's ear into an elegant silk purse.

There have been times, I confess, when I have been slightly tempted to envy my colleagues in other countries who can control the press and ensure that only the news they think fit to print is, in fact, printed. I also have occasionally felt a twinge of admiration for those foreign ministers who seem to be able to manage the news by calculated leaks or by favouring those newsmen who can be counted on to publish sympathetic stories about the activities of their respective foreign offices.

But, I hasten to add, I am not complaining nor do I intend to try to emulate the.

In pursuing an open-mouth policy on foreign policy, I have come to realize more than ever before, however, that my voice carries only as for as the media decides to carry it. I may not be willing or even if I choose might not be able to manage the news; the media does in the very nature of things manage the news. That is your job. "All the news that's fit to print" as a rule of press conduct speaks for itself.

Anyone who reads Canadian newspapers and watches or listens to Canadian television and radio will agree with me that the media has given widespread coverage to recent developments in Canadian foreign policy. My friend and yours, Gratton O'Leary, complained recently in the Senate which he adorns (even if he is a Tory) that every time he turned on the TV there was Mitchell Sharp.

So I have no complaint on that score. Indeed, I have reason to be grateful to the media generally. Nevertheless, in concluding these remarks I have a suggestion to make relating to the foreign news carried by the Canadian Press.

It is the Canadian Press that brings to its subscribers the only distinctive Canadian viewpoint that is broadly available to Canadians on what is going on in the outside world. A few of our larger dailies can afford to maintain a few correspondents outside of Canada, but the vast majority of Canadians depend upon the Canadian Press. There are other newsgathering agencies, and indeed the Canadian Press cooperates with some of them, and in terms of factual information their product is first rate and they provide us with a large variety of sources of information. Besides, the fact that they are not Canadian may not matter too much. It is part of being Canadian to be equipped with a built-in filter that enables us to detect and identify news reports that are clearly not aimed at a Canadian audience.

...9

No Canadian over the age of 10, on reading, say, that the fleet has moved into the Gulf of Tonkin, is under even a momentary illusion that the Canadian Armed Forces are up to something. Nevertheless, it would be a great contribution to the intelligent discussion of our international affairs and an appropriate recognition that international affairs are becoming increasingly a matter of concern to all Canadians if we were to have a greater proportion of our international news reports written with a Canadian readership in mind. According to my information, there are Canadian Press bureaux in London, Paris, Brussels, Washington and New York. In addition, reporters are of course sent abroad to cover specific stories. The Government considers it necessary to have some 100 diplomatic and consular missions abroad. Obviously, while the Government has reasons for having representation in Lusaka, for example, you may not have, but it seems to me that there is too great a disparity in the 100 to 5 ratio. I realize how expensive foreign operations can be. After all, I have to battle for the money to keep ours going. I also know how excellent is the coverage that is obtainable from other agencies at much less cost. But it seems to me that it is very important, particularly in those areas where Canadian interests are clearly identifiable and distinct from those of any other country, that our reading public, and indeed the radio listener and television viewer, have the issues presented to him from a point of view with which he can relate without having to switch on his congenital filter.