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Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the Graduation Ceremony, Osgoode Hall, Toronto, March 25, 1966.

My remarks ... are directed primarily to the graduates but I hope that they will be seen to have a wider implication.

I would stress to you who are entering upon your careers the importance of discussing, defining and then acting to promote the national interest, either in world or in domestic affairs. We should hold before us the ideal for a democratic society proposed by Pericles to the citizens of Athens, 2,500 years ago: "Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of state as well. Even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well informed on general politics -- this is a peculiarity of ours. We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business. We say that he has no business here at all."

I am sometimes asked, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs, what foreign policy and diplomacy are all about. I am not entirely surprised by the questions. Canadians live in an immense country in which only the familiar border with the United States provides any reminder of national differences. They may feel that "foreign affairs" is a subject for countries overseas or for a federal capital to think about.

Trade, war, immigration and travel are familiar enough manifestations of external interests and problems, but the listing of activities leads to more fundamental questions. What, in the national interest, do we want in our relations with the rest of the world? Foreign policy is the definition of what we want. Diplomacy concerns itself with how we are to attain our objectives. Dominating both is the rigorous and unending examination of all the factors, all the advantages and disadvantages which are relevant to the final decision on the most important question: "In a country with as many diverse interests and viewpoints as Canada, in a world as complex as the contemporary one, wherein lies the national interest?"

Foreign policy as much as domestic policy centres around issues which can determine the security and economic well-being of several generations of Canadians. The preservation of an alliance, the termination or avoidance of armed conflict anywhere in the world, the co-operation of nations to ensure economic progress - these are among the essential elements of our foreign policy and the leading objectives of our diplomacy.

You will probably have heard of something in the past few days about the serious problems within the North Atlantic alliance created by the decision of France to withdraw from those measures of military integration which support the guarantees of mutual assistance contained in the Treaty. I hope that you and all Canadians will understand the importance of the questions involved.

In 1914 a generation of young Canadians was committed to the barbarism of trench warfare and mass slaughter in Northern Europe. In 1939 another generation was caught up in the world convulsion of war, ideological hatred and mass genocide. I am speaking today to the representatives of a generation which, if we were not all consumed in nuclear fire first, would be in the front line of another ghastly blood-letting that might bring Western civilization down in ruins.

In 1949 the nations which signed the North Atlantic Treaty drew the correct conclusions from their experience. They decided that they must organize their security collectively in their own region, pending the establishment of universal collective security through the United Nations. They set on record before the world, for the benefit of any whose ambitions or temptations might lead them to hope otherwise, that they would fight collectively and immediately to resist any intrusion into the area covered by the guarantee.

To render the deterrent force of the guarantee as effective as possible, a degree of military integration unprecedented in peace-time was undertaken. That military integration has been both a sign of mutual interest and trust within a new type of alliance and an appropriate response to new conditions of warfare.

I am sure that a number of you have visited Europe or will do so. When you find there abundant evidence of economic prosperity, the flourishing of the arts and the healthy mingling of the traditional and the new, you must give due credit to the defensive shield which has guaranteed the recovery of a large part of the continent. The founders of NATO expected this recovery, and more than that. Canadians and others have looked beyond military measures and beyond European recovery as an immediate aim to the possibilities of developing an Atlantic Community with political, economic and military stability and well-being beneficial for the Atlantic nations and for other parts of the world.

Differences of opinion have developed, however, about some of these relations. I should like to stress some points which are occasionally the subject of controversy among Canadians.

Some see NATO as a hindrance to efforts to achieve a general relaxation of tension in the world. I believe, on the contrary, that we have been able to improve relations with the Soviet Union in recent years because our defensive power has provided a basis for clear understanding and, to an increasing extent, I believe, mutual respect. In earlier periods, shifting political alignments among nations, lack of military preparedness in peace-time on the part of some nations and an exaggerated militarism on the part of others led to uncertainty, panic and crisis.

We are trying now, through new conceptions of security, to create conditions of political and economic stability and military strength which will enable the Atlantic nations to show the maximum flexibility in relations with the rest of the world. The fate of our efforts to adhere to this modern conception of an alliance in our foreign policy will be of the greatest importance to Canada in your lifetime.

Our foreign policy does not, however, confine itself to the problems of a regional alliance, so far as the search for peace and security is concerned. The hope of security for a few nations is an illusion if we ignore the forces elsewhere which could now, or in the future, shatter that security.

I am sure that for you, as for me, the ultimate question when we consider our own future or the future of our families is whether mankind can permanently outlaw the use of nuclear energy for war. The alternatives presented by our unprecedented power for welfare or for destruction are clear and dramatic. The astronauts of the two leading powers in the world have exclaimed at the sheer beauty of the world as they have seen it, with all the fresh enthusiasm of explorers entering unknown oceans or sighting unknown continents. The military strategists of the same two powers are forced to contemplate, as a matter of professional routine, a devastation of the face of the globe which would throw human beings, animals and the very plants which sustain our life into a nuclear furnace.

We have chosen as the focal point for our policy in a universal sense the "diplomacy of reconciliation" which Dag Hammarskjold saw as the main task of the United Nations. "All the varied interests and aspirations of the world", he said "meet in its precincts upon the common ground of the Charter."

The varied initiatives of diplomacy are directed toward this focal point of a reconciliation of interests. Some have to do with disarmament or the limitation and control of arms. Some arise from the needs of peace keeping, which have led to a Canadian presence in United Nations projects in many parts of the world remote to us. In all such initiatives in political, economic or social matters, we have acted out of the conviction so eloquently expressed by an American judge on the International Court of Justice that "there will be general international realization of the common interest and that the timeless tide will still flow toward uniformity in the law of nations".

The relevance of world conditions to the most elementary questions of our security and survival is obvious. I am sure that you have asked yourselves how relevant the broad themes of our foreign policy are to immediate questions of economic prosperity and social progress in Canada.

I scarcely need to identify the economic and social challenges which we face ourselves in our own country. We have to maintain a rate of growth which will guarantee a rising standard of living. We have to exert ourselves by our industry, by our technological skill and by imaginative planning in order to be fully competitive in the world market. We have obligations towards our underprivileged groups, towards Canadian society as a whole, for improved welfare.

Does this mean that economic conditions in other countries can be allowed to recede beyond the horizon as a subject for our interest and concern? It would be the most short-sighted folly if we allowed this to happen.

Here are some of the realities of conditions elsewhere which can affect our national interest in ways we do not often realize. The President of Pakistan has pointed out that "for a majority of nations of the world, economic progress is today another name for sheer survival". The President of Tanzania has said something which should be pondered by Canadians, for whom trade is life-blood: "Even a completely closed market which is restricted to the poor of the world would be better for us than the present system in which the poor are at the mercy of the rich". A senior United Nations economist has pointed to what, from the standpoint of the developing countries, appears to be an "inevitable deterioration in the terms of trade in a world of vicious circles, perverse relationships and asymmetrical situations." This is the language of the economist, but it carries its own sense of urgency and concern.

This is the world we live in and we should be foolish to think that we could make ourselves invulnerable and count only on our efforts within our own boundaries for prosperity. International economic co-operation is imperative - whether it involves close relations and negotiations with the United States, negotiations with the developed nations over tariffs and trade, adjustment of the terms of trade for developing nations or development assistance to those nations.

The answer to any who ask whether we are to concentrate on helping ourselves or on co-operating with others is simple but hard: "You must do both". This is the challenge to Canadians in developing their own country. It is the challenge to their Government in its economic diplomacy.

These are some of the grand themes of our foreign policy. I should like to close by saying something about Canadian problems. Under the impact of danger or the stimulation of external problems, we have agreed on the national interest and acted to defend it. In the 20 years or so during which Canada has developed a global

diplomacy, few serious disagreements have arisen over our actions abroad. This is not unnatural in foreign affairs, and we can hardly expect a consensus on the national interest in other fields to be achieved as readily.

Yet achieved it must be. We have to pursue the logic of a bicultural society in ensuring justice and a balance of interests for all. We have to agree about federal and provincial responsibilities. We have the economic and social challenges I have already mentioned. We must rise as a nation to these responsibilities. Every issue must be thoroughly debated, but the debate should clarify issues, not obstruct eventual decision and action. When the decisions are made we must implement them loyally and vigorously, if we value the institutions through which the decisions were made and if we respect ourselves as a nation.

I say this because there are some who see solutions only in abandoning some vital part of our heritage and altering fundamentally some part of our political structure. There are some who doubt our present identity or long-term durability as a nation, or who speak cynically about our capacity for resolving political problems.

Considering all that we have experienced and achieved together in the 100 years since Confederation, I proclaim my own loyalty to Canada as I am sure most of you see it - a nation with elements of true greatness, capable of deriving new strength and richness from its very diversity and respected among the nations of the world.

I see it as Sir Wilfrid Laurier described it 69 years ago to an audience in Paris: "Notre pays est un pays ... plein de vigueur, d'activité et d'ambition. Le sang de la jeunesse bout dans ses veines; il a foi dans son avenir". The words are moving in either of our languages, and I repeat them to you: "Our country is a land full of vigour, of action and of ambition. The blood of youth stirs in its veins, it has faith in its future".

The future of the country will be assured if enough of its citizens recognize the democratic imperative of participating in those political processes which best determine the national interest. Some people cast aspersions on political activity, as if it were divorced from major interests of the people. Of them I would say what Pericles said of some of the Greeks: "It never occurs to any of them that the apathy of one will damage the interests of all". Political judgment, good or bad, affects the vital interests of the whole community. It must, therefore, be of general concern.

Canada has many demands to make of your generation for its own immediate well-being and for the accomplishment of honourable tasks in the world. The country deserves your loyalty, requires your intelligence and depends on your desire to work for the common interest of all your fellow citizens.