



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT

Statement made in the House of Commons on January 31, 1956, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson.

Work of the Armistice Commissions in Indochina

... I should say at least a word about the work of the armistice commissions in Indochina, which was referred to earlier in the sitting this afternoon. In that area of the world Canadians continue to make an important contribution to peace through their work with these commissions. Our men—there are some 170 of them in that area, mostly from the Department of National Defence, members of the armed forces—have discharged their extremely difficult and trying duties with great credit to themselves and to their country. In one of the countries, there, namely Cambodia, we have reached the winding-up stage of the commission, and we have been able to reduce the strength of that commission. Elections have been held in that country, and as a result the commission and its members can leave Cambodia with the satisfaction which they must feel at the stability which has been achieved in a country so recently a victim of war.

In Laos, one of the other countries, the situation is not so good. Elections have also been held there, but the communist Pathet Lao forces, which are grouped in the northern provinces of that country, have refused to accept the Laotian Government or the authority of that government and to take part in the election. Hence no reduction there has been found possible either in the numbers of the commission or in its activities up to the present time.

So far as Vietnam is concerned—and that is probably the most important of the three countries—the military phases of the armistice work have been completed and with little disturbance. I think the commission deserves a good deal of credit for that result. The political aspects, however, present a less satisfactory picture. Little progress has been made in that country toward the national elections visualized by the Geneva conference, and which are scheduled to take place in July of this year. If they do not take place it is hard to say what

effect that failure will have on our obligations in the commission.

This work in Indochina is arduous and difficult, as I have said, and it imposes a heavy burden on the armed forces of our country and upon the Department of External Affairs. We are most anxious to complete it at the earliest possible date. Nevertheless we shall not abandon that work so long as we are convinced that it is making an important contribution to peace.

Recognition of Communist China

I should also say a word about a problem which is very much in our mind these days, namely that of the legal recognition of the communist Chinese Government in Peking. One of the most difficult questions which face this country and many other countries is that of determining our relations with the two rival and bitterly hostile governments of China. It is not as simple an issue to decide as some seem to think. There is more than one factor to take into account before any decisions can wisely be taken. Such a decision requires a careful balancing of many national and international factors, moral, political and economic.

Some time ago—indeed, last summer—I expressed the view that we should have another look at this question in the light of the cessation of hostilities in Korea and in Indochina, in the light of the situation in and around the Formosa straits and in the light of the recent policy of the Peking Government in so far as it is possible to determine it. We have made this re-examination and we feel that the careful policy we have been following, and are still following, has been the right one; rejecting on the one hand immediate diplomatic recognition but rejecting on the other hand the view that a communist regime in Peking can never be recognized as the Government of China.

The arguments for and against recognition of this government have more than once been discussed, and in detail, in this House, and I do not intend to repeat them at this time. I wish merely to state as briefly as possible the considerations which determine our policy as a government in this matter.

The first consideration is the interest of our country, remembering that the paramount interest of us all is international peace and security. In addition, we are obliged to give consideration to the interests and views of our friends and allies, some of whom are even more directly involved than are we in the consequences of diplomatic recognition. It is also important not to confuse recognition with approval. There are, of course,

moral considerations involved and, in the case of a ruthless communist regime, these considerations inevitably must have a bearing on our attitude. But the decision remains predominantly a political one to be taken on the basis of enlightened self-interest, as in many other cases where we have recognized totalitarian regimes.

It should not, however, be assumed that Canadian recognition of the Peking government—even if it were to be granted at some time in the future—would extend to the island of Formosa. As we see it, the legal status of Formosa is still undecided and no step taken vis-a-vis the communist regime should prejudice that issue. In particular, we would not be a party to any action which handed over the people or the government on Formosa, against their will, to any mainland government, let alone to a communist Chinese government.

We condemn the cruelties and tyrannies of the Peking regime, and we continue to hope that the Chinese people will one day be governed by a more enlightened government of their own choice.

But, we must accept the fact of communist control of mainland China. That is one thing we cannot fail to recognize with the corollary that in certain circumstances and in our own interests we may be obliged to deal—as we already have been obliged to do—at Geneva and elsewhere with that government in respect of certain problems which cannot be solved without it. Nor should we, I suggest, base our policy on the likelihood of the nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek returning to power on the mainland. Furthermore, the anomaly of that government representing China at the United Nations, with a veto that can block any action desired by 52 other members, is becoming increasingly apparent. I believe also that we should accept no commitment to intervene on behalf of the nationalist government in the struggle for the Chinese off-shore islands. Our view on this matter has already been made clear in this House, outside this House and in the United States.

As for Formosa, the only commitment—and this also has been stated in the House—we have is that which might arise out of our obligations under the charter of the United Nations. So far as diplomatic recognition is concerned, we should from time to time review the position in the light of conditions; of our interests and of the views of our friends and allies. However, I believe we should not get ourselves into such an inflexible position that a change in policy, if it were considered to be wise and necessary, could be brought about only with maximum difficulty.

I should like to express one further thought on this subject. We are all concerned, and rightly so, that the utmost in good judgment be applied to this complicated and controversial problem of legal recognition. As I see it, however, we must not let it distract us so much that we ignore the longer term issues which are raised by communist China's emergency as a new and powerful force in the world. The consolidation and growth of Chinese power under communist rule which is now taking place may be historically as important an event as the Russian revolution of 1917. The implications for us in China's determined drive to achieve military and industrial might and a position as a world power may be as far reaching as similar developments which have taken place in Russia. Indeed, one day in the future these two revolutionary forces may clash. It may now seem to us to be of great importance to recognize or not to recognize the communist regime in Peking. It is of far greater importance to recognize that a revolution of cataclysmic force has taken place in China as a fateful part of the emergence of a modern awakened Asia...

Objectives of Soviet Policies

Hon. members will recall the feeling of optimism that was developed at the summit meeting as it is now called, at Geneva last summer: It may well be that hopes at that time were too high and that thinking was too wishful. I remember, along with others, taking that view in this House in the discussion we had on July 23 last year. At that time I, along with a good many others, felt that the real test of the reality and importance of the Geneva spirit was to be the foreign Ministers' meeting which was called for November in an effort to achieve some of the objectives of the summit meeting.

We now know that the results of that November meeting was almost 100 per cent negative. We learned at that time that Soviet words differed from Soviet deeds, and that Soviet tactics were not the same as Soviet policy. As hon. members will recall, as a result of that foreign ministers' meeting in Geneva in November, not a single basic objective of Soviet policy was changed.

What are those objectives? I believe myself that the fundamental objective of Soviet policy, the long-range one, is security for the Soviet Union and the triumph of communist ideology in a world of communist States controlled and dominated by Moscow, I believe this objective remains unaffected either by relaxation or by increases of tensions. The cold war in that sense goes on, and I suggest it is misleading to think of the cold war in any other terms.

This was very well put in an editorial in The Economist magazine last November, which reads:

"Cold war" is an even more misleading phrase than most of the monosyllabic slogans that headline writers love. It is commonly identified with such rudeness and crudeness as the Russians practised until lately. For those who make this over-simple identification, the "cold war" presumably ended when Vishinsky's diatribes gave place to Mr. Khrushchev's waggery, . . . "Cold-war" in that sense need not now return, and it probably will not . . . But the phrase "cold war" was originally coined with reference not to a form of etiquette but to a policy-- the policy of "struggle", to borrow a communist keyword. This "struggle" is basically a contest for power over men's minds, a political contest in which economic and military pressures are auxiliary. The "cold war" in this deeper sense never ended, and can never end while the communist rulers cling to their aim of worldwide victory. All that can change is the tactics employed, both by them and by the nations that are ready to defend their liberty.

These are very wise words indeed. But tactics, even on this interpretation of Soviet policy, have changed, and in one sense at least I think the change of tactics has effected a change of strategy, and in a sense that is very important indeed.

I believe myself, and I share that belief, of course, with many others, that the deterrent effect of the hydrogen bomb is now recognized in Moscow. It is now admitted there as in other places that hydrogen warfare means universal destruction, and it is now accepted in Moscow, as in other places, that a balance of terror has been achieved. No one, however, can take much comfort out of it as a solid foundation of peace.

I think, as I said a few moments ago, that the Soviet leaders do want peace in the sense that they do not want atomic warfare, and that they will not deliberately provoke or risk that kind of war with the certainty of mutual destruction. Yet I add that in my view their policy is still conflict short of war that is what they mean, surely, by competitive coexistence; not friendly co-operation.

It is always wise to go to the Soviet leaders' own words to get inside their minds, especially the words they are aiming not at their potential enemies outside, but the words which they use for their own friends, their own people. In that connection, Mr. Stalin himself expressed what he meant by coexistence, and it is a definition that has never been disavowed by his followers, when he said:

"The limits of coexistence are set by the opposite characters of the two systems between which there is opposition and conflict. Within the limits allowed by these two systems, but only within these limits, agreement is quite possible."

Then, more recently Stalin's successor, Mr. Khrushchev on September 17 last, in addressing an East German delegation in Moscow, said this, and these words are now pretty well known:

"We always tell the truth to our friends as well as to our enemies. We are in favour of a detente; but if anyone thinks that for this reason we shall forget about Marx, Engels and Lenin he is mistaken. This will happen when shrimps learn to whistle."

He went on:

"We are for coexistence because there is in the world a capitalist and a socialist system, but we shall always adhere to the building of socialism. We do not believe that war is necessary to that end. Peaceful competition will be sufficient."

That should be reassuring but it is not so reassuring when you try to analyse what is meant by the kind of competition which is referred to; competition under their rules, or under no rules. I suggest we must face the fact of their kind of competition.

Another objective which has not changed because of any Geneva spirit is to win over, subvert and eventually engulf the uncommitted millions of Asia and Africa. The recent visit of Soviet leaders to India is just one example of their determination to pursue their objective—a visit which I am sure did not deceive our Indian friends. Another example is the Soviet policy in backing Arab states military and politically.

This objective, I think, is fixed but here again their tactics are flexible. They are willing to either take the peace approach to the achievement of their objective or the force approach. Mr. Khrushchev is an outstanding example of the ability to use either tactic. In India he could pay pious if unconvincing tributes to Gandhi, the great apostle of pacificism, on one day and the next day boast that one of their hydrogen bombs could destroy an Indian city. The most important tactic of all in the achievement of this objective is, of course, to exploit and lead, if possible through local communist parties, the insistent demand for political freedom, racial equality and social betterment which exists in that part of the world today. They are having too much success in the achievement of that objective.

The third objective which I suggest has not changed is to weaken, divide and eventually destroy the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and drive the United States out of western Europe. How do they expect to achieve that? Well, there is the tactic of smiling away our fears so we will throw away our arms and our unity, to convince us that the Soviet Union is merely a country of footballers, fiddlers and flowers.

There is another tactic, and that is the Soviet attitude concerning Germany and its relationship to NATO. This is specifically shown in the Soviet attitude toward the unification of Germany, where it is now quite clear that they will refuse to consent to that unification except on their own terms. And what are those terms, at least at the present time? Mr. Khrushchec said it was withdrawal from NATO. He told me that on more than one occasion, but I suspect that he told me only half the story and that Mr. Molotov told the other half at the Geneva conference. It became clear as a result of the statements he made at that meeting that even a Germany out of NATO, even a Germany neutralized and disarmed, would not be enough as the price for unification. The present Russian position goes further than that, and I think we can take Mr. Molotov's words at face value when he said there will be no unification unless the social and economic benefits of the Germans of the East are preserved.

That means there will be no unification unless all of Germany goes communist, and that means there will be no free election. Surely that has now become clear, and I suggest we should keep it clear, so there will be no difficulty in understanding what the position is.

Now this policy of the Soviet Union in regard to Germany involves difficulties for the government and people of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is for that reason we all welcomed the searching examination which was given to that problem at the recent NATO council meeting. So we welcomed the assurance that was given last December by the foreign Minister of the Federal Republic that the present policy of that government had the overwhelming support of the German people; that notwithstanding—indeed, in a sense because of—the failure of the Geneva conference; that German opinion was steady and undecieved, that they now knew the Russian price for unification, and they would not have it on those terms.

It seems to me there is an awareness of this development even in the east itself—that is, Eastern Germany itself that may be one reason why last year 271,000 refugees fled to Western Germany. It is true, of course, that the Soviet Government does try to misrepresent the situation.

It was misrepresented in our visit to Moscow, too, in the sense that we were told that the policy of the West was to insist that Germany shall remain in NATO as a price for unification. That, of course, is not the case. All we ask is that the Germans be allowed to make their own choice as a result of free elections. That choice might be membership in NATO or withdrawal from NATO, or any other course they may desire to follow; and it should be made perfectly clear that that is the position of the West. We should do our best to correct misrepresentations of that position from communist sources.

I have mentioned the NATO conference meeting. I do not have time today to give any detailed report of it, but I can say this. We agreed at that meeting, as you would have expected us to agree, that nothing happened to justify any relaxation in our defence or in our diplomacy. We felt that those who were opposed to NATO were counting on relaxation of the tension bringing about a relaxation of effort and a weakening in our unity. We agreed that we must do our best to remain strong and united and keep our diplomacy flexible and active. I hope there will be another opportunity when I can report in greater detail about the NATO developments, and especially the Council meeting last December.

The International Situation

In conclusion, may I just say a word on the general situation. The great combined effort to maintain peace and freedom goes on. The leadership in that effort continues to rest with the United States of America, and that is why every other free nation, especially a neighbour and friend like Canada, must be intensely preoccupied with every aspect of American policy. That is why we must make our views clearly known to the people of that country on the issues which affect us both but in which their position is vital.

The two greatest factors today bearing on the danger of aggression in all parts of the world are, I think, first the nature and conduct of United States policy because of its position of power and leadership, and second the strength of United States arms. As the predominant element of power in the NATO alliance—where would we be today without it? United States strength, military and economic, has been of decisive importance during the past decade in maintaining peace in Europe, and hence in the world. It will be so, I believe, in the years ahead.

Similarly, the determination of the United States to give leadership in resisting aggression in Korea in 1950 saved collective security and probably the United Nations itself. We would be wise not to forget this when we dwell on present differences of viewpoint within the coalition—and we have them—particularly in connection with Far Eastern policy.

While our policy should, of course, be designed and carried out to make the use of force unnecessary; while tactics should be followed that are neither provocative nor rash, nevertheless, the maintenance of force in this unhappy world of today and the clear resolve to use it as a final necessity against aggression is an indisputable obligation on us all at the present time. The deterrent value of such force, as I see it, should neither be squandered by bluff nor made impotent by loss of nerve in a genuine crisis.

Our purpose and our policy must be to avoid crises and to solve international problems. But crises, in spite of all our efforts, may occur, and dangerous and unresolved problems may persist. It is important, therefore, that the communist bloc, which we fear and which we still have cause to fear, should not get the impression that free peoples in their passion for peace and their desire to secure it by negotiation and the resolving of differences would, under no circumstances, make use of the deterrent strength they have built up for security and defence in accordance with the principles of the United Nations.

This strength, though centred in the United States, is the sum total of that of many free countries, all of whom are devoted and will continue to be devoted to the ideal of peace and will strive with all their power to find means of securing that peace. That strength, then, being collective, should be used collectively if it is to be effective. This requires that every member of the coalition should know about and, if possible, should agree with the policies of the leaders as to when and how the threat of aggression, as well as its actuality, must be faced and countered. On no other basis can there be solid unity, and unity is as much a part of our strength as bombs.

We are moving, I think, into a much more fluid period or relations with the communist world than those which characterized the hard and brutal rigidity and the tense isolation of the late Stalinist period. It must be quite clear now that the new tactic of Russia is one of manoeuvre and contact, of trying everything that may help their cause; of smiles and scowls, of kicks and carrots. These tactics may be more dangerous and difficult to deal with than any ever employed by Stalin. They are certainly more complex. But at any rate, in the long run, they may offer some possibilities for negotiation and settlement. To meet them and to bring about that negotiation and settlement to which we would all give first place in our efforts, requires flexibility and imagination on our part. As "our" refers to a coalition of free states, with a cherished freedom even to differ, this is going to be difficult to combine with unity of purpose and co-ordination of methods.

We must, then, develop an imaginative yet realistic diplomacy, one based on a clear and unclouded understanding of the intentions and methods of the Soviet Union and its satellites and of their strengths and weaknesses; one based also on a staunch adherence to our own policies and principles.

There is now less reason for complacency on our part than ever, for the threat to the institutions and the society of the free world remains as strong as ever. There is, however, no reason for despair merely because Mr. Molotov said "Nyet" at Geneva and because Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev continue to level harsh and unfounded accusations at the western powers, mixed with honeyed words and offers of peace pacts. The latest of these offers was made the other day to the government of the United States through a message from Mr. Bulganin to President Eisenhower. I feel that I am voicing the impressions of most members of this House, though I know I should speak only for myself, when I say that I have read with admiration and respect the reply of the President of the United States to that offer. It was constructive not negative, and it was the sort of attitude that in a matter of this kind I am sure this government would be happy to support.

I have already mentioned the feeling of confidence and self-assurance of the Soviet leaders. If on our part we can show strength, steadiness and unity—a strength which is more than military, a steadiness which is not indifference and a unity which is based on common ideals and which requires careful and continuous fostering—we shall prove the communists wrong in their assurance that the future belongs to them.

If we do not, we shall have only ourselves to blame.

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