

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 48/22

PROBLEMS OF CANADIAN SECURITY

An address delivered by The Right Honourable Louis S. St. Laurent, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at a luncheon of the Rotary Tri-District Conference in Montreal, April 26, 1948.

I am very glad to be here to-day and to have once again the opportunity of discussing with members of Rotary International some of the problems in which the free citizens of this country and of the United States are equally concerned.

Happily, our relations with each other are so frequent and so constant that there is very little of public interest to any of us that is not of almost equal concern to all the others. That means that there are an almost unlimited number of subjects about which we could have profitable discussions.

This luncheon meeting, however, is not the occasion for a very long speech and I am sure you will wish me to realize as well as you do that most of these mutually interesting problems will have to remain untouched on this occasion.

In my capacity as Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, I find that an increasing amount of my time is devoted to long range problems of diplomacy that concern Canada's national security. Now I am optimistic enough to hope with some confidence that those of my generation on this Continent are not apt to live long enough to see another world war. Most of us do feel that the best way to work for the realization of that hope is to participate in arrangements for collective security, sufficiently impressive to make it unattractive for anyone to attempt or to contemplate aggression against us.

We tried that even before the last war ended by setting up the United Nations Organization under the San Francisco Charter but that organization has not yet demonstrated its ability to give each and every one of us a feeling of all confident security. We all promised to be good but as between Russia and her satellites and ourselves we don't trust each other.

Moreover, that Charter itself contemplates and provides for regional co-operative defence arrangements and the subject I intend for a few moments to-day to discuss in broad outline with you is that of our defence arrangements with the United States and their long range implications for Canada.

You are aware that defence collaboration with the United States is maintained through the agency of our Permanent Joint Board on Defence and you are no doubt familiar with the reasons which led to the setting up of that Board in August 1940. You will remember that Hitler had then succeeded in overrunning a large part of Europe. The United States was at peace but was slowly becoming aware of the threat to her security from Hitler, victorious and triumphant on the Continent of Europe. President Roosevelt, alive to the dangers of the international scene, was doing his best to bring home to his countrymen the gravity of their position. In early August 1940 the Battle of Britain had begun.

It was at this critical time in our history that a meeting was arranged, at the suggestion of our Prime Minister, with President Roosevelt, to decide what steps should be taken to protect the Western Hemisphere against German aggression. The meeting took place on August 17th in the private railway car of President Roosevelt on a siding near the station of Ogdensburg, New York. At the close of the meeting on August 18th the President and Prime Minister issued the following brief statement of policy:

"The Prime Minister and the President have discussed the mutual problems of defence in relation to the safety of Canada and the United States.

"It has been agreed that a Permanent Joint Board on Defence shall be set up at once by the two countries.

"This Permanent Joint Board on Defence shall commence immediate studies relating to sea, land and air problems including personnel and material.

"It will consider in the broad sense the defence of the north half of the Western Hemisphere.

"The Permanent Joint Board on Defence will consist of four or five members from each country, most of them from the services. It will meet shortly."

That is all there is. Perhaps in passing I might ask you to bear in mind the clarity and brevity of that statement. It seems to me to be a good illustration of the well known fact that when the parties to an agreement both wish it to work and both feel that the other party to it intends that it shall be carried out in its spirit as well as in conformity with its text, that text does not have to be a very extended one.

The Ogdensburg Declaration of President Roosevelt and Mr. King is not a startling new development. It was in fact the logical outcome of earlier public statements by these two statesmen. Two years before, President Roosevelt, in accepting an Honorary Degree from Queen's University, said:

"Canada is part of the sisterhood of the British Empire. I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other empire."

A few days later, Mr. King, in his speech at Woodbridge, Ontario, replied:

"We, too, have our obligations as a good and friendly neighbour, and one of them is to see that, at our own instance, our country is made as immune from attack or possible invasion as we can reasonably be expected to make it and that, should the occasion ever arise, enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way, either by land, sea or air, to the United States across Canadian territory."

It is not my intention to review the work of this Board during the war. It is sufficient to say that from its establishment until the end of the war the Board acted as a liaison organization between the two governments with the aim of arriving at practical solutions of common defence problems. The Board was quickly set up and as early as August 1940, it dealt with the preparation of a plan for the defence of Canada and the United States. The plan was accepted by the two governments and became the framework for North American defence during the period of hostilities. At the end of the war we had to consider the future of the Board itself and fate of the plan it had prepared.

The question of post-war collaboration on defence between Canada and the United States was first discussed as early as June 1945, after the German Armistice and before the end of the war in the Pacific.

It would not be proper for me to go into details but public expression of the intention of Canada and the United States to continue in peacetime the defence cooperation which had proved so fruitful in wartime was given in identical statements made by the Prime Minister in Ottawa and the President of the United States in Washington on February 12, 1947. This statement, is the basis upon which defence collaboration between the two countries continues. May I draw your attention to one or two of the most important features of the statement. It said that each Government had decided that its national defence establishment should, to the extent authorized by law, continue to collaborate for peacetime joint security purposes. The point was made that all cooperative arrangements would be without impairment of the control of either country over all activities in its territory. It was emphasized that each country would control the extent of its practical collaboration and might discontinue collaboration at any time. The statement stressed that an important element in the decision of each Government to authorize continued collaboration was the conviction on the part of each that in this way their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security would be fulfilled more effectively.

As the joint statement points out there is an interchange of personnel between the armed forces of both countries, there is cooperation and exchange of observers in connection with exercises and progress has been made on the questions of standardization in arms, equipment and organization. There is reciprocal provision of naval and air facilities. Weather stations and Loran stations have been set up in the Far North under cooperative arrangements between the two Governments and at Fort Churchill a centre has been established where the forces of both countries carry out tests of equipment under cold weather conditions.

What are the reasons for this close collaboration with the United States, and what are the long term implications?

The reasons are obvious. We occupy with the United States the northern half of the Western Hemisphere. Our security, if threatened at all, is threatened only by Russia and her satellites. No longer are the Atlantic Ocean and the Arctic effective barriers. Any hopes we may have had about creating an effective system of collective security under the United Nations have not been realized. One world has become two worlds. I do not want to exaggerate the dangers inherent in the world situation today, but they are grave enough to compel us to look to our national security. By the facts of geography our security is linked to that of the United States and it would be criminal folly on our part if we did not cooperate with the United States in self-defence.

Now, while recognizing that cooperation with the United States in defence is essential we must at the same time be alive to the dangers of close defence relationships with a country much more populous and powerful than we are. You have heard statements to the effect that the United States is taking over the Canadian North, that we have become a satellite of the United States and have lost or are in danger of losing our freedom of action in the international field. Statements such as these are obvious exaggerations.

As already indicated, the joint declaration of the 12th February, 1947, includes the following:

"As an underlying principle all co-operative arrangements will be without impairment of the control of either country over all activities in its territory."

and also:

"Each country will determine the extent of its practical collaboration in respect of each and all the foregoing principles."

Also:

"Either country may at any time discontinue collaboration on any or all of them."

Perhaps the greatest weakness in maintaining effective control over joint stations in the Far North is our lack of transport. Even though a station is under Canadian command with most of the personnel Canadian, our control is far from satisfactory if no one can reach or leave the station except in United States ships or planes. Many of us hope that the time will come when our isolated stations in the north can be fully supplied by Canadian transport. I realize that this is partly and perhaps mainly a question of men and money. Additional ships and planes would be needed and additional men to man them. This is not, however, the whole story. With the men and material now available we could perhaps do more than we are now doing in the Arctic and thus at the same time gain valuable experience and perform services now undertaken by our neighbour. It may be that a re-orientation of our thinking is required. In the past we have been accustomed to look for our security eastward across the Atlantic. We felt that was where we would fight. Now it is of equal importance that we look northward to the Arctic.

We have taken other steps to ensure control over all military activities in our territory. It has been made clear to our United States friends that any United States activities whether by land, sea or air, on or over Canadian territory, must be within the limit of a programme previously approved by the Canadian Government. And of course, before approval is given, we ask that there be substantial participation by Canadians and that all information obtained, whether of a scientific nature or otherwise, be made available to us. The same principles apply conversely to the United States.

Now if we proceed in our defence collaboration with the United States along the lines I have indicated, is there any real threat to our independence or freedom of action? I do not think so. If the United States wanted to take over Canada there is probably little we could do to prevent it. What they could do directly, they are not likely to try to do by infiltration. Fortunately for us there are no indications that the United States have any such intentions; and fortunately for the United States we are not apt to be the kind of people they would ever feel it was necessary to coerce.

If we then can welcome close defence collaboration with the United States, can we equally welcome closer economic ties? This is a big question which I cannot answer today. Because of our dwindling United States dollar resources the Government in November last prohibited or restricted the importation of a large number of United States goods. These steps, though accepted as a necessary evil on both sides of the border, have spurred resourceful persons to suggest less painful solutions. The most far reaching was the proposal for customs union made in "Life" magazine a few weeks ago. You may have read the editorial entitled - "Customs Union with Canada: Canada needs us and we need Canada in a violently contracting world." This article has set off a debate in our press and periodicals but so far it has not reached the floor of the House and I can assure you that no proposals of that kind are under consideration by the Government. An adventure of that kind is one which would not be embarked on lightly.

There are obviously very serious political objections to a customs union between Canada and the United States. But no such

objections apply to renewed efforts by both countries to lower the barriers to trade between them.

Let me now turn to another aspect of our defence problem. You may ask whether defence cooperation with the United States is in any way inconsistent with our relations with the United Kingdom. The answer is, I think, no. There is, of course, no general agreement of any kind between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Kingdom which involves military commitments. We have nothing of this nature more formidable than the conclusions of Commonwealth conferences respecting consultation and the primary responsibility of each country for local defence. On the other hand each country regards the other as a potential ally in the event of a general war and our day-to-day conduct of affairs reflects this fact.

The historical relationship between Canada and the United Kingdom in war and peace provides the general basis for close military cooperation between the two countries in many spheres of practical importance. These include the organization of the armed forces on common lines, a large range of common arms and equipment and the exchange of service personnel and military information on an extensive scale.

In fact, it is much the same arrangement as exists between the United States and Canada, though there is no special Board set up to perform the functions attributed to the Canada-United States joint Permanent Board on Defence.

I have given you this short account of our defence relations with the United States and the United Kingdom and have tried to point out some of the dangers and advantages. In these perilous days I do not think we could do less. Should we do more? In the joint statement of February 12, 1947, the Prime Minister made it clear that defence collaboration with the United States in no way impaired but was intended to strengthen the cooperation of each country within the broader framework of the United Nations. The ultimate objective was, he said, not joint or regional defence but collective international defence. We recognized that until the United Nations became effective each nation had to consider what steps it should take to defend itself against aggression. The point I wish to make is that our defence relations with the United States and the United Kingdom are based upon the assumption that an effective United Nations can ultimately be established.

We all know how the international scene has greatly deteriorated since the joint statement was made over a year ago. We also know that the main reason for this deterioration has been the inability of the Western democracies and the Eastern totalitarian states under the U.S.S.R. to establish any basis for cooperation or even mutual toleration. We feel that the responsibility for this failure rests on the U.S.S.R. in its aggressive imperialistic policies and in its sponsorship and support for subversive communist fifth columns in all countries but more particularly in those countries of Eastern Europe which are most closely under the influence of its power and its propaganda.

But wherever the responsibility may lie, there is no doubt that we have not got the one world contemplated by the San Francisco Charter with all its 57 members co-operating whole-heartedly and confidently with each other.

Power politics are still a regrettable factor in general international relations. That does not necessarily mean a break-up of the United Nations or the secession from it of the Soviet group.

It is possible within the framework of the Charter for the free nations of the world to form their own unions for collective security and Articles 51 and 52 of the Charter expressly provide that that may be done. In addition to our own arrangement, loose as they may be, with

the nations of the Commonwealth on the one hand and the United States, on the other hand, there are already two other important systems for collective security setting patterns which can be followed and which, I hope, will be followed. One of them is the Pan-American system established by the treaty signed at Rio de Janeiro on September 2nd, 1947, known as the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.

Another is the Treaty of Brussels signed by the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg, on the 17th of March.

A third, very important, international agreement is the Economic Co-operation Association for the economic rehabilitation of the Western European democracies. This also is a most hopeful international movement fostered by the world-wide and generous statesmanship of the United States government.

I am sure we were all much heartened last week to learn that while Mr. Spaak, the Prime Minister of Belgium was paying a visit to Canada, he was being selected in Paris on the proposal made by Mr. Bevin, to be the first president of the permanent organization of the Economic Council set up by these Western European democracies. Those who attended the First Assembly of the United Nations and had the opportunity of seeing the work done by Mr. Spaak as its president, have perhaps even better reasons than others to feel confident that his wisdom and tact will be a great asset in the work of this new organization. Is it apt to be concerned only with economic reconstruction or is it apt to result in a real union to strengthen economic co-operation by earnestness of military security?

I think that is something we can rather confidently hope for and I also feel that these regional arrangements are apt to be copied or extended and that there are no insuperable obstacles to their becoming linked together in one great organization, that will give substance to the conception of an effective system of collective security for the peoples of all free countries willing each to do its share so that they all can remain free.

The Prime Minister of Canada recently had this to say of our hatred of totalitarian communism:

"Communism is no less a tyranny than Nazi-ism. It aims at world conquest. It hopes to effect its purpose by force.... So long as Communism remains as a menace to the free world, it is vital to the defence of freedom to maintain a preponderance of military strength on the side of freedom, and to secure that degree of unity among the nations which will ensure that they cannot be defeated and destroyed one by one... Force has not in itself the power to create better conditions. But a measure of security is the first essential. If properly organized, the force required to provide security would have the power to save from destruction those who have at heart the aim of creating better conditions."

.... We believe that so long as Communism remains a menace to the Free World, that World must create and maintain a preponderance of force over any possible adversary or combination of adversaries. The Free World must also create and maintain a sufficient degree of unity to ensure that that preponderance of force is available to prevent the free nations from being destroyed or defeated one by one.

The force that is required is not only military force; it is economic force; it is the force which comes from the ability to rally allies; it is the force which comes from a united and informed public opinion willing to accept and implement common directives for the common good.

The creation and maintenance of that kind of overwhelming preponderance of force and of that necessary degree of unity may require

the establishemtn of new international political institutions which will appear to trench much more upon old-fashioned concepts of national sovereignty than any of the international institutions which have been established in the past; but we did it to win the war. Is it not worth while to try it to win and ensure the peace?