

GOVERNMENT



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 51/20 A STATEMENT ON CANADIAN EXTERNAL POLICY

A statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made in the House of Commons on May 7, 1951.

...One of the cardinal facts in the world today is the emergence of the United States to a position of unquestioned leadership in the free world. A great shift of power and influence has occurred within the last few years, with the result that the United States now stands pre-eminent. By any test it is not only the most powerful of the free states of the world; it is immensely the most powerful. We in Canada know the United States so well that we can view this great and historic development without apprehension, and feel indeed relief and satisfaction that power is in the hands of a nation which has such a deeply rooted democratic tradition, whose people have no desire to dominate other countries, and which has shown its good will towards less fortunate peoples on so many occasions by acts of magnanimity and generosity.

This feeling, I think, is increased by a consideration of what our position would be today if the United States had not decided to assume the responsibilities throughout the world which its new position has thrust upon it. We have good reason to believe that it will discharge those responsibilities with conscience, courage, and respect for the interests of others. The predominance of the United States, however, is bound to raise new problems for all those countries which share its values, and which are associated with it, and proud to be associated with it, in the defence of freedom. These new problems must be understood and must be solved if friction is to be kept to a minimum and the forces of freedom are to be strong and united.

In considering, for instance, Canada's relations with the United States it is not enough to take refuge in thought or in words, as I see it, in the usual clichés of 135 years of peace or the unguarded boundary. Certainly in my view any spokesman for the Canadian Government or the Canadian people on external affairs has a duty to go deeper than this in the examination of this important question. Such an examination can also lead to a clarification of issues only if it is made within the wider framework of the position of the United States as the leader of our free alliance against the dangers which threaten us. The maintenance, let alone the strengthening, of an alliance of free nations is never easy, and requires tolerance, patience and great understanding. It is not easy in war; it is not easy in times of normal peace. It is especially difficult, I think, in a period such as the present of part war and part peace, with all its frustrations, tensions and anxieties.

Therefore I am sure we all agree that this imposes on the peoples of all free states a special obligation to face the problems of their mutual relationships with candour and frankness, but also with a firm resolve to understand each other's points of view. It seems to me that the unity of the free world would be in real jeopardy if there were no free discussion of our common objectives and of the possibly different means by which they can best be reached. Much of that discussion will and should be carried on confidentially between governments, but the people have a right to be kept informed of the problems involved and the principles of action which the government may think to be necessary for their solution. Therefore honest discussion of the issues before us, so long as it is conducted in cool and reasonable terms, will not weaken the free world. I am convinced on the contrary that it is an indispensable part of the process of developing our united strength, although of course in this kind of discussion one always runs the risk of misinterpretation and the placing of a wrong emphasis on what may have been said.

In all these relations between the governments in our alliance of free countries, no single government can of course surrender its judgment into the keeping of any other government, however close and friendly that government may be. It may at times, however -- and I have said this before, although it is sometimes forgotten -- have to yield to the collective judgment of the group reached after discussion and consultation. That is the only way that democracy can be carried on within our own country. It is the only way that democracy can be carried on internationally. The decision when to hold out and when to yield is often a terribly difficult one to make. Yet it is on that decision that the unity and close co-operation among members of our alliance will so often depend; and on that so much else depends. Over-sensitiveness and obstinacy, on the one hand, over the maintenance of national rights and national sovereignty, and arrogance or carelessness, on the other, in over-riding them, might in either case produce serious and even dangerous division among the countries of the world.

That division, which would lead possibly to disunity and even disruption, gives the foe that threatens us his greatest comfort and his greatest opportunity. Particularly during these times -- I am sure we all agree with this -- must the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada maintain and strengthen their special ties of friendship within the larger group. It would be folly to think that any one of us can go it alone. It would also be a fatal error, made previously by two dictators, for any potential enemy to think that we intend to take that course, folly also for him to draw wrong conclusions from that mistaken interpretation of our democratic differences of opinion. On the big issues we stand together within our countries as well as between our countries, even though we may sometimes, seem verbally separated. It is, I think, as much the responsibility of public and press opinion as of governments to keep these differing voices from resulting in different policies. Policy for the free world must be forged not on a shifting basis of emotion but on the hard anvil of facts. Only in that way can it be well-tempered and strong.

One of the most important of these facts is that of persistent Soviet communist hostility. Another is, as I

have said, the new position of power and responsibility of the United States as the leader of the free world. This latter fact, as I see it, means that our own relations with the United States have entered upon a new phase within the last few years. It does not mean that they should not be or cannot be as close and friendly as they have been in the past. Canadians, with very few exceptions, indeed -- and those exceptions mostly of the communist persuasion -- all hope this will be the case and want to do what they can to make it possible and even easy. Certainly that is the policy of this government, as it has been throughout the years.

Well, what is the nature of this change I have been talking about, and not only inside the house? Hitherto questions which from time to time we have had to discuss and decide with the United States were largely bilateral matters between neighbours. They arose from such things as border disputes, differences over the diversion of water and so on, or had to do with commerce back and forth across the boundary. Of course they were often complicated and difficult enough. Now, however, we are not only neighbours but allies. I think perhaps that is the simplest way to indicate the change that has come over the nature of our relations with the United States. We have always been good neighbours, accustomed to settling our differences in a neighbourly spirit. Now we are good allies, and as allies we must do our best to settle, in our customary friendly way, such differences as may exist between us from time to time. But the questions we shall have to discuss in this way will often be of a character arising from our senior and junior partnership in a common association. They will often deal with the policies to be followed by that association in the North Atlantic Pact or within the United Nations, very often indeed within the United Nations.

It is perhaps not unnatural that many people in Canada and the United States have not yet realized this change. It has come about rather suddenly, and I doubt if in either country we have yet completely adjusted ourselves to it. On Tuesday of last week, I believe, the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) gave an illustration of one of the new categories of subjects under discussion between Canada and the United States when he announced in this house the recommendations of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which had been accepted by both governments, for the revision of the lease under which the United States holds certain bases in Newfoundland. The discussions on this subject between Canada and the United States were carried on in a friendly and co-operative spirit, as is our habit, and they have resulted in a compromise which I think will commend itself to the house as reasonable in the circumstances. The problem itself arises out of the defence requirements of the United States on Canadian soil, requirements not merely for its own security but for the security of the free world. It also arises, however, out of the necessity of the United States meeting these legitimate requirements in a way which recognizes Canadian jurisdiction and, even more important, Canadian self-respect.

In an age of atomic weapons and long range bombers Canada is obviously now of far greater importance to the defence of North America and the North Atlantic area than ever before. For that reason, and because we are now joined as allies in the North Atlantic Treaty, inevitably from time to time there will be other defence questions of very

great importance to both countries which must be discussed. I have no doubt that we shall be able to find satisfactory solutions to those questions as well, but it will be easier to find them if we in Canada continue to remember the very heavy responsibility the United States has shouldered for the common defence, and if the United States continues to appreciate that the alliance in which we are joined with them will not be as strong as it should be unless the various defence arrangements which may be necessary on our soil are worked out in such a way that they will commend themselves wholeheartedly to Canadian public opinion.

Another -- and I suppose at the moment the most pressing -- problem we face with the United States, because it is indeed a phase of United States-Canada relations, though it is also of far wider and deeper significance, involving as it does the whole question of global war or global peace, is the policy to be adopted at the present time in Korea. For the time being I think the role of diplomacy in Korea is secondary, because the scene there is now dominated by the heavy fighting which has been going on for the past few weeks. The first wave of the new Chinese attack has been checked and broken by United Nations forces, but the attack is not yet spent -- far from it. This is probably just a lull before another storm. So it seems to me that for some time to come, while this heavy fighting is going on, the task of upholding the purpose and will of the United Nations in Korea must rest upon the fighting men who have withstood so courageously the attacks made upon them by much more numerous enemy forces. One Canadian battalion, as we know, has had an important part in the recent fighting. Additional Canadian troops have now arrived in Korea, and before many more days have passed a full Canadian brigade group will be in action. These men, along with those of the other United Nations forces, and particularly the forces of the United States, will have more effect upon the course of events in Korea over the next few weeks than any diplomatic moves; and I know the thoughts of every one of us will be with them, and perhaps especially with those of our own men who are going into action for the first time.

In those circumstances perhaps it would not be appropriate for me to say too much about the actual situation in Korea, but there are a few things I should like to say. The present Chinese attack must be broken before we can again begin to entertain any hope of a peaceful and honourable settlement there. When it has been broken, as we hope it will be, and with heavy losses to the enemy, the Chinese communists may be in a mood to negotiate an honourable settlement -- the only kind of settlement we have ever contemplated -- or at least to desist from further attacks. While I think it would be quite unrealistic to hold out hope of an early settlement in Korea, or even of an early end to the fighting, nevertheless we should always remember that the United Nations stands ready to negotiate, though not to betray its trust or yield to blackmail. The statement of principles adopted by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority on January 13 last, which would provide for a cease-fire to be followed by a Korean settlement and by the negotiation of a wide range of Far Eastern problems, still represents the considered opinion of the United Nations. If the Chinese government and the North Korean government wish to take advantage of the offer contained in that statement, it is open to them to do so. Of their willingness to do so, however, there is no sign

whatever. The approaches made to Peking by the Good Offices Committee established by the United Nations assembly have all been rebuffed. The North Korean government, in a broadcast message as late as April 18, has repeated its determination to drive the United Nations forces from the peninsula. We can only hope that the heavy losses which the aggressors are now suffering and will suffer in Korea may produce a more accommodating frame of mind.

In the meantime, the United Nations forces are heroically and skilfully fulfilling the task which has been given to them, which is the defeat of armed aggression in Korea. This is -- and it should not be forgotten -- the sole military objective of the forces of the United Nations in Korea, the defeat of aggression so that a free, democratic and united Korea can be established. It is also worthy of note, I believe, that, as Mr. Warren Austin, the United States delegate to the Security Council, said on May 1 -- I quote from his statement:

"The United Nations has not declared nor has it ever been asked to declare, that the political objectives --"

That is, a democratic, free and unified Korea.

"-- must be achieved by military means. In fact, the emphasis has been quite the contrary."

Furthermore...I suggest it is not an aim or objective of the United Nations in its Korean policy to interfere in the internal affairs of any Asian country to replace one regime by another. Its aim, as I said, is to defeat aggression and so prevent other acts of aggression by proving that aggression does not pay. To some that may seem to be too limited an objective. On this point the well known columnist Mr. Walter Lippmann had this to say the other day -- and I quote from his article:

"Only a limited objective can be obtained by a war which is limited. The question now is whether the country --"

He was referring to his own country, the United States.

"-- will agree with reasonable unity that our military objective in Korea is the limited one of repelling aggression south of the 38th parallel and restoring the South Korean republic. We can, and we should, still hold it as a political and diplomatic objective that Korea should eventually be united by democratic means. But we cannot unify Korea by a war confined to the Korean peninsula, and we shall get nowhere in this controversy until we make the choice of limited objectives out of a limited war or unlimited objectives out of an unlimited war."

It is also sometimes loosely said that the United Nations forces are fighting in Korea to defeat communism. There is perhaps some colour for this mistake, since the aggression perpetrated is by communist states, and has its roots in the totalitarian communist nature of those states. Free men everywhere must be determined to resist communism. But it is a confusion, I think, of categories to think that communism as a doctrine or form of government must be fought by armed forces, or that such is the

purpose of the United Nations military action in Korea. When communism, or indeed fascism, results in acts of military aggression, that aggression should be met by any form of collective action, including military collective action, which can be made effective. But the purpose of such action is to defeat aggression. Communism itself, as a reactionary and debasing doctrine, must be fought on other planes and in different ways; by the use of economic, social, political and moral weapons. As Sir Norman Angell put it in a letter to the New York Times the other day:

"The vital distinctions in this matter are not difficult or very obscure. We can overcome, and still better, deter, military aggression with military force ...But if we use military power to dictate or to appear to dictate to other nations, Asiatic or European, what social or political or economic system they may adopt for themselves, we shall awaken a nationalism which in the end will defeat us."

Since the United Nations objective in Korea, then, is to defeat aggression, it follows, I think, that the methods used should be designed to limit and localize the conflict and not to spread it. As long ago as August 31, 1950, I said in this house that it was not the purpose of this government to support any course of policy which would extend the scope of the present conflict in Korea, a conflict which should be confined and localized if it is in our power to do that; also that United Nations policy should be to avoid giving anyone else an excuse for extending the conflict. ...That is still our view.

One way by which the conflict could be spread would be by authorizing the United Nations commander in Korea to conduct aerial bombing of China. As I said on April 26 last in the house, it is possible to visualize a situation in which immediate retaliatory action without prior consultation might be unavoidable in pursuing enemy bombers back to, and in attempting to destroy, the Manchurian air bases from which they came. It is our view, however, that the bombing, as well as the blockading, of China should, if at all possible be avoided, since such action would involve grave risk of extending the fighting without, as we see it, any corresponding assurance that such extension would end the war. The history, the position, the social and economic organization, and the political situation in China would not seem to give much hope for any such decisive result from such limited action. Indeed, it may be felt, on the contrary, that this limited action which has been suggested would inevitably develop into unlimited action against China, about the possible result of which the Japanese perhaps are best fitted to give testimony. One result we can, however, expect with some certainty, and that is great satisfaction in Moscow over such a development. It may be that the Chinese communists, by indulging in massive air activity over Korea, will make some kind of retaliation necessary. They have, however, not yet taken such action, and in that sense have not yet conducted an all-out war against the United Nations forces in Korea. As General Bradley put it in an address in Chicago on April 17:

"Communist air intervention has not been a factor in the ground action to date. Neither has it been any serious threat to our air force."

If the Chinese communists change that situation, the responsibility for the consequence would rest entirely with them and not with the United Nations forces.

I am, of course, ...aware that this policy of restraint in which all the governments who have forces in Korea concur to the best of my knowledge, may complicate the problems facing the United Nations commanders in Korea. These problems, however, in the opinion of many, would be immensely more complicated if the fighting were extended to China.

The question, I think, above all other questions at the moment, is, in short, whether aerial bombardment of points in China, together with a naval blockade and the removal of all restrictions from Chinese forces in Formosa, would be sufficient to bring China's participation in the war in Korea to an end, without bringing about intervention by the forces of the Soviet Union. It was felt by many last November that if United Nations forces advanced to the very borders of Manchuria and cleared North Korea of the enemy, the war would then end; that there would be little risk of communist China intervening, or, that, if it did, the intervention could be contained and defeated. As we know, and as I said last February in the house, it did not work out that way, for one reason or another. In the light of that experience, we should, I think, before we take any new decisions which will extend the war, be reasonably sure that this extension will have compensating military and political advantages. Let us not forget we would be playing for the highest stakes in history.

Another way in which the conflict could be extended, in the hope that it would be ended sooner, would be by facilitating and assisting the return to the mainland of China of the forces at present in Formosa under the command of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. We should remember, of course, that these forces, or forces under the same command, have been driven from China by their own countrymen. The question to be answered, therefore, is this: Is there any reason to believe that these Chinese nationalist forces now in Formosa would have greater success in China than they had previously, unless they were supported by troops and equipment from other countries which could ill be spared for such a hazardous venture, with all its possible long-drawn-out consequences?

The desire to localize the conflict and prevent it from spreading remains, then, our policy, though we must recognize that while it takes only one to start a fight, it takes two to limit, as well as two to settle, a fight.

May I now say just a word in conclusion...about our views...on the situation in Formosa. I believe that this island should be neutralized while fighting is going on in Korea. I have expressed that view previously. Certainly the United States of America cannot be expected to permit the Peking government to take over Formosa while that government is defying, and fighting against, the United Nations. It does not follow, however, that if and when the Korean conflict can be ended satisfactorily, we should refuse to discuss the future of Formosa within the context of international agreements that have already been reached concerning it, and indeed within the context of the United Nations Charter. Any other course would, I think, result in implacable hostility between the United Nations and

whatever government was in control of China at the time the war ended.

Until that war ends, however, and China abandons her attack against the United Nations in Korea, there can be, I think, no question of even discussing whether Formosa should be handed over to the Peking regime; at least that is our view. The same, I think, applies to recognition of that regime in Peking. There can be no question even of considering it while the Chinese defy the United Nations in Korea and fight against our forces there.

Nor do we think it realistic or right, while communist China is fighting in Korea, to include the Peking government in the current discussions of a Japanese peace treaty. In this regard, as in the case of the disposition of Formosa, the decision as to who shall talk and sign for China might well, I think -- and even any discussion of this matter -- be postponed until the Korean war is ended.

These are two questions which I know are uppermost in our minds these days. What is going on in the Far East? What is the policy of the alliance which has been built up, and which is getting stronger every day, to meet the dangers ahead, and within that alliance what is the relationship of a junior partner like Canada to its neighbour and its very senior partner in this association, the United States of America? It is not easy these days to be too optimistic about the course of events; but time is going on, and while time is going on we are getting stronger. In that sense, but only in that sense, time may be said to be on our side if we take advantage of it. If we do take advantage of it, and if we grow stronger militarily, economically and in every other way, then I think, as I have said before, that we have no reason to regard the future with panic or despair. But the remedy, ... rests with us.

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