



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## VIGILANCE - THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

An address by Hon. Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence, at the Annual Meeting of the United Nations Association of Canada, at Toronto on October 25, 1948.

It is a great privilege for me to speak at the Annual Meeting of the United Nations Association. I can imagine that you would have liked to have had on this occasion a man who has become known and respected throughout the world for his work for peace, our new Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable L.B. Pearson. It happens, however, that he is busy elsewhere today.

Tonight I propose to discuss with you The Problems of Power and of Peace in the United Nations. Combining the words "power" and "peace" reveals the basic dilemma which faces us. We desire peace wholeheartedly. We could wish for nothing better than the disappearance of all great armies, of atomic bombs and of nerve-racking rumours. But we are forced day by day to think more and more of our military security, of war strategy and of budgeting for the purchase of military equipment.

Imagine what it would be like if there were real confidence among nations, if atomic energy were internationally controlled, if a large measure of disarmament were achieved. How good it would be to plunge into the job of peaceful development, to devote the total energies of our workers, our scientists and our businessmen to production of the goods we need, to end restrictions on travel, to see prosperity grow and freedom reign.

But across this bright prospect falls the cold shadow of a possible world war. We are forced to expend in military training and manoeuvres the man-hours that might have gone into some new productive enterprise and to use steel for bombs and battleships instead of houses or farm machinery.

On United Nations Day 1948, after three years of effort by the United Nations, we must ask ourselves why the threat of war is still here, why preparations for war must occupy the attention of so many nations three short years after the conclusion of the last war.

I see here tonight many old friends who experienced the first war and worked to prevent a second because they had seen the first. They had learned what modern war does in the way of destruction of material and human values, in uprooting established habits of conduct and destroying deep-worn routes of trade. But the western democracies failed to give concerted leadership to the League of Nations. The United States refused to become embroiled in the affairs of Europe. Japan, Italy and Germany were given their chance to ride roughshod over the hopes of humanity.

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During those years supporters of the League of Nations, the spiritual ancestors of those who are here tonight, strove to bring home to people in this as in other countries some very simple truths ... "peace is indivisible" (it is interesting to recall that this was Litvinoff's phrase) ... prosperity is indivisible .. peace can be preserved only by the willingness of nations to stand together against aggression rather than be conquered separately. Meanwhile events from Manchuria to Ethiopia, from German rearmament to Munich brought home these truths with the steady tramp of marching feet which each day from 1932 on brought us closer to war.

The war which came in 1939 was won in the end by the collective action which, had it been taken in time, would have prevented it.

During the war steps were taken to begin the organization of peace after victory. The Atlantic Charter today is unfortunately almost a forgotten document, but let us recall what it said. Two great men, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt said that it was right

"to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries, on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world ... no aggrandizement ... no territorial changes ... sovereign rights and self-government restored ... access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world ... improved labour standards, economic adjustments and social security ... a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands will live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

The Atlantic Charter was made on August 14, 1941, before the United States had entered the war. It was the basis for the Declaration by the United Nations made at Washington on January 1, 1942, the first array of the grand alliance which brought victory.

Soon in every country teams of experts were working on the terms of peace and the machinery to prevent another war.

Two wars and a world-wide depression brought home to Canadians that for us isolation was an impossibility. Our country links the Atlantic and the Pacific and is on the great air routes of the world. Our resources with the hard work of Canadian hands and the results of Canadian skills make us one of the great trading nations with world-wide interests. The prosperity of the people of Three Rivers and Chicoutimi, of Portage la Prairie and Moose Jaw, of Vancouver and Halifax, depends on trade, trade with people in other parts of Canada, trade with other parts of the world. On a stable international policy hangs the fate of our prosperity, our welfare and our peace.

Under the present Prime Minister and his distinguished assistant, the late O.D. Skelton, the Department of External Affairs was gradually built up. It was small but it was good. Its growth matched our increasing interest, responsibilities and opportunities. As our representatives became known abroad, they became respected. Because Canada has no particular interest except peace, we usually stood objectively for what was generally regarded to be the interest of all countries.

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During the war our experts, like the others, worked on the preparations for the peace. Views differed between countries and within each country as to what should be done and when it should be done. But all were agreed that an international organization should be set up.

I remember in a speech at Williamstown back as far as 1943, I expressed the hope that the organization should be set up during the war so that the nations should get the habit of working together when they were bound together in the unity of a single common objective, the defeat of the enemy. For the same reason I took the view that it would be a good thing to make peace quickly after victory. It was possible then to foresee the struggle which has since occurred for the torn body of defeated Germany.

Another object in setting up the organization quickly was to present a forum in which the conflicting interests of the three super powers would not come into as sharp and grinding a contact as they would do if only four or five of them met together.

In October, 1943, it was decided at Moscow to start the machinery going. The meetings of Dumbarton Oaks in 1944 were followed by the Conference in San Francisco, which produced the charter of the United Nations on June 26, 1945.

The Charter was a pretty realistic document. It recognized for example that no great power will put itself in a position where it will allow its vital interest to be decided by a bare numerical majority. Peace can be made neither by votes nor vetoes. The Charter provided machinery for co-operation in building the foundation of positive peace, not the mere absence of war.

Despite all this work and the wishes of two billion people, the United Nations has not been able to establish the atmosphere of security. The international climate has in fact grown steadily worse. That has not been due to the charter or to the United Nations. It has been due just to one thing - the attitude of the Soviet Union.

Apart from security, however, the United Nations has accomplished many things. Under its auspices there have been established agreements and working arrangements between nations on trade, food, labour, finance, banking, social questions, aviation, relief, refugees, narcotics, justice, statistics and so on. It's a big list and that work must be carried on.

I was privileged to take part in the conference which set up the World Health Organization. It is one agency in which the Soviet Bloc has worked with the others.

By and large these activities carried on by the United Nations and its specialized agencies have been useful and promising. They have set a pattern for international co-operation, they have helped to create the habit of working together.

We have the machinery. We have abundant good-will. We want to co-operate. But the Soviet Union will not co-operate on matters of major policy. At every conference Soviet representatives deliberately obstruct every effort to make peace. The Soviets are "bending every effort of propoganda and sabotage to defeat the Marshall Plan and prolong Europe's chaos and misery".

...../It was

It was during the Paris Conference in 1946 to make peace with Italy and the Balkan satellites and later at the General Assembly of the United Nations that the Western Powers affirmed that Russian conquest had gone far enough.

Efforts to make a peace settlement with Austria and Germany got nowhere. The Soviet government apparently decided that the postponement of a settlement in Germany would create conditions of chaos favourable to the Communisation of Germany. Britain, the United States and France felt that economic stability, ordered government and financial reform were necessary steps in the rehabilitation of Germany, which itself was essential to European recovery.

In the wider field the absence of co-operation on the part of the Soviet Union was vividly revealed. In the Security Council Russia used the veto twenty-seven times, and failed to co-operate with the other Great Powers in providing the military support for the Council required by the Charter. Soviet action made it necessary to look to other means within the Charter to provide for effective measures of collective security.

Something had to be done.

Article 51 of the Charter permits measures of collective self-defence against aggression and allows regional arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The first step was taken when the Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, along with France and Britain signed the Treaty of Brussels on March 17th to form the Western Union. The five countries agreed to put their full resources into the defence of each other. It was the first important effort to unite the military and economic strengths of the countries of Western Europe in their own defence.

The announcement of Western Union immediately was followed by statements by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada. These were of the utmost significance - they declared their governments' intentions to support this effort to defend democratic order.

The countries of Western Union have been working at political, economic and military levels to give substance to the words of this agreement. And, a matter of the greatest importance, they, together with the United States and Canada, have been working on the problem of how to strengthen Western Union with a North-Atlantic Security Pact. The reason for this is obvious. We all know now that it is much better to stand together than to fall separately. And make no mistake about it. If a war comes, if the Soviet Union commits an act of aggression, it will be an act which will break our peace and ultimately threaten our security. The only war possible today is a war of aggression by the Soviets. I have heard some people - just a few - speak about the possibility of Canada being neutral in such a war. I do not believe that this is even a theoretical possibility for us. Our vital interests, even our territory could be open to attack. The choice in war would be a simple one - Communist or Canada. Our people would never tolerate a position in which we were passive while our country was being defended by others.

For these reasons we have, as Mr. St. Laurent said, pressed for the consummation of a North-Atlantic Security Pact. That policy was supported unanimously by the National Liberal Convention in a resolution adopted at Ottawa on August 6th of this year, by the C.C.F. on August 21st and by the Progressive-Conservative Party on October 2nd.

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As Western Union becomes stronger, any chance that there might be of the Soviet Union winning an aggressive war will obviously become less. The existence of a North-Atlantic Security Pact of mutual assistance including the United States and Canada would further reduce the chance of Soviet success.

The existence of an Atlantic Security Pact in 1935 would have prevented the Second World War in 1939.

On this account the Soviet Union has pressed her efforts to drive the United States, Britain and France out of Berlin because her success in this line would deal a damaging blow at Western Union. It is this effort and the willingness to run the risks which it involves that has added tension to the present situation. I don't believe that the Russian people or even the Soviet leaders want war today; but their intransigent attitude has increased its possibility.

Even though the situation in Berlin might improve, there would be other points of tension and difficulty. We shall only have a stable peace when the Soviet Government seeks the welfare of their people rather than the extension of their power.

In short, the Soviet attitude since the end of the war has driven and is driving the Western democracies into the same kind of union to preserve the peace as was needed to win the war. It is a defensive union. No one of these countries has any aggressive intentions, and Russian distortions will not alter that fact.

You remember the eloquent and courageous words of the Premier of Belgium, Mr. Paul Henry Spaak, in the Session of the United Nations Assembly not quite a month ago. Turning with dramatic emphasis towards the representative of the Soviet Union, Mr. Spaak spoke clearly and unmistakably for all the democratic countries. I quote:

"We do not want to dispute communism. We consider that for many countries communism may be necessary, but we think it is something the Western world can do without. Without wishing to discuss any particular regime we want to affirm that, having fought in the last world war against fascism and against Hitlerism, we have no intention of submitting ourselves to any kind of authoritarian or totalitarian doctrine whatever.

We are for liberal democracy; that is to say, we believe - with all our might and all our conscience - in the necessity of building a political society on liberty of thought and writing, freedom of assembly and association. We want free elections, a government responsible to the people, the respect and dignity of man, and a state that served man, not a man who has to serve the state, still less a man who has to serve a party."

A little later on in this same magnificent speech, Mr. Spaak continued:

"The Soviet delegate need not look for complicated explanations of our policy. I will tell him what is the basis of our policy - in terms, perhaps slightly cruel, but the ones a representative of a small nation uses: Do you know what is the basis of our policy? It is fear of you, fear of your government, fear of your policy!

...../Do you know

Do you know why we are afraid? We are afraid because you often talk of imperialism. What is imperialism? It is a people, generally a great power, that makes conquests and increases its influence throughout the world.

What is the historical reality of these last years? There is but one great power that emerged from the war having conquered other territories, and that power is the U.S.S.R.

It was during the war and because of the war that you annexed the Baltic countries; it was during and because of the war that you took a slice of Finland; it was during and because of the war that you took part of Poland. It is thanks to your audacious and supple policy that you have become all-powerful in Warsaw, Prague, Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia; it is thanks to your policy that you occupy Vienna and Berlin and that you are not disposed to withdraw; it is thanks to your policy that you are reasserting your rights to share in control of the Ruhr. And having seen your empire which extends from the Far East to the Baltic and from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, we now feel you also on the banks of the Rhine - and you ask us why we are anxious!

Could there be any more eloquent explanation of Western Union or still more of a North Atlantic Security Pact under the charter and within the framework of the United Nations?

Plans alone are useless. We must put them into effect.

First, there must be action on the political front so that the countries concerned will consider their essential common objectives of security and recovery as well as their individual interests.

Second, there must be action on the economic front so that the countries concerned will work together for prosperity as well as for security and peace.

Third, there must be action on the military front so that there will be a concerted effort with unity of command, agreed strategy and planned use of resources.

We are giving credits and loans and advances to Britain and the countries of Europe because we believed it was in Canada's own interest to do so, though it also happens to be the Christian, the humane and the decent thing to do. It has been in our own interest because our long-term prosperity in part depends on the productive capacity of Britain and Europe being restored so they can pay for the Canadian goods we have to sell. But not only this - it has been in our own short-term interest because we do not send dollars abroad, we send goods, goods for which, for a large part, there is no alternative market anywhere. We have extended credits so that we might sell our products and at the same time help to revive Europe to buy more.

With regard to defence, we are building up the defence forces necessary to defend Canada against immediate attack and to serve as the nucleus for large forces should an emergency arise. We have close working arrangements with the United States under the Joint Declaration of February 12, 1947,

...../which

which extended the life and the usefulness of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence; and we are working out with other free nations plans for a Joint defence based on self help and mutual aid as part of a combined effort to preserve peace and to restrain aggression.

We know what we want. Some of this work has been done, more is being done and more will be got under way. Our representatives have been in close consultation with the representatives of other nations as to what the role of each would be. Any arrangement such as a North Atlantic Security Pact will be submitted to Parliament for its approval. We are making no commitments without the approval of Parliament. On the other hand we are planning our defences after consultation with others so that what we do will fit into any subsequent plan that may be arrived at after Parliament has given its approval to Atlantic Security.

We all hope that these anxious days will pass. But there will only be peace when the nations agree that their highest aim is not the power of the state but the welfare of the citizen. We all know that the standards of living in Eastern Europe are not to be compared with our own. Let the Communist regimes work at building up the standards of living of their own people there rather than pulling down the standard of living in the West. The main hope of peace is in such a change of policy. Whether or not it will come about I cannot say. It is certainly difficult to be optimistic, but the problem of administering a complex of nations like the Soviet Bloc and the occasional glimpses through the Iron Curtain of the possibilities of a life on North American standards and based on freedom may in time bring about a change.

We want "to let time, not trial of war, be the determining factor".

That is what democracies in search of peace must be working for now - time. And the only way we can gain the time is to be prepared to defend our way of life and to proclaim our willingness to do just that in such unmistakable terms that no one can stumble into war without knowing where each of us will stand.

It is on this account that we are today, within three years of the war, spending ten times as much as we did on the average in the years before the wars. Today we have in the Active and Reserve defence forces of Canada and in civilians in the Department of National Defence a total of 95,000. We are wanting more. We mean to build up our forces to meet our needs as I have described them for the defence of our country and the defence of peace.

Canada wants peace. The defence of peace means today the defence of Canada. Vigilance is the price of freedom.

I have spoken now of the objectives of our policy. Now may I conclude with a word on the work of the United Nations Association.

The United Nations Association must be a powerful agency in the fight for peace.

...../It has been

It has been a good plan to celebrate this anniversary of the Charter as United Nations Day. In spite of the setbacks and disappointments of these last three years, in spite of the dark shadow that menaces us from totalitarian states, we in Canada have not lost that faith in mankind and that resolve to live in peace and justice which led us to sign the Charter three years ago.

The United Nations Association in Canada is the lineal descendant of the League of Nations Society in which I was for some years greatly interested. Speaking to you reminds me very vividly not only of the hard, sometimes very uphill, work which we did then, but also of the almost revolutionary change that has come about in Canadian thinking about international affairs and Canadian foreign and external policies.

It may be that some of you who are now striving to enlarge your membership, to stimulate study, thought and discussion to persuade others to launch the policies you want, will occasionally grow weary of the effort and despair of success. Time seems so short; the vast body of public and international machinery so immovable; the outlook for peace so sombre.

But in all sincerity I can say this to you. As a democracy, the weight and power of Canada's words and actions in the long struggle for a law-governed world are measured by the knowledge and convictions of our people. The arms, industry, and scientific skill we have to offer in the service of a free and organized world community draw their creative spark and their striking force from the intelligent and informed support of the Canadian people. And that support is made possible by the day to day efforts of groups like your Association.

You have an advantage over your predecessors in the League of Nations Society. Many of you here will remember the almost breathless hope with which we spoke and wrote and discussed the constitution, principles and activities of the League; and you will remember also the immense resistance of ignorance, indifference and even hostility against which our campaign was waged.

The peoples, and the governments which reflect their will, indulged in wishes and hopes for peace, but evaded the sacrifices and labour by which alone it can be realized. And it was exceedingly hard to persuade most people to face this uncomfortable fact.

Today you must still educate and argue and explain the issues and constitutional problems of the United Nations and its associated bodies: children must be taught about it; adults must study and discuss, if they are to vote and voice an effective public sentiment.

But the day of indifference and isolationist self-delusion has almost entirely gone from Canada: and while of course the vast tempest of war and its anxious aftermath have done most to bring that about, do not underestimate the part that has been played by devoted citizens like yourselves in changing public thought on international matters.

Citizen organizations spreading knowledge and keeping discussion alive are mainsprings of a healthy democracy. And if the United Nations is to succeed where the League failed it will be because our definition and practice of democracy is a better guide to action than any totalitarian philosophy.

Everyone who loves Canada and wants peace should wish you well and give you strong help in your important work.

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