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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE BY THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
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The year now ended has been an eventful one for those engaged in the search for peace and security.

During 1954 there have been important successes. There have also been days when the western democracies have had to face disappointments and setbacks. More serious and disturbing than the actual disappointments themselves, however, is the lack of cohesion that they have sometimes revealed between the democracies. On occasions during the past year the essential unity of our partnership, on which the security of the free world rests, has been threatened by tendencies of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic to find for frustration and failure an easy release in mutual recrimination and exasperation.

There have been days, during 1954, when many in the free world have been disquieted by fears that governments might be provoked into hasty or ill-considered action with results which would inevitably commit us all. Others have feared that we might be lulled into an unrealistic and dangerous complacency of the kind that proved so costly to Europe in the 1930's.

Meanwhile the steadily increasing power of weapons and the advancing techniques for their delivery have made the prospect of war more terrifying and, to prevent it, unity, calm, and steady strength more essential than ever.

A few months ago, Sir Winston Churchill pictured us today as from time to time "peering around the rim of hell". Certainly there have been moments during the past twelve months when a consideration of international issues has involved more than a glance in that direction. No one can truthfully assert that we have yet achieved a situation of international order and confidence where this hell of a thermonuclear war is unthinkable.

It is salutary, therefore, to be reminded of the dangers that we face: that of disunity on the one hand, which could lead without physical hostilities to defeat in the cold war; and that of one outbreak of cataclysmic destruction which could come either through miscalculation or through deliberate aggression.

We can, however, take comfort from the fact that the critical periods through which we have passed during the year now ended have proved, on the whole, sobering, rather than shattering to our coalition. Where there have been set-backs, these have been accepted and plans made to recover from them. As the year ends, our coalition for peace seems, I think, stronger than it was at the beginning. We are learning to live with the situation that exists, without panic but without illusions.

There have also, we must not forget, been significant successes during the year. In Korea, though it has not proved possible to advance from truce to a political agreement for peace, the armistice has been maintained and a withdrawal of United Nations troops, including Canadian, has begun. Agreement was reached at Geneva last summer which stopped the fighting in Indochina. The settlement there has involved heavy new responsibilities for Canada. To assist in the difficult task of pacifying that area, Canada was asked, with India and Poland, to undertake the onerous and complex duties of membership on three International Supervisory Commissions. These responsibilities were certainly not sought by us but we could not refuse them.

And so today, Canadians in the service of their country and of peace are seeing the old year out and the new year in not only in diplomatic missions throughout the world, not only in garrisons and airfields in Western Europe and outposts on hilltops in Korea, but also in patrols along the jungle paths of Indochina.

Another important Asian development during the past year was the decision of a number of countries located in or with particular historic interests in South East Asia, to develop in SEATO collective defence arrangements somewhat analogous to those developed in NATO for the North Atlantic region.

Equally important, a group of South Asian countries, which has come to be known as the Colombo powers, has also met to consider the contribution which they can make to peace in that area.

The further development and extension of membership in the Colombo Plan for economic development of that region is also noteworthy. We were happy to be host in Ottawa in the autumn to Ministers from Colombo Plan countries at their annual consultative meeting.

In Europe the most important political events in the international field have been connected with the plan, worked out at conferences in London and Paris in the early autumn, for the association of a free, democratic, sovereign Germany with NATO and the Western European Union. The programme of debates in our various capitals, on the ratification of these arrangements, has called forth from the Kremlin a remarkable mixture of blandishments and threats; of "sticks and carrots". Their obstructive purpose is obvious and it is to be hoped it will not be achieved.

This time last year we were still wondering to what extent the new masters of the Soviet Union proposed to follow in the footsteps of the old. During the year we learned that there to be some interesting and important variations in tactics, although in strategy and in the basic aims of policy Mr. Malenkov and his associates do not appear thus far at least to have abandoned the dangerous paths of Marshal Stalin.

Until recently we have have had to face heavy-handed Soviet policy of intimidation and threats. This has often had the useful result of consolidating the western world in resisting crude Soviet demands. It seems that now the men in the Kremlin are becoming more astute, and may be seeking to undermine democratic unity and to sap our strength by gestures for what they call "peaceful co-existence".

Perhaps this adventure of Moscow into more beguiling tactics is an acknowledgment on their part that the West was not to be intimidated. It is to be hoped that it will soon be realized also that we are not to be cajoled by words alone.

What we must still hope and work for, is a realization on the part of the Soviet leaders that words divorced from deeds will not do; that while we are neither to be frightened nor lulled into an abandonment of policy or principle, we are always prepared to consider at the conference table or through the normal diplomatic channels any legitimate and sincere proposal from them which might strengthen peace and security in the world.

It would be dangerous for the West not to be prepared for deceit, but it would be stupid not to take advantage of every reasonable opportunity for sincere negotiation. We cannot, even if we wanted to, wipe out our memories of Soviet obstruction to the humanitarian work of economic assistance since the end of the war; nor of the U.S.S.R.'s more open and forceful activity in the Berlin blockade; nor of its expansion and the overthrow of liberty all over Eastern Europe. But though we have learned to be cautious, we must never forget that the ultimate goal that we must continue to seek must involve not only coexistence, but the constructive cooperation, of all men.

Throughout the year, as previously, the United Nations has remained the basis of Canada's policy for seeking with other states solutions to international problems, just as NATO has been the foundation of our policy for collective defence.

Apart from these larger associations, we have had occasion more than once during the year in Canada to appreciate the value of our membership in the Commonwealth of Nations, an important part of which is its role in facilitating close and friendly relations with new democracies in Asia.

We have also had cause during the year to be thankful for the good neighbourhood between the United States and Canada, and for the continuing closeness and friendliness of our relations with France and the other free countries of Western Europe.

The year now ending has seen final solutions to very few of the problems that we face. But in several of them it has taken us forward, and kept open the road to further advances toward genuine peace. It has seen at least the partial realization of some of the plans and hopes of earlier years. These very achievements have, of course, brought with them new problems on which we must now set to work in the hope that a few years hence we may look back without reproaching ourselves for lost opportunities or lack of foresight. In world affairs it is rarely possible to say that an issue is settled and the books closed. Diplomacy is a continuing process; with the end of one problem often becoming the beginning of another. Our purpose should be to ensure that the process at least moves in the right direction! I think that in 1954 we have on the whole been doing that.

May 1955 bring to all of us real happiness, and may we make during the next twelve months genuine and steady progress towards an assured peace on earth to all men of goodwill.