



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## FAR EASTERN POLICIES

Text of an address by the Hon. L. B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, to the American Assembly, Arden House, Harriman, N.Y., Thursday, November 15.

From the Far Eastern policies of the free nations since World War II, two main conclusions, among many others, can be drawn; conclusions which, incidentally, can be drawn also from policies in other areas.

(1) A coalition of free states is difficult to operate except when national security is directly threatened, and common fear becomes a strong cement. Only then do the claims of inter-dependence override those of independence; international considerations successfully compete with those of national interest.

(2) In a free democracy which is open to all the appeals, selfish and unselfish, of propaganda spread by mass media of communication, it is difficult to reconcile the ideological and the strategic as the basis for policy and action.

As to the first conclusion, the lessons of Far Eastern policy in regard to co-operation within a coalition are as obvious and as important as those which we are, I hope, now learning, in a very hard and agonizing way, from Middle Eastern policy. Governments and peoples whose interests make close and friendly co-operation necessary, find it far more difficult to convert that necessity into action than into words. The latter, indeed, is easy. The former requires, at times, the subordination of what seems immediate national interest to international, longer-range requirements. That is not easy.

The inability to bring about this reconciliation of interests inside a coalition has been largely responsible for the present collapse of Western co-operation in the Middle East, which has brought distress to everyone except those who

see in such co-operation the strongest barrier to the attainment of their own imperialist and reactionary power objectives. This collapse is, I am convinced, only temporary; but temporary is too long! It must be a primary obligation on all of us to speed and make effective the work of repair and restoration. Indeed, we must do more than this. We must strengthen and deepen the foundation for such co-operation, so that a collapse will not take place again in the face of the pull between the requirements of national and international policy. At the moment that is the primary task and responsibility of all who believe in freedom and security.

In the Far East no such collapse of co-operation has taken place, but here also for years there have been strains and stresses on the unity of the coalition, arising out of divergencies of views and policies, especially in regard to Red China. These divergencies, which still exist, bear within them the possibility of serious trouble between friends; something we may tend to forget as the position in that part of the world seems at the moment to have achieved a measure of reassuring if uneasy stability.

The earlier communist attitude of menace and tension, especially in the area of the coastal islands of Quemoy and Matsu, has been less aggressive lately. The Peking authorities have also for some months modified their threats of invasion of Formosa and stepped up their attempts to persuade the Chinese Nationalists on this island to come to a peaceful settlement with the mainland authorities. In Indochina and in Korea, hostilities have virtually been brought to an end and situations which seemed full of dangers to peace have, apparently, eased somewhat.

Recent and unhappy experiences, however, in the Middle East show how quickly a situation can change, and a serious conflict of policy between friends developed. This makes it all the more important to look at the Far East; to examine any differences of policy there; to see why, if they exist, they have not caused an open split in the alliance, and what can be done to avoid this. In the effort to secure and strengthen co-operation between free states, continents and oceans are merely sectors of the same front.

The first task, that of examination of differences is closely related to the second conclusion I have drawn from our Far Eastern policies, namely, the difficulty in reconciling the ideological and the strategic.

Professor Louis Halle, in a recent article in the Yale Review, on this subject, one which I thought to be wise and penetrating, had this to say:

"We cannot do away with disunity over policy and action when the real divergence is in the realm of philosophy. At best we can merely bridge the gaps by practical compromises. But the wider the gaps and the deeper they run the harder they are to bridge. The place to seek unity, then, is below.

"Fortunately, the philosophical questions on which we differ (he was writing about Western co-operation) are few by contrast with our consequent differences on practical issues. The difference which chiefly accounts for our disunity on foreign policy today, I think, is that between those who tend to give primacy to ideological considerations and those who are disposed to put strategical considerations first...."

Those who, in Mr. Halle's phrase, give "primacy to ideological considerations" are likely to see the situation in the Far East primarily in terms of the necessity of destroying communism; especially, of course, in China, where it has seized control of the state by methods which we condemn and for purposes which we have reason to suspect. To this objective, other things, such as the economic and political problems of Japan, the exploitation of natural differences between Peking and Moscow, problems of trade in the Pacific, the strengthening of friendly political and economic relationships with the uncommitted countries; all these take second place. The struggle is primarily a moral and ideological one; against Chinese Communism as such, and the crimes which it has committed.

In the United States this ideological aspect of Far Eastern policy is very strong; stronger, perhaps, than the strategical and political, though, of course, not uninfluenced by these latter considerations. It makes a strong appeal to our ideals and our emotions and strong voices make sure that this appeal is both loud and widespread.

Among the European friends of the United States, however, there is perhaps less of the ideological and more of the political, or, if you like, of the pragmatic approach to these problems of the Far East. There is more of rationalizing and less of moralizing; more of a desire to achieve a limited practical objective and less of insistence on total victory. There is, I think, among all the Western allies, general acceptance of the view that the Peking Government represents a foreign and reactionary ideology which, in its actions, has offended, indeed outraged our deepest moral and humanitarian feelings. There is no such general acceptance of the best way of dealing with it.

On the one side, and it may be an oversimplification to call it the American side, there is uncompromising and active hostility and, irrespective of the effect of this attitude on our relations with other free nations of Asia, a determined

refusal to recognize the Peking regime in its present form as an accepted or acceptable member of the community of nations. There is impatience with any policy based on any other consideration than that of doing everything possible to bring about the disappearance of this dictatorial and dangerous regime.

On the other side, there is a disposition to accept - though without any relish - certain facts of the situation and hope that the processes of normal political and economic evolution will improve this situation and remove some of the dangers inherent in it; will bring about ultimately some measure at least of national respectability. There is the hope that China will gradually absorb Communism as it has absorbed all its foreign bodies over the centuries, and that Mao Tse-tung, if left alone, will become Mao Tes-Tito! To this school, expediency is not immorality, but realism, while moralizing is concerned not so much with principle as with self-delusion.

Those who think like this may take some comfort from Louis Halle's words, in the article to which I have already referred:

"....in the historical perspective the people identify statesmanship with strategic prudence, however much they abhor it in their moments of ideological excitement. Queen Elizabeth never aroused such fervor of approval among her contemporaries as Cromwell did, but history has preferred her example. In the same perspective Abraham Lincoln is morally superior to Carrie Nation."

It is, then, considerations of political strategy as much as, or more than, those of ideology, that have influenced policy in certain countries in our Western coalition; that have caused many of them to recognize diplomatically and to deal with the Communist government of Peking. The plain fact is that governments in these countries do not think their national interests in the Far East are as seriously affected by trying to come to terms with Communist policy in that area as they would be if they ignored and tried to outlaw the regime in Peking. Such governments are more ready, then, to compromise and make adjustments, for what they consider to be their own national advantage. Others are held back from doing so - especially in the field of commercial relations - only by fear of offending the United States and destroying cooperation with her in Pacific affairs, with resultant harmful effects on co-operation elsewhere. These governments tend to become impatient at those who insist that our policy toward Peking should be in essence a crusade against evil. When your own national interests are not immediately and harmfully affected, or your historical and established position forcefully challenged, it seems to be easier to be objective about such things as crusades against communism or colonialism, or any other "ism".

There is ample ground for difference of opinion and policy in these different approaches to a common problem; for criticism by the one side of the selfish concentration of the other on short-range national interests; or, in reverse, for criticism of an unhealthy and exclusive concern with considerations of abstract morality which are inappropriate in respect of what is, after all, a matter of practical international politics and strategy.

Why have these differences between national attitudes to this Far Eastern problem not developed into an open split? I suggest that it is because her allies have, by and large, been willing to let the Americans - who have had to pay the piper - also call the tune in this matter and have gone along, albeit at times reluctantly. This, in its turn, was possible because the United States has not pushed matters to the point where an armed conflict with Peking was certain to result. There has also on occasions been restraint shown by the Communist side; a restraint inspired perhaps by respect for American power. In any event, we have escaped in the Far East - if not in the Middle East - the more harmful consequences of a divergence of policy between friends.

This is the more fortunate, and the more significant in its relation to current difficulties, because in some of the more important American moves in Far Eastern policy, which affected others than herself, consultation was not much more effective between the United States and its friends than it has been recently in respect of Mediterranean developments. By consultation, I do not mean one government merely passing on information about a decision after it has been taken. That is really not consultation at all. I mean a frank and complete exchange of views before decisions are taken; at a time and of a character to influence those decisions. We do not have nearly enough of that kind of consultation in the Western coalition. Its absence can get us into serious trouble. It will weaken and may ultimately destroy co-operation. It is time that we realized this and did something about it - except talk.

This inadequacy of consultation is not, as I have said, peculiar to European or Middle Eastern matters. A revealing example, among others, in the Far East is provided by the decision taken in 1950 to authorize United States forces to move beyond the 38th Parallel in Korea. This was a decision of the United Nations. It was bound to have far-reaching consequences, as it did have. The policy of the United States in regard to it was, of course, of first, indeed of decisive importance. Admittedly the United States was primarily concerned. But the effect of the decision to cross the Parallel, especially if it led to an extension of hostilities beyond Korean, was bound to be felt and shared by the friends and associates of the United States. It might have been expected, therefore, that before any decision was taken in Washington there would have been a thorough exchange of views between the United States and

its friends who were co-operating with it on this Korean question; or at least between their representatives at the United Nations, so that agreement could be reached on the course to be followed. But this was not done. True, there was no public indication of disunity or difference, but that was because the other countries agreed to maintain the common front at the United Nations in the face of a particular United States initiative about which they had not really been consulted in any effective way. There were serious practical difficulties in the way of such consultation at that time, I know, including those connected with military plans and timing. It is also true that by far the major share of responsibility and action in this United Nations operation was being borne by the United States. But others were involved. The episode is significant as showing how difficult it can be inside a coalition to reconcile the often conflicting obligations of national and collective responsibility.

The present, however, is more important than the past. Are there still differences now in Far Eastern policy that should be frankly examined and, if possible removed? There are, indeed especially in regard to our attitude to the Communist government in Peking.

Some of the Western group, as I have stated, have recognized this government as that of China; others have not. Those who have granted recognition, however, - and Canada is not one of them - have foregone much of the advantage that they might have, in their opinion, been expected to derive from it by rejecting the claim of the Peking Government to represent China at the United Nations. It is no secret that they have done this largely because of their concern for their relations with the United States. Some very influential Americans, after all, have said that once Red China goes into the United Nations, the United States goes out.

There are also some differences of opinion as to whether there should be a complete, or almost complete cessation of trade between the Allied group and Communist China, or a prohibition of trade only in a selected list of strategic commodities which might be progressively shortened, if and when the situation warranted such reduction.

There is also (and this is more fundamental) a difference of opinion over the very nature of the conflict between the two Chinese governments. Some governments consider it primarily as a civil war, which means that action of one side against the other - even over the off-shore islands - does not constitute aggression under the United Nations Charter and therefore require our intervention. Other governments, however - including Canada - feel that while this may be true in respect of action on the continent of China or against the off-shore island, it does not apply to Formosa, which should not be

permitted to fall a victim to communist military attack. Still others, notably the United States, refuse to consider that action by the communists against even the off-shore islands of Quemoy or Matsu should be considered merely as part of a civil war and not warranting any interference on their part.

There is still ample room, therefore, for a serious conflict of policy and even of action between the United States and its friends arising out of these different viewpoints. We have been saved from this up to the present by the considerations which I have mentioned, and in recent months by the absence of military moves against the off-shore islands or against Formosa. If those moves, however, had taken place there might have been a really serious threat to unity and co-operation inside the coalition. It is therefore important that every effort be made to work out a real understanding and a common policy in these matters, or, if this cannot be done, that each should be kept informed as precisely as possible of where the others stand. At best, the maximum of unity, and at worst, the minimum of misunderstanding should be our aim.

These random reflections on policy in the Far East merely reinforce in my own mind the absolute necessity of strengthening co-operation and unity within our Western coalition generally. This means that action by one member state which affects, directly or importantly, the other members should only be taken after collective discussion and agreement, unless a situation of extreme emergency makes this impossible. This applies to the Far East, the Middle East, and to Western Europe and the Atlantic area. It applies particularly to the more powerful states in a coalition who, because of their power and their responsibilities can affect, by their actions, the other and less powerful members in a way which is not normally the case if the situation were reversed. A breach of this cardinal principle of consultation by the United States and the United Kingdom, for instance, and such breaches have occurred, as we all know, can do untold damage. A breach by Canada or Norway is likely to receive less attention, might even go unnoticed, because its effect is likely to be less. That is one reason why smaller nations are always more virtuous than larger ones in these matters. Their international sins of omission are often too small to get headlines.

It is, however, and I apologize for repeating it, less important at the present moment to dwell on the difficulties of the past than on ways and means of avoiding them in the future. A Canadian may, I think, be pardoned for emphasizing that this is particularly true in the case of consultation and co-operation between Washington and London and Paris. It is imperative, in our dangerous and disturbed world, that the lines of contact between these three capitals be repaired and renewed and reinvigorated.

Apart from the actual preservation of the peace, and, indeed, related to it, there is no more important objective for Western policy than this, and every possible effort must now be devoted, with understanding, with goodwill, and with energy to its achievement.

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