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# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 67/18 SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING  
CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary  
of State for External Affairs, at Waterloo  
Lutheran University Convocation, May 22, 1967.

...The process of growth and change which has been so evident in higher education in Canada in the last few years has also been very evident in the field for which I am responsible -- namely, foreign policy. While the principles which have traditionally governed the conduct of our relations with other countries remain valid, the way in which they are expressed in policy must reflect the changing circumstances of our times. It is on this theme that I should like to say a few words today.

Although we are this year celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of Confederation, the development of a distinctive and independent Canadian foreign policy is more recent. It was not until 1907 that we had a separate Department of External Affairs, and for many years after that our foreign policy was limited to ensuring that Canada's particular interests were taken into account in the conduct of British imperial foreign policy. Canada became a member of the League of Nations when it was established in 1920, but never assumed an especially active role in that ill-fated organization. Pre-occupied with our own problems and by the needs of our own development, we did not feel any great need to concern ourselves with events outside our borders.

With the benefit of historical perspective, it is clear that the Second World War marked a major turning-point in the evolution of Canadian foreign policy. Canada came out of the war more fully aware not only of its vital interest in preserving peace throughout the world but also of its ability to bring its influence to bear in the councils of the nations more positively and effectively than before. And, of course, the postwar world, which had seen the dawn of the atomic age, was a much more dangerous place, in which no nation, and, indeed, no responsible citizen, could afford to ignore the issues which threatened to divide the world's peoples.

Early in 1947, shortly after he had been appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent gave a lecture at the University of Toronto in which he set out to define the principles underlying Canadian foreign policy. As Mr. St. Laurent pointed out in his lecture, a policy in world affairs, to be truly effective, must have its foundations

laid upon general principles which have been tested in the life of the nation and which have secured the broad support of large groups of the population.

The principles which Mr. St. Laurent distinguished were as follows:

- (1) national unity;
- (2) political liberty;
- (3) the rule of law in national and international affairs;
- (4) the values of Christian civilization;
- (5) the acceptance of international responsibility in keeping with our conception of our role in world affairs.

Twenty years have passed, but I think the principles listed by Mr. St. Laurent would still be widely accepted in Canada as guidelines in the conduct of our foreign policy. However, it seems to me that they may need to be expanded somewhat, if they are to reflect the realities of the modern world.

In particular, I believe that we must now acknowledge that national security is a vital factor underlying our foreign policy. The survival of Canada is necessarily our primary objective.

To the conception of political liberty, I think we should now want to add that of social justice, for it has become increasingly evident that the freedom we so rightly prize can flourish only when there is a social order characterized by a fair distribution of wealth and equal opportunity for all. Hand in hand with this principle would go another -- namely, economic development, both in Canada and in the world at large.

We might also rephrase the last principle, or guideline, as the acceptance of international responsibility in accordance with our own interests and our ability to contribute towards the building of a peaceful and secure international system. While it is not inappropriate to speak of our role in world affairs, it may be misleading, in that it can lead to the belief that there is some particular role that we are predestined to play. As with other countries, Canada's foreign policy must ultimately reflect its national interests, the foremost of which is, of course, the maintenance of world peace.

In summary, then, it appears to me that the basic principles, or guidelines, underlying our foreign policy could be listed as follows:

- (1) national security;
- (2) national unity;
- (3) political liberty and social justice;
- (4) the rule of law in national and international affairs;
- (5) economic development in Canada and the world;
- (6) the values of Christian civilization;
- (7) acceptance of international responsibility, in accordance with our interests, and our ability to contribute towards the building of peace.

In 1947, it was possible for Mr. St. Laurent to discuss the practical application of the principles which he had listed under a limited number of headings: the Commonwealth, relations with the United States, traditional ties

with France, and support for constructive international organization. None of these applications have diminished in importance, but circumstances have so changed as to require a much broader view now than was either possible or necessary 20 years ago. Indeed, there is now no part of the world which lies outside the scope of Canadian foreign policy.

In the period since the war, there have been two particularly significant changes in the nature of international affairs which have had major implications for our foreign policy. The first is the very great increase in the number of sovereign, independent states during the last 20 years, resulting from the dissolution of the old European empires in Africa and Asia. This change has, of course, been most strikingly illustrated in the continent of Africa, where the number of independent countries has increased from four in 1945 to 37 today.

The emergence into the mainstream of world affairs of so many newly-independent states has had implications far beyond the increase in absolute numbers. For many of the new nations, independence has been only the first step in the often difficult and agonizing process of nation-building. In the great majority of them, standards of material well-being have been extremely low, and the complex technological and industrial society which we now almost take for granted in the older, Western countries was virtually unknown. Under the circumstances, it was only to be expected that instability and uncertainty would characterize the newly-independent states as they embarked on the enormous and challenging task of simultaneously building modern economies and modern national societies.

The second major change in the nature of international affairs which deserves special mention is the greatly increased complexity and diversity of economic relations between states. While trade has traditionally been one of the first and most important factors in bringing peoples and nations into contact with one another, trade is now only one aspect of the economic relations between states, and even it has grown immensely both in volume and complexity over the years. Other, newer aspects of international economic relations include those in the fields of monetary management and of development assistance.

The evolving nature of economic relations between states has given rise to the establishment of a whole range of influential international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. There is also, of course, the United Nations itself, which, through the United Nations Development Programme and the various Specialized Agencies, has assumed major responsibilities in the economic field. The importance of this is underlined by the fact that four-fifths of the financial and manpower resources available to the United Nations system are now applied to the tasks of economic development.

The international effort which is now being made to assist the economic development of the developing countries is perhaps the most clear-cut, practical illustration of the widespread realization that nations are not rivals

in their efforts to grow and prosper but necessary partners. The responsibilities of governments for human welfare are no longer limited by national boundaries. This represents a marked, indeed a revolutionary, change from conceptions that prevailed even two or three decades ago.

As one of the major developed countries, Canada has a clear responsibility to participate fully in the task of international development. Canada's programmes of development assistance began when the Colombo Plan was established in 1950, and have now grown to approximately \$300 million a year. The Government has taken the decision to increase its contributions to international development to the level of one per cent of our national income by the early 1970s.

Canada's aid programmes are but one example of the way in which our foreign policy has evolved in recent years in accordance with the guidelines set out by Mr. St. Laurent in 1947. Another example can be found in our developing association with the "Francophone" countries.

It is true now, as it was 20 years ago, that our foreign policy must reflect both our French and English heritages if it is to contribute to national unity. There are now many more French-speaking countries than there were in 1947, and the scope for valuable associations based on our French heritage has greatly increased. I am convinced that all Canada stands to benefit from this development.

Our efforts to establish the rule of law in international affairs are concentrated now, as they have been since 1945, in the United Nations. Canada has been ready to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and to support the United Nations in other ways, in the firm belief that through this international organization we are helping build a firm structure of international order.

Like any forum embracing different members, and reflecting different viewpoints, the United Nations is only as strong and as effective as its members choose to make it. For this reason, I believe it is of vital importance that the United Nations be made truly universal, and that the power to make decisions within the United Nations context be clearly related to the responsibility which ultimately devolves on member states for their implementation. It is also, I believe, most important that the nations of the world realize that the effectiveness of the United Nations, and, in the final analysis, their own security, depend on their willingness to accept modifications in the conception of national sovereignty in accordance with the interests of the wider international community.

It is, unfortunately, still true that threats to the peace can arise which, for one reason or another, it is not possible to deal with through the machinery of the United Nations. The present conflict in Vietnam is, of course, a case in point.

I want to make it absolutely clear that the Canadian Government fully shares the deep concern which so many individual Canadians feel about the dangerous situation in Vietnam. The question which has faced the Government is to determine what course it can and should follow to mitigate the dangers and de-fuse the conflict.

It has been my strong preoccupation in recent months to explore every possibility open to us that might afford some opportunity for a reduction in the scale of hostilities, including the cessation of bombing, and set the parties to the conflict on the path to a negotiated settlement. Because Canada has a role in the area through its membership on the International Commission, however little that Commission may seem to be able to achieve in the present circumstances, we do have an opportunity for exploring and assessing possible courses of action. It has been, and continues to be, my belief that constructive and unremitting efforts in this area hold out the best hope for the Government of Canada to play a useful part in the tragic situation in Vietnam.

It is a matter of judgment whether public exhortations addressed to one side or the other will enhance our capacity to influence the course of events. My own judgment has been that, in the circumstances obtaining up to now, the policies we have been pursuing have offered the best means of doing just that.

From a longer-term point of view, of course, the Vietnam conflict has re-emphasized the necessity of strengthening the means available to the international community as a whole to prevent such situations from getting out of hand. There is an almost universal desire to see the problems of Vietnam peacefully and justly settled, and yet the conflict goes on and becomes more and more menacing. Surely the nations of the world -- and, in particular, the great powers -- must realize that the time has passed when they could safely pursue their interests, or even their deeply-held convictions, outside the framework of an organized international community.

In this centennial year of 1967, we in Canada are being made particularly aware of the exciting potential which lies in the future for this country and, to paraphrase the theme of Expo, for "Man in his World". The conflict in Vietnam, the threatening situations in other parts of the world, and the distressing problems of hunger and poverty in so many of the developing countries are pointed and tragic reminders that truly formidable obstacles remain to be overcome if the bright promise of the future is to be realized.

Our foreign policy is concerned with overcoming these obstacles. The tasks ahead will require not only sound principles, but patience, wisdom and determined effort. In undertaking these tasks, I am confident that Canada will be serving its own interests, and those of the wider world community, if it strives in all things to be a "good citizen of the world".