Peace in the Family of Man

By Lester B. Pearson

Distributed in service to the ideals of Peace
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Okotoks, Alberta, Canada (www.peace.ca)
To celebrate Canada’s unique role
In building peace in the world.

It was a pleasant surprise to learn about and read Mr. Pearson’s book. It struck me as unfortunate that this veritable goldmine of peace information from a Canadian Prime Minister, and Canada’s only Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, was a “well kept secret”. (It is also unfortunate that many Canadians do not know that Prime Minister Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.)

Many of the “pearls of wisdom” from Mr. Pearson in this book are as relevant today as they were in 1968 when he gave these lectures. As a tribute, I wished to help make Mr. Pearson’s words available throughout the world.

It is also very important for Canadians to consider our responsibility to help build peace in our communities and world. I believe Canada is well placed to play a special role. Canadians are blessed with resources and skills, and hence we have more responsibility to serve the world in building peace. It is in our own best interest to help build a more effective United Nations, and international law and order. It is also in our own best interest to support other countries in their quest for peace – particularly our closest neighbour, the United States, with whom we have a special relationship. Mr. Pearson’s words provide insight into the dynamics and how we might pursue this goal in a pragmatic way. Mr. Pearson provides a good example of a “Servant Leader”. (reference http://www.peace.ca/servantleadership.htm and http://www.peaceleader.htm)

Canada has an opportunity and responsibility to build upon Mr. Pearson’s work and make our country a Peace Education “Student/Tourist Destination”, and a source of skilled Peace Consultants/expertise available to serve the world.

Canadian Leaders (government, industry, education, religious, etc.) have a special responsibility to build peace at home and abroad.

I have taken the liberty of highlighting some of Mr. Pearson's comments that particularly struck me. I hope Mr. Pearson’s words move you as they have me.

[Note - This text is also available in Microsoft Word format at http://www.peace.ca/Peace_in_the_Family_of_Man.doc. When you read the book, you will note that the male gender is used in general. At the time the book was written, 1968, there was less awareness of gender issues. Please consider the male gender usage interchangeable for both genders.]
INTRODUCTION

After a lifetime devoted to the cause of international peace, one of its most distinguished servants here reflects on the state of the world today and the prospects for peace in the family of man. Mr. Pearson’s commentary reveals the personal qualities that have established him as a great conciliator: understanding, patience, reasonableness, and the ability to lighten his arguments with a gently ironic sense of humor. These qualities inform his judgments as he discusses the polarization of international power, the threat of nuclear war, the means of increasing political and economic co-operation, the role of the United Nations, and the prospects for the future.

He begins after the First World War, when those who discussed disarmament at Geneva did so in the conviction that there would be no more war, and ends as the major powers, armed like gladiators to the limits of their endurance, confront each other on a high wire in an era when travelers in outer space have reminded us that our planet is home to all the human race. If Mr. Pearson is not optimistic, he is not disillusioned. He makes clear the futility of attempts at quick solutions and re-states the urgent need to bring to the creation of a unified international community the same intensity of personal commitment we bring to domestic affairs.

The reader will find that sense of personal commitment here, beneath the familiar unpretentious style, and a clear statement of the ideas and attitudes that must direct actions of both governments and citizens if there is to be stability in the world and hope for all its peoples. This book contains the six Reith Lectures broadcast over the BBC in the autumn of 1968.

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1. PEACE IN THE FAMILY OF MAN

It was with some hesitation that I accepted the invitation – and the honour – to join the distinguished company of Reith Lecturers. After I read earlier lectures and appreciated their literary excellence and academic distinction I realized that my hesitation was justified.

While I disagree with the cynic – I am bound to – who came to the depressing conclusion that a man can only begin to think when he ceases to work, I confess that my activities in recent years – and even in recent months – have not given me the time or opportunity to buttress my thoughts, if not with logic and learning, at least with adequate research.

I am also acutely aware, from my life in the world of active politics, national and international, how great is the gap between many of the ideas and ideals which I will express in these talks as essential to peace in the family of man; and the hard reality of the practices and policies that dominate our world today.

If, having abandoned the restraining responsibilities of office, my reach may now seem far beyond my grasp, I can only echo hopefully the poet’s question, ‘What’s a heaven for?’

It is a question that not only Reith Lecturers but even practical and pressured politicians ought to keep in mind.

The first sixteen years of my life were spent in the Edwardian end of the Victorian era. It was a time when we felt that God was in his heaven and all was well with our world. For a young Canadian that world was a very small part of a province, of a dominion, in an empire on which the sun was said never to set.

And then in August 1914 the armies moved, and it all ended. For me there followed four years of unheroic but never to be forgotten military service overseas; the sacrifice of many of my friends, and a large part of my generation. When that war ended, fifty years and one week ago, those of us who survived, resolved; ‘never again – it must not be’.

The League of Nations which was born of that war seemed to embody that resolve – as well as the hopes and ideals of millions who had gone through its horror and tragedy in order, we were told, to make the world secure against it repetition. The League was an organization founded on Woodrow Wilsonian idealism; on which we hoped, the French especially, to build a practical and realistic structure for international co-operation and collective security. But the will was lacking; and so was international trust. Fear remained first among the emotions and it is not a good base for peace.

I recall my own very modest part as a civil servant in Canadian delegations to League assemblies after 1930.

I shall never forget the outburst of idealism in Geneva at the Disarmament Conference at that time. There must have been hundreds of thousands of names representing, it seemed, the plain people of all the world, on petitions presented to the Conference beseeching the statesmen to disarm, and remove the growing threat of another war.

I remember even more vividly those days of hope in 1935 when the League of Nations took stern collective action against an aggressor. I remember the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom moving us to cheers and almost to tears when he pledged the policy of His Majesty’s
Government to steady and collective resistance against aggression; in this case, Fascist aggression against Ethiopia.

That, to me, was the highest point of international progress between the wars. It was soon followed by the lowest; with the shoddy betrayal of international sanctions by us all, and the desertion of the brave victim. I have felt ever since that this abject failure of collective action against Fascist Italy’s aggression in Ethiopia was the beginning of World War II. That action collapsed because, when the test had to be faced, national policy, and national fears – yes, and national prejudices, proved to be stronger than international ideals.

I recall one conversation I had at that time with a British naval friend, who was worried that even the ineffective sanctions that had been adopted might lead to war with Fascist Italy – fighting war. ‘We dare not go further along this path,’ he said, ‘because the British Navy is in no condition at this time to wage war in the Mediterranean.’ It was war against Italy alone that he was talking about! I asked my naval friend, ‘What would happen if the Italians landed a thousand men on an island in the Mediterranean which happened to be under the British flag?’ The reply was quick and decisive – ‘It would be war and we would drive them off.’ And so it happened. A few years later, this same navy, for king and country, went proudly and confidently into the Mediterranean to face Italy and Germany and their allies, without doubt or hesitation.

So the League collapsed and World War II began. 1939 merely confirmed that those who are not able to read the lessons of history are doomed to repeat its tragedies. As World War II was drawing to an end many of us were encouraged to believe that this time we had learned its tragic lessons; that this time the world would effectively organize for peace. San Francisco was to be no second Versailles. This time we would build a United Nations organization, on the ruins of the old League; one that would succeed. The new world – if one may put it this way – of Washington and Moscow would redress the balance of the old; the world of the old League of Nations, that Western European statesmen’s club with associate membership from Latin America and some other parts of the world, but without the United States, the Soviet Union (until 1934) and all those ‘lesser breeds’ (as they would probably have then been thought of) that had not yet achieved independence. For a few weeks at San Francisco we thought we had scaled the heights and could see the promised land. For a moment we were dazzled by what Oliver Wendell Holmes once called ‘the gleaming dream of peace’. And then, again, it disappeared.

What went wrong this second time?

Not the Charter we drew up at San Francisco. True, it had to be based on the equal and absolute sovereignty of every member state – but it was good enough and strong enough to be the foundation of a world organization if the will to build had been there.

The weakness was not limitation of membership. That only became apparent later when seven hundred million Chinese came to be represented by a government in exile on the Island of Taiwan.

It was not because of the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council. That was only a symptom, not the disease. It merely underlined the fact that the United Nations could work effectively only if the five Great Powers – and particularly the United States and the USSR – worked together.

That co-operation soon became impossible, on any acceptable terms.
To the Soviet Union such co-operation implied that the two super-powers – as leaders of two blocs – would run the world, and each would keep out of the other’s spheres of influence. But the United States and the United Kingdom and France, while insisting on the recognition of their own power interests and responsibilities, were unwilling to accept Moscow’s idea of international order and organization.

And so the cold war began.

How could we expect the United Nations to grow in strength and authority as a world organization in these circumstances? Instead of being a pathway to peace and security, it became far too often a battlefield in the cold war.

This was nowhere more apparent than in the effort to organize international security. The Council which the Charter had decreed should be the main agency for such security became, in the words of Mr. St-Laurent, then Canadian Prime Minister, ‘frozen in futility and divided by dissension’. No international force could be organized under its jurisdiction.

Most important of all was the failure to establish international control of the atomic weapon which had brought a new and potentially fatal dimension to destruction and a new and dangerous element into diplomacy and defence policy.

My mind goes back, again, to a personal experience. I was Canadian Ambassador in Washington in November 1945 when President Truman invited the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and Canada, with their advisors, to discuss with him what should be done about atomic weapons, in the development of which they had co-operated during the war, but which the United States alone possessed at that time.

On a Sunday morning, the two Prime Ministers, with a few advisors – I was the Canadian one – went for a cruise with the President down the Potomac River on the Sequoia. In the course of the day the implications of the atomic bomb and atomic warfare were discussed, in a cabin in which there was a large circular table. I sat beside Mr. King. Lord Halifax sat beside Mr. Attlee. Mr. Truman had with him his Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes, and Admiral Leahy.

At one point Mr. Truman said, ‘Now, we will go around the table, and I’ll ask everybody’s opinion as to what we should do about the bomb.’ This was the first time I had ever been asked by a head of state to express my views, and in the presence of my Prime Minister, on such a vital subject. I was a little diffident about saying anything. But not much was needed. All I had to say was, ‘There’s only one thing to be done, and that’s to get in touch with other powers, especially the USSR, which will become a nuclear power shortly, and draft an agreement for international control of this new destructive force. If the United States is willing to give up national control of the nuclear weapon, when they alone have it, their good faith should be beyond doubt.’ That was the general feeling of the group. But it didn’t lead to action then – or at any time.

The great opportunity was lost.

Once the Russians had the bomb, the nuclear deterrent, not millions of men with guns and bayonets, became the guarantee of peace and protection. We have balanced on this thin edge of safety ever since.

The United Nations, however, did not give up the fight for collective, international security arrangements. It even took armed action against the aggressor in Korea, when the absence – unlikely to be repeated – of the Soviet delegate enabled the Security Council to act.
Later, when the inability of the Security Council to guarantee security or organize force against aggression became all too apparent, the Assembly (where the veto did not operate) was authorized by resolution to mobilize international force for international action to preserve the peace or defeat aggression; a step taken against the bitter opposition of the Communist and some other members, who insisted that it was in violation of the Charter.

It was this authorization which made possible the intervention of the United Nations’ Assembly in the Suez crisis of 1956, of which I have vivid memories even twelve years later.

In October 1956 the United Kingdom and France intervened in fighting between Israel and the United Arab Republic for the stated purpose of bringing that fighting to an end. At the United Nations there was violent opposition to this intervention and a demand that unless it were brought to an end the United Kingdom and France should be declared aggressors under the Charter. Friends of France and Britain — and that included Canada and others that had not been able to support the intervention — were deeply disturbed about the possibility of punitive economic or political action by the Assembly. They were also worried about the very real danger of the war spreading, through Soviet intervention, and about division within the Commonwealth deep enough to lead to its break-up.

Between London and Washington, also, a serious breach had developed. There is one cardinal and constant feature in Canadian foreign policy: to avoid any situation by which Canada as a North American country would come into conflict with Canada as a member of the Commonwealth. It can therefore be understood how alarmed we in Canada were — for more than one reason — over this Suez crisis.

The UN Assembly was called to consider the matter. Finding myself once again in New York representing Canada at the United Nations, I was naturally anxious to do anything I could to find a United Nations solution by which the fighting could be brought to an end; by which those who had felt they had had to intervene could honourably withdraw; and by which the danger of a Commonwealth break-up would be removed.

As I saw it, the United Nations must move quickly to set up some kind of international police force which could come between the combatants, end the fighting, and prevent rash action by the Assembly against France and Britain — with all the regrettable consequences that might follow.

I discussed the idea of such a move with Dag Hammarskjold who was at first doubtful about its timing and practicability; and with some other delegations, including the United Kingdom. As soon as possible I put forward a resolution that led to the United Nations Emergency Force.

There is a time in an international crisis when all are so frightened of what might happen that they will accept many things that they would not have even contemplated before the crisis; and indeed are unlikely to contemplate a week after it has ended. So at the time it was introduced my resolution for a police force was greeted with almost unanimous acclaim. Everybody was looking for some way to resolve this dangerous situation and this resolution seemed acceptable for that purpose.

It was passed early in the morning, and we got to work at once in Mr. Hammarskjold’s office. The resolution gave us only seventy-two hours to report back to the Assembly on the organization of the Force. But before that deadline was reached, we had completed our report, for submission to the Assembly.
It was a thrilling moment. We had to secure contingents from various countries, arrange for United Nations uniforms, badges, identification; provide for air transportation; above all, get somebody over at once. It didn’t matter very much how many we could secure, where they came from, what they looked like. If only a hundred were to appear, at once, men of the United Nations, that would be better than a division later. Wasn’t it Stalin who said, ‘How many divisions has the Pope?’ Well, this United Nations Force was beyond divisions. It was the conscience of the world community, acting to stop a small war and prevent a bigger one. Whether it actually succeeded in preventing that bigger war, we will never know. But it certainly succeeded in bringing this particular fighting to an end for some years. An Emergency Force of the United Nations remained between the parties to the dispute. When it was forced to withdraw, we know what happened.

The Assembly on this occasion had discharged important responsibilities in maintaining peace and security. But this was not the way it was meant to be done by the Charter. It was the Security Council that was meant to be the principal peacekeeping agency.

The cold war made this impossible. So when hope of organizing security under the Security Council on a universal basis failed, those of us who believed in collective action, rather than national action for defence, felt that we should not allow the best to become the enemy of the good. We should try to make regional security arrangements. Those governments that were ready to subordinate their national sovereign rights to the greater need of peace and international security should get together for that purpose. So began the talks that led to NATO.

I was as much a United Nations man after NATO as before. But I felt strongly that the failure of the Security Council to provide security on a universal basis should not prevent the formation of a regional security organization.

I felt the more strongly about this because the destruction of democracy in Czechoslovakia by the USSR, showed that there was a real danger of Soviet aggression against Western Europe. To prevent this, collective resistance had to be organized on an Atlantic basis.

Yet in NATO I saw more than a military alliance. Along with others, I hoped that it might develop into a genuine Atlantic community, organized on a supranational basis.

That is why I was happy when Article 2 – which is sometimes called the Canadian Article – was put into the Treaty to provide for co-operation in other than military matters. This seemed to me to be essential. A military alliance rarely survives the crisis and danger which gives birth to it. We were forming this alliance in a time of crisis and, unless there were some other cement than mutual fear and the consciousness of a common danger, we could expect the military alliance to disappear when the danger seemed to disappear.

The attitude of the bigger NATO powers was friendly but skeptical. ‘OK, if you idealistic Canadians want to do this, it can’t do anybody any harm, but don’t expect it to do anybody much good; or worry too much about it.’ Well, the smaller members in the alliance did worry about it. They were anxious to make NATO a genuine collective organization for more than defence. They have only partially succeeded. NATO did become an effective organization for collective security, but it was impossible to develop Article 2 as we had hoped. On the economic side, NATO was both too small and too large in its membership. On the political side, the smaller powers were willing to give up more of their sovereign rights than the larger ones were. This was natural. Their sovereignty in any event was more legal than actual. The United States, the United Kingdom and France did not wish NATO to become a political organization with supra-
national authority. They were not willing to allow their policies to be determined, or even indeed too much influenced, by a group of men from other countries sitting around a table in Paris. So NATO remained a diplomatic and consultative, rather than a political and decision-making organization.

There was one other development in NATO which seems to me of significance. The North Atlantic is an area with the kind of countries where you might expect close international co-operation; and from which a confederation might develop in due course. That is one reason why I had hoped that Ireland and Sweden would become members of NATO. They have the democratic institutions and traditions and a way of political life that bring them into a close affinity with other democratic Atlantic nations.

Ireland and Sweden did not become members, but Turkey and Greece did, though they are not Atlantic but Mediterranean countries. My feeling at the time was that NATO should not move into the Mediterranean. This was not out of any lack of respect or regard for those two Mediterranean countries; nor out of any feeling that their security was not of importance to us all; or that they were not entitled to the same kind of co-operative assistance against aggression as any other country. But I felt that for this purpose there should be a separate Mediterranean collective security organization, perhaps loosely associated with NATO; one that would have been as effective as NATO for the security of those countries, because the United States, whose interest and responsibilities are world-wide, would have been included in it.

Nevertheless, for strategic and military considerations which seemed overriding to those most directly concerned, Greece and Turkey became members of NATO. They have been active and valuable members, and the views I had in 1950 do not reflect on that value or usefulness in any way.

The position of Turkey is of particular significance in this context. The Turks are a brave and stalwart people. They are also neighbours of Russia and must always be anxious about their security in an uneasy world. Therefore NATO must have seemed to them a very important organization. Turkey borders on the Soviet Union. Turkey is a member of NATO. If there are, or have been, bases near the Soviet-Turkish border – nuclear bases, missile bases – they are NATO bases and the United States, as a member of NATO, is there.

But the Russian reaction might well be: ‘This Turkish base is really an offensive and aggressive NATO base. It is a threat to us.’

I remember – if I may digress for a moment – long and weary discussion at the Geneva Disarmament Conference of the thirties on the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons: if a naval gun is 7.8 inches, say, it is offensive, but if you bring it down to 4.6 inches it is defensive. The arguments went on for days and days. One night at a café in Geneva, after a very good dinner, some of my friends and I, junior advisors and therefore confident in our wisdom, solved this problem without any difficulty. The distinction between offensive and defensive arms was a very simple one. If you were in front of them, they were offensive; if you were behind them, they were defensive.

Well, the Russians are in front of any kind of a weapon on the Turkish border, so undoubtedly to them it’s an offensive weapon, however defensive the policy may be behind it. The USSR, therefore, may have felt that if they adjusted to this situation on their Turkish border without too much alarm or counter-action, the United States would not – or should not – be so violently
opposed to Moscow transporting a few missiles from Russia to a trans-Atlantic state, Cuba, which had by that time become an ideological friend of Russia.

Canada supported the United States in its determination to get Russian nuclear missiles out of our part of the world. In a hostile country, such as Cuba had become, they were a provocation and a threat to peace. So I do not condone what the Soviet Union tried to do in Cuba – any more than I condone what they are now doing in Czechoslovakia. But we should try to understand their reasoning if we are going to react wisely to what seem to us to be dangerous situations that spring from that reasoning.

I had personal evidence of the importance, and the difficulty, of doing this during a weekend I spent with Mr. Khruschev in October 1955, at his palatial home on the Black Sea near Yalta. Mr. Buganin was there too.

We had hours of very frank, no-holds-barred, talk. Mr. Khruschev kept referring to the danger of renewed Nazi aggression and the mistake that Canada was making by joining West Germany in NATO. His theme was ‘You have no idea what these people have done to us. How can you join them and encourage them to attack us again?’

I told him I could understand their feelings but I did not share their fears. I believed that West Germany was now a good and peaceful member of the European community. However, I argued, even if there were such a danger, which I didn’t admit, surely NATO lessened, rather than increased it. Wasn’t it better from the Russian point of view to have the Germans inside an organization which could curb aggressive tendencies among any of its members? ‘Do you think,’ I asked him, ‘that Canada is aggressive?’ ‘Oh no,’ he assured me, ‘not at all. You are fine, brave people.’ So I replied, ‘All right, we’re in NATO. So is Norway, and Denmark, and the Netherlands, and Belgium and the United Kingdom. Do you really think any of us wants the Germans or anybody else to use NATO as a base for an attack on the Soviet Union?’

I made not the slightest impression on him.

By the same token I suppose there’s not much use trying to argue with the Soviet leaders now that they should have left Czechoslovakia alone; that the Czechs should be free to choose their own kind of freedom and democratic socialism; that they might even be better and stronger allies of Russia as a free socialist democracy. There was no way in which the Czechs could convince the Russians of that, and so the Soviet forces moved in. In so doing they underlined once more how close we are to the brink of a destructive nuclear war; and reminded us once again of the agonizing paradox that our main hope for peace at present depends on the capacity for annihilation of the very weapons we fear.

Certainly the only real deterrent we now have is the fear that war will destroy us all. Yet in the long run, without fundamental changes in international society, this fear will either diminish or disappear, in which case we shall quarrel and threaten ourselves into conflict in the old traditional way; or the fear will become so great that we will be driven to fight in order to remove it.

In either case the result will be nuclear war. I do not believe that if the Big Powers begin all-out military action against each other they will be able to refrain from using any weapon they have. Once in the middle of a full-out war there would be no deterrent against the escalation of weapons. There never has been at any time in history. In a war for survival a nation will use everything it possesses in order to achieve victory, even if it loses half its population in the attempt. What entitles us to think that we are different in this respect from what we were a
hundred years ago, or fifty years ago? So we literally hover on the brink of survival or complete destruction. If we don’t do something urgently to solve basic world problems, security problems, economic and social problems; problems of the rich and the poor, of the developed and the developing nations, there will be an explosion – a nuclear explosion, which will plunge us all into the abyss.

Yet there is no cause for despair. We know what we have to do, and it can be done; even though I am acutely aware of the difficulty of bringing about the necessary social, political and economic changes which will have to precede peace and security through the establishment of effective international order. The demand for easy and clear-cut solutions of the ‘World State now’ variety will not save us. Indeed, it may weaken our resolve to work at and to live patiently with our problems until we can solve them. Certainly in the urgency of the present situation it is foolish to ignore any opportunity to move forward. But if we insist on all or nothing solutions, we can count on getting nothing. For a long time yet we shall have to reconcile urgency with practicality.

Our situation is rather like that of a man in a runaway car on an icy slope gathering speed towards a precipice, who has to say to himself, ‘If I slam the brake on, I shall skid. But I know there is a way of stopping this thing. Carefully now …’

Steadiness and patience are not qualities too widely esteemed in the tense and uneasy world of today. But only steadiness and patience in combination with idealism, determination, hard work and commonsense will see us through to peace in the family of man.

As these lectures continue I will be discussing some of the hopeful and less hopeful signs that face us as we try to move towards this goal.
2. THE BALANCE OF FEAR

‘An austere ostrich of awesome authority was lecturing younger ostriches one day on the superiority of their species.’

These are the first words of one of James Thurber’s *Fables for our Time*, about a conference of ostriches called to find out why they could not fly. One impatient young ostrich, Oliver by name, was complaining bitterly that while man, an animal could fly sitting down, ostriches, birds, couldn’t fly at all.

An old ostrich looked severely at Oliver, first with one eye and then with the other. ‘Man is flying too fast for a world that is round,’ he said. ‘Soon he will catch up with himself in a great rear-end collision, and man will never know that what hit man from behind was man.’ So far, we’ve avoided this rear-end collision, but we shouldn’t be too complacent about our escape.

We have been very slow – I hope not fatally slow – to recognize the revolutionary nature of the change that has taken place in the world in these last fifty years. In the late Senator Robert Kennedy’s account of the Cuban crisis, there is one small symptom of this. ‘There were those,’ he wrote ‘…who felt the missiles did not alter the balance of power…’ In other words, there were those who applied during this crisis Nineteenth century concepts to Twentieth century situations.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the world, or at least the dominant western part of it, was held together by a balance of power system which was rough and often inequitable, but which worked. The European powers who largely ran that world had an underlying mutual interest in making the system work; not as a means of avoiding war, because it didn’t avoid war, but at least of avoiding the chaos which seems to follow the wars of this century. They even observed certain rules of conduct, certain restraints and the acceptance of certain limitations in the way they fought each other. There was always the possibility, indeed the likelihood, of the dynastic enemy of today becoming the dynastic ally of tomorrow. The primary object of this kind of war was peace and policy. Victory was a means to an end. The people were expected only to fight and die, which they did usually without reasoning why. If, for instance, you look at the reaction to the struggles between France and Great Britain in Napoleon’s day, you find almost an indifference on the part of the people generally to what was going on.

All this ended for ever in August 1914, when we entered on what might be called the wars of political religion of the Twentieth century; passionate democratic and national crusades; wars of unconditional surrender; of squeezing the vanquished until the pips squeak, in the rousing phrase of Sir Eric Geddes in December 1918. So today, instead of a pluralistic, conventional, balance of power world, we have a bi-polar nuclear world. Most of the powerful, though not necessarily the most populous, nations are grouped in two blocs, centered around two super-powers. The earlier forces of balance that made for at least some degree of order no longer operate. We are now groping for other forces to take their place and which will be adequate to keep the peace. All we can be certain of at the moment is a balance of nuclear deterrence between the two super-powers.
This present polarization of the world into two power groups is a stage in history. It will pass. I hope our planet does not pass with it. For the present, the important thing is not to expect earlier political or strategic ideas and methods to apply to this new world situation.

The old political alliances of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago were not alliance of peoples; of alliances of popular governments. That development began with the French revolution. But, even in the Nineteenth century, the normal alliance was one between dynasties or governments representing privileged classes only. Such international groupings did not attempt to divide the world up into two spheres of influence, with a great coalition on one side and another on the other. There was a flexibility within the group. You could escape from your commitments relatively easily. Popular democratic passions were not involved as they are today. The system often resulted in war, I know, but not in the kind of war we have had in this century. True, the source of the first World War may be found in the old kind of European alliance. But that war also ended the old system through the passionate popular feelings that were aroused and the influence of those feelings that were aroused and the influence of those feelings on the peace settlement that followed.

After 1918 the rise of Soviet Communism and German Nazism introduced other new and revolutionary elements. When German Nazism was destroyed in 1945, there was left a mighty, but shattered, USSR and a mighty, but physically intact, United States. Around these two, much of the world grouped, with each side armed with nuclear weapons of total destruction.

Let us suppose—and, I assure you, this is purely hypothetical—that there were a successful Communist coup in Greece, and that the new Greek Government wanted to align itself with the Warsaw Pact. Greece is now in the American, or, if you like, the NATO sphere of influence. If Greece tried to withdraw from NATO, not by a free vote of the people, but by a Communist coup d’etat engineered with outside support, the United States might feel an international crisis had been created, sufficiently serious to warrant a threat of force to stop it; as it did in Cuba, though that crisis concerned a country much closer to home. Any threat of force, however, would have to include the possible use of nuclear arms, because that is the only way in which it could have the desired deterrent effect on the other bloc, so much stronger in conventional forces.

Moscow, on the other hand, would have conventional armies strong enough for effective use against any conventional force that might be opposed to it. At this time the USSR is in a military position to impose its will on certain other nations by conventional force alone; even if the United States helped with conventional military forces.

But if that help included the use of nuclear force, then the United States would have to take the responsibility for converting the war into a nuclear one and destroying the aggressor and the victim and perhaps everyone else. For this reason, to pursue the hypothesis, Greece might be led out of NATO by a new revolutionary government without any outside intervention at all.

All this illustrates the great difference between the position in which the United States would find itself if an overseas allied country after a revolutionary change of regime decided to move over to the other camp; and that of the USSR which can call a satellite to heel with relative ease, as we have seen it do in Czechoslovakia; ignoring any hostile reaction, or countering it if necessary.

Last summer’s crisis made perfectly plain the attitude of the USSR towards a possible change of satellite status, whether of not it was the desire of the Czech people. The notorious
Warsaw letter to the Czech Communist party in July stated: ‘We will never allow “imperialism”,
by peaceful means of by force, to …change the balance of power in its favor.’ Brezhnev
confirmed this ‘Monroe Doctrine for Socialist states’ when he told the Polish Party Congress on
12 November last: ‘When a threat emerges to the cause of socialism in any socialist country, this
is no longer a matter only for the people of the country in question, but it is also a common
problem, which is a matter of concern for all socialist countries. It goes without saying that such
an action as military aid to a fraternal country can be caused only by the direct actions of the
enemies of socialism inside the country and beyond its boundaries – actions which create a threat
to the common interests of the socialist camp.’

The new doctrine may be somewhat ambiguously worded, but in the case of
Czechoslovakia the USSR has given it a clear interpretation. The Czechs are to be anchored in
the Warsaw Pact. The whole international community – and that could include socialist states
like Yugoslavia, Algeria of even Cuba – will be deeply concerned about the interpretation of
this doctrine to justify aggressive intervention in the affairs of other states. That concern should
be made clear to Moscow, but not by threats which are unclear so far as carrying them out is
concerned. I have never been much of a believer in the iron glove over the velvet hand type
diplomacy.

Today diplomacy, in its major manifestation for peace and security, revolves around the
two blocs I have been talking about. The most dangerous aspect of this two-bloc system is its
rigidity. The old political alliances, because they were alliances between governments, were
flexible arrangements. States, as I have said, could escape from them without too much
difficulty. New leaders would emerge, and the groupings were constantly shifting. Now,
because there are still only two powers that have the capacity to destroy the world – and
themselves – others circle uneasily around them, as satellites or as allies. The peripheral
members haven’t the power of mobility to plat a game of shifts and balances even if they wished
to. This kind of relationship may be inevitable in a bi-polar would of the kind we live in, but it
doesn’t constitute a solid and enduring foundations for peace or for peace or for a genuinely
collective international organization to preserve peace.

A few years back, when we seemed to be in greater immediate danger of nuclear war
than now, there was a feeling among the smaller nations in the Atlantic alliance that the vital
decisions on out side were in the hands, not so much of a group f allied states, as of a group of
men in Washington. This feeling expressed itself in the slogan: ‘No annihilation without
representation.’

I remember once, before a meeting of the NATO Council in Paris in 1954 the late Mr.
John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of State, was dining with four or five of the members
of the Council, of whom I was one. He was telling us, politely but frankly, that the smaller
members of the alliance complained too much about lack of consultation; that the situation was
so serious that we should rally round the United States in unity and strength, and not worry too
much if we did not seem to be given enough chance to influence policy. In reply to a question
from the Foreign Minister of Denmark, Mr. Dulles said: ‘Denmark should take more risks for
peace.’ Our reaction to a statement of that kind can be imagined. Denmark, small and close to
the mighty Soviet Union, was taking a supreme risk for peace by its very membership in NATO.
If there were nuclear war, it would be one of the first countries to be overrun and destroyed.
Denmark had given itself as a hostage to fortune merely by being in NATO. She had done so
because her people, rightly, believed in collective action as the only way to maintain peace and
security and prevent war. My European colleagues refrained from suggesting that Mr. Dulles should go out to the United States’ mid-West and tell the farmers there that they should take more risks for peace.

This incident has remained in my mind as an indication of the difficulty in building up a genuine collective security system on a free democratic basis when one country is so much more powerful than the others, even when the desire of that country is to act as only one member of a free coalition.

In those early days here were people – there may still be a few – who talked about a preemptive war as the only way by which we could remove this danger of attack: to strike first. There’s less panic talk like that now. There is even less talk – of there was before Czechoslovakia – about the policy of containment. I don’t want to be unfair to Mr. Dulles – he is not here to defend himself – but there was once a very real anxiety that this policy of containment would be applied in a way to perpetuate animosity between the two blocs and remove any chance of a détente; it seemed to be based on a dogmatic, inflexible, stand: ‘Thus far and no further. If you move in any way beyond a certain line, we will take at once the action that is necessary to stop you.’ We hear less now of this kind of talk. Collective policy for effective defense – which remains necessary – doesn’t require it; though a more flexible stand doesn’t guarantee that the other side will reciprocate.

Even in those earlier days we should have been thinking not only of direct military aggression or of indirect, ideological aggression, against which force itself is no defense. We should also have been thinking of how we could best counter the appeal of Communism to the emerging millions of the developing and uncommitted world; the appeal of what might seem to them to be a short cut to welfare and development as well as a protection against the return of imperialism; an appeal that could also, however, cause conflict on a new front between the blocs.

When you have to compete against this kind of appeal, you can only hope to show by policy and example that your kind of society offers the best model to emulate. You can only try to give people in need more assistance and a deeper understanding than Communism can ever do: while making sure there are no inadmissible political strings attached to your sympathy or your assistance. I think we are more aware now of the necessity for this kind of counter-appeal. But we’re still not making a good enough job of it.

Neither are the communists, whose mid-Victorian frame of reference is notoriously inapplicable to the middle of this century. Karl Marx is as dead as Queen Victoria. We know this. What we would like to be sure of, however, is that the Russians also know it; that they are not playing the game with new messengers, but according to the old rules. Certain questions suggest themselves.

Does Communist imperialism represent primarily a messianic urge to spread a new religion or is it a Russian desire to gain power and dominance for a sovereign state? Or is it simple a defensive conviction that capitalist countries, unless they are faced with unconquerable military power, will plot to destroy Communist societies, and in particular the Socialist Fatherland? I find it difficult now to make up my own mind whether the compulsion is more offensive than defensive. I didn’t have so much difficulty fifteen years ago. I was satisfied then it was almost totally offensive. Now I’m not sure.

There are Communist leaders who have not yet abandoned the ideological desire to establish Communism throughout the world. How could they? This is their religion. Mr.
Khruschev used to insist on this ad nauseam: ‘We don’t have to fight you, because your grandchildren will all be Communists anyway.’ The threat, however, is not the same as we considered it to be in the early days of the cold war. For one thing, there are more members of the ‘establishment’ in the Soviet Union now, and an establishment, I’m told, is never dynamic.

The fact is that the debate about Russian motives is too often argued from absolute positions on either side. The truth is almost certainly that both offensive and defensive motivations are all mixed up in the Soviet people, as they’re all mixed up in everybody. The Soviets want to spread Communism because they have been taught to believe that this is the best way to organize society and liberate man kind. But they also want to spread Communism for their own protection, because Western capitalist behavior, ever since the interventions on the side of the White Armies against the Bolshevik Revolution, has persuaded them that their gospel was right when it insisted that capitalism would not cease to attempt to destroy Marxist Socialism.

In the process of creating a strong state, and strong military forces for this purpose, Russian chauvinism has also been aroused; just as racial Chinese arrogance has been whetted by national revolutionary emotions. As always, there are men willing to exploit these emotions in order to advance their own political power. It doesn’t make much sense, however, to talk about a common Communist purpose as something solid and monolithic, even inside the Soviet Union. The motivations of a Red Air Force technician, a Leningrad chemist, a Moscow bureaucrat dedicated to increasing the production of cotton or refrigerators, a Communist party secretary—all these are likely to vary widely. Public opinion may not have full sway over the Soviet government, but the different motives of Soviet citizens are increasingly reflected in the pressures that do get through to their leaders. There has been an example of this in the recent Czech crisis. Twenty years ago there would have been no restraint of any kind, no limitations on the use of whatever power necessary to crush and destroy Czechoslovakia; no hesitation about using it.

In Stalin’s day, I once had a private and personal discussion with a highly placed Soviet official. I told him that I have very interested in some questions that we never mentioned in official discussions. ‘How do your processes of government work? What is your decision-making process? When does the Politburo meet? Who decides what will be talked about? Who draws up the agenda? And what kind of arguments do you have?’ His reply was illuminating: ‘We usually meet around midnight. There’s lots of talk, based on an agenda drafted by the Secretariat. Everybody has an opportunity to express his views. But,’ he added, ‘whatever view is expressed, and though it may conceivably have some influence on the leader, when the time comes he says “it will be done this way” and it is done. There’s no nonsense, there’s no further discussion.’ You may say that this is not too far removed from the procedure in some democratic cabinets. But my Soviet friend made the difference clear to me when he indicated that it was not wise to be on the opposition side of an argument too often. If you were, it was likely to be Siberia, or worse; not the back benches of the Chiltern Hundreds.

I don’t think the Russian system is operating in quite the same despotic way at the present time, though of course it remains a totalitarian dictatorship. For instance, there seems to have been a division of opinion inside the Soviet government over Czechoslovakia in August. If so, that was not merely due to the fact that there is no longer one single unchallenged leader in the Soviet Union, as there was when Stalin was alive. It is also because growing differences of
opinion and points of view within the Soviet people themselves are being reflected, at least to some extent, in their governing bodies.

Externally, too, there have been some chips off the old Communist bloc; in fact, there’s been a deep Chinese split in it. This division, which may have reduced somewhat the threat of East-West war, has also given a greater feeling of assurance to the non-committed countries, and more flexibility to their policies.

The result of these developments is that, while two great blocs still exist in the world, and their control and power centers remain in Moscow and Washington, the other members of the blocs are less integrated into these centers, while the uncommitted are more confident in their non-commitment.

If, however, there is to be any significant development in co-operative co-existence between Washington and Moscow, the two centers of power – and in the last few years some progress was being made – it will have to be on some other basis than mutual regard. We Anglo-Saxons always like to feel that whatever we do is based on some ennobling and worthy emotion. The moral, brotherly approach makes us feel decent and virtuous. But no progress in détente with the Soviet Union and its allies can be made on any such basis. It will be made only by seeking and finding areas of mutually profitable co-operation; based on mutual self-interest and any good faith that may be created by experience. For example, the Soviet Union has, on occasion, been just as determined as the United States not to be dragged into a war by rashness or an accident of police on the part of the ally. Also the two super-powers have found a common interest in trying to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. They have worked together quite constructively in this field.

There is also a dawning recognition of a community of scientific interest, which has increased as we have begun to move out of our own planet. Even a common political concern has been shown at the United Nations on certain matters, though usually it has been disguised from the uninitiated, and in any even is not given the publicity that the more customary bitter verbal conflicts always secure. This common concern between the Soviet Union and the United States has been shown in their similar attitude to certain brush-fires which neither side wishes to see spread. Most important of all, there is now a common fear of Communist China in Washington and Moscow. History shows, unhappily, that there is nothing like a common fear to bring people together. The Soviet Union could have been more difficult in Vietnam than it has been during the last three years, if it had not feared, not only the United States in Vietnam, but Communist China in Vietnam and on its own borders.

If co-operation is to develop, if we are to make any progress, there will also have to be compromises on specific issues. At times these compromises will be very unsatisfactory. Western governments will be bitterly attacked because they may seem to be acting counter to political morality. As one who has been in domestic and international politics for many years, I know that while justice can never be discovered from the means of achieving it, sometimes we have to accept a settlement based on very rough justice as the lesser of evils. That is the only valid reason why we have today two Germanys, two Koreas, two Vietnams; and why we accept the temporary destruction of some national freedoms and some very old and civilized societies.

Another cause of tension between the two blocs has been economic; including the gap between their standards of life. But this also is changing for the better.
The Russian people have reason to look forward to their economic future with far more confidence than some years ago. Their consumer tensions; if I may call them that, have been reduced. There is even the beginning of a perception of common economic interests between them and the West, as both sides modify their economic ideologies.

These are at least hopeful signs. But we would be very foolish to take for granted that this new international awareness in the Soviet Union; this new, if hesitant, move towards some very limited freedom, or at least less rigidity in totalitarianism; this growing sense of material wellbeing, will automatically subdue aggressive national and ideological drives. History doesn’t permit us to draw that kind of conclusions. There are too many indications that political and economic growth feeds national pride, and leads to an assertive and often an aggressive mentality. A nation on the march, and on the make, with enormous power at its call, is always potentially dangerous; always appears as a threat to somebody, especially when it believes it has a world mission.

Soviet citizens are not bearded moujiks or lumpen proletarians incapable of handling the sophisticated mechanisms of modern civilization. They are a very gifted race, with qualities of intellectual brilliance and physical endurance that certainly qualify them to be leaders in the world. We may hope that they can find some satisfaction for their national emotions of pride and patriotism in gold medals at the Olympic Games; in trying to set records in outer space; and in catching up with the West in computers and Coca-Cola. If not, and if their intention should be the simple aggressive one of seeking out the first opportunity to destroy by military action the Western world, and plant their flag on all the continents, well, in its savage way this would at least be a clear-cut situation, and we would be forced to cope with it, even though everything and everybody might be destroyed in the process.

It could be, however, that a greater danger lies in their obsession that we are going to strike them; and that out of this comes the drive for them to set up rocket bases and do other things that contribute to our sense of insecurity. This, in its turn, leads our side to establish bases near their borders, which increases their sense of insecurity. So the vicious and fatal circle is formed. We cut through it by stumbling into a war which we never meant to begin in the first place.

In all this I am not advocating that we abandon our military defenses whenever things seem to be improving politically; or that we should rush in panic to add to them when there is a set-back. Strong military power will have to be retained for deterrence, for defense, and as a basis on which you can give strength to your diplomacy and your negotiations; while rejecting the obscenity of ‘overkill’ and avoiding provocative or threatening displays of force like the plague.

There are people in the Kremlin, and no doubt in the Pentagon, who believe in military power as an agent of the wrong kind of persuasion: not as something from which you negotiate for accommodation, but as something to be used as a threat to bring about the achievement of a political objective. This influence shows itself in another way, which General Eisenhower went out of his way to refer to in his last broadcast as President of the United States: ‘We have been compelled,’ he said, ‘to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions…This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience…In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought of unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The
potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes."

President Eisenhower was in a good position to now that a military-industrial complex of this kind can influence, and my increasingly seek to influence, national policy. This would be all the more dangerous if, as part of a general disarmament agreement, certain defense industries which give so much employment, and which have become and important part of the national economy, had to be eliminated. The men who control these industries often wield political and economic power to resist change even more effectively than men in uniform. When they are also allied with those men in uniform, you have a combination which could become a threat to civilian supremacy and even to international co-operation and progress.

Even if we believe that the Russian fear of a threat from outside its borders is basically a paranoiac fear, we ought to understand that from their point of view it is not baseless. Somehow we have got to persuade the Russians and their friends that with common fears we also have common interests; that the greatest of all common interests is the avoidance of war, whether it is brought about by calculation of, as is more likely, by accident; war which could destroy us all. If that seems a policy of Utopia, I’d like to know a better one.
In war, at least at the outset— and unless it is the new Vietnam type of undeclared and unclean war— citizens unite and fight together in a common cause. We proudly wave our national flag and wear the national uniform. If we are Canadians, we display, as something very special, our Maple Leaf badge. When Canadians are fighting over-seas (we have had to do that twice in this century) and whenever we come from in Canada— Vancouver Island or Newfoundland four thousand miles away; Quebec City or the Yukon— we have a strong feeling of unity and pride in being Canadians. We have indeed a greater feeling of national identity in war than at other times; of belonging to a particular national society. We get the same feeling in a less intense but more civilized way in international sporting competitions. At world hockey championships, Canadians become positively chauvinistic.

What is this national emotion? What value does it have? How are we to move beyond the prejudices, prides, and loyalties that gather around it; the responses to it which we learn in our cradles, and some of us will never unlearn until we reach our coffins?

Nationalism can be a fine and noble emotion; the love of a man for his own country and what it means to him. But the absolute sovereignty of the nation state, with excessive and exclusive nationalism, is the strongest obstacle in the way of building world order, and of the deeper realization of a world community. The first reaction of millions of people today to any proposals for more effective international institutions, for international control of anything, is: ‘this means that foreigners will be taking charge of our affairs.’

One way of gaining a stronger feeling for the whole community of man would be to discover another planet which was inhabited, and where the natives were hostile. (The cynic might add that if they had learned how we conduct our affairs on Earth, they would be bound to be hostile!) An astronaut would come back to earth from Mars or Venus and complain: ‘I was arrested and badly treated.’ He would report this, not as a Russian, or as an Englishman, or as an American, but as an Earthman. Then we would all get together and react vigorously through press, radio and television— ‘You can’t do that to us.’ And ‘us’ would mean the inhabitants of this planet.

Astronauts returning from outer space have referred to the feeling they had on coming back to ‘earth’; that this was their earth; this was their planet; it belonged to all humans. Through personal experience they are able to relate— as man had never been able to before— their own world, as a unit, to all the other worlds to which they had got closer than any other human beings.

To turn from a hypothetical future to an actual past, I hope I won’t be considered subversive myself when I give the opinion that the most subversive anti-national document of modern times, far more so than Karl Marx’s Communist manifesto, was the Declaration of Independence by the Fathers of the American Revolution.

In the Eighteenth century, the idea that colonies could not only defy the mother country, but from a federal society of their own, was considered not only as dangerously revolutionary, but as quite impossible. When the American colonies declared their independence in 1776, each became a separate sovereign state. It was realized, however, though there was strong support for the narrower idea, that there had to be a broader basis for viable freedom than this separatism.
It was James Madison, who later became president, who said, ‘If that were all that was achieved, (he meant sovereign status for each colony) it would have been worthless.’ To him it would have been sovereign fragmentation without any United States: the kind of thing, we are told in some quarters today, that must persist in the world.

Things could easily have gone that separatist, sovereign way in North America in the Eighteenth century. The British colonies were on the Atlantic seaboard. The French were in Quebec to the north, and in Louisiana down south. The Spanish were moving up from Mexico, and the Russians were moving down from Alaska. A French victory at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham could have changed the history of the continent and the world. If Great Britain had then acquiesced in French domination of the northern half of the continent, the two French settlements would have joined hands in the Mississippi valley, and there would have been a French ring around the American states. There would have been a Spanish-speaking state in the north-west. Our continent would have become a microcosm of today’s world. It may well be, therefore, that Wolfe’s victory at Quebec not only made Canada safe for the British, at least for a time, but made the world safe for the American Revolution. Instead of continental separation, there was established what another American President, John Quincy Adams, called a ‘compound nation’, the United States of America. As Adams put it: ‘the war taught our fathers that they had infinitely more to do than merely achieve their independence; that they must for their compact upon principles never before attempted on earth, including the principle where political communities now free could unite into a union under one government.’

What we have to do now is to extend this idea of a federal union of independent political communities into a far wider area than was ever considered at the time of the American Revolution, so that such national communities throughout the world will one day become part of a larger international community. The problem today is not the creation of new free states, but subordinating the sovereign freedom of all states to the necessity of peace, security and progress. There could be no more essential task, or more difficult. Its very mention seems to take us into the outer space of unreality.

The Americans, after all, reached their goal of federation only after a long, hard struggle; and after one of the bloodiest of all civil wars seventy-five years later. Yet theirs was a union of states which began with many strong bonds between them. The process will certainly be infinitely more difficult for states in the world of today. But then, too, the need is infinitely greater. Perhaps we should begin with another subversive declaration, suitable to the conditions of 1968, not 1768; that the peace and security of people take priority over the sovereignty of states; that the compound nation of America must be extended.

There is a further difficulty. The American Union and the rule of law within its borders were established by force. But the establishment of the international rule of law cannot depend on force. We have to do it by agreement. We have to do it step by step through international institutions. And we may have only years, not centuries in which to succeed; yet only the tentative and limited first steps have already been taken.

Before seeing what these steps are, and how far they have carried us, I should go back to the question I asked earlier and define my terms; especially what I mean by the word ‘nationalism’. I don’t know any word that has come to mean more things to different people.

Nationalism doesn’t necessarily mean sovereignty. The word ‘nation’ does not mean state, though this is the meaning most often given to it. Indeed, I often use it carelessly in that
sense myself, thereby adding to the confusion that I now want to clear up. A nation can, of course, coincide with a state, and often does. But there can be more than one nation inside a sovereign state, and often is. Let’s not confuse nation with race, either. Race is a far wider concept. It denotes the biological unity of a group with certain physical characteristics. A race can comprise many nations and many states.

Once you begin to look for common factors which determine a nation or nationality, you get into difficulty. Language is not necessarily a common factor. Switzerland has four languages, three of them officially recognized. Size has nothing to do with it. You can have a tiny state which considers itself to be a nation; or you can have the United States of America. Clearly defined boundaries don’t make a nation. You can have the boundaries of a nation inside a state, and you can have a national group overflowing state boundaries. How many Chinese settlements are there outside China?

Economic interest is not a determining factor. A nation state will often cling to a separate existence against its best economic interests. Neither is religion; though a common religion— or a common language— makes the sense of nationalism stronger. Perhaps the most frequently occurring factor is a common culture; but that word is so elusive and hard to define that it is not always very helpful as a criterion. By culture I mean common habits, common traditions, common customs, and, above all, a common desire to live together as a separate group; as a communal society, with certain well-defined loyalties and objectives. Ernest Renan in 1882 described a nation as a ‘daily plebiscite’. It depends, he said on ‘the consent, the desire clearly expressed, to continue life as a community.’ Perhaps we should merely admit that we may not be able exactly to define a nation, but we know one when we see it.

Nationalism is often made more confusing by the presence of ethnic groups within states; groups which are not nations even within the definition I have given. Take the United States. It consists of representatives of practically every national culture, every national tradition in the world. If the United States had encouraged the separate political growth and cohesiveness of these different cultures and traditions, they might have fatally weakened the unity of the state. So the United States has deliberately fostered the idea of ‘the melting pot’, where ‘Americanism’ is emphasized at the expense of every other tradition. In the United States, with a single language, the educational system could be, and has been, used as a powerful unifying factor. Yet where there is more than one language, education may work in the opposite direction.

In my own country, Canada, education is constitutionally in the hands of the provinces. One province of Canada, which is about 85 per cent French-speaking, uses education, quite understandably, and legitimately, to maintain a separate French-speaking culture and tradition. But it is possible to combine that with education that makes for loyalty to the confederation of Canada as a whole. In our country, if we tried to impose the melting pot theory of national development on all Canadians, we would not unify our country, we would destroy it. French-speaking Canadians were there, as a group, before English-speaking Canadians. They have maintained their separate culture, their separate language, their separate traditions, and they are not going to have these submerged in any melting pot; nor is it right or necessary to ask them to.

If in our world we cannot maintain existing political federations with unity on essential matters, but with recognition of differences of culture and tradition and language— and even special constitutional rights— what chance is there in the future of building up a wider international community where these separate racial, national, and even political differences can be merged, not submerged but merged in the community of man? From my own Canadian
experience I believe that cultural and social differences inside sovereign states, as well as cultural influences on them from outside, can and should strengthen rather than weaken a modern political society; that political unity, in other words, does not have to mean either cultural or social uniformity. It would be foolish and futile to insist that such differences should be eliminated in the interest of a single, sovereign political unity. It would be equally futile and foolish in the international field to insist on the complete obliteration of national differences in the interests of international unity. National societies meet a deep need in people’s hearts and minds. It is difficult to become passionate about something that includes everything. So we have to find a way to reconcile the narrower, more intense patriotism with a wider loyalty. I think it can be done. I think it must be done.

Historical experience shows that a state can develop successfully with different national identities. The Scottish people are a national society. You certainly know a Scots group when you see it. They have managed to maintain, and vigorously, their separateness inside the United Kingdom. Some would say that they have managed to do even more: to impose their separateness on other parts of the United Kingdom. Scotland, in that sense, is a nation. So is Wales.

It has been argued that Scotland and Wales would be nations in a more meaningful and satisfying sense if they were able to have more of the institutions of local self-government; if, for instance, they had their own provincial assemblies. That is not for me to say. But surely it is possible in a country like the United Kingdom to reconcile political unity with national individuality; to maintain a United Kingdom of separate and developing peoples. I certainly hope so, for the sake of the bigger international issues we have to solve.

If those who believe in separate nationalities in this cultural sense insist that each nation must also become a separate sovereign state in the political sense, where do we get? I know that if you encourage the awareness of national separateness in the cultural and social sense, you are bound to create in some people’s minds an idea that this awareness cannot be carried to its logical conclusion without political independence too. But if this were accepted in all national societies, where would it get us? Would the people of Wales or Scotland be any better off if they had absolute sovereign independence than they would be if there were a Welsh or Scottish region or province, inside a United Kingdom, where they had responsibility for their own cultural and certain other forms of development?

Apply this extreme political separatist argument to India, and it would not only be the end of India today, it would also end any possibility in the future of bringing the sub-continent together in some kind of confederation which would include Pakistan and perhaps other countries. Apply the argument to the situations in Africa, which is confused enough now: there are at least, or so I am informed, six thousand separate tribes in Africa and each can claim to be a nation in the social sense, with its own tribal loyalty, its own language, its own culture, its own taboos.

In 1962 Mr. Pierre Trudeau, my successor as Prime Minister of Canada, wrote this. ‘The state of India is a sovereign republic. Yet four languages are officially recognized there, not including English or Chinese or Tibetan or the innumerable dialects. In the state of Ceylon, there are three main ethnic groups and four religions. In the Malay federation, there are three other ethnic groups. The Union of Burma has half a dozen nationalities. The republic of Indonesia includes at least twelve national groups, and twenty-five main languages are spoken there. In Vietnam, in addition to the Tonkinese, the Annamites and the Cochin-Chinese, there
are eight large tribes. History has changed African territories into sovereign states with boundaries – established on ethnic or linguistic grounds alone, we would look in vain.’

For my part, if the idea of political separatism is carried to its logical conclusion, I may yet be seen carrying a banner inscribed, ‘Long Live the Union of free Brittany and free Cornwall’; in Celtic, I suppose.

It is interesting to apply the doctrine of nationalism, as I have been describing it, to the Soviet Union. Marxist Leninism, like the Bible, can, of course, be interpreted in any way which is desired by the interpreter at any particular moment. It can mean, legally, sovereign status for each Soviet Republic. It has, in fact, meant that Marx’s universal brotherhood of the proletariat, which in due course would become the universal brotherhood of all men, has given way to Holy Russia. Indeed, a strong case could be made for the assertion that under Communism the Soviet Union has come closer to being a centralized state than anything that existed before within the same boundaries. Even though there is representation of different national groups in certain central institutions, and even though at every great Soviet display we see the separate cultural groups dancing and marching, and singing their special songs in their own languages, there is complete subordination to the centre in all political matters. Complete loyalty to the Soviet Fatherland is demanded on the part of its citizens. It such loyalty is given, it has been brought about by successive Soviet governments in two ways: first, by education, largely through the Communist Party; and, second, by stirring up popular emotion in the great patriotic war against the Nazi aggressor, when every Soviet citizen was imbued with the idea that he was defending the sacred soil, not only of Uzbekistan, Armenia or Siberia, but of Holy Russia.

Nationalism is often associated with the struggle of unfree peoples for independence when it can be a very powerful and noble emotion. During the struggle for freedom, the new feeling of nationalism and unity can be stronger even than the older separatist tribal feeling. But after freedom has been achieved, the more restricted loyalties often become strong again. Nationalism is good when it leads to freedom from oppression. But it is less good when, after people become free, it is used for a return to fragmentation; or, at the other extreme, to political or racial arrogance by the new rulers; to the forced and total cultural and linguistic integration of unwilling groups into a centralized state; or to forced exclusion of others from that state. There is nothing to be said for this kind of nationalism. It leads to racial discrimination and arrogance, which is to be condemned in any society. We are all descendants of Adam and we are all products of racial miscegenation. Racial purity depends on where you start to count.

It was only a few years ago that we thought of Nigeria, the most populous of the new African states, as an example of what could be done to reconcile tribal feeling with national development. It was a set piece which was working well. So we thought. Then the whole thing seemed to be collapsing, because of fierce forces of tribal separation and tribal domination which had not been sufficiently taken into account when the constitution of the country was drafted. The hopes we had for Nigeria were so high that our present distress over what is happening must be that much greater. And yet, if there is not some kind of federal society in many of these new countries, what chance is there for their survival as free peoples at all; because fragmentation will go on and on until some tyrant ends it and brings about a forced and despotic unity.

The civil war in Nigeria – and other recent troubles – underline the drastic change that has taken place in the Commonwealth in recent years. The Empire conferences which I attended at the beginning of my official career were rather like cozy little West End club meetings where the Prime Ministers sat around the Cabinet table at 10 Downing Street with the officials
modestly but importantly ranged behind them. One table was enough. The atmosphere was that of an old boys’ meeting. That day has gone. Twenty-eight Prime Ministers now sit formally in a large room around a big table. The great majority of those now present are from countries which not long ago were represented by the Secretary of State of the Colonies. Many of them have graduated, not only from Oxford or Cambridge or the London School of Economics, but as political prisoners from Her Majesty’s Gaols, in order to take their place around the table. But because they have been exposed to the parliamentary and democratic traditions of Great Britain, and because many of them went there to public school or college or law school, these men, now leaders of independent states, bring to the meetings a family feeling which is very difficult to describe, but still manages to exist.

There have been divisions between nations inside the Commonwealth as bitter as anything in the United Nations. On more than one occasion in recent years, the Commonwealth might easily have broken up: over Suez, over Kashmir, over Rhodesia. But it has not broken up. How far that feeling of family solidarity can be maintained in the second or third generation of leaders, who didn’t go to Britain for an education, I don’t know. Certainly the Commonwealth can’t be held together much longer on the ‘old boy’ basis that has been effective. This still exists, but it’s not likely to exist much longer. At the moment, it seems that the Commonwealth is being taken less seriously in the world, and even among some of its own members. Yet the very difficulties of holding it together underline the importance of doing so; because the Commonwealth in its varied, multi-racial membership does reflect the world in which we live. It is a pluralistic political association representing every tribe, every color, every continent.

It is of great importance to show that this kind of association, of small powers and large powers, of former colonial states and former imperial states, can meet and discuss, and even at times decide together; even though there are no formal bounds, and some divisions between them. I would like to think that such associations as that of the Commonwealth are stages in development to something closer and more united. But certainly if we now tried to make the Commonwealth a more formal association, with demands on its members, with a constitution binding on them, to convert it into some kind of confederation, however loose, it would simply break up. Yet if we can develop, on this multi-racial basis, a new kind of co-operation between free countries, each desiring to work with and help the others, we may be able to give a new and constructive functional expression to the old family feeling that once was strong. In doing so, we will have modified separate and sovereign status in the interests of a deeper feeling of international unity.

This modification is shown elsewhere in the growth of other and more formal international institutions, which in their activities illustrate the increasing need for co-operation between states, as well as the growth of world opinion in favor of it. Sovereign states have accepted, even if not always very warmly, the right of international agencies to conduct ad hoc, or even regular, investigations into their affairs. International inspectors now examine the national books. If you want a loan from the World Bank, or if you want some assistance from the International Monetary Fund, they will send their men around, who look into your national accounts, and into your national financial policies. If you want their help, you have to accept their criticism. Indeed, decisions which concern that most vital part of national sovereignty, your currency, as we now know very well, are no longer solely under national control. This kind of intervention is the price governments must pay for the benefits of international assistance and co-
operation; especially in the financial and economic sphere. But it would have been unthinkable a hundred years ago, except in the case of colonies, or subordinate states.

International political investigations are even more difficult to reconcile with national sovereignty, but on occasion they have also been accepted.

I think of one occasion. Some years ago the NATO Council agreed to a procedure by which three officials – British, American and French – were authorized to examine the defense programs and the economic and financial resources of all the member states; and to make recommendations on the contributions of each member to collective defense, so that there would be a fairer sharing of the total burden. That was supra-national progress. True, the members of NATO accepted the recommendations only when it suited them to do so. This showed that the power of decision still resided, ultimately, in the sovereign nation state. Yet our NATO experience has also shown that national decisions can be, and are strongly influenced by the opinions and the recommendations of persons not responsible to your own government but representing an international organization.

In any rational analysis, we are surely entitled to say that sovereign power, exercised through the nation state, which came into being to protect its citizens against insecurity and war, has failed in this century to give them that protection. The rationale for change has been established. The will to make it has not.
4. CO-OPERATION THROUGH ECONOMICS

Earlier I was talking about political problems arising out of the relationship between the two super powers and the threats to peace which flow from them. Tonight I want to talk about economic developments and the way they can influence political relationships; especially those between the materially developed and less-developed countries which constitute the other great division in the family of man.

Today, big corporate business in the industrial capitalist world is becoming by necessity more and more international in its organization and its operations. Maximum production and marketing efficiencies often cannot be realized within the boundaries and the environment of a single state. That is also why separate states often become integrated into larger international economic systems; in order to enjoy the full benefits of technical and economic progress.

The multi-national firm transcends national boundaries, not by crossing them, but by ignoring them through the establishment of subsidiaries in foreign countries. Its success has been so great that not long ago one economist predicted that by 1980 three hundred multi-national corporations would substantially control the business of all the non-Communist world.

This economic evolution is another factor in the erosion of national sovereignty; or, as some cynics would put it, in the process of universal Americanization. That is why some governments oppose it, as a threat to political independence. The multi-national corporations respond to this by making the necessary adjustments to ensure that their subsidiaries shall appear as ‘good corporate citizens’ in the countries where they operate. They know that otherwise they would soon be in trouble. It is to their advantage to be a British company in Britain and a Japanese company in Japan. But this does not alter the fact that the ultimate decision-making process is in the head office; which is usually situated in the United States of America.

The fact is that the sovereign states alone is now becoming virtually obsolete as a satisfactory basis for rational economic organizations; at least in industrially developed societies.

Economic growth, with the material benefits that come from the efficiencies of large-scale industrial production, can only realize its full potential in large free market areas extending beyond national boundaries.

This extension leads to the penetration of one economy by another; a process which has probably progressed furthest in Canada. It has been going on there for many years, yet up to the present it has not prevented national political development. IN one sense, indeed, it has made us more conscious in Canada of being Canadian because of our preoccupation over intrusion from outside. Nevertheless, the question is inevitable: what price economic – or even political – sovereignty if 50 per cent of a country’s industry is controlled outside the sovereign state?

The same process is well under way in Western Europe; so we are told in Servan Schreiber’s book The American Challenge. The United States of America, he claims, has understood more quickly and clearly than Europeans themselves the direction in which economic developments are inevitably moving in Europe. American firms have often been carrying out the European ideas of Robert Schumann, Jean Monnet and Walter Hallstein while European national firms have been lagging or unable to adjust to wider continental markets.
In the short run, a growing European dependence on American investment can be economically beneficial as the ‘principle vehicle of technological progress.’ But in the long run, it could reduce Europe to the status of a colony, as effectively as Europe itself once reduced large areas of the globe to that status, because they were disunited and divided.

In Servan Schreiber’s view, it will be futile for Europe to respond to this American challenge through the protective national measures of separate states. It will require ‘a united Europe …the creation of a third great industrial power with no imperial pretensions – one whose only strategy is to help build a more unified international community.’

Any such project, Servan Schreiber admits, ‘requires an intellectual leap into the future over a thousand discouraging obstacles. To take this step,’ he says, ‘we (Europeans) have to realize that the nation-state is not the ultimate form of social organization and that politics is more than a short term adjustment of power and of interest groups…There is no other solution than forming some kind of federal organization.’

The French writer might have added that the greatest European obstacle to such a solution is the government of his own country, which gets its inspiration from a nationalist past that is not going to return, and refuses to learn from the lessons of the past which have been so tragic for France – and other countries.

It may be objected that there is little evidence of any active popular desire for political federation in any country in Europe. I can only answer that the steps that have been already taken towards European economic integration would have seemed quite impossible fifty years ago. The compulsion of economic events from now on, including competition from the United States, and the feeling that there should be a strong Europe as a political balance wheel in the world between the two super powers, may lead European states to make further changes in the direction of federalism. I hope that it does. If the economic changes that take place make the European market a more profitable one and European countries more prosperous, with each country helping others, where necessary, to adjust to new conditions, then European federation could become a logical and acceptable further step. There would be a natural progress from the economic to the political. But the process cannot be rushed.

This economic development, I know, is strongly opposed in certain sections of the Commonwealth. It also arouses strong patriotic emotions in Britain at the thought of merging so much national sovereignty in a European federation, with considerable loss of control over national decision-making. But all states are already losing much of this control, indirectly or directly, by the facts and compulsions of international interdependence. Neither Great Britain, Canada, nor any other country is a fully sovereign state today – except in a legal sense.

Great Britain and other Atlantic states, for instance, have agreed that if one is attacked, all are attacked and war follows. If a country is willing to limit its political sovereignty in that way to preserve peace, surely it is unrealistic to insist on full sovereign economic independence when there are clear advantages in association with others.

There are also those who believe that if Britain joins a European economic, let alone a European political community, that would mean the end of the Commonwealth. I hope and believe that this need not be the case. If we can’t strengthen peace and security in the world, without breaking up the Commonwealth, then its foundations are much weaker than I believe them to be.
I know European economic integration would mean immediate economic trade difficulties, as well as advantages, for Commonwealth countries; for some more than for others. I know that adjustments would have to be made and shocks cushioned. But we’ve made adjustments in the Commonwealth before, political and constitutional ones. It is a very flexible and resilient association.

When I first joined the Canadian Government service, the new Commonwealth, with free self-governing dominions, was emerging from the old Empire. I was told that this would end the special links between Canada and the Mother Country. On the contrary, by the removal of inhibiting bonds of dependence, we found a better, friendlier and more rational relationship.

I know that the present European situation is not comparable to the evolution of the Commonwealth, but I hope that, if and when all the European countries give up certain sovereign rights in the interests of a larger international economic and political community, far from weakening their relations with other states and peoples, it will make them closer. I also devoutly hope that any such European development will be quickly extended beyond Europe, and in particular across the Atlantic.

I want to pass on now to economic relations between the materially developed and less-developed countries, and the urgency of doing more to narrow the production and welfare gap between the parts of this other two-world system. In spite of a huge and unprecedented transfer of resources in the last twenty years from those that have to those that have not, the rich are still getting richer and the poor, relatively, are getting poorer.

At present, the gap between per capita income in developed and less-developed countries is $1,540; at the present rate of growth it will be $5,540 by the end of the century.

Here’s another statistic. We are told that the increase in the gross national product of the United States of America last year, not the total product but the amount by which it increased, was greater than the total gross national product of all the African countries put together including the rich country of South Africa.

Such continued disparity is not likely to promote peace in the family of man. The animosities that will arise from it are incalculable and explosive; especially when the issues are social and political as well as economic. They are mixed up with the transition of peoples from dependence to independence and with a host of emotional impulses that go with a nationalism that has just achieved political power – often suddenly and without sufficient preparation. These impulses become doubly explosive when they are exploited as part of the cold war. But they would be explosive without it.

Many people in the West are afflicted with a sense of guilt in their relationship with the hungry and impoverished millions in Africa and Asia. They accept the reproach – or they are influenced by it unconsciously – that materially backward people are somehow backward because we of the West have abused and oppressed them and that we can ease our consciences by helping them to ‘live better electrically’, to put it in the most naïve terms. It is a generous-hearted reaction and it expresses a desire to act in the Christian tradition. It may have justification in some cases but unfortunately it is often muddled, in its history, its economics and its ethics. At times it is not much more helpful than the attitude of the hard-faced persons who simply reject any obligation to help anybody but themselves.
It has always seemed to me a somewhat limited interpretation of Christianity which implies an obligation to the less fortunate merely because we may have once done them harm; or to murmur ‘mea culpa’ to justify a good deed.

This confused attitude in the West often has its counterpart in the reaction to aid at the receiving end. Nationalism in former colonies, now free, is possessed with a sense of economic as well as political grievance: a resentment against earlier exploitation, real or imaginary, which too often takes the attention of national leaders off their real problems; and can be used as an excuse for inaction. If there is little or no economic progress after the transfer of power, the new leaders can go on explaining away their failure as a legacy of imperialism. This obscures the essential but sometimes bitter truth that independence, like patriotism, is not enough; that instant freedom does not mean instant prosperity.

It is not easy to argue that since the poverty was caused by the ‘imperialists’ it is their responsibility now to help in removing economic difficulties by subsidizing the new state for years to come. This might achieve good results, even when it’s not justified on other grounds, if it led to co-operation between the new nation and its former ‘exploiters’. But if the feeling of grievance and bitterness persists, it will make collaboration very difficult. ‘Good riddance’ and ‘please help’ are not easily reconcilable. Private investment, which can be a fruitful way of promoting economic development, is frightened off, and Western taxpayers are discouraged by the unfriendliness of the people they are trying to help. Ultimately, the new nation may find that the easiest way to assure a flow of funds is to exploit its cold war nuisance value and get competitive political and economic bids from both sides; which makes for suspicion and tension rather than co-operation.

In approaching these difficult and sensitive problems, we need to abandon certain easy assumptions. The first is that the difficulties that undoubtedly exist between rich and poor nations are the product of poverty alone, and can be dispelled by filling bellies and dental cavities.

The second is the assumption that the masses in these impoverished countries want no part of our materialist civilization with its supermarkets and its psychiatric clinics; that they would be content to live as they have for centuries in their natural state of happy innocence and accepted poverty, if only their leaders with Oxford or Columbia degrees would not stir them up. Even if this were true, it is irrelevant. Most of the poorer people now know the rest of the world and they know that disease and hunger and deprivation are not inevitable. They know that man can live to seventy instead of thirty-five years. Even in the most remote parts of the world people have now learned something about the technological society; where there are gadgets to make life more comfortable, and diversions to make it more exciting. New hungers have been created, if only for longer life and better health. Indeed, I do not know of any country which has been exposed to the blessings of rock’n roll or Brigitte Bardot which is not now anxious to copy some of the worst features of our affluent society.

But even if there is a country somewhere whose people do not know, or do not want, the material benefits of Western civilization, certainly their leaders do want them, nationally, and these are the men we have to deal with. And they want much more than food and hospitals and diesel engines. They want freedom and power: power to help their people or to pursue their own ambitions; or both. Their admirable and less admirable motives probably are mixed up, as they
are in most politicians in other societies. But we can’t ignore them or the political and economic ideas we ourselves have implanted in their minds by precept and example.

Nor can we expect them to be calm and contented merely by our assistance that, as the white man has already done much, he will do more to help improve the lot of the non-white natives. Dr. Schweitzer is no longer enough.

People can be very proud, though they may be very poor. In 1945, I was Chairman of the Supplies Committee of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, whose Director General was a colorful personality named Fiorello La Guardia, formerly Mayor of New York. He and I were in Eastern Europe not long after the end of the fighting, to investigate needs and priorities for relief. In the countryside outside the shattered city of Warsaw we came to what had been a battlefield. It was reminiscent of the Western from in World War I. There were some old dug-outs where a few people had returned to live and had begun to till the torn soil. A woman came up out of one of them. She was, or at least she looked, very old. She was told who we were and that we had come to help. With great dignity and impressive simplicity she said something in Polish, which was translated for Mr. La Guardia and myself. ‘Thank you,’ she had said, ‘for honoring our poverty. We will work hard to renew our lives.’ People are proud and sensitive. So the spirit in which help is offered is as important as the help itself.

Nothing could be more self-defeating – less effective in promoting peace and goodwill – than attaching inadmissible political or social conditions to our aid; to say we will help, not all of those that help themselves, but only those that support us and believe in our political and economic system.

We must not even exclude revolutionary movements and governments from our offers of co-operation; or assume automatically that every outburst of revolutionary nationalism is Communist, and therefore hostile to the West. We must accept the fact that in many countries where people live in misery and distress, revolution may seem to them to be the only way out; and that Communism has nothing to do with their feeling.

In external aid for development there should be also maximum participation on the part of the receiving country. To the greatest possible extent we should place responsibility on the governments and the people of the country to which the aid is offered. This is not always easy to do. Some part of the aid may go into the pockets of people who aren’t entitled to it. There will the inefficiency. To stop all aid programs because of these things would be very foolish. There are local usages and customs which seem bad and wasteful to us but which have been part of life for centuries and should be respected.

Nevertheless, while respecting all local usages and customs, a donor country is entitled to seek for itself the assurance that its assistance is being used as effectively as possible; that not too much is wasted or put into a numbered bank account in Switzerland.

We also have to reckon with religious attitudes. Who doesn’t know about India’s cows? Their sacred status in India has resulted in their number becoming a serious handicap to improving the agricultural economy. And there are also India’s rats, which have been estimated to eat or spoil as much as twenty-five per cent of their food supplies.

I’ve had experience of this situation in discussions on aid matters in Canada; I’ve been reminded that India would be more acceptable as a receiving country if she would do something to show that she is even more interested in the survival of her people than she is for her cows. This is a difficult problem because it involves matters of conscience and religion. It is not the
kind of difficulty that can be resolved at once or by anybody outside the country. The Government of India knows that in the best interest of her own people there have to be changes, and these changes are being made; but it takes time, and our thoughtless impatience does not help.

Recently there have been indications that we in the West are getting discouraged and somewhat cynical about the fact that in spite of mutual assistance the poorer countries are not making enough progress. Indeed, aid shows signs of drying up. This must not be allowed to happen.

**Perhaps the best form of aid is trade.** We haven’t made nearly enough progress in helping less-developed countries by putting them in a position where they add to their own resources by trading with others on a competitive basis in their own products, primary and industrial.

The less-developed nations which depend largely on exports of primary products for their income have too often found themselves at the mercy of fluctuating world prices which they have no power to influence. Some attempt has been made to bring international order into this kind of trade by international commodity agreements. But the benefits have been limited, because of the difficulty of finding a price which will take into account all the variations between one country and another in the cost of producing a commodity. Much remains to be done, and it can only be done by international economic co-operation and agreement. If we cannot get together for international action of this kind, then we will have the same kind of international anarchy in economic as we have in political affairs, and the results will be more than economic.

With manufactured goods the case is different. A great deal of financial assistance has been given by the West to help poorer countries to industrialize. Indeed, industrialization has often been too high a priority in development. The leaders in a new state have been captivated by the vision of great steel works and textile factories, and too much of the money may have gone there, instead of into the development of agriculture. Then when the country has been put in the position where it can compete in the markets of the world in certain industrial products – textiles are the example most frequently cited – our manufacturers begin to complain and we put up barriers to the reception of these goods in our country. By doing so we neutralize the industrial help we have given; indeed we make a mockery of it.

Through UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, attempts have been made to work out a means of giving the developing countries special privileges such as one-way trade preferences. But up to now very little has been achieved. We have here another example of how every economic problem is, or becomes, a political problem also. If a government proposes to help a poorer country by receiving ten million dollars worth of its goods, whether rubber shoes from Hong Kong or shirts from India, or anything else which undersells your own product, as these goods come in a special interest naturally finds itself hurt. And the cry goes up, understandably, ‘If you want to help these people give them dollars, or build them a hydro-electric dam, or send them planes or Cadillacs, but don’t put us out of business so that they can sell their shirts.’ It is politically much easier to make an aid allocation that is spread over the whole body of taxpayers, so that no special interest is disturbed.

Yet if we are to have intelligent international division of labor, industry in the big, developed and rich countries should increasingly concentrate on production that requires a high degree of investment and skill, such as motor cars, computers, color television sets; because
these are things the poorer countries cannot hope to make for years to come. All that has to be done is to tell a cotton manufacturer in Lancashire, or in the eastern townships of Canada, that he must become a manufacturer of computers, so that we can all help India by wearing more Indian shirts. If you add that the government will ease the process of transition by financial assistance to the manufacturers who are hurt, he may feel a little better!

I want to end this lecture with two points about international aid and development. First, on the individual level: In my own country, and I am sure in other countries also, there is a tremendous reservoir of goodwill, of desire to do something to help less materially fortunate peoples.

With all the evidence of conflict and cruelty in the world, of man’s inhumanity to man, there is also, paradoxically, more humanitarianism, more acceptance of responsibility for others, more desire to be our brother’s keeper, as well as his killer, than ever before. There is genuine excitement over something like a hunger march to raise money for international aid. Unfortunately this kind of excitement sometimes becomes disconnected from a budget which asks for an increase of ten per cent in the income tax. But on the whole, few governments can complain that their people have been holding them back in the effort to work out a generous and wise relationship between their own economy and mutual assistance. In 1966, for instance, my government in Canada put before Parliament the objective that by 1970 one per cent of Canada’s national income should be contributed to international development and aid. This represented an increase from two hundred and twenty-six million dollars to more that four hundred million dollars, and we were worried as to how it would be received. We had nothing to worry about.

My second, and final point, is the broader political view which international collaboration on aid and development may have for all nations. At present, the prospects for political collaboration are limited to what we can achieve haltingly, step by step, by diplomacy, in the United Nations or at other international bodies. Aid for economic development is the field in which there has been the greatest body of agreement on objectives and principles; and hence the greatest opportunity for constructive cooperation on a broad international basis.

Nothing could be more important than building up efficient co-operative machinery for this purpose. This requires adequate funds from the legislatures of the developed countries to make it work. Such funds must become an accepted and continuing financial commitment and not merely a residual factor in the budgets of donor governments.

For an example of one of the bitterest contrasts of our times, I turn to Vietnam, and the Mekong Delta project. It would make the angels weep to think that less than one third of the money that has been spent in one year by the United States in the prosecution of the Vietnam War would complete this wonderfully imaginative Mekong Delta project. True, that project has not been abandoned. It’s going ahead in certain areas even in the middle of the fighting. Here we have senseless, brutal slaughter taking place side by side with an international effort of a scale, and showing a kind of international responsibility, that would have been unthinkable fifty years ago. Vietnam, in this respect, represents the worst and the best sides of our contemporary world, both operating at the same time.

Which side will dominate the other; in Vietnam, in the world? On that our future depends.
5. A POOR THING, BUT OUR OWN

Has the United Nations been a success, or a failure? The answer to that must depend, of course, on what was, and is, expected from it. Certainly we expected much – too much – at San Francisco. The delegates who met there in 1945 had no intention of setting up anything that would destroy the supremacy of sovereign states – let alone a world government. Even so, many of them were influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by federal principles and ideas. There was to be an upper house – the Security Council – and a lower house – the Assembly – both with specific functions; and the International Court to interpret the constitution, which was the Charter. It was even envisaged that the members would provide armed forces. The blueprint for a better world was impressive. But the construction didn’t follow.

When the strength of traditional nationalism and sovereignty, and, in particular, when the realities of the cold war in a bi-polar world, made it clear beyond any doubt that the United Nations could not have anything even approaching the authority of a government, it might easily have collapsed in futility and disappeared. That it did not was largely due to the insistence by the little people in all countries that we must not go back to the bloody anarchy of 1914-45. It was also a recognition of the growing economic and political interdependence of all states.

Recurring reports of the death of the United Nations always turned out – as Mark Twain said of his own – to be exaggerated. Indeed, the world organization has become a kind of international life force – even though this force is often unorganized and undisciplined. In its twenty-four years of life the United Nations has shown a real capacity to adapt itself to exigencies and changing conditions which has enabled it not only to survive, but to become essential for the conduct of international relations.

The United Nations has settled, and this is an important achievement, more than one dispute which might have led to war; and prevented minor wars becoming major ones. It has groped towards the development of functions of a kind not contemplated when the Charter was signed. Conventions have evolved which had modified the law of its constitution. Take the role of the Secretary-General. At first, it was expected to be that of a functionary, and official. That changed; especially under Mr. Hammerskjold, when the Secretary-General became a very important power on his own.

There was another evolution. When the Security Council found itself impotent, through the use of the veto, to intervene in conflicts with enforcement machinery behind its decisions, the United Nations Assembly was brought into the picture. The United for Peace Resolutions were passed to provide a constitutional Assembly basis – though the Soviet Union and some other members have always claimed it was illegal and invalid – for action to preserve peace in time of trouble.

Again, the function of the Assembly as the ‘town meeting of the world’ has developed in a way that I suspect the big powers at San Francisco did not contemplate. Originally the Soviet Union was anxious to extend the veto to discussion as well as decision; even to the adoption of an agenda. I recall very vividly the effort at San Francisco to force the big powers, the permanent members of the Council, to accept the unrestricted right of every member to talk about anything he wanted, even if any decision in the Security Council arising from that talk could be vetoed by the permanent members. And this has resulted in some very vigorous talk indeed. Perhaps the last despairing effort of the Soviet Union, though it didn’t seem despairing
at the time, to exercise in practice this kind of veto on talk was when Mr. Khruschev banged his shoe on his desk in the Assembly, hoping that by this modern version of sabre rattling he would be able to bring an unpalatable discussion to an end. He wasn’t.

Having served as President of the Assembly, I know that it can be difficult to keep before one this ideal of a developing world public opinion, of a forum for the expression of a world conscience, while listening to endless, irrelevant, and at times acrimonious debates on points of order at two o’clock in the morning.

Sitting there on the rostrum hour after hour, I became a compulsive doodler, which resulted in a not being once handed to me from a Canadian delegate who was in the lounge comfortably watching the proceedings, and which read: ‘The TV camera is on your hand. Stick to those geometrical patterns.’ He must have been worried that as the debate became even less absorbing I might move on to sunbathers or mermaids. Nonetheless, these voices going on and on represent the emergence and growth and expression of world opinion.

But in the expression of views and in the making of decisions, the individual and sovereign equality of each of the United Nations’ members was recognized in the one-state-one-vote principle.

In the United Nations Assembly the United States and the USSR, each with power to destroy the world, have the same voting rights as member states with less resources than the General Motors Corporation; with fewer people than any one of half a dozen Soviet cities; less revenue than an American university; or less economic power than a British trade union.

But they all have sovereign equality in law, however meaningless that may be in practice. Sovereignty was also recognized in the provision that the United Nations must not intervene in any matter within the domestic jurisdiction of a member state. But this has been disregarded by all members, most of all by the Communist states, whenever they saw fit.

There have, of course, been modifications of the principle of sovereign equality. The veto given in the Charter to each of the five permanent members in the Security Council was one such constitutional modification. Also in the Assembly, voting patterns are developing based on ideological, racial, geographic or strategic considerations that tend to modify in practice equal voting rights. The situation is not unlike the relationship to his party of the individual member in a legislative assembly. He can vote as he likes, and his own vote counts for as much as the Prime Minister’s. But party affiliation, party loyalty, party pressure, limit his freedom or will to exercise this equality. There is unequal power within equal status.

Nevertheless, because of the principle of sovereign equality, the fact remains that a decision can be taken at the United Nations against the opposition of a minority of members who include all or almost all of those that have the resources to carry it out; and without whose participation the decision is meaningless in practice. This has at times resulted in irresponsible votes: for example in the censure of Britain over Gibraltar. But there have been fewer of these than was expected by those who worried about the addition of so many new members – including small and weak ones – that the present total has reached 126.

If the United Nations is to grow in effectiveness to a point where its decisions can become binding, with authority behind them, one day there will have to be some further modification of the one-state-one-vote principle; some system of weighted voting, as indeed is already the case in certain international institutions such as the World Bank and the Monetary Fund.
Coming to the United Nations’ practical achievements, some of the most important have been in the field of mediation and conciliation. Here the United Nations has shown itself to be adaptable to changing needs and conditions and has been able to adopt a variety of procedures and expedients as required.

In this role of mediation and conciliation, as indeed in the development of the United Nations generally, the middle powers – committed or uncommitted – have been of essential and increasing importance. I know that the super powers will always command super-political power in the United Nations, as well as super-military power outside it; but I believe that, if the United Nations is to become more and more authoritative, the lead to this end will have to be taken by the middle and smaller members of the organization. They should work more and more closely together in New York, as middle powers. They have enough strength and enough sense of responsibility to make their participation in United Nations’ activities of real importance; but they are not so strong as to create suspicion and uneasiness. They will have an increasingly important role to play and, I hope, will play it.

India, for instance (in many ways more than a middle power) has contributed invaluably because of her position, uncommitted to either of the blocs, and because of the special authority she enjoys among the newly independent nations of the world.

It has been interesting also to see how the Irish, a nation whose people have long had the reputation – however unwarranted – of preferring a fight to a peaceful settlement, have emerged in the United Nations as eloquent and skilful conciliators. They are a European nation of ancient civilization, but because of their history they can associate easily with the anti-colonial states and be accepted by them as understanding friends.

Sweden, because of her neutral and uncommitted position at the United Nations, has often been acceptable to both blocs for international duties, and has been among the first to be called in whenever various interests have to be balanced. Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and other Latin American countries have played important roles. They are on good terms with nearly all countries and have a sense of international responsibility.

Even middle powers formally committed to one side or the other have a part to play. Poland, for example, although she is unable, or unwilling, to differ with the Soviet Union on any important point of policy, has shown a disposition towards impartiality and independence in special situations. If I may be permitted to mention my own country, Canada is a loyal member of NATO, but we have gained a reputation for objectivity in the United Nations and have differed on occasions with major Western powers. With the Scandinavian states, we have been asked to serve on a great many United Nations commissions, and we have contributed contingents to every United Nations peace or police force.

It is important that the middle and smaller powers should preserve as much flexibility of maneuver in the United Nations as they can. With an easing of tensions, the time may come when even those committed to one bloc or the other will feel free to work more closely together as a group. Apart from what they can achieve in this way, the fact that such powers can find a constructive outlet for national pride and purpose through co-operation in international organizations may help to relieve the tensions which would otherwise find an outlet in a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude to each other of to the larger powers and aggressive insistence on their own national rights.
This middle-power role, of course, will always be complementary to that of the larger powers, not a substitute for it. In the present state of the world it is often, and regrettably, only the ‘big-power’ threat of force in the background which induces the parties to a dispute to accept the good offices of the United Nations. It will be a happy day when we can secure a settlement by appealing simply to a nation’s love of peace and fair play and abstract justice, but that day will be a long time coming. We have a great deal of pioneering in the field of mediation and conciliation to accomplish in the meantime. For this the United Nations is essential: a fact which is often forgotten by those who depreciate its importance.

Meanwhile we must not take too tragically the fact that some work for peace has to be done outside the world organizations. This is inevitable so long as important countries like Germany and above all Communist China remain non-members. One of the strongest arguments in favor of the admission of Communist China to the Chinese seat in the United Nations is that, until this takes place, certain peacemaking activities involving the Far East may have to be dealt with outside regular United Nations procedures.

In the case of the cease-fire talks during the Korean War there was no particular difficulty with Peiping, because the Communist Government had no objection to dealing with the United Nations as a co-belligerent; especially as this weakened the concept on international peace action against an aggressor. But in the case of the 1954 Indo-China settlement at Geneva, if you can call it that, they would not enter into any discussion under United Nations auspices; nor will they today concerning Vietnam.

This brings me to the peace-keeping role of the United Nations, exercised through peace-keeping machinery. I used to be depressed at the United Nations by the amount of publicity and attention that was given to any meeting where there was likely to be a row between the Soviet and American delegates, or indeed any kind of a row. The public gallery would be crowded, every man who represented any newspaper in any part of the world who could get in would be there. The television cameras were all ready. There would be an air of excitement. Down the hall a commission would be discussing how to grow two blades of wheat where only one blade grew before, in order to help those people in the world who were underfed or starving. There would be nobody present but the members and some experts. Yet, perhaps, this disparity of interests is not so unreasonable as it may appear, because the United Nations will be judged, after all, according to its success or failure in solving political disputes and avoiding war.

Korea was the most important instance of United Nations intervention, if not to keep the peace, at least to restore it and repel aggression. We should look at it in some detail. In Korea, because of the fortuitous absence of the Soviet delegate in the Security Council, which is not likely to be repeated, and on the initiative of the other superpower, the United States, not on the initiative of a small power or a middle power, the United Nations intervened when North Korean forces attacked South Korea. Neither country was a member of the United Nations, but North Korea’s aggression was supported by the two great powers, the Soviet Union and China.

The United Nations was able to move with speed and power to halt this aggression because the government that took the initiative was the United States and it had power near at hand. This was something unprecedented and something that has not been repeated. At the time the intervention of the United Nations surprised those who said the organization was incapable of this kind of swift and effective action: action by individual states to set up a collective force through a collective decision made by an international organization. This was not war in the traditional sense at all. It was international police action. In our House of Commons in Ottawa I
used to be jeered at by some opposition members when I referred – as I always did – to the United Nations operation in Korea as police action. ‘What’s the difference,’ they would say, ‘between police action and war, if the soldiers of the two sides are killing each other?’ There is all the difference in the world. The United Nations forces and the North Koreans could not be considered as co-belligerents any more than a policeman and a burglar whom he was trying to arrest could be considered as co-belligerents. However much the cynic may ridicule the distinction, it is valid and immensely important. We had here, in fact, a recognition of the concept that war between states is civil war in the international community.

But when this much has been said, we have to admit that the Korean intervention in practice was far from the kind of genuine collective action against aggression that was visualized by the Charter; either in participation or in control. One member dominated all aspects of the intervention. Most of the soldiers were American, and the military decisions, in fact if not in theory, were made by a General who, in the eyes of most of the world – and certainly in the eyes of practically all of his countrymen - was an American officer, though he himself was always very careful to refer to himself as Commander of the United Nations’ Forces. After all, when General MacArthur got into difficulties which led to his recall, those difficulties were not with the United Nations, they were with the President of the United States.

I had some reason to know from personal experience to what extent Washington paid the piper in Korea, and to what extent, therefore, Washington called the tune; through others played in the orchestra with instruments of varying degrees of importance. This United States predominance in the military operations helped the Soviet Union and its friends in their calculated campaign to convince the world that the United States was merely using the United Nations to cloak its imperialistic designs against Asia; and its particular design against one small Asian country, North Korea. This made it easier for the Communist Chinese, when the time came for peace negotiations, to act not as penitent aggressors but as equal participants with the United Nations, able to castigate the alleged aggressive actions of the United States and its friends who had, as they claimed, ‘invaded’ Korea. It was easier still to make this charge after the United Nations forces were authorized – under pressure from the United States – to move across the 38th parallel into North Korea and right up to the Chinese border.

There were nations in Asia and Africa who were ready to accept this new construction of events, to the extent that the original significance of the United Nations action now seems almost to have disappeared, and to have been supplanted by the Communist version. In spite of this, the fact remains that the members of the United Nations, having gone to the defense of South Korea against aggression by virtue of a resolution of the Security Council, cannot argue in future that the Charter provisions on security do not involve an obligation for all members, at the very least, to take note of an aggression by any power, great or small. They did so in Korea. In saying this I don’t mean to argue that this kind of moral and political commitment will override strategic or other obstacles in the way of discharging it. It probably won’t, in the kind of world we live in today. Nevertheless the obligation, in theory, has been accepted. It not only denies the sovereign right of nation-states to declare war in pursuit of policy, but it also affirms their responsibility to take part in police action against an aggressor so declared by the United Nations.

Experience since 1945, in Korea and Palestine particularly, has underlined the importance of United Nations peace-keeping activity. It has also exposed the many obstacles in the way of making that activity effective. Progress in building international peace-keeping
machinery has been discouragingly slow. Nothing has been done for advance planning and organization. Yet the United Nations should not be asked to improvise arrangements at the last moment in every crisis; to initiate crash action, as it has had to do. The Secretary-General himself has stressed the advisability of countries, in their national defense planning, making provision for units that would be available for a permanent United Nations police and peace force. But little progress has been made. The efforts to bring about permanent peace-keeping arrangements have been opposed not only by those in the Communist bloc, who claim that only the Security Council – with its veto – has any peace-keeping responsibility at all; but also by other countries, who should have been first, one would have thought, to recognize the importance of international machinery for security and peace.

Still other states, France is the most important one, do not believe in United Nations peace-keeping in principle. They look back, for security, to national policy and national power and the alliance systems of the past. Others are suspicious that the United Nations peace-keeping machinery may be used against their interests.

On the positive side, some countries, including Canada, have tried hard to provide for a permanent United Nations police and peace force in which men would be trained and equipped and ready to go wherever the United Nations asked them to go, with the approval of their own governments.

Canada now maintains – as do some other countries – forces, trained and equipped for this purpose, which can be placed at the disposal of the United Nations on short notice for service anywhere in the world. It would be a great step forward if the United Nations would officially sanction arrangements under which there would not only be men trained and equipped and ready in member countries, but also a staff and planning organization at headquarters in New York. It is most regrettable that it has not been possible to take this step, in spite of the persistent and sincere efforts of some members of the United Nations.

There is one respect, however, in which international peace-keeping can, inadvertently, be almost harmful. The very success of police action in keeping warring factions apart, in stopping the fighting, and then remaining between the parties to the conflict, can remove some of the pressure to bring about a political settlement. This is why the United Nations should never engage in peace-keeping without also trying to remove the sources of conflict which brought about the fighting in the first place. Here we have failed; particularly in the Middle East.

Finally, if we do ever get a permanent United Nations Police Force, and this is something we must continue to work for, whatever the difficulties and the setbacks, I should like to see it used not only as a peace force but also as an International Aid and Disaster Force. The world continues to be subject to disasters far beyond the resources of an individual country to cope with. At the time of the earthquake in Iran last August I was in a large American city. The main newspaper there carried on its front page a bold headline about a single gruesome murder. The news of the earthquake, with more than 20,000 dead and 100,000 made homeless, was somewhere in the back pages. There is a lack of proportion here, a lack of public concern about greater, but impersonal and more distant tragedies. I know that the International Red Cross, and other voluntary organizations, have made and continue to make magnificent efforts to come to the rescue in the case of disasters beyond the scale of one country to deal with. But surely such disasters call for action and resources organized on a permanent basis by the whole international community under the auspices of its world organization.
The contingents of an International Peace Force could be used for that purpose. Such a Force would have the men and the transport and much of the equipment, and could acquire the training, to bring help quickly and massively anywhere in the world where it was needed. Is this not a humanitarian and non-controversial field where the nations have everything to gain and nothing to lose by working together; and where measures to establish the machinery for such co-operation could be taken at once in the United Nations?

The present state of the United Nations is a transitional one, as Mr. Hammarskjold put it, ‘between institutional systems of international co-existence and constitutional systems of international co-operation.’

To complete the transition is not going to easy. No one could know that better than I do, and my knowledge is based on long and practical experience. Yet that very experience, which has shown how close we have been, more than once, to disaster, has convinced me that Dag Hammarskjold’s transition must be made if we are to escape destruction. Of course, it can only be done step by step; and at times we may even have to retrace our steps, or find detours around road blocks. But we must continue to move in the right direction.

I am going to suggest one step to make the United Nations more united and less national, and therefore stronger; yet a step which, paradoxically, may seem at first sight to lead away from this objective. I think we should regionalize, to a greater extent than we have done, some of its activities, especially those of the 126 member Assembly. At this ‘grand assembly’ there is never time now for the work that needs to be done.

So why not have regional assemblies for regional problems? In the economic and social field, the practice has been growing of delegating responsibility and authority to United Nations regional commissions. Why should we not adopt a similar approach to political questions which face the United Nations; and establish for that purpose regional assemblies of the General Assembly: one for the Western hemisphere, one for Western and Eastern Europe, one for Africa, one, or perhaps two, for Asia. The full Assembly, the town meetings of the whole world, would then meet, say, every three years. The regional assemblies, which would not replace but would supplement the full Assembly, would meet every year, and deal with regional problems. When possible they would settle them, and when it was not, they would lay the groundwork for settlement at the universal assembly when it next met.

As a link in New York between the world assemblies, and this is important, we would have an enlarged Security Council, meeting continually in New York with new powers and new authority and new rules. I know that all this would require an amendment to the Charter, and I know that the veto operates in respect of amendments. But I would like to see this kind of change considered.

I don’t want it to be inferred from this proposal, or from the support I’ve expressed for other regional associations such as NATO and the Commonwealth of Nations, that I believe in international fragmentation; quite the contrary. But just as within states federation may often be the best method of reaching unity on a broader and more enduring basis, so in the international community, regionalism – provided that it is not politically, racially or even geographically exclusive – can be a way of reaching the ultimate objective: an organization that embraces the whole world of man, but one which can function more effectively than is the case at present.
6. WHICH WAY WILL IT GO?

What now? Where do we go from here? There are those who would say, like the Irish farmer in the story who was asked the way to Dublin by a tourist lost in a bog, ‘Well, if I were ever going to Dublin, I’d never start from here!’ But here we are: and here and now is our starting place.

Those who are possessed with a feeling of approaching doom will feel badly let down if we don’t move far more quickly than we have to our goal of peace in a nuclear world. When progress is slow the idealists are always in danger of becoming cynics, while realists grow in sober confidence and hope for the longer future. C. S. Lewis once wrote: ‘I am an optimist, because I believe in the fall of man.’ I suppose it all depends on whether we think of the state of nature as Shangri-la or as nasty and brutish. If we believe that the world is made up of powerful irrational forces, that anarchy and dissolution are always closer than we think, then we have some reason for optimism, not only because we are still here; but because, under the pressure or, if you like, the blackmail of facts, we are moving forward, however slowly.

We are a long way from the promised land, but viewed in the broad perspective of history, we have taken some important steps in the century that make for international order and international understanding: for effective international institutions of government.

Meanwhile the threat of a war of universal destruction remains, and produces a deep fear of the future. This fear comes now not so much from the aggressive territorial imperialism of old, as from our inability to control new forces for destruction that we have discovered and developed. In technological and scientific advance, we have scaled the heights, but in social and political change, we are stuck in the swamps of human behavior. We are giants in brain power but we are pygmies of the spirit.

There is nothing new – or unusual – about the use of threat of force in the pursuit of policy. There is nothing new in the fact that certain states are adding to the force in ways unprecedented in history; until they reach the gross indecencies of overkill.

One thing, however, is new and it makes a vital difference. The super-states – with all their boasted absolute sovereignty – are afraid to use the power they have acquired.

So our greatest danger now is that war may occur, not from a direct and calculated aggression; not by design, but by accident; or by conventional conflict escalating into nuclear conflict; or by a minor fight between smaller powers, each with a powerful friend, whom it is able to involve in the conflict. We have had enough evidence of such ‘escalation’ in this century to justify our fears.

It was in Sarajevo and Belgrade, not in Berlin or Moscow or Paris or London, that the massacre of 1914 began. And today the ‘great powers’ have their hostages to fortune in Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, Berlin, Albania, Cuba, Israel.

A broader skirmish – and they seem almost continuous – between Israeli and Arab forces could explode any time into an all-out war. Would the United States stand by and see Israel crushed with the help of Soviet arms? Would the USSR find it tolerable to see the Arab states which it had armed a second time defeated once again?
But there is one encouraging feature to all this. The risk of nuclear war makes a big power more cautious than it would have been about intervening or being dragged into the conflict of a client state. The mistake that could be made could now be fatal. This should make for caution – in the Middle East, in Berlin, in Vietnam, in Cuba.

Indeed this fear of involvement by miscalculation explains why even the superpowers now accept provocations and insults from each other without active retaliation; why they accept them even from small countries who, a hundred years ago, if they had attempted to bait a bigger power, would have been disposed of quickly and quietly by a gunboat or two or by a few marines sent to show who was running the world. But now ‘Civis Britannus sum’, or its equivalent in any other language, is no longer enough to ensure that the watchful eye and the strong arm of your government will protect you from all harm. A British diplomatic representative can be detained and insulted in Peking; and American ship and its crew can be arrested off North Korea by a regime that is not even recognized by the United States, and held until the mighty superpower apologizes. But the world goes on!

If a superpower accepts this kind of provocation, it is because it can’t risk the possible consequences of another superpower intervening on the other side. The Russians in this regard may take more risks than others, and rely more on Western patience than we do on theirs. But they’ve also had their Cuban retreat.

Let me return to my original question.

Where do we go now? What of the future?

In a rapidly changing world it is not easy to predict what will happen, let alone what should be done about it. But certain things stand out clearly – which doesn’t necessarily mean we will do anything about them.

I must mention first – I’ve already talked about it in some detail – the necessity of preventing the world from dividing between the rich and the poor; into a few affluent societies surrounded by slums. It is not good enough to think of peace as merely the absence of war. Peace is progress, peace is growth and development. Peace is welfare and dignity for all people. The nations – developed and developing – must work together; each side has its responsibility to this end. They must do so not merely by transferring resources from those who have to those who have not, in conditions which make progress possible. There must be international economic and financial policies which recognize the interdependence of all nations and will help the poorer ones to grow. If after the political, economic and financial experiences of recent years, we still think that states however proud and independent they may feel, can go it alone in these matters; ignoring each other’s interests, and above all the interests of the impoverished and backward states, then we are beyond redemption. Before long, in our affluent, industrial, computerized jet society, we shall feel the wrath of the wretched people of the world. There will be no peace.

I’m thinking not only of the millions of the emerging and ancient peoples of Asia and Africa. We too easily forget the restless multitudes of Latin America. This is another area which is destined to become of critical importance in the years ahead.

Arnold Toynbee was indeed right when he said that the West is now surrounded by the World.
As for that other division in our world, Communist and non-Communist, it is easy to state the problem and what should be done about it; and then despair, in the light of current events, about the possibility of doing anything adequately, or in time.

Up to now, most of the positive steps that have been taken have been due to the pressure of fear generated by crisis. This has been the most effective spur to international action; but we will never find enduring peace and international machinery to maintain it by stumbling from one crisis to another.

So, notwithstanding the recent and deplorable aggression against Czechoslovakia this summer, there must be a new and greater effort than ever before – and particularly through early discussions at the summit between Washington and Moscow – to bring about an East-West détente; better relations between the United States and the USSR.

Failure here – and failure could be by commission as well as omission – could mean a return to Stalinism in Russia, McCarthyism in the United States, and the worst days of the cold war.

One major objective should be the limitation of armaments by progressive stages: beginning with a freeze on existing levels and categories of weapons; a prohibition of the testing of new weapons, enforced by international control and inspection; and a ban on the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems.

A next stage should be the reduction of all armaments, and the ultimate abolition of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons under national control.

Pending this, steps should be taken to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms: otherwise within a few years many states will possess them, and an entirely new situation, a new balance, or lack of it, will arise in relations between states.

There is, of course, a Treaty now signed and open to accession by all nations to stop nuclear proliferation. Its negotiation has been encouraging. It marks progress in this field, but I doubt whether it will achieve the goal desired.

The Treaty has worried certain non-nuclear states, India in particular, lest it might weaken their security against unfriendly and nuclear neighbors. One of those neighbors, China, has nuclear weapons but has rejected the Treaty. Some states, in effect, are being asked to rely on others for their protection against nuclear attack when those others will not bring their own nuclear weapons under any form of international supervisions and control. It is not easy to ask countries like India, Pakistan, Germany, Brazil to accept a self-denying ordinance of this kind, unless they are satisfied of the good faith and good intentions of the nuclear powers in pledging protection to them against any form of nuclear attack.

It is important, I know, that this Proliferation Treaty should become a part of international law. It may well be as far as we can go in present circumstances, but it does not go far enough.

To sum up, therefore, there must be a far greater effort made to limit and control armaments. We are losing our sense of priorities. Détente and disarmament must be put first, and we have been forgetting this; or become too discouraged by mounting difficulties. Disarmament must be given a new impetus, a new urgency. What more important initiative could the new Administration in Washington now take.
If it is not taken, or if it fails, it could mean a new arms race, the dangerous consequences of which cannot be exaggerated. Let me mention one. In any new arms race the stability and the credibility of the nuclear deterrent – on which peace now precariously rests – would be weakened and probably destroyed; because one phrase of such an arms race would be the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defense systems as well as new attack missiles with multiple nuclear war heads.

As the deterrent became more and more uncertain, more and more unstable, the temptation would increase to remove the danger by a surprise blow, relying on the power of your new attack weapons to pulverize your opponents and the effectiveness of your new defense system to protect you against any retaliation.

On the other hand, a détente between East and West would make it possible to organize peace and security on a more effective basis and create the conditions which would make reduction of arms more feasible.

The alternative to a détente and arms agreement become all the more frightening when one contemplates the increasing speed of technological and scientific developments – both civil and military. It is estimated that this year thirty billions of dollars are being spent on defense research and development. Even if – and this is a very big “if” – the United States were to succeed in deploying an effective anti-missile defense system for its own territory and people, Western Europe would not be likely to afford the effort to follow suit. The result could be the break-up of Atlantic collective security in bitterness and recrimination.

A détente would alter the whole European picture. It would at least make possible contacts between the members of the NATO and Warsaw Pacts, leading, I would hope, eventually to a balanced reduction of forces in Eastern and Western Europe. Among other things this improvement would provide the best and perhaps the only chance for the smaller Warsaw countries to secure the right, which NATO members have never had to surrender, to develop nationally along lines of their own choosing.

All this could help the progress towards European unity; but unity brought about without the negative pressures of cold war or of too great dependence on the United States.

In this European integration, the United Kingdom would, I hope, become a partner. Her participation would help Europe to become a powerful third force in the world without losing those trans-Atlantic ties which will continue to be vital, and in my view must be maintained.

In this new Europe Germany will be a strong, and, I believe, a constructive force. She will not be subordinate in any way to France or the United Kingdom. She will not have to rely so much as formerly on her cherished relationship with the United States. But it is important that she continue to face West. When Germany has turned to the East, the results have been tragic and harsh – for Germany herself and for the world.

A détente could have another important result. It would reduce – or even remove – that danger to peace which arises out of the dependent relationship between a smaller state and a big protector; where the smaller state may try to involve the larger in its fears, its quarrels and its ambitions. What must be done is to make the whole international community – not one single power – responsible for security and justice in special situations.

Israel provides a good example of what I mean.
Some progress has been made in internationalizing the problem of Israel’s relations with her Arab neighbors. Here the United Nations has become a safety valve against explosions. But there will be no real security, and the threat to peace will remain until, first: Israel’s right to exist as a state is acknowledged by her neighbors; second: the conviction of those neighbors that they have been victimized by Israel’s ‘aggression’, and their fear that this will continue, have been removed; and third: support for one side for the United States and for the other from the USSR is made unnecessary and is ended.

If these points of danger could be resolved, it would then be possible, as it has always been desirable, for Israel, with her technological and scientific know-how, to become a cooperating member of the community of other Semitic peoples in the Middle East.

The substitution of welfare for warfare as a basis for relations in this danger area could mean much for the economic development of the Arab states – and much for Israel. But it will require important concessions on both sides, which neither Israel nor the Arab states have yet found it possible to even consider; at least in public. The reward for a settlement would be great. The penalty for failure to achieve one could be even greater.

The danger is increased by the apparent determination of the Soviet Union to build up her naval strength in the Mediterranean. In itself this can hardly be criticized while the Mediterranean, and open sea, is an area of naval activity for the other powers. But as long as Soviet policy aids and supports the United Arab Republics in its bitter hostility to Israel, Moscow’s new naval moves become an inflammatory feature of an already dangerous situation.

In no place, in short, could a détente between Washington and Moscow have more reassuring consequences than in the Middle East.

When one talks, however, about improvement of relations between the Communist and non-Communist world, it is foolish to restrict our hopes and fears to Europe and to the Middle East. South-East Asia and the Far East could well be the source of the greatest danger in the years ahead if something is not done to bring the 700 millions of Communist China into a better relationship with the rest of the world. The West has to take its share of responsibility for the failure to do this – but in recent years most of the blame lies on Peking, including its inhuman treatment of foreigners within its borders. Our responsibility now is to make sure that if the Chinese Government remains isolated, debarred from the responsibilities, and the privileges, of membership in the United Nations, this is their doing, not ours.

The right response to Peking’s aggressive and bellicose attitude will not be east to determine. It will require strength and patience and a long view of events. It should not, as I see it, mean the application to China of that rigid and doctrinaire policy of ‘containment’ which has been abandoned in Europe for a wiser and more flexible reaction to Communist provocations.

There are two other developments which could be of increasing importance in Asia, which I can only mention.

Japan will exercise more and more influence, take more and more responsibility for Asian affairs; without, I hope, altering her friendly relations with North America.

India and Pakistan, I hope, will remain as strong states, but with better relations with each other. This is important, for the alternative could lead to instability and even worse in the whole area. The future of this sub-continent, with its hundreds of millions of people, is in the balance. That future could affect the peace of the world.
At the moment, however, we are more immediately concerned in this area with the problem of Vietnam. I can see no hope for peace and stability in south-east Asia as long as the war in Vietnam is not ended; not by expulsion of the forces of the United States – no one has the power to do that in any event; not by ‘scuttle and run’ – the Americans do not act that way and their friends should be glad that they don’t. But the United States may have to go more than half-way to meet the ‘other side’ – as I believe they are now doing – in order to bring about a cease-fire, an armistice, a stage-by-stage withdrawal and a peace settlement.

Vietnam must then be left to the Vietnamese, to work out their own destiny. This could best be ensured by an international guarantee of neutrality and security for the whole area and a massive and practical program of external aid for reconstruction and development.

I have touched on only one or two dangerous situations in the world; on only one or two of these things that have to be done. I have omitted many important issues and I have oversimplified others. I know how easy it is to talk about what must be done and how hard it is to get it done. In particular I know how easily the fears and tensions that make for conflict – and hinder co-operation – can be stirred up by our modern media of communication which are able to bring about a mass reaction that is instant, often thoughtless, prejudiced and aggressive; in large part because the media concentrate on the kind of news that is the most exciting and therefore often the most likely to produce a negative, even combative result. Modern communications have brought man – and his doings – into everybody’s living room. Too often they have done this in ways which help us to learn the worst of each other and which seem to increase rather than reduce tension.

Faced with all these tensions and frustrations and fears, man looks today for solutions and for security from the action of decisive and determined and charismatic leaders. This usually means men certain of their own views and confident in their own power; men who see things in black and white, who are assertive and uncompromising, and who hold forth the hope of salvation through a simple principle of conduct to which all can cling, whether it’s socialism or free enterprise or vegetarianism or yoga or what have you; men who have final and absolute solutions for every problem.

I was attending a conference in Chicago some years back to which all the holders of the Nobel Peace Prize had been invited. In the course of the meetings we were asked to take part in a TV seminar. There we were, eight or nine Nobel Laureates, sitting around a table while a very confident interviewer asked us questions. Our observations however, were periodically interrupted by a commercial devoted to the merits of a medicine which was a quick and certain cure for various ailments from which, unfortunately, we were all likely to be suffering. So while we were trying to be reasonably encouraging about the world and its troubles, while agreeing that they could not easily or quickly be solved, a spell-binder broke in every few minutes to insist that if we’d only take his pill, everything would be just fine; while without it we were doomed.

We have been conditioned today to seek easy and quick remedies for every ill that the body, and the body politic, is heir to. But there are no simple or sure remedies. One way to make progress to the ‘distant scene’ of international peace and security is to recognize that the road is dark and difficult and that calls to adopt this or that easy detour, which will not be lacking in appeal or confidence, will not be of much help.

It is the Marxists who err most grievously in this regard, though even Communist leaders are beginning to admit that Marxist-Leninism needs contemporary interpretation and application.
But we of the West also too often look for solutions, not so much by honest and hard thought and effort, but by noisy and at times careless chants and slogans about our own superior ideas and systems. Yet the very vigor with which we denounce each other’s panaceas shows our own doubts about our own.

We have a right – indeed we have a duty – to proclaim and defend our own democratic concepts of freedom and our way of life. But we should realize that they don’t necessarily apply in the same way to all the variety of cultures and races, of social and economic systems, which make up today’s world. We would be wise to be humble. All the more so because while we assert, as always, that we have God with us, our conduct too often seems not to be dictated by any sense of that morality which, we are told by the theologians, distinguishes us from the lower animals, who have only behavior mechanisms. We tend to bow down to the success, personal and national, that comes with the possession and use of aggressive power; whether for the domination of government and people, or the accumulation of fifty tankers and five hundred million dollars, or a thousand newspapers. We admire this kind of success and call it greatness. Unfortunately it is the kind of greatness which more than once in this century has led to conflict and destruction.

Arthur Koestler, in a lecture not long ago at the University of Copenhagen, argued that the source of all our troubles is a man’s instinct for ‘unselfish loyalty to tribe, nation, religion or political ideology’. He asks, ‘What has gone wrong with the evolution of man? Why is he the only animal that fights his kind without meaning?’

‘Not,’ he answers, ‘because man is too belligerent or aggressive but because, on the contrary, he’s too easily deceived by appeals to his loyalty and his love. His infancy associations, his training and education as a child, the group community pressures to which he is later subjected, have made man not too little but too much of a social animal.’

There is much in this, of course, but I have some difficulty in accepting the Koestler theory that the source of our trouble is not man’s original sin but man’s original goodness; that it’s not his aggressiveness, but his agreeableness that has to be changed. In any event, this only transfers the guilt of aggression to rulers who take advantage of this loyalty and submissiveness and whip the lambs into raging lions. But surely we know that the fault lies not in our rulers but in ourselves. Whatever the cause, the results in history have been violence and war – and never so much as in our own times.

Fortunately there are signs, though not very clear or numerous as yet, of an awakening consciousness of impending doom if man does not abolish war as an instrument of national policy and create the necessary international institutions to make this possible.

Perhaps you can also take some hope from the changing nature of war itself. Until the present century, the waging of war has been a highly emotional and not always unattractive experience. The Charge of the Light Brigade or Custer’s Last Stand have not been so much a deterrent against a repetition of killing as an incitement to it.

It is surely more difficult to arouse this kind of ‘death or glory’ emotion about a guided missile or an anthrax germ. It’s not easy to strike heroic attitudes over a crusade with a computer. Therefore it should be easier now to find an appealing moral equivalent for modern war as a relief for a man’s aggressive instincts and to counteract what Freud has described as man’s special death wish.
Whether we like it or not, war has been an outlet for the emotions of people, especially people who are deprived or dissatisfied; an outlet also for the idealism, the energy and drive, of younger people. War offers everyone a chance to become involved, to the utmost, to the exclusion of everything else, in a common endeavor; in a common sacrifice. Young people, I hope, will in the future be mercifully denied this kind of involvement which leads to killing and being killed. But too often now they are denied a more constructive channel for their aspirations, their concern, and for the expression of their idealism. Until they are made to feel that they can participate with their elders in the running of things, participate in everything, they will continue to find an outlet in the mounting of barricades, in struggles for change and for a greater freedom, of whose nature they may not be very certain themselves. Can we find a way in which the energies, yes, even the aggressiveness, of young people, indeed all of us, can be applied to making the world better instead of worse? If we need a moral equivalent for war, and we do, we have it at hand in the need to attack and defeat poverty and deprivation and discrimination and injustice; in the challenge for creative social change; for service to the family of man.

We must begin to work on the principle that the interest of all men is above the national interest of any group of men. This may mean modifying our whole concept of the all-powerful sovereign nation state: indeed it must mean that. But could anything seem less likely?

The emotion and traditions that still surround nationalism and national sovereignty deny priority, or even urgency or purpose, to something which is still so remote from our loyalties and feelings as the international community.

At present, we take it for granted that the first duty of the government of any sovereign state is to defend the interests and well-being of its people and take whatever action is possible and necessary for that purpose. Yet we know that this action will not alone produce the desired result.

When national action fails to protect the public interest, it is none the less assumed that the state’s obligation to provide such protection remains valid. But a similar failure in the international sphere throws doubt on the practicability or validity of the whole idea of effective international action.

It is going to be a long, slow process to change this attitude. But today it is essential that we make a greater effort than ever before, because today’s world, and even more tomorrow’s, makes the old, narrow and exclusive concept of nationalism and national sovereignty as out of date and inadequate as the coach and four or the muzzle loader.

Barbara Ward has written, ‘The ever tightening thickening web of complete interdependence draws all the sovereignties, great and small, kicking and screaming, into a single planetary system. But the institutions to express this unity are so frail, so dependent upon sovereign vetoes of unsovereign states, that they seem little more than the tribute of hypocrisy which vice pays to virtue, recognizing its necessity by giving it the widest berth.’

People, therefore, must be made to see that internationalism is quite as important to them, as practically and immediately important, as national loyalty and interest; important not merely in an academic and remote or idealistic sense, but important as something which immediately and concretely affects their well-being, their very lives.

We must apply the science and art of politics to the affairs of the international community with the intensity of personal involvement that we give to domestic affairs.
In the past, conflicts have led to wars within national boundaries. But normally we don’t go to war over such disputes. If we do, we call it civil war. We must reach the point where we consider war between countries as civil war.

We must cultivate international ideals, develop international policies, strengthen international institutions, above all the United Nations, so that peace and progress can be made secure in the family of man.

Biography:

Lester Bowles Pearson, P.C., O.B.E., M.P., M.A., LL.D., was born in Newtonbrook, Ontario, in 1897 and went to school in Toronto, Hamilton, and Petersborough. After service in the Medical Corps and the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War, he graduated from the University of Toronto in 1919 and went on to study at Oxford University. He taught in the Department of History at the University of Toronto for two years before joining the Department of External Affairs. His distinguished career as a diplomat included service as Canadian High Commissioner in London and as Ambassador in Washington. In 1948 he was elected Member of Parliament for Algoma East and became Minister of External Affairs in the government of Louis St Laurent. He led the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations for some years and was President of the General Assembly from 1953 to 1955. Mr. Pearson succeeded Mr. St Laurent to the leadership of the Liberal party in 1958 and was Prime Minister of Canada from 1963 to his retirement in 1968. He is at present (NB: written in 1968) Chairman of a commission sponsored by the World Bank that is investigating problems of economic assistance to underdeveloped countries.

Mr. Pearson has received many award and honorary degrees. In 1958 he was given the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in creating the United Nations armed force that established and maintained the truce in the Middle East after the Suez Crisis.

Final note – we have tried to ensure that there are no typos in the above text. If you detect one, (or something that sounds grammatically incorrect) please inform Bob Stewart at stewart [at] peace.ca . This text is also available in Microsoft Word format at http://www.peace.ca/Peace_in_the_Family_of_Man.doc