

A Status to Preserve

Considering its relatively small population, Canada enjoys a remarkable position in the world, and wields a remarkable influence at the world's council tables. This has come about since the end of the Second World War, from which Canada emerged as an independent Middle Power, trusted and liked by most nations, feared by none.

At the United Nations, in the North Atlantic Council and its subsidiary organizations, this independent status has given Canada opportunities, far beyond her wealth and numbers, to speak, to counsel, and even to lead. This also is the case in the British Commonwealth. We do not always exert the considerable influence the Commonwealth accords us. But still we have it.

As a nation which never had colonies, which in fact was once a colony itself and emerged from that status less than a century ago, we can talk to the Afro-Asian bloc as perhaps no other nation can. Our status with Latin America is hard to match. And so the story goes in many parts of the globe.

Most Canadians are proud of the remarkable, in many ways unique, position Canada occupies in the world today. They hope Canada will maintain that position. But this can only be the case if Canada maintains her independence. Let us become, or even seem to have become, some other nation's satellite, and much of the influence we now enjoy will have been thrown away.

That is why Canadians should be deeply disturbed by their Government's decision, after scrapping the all-Canadian Arrow interceptor, to install the all-American Bomarc missile in its place; and to have, on Canadian soil, American nuclear warheads under American ownership and control. That is why Canadians should be deeply disturbed, also, by indications that their role in defense production for North America and for the Western Alliance is to be a minor, ancillary one, measured out to them by the United States.

Such things, in the eyes of the world, give us the appearance of being a possession, not a partner, of the U.S. This, in fact, is not the case—yet. We ourselves may feel, and may be right in feeling, that we have a complete understanding of our American friends; that they will not abuse the military and economic and political relationship—which must always be a close one—between us. But what we think about it, and what other nations think about it, could be two very different things.

Seeming to have swung into the U.S. orbit, we could lose most or all of the interna-

tional influence that has accrued to us in the last two decades. And that would be tragic; for the future may well require us to play a still greater role in the world as interpreter, as conciliator, even as arbitrator.

The concern, and most properly, of the non-Communist world is to keep out of war. But to keep out of war, it must find durable bases of living with the Communist world, and vice versa, regardless of differing political ideas and differing economic structures. Canada has particular reason to see this necessity because she is, quite literally, in the middle—with Russia as her neighbor to the North, and the U.S. as her neighbor to the South. Somehow, we must learn to live with both of them.

And this applies to another of Canada's neighbors, across the Pacific. China is determined to become a modern Power, in time a Great Power. And, like us, she is determined to become an industrial nation. Assuming some kind of peace can be kept, we in Canada must find a basis to enjoy and exploit China's development for the furtherance of our own. These are the kind of things on which—if we are not willing to become a satellite—we must make some firm, clear decisions.

Such decisions regarding Canada's future, made by Canada herself, should not bother the Americans one bit—unless the Americans live with the total conviction that peace is not possible; that the Communist nations must be driven off the face of the earth.

In point of fact, we can make decisions of our own without damaging the relationship between Canada and the U.S. An instance is our steadfast refusal to join the Pan-American Union, or, as it now describes itself, the Organization of American States. The U.S. has always wanted us to join; we have always declined. But that has not hurt our association with the U.S.—or our association with Latin America. On the contrary; the more we assert our independence of the U.S. (or anybody else), the more the U.S. (and everybody else) will respect us.

And respect, general respect, is what Canada must have if she is to play as important a role in the world as she does today—let alone the more important one which is within her grasp. In major areas of foreign policy, where our own major interests are involved, we must go our own way—which means, in the immediate context of the Arrow-Bomarc-nuclear-weapons controversy, that we must keep ourselves free to go our own way. Or, more simply, that we must keep ourselves free.

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