

## THE COLOMBO PLAN:

## CANADA'S MOTIVES

by Sister Saint John Maria (Butts) C.N.D.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	iv
1. The Plan: A Brief Explanation	x
2. The Plan at Work: Some Illustrations	xvii
3. The Progress Achieved: Some Evaluations	xxi
 I.- THE INITIAL MOTIVATION - COMMONWEALTH ECONOMICS	 1
1. Introduction	1
2. The Founding Conferences	2
3. Economic Co-operation in Asia	6
4. Economics and Commonwealth Solidarity	10
5. Changing Canadian Attitudes	11
6. Two-Way Economic Motivation	16
7. Is Economic Motivation Enough?	20
 II.- THE CONTINUING MOTIVATION - A WEAPON IN POLITICS	 23
1. Introduction	23
2. The Change in Communist Policy	24
3. The Political Scene in Asia	27
4. The Change in Motivation of the Commonwealth Plan	 31
5. Can Our Plan Do the Job?	36
6. What Can be Done by the West?	40
7. Political Motivation Declines	46
 III.- THE PRESENT MOTIVATION - HUMANITARIANISM . . . .	 49
1. Introduction	49
2. Emerging Humanitarianism	52
3. The New Concept of Humanitarianism	56
4. Canadian Humanitarianism in Practice	65
5. Mutual Motivation	68
6. The Role of the Politicians	73
7. The Ultimate Defence of the Plan	75
 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	 80
 BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	 94

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. R. G. (Nik) Cavell, a former director of the Colombo Plan, told recently of a lecture he delivered at an Indian University, during which a young student rose and "most belligerently" asked: "Why do your country and other Western nations give us aid? Don't talk to me about Christian charity; I am not a Christian and I don't believe in such protestations anyway. You must have some motive. What is it? Where is the catch?"<sup>1</sup>

Even more recently, in January 1965, a survey of Canadian citizens revealed that only twelve per cent of Canadians would want any increase in our present foreign aid commitments. On the other hand seventy-three per cent of our politicians would want foreign aid increased.<sup>2</sup> Why is there such a discrepancy between those who should know and those who must give?

Thus on both sides of the stream of economic assistance we have confusion and uncertainty. The recipients want to know "why" before they accept the assistance and the

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<sup>1</sup> R. G. (Nik) Cavell, "A Bold New Design to Halt the Waste of Billions in Foreign Aid", MacLean's Magazine, Vol. 76, No. 12, April 6, 1963, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Blair Fraser, "Our Quiet War Over Peace: Politicians vs the People", MacLean's Magazine, Vol. 18, No. 2, January 23, 1965, p. 18.

donors are not anxious to give because they do not know why they should.

All will agree that the motives which induce governments to provide aid cannot be wholly separated from the basic purpose of the aid itself, that is, economic development. Yet, when it comes to an answer to the question of, "Why should we help Asia", we can find neither agreement nor clarity. If this question were answered, then the Canadian people would respond with the backing necessary to make the Colombo Plan a more hurried success and the Indian people would accept gracefully.

Among Canadian politicians, writers and businessmen there is fairly general agreement on the principle of foreign aid. Most accept it as a part of our foreign policy. Yet we are far from agreement on why aid should, or indeed, must be given. Our present Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, in addressing the Memorial Assembly at Macdonald College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, gave his audience something to think about on this question:

The motives behind our foreign aid programme are likely to be mixed. These programmes have evolved pragmatically and the world setting in which they have evolved has itself been changing with unprecedented rapidity. Foreign aid is today part of the established pattern of international relations and it is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, there is merit, I think, in our stepping back from time to time to review the motives that have actuated our Canadian foreign aid programme and to consider afresh the purposes which we should expect it to serve.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Martin goes on to show the mixture of motives for foreign aid, but it must be noted here that he himself lines up behind the humanitarian motivation. Nevertheless, he does explain that economic and political motives cannot be overlooked.

Which of these motives were in the minds of the founders of the Colombo Plan? Was the Plan initiated as primarily a means of strengthening the economic ties within the Commonwealth of Nations? Was it looked upon as a means of an industrial buildup of Asia which, in the long run, would be a buildup of markets for our own developing economy? Or did the Plan fathers have in mind a first line of defence against the communist giant pushing relentlessly forward in Asia? Is the motivation behind the Plan, first and foremost, political - to extend the boundaries of freedom and democracy by convincing Asians that a better way of

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<sup>3</sup> Statements and Speeches, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, The Queen's Printer, No. 65/2.

life is possible under democracy? Is it our hope to undermine the force of communist propaganda by removing the discontent in which communism flourishes?

Or may we be bold enough to claim that our motives for helping others are more altruistic than either the political or economic ones could be? Are they fundamentally unselfish - primarily for the good of the Asians and not our own good? Would the help be forthcoming even if the political and economic advantages could not be defended?

In the pages that follow an effort will be made to segregate the motives behind the Colombo Plan and to show a definite progression in their development. While it is true that none of the motives disappear and politicians of particular persuasions will not allow their favourites to be forgotten, yet there are definite periods when particular motives predominate.

The Colombo Plan was conceived in 1950 as primarily an undertaking of the Commonwealth of Nations whereby the more developed members would assist their poorer Asian counterparts. This aid would take the form of financial and technical assistance in the setting up of power projects and industrial development in order to create more jobs, and, in general, to raise the standard of living in the recipient countries. Underlying all the assistance in those first years we discern a motive which is primarily economic. Canadians

are told by politicians and writers that they can insure economic stability and progress in Asia by a flow of capital from this country to the region. Nor do the Plan founders want us to forget that economic assistance can be a two-way street. By helping Asia we would increase the volume of world trade and thus help our own employment situation.

Economics remained the dominant motive of the Colombo Plan for the first two years. Then, suddenly, in October 1952, the Communist Party Congress announced a drastic change in Russian foreign policy. Where, formerly, they had concentrated on the economic buildup of the homeland they now began a concerted and open bid for the future of the developing nations and the triumph of World Communism. The West had to counter attack. It was convenient that just when the economic motivation for our foreign aid programme was beginning to pale and wear thin, a new incentive was found. Our motivation took on a definite political colouring as the Colombo Plan became a part of our peaceful struggle against communism. Canadians were told that Asia could be saved for democracy if we would steal the fire from the communists and their promises of help. For the remainder of the nineteen fifties the political motivation overshadowed all others and kept the Plan going, admittedly for some years on a reduced scale.

In the 1960's the doctrine of co-existence had gained many adherents and with the preaching of "live and let live" with the communists there has come a diminution in the energy for the struggle against them. The political motivation for foreign aid then, would no longer suffice. Yet, as Mr. Martin pointed out, aid had become part of the established pattern of international relations, and could not be dropped. And it must not be dropped. While it is still important to know that foreign aid promises economic benefits to both "haves" and "have-nots"; and it is also true that Asia will still be more friendly to us if we help the people to eat regularly; yet, a stronger motivation must govern our aid in the present day. The time has come and the ground is now cleared for confrontation of the moral issue. Western citizens must be shown that their surpluses can lift the burden off the backs of poorer citizens the world over. Canadians must be given Mr. Martin's conviction that "foreign aid is morally the right course to follow"<sup>4</sup>. In the light of the wretchedness of the world we must not be indifferent and impassive.

Leaders in the underdeveloped countries who have a right to question our motives will accept our aid most rapidly if we can convince them that our motives are altruistic and there are no strings attached. As Gerard Piel, writing in the Atlantic Monthly puts it:

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

India's planners have plainly detailed the nature and function of foreign aid and have called for it on a scale sufficient to challenge the conscience as well as the interest of the peoples of the rich nations.<sup>5</sup>

Let us then declare our present motives for what they are, first and foremost humanitarian.

Before proceeding to examine this motivation in depth however, a brief description of the Plan itself is necessary.

#### 1. The Plan: A Brief Explanation.

a) Donors - At a meeting in Colombo, the capital of Ceylon, in January 1950, the foreign ministers of British Commonwealth countries agreed upon the vital importance of the economic development of South and Southeast Asia in the maintenance of political stability in that area, and in the growth of an expanding world economy based on multilateral trade. They also agreed that it was their duty to do something about the problem.<sup>6</sup>

The Commonwealth governments took the initiative in considering national action to deal with the problem. Three-quarters of the people in South and Southeast Asia

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<sup>5</sup> Gerard Piel, "Abundance and the Future of Man", Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 213, No. 4, April 1964, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Report on the Colombo Conference, Colombo Plan Information Unit, Colombo, Ceylon, March 1950.

live in countries that are members of the Commonwealth and the whole area is one in which Britain has close political and economic ties. It was recognized from the beginning that countries not within the Commonwealth should also be invited to participate and that the co-operation of other nations might also be sought. Thus, the very next year the United States requested entry into the Plan and it was followed in 1954 by Japan.

The purpose of the Commonwealth governments in initiating the programme for South and Southeast Asia was fully in accord with the principles of the United Nations. They intended that it should be in harmony with the work already accomplished there by the United Nations relief organizations. In fact, the specialized agencies of the United Nations had recognized the need for outside assistance for the development of underdeveloped territories.

b) Recipients - India has a population of close to four hundred million and an immense variety of natural resources. In spite of the fact that industries became established between the wars, organized large scale industry in 1950 provided employment for only ten per cent of the working population. Medium-and-small-scale industry engaged another ten per cent and most of the remaining depended on the land for their livelihood. Agricultural yields were low in comparison with most other countries and there was

evidence of a further decline in the years following the Second World War. Agriculture was not developed rapidly enough to ease the increasing pressure of population upon the land so that there is now great poverty among millions and an increasing struggle for existence. In India at present, the people's diet consists almost entirely of cereals and in the urban areas an Indian consumes only about twelve ounces of food grains a day.

An extraordinarily severe strain was imposed on the Indian economy by the Second World War. Under the stimulus of war demand, an increase in agricultural and industrial production did take place but this was counterbalanced by the diversion to war purposes of a large proportion of total supplies available. India became the supply base for Allied armies east of Suez. The shortage of civilian goods and the increase in money supply brought on a severe inflation. At the end of the war machinery was overstrained and in need of replacement. The railways which had carried such a burden of war traffic were in urgent need of repair.

Unhappily, political and social disturbances occurred in large areas with varying intensity, and governments, pre-occupied with these, were forced to devote a large part of their resources to the maintenance of law and order. In the Indian subcontinent the transfer of political power to the new governments of India and Pakistan was carried out

smoothly but the partition of the country itself caused considerable dislocation. In addition, abnormal expenditures of millions of dollars on the rehabilitation of refugees and essential food subsidies intensified the budgetary problem. Moreover, the political and economic changes adversely affected the flow of savings into the capital market.

In view of all these difficulties, it is hardly surprising that there is still a major task of reconstruction in India. The realization of self-government has made possible a new approach to the problem of raising living standards. Among the people of India, hopes and aspirations have been raised by the plans of their government to secure a fuller life for them.

We must not forget, either, that India, Pakistan and Ceylon play an important part in world economy. The area is a major source of food and raw materials. Prior to World War II it provided most of the world's export of jute rubber, tin, tea and fats. These enabled the area to have a trade surplus with North America. At the same time it had a trade deficit with the United Kingdom and the dollars earned in America were an important factor in enabling the United Kingdom to balance its budget. If the pre-war situation could be restored we might thereby hope for some alleviation of the present imbalance of world trade.

c) Forms of Aid - Following the initial meeting at Colombo, a process of Commonwealth consultation was begun with the purpose of making the most effective possible attack upon the problem and of drawing the attention of the world to the needs and difficulties of the area. A Commonwealth Consultative Committee was set up and it was agreed to draw up a practical and realistic plan of development for a six-year period beginning in mid-1951. Invitations were made to the non-Commonwealth countries of the area to draw up six-year plans for economic development.<sup>7</sup> In October 1950, the committee met again in London. This meeting was attended by delegations from the non-Commonwealth governments of Cambodia, Laos, Viet-Nam and Thailand with Ambassadors from Burma and Indonesia as observers.<sup>8</sup>

Since there was no standard formula that could be universally applied, the most effective and efficient pattern of development appeared different for each country coming into the Plan. The scheme of development proposed for India was designed to improve the standard of living, to provide a minimum of social services and to supply sufficient capital and consumer goods to restrain inflation. In the emergency

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7 Ibid., p. 2.

8 The Colombo Plan, Report of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, London, September-October 1950, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, p. 2.

after World War II, India was able to subsist by drawing upon its sterling balance to pay for vitally needed imports of grain, textiles and machinery. This external finance could never be adequate and emergency planning had to be replaced by realistic long-term plans for economic development.

It was certain from the beginning that a substantial amount of government-to-government finance would be required, especially in the early stages of the development programmes and the Commonwealth governments considered to what extent the external finance requirements could be provided by their countries. All the governments of the area were ready to welcome the inflow of foreign but especially private capital.

Another limitation on the programme was the availability of technical skills. India, for example, could provide lower and medium grade technicians but it needed a considerable number of highly skilled personnel such as engineers, doctors and agricultural experts. Experts were also needed in certain specialized fields of industry, agriculture, medicine and education. It was for this reason that, in addition to directly productive projects, provision had to be made in the programme for training institutes, technical schools and agencies through which knowledge could be increased and disseminated.

d) Administration - The effectiveness of the Colombo Plan, as of any other project, depends to a large extent on

its efficient administration. Canada has taken several years to develop an effective administration for its foreign aid programmes.

When the Colombo Plan came into being the programmes were placed under the Department of Trade and Commerce and administered by an Economic and Technical Assistance Branch of that department. But, since any aid programmes must necessarily entail some foreign policy aspects, the Department of External Affairs had to be given a hand in administration. Also, the Department of Finance attempted to exercise its share of administration. The result of all this was inevitable friction. Broad policy-making was placed in the hands of a large interdepartmental committee but here again there was difficulty because the responsibilities of the various Ministers were not well defined.

In 1960 a solution to the problem was found in the creation of an External Aid Office under the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Secretary of State became the Minister responsible for administration and, together with the Cabinet, for policy. All Canadian aid programmes are now operated by the External Aid Office. An External Aid Board of five members represents the departments mentioned above.

The External Aid Office has since been organized into five divisions responsible for different phases of the

aid programme. For example, there is a Technical Assistance Division which is concerned with the placing of trainees from the Asian countries in suitable institutions of learning or industries in Canada, and the sending of Canadian experts to Asian countries.

Thus, the organizational problems at the top level have been solved though there is still a problem of recruiting suitable men to fill the various posts which have been created and many positions are still unfilled. Again, it is a case of a lack of experts in the country as a whole and it will take some years to get men suitably trained and have them gain the experience necessary.

## 2. The Plan at Work: Some Illustrations.

Let us look for a moment at Canada's early efforts to help the largest of the Plan countries - India.

In the beginning the Canadian government agreed to provide twenty-five million dollars a year for the Plan - fifteen million for India, ten million for Pakistan. Representatives of these two countries visited Ottawa to set up basic working agreements. These agreements established that the aid should be given for specific programmes decided upon by both sides. These original agreements still hold to-day although the Canadian Colombo Plan budget has since

expanded to fifty million dollars a year and the agreements extend to 1966.<sup>9</sup>

Canada, like all other participating countries, had agreed that the basic philosophy behind the programme should be, "to help these people to help themselves". In other words, it is not enough just to decide to give monetary gifts because, too often, after the money is gone or the food is consumed, the country remains in the same helpless condition. Because of this, the Canadian authorities were at first reluctant when, in March 1952, the Indian delegates requested that Canada's contribution should include ten million dollars worth of wheat. However, a system was established whereby the wheat would be shipped and the money gained from its sale in India would be placed in a special fund to be used on schemes such as an irrigation and hydro-electric project in West Bengal.<sup>10</sup>

Canada also undertook the task of improving the transportation system of the province of Bombay. One thousand five hundred complete vehicles were provided for the transport corporation of that province. In Pakistan, the

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<sup>9</sup> Canada and the Colombo Plan 1951-1961, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, 1961, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> The Colombo Plan, Progress Report by the Consultative Committee, Karachi, March 1952, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, p. 56.

biggest Canadian project was the Warsak Dam costing seventy-two million dollars. Other undertakings included a cement plant in the Thal area, the establishment and equipping of an experimental farm in the same area and the providing of wooden railway sleepers for the repair of the Pakistan railway system.

Perhaps Canada's greatest contribution to the Plan may prove to be in the field of technical co-operation. From the outset the Canadian government offered numerous scholarships to Asian students. At the present time Asian students, who number well over two hundred at any given time, are found in Canadian universities from the Maritimes to British Columbia. Apart from these individuals, technical missions in the field of agriculture, hydro-electric power development and highway and bridge construction, have been conducted across Canada on observation tours. In the other direction, Canada has encountered considerable difficulty in meeting requests from the area for experts. Nevertheless, Canadian promoters maintain that the best results will be obtained by concentrating on training in the area, particularly of middle and lower grade workers. At the present time, according to official figures, about fifty Canadian experts are working in Asia at any given moment, as teachers, advisers and organizers. These are experts hired directly by the Plan administration.

Some experts returning from India have come home convinced that the secret of success for any plan to help Asia is in the field of mass education. An expert tells of a Credit Union he visited in India. Of ninety-four shareholders in the union ninety-one had signed the book with an "X". This same fact is brought home to us by Indian elections in which the competing political parties may be represented by symbols so that the people may distinguish their preference on the ballot. Besides the elementary education in the "three R's" which is indispensable to a successful democracy there is need for a basic education in many other fields. It is only by health education that unsanitary conditions may be overcome. It is by education, too, that they can overcome their superstitious fears, ideas and practices. It is impossible for the existing government to provide the thousands of schools and teachers necessary to give compulsory elementary education to these teeming millions. Canada has taken a feeble step in the right direction in sending to India an expert in the field of technical schools. This educator reported that he was at first quite discouraged and then convinced that the basic need is on a lower level in the elementary education field. This is one project to which Canada could well give impetus.

### 3. The Progress Achieved: Some Evaluations.

The original Plan was to cover the period up to June 1957. At the meeting held in Singapore in 1955, it was decided to continue to June 1961 and then to June 1966 with the way left open for continuance.<sup>11</sup>

At the annual meetings of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee each country participating gives a survey of its own development. In practically every case the reports show that the countries are able to surpass or at least maintain their previous rate of economic progress. It is generally agreed that progress has been made. But much more remains to be done and the tasks ahead will be even more difficult. The population of these countries continues to increase ever more rapidly and the increase in food production must do more than keep pace.

The 1955 report of the Consultative Committee stressed the difficulty that a number of countries were experiencing in expanding their domestic budgetary resources. This problem was aggravated by the fact that many of the projects accomplished were large-scale and there was a necessary time lag before the benefits of increased output and income are experienced. Experts in the field have since

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<sup>11</sup> The Colombo Plan, Consultative Committee Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, October 30 to November 15, 1963, Saman Publishers, Maharagama, p. 12.

advised a greater emphasis on development in the private sector of finance and in some places financial institutions with government support have been set up. Yet the need for external capital remains crucial. The money could come from other governments, from international institutions or from private investors. There is more and more room for an increased flow of private capital to the area.

The latest committee report on the Plan warns that it will be some time yet before we will see any tangible results from our attempts to assist in education in South-east Asia. Nevertheless, there was a call for increased confidence in this phase of the programme. In this particular aspect it has been well pointed out that Canada is especially advantageous as far as the Indo-Chinese states are concerned since many Canadians are able to speak French, which is the second language of that land.

Many Committee Reports deplore the problem that has been encountered in persuading trained Canadians to accept positions as instructors in the underdeveloped countries.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The Colombo Plan, Progress Reports by the Consultative Committee, Karachi, March 1952, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, p. 56.

Op. Cit., New Delhi, October 1953, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, p. 79.

Op. Cit., Ottawa, October 1954, The Queen's Printer, Ottawa, p. 155.

Obviously, the few experts we have in this young country are readily absorbed in its growing industries and they are offered such salaries that we are expecting much when we ask them to pack up and go to live in Asia. In this respect the Communists have an advantage over us. Their subjects are simply given an assignment to go to work in a country where they are needed. Thus, Russia has offered to send to Asia unlimited numbers of experts in every field. The offer has caused additional adverse criticism which we must now counterbalance with additional aid. Yet, when we view the outstanding success of such movements as the Peace Corps of the United States we have reason for optimism that we shall find the personnel necessary for the working of the Plan.

## CHAPTER I

### THE INITIAL MOTIVATION - COMMONWEALTH ECONOMICS

#### 1. Introduction.

In a preface to a booklet commemorating the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Colombo Plan, the Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, then Prime Minister of Canada, wrote:

The Colombo Plan arose out of, and in turn has contributed to, the realization that the economic progress of all parts of the world is an essential element of any satisfying and enduring peace. (...) Canadians, together with the people of other Commonwealth nations are especially proud of the role of the Commonwealth in starting and sustaining this great Plan. That the original idea was so quickly and effectively extended to other nations is an indication of the important and useful part which the Commonwealth can play in international affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Diefenbaker concludes that a realization that much of the Plan funds are contributed by "outsiders" such as the United States only serves to accentuate the importance of the Commonwealth.

Though we may not put such a favourable interpretation on the events it is nevertheless true that the Colombo Plan began as a Commonwealth project. To this day, over ninety-five per cent of the Canadian funds given under the

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<sup>1</sup> Canada and the Colombo Plan, 1951-1961, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1961, p. 1.

Plan goes to the Commonwealth countries of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Malaya.

## 2. The Founding Conferences - 1950.

In 1949 the Foreign Ministers of the independent countries within the Commonwealth of Nations were preparing for their first meeting since the Second World War. This meeting was destined from the beginning to be different from the previous ones of the same body. It was the first at which the newly independent Asian members participated to express their own sovereign views and it was "the first ever to be held on Asian soil".<sup>2</sup>

The agenda of the meeting did not include the Colombo Plan although provision was made for a discussion of the political instability and the economic insecurity of the postwar world. The Marshall Plan of the United States had set the example of what outside help and planning could do for Europe, and President Truman had promised the same for Asia through Point Four. With all this as a background it was the Australian delegation that came to Colombo with the suggestion that the Commonwealth countries take the initiative in setting up a programme of assistance to South

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<sup>2</sup> Statement by Honourable L. B. Pearson, House of Commons Debates, February 21, 1950, p. 129.

and Southeast Asia. From Asia itself, through the leaders of Ceylon, came a similar blueprint for joint assistance to the region.

This is not to say that all the Commonwealth countries were immediately enthusiastic about the proposals. Some of them were struggling with young, developing economies, while others had not yet recovered from the war. On the other side, some Asian delegates wondered whether this acceptance of outside aid might not compromise their recently won independence. The most that could be accomplished was an agreement to meet again in Sydney, Australia, to discuss a programme in detail. From the very opening motion it could be seen that the motivation behind any proposal of help to underdeveloped nations would need to be clarified on both sides if the assistance schemes were to be made acceptable to all.

Four months after Colombo, the delegates at Sydney overcame enough of the misgivings to call on the Asian nations to prepare development programmes. The British and Australian delegates guaranteed most of the funds. Canada made a contribution but it was less than that offered by some of the Asian countries themselves.

The Report of 1950 examines briefly the economic conditions of the countries of Southeast Asia and presents the arguments for the giving and the accepting of the

proffered aid. These arguments do not mention the Commonwealth specifically but speak of the value of the region to the whole world from the point of view of economics as well as politics and peace. The report described in detail the economic problems and programmes of the Commonwealth countries of Asia. The inevitable conclusion was drawn that:

The conception of the Commonwealth countries' approach to the problem is that a fresh impetus should be given to economic development in South and Southeast Asia in order to increase production, raise standards of living, and thus enlarge the volume of trade around the world from which all countries may benefit.<sup>3</sup>

Lest this objective be made to sound too difficult as well as too idealistic the planners add:

A realistic view of the last five years shows that much has been done to restore the disrupted economics of South and Southeast Asia. Those countries which have succeeded in maintaining political stability through the turmoil of the period have made headway with rehabilitation, although this has in some cases involved large balance of payments deficits. A stage has now been reached at which it is possible to plan ahead and to move from policies based upon the need to deal with immediate emergencies to the execution of sound and realistic long-term plans for economic development.<sup>4</sup>

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3 The Colombo Plan, Report of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, London, September-October 1950, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, p. 3.

4 Ibid., p. 8.

The Colombo Plan was then initiated as an economic project within the Commonwealth but was intended from the beginning as a programme for the entire region on the theory that the poverty of one depresses all. There could be no exclusive spirit in the scheme. It was also recognized from the beginning that the Commonwealth countries alone could not meet all the needs and the way was left open for the United States and Japan to become donors. In explaining the Plan to the Canadian Parliament, Honourable L. B. Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, made a special plea for the immediate inclusion of the United States in the programme, saying that unless the United States was included, "its accomplishments may prove to be meagre."<sup>5</sup> The United States entered the Plan as a donor in 1951 and Japan in 1954. On the side of the recipients, non-Commonwealth countries were invited to prepare development programmes of their own which would be considered on the same basis as those of member countries. All these together would provide a comprehensive survey of the economic needs of the area as a whole. Nevertheless the Plan still operates under the guidance of the Consultative Committee which was set up in the meetings of the Commonwealth delegates.

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<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Debates, February 21, 1950, p. 132.

## 3. Economic Co-operation in Asia.

What does economic co-operation mean to the Commonwealth countries in Asia? What did it mean in 1950? The 1950's marked the end of one period of great turmoil and change in Asia. In every major country there had been an uprooting of the old political order. Outside influences had greatly changed. The old stabilizing effects of British power in India had been withdrawn and a powerful upsurge of nationalistic feeling came to dominate the scene. These changes were much more than political. The Monthly Review of the Bank of Nova Scotia made this assessment of the background of the Colombo Plan shortly after the Plan began to function:

In the economic and social sphere, the predominant characteristics have been disorder and instability. The Asiatic peoples generally are desperately poor and in recent years their poverty has, if anything, increased. Food production has recovered to roughly the pre-war level but population has continued to grow and is now at least ten percent higher than before the war. Moreover, the countries of South and Southeast Asia which used to play such a large part in balancing trade between Europe and North America, have for most of the post-war period added to the dollar deficits of Britain and other European countries.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Monthly Review, The Bank of Nova Scotia, Toronto, October-November 1951, p. 1.

This review makes it abundantly clear that the task undertaken by the Colombo planners was a tremendous one but it also points out, in the best traditions of Canadian businessmen that it is in the interests of the Commonwealth countries to do whatever they can to foster greater economic stability in Asia.

Though we admit that the problems of Asia in general and of India and Pakistan in particular are not entirely of an economic nature, there is no doubt that one of the fundamental difficulties is the low level of development of their economies. Their great need is to increase the rate of economic development, to adopt new methods of production and to secure a greater application of capital. In an economic survey of the Colombo Plan region taken five years after the inauguration of the Plan we find:

At present, the bulk of the working population of these countries, about seventy percent or more, is engaged in agriculture and standards of living are very low. In these respects they resemble Great Britain and other Western countries before the industrial revolution. The rapid economic progress of the West during the last hundred years or more has been accompanied by a marked expansion of their manufacturing industries. (...) It seems natural to assume that the road to economic progress for Asia lies through industrialization, and this view is strengthened by overpopulation, in most of these countries, on the land. It is asserted that there is so much under-employment in agriculture that a substantial proportion of workers could be taken off the land, and diverted to other occupations, without significantly reducing aggregate agricultural output.<sup>7</sup>

This survey hits upon what has become the core of the Colombo Plan programme. While it is true that the Asian countries need outside capital in order to begin a process of industrialization it is also essential that the Asians taken from the farms be given at least an elementary technical education and training. The Progress Report of the Consultative Committee issued when the Plan had been in operation for two years is very clear on this point.

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<sup>7</sup> The Colombo Plan: An Economy Survey, Memorandum of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, Oxford University Press, May 1956, p. 2.

An increasing flow of technical assistance in the fields of industry, agriculture, public utility institutions, education and other social services is essential if the development programmes are to be carried out effectively and on time. One of the important forms of such assistance is to build up within the area itself the institutions where the technicians who are so urgently needed can be trained on the spot. But in the short run, an important contribution must be made outside the area by the provision of experts, from engineers to foremen, by the provision of equipment required for training, and by provision of training facilities.<sup>8</sup>

It is to this end that Canada has offered scholarships and fellowships to Asians and has conducted technical missions across Canada on tours of hydro development, highway and bridge construction.

By investment of their small capital gains most of these countries can help to increase their own capital supply but "their needs are so great that aid from the more advanced countries is essential too if they are to break out of their present vicious circle."<sup>9</sup> The West then must add to their capital until their growing industries can produce enough to begin an upward spiral.

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<sup>8</sup> The Colombo Plan, Progress Report of the Consultative Committee, Karachi, March 1952, London, The Queen's Printer, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Clarence L. Barber, "More Aid to under-developed Areas?", International Journal, Vol. 10, No. 3, Summer 1955, p. 9.

It was with all these considerations in mind that the Ministers of the Commonwealth countries laid the foundations for the Colombo Plan in 1950.

#### 4. Economics and Commonwealth Solidarity.

Colombo was the beginning of a great new venture in Commonwealth planning. It would aid in the evolution of the remaining Far Eastern colonies towards self-government. It would provide a substitute for the declining idea of imperial tariff preference. It would help the United Kingdom to retain its position of primum inter pares in the Commonwealth. To Britain, too, it offered a means of regulating the export of British goods to sterling balance-holders such as India. Britain would benefit further from improved sources of raw materials and enlarged markets for its industrial products.

From the point of view of Australia and New Zealand there was the question of how less than ten million British people in the countries "down under" were to cultivate the friendship of their billion Asian neighbours. The Australians have tried to identify themselves with the interests of Southern Asia, despite their isolationist traditions such as the White Australia Policy.

Our concern here is in Canada's interest in the plans of assistance to Asia. Canada as a member of the dollar block takes the North American viewpoint. Neither her

security nor any vital economic interest is at stake. Canada's major world commitments have usually been towards Europe and the North Atlantic. Her interest in Asia lies in its benefits to the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Nations and international trade. When the Commonwealth leaders met at Colombo in 1950, it was clear that Britain alone could no longer furnish the outside help needed for economic development in her colonies, Malaya and Ceylon. So, this first Commonwealth conference ever to be held in Asia reached a historic decision. It was agreed that Commonwealth nations, Asian and non-Asian, should pool their resources in a programme of development for the Commonwealth link. It would serve to bring East and West together, and help to lay sound foundations for democracy in Asia.

#### 5. Changing Canadian Attitudes.

Before this time Canada's main sphere of international interest had always been Europe rather than the Far East. But a change had been taking place. In the postwar years the sweeping tide of nationalism in Asia, and the emergence of the new and independent nations stirred up new interest in the Pacific area. With it has come greater knowledge of the countries concerned and greater sympathy with their problems. No longer do the Asian lands and their swarming populations seem as remote to Canadians as they once were.

The first symbol of this narrowing gulf was the round-the-world tour in 1954 of Canada's Prime Minister. In a six weeks' journey by plane, Mr. St. Laurent visited eleven countries, including the Asian members of the Commonwealth. While a number of stops in Europe were included, the main purpose of the trip was to allow Mr. St. Laurent an opportunity to see something of the Asian nations at first hand, to talk with government leaders and others and to size up conditions on the spot.

The fact that the Asian tour was the first of its kind to be undertaken by a Canadian Prime Minister is significant in itself. The trip had a double impact; it served not only to increase Canadian understanding of the Asian countries but to make Canada better known and understood by them. Canadians are particularly liked in the East because they have a reputation for genuine altruism. The United Kingdom has a colonial reputation to live down and the United States has difficulty fending one off.

Mr. St. Laurent's views and impressions, conveyed in speeches and at press conferences during his tour, are indicative of the new Canadian attitude toward Asian affairs. He referred to "Canada's growing interest in Asia and Asian problems" as reflecting "the contraction of the modern world and the fundamental changes which have taken place in recent years in Asia's relations with the West." And he added:

To the extent that we come to realize the welfare of all parts of the world is inter-dependent, a new concept of world-wide partnership has evolved. You in Asia are inevitably concerned with what happens in Europe or North America just as we are concerned with what happens here.<sup>10</sup>

In the same address he pointed out that the differences that existed in Canadian minds about East and West have little substance to-day as we are all partners in the same great undertaking.

Mr. Escott Reid, the High Commissioner for Canada in India, expressed the same sentiments two years later in an address to the Rotary Club of New Delhi:

The culture of the whole world would be impoverished if India, the vessel of an ancient, lovely and living culture, were to dissolve into anarchy or, if, to save itself from anarchy, it were to adopt totalitarian rule and thus be false to its traditions of tolerance and humanity. On the other hand, the culture of the whole world will be enriched if India succeeds in its programme of economic and social development. For success in that programme will release tremendous latent energies in India, and those energies will produce not only things of the hand but things of the mind and the spirit.<sup>11</sup>

So it can be seen that the emergence of the New Asian nations and the problems and challenges accompanying it have given to thinking Canadians a new interest in the Commonwealth

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<sup>10</sup> Statements and Speeches, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, The Queen's Printer, No. 54/14.

<sup>11</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 57/28

as a living and constructive grouping. As a link between East and West in a troubled and divided world, it has come to have new and significant value, and Canadians are anxious to do everything possible to retain the economic and political contact the Commonwealth affords. Instead of diminishing, Commonwealth solidarity in the postwar years has increased. Throughout the Commonwealth understanding has grown that its continued existence depends not on formal machinery but on discussion and respect for the views of others. The basic feature shared by the great majority of its members is attachment to democratic parliamentary government. At any rate, a belief in the progress to be achieved by working together as a group has resulted in the Commonwealth continuing to survive despite the precariousness of its bonds.

As far as Canada is concerned, the practical nature of this association is nowhere better illustrated than in its relations with India. Canada pioneered in the creation of a Commonwealth within which nations could be free and independent. It approved the grant of Dominion status to India in 1947 and it played an important part in arranging the formula by which, in 1949, India became a republic but remained within the Commonwealth.

The process of becoming acquainted has gone on since, and the same is true for Pakistan. Canada accepted Pakistan

as a new member of the Commonwealth as freely as it did India. Pakistan's founders manifested a high regard for Canadian Constitutional precedents and, though its government has since abandoned democracy, the founding constitution borrowed heavily from that of Canada. So it is seen, as Mr. Pearson has stated in the House of Commons, "The Commonwealth is the most important association through which we work out our foreign policy."<sup>12</sup> The Commonwealth is deep-rooted in our history, but yet sensitive to political evolution. It has no formal machinery or firm commitments but it is a source of political, economic and moral strength and a value to the free world which it has saved from disaster and defeat. Its method of consultation has survived many perils and has been followed by decisions and agreements. The Commonwealth also offers a hope of bringing balance into a world of trade that has become seriously out of balance. It can become a means to a greater end and in a world which could well use its collective thought to promote the happiness and prosperity of mankind. The existence and maintenance of the Commonwealth is a step towards that end and differences in domestic conditions should not prevent a common effort towards it. Practical co-operation should maintain a place in the march towards a more ordered world.

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<sup>12</sup> House of Commons Debates, February 11, 1953, p. 1851.

The emergence of new nations has given constructive grouping, and this link between East and West in a troubled and divided world now has a new and significant value. Canada must retain the contact the Commonwealth affords.

#### 6. "Two-Way" Economic Motivation.

So that the Colombo Plan will not be considered, in the words of the late Sydney Smith, "a hand out rather than a helping hand,"<sup>13</sup> we must look at it more closely for a moment. It is not only, or even primarily an aid programme. It is the sum of the development programmes of the Asian countries which are members of the Plan, and of the aid programmes of the other member countries. It is, as its full title states, a co-operative plan. Furthermore, the major burden of economic development is borne by the Asian countries themselves. They have embarked on programmes of economic development and are working hard to improve their own conditions. This is the essential basis on which the Plan rests.

At the same time they know that they cannot achieve their objectives without the help of their friends - help urgently needed for a number of years to come. Certain economic goals such as higher national production, greater

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<sup>13</sup> House of Commons Debates, November 26, 1957, p. 1516.

capital availability and increased flow of foreign investment and freer trade, will have to be realized before the countries of the area can consider themselves economically self-reliant.

A glance at India will make this clear. On all sides it is agreed that India has immense resources and great possibilities of development. There is within the country an economic upsurge but this is not yet strong enough to overcome the handicap both of a rapidly growing and young population and of a lack of technology and skills. India has pinned its hopes on its own Plans which in themselves are larger than the resources currently available. This is why international aid in all forms is acceptable. The greatest brake on India's economic progress is financial. India cannot finance large development projects out of its own resources. On the other hand a country of the size and prestige of India need not fear that the investment of foreign capital will be a danger to her sovereignty.

Canada, on her part, has important economic interests in the area. It has been estimated that three fourths of the West's supply of strategic materials, such products as natural rubber, manganese and bauxite, come from underdeveloped areas. In addition, a substantial share of the West's total trade is with underdeveloped areas. The loss of these markets would be a substantial one.

The giving of economic aid brings benefit to the giver as well as to the receiver and, if external assistance is to be defined in terms of motives, then it is important to understand what Canadian motives have been. The dominant considerations in the development of the postwar external assistance programmes have been economic; and among the economic factors the promotion of international trade and, therefore, the maintenance of domestic employment have been particularly important. As far back as 1944, the Speech from the Throne pointed out that "during the period of transition, the provision of international relief will help maintain full employment of Canadian manpower and resources."<sup>14</sup> It is also stated that the purpose of the export markets for Canadian products during the transition period was to assist these countries to become continuing customers and suppliers.

Trade has always been an important consideration in the Canadian decisions to extend aid to underdeveloped countries. Early in the Plan an External Affairs press release said that "naturally" it was hoped that the Colombo Plan would "lead eventually to increased trade."<sup>15</sup> Another

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<sup>14</sup> Speech from the Throne, House of Commons Debates, January 21, 1944, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Press Release, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, November 28, 1950, p. 1.

departmental publication stated that technical assistance was regarded as "of particular interest to Canada" because it gives promise, in the long run, of the development of important new markets and the opening up of new sources of raw materials, food, and manufactured articles.<sup>16</sup>

Canadians are not overlooking the commercial possibilities that may occur in the future if adequate assistance is extended now. In an article Asia and Canadian Business, R. G. Cavell, Canada's Colombo Plan administrator, at the time observed:

Schemes of aid, such as the Colombo Plan only scratch the surface and cannot hope to rehabilitate South and South-East Asia; rehabilitation can be accomplished only by the people themselves using all their resources and voluntarily entering the flow of world trade. It is toward this period that the Canadian manufacturer should be planning now. The Asians who have come to Canada to study and to gain industrial experience have made the acquaintance of Canadian engineers and other experts who see the future possibilities of the area for business co-operation with Canadian business and industry.<sup>17</sup>

This same interest in trade, it may be noted, is apparent in Canada's official contacts elsewhere in the Asian area. Canada has trade commissioners at Singapore, Hong Kong

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<sup>16</sup> Canada and Technical Assistance, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, Reference Paper No. 60, January 1952, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> The Business Quarterly, Summer 1954, p. 63.

and Manila and its first ambassador to Indonesia was George Heasman, former director of the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.

Addressing the Royal Commonwealth Society in Toronto in 1962, the Honourable John Diefenbaker used the motive of trade to sell the idea of aid.

We have much to gain by participation in this world-wide enterprise. Those who question the value of expenditure on external aid should not overlook the commercial dividends inherent in the creation of expanding markets. In material terms, aid today can mean increased trade tomorrow. Through generous co-operation we can help ourselves as well as others.<sup>18</sup>

#### 7. Is Economic Motivation Enough?

Mr. R. G. Cavell, Canada's first director of the Colombo Plan wrote, shortly after his appointment in 1952:

The Commonwealth today is one international body which has succeeded in holding together perhaps better than any other, but it cannot continue its influence as a world-stabilizing factor unless the great extremes in the living standards of its member nations are remedied, and that is the main objective of the Colombo Plan.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 62/8.

<sup>19</sup> R. G. Cavell, "Canada and the Colombo Plan", Food For Thought, Vol. 12, No. 4, Toronto, Canadian Association for Adult Education, January 1952, p. 12.

These were the sentiments echoed by most speakers and politicians in the first two years of the Plan. A few months before, one politician, Honourable Mr. Blackmore, had even gone so far as to say that we "must rebuild the Commonwealth to the power of 1914--not by strength of a central body but by the inspiration of the great ideal of gaining freedom and security."<sup>20</sup> Some months later the Honourable Mr. Green extolled the value of the Colombo Plan in terms of the value of the Commonwealth. He recalled the times the Commonwealth had "saved civilization" and calls it "the greatest factor in bringing peace to the world." He continued:

I am interested in another way in which we can help strengthen the Commonwealth. I refer to the Colombo Plan. (...) This policy of strengthening the Commonwealth is wise for Canada for the present and it will be wise for the future. It would help to make Canada a great nation.<sup>21</sup>

In stressing economic motives then, most speakers thought of the Colombo Plan in terms of Commonwealth economics. The Commonwealth provided a framework within which the members could operate their assistance programmes for the economic betterment of Asia and, as a by-product, their own economic advancement. Economic motivation was sufficient to persuade them to give not only material goods, but, more particularly, education, organization and

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20 House of Commons Debates, June 15, 1951, p. 4159.

21 House of Commons Debates, March 25, 1952, p. 768.

encouragement. In fact, these were considered the very best kind of help. This opinion was expressed quite forcibly in an editorial in the Montreal Gazette as recently as the summer of 1959. The editor quoted the figures for both technical and capital assistance and then made the observation that:

All this assistance, important as it is in itself, is an expression of something greater still. The greater fact is that the nations of the Commonwealth, by their diversity, independence and mingled necessities, are members one of another, and must find a confident trust, a sure courtesy, and a thoughtfulness, that such a constructive fellowship is possible in the midst of so troubled and anxious a world.<sup>22</sup>

Thus the ties of the Commonwealth were mentioned in the background when any form of assistance was called for on economic grounds. Nevertheless, it is naive to suppose that the few million Canadians can provide a great economic uplift for the hundreds of millions in the underdeveloped countries of Asia. Our aid can be at best the proverbial "drop in the bucket". Leaning heavily on the historical and sentimental ties of the Commonwealth, Canada embarked, in 1950, on the Colombo Plan. Since then, the Plan has grown and with that growth our motives too have broadened and changed in emphasis.

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22 Montreal Gazette, July 23, 1959, p. 4.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONTINUING MOTIVATION - A WEAPON IN POLITICS

#### 1. Introduction.

Since the beginning of Soviet rule in Russia the question of Russia's attitude towards developing countries has called for an answer. As early as 1921, Lenin, in speech and writing, called for support for new nationalist states even if they were non-Communist. His reasoning was that this would be a means of continuing the Communist revolution. Russia could undermine the economic foundations of imperialism by depriving the imperialists of markets and investments and thus speed the progress of the revolution.

To-day, Soviet leaders are grappling with the same dilemma. Faced with the sharpening challenge of Peking, they must increase their commitments to capture the aspirations and hopes of the developing countries. They have initiated large-scale aid programmes for countries such as India. They have met with some gains and some setbacks but nowhere has their aid been decisive in changing a form of government. Nevertheless we must not underestimate the propaganda value of their aid programme. Their most effective propaganda is not to show the worth of their system; it is to argue that economic aid given by the West simply masks an attempt to

reimpose imperial control by economic means. In Asia where memories of Imperialism are yet vivid, this has a very special ring.

Its (Communist propaganda's) success rests upon an absence of knowledge of Communism. It depends also upon the acceptance of the idea that the free world's only interest in Asia, is a cold-war one, inspired only by military and political considerations, whereas the communist's interest grows straight out of his beliefs and is therefore genuine.<sup>1</sup>

It is to the credit of most of the underdeveloped nations that they continue to pursue their own paths of reform and seek to strengthen a position of non-alignment with either side. Let us look for a moment at the Communist pattern of aid to Asia in order to see how our aid programme can counteract the efforts for the spread of Communism.

## 2. The Change in Communist Policy.

After the death of Stalin, Soviet policy towards the underdeveloped areas of Southeast Asia experienced a drastic and challenging reversal of tactics. Mr. Alvin Rubinstein, writing in the issue of Current History of February 1955, had this to say:

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Hyde, "Communism and the Developing Countries", Christian Responsibility and World Poverty, Newman Press, Maryland, 1963, p. 83.

Upon the present timid and inadequate approach of the United States to the pressing problems of underdeveloped areas, the Soviet Union is carefully preparing the way for eventual Communist control of South-Asia. Through a combination of Western hesitation, a regrettable degree of xenophobic Asian nationalism, and astute Soviet diplomacy, prestige of the U.S.S.R. is on the rise in this crucial area. It is rapidly approaching a position where it may seriously compete with the West for the attention and tacit allegiance of non-Communist Asia.<sup>2</sup>

The writer goes on to say that the Point Four programme of the United States for aid to Asia was, at that time, capturing the interest of the underdeveloped countries. But Russia was entering more into the battle for the minds and hearts of these people. At the previous meetings of United Nations economic bodies the Soviets invariably came out in strong support of the principle of help to less developed countries. Yet, in practice, Russia refused to help institute a working programme of such assistance. The poverty of the Soviet record in the United Nations technical assistance projects up to that time exposed the insincerity of their statements.

The "new look" was evident in the U. N. agencies most concerned with the problems of economic development when, in 1953, Russia made an offer of one million dollars

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<sup>2</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Russia, Southeast Asia and Point Four", Current History, February 1955, p. 103.

in financial aid to the U. N. Technical Assistance programme.

Why this sudden change in the Soviet approach? As Mr.

Rubinstein puts it:

The significance of Soviet participation in the United Nations technical assistance programme cannot be overemphasized. Its purpose is nothing less than the demise of the "Point Four" concept. Realization of this objective would ensure the alienation of East and West. In such an eventuality lies the key to a possible Communist triumph in Asia and Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Following upon this change of tactics were invitations to Russian professors and technical experts to visit in India. At the same time, Indian agricultural experts were invited to agricultural exhibitions in Moscow.

This same pattern of economic inducement has also been held before Indonesia and Burma. In 1953 the Soviet government sent its first ambassador to Indonesia. The Russians granted a large loan for the development of heavy industry in that country and made repeated promises of more trade coupled with free technical assistance.

Burma has been able to exchange its surplus rice for Russian industrial goods. Loans at low interest rates have been advanced to Asia and Russian oil has been offered. Statistics show that the Russians have, trained and available, the proffered technicians.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 107

It must be kept in mind that the long-term objectives of Soviet foreign policy remain unchanged. However, the shifting pattern of Soviet tactics requires a corresponding flexibility on the part of the West. Soviet leadership seeks to undermine the non-Communist world by an illusory co-operativeness. Only through a Western-supported expansion of United Nations technical assistance activities can the underdeveloped nations of Southeast Asia be enabled to perceive the true character of Soviet policy and intent.

### 3. The Political Scene in Asia.

In Asia in 1953 two great experiments were going on; in China, six hundred million people were trying to raise their standard of living by following the ways of Russia; in India, four hundred million were trying to accomplish the same goal by parliamentary democracy. The whole of Asia was watching, and continues to watch, to see which will do most for its people in the shortest time. The great Western economist and writer, Barbara Ward, writing in the Atlantic of February 1955, said it thus:

The polarization of Asian ambition between India and China is perhaps the dominant political fact in Asia today. The success of one method or the other will set the pattern for Asia. Even their relative speed of development is being watched searchingly in order to determine which model is to be preferred. Western policy-makers, however, appear to have been working on the supposition that the outlook for Asia is reasonably secure. At least that is the only assumption that seems to explain the relative lack of any clear Western policy.<sup>4</sup>

Asia in 1953 was characterized by much civil unrest, especially in India and Pakistan, attributed largely to economic depression. The countries were unable to produce their own requirements of food grains. The cities were crowded with a floating population of unskilled unemployables. For all these, external defences appeared less important than economic peril. Poverty and economic backwardness were prime reasons for giving priority to social and economic problems rather than political ones. The increase in population without a balance in the increase in cultivable land or an increase in capital investment all added to the tremendous pressure of the poverty-stricken. There was a growing awareness among the leaders of a need for extensive agrarian reform as well as for rapid industrialization if the deterioration in the standard of living was even to be checked. In some Asian countries these conditions

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<sup>4</sup> Barbara Ward, "Asia's Needs and Western Policy", Atlantic, No. 197, February 1956, p. 44.

led to unstable and uncertain governments and these in turn discouraged the investment of private capital.

In these social and economic conditions the communists poured out their propaganda which represented Western policies as reactionary or as designed to revive Western economic or political control. Mr. Norman D. Harper, an Australian professor and lecturer, explained the move of Asian nationalism towards Communism in these terms:

The initial success, and the tremendous propaganda value, of Russia's Asian policies of racial equality enhanced the attraction of socialism and communism for the middle class intelligentsia who so often led the nationalist movements. Much of the thinking was emotional, some of it appeared naive and irrational. But the cumulative effect was important in accentuating the leftward trend.<sup>5</sup>

Another consideration worth noting here is that, while Western leaders may sometimes be accused of exaggerating the threat of Communism, most Asians are inclined to underestimate the same threat or even deny that it exists. Many intellectuals, particularly Indians, do not understand why we are so concerned. The evidence of this faith in peaceful co-existence in high places was given in the declaration issued in June 1954 by Chou-en-Lai of China and the late Prime Minister Nehru of India. Nehru and his

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<sup>5</sup> Norman D. Harper, "Reorientation in Asia and the Pacific", International Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1952, p. 99.

followers seemed convinced that the communists were interested in security and had abandoned their founding doctrine of expansion and world domination. On the other hand, Indians have retained much of their fear of Western colonialism and they are not so sure that Western powers have changed their imperialist attitudes. In August 1954, Nehru, in a major address on foreign policy, declared:

We talk about the crisis of our time and many people do it in different ways. Probably in the United States the crisis of the time is supposed to be communism versus anti-communism. Maybe so to some extent. Well, the crisis of the time in Asia is colonialism versus anti-colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

This prevailing fear gives the communists a certain psychological advantage in Asia. They point with pride to the tremendous strides made in the Soviet Union. Through this propaganda Indians and their leaders cannot see Communism as a threat.

Yet, India, as a nation contiguous to Communist powers, must seek a suitable accommodation. It is vital for the West to appreciate the dilemma. While Indian leaders are "men of the West" they are much impressed by rapid Soviet industrialization. Indian students, professors and experts now visit Russia at Soviet expense and this

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<sup>6</sup> As quoted in, "The United States and India", Current History, January 1955, p. 44.

rapprochement may make an indelible impression on India's leaders.

The West must not underestimate the plausibility of Russian propaganda. To these areas, Russia stands as an example of a country that successfully made the transition from a poor, underdeveloped, peasant economy to a large-scale industrial nation in a short period of time. This is a convincing argument to a poor country unable to appreciate the disadvantages of the Soviet's totalitarian methods. Where seventy per cent of the people are landless peasants, a promise of land is more appealing than a promise of free speech. As Director Cavell pointed out by quoting Confucius, "an empty stomach does not dwell on high principles"<sup>7</sup>, the great task facing the governments of Southeast Asia is to feed, house and clothe their poor people.

#### 4. The Change in Motivation of the Commonwealth Plan.

While it is true that the Commonwealth Colombo Plan was in operation before the Communist change of Asian policy, a more pronounced political motive can be discerned in the speeches of politicians and civic and social leaders after 1953. In September of that year, Mr. R. G. (Nik) Cavell, a director of a division of the Canadian Trade and

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<sup>7</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 57/29.

Commerce Department, addressed a meeting of the Canadian Exporters' Association in Toronto:

The responsibility must be shared by the whole free world if that world is to be kept in being and strengthened to the point where it is practically unassailable by sheer weight of numbers and the strong cement of a grim determination to be free and to preserve all that human freedom means. A hungry man will follow any banner that has the word "food" written on it.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Cavell goes on to remind Canadians that this is one phase of their fight for freedom. We can build a free world and make it strong with the strength that only freedom can give but we must make sacrifices so that some day we and the Asians can look at our children and know they will never be slaves of a totalitarian state.

The Bank of Nova Scotia Review for May 1954 described the difficulties of our aid programme of that time in the following terms:

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<sup>8</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 53/19.

The process of economic development is not easy. Some areas simply do not have many resources to develop. Social and cultural factors effect the desire and capacity of countries. Density of population may be a matter of concern. They are all short of capital and trained people. It is because of these factors that the Communist approach has considerable appeal. Under it, development plans can be more thoroughly controlled, consumption more readily restrained and savings forcibly mobilized. With more domestic capital, mutual accommodation with foreign peoples and ideas may appear less necessary.<sup>9</sup>

More and more the authorities and leaders of the fifties came to look upon our aid programme as one of our most important weapons in the ideological struggle for men's minds. Mr. Cavell, himself, by this time the director for the Colombo Plan, pointed out in speech after speech that we were in the midst of the struggle to safeguard human beings "in the preservation of their human rights". Over and over he explained the dreadful hardship of the people of Asia and the impossibility of maintaining a stable and safe international situation while a great sector of the world was starving. His rallying cry was that we had to fight the communists with food and machinery and that eventually it was human freedom that was at stake. In his own words:

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<sup>9</sup> "International Investment for Development", Bank of Nova Scotia Review, May 1954, p. 1.

We have much to offer even if all we do is point the way for our Asian friends to the achievement of a way of life which has as its base the freedom of the human being (...) but first must come enough food. (...) The continuance of our freedom depends on our ability to enlarge and make secure a free world which must of course include our Asian brothers on a basis of brotherhood and equality. It is up to us who are free and very wealthy compared to Asian standards to develop that understanding and intellectual grasp which will enable us to give enlightened help to Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup>

The same emphasis on the political aspect of aid was continued throughout the later years of the fifties and in other Western countries as well as in Canada. In a publication entitled Economic Development Abroad, published in February 1956 by the Committee of Economic Development in New York, we read:

Accelerated economic development can make the Southeast Asian peasant a less vulnerable target for the Commies. There is little evidence that the peasant in Asia is concerned with political ideologies. He seems to follow Communist leadership only if he feels that no one else is doing anything about his economic distress. There is every reason to believe his economic needs can be met peaceably by agrarian reform and by improvements in agricultural productivity.<sup>11</sup>

To return again to Canada, we find that as we move into the sixties our Conservative Prime Minister, Mr.

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<sup>10</sup> R. G. (Nik) Cavell, Address to Workers of Photographic Survey Corporation Limited, Press Release, Toronto, October 21, 1955.

<sup>11</sup> Economic Development Abroad, New York Committee of Economic Development, February 1956, p. 6.

Diefenbaker, hardly speaks of foreign aid without calling it "our weapon against Communism". Many times he reminds the Canadian people and their politicians that we are all faced with "a colossus which seeks what it considers the inevitable defeat of democracy"<sup>12</sup> but that, with the aid programmes, we have in our hands the power to abolish human poverty and so save the world for democracy. Thus he addresses the parliamentarians in mid-1961:

Communism does not understand any other principle than power. Communism does not believe in an immortal being who determines the course of mankind, even though sometimes taking generations to do so. We do, and if we do our part now without permitting ourselves to be intimidated I think there is the possibility we shall be laying the foundations for a new relationship between the communist world and the world of freedom.<sup>13</sup>

Nor was this predominant political motivation under the exclusive jurisdiction of the party in power. On this point the opposition parties were usually in agreement though they would only admit it grudgingly. They did manage to find arguments on what should be sent but not on why it should. For speaker after speaker to abolish misery is to do away with Communism. For most this was not a well reasoned out philosophy but rather an appeal which was keyed

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<sup>12</sup> John G. Diefenbaker, Address to Kiwanis Club of Toronto, Press Release, Toronto, July 3, 1961.

<sup>13</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 61/25.

to the temper of the time and an attempt to win support both at home and abroad. The important point is that the threat of Communism was, for all parties, a sufficient motive for providing aid. The very freedom of the world depended on economic liberation and this was the challenge of our time. There was a direct relationship between the amount of our aid and the improvement in world political conditions and aid was in our own self-interest in so far as it would help protect our own standard of living. There was no attempt at any distinction between the efforts to advance freedom and the attempts to hold back Communism.

If we do not want to have communism, let us fight it with a better idea, one which, while guaranteeing security and freedom, will be such as to make freedom felt.<sup>14</sup>

#### 5. Can our Plan do the Job?

If we examine the Plan as now constituted we can say without fear of error that it is far from adequate to do the job expected of it. In fact, according to the economist Barbara Ward, all the aid programmes combined are deficient, especially in the field of technical assistance in which the Communist powers have taken a decisive advantage.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Statement of Honourable Mr. Caouette, House of Commons Debates, January 25, 1963, p. 3140.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Ward, Op. Cit., p. 45.

In the field of technical assistance there are just not enough experts available. In the first four years of its operation the Colombo Plan secretariat could satisfy only half the requests sent to it for expert advice and for opportunities for training abroad. Not only quantity is far below needs but the quality also at times leaves something to be desired. Many of those who volunteered for the Colombo Plan had little more than the required goodwill. This is especially so since any worthwhile assistance would entail a stay in Asia of at least five years.

In the field of capital assistance the figures show that if we wished to realize a modest increase of one per cent in per capita income in India we would need fresh capital investment of almost six billion a year. To achieve anything close to this would be impossible with the Plan's present budget.

The greatest requirement in most of the under-developed countries is the development of the basic resources of power and transportation and in very few cases are these open to private investment even if the money were available. These must be the undertakings of the donor governments. In the field of smaller investments there would have to be some very real incentives to bring private capital investment into the area. There are opportunities for investment in Canada itself and these are looked upon as more secure, as

well as more profitable. At a round table discussion during a Canadian conference on Aid to Underdeveloped Countries:

The point was stressed that the mere voting of funds does not insure the success of a capital development programme. Experience has shown that the scale of aid is determined by a complicated process of weighing needs, resources, and capabilities. While the needs within underdeveloped areas are virtually without limit, there are limitations to the way in which money can be spent effectively.<sup>16</sup>

Basic economic reforms and the inauguration of extensive educational programmes to prepare populations overwhelmingly illiterate would be prerequisites to the successful functioning of democratic institutions. This economic development cannot be imposed or imported. It must be self-generating and in harmony with local conditions. Outside assistance is most effective when it provides something which is lacking. It may even be a drawback if it acts to retard utilization of existing resources.

The task then is stupendous. Someone has likened it to "rebuilding a house when all the rooms are filled with people". The sum total of Canada's aid could have only a marginal influence on Asian politics and must be considered as symbolic of our own hopes for freedom in a troubled world. Nevertheless politicians at home have used this motive as a

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<sup>16</sup> Report of Conference on Canadian Aid to Underdeveloped Countries, United Nations Association of Canada, Ottawa, 1955, p. 28.

rallying cry in every effort to gain support for the aid programme. Anti-Communism and the advancement of freedom have been equated and poverty alone has been made the cause of Communism. "Wherever poverty and famine reign the future of freedom is in jeopardy. Living standards must be raised."<sup>17</sup>

The most that can be said then, is that aid can be a weapon in the cold war and we cannot afford not to use it. As a member of the community of nations we must be concerned with the maintenance of political stability in Asia. The people there are at the cross-roads; the direction they take will depend in some part on the practical co-operation they receive from the more industrialized and economically advanced countries of the West. Canada can at least give a proof of the values of democracy by lending a helping hand to the Asian peoples in their own tremendous efforts to improve their living standards. We agreed at Colombo that the forces of totalitarian expansionism could not be stopped in South Asia by military force alone. The same theme was continued at the London meeting:

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<sup>17</sup> Honourable J. G. Diefenbaker, Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 62/8.

The improvement in the welfare of South and South-East Asian peoples is a vast human endeavour, and the community of free nations stands to gain immensely by it. The political stability of the countries of the area is possible only in conditions of economic progress and a steady flow of capital from more highly developed countries is essential for the purpose.<sup>18</sup>

The Colombo Plan as it has been put into operation is only a good beginning. After fourteen years we are far from our goal. The lack of order and stability in Asia is still a major threat to peace. The revolt in Asia continues and nationalist movements there are still concerned with the overthrow of medieval structures. It will take much more aid, and many more years of it before we can say of Asia what the Honourable Mr. Diefenbaker said of Europe: "Even people living in the Communist world, as they become prosperous, lose their fanatical adherence to Communism."<sup>19</sup>

#### 6. What Can be Done by the West?

In the cold war between Russian imperialism and the Western democracies there is a tendency to see Asia and the Asian national states as pawns in the game of power politics. We must not evaluate Asian movements in terms of European

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<sup>18</sup> The Colombo Plan, Report of Commonwealth Consultative Committee, London, 1950, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Honourable J. G. Diefenbaker, Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 63/6.

politics. With the anti-imperialist origin of much of Asian nationalism, there has been in Asia an almost fanatical rejection of foreign investment as an aid to economic planning. Yet the urgency of capital investment is obvious. There is an almost morbid fear of restoring Western economic imperialism. Yet foreign aid programmes have to be initiated. The greatest lesson to be learned is that any attempt to attach political or economic strings to our aid would be fatal. There is real danger that economic assistance as a weapon in global power politics could result in the alignment of nationalist Asia with the Communist camp.

The surest way to lose India is to attempt to buy her. (...) If India can solve her pressing economic and social problems - which is a condition for making India work - she can easily rank with the United States as the most powerful democratic influence in the world. The fate of the experiment in India may well determine the fate of democracy the world over.<sup>20</sup>

If Canadians are to play a fruitful part in this experiment, we must accept the need for action and we must draw up a clear, definite, adequate policy. This means that we must, above all, accept the principle of aid.

Then we must endeavour to look at the experiment not only from our point of view but from the side of the

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<sup>20</sup> Escott Reid, "Report from India", Ottawa Journal, May 16, 1955, p. 4.

recipients as well. There are facts of history and tradition which we must keep in mind when we set out to offer a helping hand to the developing nations. Chester Bowles, in his book, Ideas, People and Peace, summarizes the facts which must govern our thinking under these headings:

1. The profound difference in the conditions under which both the West and Russia achieved industrial power and the conditions now facing the newly emerging nations.

2. The hostility and resentment many leaders of these new nations feel toward both nuclear giants who, in their minds, threaten to blow the world to bits with their clashing ambitions.

3. The pride that Asians take in their own civilizations, which leads them naturally to develop in their own ways or at least to follow the examples of their own kind.<sup>21</sup>

The lesson to be learned is that the Asians will not automatically turn to us because we know we have a better system. Neither will they be bribed into joining us. At the same time we cannot afford to sit back and let the communists make the effort. This is a chance which we must not take. At the Canadian Conference on International Development Programmes held in Toronto in 1956, an Indian delegate explained his country's position in this way:

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<sup>21</sup> Chester Bowles, Ideas, People and Peace, Harper Brothers, New York, 1958, p. 61.

Of course we had the thought that we should not in any way be compelled to change our domestic policies by reason of the availability of foreign assistance. In short, that there should be no strings attached to the aid, and under the Colombo Plan as you know, we have received very large assistance which has certainly, as far as I can see, been completely devoid of strings. There are people who see strings everywhere but those may be invisible strings. I don't see them myself. We have also had the thought that, however tempting it might be, we should not join any military pact, we should not let some other country take care of our defence requirements and we would not accept external assistance for purposes of that sort because we feel we are entitled to seek peace each in his own way.<sup>22</sup>

An accentuation of the political motives behind the Colombo Plan may be reflected in the type of projects chosen under the aid scheme. Political objectives are best achieved by those projects which have more popular appeal or more colour but may not bring economic advancement. In the beginning of the 1960's the Canadian government of John Diefenbaker introduced into the Plan a programme which had neither a political nor an economic motive which could be justified unless considered from the point of view of Canadian economics. Canada began to use the Colombo Plan as an opportunity to dispose of farm surpluses. To use the Plan for welfare aid is to destroy its purpose. The Colombo

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<sup>22</sup> C. V. Narasimhan, "The Indian Approach to External Assistance", Canada and International Development Programmes, United Nations Association of Canada, Ottawa, 1956, p. 19.

Plan should be confined to capital goods and technical skills, so that the recipient countries can lay the basis for their own development as industrial nations. If these countries need extra food because of famine conditions, it should be sent as a gift, not under the Plan. Food is not part of a technical aid programme. The Canadian leaders justified the move by explaining that the recipient countries would set up "counterpart funds". This was local currency to the value of the Canadian goods and it had to be spent on development projects approved by Canada.

An editorial in the Ottawa Citizen in 1962 pointed to the fallacy of this arrangement.

Counterpart funds set up by, say Ceylon or India consist of local currency to be spent locally. But the whole point of the Colombo Plan is to provide foreign currency or credits to be spent abroad. India's counterpart funds cannot be spent in Canada to buy technical skills or locomotives. (...) It is therefore an error to say that the export of foodstuffs to the Colombo Plan countries is a device which adheres to the basic objectives of the Colombo Plan.<sup>23</sup>

This type of assistance cannot be justified on political or on any other grounds. If it is supposed to be economic it is for our own economics and our motivation is entirely selfish.

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<sup>23</sup> Ben Malkin, Editorial, Ottawa Citizen, January 16, 1962.

One of the major problems we must face if we are to motivate our aid programme with political strings is that it will be necessary to conceal our motives. Put very simply, "we cannot buy friends."<sup>24</sup> For this reason, the government assistance might of necessity take an indirect form. This is a practically unexplored field. The government could devise inducements and safeguards needed to persuade private capital to risk the hazards of Asia. Private enterprise could also do something on its own initiative. Western business could offer guarantees to the Asian countries - guarantees of local training and promotion of local officials. This was begun a long time ago by the British and so could easily be formalized and extended.

On the other hand, India's ordering of goods from Communist countries should receive serious consideration by Western governments. It would be folly for us to grant huge loans to be spent in Communist countries. If Communist power grows in India, Western money alone will not reverse the trend. Should we, or must we, then, attach political strings to our assistance to the underdeveloped?

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<sup>24</sup> Nathan Keyfits, "Foreign Aid Can Be Rational", International Journal, Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer 1962, p. 237.

## 7. Political Motivation Declines.

The evidence points to a decline in political motivation as Canadian leaders were faced with the dilemma of either masking the political undertones or of attaching political strings to their aid. At the same time the cold war became something to live with more than something to fight against. In the early nineteen sixties we find many speakers expressing doubt that the political motive would suffice. They hesitate to drop it entirely but they make every effort to make it more altruistic. At times some concern is expressed over the disillusionment experienced by the United States in their efforts at assisting others.<sup>25</sup> At other times, Canada is coupled with the Soviets instead of against them in the struggle for the minds and hearts of the natives of underdeveloped Asia.

I think that the chief co-operative task facing the so-called civilized world, including the Soviets, and which the whole world should undertake together is to see that the legitimate aspirations of those people are fulfilled. It is a problem in which everyone of us should take an interest, to see what he can do and how he can share in it.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Statement by Honourable L. B. Pearson, House of Commons Debates, September 11, 1961, p. 8199.

<sup>26</sup> Statement by Honourable Mr. Boulanger, House of Commons Debates, April 27, 1961, p. 4063.

During the very same debate another Commons member expressed the decline in political motivation and introduced the new one this way:

We should do what we can to stamp out some of the causes of war, and I refer to the unrest and dissatisfaction that grow among people who are hungry, ill-housed and illiterate. To this I would join the reason that we help these people on humanitarian grounds.<sup>27</sup>

As recently as 1963 there were still those who maintained that the political motivation alone was sufficient to sustain and increase our aid programme but these were a shrinking minority. Honourable Mr. Douglas, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, expressed their ideas:

If the world is to have any hope of living at peace, then we must be prepared to spend more money assisting these underdeveloped areas. In the long run this will do more to maintain peace in the world than will the billions of dollars which the western world is spending on armaments. (...) We contend that the best hope of future generations living in peace lies in this kind of aid, and that we ought to be diverting more of our money in this direction.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the more general opinion was that peace was not the only objective to be emphasized. Speaking at an Athletic Day Luncheon at the Canadian National

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<sup>27</sup> Statement by Honourable Mr. Stinson, House of Commons Debates, April 27, 1961, p. 4062.

<sup>28</sup> House of Commons Debates, November 14, 1963, p. 4719.

Exhibition in Toronto in August 1963, the Secretary of State, Honourable Paul Martin, expressed the dilemma this way:

We shall have to ponder very carefully whether an answer to the rising power of Asian Communism is to be found in its further isolation and containment, or whether it lies in broadening contacts at a variety of levels in an endeavour to penetrate the curtain of ignorance and blunt the edge of ideological difference.<sup>29</sup>

The problem expressed in these words conveys a kind of premonition that the rallying cry of the weapon against Communism does not suffice to convince all, people and politicians alike, that the sacrifices necessary for foreign aid must be continued indefinitely. Another motive, not political, had to be found.

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<sup>29</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 63/17.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRESENT MOTIVATION - HUMANITARIANISM

#### 1. Introduction.

The present motivation of the Colombo Plan was best analyzed by our present Secretary of State for External Affairs, Honourable Paul Martin, in an address delivered in February 1965 and referred to earlier. In his own words:

For my part, I have no hesitation in saying that I regard humanitarian considerations to be foremost in the minds of those who have supported and sustained the principle of Canadian aid to the developing countries. The humanitarian approach to foreign aid is itself compounded of a number of factors which defy separate analysis. In essence I would say it rests upon the recognition that, as flagrant disparities in human wealth and human welfare are no longer morally acceptable within a single community, whether it be local or national, the same principle is applicable to the larger world community.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Martin closed this particular address with the following judgment:

The claim is sometimes made that man's scientific progress has outpaced his moral capacity to measure up to his responsibilities in a changing world. There is something to that claim but I would like to think that in this matter of foreign aid we are at least beginning to take the measure of the changing world around us.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 65/2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

A leading politician then has definitely taken the stand that our foreign aid programme must not rest upon economic or political motives but upon our acceptance of the moral responsibilities of helping those in need. It has taken some time for these ideas to develop and to find acceptance. In the beginning of the 1960's humanitarianism was advocated but even this was discussed primarily from the point of view of self-interest. It is found, for example, in the House debates in the spring of 1963 when the government decided that our aid plans should include, for a second time, the sending of surplus wheat to needy countries, there was unanimous agreement among the political parties in the House and there was an effort on the part of many speakers to justify the action as being humanitarian. The Honourable Mr. Gelber said it this way:

In a world where starvation is the primary fact of life for more than half the human race we cannot be unmindful of the needs of under-developed countries. We can assist them to solve their problems.<sup>3</sup>

Previous to this debate there had been lone voices that were bold enough to dwell upon "our moral obligation", even while including the much more prevalent political and economic motives. The words of the Honourable Mr. Stinson illustrate the mixture.

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<sup>3</sup> House of Commons Debates, May 28, 1963, p. 380.

We should do what we can to stamp out the causes of war, and I refer to the unrest and dissatisfaction that grow among people who are hungry, ill-housed and illiterate. To this I would join the reason that we help these people on humanitarian grounds.<sup>4</sup>

The same day and during the course of the same debate, the Honourable Mr. Lafrenière made the call strictly a humanitarian one:

Nowadays, thanks to transport facilities, to the speed of information, the people of the world are closer to one another. Members of the great human family now live under the same roof and eat at the same table. But we still have to deplore the fact that two thirds of the human beings on earth are living in hunger and poverty; here is the question that must be asked: how much longer will members of the same family tolerate that some live in wealth and luxury, while others are collapsing under the burden of misery and hunger?<sup>5</sup>

The same motivation was termed a moral argument by the Honourable Mr. MacDonnell a few days later:

I pause on the moral argument. If we had these miserable people living within our sight we could not stand it of course. Being compassionate people we must act on that basis. (...) We should be deeply concerned about these people so that they can work out their economic salvation.<sup>6</sup>

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4 House of Commons Debates, April 27, 1961, p. 4062.

5 Ibid., p. 4064.

6 House of Commons Debates, May 4, 1961, p. 4331.

Perhaps the hesitancy in the acceptance of a changing motivation was best illustrated by the words of the Honourable Mr. Pearson the same year:

We cannot expect to get any results from economic assistance which is given to countries because we hope that by giving assistance they will line up with us in the cold war. I think we have made a good deal of progress in the last few years in that regard. We help these countries because it is a good thing for us to do; it is a good thing for the peace of the world, and because the world is one. Indeed the world cannot exist half poverty stricken and half on affluent society.<sup>7</sup>

The humanitarian motive, then, becomes more and more prominent in the present decade. Though it was mentioned by some from the very inception of the Colombo Plan, it is only in the 1960's that it has become the prevailing and persuasive incentive held out to Canadian citizens as the primary reason for helping the "have-not" nations. Let us look for a moment at the progressive development of the humanitarian motivation.

## 2. Emerging Humanitarianism.

Mr. Guy Wint, an authority on the history of Asia, writing in the book British in India, tells us that the Commonwealth's Colombo Plan has been denounced by the Communist radio broadcasts. Then he goes on to say:

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<sup>7</sup> House of Commons Debates, September 11, 1961, p. 8199.

Though by what they say about the Plan, the Communists seem to regard it as directed against themselves, it has in fact very little to do with Communism. It is wrong to think that it was planned as an answer to Communism at all. The Plan expressed the creative vigor and sense of responsibility of the new governments. It responded to the demands of their peoples. It was forced on the governments by their grave long-term prospects. So far from the plan being an anti-communist conspiracy inspired by America, the great difficulty has been to secure America's effective interest.<sup>8</sup>

An editorial in the Ottawa Citizen of February 17, 1951, quotes the above and goes on to say that there are very strong arguments that the Colombo scheme should be undertaken for broad humanitarian reasons.<sup>9</sup>

The author then qualifies his statement by saying that our foreign aid programmes may still be considered as competition with the communists in so far as they are based, on the principle that economic advance is possible under a system of liberal government and by use of capital borrowed at home and abroad. The communists also set their sights on economic advancement, but by another method, by capital raised from forced savings. They too must sacrifice in the present to achieve the prosperity of the future. Which

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<sup>8</sup> Guy Wint, British in Asia, London, Faber and Faber, 1954, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> Ottawa Citizen, February 17, 1951, p. 4.

system will prove more effective? They are being anxiously scrutinized and compared.

Mr. Wint has said that the Colombo Plan expresses the creative vigour and sense of responsibility of the new governments. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent of Canada took up this idea in addressing the members of the Parliament of India on February 23, 1954:

Few events of recent years have so caught the imagination of Canadians as the emergence of India as a free nation with democratic parliamentary institutions much like our own. We have watched with special interest your struggles for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, whose inspiration has spread far beyond the bounds of this country. And we were glad that the struggle ended to use Mr. Nehru's words, "graciously, gracefully and with a minimum of bitterness." As such it marked the beginning of a new understanding based on equality, friendship and mutual high regard.<sup>10</sup>

The Prime Minister went on to tell the Indian Members that Canadians were watching their successive achievements in welding India into a single political entity, in framing and adopting a national constitution. Indian leaders also came in for praise for their efforts to improve economic conditions through the Five Year Plans.

Of the working people in Southeast Asia to-day, at least seventy per cent are engaged in agriculture and the

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<sup>10</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 54/14.

standard of living is very low. Historians tell us that in many respects the conditions resemble those in Great Britain and other Western countries before the industrial revolution. The Western nations have made rapid economic progress since that time and the progress has been attributed to a marked expansion of their manufacturing industries. To-day the lion's share of the world's output of manufactured goods is produced by a comparatively few countries and these same countries are the wealthiest in the world. It seems natural, then, to assume that the road to progress for Asia lies in industrialization. This opinion is strengthened by the problem of overpopulation on the land.

Neither the Colombo Plan nor all the other plans together can accomplish, at the rate they now operate, the job there is to do. But this does not mean that we cannot help the Asians to do it themselves. John Kerry King, writing in South East Asia in Perspective, explains it this way:

For South East Asia the substance of economic progress cannot be imported, rather it must be generated from within their societies. It is better to stimulate their own economic growth and to foster social change than for us to set up artificial or transplanted methods for economic development.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Kerry King, South East Asia in Perspective, New York, Macmillan Co., 1956, p. 103.

In this undertaking all the Western powers could have a hand and it could be realized. If we would set ourselves a basic long-term objective of the growth of a series of independent, democratically oriented and reasonably strong states in Asia we could reap political and economic by-products. But they must be by-products and not objectives. Mr. King maintains that basically the Colombo Plan could work with this format. It enjoys high prestige and confidence among the Asian members. We must now set about giving these people a sense of personal and national economic growth and progress through their own national governments and we must foster the people's participation in government activities. Most of these countries already have the natural resource potential and their people are capable of energetic and sustained activity when they are motivated. The most humanitarian act we could perform would be to provide the motivation and set the foundation for a partnership in progress.

### 3. The New Concept of Humanitarianism.

The last twenty years have completely shattered the world in which we live. Writers and speakers of our time repeat the cliché of the shrinking globe. Airplane, radio and television have given us neighbours all over the world. Through these same media our neighbours learn of our

standard of living while they live in poverty. Members of the great human family now live under the same roof and eat at the same table. Yet two thirds of this family is living in hunger and poverty. How long will the members of the family tolerate these conditions?

As long ago as 1938 Jacques Maritain quoted a loyal Soviet communist as declaring that: "for the first time in history the truth of man's love has been brought into action as a creative force, having for its aim the emancipation of workers". With Maritain, we may at least disagree with the motive of this love. Then the great French thinker continues:

The social consciousness which was more or less lacking in the Christian world at the beginnings of the modern period, is at long last coming into existence. This is a phenomenon of considerable importance, all the more so as this consciousness is informed and will be more and more informed by a just understanding of modern history and its normal processes which were vitiated yesterday by capitalist materialism and are vitiated today by the Communist materialism which has succeeded it.<sup>12</sup>

This new twentieth century social consciousness should recognize that the poor anywhere in the world have never won justice. More than that, it should keep us from being complacently resigned to this fact. It should rouse us to action to do our part towards seeing that people not only at home, but in Asia as well, are helped in finding a good and decent living.

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<sup>12</sup> Jacques Maritain, True Humanism, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1938, p. 112.

In a news bulletin published by the Institute for International Education in New York in February 1953 the great historian of our own time, Arnold Toynbee, is quoted as suggesting that our age will be remembered:

(...) not for its horrifying crimes or its astonishing inventions but because it is the first age since the dawn of history in which mankind dared to believe it practicable to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race.<sup>13</sup>

Closer to home, Senator David Croll of Canada, in a speech to the United Nations on January 8, 1957, said:

International economic assistance is a new idea, the free giving of aid from one sovereign country to another sovereign country is a recent development and can almost be considered to have begun after the end of the Second World War with the generous program of assistance to Europe known as the Marshall Plan. It is important, therefore to maintain and protect this new idea in the hope that it will develop into a secure basis for international co-operation and peaceful progress.<sup>14</sup>

A consciousness of the disparity in living standards between nations has also been manifest in the work of the International Bank and the United Nations programmes. More than this, there has been at least a sporadic effort to do something to fill the gap. Out of the troubled postwar

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<sup>13</sup> News Bulletin, Institute of International Education, New York, February 1953, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 57/5.

period has grown a new concept in international co-operation - the concept that countries which are more highly developed materially should co-operate with those which are less advanced in their techniques for improving the economic conditions of their people. Canada was among the first to subscribe to this new concept.

In 1961 the Colombo Plan committee published a special issue of the Colombo Plan Broadsheet to commemorate ten years of successful international co-operation under the Plan.

In the world in which we live it is not only the obligation of, but as well, the interest of the economically more advanced and prosperous nations to extend the hand of friendship and assistance to other nations whose people are less fortunately placed than their own. (...) In the history of mankind there has probably never been as great a need as there is to-day to seek to comprehend and acknowledge that mankind is one human family destined to live together or struggle against one another with untold and devastating consequences for us all. The Plan represents a small but tremendously important part of human endeavour to achieve international human fellowship which, despite national characteristics, must exist between all peoples.<sup>15</sup>

Put in a more homely fashion by a member of our government in the early stages of the Plan it was phrased something like: "They are the people across the tracks, we are the

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<sup>15</sup> Sir Percy Spender, Colombo Plan Broadsheet, Special Issue, October 1961, p. 3.

house on the hill."<sup>16</sup> We must show our genuine regard for those neighbours and a deep understanding of their problems.

In 1962, Paul G. Hoffman, "the man behind the Marshall Plan", published a book entitled World Without Want. He speaks of this new Christian Consciousness:

The industrially advanced nations are undergoing a process of awakening. We are learning to pay attention to the demands of the rest of the world (...) responsibility for the headlong plunge that the backward nations wish to take into the twentieth century is primarily theirs, but they need help. If, through their own efforts plus the needed external assistance, these people do achieve better lives, the world may become a safer and happier place than anyone has dared to hope.<sup>17</sup>

So the concept of helping whole nations to improve their lot through economic development is a product of this generation. It proceeds from changed attitudes towards poverty and exploration of resources at home. Industrialized nations must accept the task of speeding development of backward countries as an objective worthy of achievement for its own sake. In the past, foreign aid may have been considered a weapon in the cold war but we now realize that a programme for development of the underdeveloped areas would be necessary without a cold war. Hunger should be disturbing

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<sup>16</sup> Mr. Graydon, House of Commons Debates, October 22, 1951, p. 260.

<sup>17</sup> Paul G. Hoffman, World Without Want, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, p. 19.

in any type of world. The demands of the ill-fed and illiterate would be as great and our obligations as real. As underdeveloped nations emerge, their people and ours must develop a new vision of humanity. It has never been clearer in history that all men are brothers. The economic and scientific facts of to-day's world point unfailingly to total interdependence. We must struggle together toward mutual respect and a common dedication to common constructive goals. We are prepared to co-operate in the United Nations in order to keep the peace; let us begin to really co-operate to build up the peace and thus to guarantee it. As the Honourable Mr. Diefenbaker expressed it in January 1960:

For too long, diplomacy, and what we have erroneously called foreign affairs have been associated predominantly with power politics and selfish national policies. Today they are being associated with human welfare and economic betterment. There is no limit to the distance the world can travel along this road.<sup>18</sup>

So we have before us a great ideal, a world-wide effort to reduce the poverty, ill-health and ignorance that slow down humanity's advance. In 1950, when the Colombo Plan was first conceived, there were many who spoke of the Plan purely as a humanitarian project. They spoke of the needs and the burdens of suffering humanity and of the moral

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<sup>18</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 60/4.

obligation of the more fortunate to come to the aid of those who struggled. Mr. Hugh Keenleyside, the director of Technical Assistance Programmes of the United Nations, expressed in these words the sentiments of most Canadians:

As long as any human being anywhere needs shelter, so long as anyone anywhere lacks fuel or clothing or food so long will the demand for Canadian products and services persist. Our forests, our fields, our lakes and seas provide a vast store of renewable resources, on which we may draw to satisfy the elementary needs of the men, women and children of every land. As the trustees of a great inheritance we have a responsibility as well as an opportunity. The responsibility is to the people of the world who urgently need the resources with which we have been so generously endowed. The opportunity is to meet this need.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is that, in keeping with the progress in science and technology, we must make progress in a Christian democratic outlook towards those about us who need our assistance, and who know that we have it to give. The help extended to underdeveloped countries must not be considered, by them or by us, as charity inspired by sympathy or pity. It must be given, and be considered, as an exchange of friendly services which will be profitable to both parties.

It is the principle of aid that needs to be accepted. Why are the countries of the West assisting the countries of South and Southeast Asia and other areas? For our part

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<sup>19</sup> H. L. Keenleyside, "The International Significance of Canadian Resources", International Journal, Spring 1950, p. 120.

perhaps the motive is not very important. But for the new nations of the East it is basic. Automatically suspicious, many of them see in offers of assistance, an intent of economic enslavement. The method of aid requires the utmost tact and cordiality. We must carefully analyze our motives and as clearly as possible express these motives so that the underdeveloped countries can understand the reasons for which the assistance is being offered. Prime Minister Pearson has said: "We cannot purchase reliable allies or real friends and we should not try to do so."<sup>20</sup> The relationship between the helper and the helped is a difficult and complicated one. The United States has found that economic aid should not be designed or expected to make friends. It is also clear that economic aid should not be intended to result in the receiver copying the donor's economic or political policies. Senator David Croll puts it this way:

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<sup>20</sup> Honourable L. B. Pearson, House of Commons Debates, January 31, 1956, p. 716.

If we do not have clearly in mind why we are providing economic aid, or if we provide it for the wrong reasons, I have come to the conclusion on the basis of my short experience, that the peoples of the underdeveloped countries will be the first to recognize our error. They neither ask for alms or charity and nothing we give is given in that spirit. We recognize their rightful insistence on the equality of peoples and the management of their own resources without interference.<sup>21</sup>

The philosophy in the background then must be more one of egalitarianism rather than utilitarianism. The economically advanced nations must voluntarily assume responsibility for development of backward areas. The foreign aid plans also reveal:

(...) an optimism and a faith in security through planning that are Fabian, as is the tendency to overlook the interests of the individual in fostering those of the group. The influence of Gandhi is discernible in the emphasis on directing the main stream of benefits toward the peasant class. The authors of the plan recognize the primary role of agriculture and admit that rapid, industrialization is not a cure-all for Asia's ills.<sup>22</sup>

Another Asian opinion reflected in the Plan is the distinct preference for governmental capital over private capital. Some students of aid plans also discern a British influence calculated to pursue diplomatic advantage, at least the new

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<sup>21</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 57/5.

<sup>22</sup> Colombo Plan Broadsheet, Special Issue, November 1957, p. 1.

contacts are calculated to undo some of the unhappy memories lingering from the days of Western imperial supremacy.

The doctrines of every major religion require the rich to act compassionately towards the poor. If moral codes fail to command positive action, the negative whip of an uneasy and inescapable conscience compels our attention to the needs of stricken people. Morally we cannot escape concern. Since at the same time we will gain politically and economically from it, there is nothing for us to do but act and act fast for those who need our aid.

#### 4. Canadian Humanitarianism in Practice.

Canada's Colombo Plan is positive in its aim of building a free and prosperous way of life and the greatest virtue of it has been that the aid is given without strings. Such a Plan has a great potential for contribution to international brotherhood.

At the Colombo Plan meeting held in Saigon, Viet Nam in October 1957, representatives of many nations praised the humanitarianism of the Plan. Ngo-Dinh Diem, the late president of Viet Nam, put it this way:

We are meeting here twenty-one nations strong, from near and distant lands, small and large, Asian and western, speaking different tongues, nurtured in different cultures, customs and traditions, and in different stages of political, social and economic development. And yet the striking features of the Colombo Plan are the elements which unite us as a community of free nations.<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Mitsuziro Ishi, the speaker of Japan, remarked:

The Colombo Plan, born of friendship and goodwill, community and hope, is based on mutual understanding and co-operation of the East and West. I dare say this is one of the most realistic development plans in our time. The one great common problem that confronts the nations of this part of the world is how to achieve an economic development and a high standard of living worthy of their lofty traditions and spiritual heritages. The prosperity of a nation is interdependent of another nation's prosperity.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. R. C. Casey, the delegate from Australia, commented that the Colombo Plan could be described as a "stirring of the international conscience"<sup>25</sup> and Mr. Sukit Nimmankaemin, the representative for Thailand, contributed a Buddhist conviction that one who receives is "no less blessed than him who gives."<sup>26</sup> It is significant too, that the message from the Queen of the Commonwealth to that particular Colombo

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23 Ibid., p. 1.

24 Ibid., p. 10.

25 Ibid., p. 10.

26 Ibid., p. 17.

Plan meeting contained the observation that "in this age no nation can live unto itself."

From these words we can conclude that the spirit of the Colombo Plan organization reflects the understanding of a partnership among nations irrespective of their racial origin or stage of economic development. It certainly cannot be considered as a partnership of ideologies or doctrines, but it is a partnership in which the sole objective is the welfare and prosperity of the member countries. Its common aim is directed to the fight against poverty. In this objective it transcends all political boundaries. It may have begun in 1950 with a donor-recipient format but it is now developing to the stage where it is difficult to distinguish the original structure. As the Plan now operates, all give and all receive in the hope of arriving some day at common welfare and mutual prosperity.

Perhaps the biggest contribution made by the Colombo Plan is the hope it gives to the people of Asia. The Plan may not be the most striking but it is the expression of a significant trend in human affairs. This trend is the realization that we are all, developed and underdeveloped, members of one world, "that our affairs are somehow mixed

together"<sup>27</sup>, and that, as neighbours, we owe a duty to each other.

#### 5. Mutual Motivation.

We must not regard economic aid as a one-way street. Both the donor and the receiver have important financial responsibilities. It is now realized also, that external aid can provide only a minor proportion of the needs of economic development. Perhaps it is fortunate that this is so. The underdeveloped areas must play the major part themselves and that is psychologically advantageous. At any rate, each country is best equipped to regulate its own development. Assistance can come from abroad but there is no help more profitable than self-help.

On the other hand, Canada has received benefits from participation in foreign aid programmes. The help we have given has so far been marginal but already we have reaped a benefit of an understanding of these countries which we never would have gained had there been no programme of assistance to them. Canadians have found that they have a great deal to gain from contact with the ancient cultures of Asia. These benefits are real and important.

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<sup>27</sup> Statement by Mohammed Ali, Minister of Finance, Pakistan, Press Release, Meeting of Commonwealth Consultative Committee, Ottawa, October 1954.

This fact was brought out very forcefully by the former Prime Minister of Canada, Louis St. Laurent, when he addressed a convocation at Delhi University in February 1954.

I am conscious to-day of the vast cultural heritage of this ancient land. I recall, for example, that more than four thousand years ago there was a remarkable valley civilization on this sub-continent. I also recall that some of the technical concepts on which Western science and Western thought patterns are based, such as the so called Arabic system of numerals, had their origins in India. It was India too, that gave birth to two of the great religions of the world, and the imposing moral philosophies which emanated from them.<sup>28</sup>

The Prime Minister went on to extol the Indian civilization as one of the greatest of the world, mentioning achievements in the realms of art and architecture in particular and concluded that the Indian people have a duty to perpetuate and transmit their achievements.

No country, no culture lives, or has a right to live, for itself. If it has any contribution to make towards the enrichment of the human spirit, it owes that contribution to the widest circle it can reach. I think it is a splendid thing that our two countries, the one young, the other old, can join together at this time in each making its own particular contribution to the building of a better world. I think too, that it is gratifying that the people of India and the people of the West can see the best that is in each other and that they realize that we are all human beings essentially equal in every respect.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 54/15.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

In fact, Mr. St. Laurent carried his theme so far as to ask his Indian audience not to look down upon the West as their inferiors.

Because most of our countrymen would not go so far, we do not find many who will admit as Mr. Diefenbaker did: "We have much to learn from them."<sup>30</sup> At least this much can be said "at home". When Mr. Escott Ried, our High Commissioner to India, was addressing a Rotary Club meeting in Delhi, he went back to the more forceful words of praise and even flattery.

I speak of the interest of the whole world in the preservation of the culture of India and in its flowering. It is an ancient and rich culture with a tolerant and a humane tradition. It has contributed to the world great saints and philosophers...it continues to produce great men.

The culture of the whole world would be impoverished if India were to dissolve into anarchy. On the other hand the culture of the whole world will be enriched if India succeeds in its program of economic and social development.<sup>31</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn then is that it is to our own intellectual and cultural advantage to see that India is able to advance economically and so release the energies which will produce not only things of the hand but things of the mind and spirit.

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<sup>30</sup> Department of External Affairs, Reference Paper No. 103, September 1959, p. 1

<sup>31</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 57/28.

For this goal economic development alone is probably not enough. We should also assist in the development and growth of liberal institutions, centres of education and culture.

There are even those visionaries who see in the future a new world civilization. Each nation will contribute to the rest of the world and a common pool for a common civilization will develop. So we come full circle in the development as the Eastern nations will be contributing for the enrichment of their own lives as well as the enrichment of us all.

To be a little more practical for a moment, there is no disputing the fact that the Colombo Plan has brought an increasingly large number of Westerners and Asians together and enabled them to learn more of each other's ways of thinking and working. The various technical co-operation schemes have brought about the same result. Mr. Paul Martin, our Secretary of State, in an address given in Toronto in August 1963, explained it this way:

We give Asians material assistance and technical knowhow, but, in doing so, we always try to remember that Asians have their own ways, some long established, some as modern as our own, of tackling their own problems, and that we on our part have a great deal to learn from them. Essentially the Colombo Plan is an expression of friendship, of co-operation between peoples in two widely separated parts of a shrinking world, who are coming increasingly to realize that their welfare is interdependent.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Department of External Affairs, Op. Cit., No. 63/17.

Mr. Pearson spoke in the same vein when he addressed a gathering of workers and dignitaries at the opening of the Mayurakshi Project in November 1955.

Our peoples have shared the cost. And because among friends, when the welfare of some is furthered by help from others, we also share the benefit - it is as simple and as fundamental as that, as simple as neighborly help and as fundamental as friendship.<sup>33</sup>

Indian Prime Minister Nehru then echoed that the dam would be a visible and enduring link of friendship between Canada and India and "let this friendship endure."<sup>34</sup>

These protestations of friendship may appear exaggerated and even sugary but they do serve the purpose of underscoring the fact of mutual help rather than the one-way street. As Mr. Nik Cavell said to a Maclean's magazine reporter: "The Asian is sensitive about taking charity."<sup>35</sup> Our greatest hope according to this same authority is to convince these people that we are concerned about them and that we want them to be prosperous.

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<sup>33</sup> Lester B. Pearson, as quoted in "Mayurakshi Project", External Affairs Bulletin, January 1956, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> As quoted in "Mayurakshi Project", Op. Cit., p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Douglas Dacre, Op. Cit., Maclean's, May 1, 1952, p. 72.

## 6. The Role of the Politicians.

Before resting the case for humanitarianism, mention should be made of the fact that this is probably the motive for aid most stressed by our politicians and civic leaders. This is doubtless at least partly due to the fact that the politician may find it expedient to enlist the humanitarian arguments to convince the public that aid must be given. Yet even this argument should cause us to ponder. It is, after all, the public moneys that are being spent and if these motives can convince people that it should be spent, then they are the real and proper motives. Only twelve per cent of Canadians want to increase foreign aid simply because the need has not been brought home to them or they have not been shown how the money will be spent. If the Plan were given proper and sufficient publicity, the people of this country would rise to the occasion and give help to these underdeveloped lands. Let the politicians worry less about having the spectre of Communism hovering over us and concentrate on presenting the people with the facts of the need and of what can and should be done about it. Canadians will do their part.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs held in December 1963, one of the members of the Committee objected quite strenuously to the money being voted

for our external aid programme as Canada itself is "not developed yet". We have many problems here at home which need our financing before we can help others. This objection was answered quite ably by Mr. H. O. Moran, Director General of the External Aid Office.

Every nation has its own development problems. I also believe that while charity begins at home, surely within your heart and mine it does not end there. In respect to the problems that are facing us at home you and I are trying to make our contribution to their solution (...) but I cannot see why these humanitarian instincts must end at our national borders. I have lived for eight and a half years in the countries of the Middle East and southeast Asia and I say to you that if you move among these people and view the indescribable poverty and misery in which they exist you cannot turn your back on them and say no.<sup>36</sup>

Mr. Moran goes on to give instances of Canadian Aid not only through the Colombo Plan but through other agencies both public and private. The fact that he had made his point may be garnered from another committee member.

I think the general public - and I presume that includes members of parliament - are sometimes confused because they do not obtain an over-all picture of the need, and if they did they could better tell how far the dollar sign, as it were, the budgetary limitations are preventing us from meeting the need. (...) I think it would be helpful if, in addition to a report which says what we are doing, we could have a report compiled with various suggestions of need from various agencies in different fields.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Standing Committee on External Affairs, Queen's Printer, Ottawa, Thursday, December 12, 1963, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

A report such as this might give us better-informed parliamentarians as well as a better-informed Canadian public and then Canadians, like Mr. Moran, will not be able to say no.

#### 7. The Ultimate Defence of the Plan.

Canada's contribution to the Colombo Plan reflects the very human interest of the Canadian people in the welfare of the millions in Asia. This interest transcends distances and geographical boundaries. The Plan, so small in itself, is a good omen of the future for it makes us dare to hope that, in the spiritual things, the Western world is gaining strength. We are getting to know the Eastern people and to understand their difficulties as we win their friendship. We can give them the conviction that a better life is attainable. We can offer them hope of this life and at least some of the tools to attain it. If we want advances to take root we must have the people themselves participate and advance by their own efforts with a little outside help in money and materials. We must not forget that people are borne with brains and backs and strong right arms as well as with stomachs.

The Current Affairs Bulletin published by the University of Sydney in Australia summarizes in a paragraph

all the possible motives behind a country's foreign aid programme, and then draws its conclusion.

Attitudes towards the Colombo Plan and similar schemes vary. Some justify such schemes on humanitarian grounds, some regard them as international common sense, some think of them as an insurance against Communism and some expect them to encourage the growth of democracy. (...) Some critics, while granting that Western aid is necessary if countries of the region are to have any prospect of avoiding Communism, wonder whether the countries receiving Western aid will not nevertheless develop their own form of totalitarianism (...) that democratic government is not easily workable in the absence of certain traditional attitudes which are not usually found in the East. Even the most hopeful exponents of the theory that the Plan is an investment in democracy can give no very clear idea of the way in which democracy is likely to develop in various countries, or what form it is likely to take, and make their ultimate defense on humanitarian grounds.<sup>38</sup>

Mutual aid may yet prove a stronger bond of national sovereignties than either military alliances or preferential trade which have both been tried and found wanting. We all want peace and we have at hand an instrument for attaining it. Let us hope that we will have the leadership to measure up to our world responsibilities. In the words of our present leader:

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<sup>38</sup> "The Colombo Plan", Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol. 13, No. 9, University of Sydney, Australia, February 1954, p. 143.

We ought to be less concerned with how much we have done and more concerned with how much is yet to be done, less concerned with how little others are doing, and more concerned with how much we could do; less concerned with whether we can afford to do more and more concerned with whether we can afford not to do more.<sup>39</sup>

Let this leader find a workable way to plan for "the more" that Canadians are ready to give. The sacrifices that go into the Plan shall be the milestones of human progress and together we shall all realize the magnanimity of nations. The needs are easy enough to prove. It should not be too difficult for our experts to tell us how we can begin to meet them. Then we ourselves will have to dig deep into our humanitarian motivations, to tell us why we should meet them, and to give us the courage to keep up the efforts through the long years ahead. And even if, in a world of sovereign and free peoples, we feel that no country can be obliged to do more for its neighbours than it thinks fit in its own best interest, we can make our humanitarianism fit our own enlightened interest. If our assistance in economic development is accompanied by the growth of liberal institutions we can help ensure the development of friendly nations that share our own outlook. A strong basis for this

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39 As quoted by Douglas Anglen, "Canadian Post War Contribution to International Assistance", International Journal, Autumn 1954, p. 254.

contention is found in the messages brought to the Consultative Committee Meeting held in Bangkok in 1963.

The Prime Minister of Ceylon said of the Plan:

It has been an extremely successful experiment in economic co-operation between the developed and the developing countries. What started as an attempt at economic co-operation has, during the years, led to the promotion of better understanding and increasing friendship among its member nations, and it is my sincere hope that this friendship would grow during the coming year.<sup>40</sup>

The Indian delegate conveyed the same sentiments:

The Colombo Plan countries can justly take pride in the fact that they have been among the pioneers in the evolving of a process which has been gathering momentum. (...) I am certain that the member countries of the Colombo Plan will, in the years ahead, continue to be animated by the same spirit of international co-operation good will and constructive endeavor.<sup>41</sup>

The Prime Minister of Japan put it more succinctly:

As no man can live alone, so no individual country can attain its national development without help from other countries. The Colombo Plan is an expression of ardent aspirations of mankind for better life through mutual assistance.<sup>42</sup>

Thus we can have a humanitarianism which, at the same time will serve our own best interests. When the Canadian

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<sup>40</sup> As quoted in "The Colombo Plan", Report of Consultative Committee Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, October-November 1963, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

public becomes convinced of the necessity and the desirability of increasing our aid expenditures then the politicians will take the necessary steps.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In May 1955, there was held at the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa, a conference on Canadian Aid to Under-developed Countries. The conference was attended by Canadian directors of Canada's part in the Colombo Plan and many interested friends. The main address was given by the Honourable Lester B. Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Pearson stressed the fact that the Colombo Plan does not operate in isolation but that there is very close collaboration between those participating in it and those responsible for the various aid programmes sponsored by the United Nations. Assistance programmes are very valuable as a welfare approach to peace and international co-operation. In fact, he said that the assistance plan was one of the most heartening aspects of the international scene. However, he also insisted that there is much scope for a plan within the smaller regional organization of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth deserves much credit for the positive manner in which it has responded to the challenge of economic development on a world-wide basis. The minister also remarked that many and important countries outside the Commonwealth, notably the United States, are also participating in the Colombo Plan. Because of this participation we can now say that this help

is from the "West". Mr. Pearson did not wish to ignore the danger of the stigma which might be attached to this term by many of the peoples of Asia. Yet, he maintained that we can minimize the danger here in the West if our motives will not only be, but also, appear to be, beyond reproach.

This is an area of international relations which is so delicate and so open to misunderstanding that it is really not good enough even to be right for the wrong reasons. If we of the West provide material aid only or even primarily for cold war motives, we are likely to fail in achieving any good and permanent results. It is important to guard against any false idea that we can purchase or try to purchase allies. We must not insult their dignity and destroy our claims to equality by attempting to buy them over to our side.

Proceeding along this line of reasoning, the External Affairs Minister gave the people of Canada a question to ask themselves from time to time to test their real motives. The question is this: "Would we be doing what we are if the political and military menace of Soviet and Chinese Communism did not exist?" It is a sorry commentary on our past war efforts if we must admit that without the communists and the threat which they represent, we might not so readily have done what we should have been doing anyway. We of Canada must realize then, that it should be for us a matter of great

satisfaction rather than sacrifice to be able to assist these underdeveloped countries to develop themselves in a constructive and far-sighted manner. The great majority of these countries are seeking to preserve their own heritage of human and spiritual values in working out their economic destiny by democratic means. In their refusal to grasp at the material promises of the communists they have made a great contribution to the democratic cause throughout the world. Mr. Pearson answers the question he wished the Canadian people to ask themselves in the following words:

The genuine desire of Canadians to help others who are less fortunate; the recognition that the more quickly other peoples' standards of living rise the better off we shall all be, the conviction of economic aid and social progress are essential to a durable peace; the judgement that the resources of most of these countries are capable of supporting a fuller and richer life, the evident effort of which the people of these countries are themselves making to improve their conditions, and the sympathy which we as citizens of a relatively young country feel with those who are trying to establish their own nations on a new and durable basis - all these seem to me to be more solid and more fundamentally significant reasons for providing assistance.<sup>1</sup>

All these motives then, every well-informed Canadian must keep in mind as he reads about - or talks about - the money being spent in far-off Asia. We must remember, too,

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<sup>1</sup> L. B. Pearson, as quoted in Conference on Canadian Aid to Underdeveloped Countries, Ottawa, United Nations Association of Canada, May 1955, p. 5.

that the job is still in its infancy. But eventually, human happiness is at stake and we who have worked out some of the problems of maintaining a free society owe it to those who are still developing to help them profit by our mistakes and benefit from our experience.

The Colombo Plan has grown far beyond the ideas of its originators. Since the original directors were working without any background of previous experience, and were working out an aid programme which was unprecedented in its function and scope, they had to draw up a few guiding principles. They tried to choose products in which Canada could make her best contribution. These seem to be primarily in the fields of power and transportation. The principal achievements of Canadian aid so far have been the Kundah and Warsak Dam projects in India and Pakistan respectively, the provision of train engines to India, and the atomic reactor in India. The reactor was completed in 1960 and constitutes the basis for Indian research in atomic energy. At Kundah, Canada constructed power houses, two of which opened in 1961, the same month as the opening of the Warsak power plant.

All the while the directors have tried to give first place to priorities established by the recipient countries since the projects must fit into their programmes and not be superimposed on them. Also, our aid must have permanent

value - it must not fall into the temptation of attractive but short-run projects.

The experience of the past few years has shown that the scale of aid has been determined more by weighing our capabilities than by weighing Asia's needs. The needs within underdeveloped countries are virtually without limit, but if projects are chosen at random the Asian economy will never become self-generating.

And what of to-day? It has been almost a decade since that Ottawa meeting of 1955 and fourteen years since the beginning of the Plan. Have these been years of progress and enlightenment on a question of the why of foreign aid and particularly on the Colombo Plan form of it?

There are many well-informed citizens of Canada to-day who maintain that we are wrong in trying to work out all these complicated schemes of assistance to foreign countries. They will point to the United States as an example of a country which has received less than a "thank you" for the billions of dollars it has poured into war-torn and underdeveloped countries. These people maintain that the only reasonable procedure is to have all aid programmes channelled through the United Nations. In this way it could be considered nothing short of world brotherhood and mutual assistance.

To these, Prime Minister Pearson has given the answer that the Colombo Plan strikes a very happy medium between two extremes. It is true that bilateral schemes can be advantageous. For example, they tell us of a scheme in Norway where three million dollars was collected directly from the people for a building project in India. This has a very strong personal appeal and the advantage of direct contact. But it could never become large-scale enough to fit present needs. And there is a limit to how much the poorer countries will accept from their "big brothers" without becoming very sensitive. Many of these countries are newly free and they are touchy about sovereignty so that they do not wish to become indebted to any state. With these thoughts in mind, Canada is slowly and cautiously expanding bilateral aid outside the Colombo Plan. In 1961, for example, Canada contributed half a million dollars for a Commonwealth Scholarship Plan. In 1963 the number of students and trainees in Canada under the Colombo Plan was 823, while the total number included in all plans rose to 1,423.<sup>2</sup>

There are those who say that most of the objections to aid would be overcome by a plan administered through the United Nations. The aim could not be said to be political

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<sup>2</sup> Department of External Affairs, Reference Paper No. 86, September 1964, p. 19.

and the interest of the recipient would be foremost in all considerations. These countries would be built up while the United Nations was being strengthened and appreciated by them. Again, with these thoughts in mind, Canada has been contributing to the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme of which a Canadian, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, was, until his retirement in 1960, the Director General. To this programme Canada has contributed at the rate of two million dollars a year while giving a like amount to the United Nations Special Fund which can make capital grants for surveys, research, training and other activities conducive to pre-investment in underdeveloped countries. Also, through the United Nations, Canada has contributed several millions to refugee assistance organizations in Europe and Asia.

Yet these plans of international assistance are so new that we must work very gradually in attacking the problem of wide-scale planning. Even with aid coming from one country, the difficulties of co-ordinating the programmes are great. Such a Plan entails considerable liaison at various levels and personnel from many agencies must work harmoniously together. In our present stage of co-ordination of policy it would be too much to expect that satisfactory plans could be made on a world-wide scale. The present Technical Assistance Programme of the United

Nations entails an expenditure of only twenty-eight million dollars. Yet, when Dr. Keenleyside was directing this project, he was obliged to admit that a greater degree of co-operation was needed among the contributing countries "if the programme is to make a favourable impression."<sup>3</sup>

We can conclude then, that the best programme which can be devised in the light of the present situation is one such as the Colombo Plan. Here we have, co-operating in the Plan, countries which are accustomed to consultation and co-operation. They have grown up under such a system. They understand each other and thus they negate the danger of suspicion or jealousy. They have mutual respect for individual liberty and they have worked together long enough that they will not impute ulterior motives to each other. Their language, their laws and their governments are much alike and they can have an interior organization of the Plan which will be very similar in each country and which will greatly facilitate the working of the Plan.

Evidence for the truth of these assertions may be taken from the fact that countries such as France and Denmark have noticed the value of the co-ordination found in the Colombo Plan and the work it has achieved and they have asked

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<sup>3</sup> H. L. Keenleyside, Report of Conference on Canadian Aid to Underdeveloped Countries, United Nations Association of Canada, Ottawa, May 1955, p. 20.

at different times to be allowed to give assistance under the scheme. While it has been pointed out that Russia has joined the Technical Assistance Administration its role so far has been negligible especially as far as finances are concerned. Russian contributions to the United Nations have not only lagged but have usually been made in inconvertible rubles which officials have a hard time spending. It should also be noted in passing that the Russians are often more than willing to send their "experts" to help in the "development" of the countries outside the curtains.

One thing above all must be kept in mind, the people in the underdeveloped areas have a pride of heritage and a great desire to modernize but not to westernize their countries. The leaders of the people are, in general, of high calibre, educated, but retain, nevertheless, a deep allegiance to the social systems of their countries. The masses of the people there are essentially conservative. If progress is to be made we must learn to understand and adapt ourselves to attitudes that are unfamiliar to the Western world - religious taboos, a different sense of time, an acceptance of disease and suffering, unfamiliarity with the idea of social responsibility.

All the countries of South and Southeast Asia must change radically and rapidly if they are to industrialize and catch up with the rest of the world. China has moved towards this radical change via the totalitarian route.

India, Pakistan and Ceylon have chosen to co-operate with us in the Commonwealth. History is offering us an opportunity to show that twentieth-century Western civilization is not purely materialistic, not profoundly selfish. It is above all essential to make Asians aware of their own potentiality and encourage them to have confidence in their capacity to bring about a better future. The future will depend essentially on their own efforts but for the present we must make sufficient capital and educational contributions to bring about the transition from the present state of underdevelopment to a stage of self-sustaining growth.

We need a better-informed Canadian public. People must become convinced of the desirability and the necessity of foreign aid by having the motives behind the aid programmes presented to them. Canadians in general seem to be resting on a smug satisfaction that they are doing enough. The blame for this must be placed before the Canadian press and the Canadian politicians. Mr. Paul Martin, the present Canadian Minister of External Affairs was quoted in July 1963 as having said: "Our people generally are not convinced of the importance of foreign aid. Anyone who has run for election in Canada (...) will know that this is the case."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Canada's Overseas Aid, A. A. Fatouros and R. N. Kelson, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Toronto, 1964, p. 105.

But what is he doing to convince them? They have risen to heights of generosity in the past and there is no reason to believe they will hesitate to do so again if the needs are placed before them.

But the needs are seldom presented. In the spring of 1962 a conference on Canadian Overseas Aid was held at the University of Western Ontario. Among the participants at this conference, just as at the Ottawa conference seven years before, were people from the United Nations Secretariat and the World Bank and representatives from Canadian industry, university life and government. Yet the Canadian press had even less to report on this conference than on the one of 1955.

Nevertheless the rapporteurs of that conference have done a service to the Canadian public in attempting to bring up to date the motives which underlie our foreign aid programmes; for it is still true that if our people are taken into the confidence of the politicians and the reason for our help is explained to them they will be behind any politician who has the courage to ask for the help. And, after all, it must come from the people.

The 1962 conference drew the conclusion that no overall agreement on objectives seems to exist either among supporters or critics of foreign aid. Politicians present spoke of primary political motives; economic motives were

predominant in the minds of businessmen, while the general public seems more influenced by humanitarian arguments.

From the point of view of pure history we feel it may be safely concluded that the Colombo Plan was begun primarily from an economic motive. It was born of a desire to support and strengthen the ties, chiefly economic, between the members of the Commonwealth. These were sufficient to give the Plan its initial emphasis. It was then drawn up in terms of a five-year assistance programme. Before the five years were completed the communists entered the field of overt aid. This not only added a new urgency to Western foreign aid programmes but it caused the Colombo Plan to enter a second phase under a new motivation. It acquired a political objective as aid became an accepted way of winning friends and influencing the policy of other states.

The third and present phase of the Colombo Plan has developed in the atmosphere of the sixties. The advocates of peaceful co-existence have taken the fire out of the cries of foreign aid to combat Communism. Neither are the ties of Commonwealth solidarity strong enough to convince our people that we must give more to other people in other lands. In the words of Honourable Mitchell Sharp, spoken at the UNESCO Conference in 1961, when he was a representative of Canadian business rather than Canadian government:

There is one good and sufficient reason for international aid and that is that there are less fortunate people in the world who need our help. If they are grateful for our help so much the better. If by reason of the aid they receive, they become bigger customers for Canadian goods and services, better still. If our aid helps them to set their feet firmly on the road to higher standards of living without resort to Communist dictatorship, the benefits to us are beyond measure. But the inspiration for what we do must be essentially humanitarian and unselfish. (...) Many of the troubles with which international aid is beset today may be laid to the fact that we of the free world are losing this humanitarian inspiration.<sup>5</sup>

Let us trust that the Honourable Mr. Sharp's convictions on the motivations for international aid have not weakened since his entrance into the Canadian Cabinet. The time has come for him and for other leaders and politicians to reiterate these sentiments. The only legitimate motive which will bring public opinion to the full support of foreign aid is the humanitarian one. The humanitarian motive must be brought out not only to temper but to overshadow all economic and political considerations.

Mr. Cavell answered the Indian student that we are giving aid for the simple reason that "we are desperately trying to build up a soundly based free world."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mitchell Sharp, "Canada's Stake in International Programmes", Dialogue 1961 - New Dimensions in International Relations, Canadian National Commission for UNESCO, Ottawa, 1961, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> R. G. Cavell, Op. Cit., Maclean's Magazine, p. 30.

Yet, our Asian expert admitted that this reply did not satisfy his young Asian listeners. Neither will it satisfy the donors at home. The politicians whom the survey reports to be in favour of more aid must have the courage to speak up to the eighty-eight per cent of Canadians who objected to giving more. The case must be put before the Canadian taxpayer. Mr. Cavell calls for a government declaration to this end. Let the government leaders call upon the humanitarianism of the people of Canada and they will rise to the occasion. The politicians will have no need to soft-pedal their votes for foreign aid and the recipients will accept with the knowledge that there is nothing ulterior in our giving.

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## ABSTRACT OF

### The Colombo Plan - Canada's Motives

A major portion of the funds voted by the Canadian government each year for foreign aid is channelled through the Colombo Plan for aid to South and Southeast Asia. Since 1950 Canada has spent roughly a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money on this Plan and the way is left open for continuance. Foreign aid has become part of the established pattern of Canadian international relations.

In the Western world to-day political leaders are seriously questioning the value to both giver and receiver of this vast expenditure of public funds for development in other lands. A recent survey by a Canadian magazine revealed that roughly three-fourths of Canadian politicians would want our foreign aid budget increased while only one-eighth of the Canadian people would favour an increase in foreign aid. However, this small proportion of citizens constituted the same group which proved to be comparatively well informed on Canadian and world affairs. Canadians, along with all citizens of the West, will favour aid if they are told why it should be given. On the part of the recipients, also, there is uncertainty. They want to know "why" before they accept our assistance.

An attempt is here made to show why the Colombo Plan aid has been given and why it should be continued. The Plan's motivation is traced from its beginnings at the Commonwealth Conference of 1950. In the first years, the economic motivation of the Plan was given prominence as the Plan was explained primarily in terms of mutual economic assistance within the Commonwealth. The economic benefits to both giver and receiver were considered sufficient to get the Plan under way those first years. In Canada, emphasis was placed on the benefits of increased employment at home as industries supplied the material assistance, and on the long range benefits that would accrue from increased trade.

With the death of Stalin the Russian external policy took on a new form as the Soviets entered in earnest the field of overt aid. Faced with the sharpening challenge of Peking, the Soviets initiated large-scale aid programmes for countries such as India. Incentives were offered for increased trade between the Asians and Russia. Russian experts and advisors were provided for a number of Asian nations. Their capital and technical assistance, especially in Asia, gave the communists a tremendous psychological advantage in the cold war in the underdeveloped nations. This not only added a new urgency to the foreign aid programmes of the West but it caused the Colombo Plan to take on a new and political motivation. The Plan became a weapon

in the cold war. It was promoted by politicians of all persuasions as a way of winning friends, a means of holding back communism and of advancing the frontiers of democracy.

With the 1960's, the Kennedy era and the co-existence policies of Khrushchev, the cries of foreign aid to fight communism lost much of their fire. The emphasis on "live and let live" and co-operation with the communists coupled with the new emphasis on the interdependent world of to-day brought to the forefront the humanitarian motivation of the Colombo Plan. Politicians and civic leaders of to-day speak of the necessity of helping our brothers in underdeveloped lands, and continue to remind us of our moral obligations in this field. We must come to the assistance of the peoples of Asia because it is the right thing to do and not because we would gain any economic advantage or political friends for ourselves.

The conclusion drawn is that the humanitarian motive must be clarified and emphasized for to-day's taxpayer. The aid and the reason behind it must be given much more publicity. This means that there must be a clear government declaration that will put before the citizens of the "have" nations the needs of their less fortunate neighbours in other countries. Canadian citizens must be convinced not only of their ability to help out but of their obligation to do so.