

*Queens Quarterly. Vol 74
(Winter 1967)*

The Conscience of the Diplomat: A Personal Testament

by

ESCOTT REID

In reply to the cynical theory that the craft of diplomacy necessarily blunts moral sensibilities, a former senior Canadian ambassador contends in this personal testament that a diplomat need not sacrifice either his intellectual honesty or his integrity of character.

CONSCIENCE IN THE DEEP FREEZE?

Extracts from

The Alan B. Plaunt Memorial Lectures

by

JAMES EAYRS

at Carleton University, Ottawa, November 1965*

Satow's Guide to Diplomatic Practice . . . offers no hints to the junior diplomatist on how to go about expressing to his superiors his qualms about his country's policy. These are dangerous thoughts which the seasoned diplomatist will long since have learned to suppress.

Diplomacy is not an art but a craft. Its practitioners, with loving attention to detail, take satisfaction not in creation but in workmanship. If the object of their labour turns out to be some hideous gargoyle, that is not their fault. They are executants of the designs of others. These may be squalid as well as grand.

It is striking how few of its members [the members of the diplomatic profession] protest against the sort of things it requires them to do. This is not at all because what they are required to do is always clean and decent. Rather it is

*James Eayrs, *Right and Wrong in Foreign Policy*. Published in co-operation with Carleton University by University of Toronto Press, 1966. The first two extracts are from page 41; the third from page 41; the fourth from page 36; the fifth from page 53; and the sixth from page 55.

because the whole ethos of the profession is designed to quell the moral sensibilities of its members. It is as though foreign offices have built into their basements some sort of low temperature chamber where fledgling foreign service officers deposit their consciences on recruitment for redemption only on retirement. By then they are too deeply frozen to thaw out in time.

Are statesmen to be excused for their follies if they act in good faith? Are we to judge them for effort in a world which usually judges for result? What is so special about statesmen that when their plans miscarry and their statecraft goes awry we are not to call them guilty men?

The public service is no place for the intellectual. The intellectual cannot do it justice. The environment is alien, particularly the environment in which foreign policy is made.

So if the intellectual is to remain a useful critic of foreign policy retaining his capacity for detached analysis and informed condemnation, he must stay out of government.

A DIPLOMAT who examines his conscience on what he did and what he failed to do in his career in the foreign service embarks on a profound and subtle task. One reason is that the duties of a diplomat are complex and diversified. In the course of his career he will be an executant of foreign policy, a maker of policy, a critic of the policy of his government in confidential discussions within his government's service and an exponent of policy in confidential discussions with representatives of other governments. He may be a public advocate of policy at international conferences or in public speeches to audiences in other countries.

As he rises in the foreign service his capacity to influence the making of the foreign policy of his country will increase but even the most junior diplomat has opportunities to influence the making of policy through the information and advice he gives to his superior officers, through the first drafts of the memoranda, telegrams, statements and speeches which he prepares for the consideration of his superiors.

Whether a diplomat is serving abroad or at home in the ministry of foreign affairs, he is the mouthpiece of his government in discussions with foreign governments. When he is abroad he communicates information, views, arguments to the government to which he is accredited, mainly through officials of the foreign office of that government. When he is at home, he communicates information, views, arguments to the foreign diplomats accredited to his country.

D.N.D.

Directorate of History

322-009

(D358)

6-0-7

HQS. 7368 Vol 11

13 Jan 47.



Japanese - Pac. Coast

On receipt of telegram from Joint Services Committee (PC) (P.C. Tele. 663 d. 12 Jan 47) recommending "from point of view of defence" removal of all Jap and Axis male aliens between ages of 16 & 50 from coastal areas of B.C., the V.C.G.S. (Maj. Gen. Pope) in a memo to CGS questions whether the removal was requested on the grounds of defence, or, as stated in the GO Com's letter of 30 Dec 41, "for the prevention of internal disorder and as a measure for the protection of the Japanese population against maltreatment by the whites."

The V.C.G.S. is unable to agree to such a drastic step, as Vancouver is subject only to bombardment, and the Japanese, of whom 80% are Canadian Nationals, are unarmed. The F.B.I., through the Commissioner RCMP, had advised the Inter-Departmental Committee on Orientals in British Columbia "that the position in respect of Japanese on the West Coast of the U.S. was entirely satisfactory" and that both in Honolulu and at Manila Japanese residents had behaved correctly from a U.S. point of view during the attack on those places.