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NORTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATIONS IN LAOS

Mr. Paul Martin, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, recently made available to Canadians Message No. 35 of September 16, 1965, from the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos to the Co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference (which had just been released by the British Co-chairman). In issuing the report, Mr. Martin made the following statement:

The message establishes that regular units of the armed forces of North Vietnam, numbering up to 650 men, entered Laos during 1964 with arms and munitions, and that they engaged in hostilities with Laotian Government forces on Laotian soil. These acts of aggression against Laos represent gross violations by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) of the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos and its Protocol, both of which were signed by the Government of North Vietnam and 13 other governments in July 1962.

Canada participated in the 1961-62 Geneva Conference in the hope that a solemn agreement guaranteeing the neutrality and integrity of Laos would remove that country from the arena of world conflict and enable it to pursue its development in an atmosphere of peace and stability. To contribute to that goal, Canada also agreed to serve, along with India and Poland, on the International Commission which, under the terms of the agreements, was given the responsibility of supervising the implementation

of the undertakings of the signatories.

EVIDENCE OF VIOLATION

It was hoped that, with the reaching of agreement after more than a year of strenuous negotiations, conditions had been created for the achievement of peace in Laos. This investigation by the International Commission was carried out by the Indian and Canadian delegations, since the Polish delegation declined to participate. Their report makes it clear, however, that North Vietnam has violated important provisions of the 1962 Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, as well as Articles 4 and 6 of its Protocol.

This is the first report of the Laos Commission which establishes that major violations of the 1962 Agreements on Laos have been committed by a signatory power. The Commission is now investigating a number of cases of North Vietnamese prisoners captured in Laos and also is investigating an allegation by the Communist Neo Lao Haksat that United States aircraft based in South Vietnam have bombed and otherwise attacked Laotian territory.

In the light of these findings, the Canadian Government is gravely concerned about this course of developments in a country whose neutrality and integrity have been solemnly guaranteed by an international agreement freely entered into by all the parties concerned.