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Statement by the S.S.E.A. Hon. Paul Martin on Vietnam

I am greatly heartened to learn that President Johnson has ordered a suspension of the bombing of the greatest part of North Vietnam and has coupled that suspension with a renewal of an earlier plea for prompt and serious talks on the substance of peace. I know that the decision could not have been an easy one for him to take. It is an act of courage on his part to take that gamble for peace.

Last September at the United Nations General Assembly, I urged that there be a halt to the bombing as a necessary first step on the road to de-escalation. I now urge the leaders of North Vietnam, and all those who may have any influence in their counsels, to seize this opportunity swiftly so that the next steps can be taken which may quickly end the tragedy and the suffering of all the people of Vietnam, and allow them and all of us to turn our hands to the works of peace.

Canada, for its part, stands ready to do anything within its power which may contribute to the prompt initiation of serious talks. The possibilities include Commission contact with the North Vietnamese Government and action in the Security Council, perhaps with a view to reconvening the Geneva Conference itself. If it should appear that it would advance the prospect for peace, our Commissioner will proceed promptly to Hanoi.