

*Supply—External Affairs*

to a report such as is being suggested. However, under the terms of the commission there has to be agreement between a majority of the members of the commission. It does not have to be a report that is unanimously supported. It will be recalled that in 1962 the commission did make a report. It was a majority report supported by Canada and India. There is certainly no objection from Canada to such a report.

**Mr. Douglas:** May I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs two questions. The first one has to do with the statement made by Secretary General U Thant on his return from a series of exploratory investigations, in which he gave it as his considered opinion that a cessation of the bombing of North Viet Nam would result in meaningful negotiations within two weeks. I want to ask the minister if, in the light of his correspondence with the foreign minister of North Viet Nam, and the report of Mr. Dier, he shares the feelings which U Thant had as a result of his investigation. In other words, does he feel that the assumption which U Thant drew from his conversations was fully warranted?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I have publicly stated that the opinion expressed by the Secretary General is one that I would hope represented the true situation, and I do not have any doubt from the talks that I have had with the Secretary General himself that he believes that if the bombing did stop for the period mentioned there would be meaningful discussions. His information was based on views expressed to him in Paris by someone who represented the government of North Viet Nam, but someone who was not in high authority. Apart from this statement by the Secretary General our own discussions with the foreign minister and with members of the government of North Viet Nam yielded the information that there would be talks, but no indication when those talks might take place. This information has been passed on to the Secretary General. Indeed the government of France, about the same time as the statement was made by the Secretary General, expressed the view that if there was a cessation of bombing there would be talks shortly thereafter.

I wish that I could say that the information transmitted to us, which resulted from direct discussions with the governments concerned, confirmed the optimism of the Secretary General. But having said that, I do want to reiterate that I strongly support the position

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

taken by the Secretary General, one that is perfectly consistent with the position we ourselves took last September, that the cessation of the bombing would transfer the onus to the north and was in the present situation the only means we know which might conceivably lead to talks.

**Mr. Douglas:** I wonder if I may put my second question to the minister very briefly. Am I correct in assuming from the minister's statement that there is no serious difference of opinion respecting the suggestion that a cessation of the bombing would probably result in negotiations, but that the difficulties are twofold: one, the matter of when the negotiations would take place; and two, the proviso laid down by the President of the United States in his San Antonio statement that there must be some commitment by North Viet Nam with reference to the building up of its military strength in the south? Am I correct in assuming that the real obstacle lies in the fact that the United States is insisting that the artificial division, the military demarcation line between North and South Viet Nam, has now become an international boundary and that North Viet Nam should be required to discontinue supporting whatever forces it may have in South Viet Nam? Is that the real obstacle lying at the root of any meaningful negotiations?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** The answer to the question is no. The United States have said that they would be prepared to stop the bombing if they could be assured that talks would take place, and if some indication was given as to when these talks would take place. This is the information we were seeking to get.

As I speak tonight I choose my words carefully, but I still hope that the government of North Viet Nam, knowing that the American government is prepared to stop the bombing, would not only say they will enter the talks but would give an indication as to when these talks would begin. If that is done, I would feel very optimistic that we might begin to try to find a solution to this regrettable war.

**Mr. Douglas:** I do not wish to weary the minister, but I have a final question for him. May I ask him when the United States have ever publicly said that they are prepared to cease the bombing if they get a definite time as to when negotiations will begin, without the proviso which was contained in the San Antonio statement that they must also have