

Foreign Policy

For many years now we have been the only party in Canada which has criticized American policy in Viet Nam and has criticized the government of Canada for not forthrightly and publicly condemning that policy in the hope that Canada's condemnation might persuade Washington to change it. The right hon. gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, quoted a speech made some years ago by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in which he agreed with the American analysis of why the United States must be in Viet Nam. This is where we got into difficulty when he and other spokesmen for the government some years ago agreed with the analysis and the reasons which the Americans adopted for going in to Viet Nam.

On many occasions we have pointed out that it is far too simplistic, and indeed probably false, to suggest that the situation in Viet Nam is merely one of aggression, even though no one with his senses has denied or failed to see the communist intentions and the communist subversion in South Viet Nam. We have emphasized in many debates in this house and outside it that it is necessary to appreciate and to realize that a major factor in the Viet Nam situation is civil disagreement and a civil war between two sections of Viet Nam. Indeed in his speech today the minister said—I hope I heard him correctly because my notes are very brief, and I hope I do not misrepresent him—that the government of Canada is persuaded that the situation in Viet Nam is not a military one, that it is a political one. The minister went on to say that what we were concerned with was the future political arrangements between the two parts of Viet Nam and between the people of Viet Nam. The minister nods his head that I am representing him accurately.

If that is the case, and it is the case, what right has any big power to be in that situation? Who is to decide the future political arrangements between North and South Viet Nam and among the people of Viet Nam if it is not the people of Viet Nam themselves? If the minister says to me in reply that that is exactly what he wants, and that the policy is to create a situation in Viet Nam where the people of South Viet Nam would be free to make a decision without subversion and without interference from outside. I have no quarrel with him. But that does not require the bombing of North Viet Nam. That does not require the invasion of the demilitarized zone.

[Mr. Lewis.]

That does not require the constant and incessant escalation of the war by the United States.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Or by both sides.

Mr. Lewis: The minister says "or by both sides." I was going to say this later but I will say it now. Every time he is asked this question the Prime Minister says "both sides," but the fact is—and let us not run away from the fact simply because it happens to relate to a country whose régime we do not like and that no one else in this house likes—that Hanoi has not bombarded any place in any other country. Let us not forget that Hanoi's activities have been limited to Viet Nam. The bombing of Hanoi, the bombing of North Viet Nam has been an act undertaken by a powerful country separated from Viet Nam by a huge ocean. We suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to recognize these facts.

• (5:20 p.m.)

May I quote first a very recent editorial from the *Globe and Mail* of May 20. It says:

It has long been clear that the war is neither a clear cut case of aggression from the North, nor a purely civil conflict within the South.

It goes on to say:

What really matters is that the world's mightiest power has massively intervened in a war between different Vietnamese forces, whether or not they are considered to be feuding factions within a single nation, or two sovereign governments. It is this intervention which has magnified the conflict out of all reasonable proportions and has raised the awesome prospect of a much wider war.

This has more recently been made infinitely worse by the invasion of the demilitarized zone. If I am told that certain spokesmen for the United States have assured us they will not go beyond the three miles, I think it is, south of parallel 17, perhaps they will forgive me if I look at this statement with a jaundiced eye because I recall that only two, three or four weeks ago the same United States spokesmen or others promised most emphatically that they would not enter the demilitarized zone. That promise has now been broken. The logic of these escalations is that they cannot be brought to an end. If you go one step, almost inevitably you must take the next step or admit defeat which you were not prepared to admit in the first place and which no one is asking the United States to admit. In fact, the greater the escalation, the greater the involvement, the more difficult it will be for the United States and the others to extricate themselves.