

for the three associate states of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. If recognition were granted, it should strengthen the position of Bao Dai and make it easier for the French Government to turn over to him a greater measure of authority. Any contribution made to political stability in Indo-China would enable France to decrease her military commitments there and allow her to make a more effective contribution within the North Atlantic alliance. Furthermore, it would also be helpful in contributing to internal stability in France. Recognition had been extended to the three states by a large number of countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States. If we were to follow, our recognition could be couched in the terms of the treaties between the three states and France, that is, would recognize them as associate states within the French union.

Against recognition was the fact that the three states did not meet all the customary legal requirements for recognition. Under the terms of the agreements establishing their independence, France still retained a large measure of control over foreign affairs, defence and finance. Furthermore, Bao Dai's Government was in effective control over only a limited part of the territory in Viet Nam. In addition, the only Asian state so far to grant recognition had been Thailand. India had indicated that it would regret recognition by Canada but it was thought it would understand the reasons motivating it. Finally, there was some possibility that recognition by Canada might increase the chances of France asking for Canadian assistance in Indo-China.

6. Mr. Pearson suggested that, in view of the present tense situation and the uncertainty of developments in the near future, it might be wise to hold up recognition for a short period.

7. The Cabinet, after discussion, agreed to defer the problem of recognition of the Indo-Chinese states of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos for consideration at a subsequent meeting; the Secretary of State for External Affairs to prepare for circulation a report on the present situation.

External Affairs; proposed bilateral air agreement with France

8. The Prime Minister, referring to the discussion at the meeting of March 31st, 1950, said that negotiations had taken place between

001748

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