

Supply—External Affairs

a very real interest in what is happening there, and what is likely to happen there. As a country with hundreds of miles of exposed coast on the Pacific, Canada is naturally concerned with problems affecting security in the Pacific and in Asia. Moreover, we know from the experience of two world wars that peace is indivisible and that a threat to peace anywhere can soon cover the whole world.

Our inevitable concern for developments in southeast Asia is increased by our close relationship to the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the three Asian members of the commonwealth. The growing anxiety of these latter three over hostilities going on so near to their homelands can be readily appreciated, since their security would be very seriously threatened if an aggressive communist nation took control, either by internal subversion or by direct military intervention, of one after another of the countries in the area.

Added evidence of our concern for the security and well-being of the nations of south and southeast Asia is to be found in our active participation in the Colombo plan, whereby we have sought to associate ourselves with the area's economic development.

In so far as accepting special political and defence commitments is concerned, there is of course a limit to what a country of Canada's population and resources can do. We have limited strength, in both men and materials; and our commitments, Mr. Chairman, are already heavy. Existing undertakings, such as those under NATO, are such as to circumscribe what Canada can and cannot undertake, militarily and otherwise, not only in southeast Asia but elsewhere.

And therefore, while it is true that if peace is threatened by communist aggression anywhere, it is threatened everywhere, it is also true that Canada cannot be expected to accept special or regional defence commitments in every part of the world where collective arrangements may be advisable. We have of course, through membership in the United Nations, accepted the provisions of the charter. Canada has, therefore, already definite, if general, obligations in the maintenance and restoration of peace and security in all areas where these are in danger. In this connection, it should be realized that the situation in Indo-China, with all its consequences to the peace and security of southeast Asia, has not yet been brought to the United Nations, and is not before the United Nations at the present time. If or when that position should change, Canada's policy, like those of other member states, will of course depend upon the nature, the purposes

[Mr. Pearson.]

and the scope of any action which might be recommended by the United Nations. Any action involving an extension of Canada's present commitments would be placed before parliament.

The responsibility for seeking recourse to the United Nations would rest with the states and governments in the areas which are most directly concerned, and any such approach would, I assume, depend upon the outcome of the direct discussions which are now going on in Geneva, and also on a clear assessment of the possibilities and limitations of effective United Nations action. It is clear—at least it seems clear to me—that the United Nations Organization possesses a fund of experience and provides available procedures for peaceful settlement which, in other circumstances, have helped in the past to put seemingly intractable problems on the road to solution, or to halt deterioration in situations threatening the peace, and I would hope that the United Nations might prove useful in this situation, too. But, Mr. Chairman, whether at the United Nations or at Geneva, or wherever the road may lead, the search for peace and security goes on.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, as I listened to the unveiling of the speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs I was rather disappointed in that stand as revealed by him in the early portion of his speech. Without having before me the actual words he used in the two or three concluding paragraphs of his speech, I believe the minister has gone farther in the commitment of Canada to its world responsibilities than this government has ever gone before. His concluding statement to the effect that Canada today has a responsibility in NATO, which is direct, and that Canada internationally, under the United Nations, assumes responsibility for assuring that communism should not advance anywhere in the world, regardless of any words that might dilute the statement that he made means, if literally taken, a commitment far and beyond those ever before taken by this government.

When speaking of the situation in Asia, the minister said that which many of us in other parts of the house have said on other occasions, namely, that military defences of themselves will not maintain bulwarks against communism unless the nations affected desire to be protected or to stand against communism. He referred to the Colombo plan with satisfaction in the degree to which Canada is contributing to raising the standards of people in undeveloped areas in Asia and in other parts of the world.

Through the years I have taken the stand that Canada must extend the amount of that