

*External Aid*

quite acceptable, might have been found. However, Mr. Smith then added that there was no hope of a settlement unless the two sides themselves made some compromises. I quote some of his words:

The Biafrans will have to make concessions with regard to sovereignty, and Lagos will have to make concessions with regard to physical security and economic viability.

I bring up that statement again, Mr. Speaker, to make clear that those who were in a position to offer their good offices made a close study of the question and that it is up to the belligerents to find within themselves the true spirit of conciliation which is the prerequisite of any compromise. Above all, we must not think that we, in Canada, were the first to become aware of that war, and that we have all the answers. We do not have them.

If Canada attempted, in one way or another, to impose any solution whatever to the conflict, that effort would constitute an intervention in the internal affairs of another country.

• (3:20 p.m.)

[English]

The policy which my government has followed in this situation has been motivated, as is proper, by humanitarian considerations. But what a government cannot do in this or in any other situation is to depart from the broad context of its foreign policy or its general and carefully formulated outlook on the world. Thus our policy involves our attitudes toward the aspirations of the developing countries; it touches on our position in the Commonwealth and the United Nations; it urges us to be realistic in our continuing desire to play a useful, responsible role on the world scene. I emphasize this concept of responsibility in foreign policy both because it is particularly relevant to the question of Nigeria, and because it is our belief that in the increasing complexities we have to face in international affairs it is steadily more important that countries like Canada play their parts responsibly.

We see in Nigeria a tragic and bloody civil war taking place in a Commonwealth country with which Canada has developed strong ties of friendship. I am not now talking about red tape or protocol or diplomatic technicalities. I am talking about a real issue. Contemporary international practice recognizes a fundamental legal obligation not to interfere in the internal affairs of another state. The

United Nations General Assembly's unanimous declaration on non-intervention in 1965 describes this duty in no uncertain terms:

No state has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state.

Certainly world concern for the promotion and protection of basic human rights has enabled the assembly effectively to overcome past objections that even the mere discussion of these rights constituted a form of intervention. However, in this particular instance there was no general desire to have the item discussed at the United Nations. Moreover, in so far as actual intervention is concerned, that is, action by the United Nations within the territory of a state without its consent, it should be realized that only in the most extreme circumstances involving the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security can the appropriate United Nations organ authorize or approve such intervention.

I emphasize that to many of the states of the world—those which have only recently gained independence—the principle of non-intervention is a dominant consideration. As an example I need only recall that for all of the concern of the countries of Africa for the plight of the native population in the republic of South Africa, there has never been a proposal from an African country that the United Nations possesses the right to violate the territorial integrity of South Africa. The question of southwest Africa because of its mandate is distinct and not to be confused. If, therefore, the Africans, for fear of creating a precedent which might be used against themselves later, have not raised the argument of intervention on humanitarian grounds in South Africa, it is not likely that any Canadian effort to intervene in Nigeria would be met with other than outraged opposition.

There have been persistent proposals in this house and in the press that Canada raise this issue at the United Nations. Notwithstanding what I have just said, I should like to assure the people of Canada that we have gone into this deeply. There have been intensive consultations with other delegations in New York; the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) sought the views of the United Nations secretary-general in an exchange of messages in September; our missions abroad have sought advice; I talked personally with the secretary-general about this and other matters. As a result of all this, of my own talks with the secretary-general,