

Of renewed importance, although outside United Nations auspices are the truce supervision activities in which we are engaged in the three Indochina states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It is now almost ten years since this country undertook, at the request of the participants in the Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina, to serve along with India and Poland in the three International Supervisory Commissions for these three Indochina nations. Indochina is once again in a state of crisis, and I believe it is the responsibility to explain the Canadian Government's position with respect to some of the unfolding events in this area.

Civil War in Vietnam

In South Vietnam there is now a full scale civil war supplied, directed and inspired from Communist North Vietnam. This civil war runs the risk of becoming an international war, because the Communists continue to encourage their Communist fellows within South Vietnam and to provide them with help in the form of strategic direction and infiltrated supplies of arms and trained personnel, while the United States, for their part, have responded to the requests of successive South Vietnamese governments for help in the form of training and equipment against this externally organized and supported insurgency.

Both the Government of the United States and the Government of South Vietnam have made it clear that if the North Vietnam Government and its backers will cease to interfere in South Vietnam, military aid from the United States will not be necessary. There is no question of any attempt by the South to take over the North, nor of the United States desiring to establish bases in the South. What is required is for the Communist North to abandon its policy of interfering in the South. Our delegation to the Commission reports to us as an independent body, and I am satisfied that the assessment made by Canada, on its own, represents the actual situation.

There have been suggestions that neutrality would be the best policy for Vietnam. I would not disagree with this as a long-term objective; we have already agreed that it is the desirable policy for Cambodia and Laos. But there is no doubt that supporting a nominally neutralist South Vietnam in present circumstances, make that territory become anything other than an early victim of Communist subversion? I believe that genuine, viable neutrality for Vietnam can become possible, but I think it will become possible only when the present insurgency is brought to an end.

The role of the Commission on which Canada serves in this situation is very difficult. Yesterday, in the Security Council, Mr. Stevenson criticized the effectiveness of the Commission. A large part of the original terms of reference of the Commission has become a dead letter. But the Commission has performed the useful function of examining South Vietnamese charges of subversion from the North, and has presented a special report to the Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference stating its positive findings. It has not done as much as we would have thought necessary. In particular, we have believed and repeatedly stated that the consideration of cases of subversion should have been more expeditious. In the critical situation obtaining in Vietnam, the Commission's duty to point to breaches of the cease-fire agreement becomes more rather than less urgent. We shall continue to press our Commission colleagues to take the same view of the Commission's duties as we do.