

Supply—External Affairs

State for External Affairs from having what I would call the courage, in this desperate world situation, to say clearly both in this house and on the floor of the United Nations that the responsibility has now shifted to Washington, Hanoi having said it would talk if the bombing ceased?

• (9:10 p.m.)

This to me was the most disappointing part of the minister's speech. I have no doubt that he is utterly and completely sincere in his search for a solution to the problem. I have no doubt that the government is utterly and completely sincere in that it does and in all it has done. I am not trying to denigrate the little the minister has done in seeking a cessation of the bombing, or the good things he has done by sending envoys to Hanoi. But I do not think this is enough.

After a little thought, I was not prepared to have this debate end with the kind of statement which the minister made, which it seems to me indicated no policy whatever except continuing along the same road. My hon. friend, the hon. member for Greenwood, was as aware as the minister of the limitations of a discussion at the Security Council. All members of this party in this chamber, and members of our convention and federal council who urged that the matter be brought to the Security Council, are well aware of the limitations.

We are well aware that North and South Viet Nam are not members of the United Nations and are not subject to the authority of the United Nations. But let me remind the Secretary of State for External Affairs that that has not stopped the United Nations from dealing with other situations. There have been more than one situation in which the Security Council has discussed and attempted to act upon matters when some of the parties concerned in those matters were not members of the United Nations.

There would be nothing to prevent the Security Council from discussing this matter, and for the United States at the Security Council to make some commitment that would be a first step toward negotiations. And, indeed, since behind the scenes the Soviet union is as important perhaps as Hanoi itself, then the presence of the Soviet union at the United Nations in the Security Council may well be of considerable value in a discussion by that council, and in the negotiations which would be carried on at the council, and behind the curtains between official council sessions.

We are well aware of the limitations, but I do not think that the reason which the Secretary of State for External Affairs has given for not placing the matter on the agenda is a valid reason. I conclude, Mr. Chairman, by repeating that I find it extremely disappointing that the government spokesman should tell us he still believes in the necessity for ceasing bombing North Viet Nam, and in the next breath attempt, by a description of events, to justify American failure to carry out that policy.

I was terribly disappointed and distressed by the fact that the government is apparently attempting to carry on a policy which on the one side says this and on the other side says that. In the meantime this horrible war continues. Thousands of Vietnamese are killed daily. The danger of escalation grows every day.

The press today reported that the administration in Washington was not going to send 260,000 men to Viet Nam, but it was going to increase its manpower there by 35,000 to 50,000. Mr. Chairman, one does not have to be a diplomatic or military expert to know that if you have agreed to increase your manpower today by 35,000 to 50,000 and the war lasts any length of time, then further escalation of your manpower is almost a certainty. In that situation it seems to me that members of this committee and the people of Canada cannot be satisfied with the kind of statement which the minister made in so desperate a situation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious that, as far as the Viet Nam war is concerned, we all agree that it is a dirty war which should come to an end as soon as possible. It is quite obvious also that everyone is hoping that a way can be found to put an end to it.

There is no doubt also that opinions differ when it comes to evaluating what steps should be taken to that end. And there is some evidence of this, because the hon. member who spoke before me said that he was extremely disappointed about the position taken by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin).

Personally, I feel quite differently about that statement. I would say that it is realistic, reasonable, in the circumstances, and even rational, frank and courageous, since he is in a position where it takes some courage to say openly to the American giant what one thinks he should do or not do.