

Calling publicly for a cessation of the bombing, we have made it quite clear that the obligations for restoring peace are reciprocal and that it would be totally unrealistic to place the whole burden of responsibility for making essential concessions on only one side, namely the United States. Unless the decision to suspend the bombing were to lead to some tangible concessions by North Vietnam, the chances of any resultant talks producing fruitful results would certainly be diminished and the danger of a reversion to military measures, perhaps on an intensified scale, would have to be taken seriously into account.

I should hope and expect that North Vietnam itself would see the force of this argument and that those countries which have particularly close relations with North Vietnam would also use their influence constructively in the interests of peace so that a beginning to a peaceful settlement could be made.

There are two points which I consider essential in the relationship between public and government. The first is that any citizen who has views on foreign policy should have an easy opportunity to discuss them publicly and to communicate them to the government. The second is that the government should ensure that the public is brought into its confidence, is provided with information and is given a chance to increase its knowledge about foreign affairs. I think that both these conditions are being met in Canada. Thus, in an area such as foreign aid, the Government, having set out goals which we hope Canada can reach in four or five years, is working to ensure that public opinion will accept and endorse the financial programmes required to meet the needs of less-developed countries. Canadians are responding to the policy of rapidly expanding foreign aid and seem increasingly aware of the opportunities for Canada in development assistance.

Individuals affect Canada's foreign policy in two major ways. First, they participate in person-to-person or group-to-group activities, such as trade or tourism, which in turn have implications for official policy. Second, the public influences government policy by the presentation of its views on various issues through personal discussion, the communications media, lobbying and other methods. Although the effect of any of these methods is difficult to establish with precision, there is no question in my mind that public views on international matters are an important factor in the evolution of government policy. Without abdicating its responsibility to give a lead to the public, the Canadian Government is both aware of, and responsive to, public opinion.

If public opinion is free, comment on government policy will be critical as well as commendatory. This is to be expected. In the Canadian context, critical comment is seriously studied in the Government's own review of foreign-policy questions.

Let me give a specific example. We regularly re-examine our defence commitments to determine whether they serve Canada's national objectives. Partly as a result of a healthy questioning by some Canadians, we have recently re-assessed with special care the grounds for participating in collective security arrangements. The conclusion which we have reached is that we should continue at the present time to make an appropriate contribution to collective defence arrangements in NATO. But the point which I want to make here is that the Government is alive to public concern on an important subject such as collective defence and is prepared to give serious consideration to the views of individual Canadians on it.