



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## VIETNAM

Statement by the Honourable Paul Martin,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
to the House of Commons Standing Committee  
on External Affairs, April 11, 1967.

I would like to be able to tell the Committee that the prospects in Vietnam are encouraging. In some respects I might be justified in saying that they are. In particular, I think there is reason to feel encouraged by the progress that is being made in South Vietnam towards the facts and forms of responsible government. In the wider perspective of the conflict, however, I must frankly confess that neither an end to the fighting nor the outlines of a political solution are as yet within sight.

In my presentation to the Committee this morning I would like to do three things. I shall begin by trying to set out in some detail what we know of the positions of the parties as they have emerged over the past year or so. I will then try to explore whether there is any basis on which it might be possible to break out of the present impasse. I will conclude my presentation by setting out some of the elements which we see as forming part of any eventual accommodation in Vietnam.

Before I proceed with my presentation, however, it might be useful if I were to restate briefly some of the salient aspects of the Canadian position in relation to the Vietnam conflict as I see it. I believe it would be useful to do that because there continues to be a good deal of misunderstanding of our position in the public debate which is going on in Canada about the Vietnam situation.

The first point which I think needs to be made in that regard is that Canada has no direct national interest to assert or maintain in Southeast Asia. Nor do we have any formal military or other commitments there. If we have been drawn into that part of the world, it has been solely as citizens of the wider world community. What we are doing in Southeast Asia is twofold: we are there on a peace-keeping mission on behalf of countries which do have a direct national interest in that area; and we are also there as a contributor to the collective effort to meet the rising expectations of the people in that area for a better life.