

CANADA'S INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

The following is part of a speech by Mr. Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Club in Toronto on January 31:

...There are two directions from which we must approach this subject. Both are essential to a full understanding.

In the first place, I should like to establish the basic fact of our independence in relation to some of the world problems of the moment, because there are people who doubt it.

In the second place, I should like to explain why we can take an independent and useful role in world affairs and what are the means chosen by the Government to ensure that we can continue to do this. A nation that does not understand the conditions on which its strength and independence rest will not be able to preserve them effectively.

There are persons who ask whether we have a foreign policy centred on Canadian interests and viewpoints. I do not think they realize the extent and intensity of the work which is done to produce exactly that kind of policy. Every week, hundreds of telegrams and despatches arrive from Canadian missions abroad. Every week, scores of memoranda are prepared within my Department, or in other departments in Ottawa, recommending courses of action which best seem to meet Canadian external interests.

When our national interests and our judgment of a particular situation coincide with those of other nations, then we are quite happy to be identified with others in a common policy. Canada is a mature and responsible nation. It sees no value in difference for the sake of difference, for the simple purpose of attracting attention.

Where there are good reasons to take a stand different from that of allies or friends, we do so. This is the point which tends to be overlooked and which I accordingly stress.

The record of such independence of viewpoint is abundantly clear. In a number of situations we have taken action or urged viewpoints clearly different from those of nations with which, otherwise, we had a close identity of viewpoint. I would refer, by way of example, to trade relations with Communist nations generally, the Suez crisis of 1956, relations with Cuba, the admission of new members to the United Nations, relations with China, the situation in Indo-China, some aspects of peace keeping and the implications of common membership in NATO. Individual Canadians may agree or disagree with the decisions of the Government of the day, but they cannot justifiably deny that the decisions were Canadian ones. Our policies emerge from our own combination of interests, convictions and traditions — they are not borrowed from or imposed by others....

CANADIAN POLICY ON VIETNAM

It is sometimes alleged that Canadian policies can be independent only where United States interests are not significantly involved. Conversely, it is said that, where a major United States interest is engaged,

as it undoubtedly is in Vietnam, Canadian policy can operate only within strictly defined limitations.

To put the issue more bluntly: has Canada maintained a mind of its own on the course of developments in Vietnam?

For more than 11 years we have maintained a substantial Canadian presence there as observers. Almost a quarter of our foreign service officers — not to mention an even greater number of members of the Canadian Armed Services — have done tours of duty there with the International Control Commission. As a result of this continuing and very substantial presence, we have been able to form an accurate assessment of the issues at stake. We have not shut our eyes to violations of the Geneva Agreement which have helped to bring about the present dangerous situation in that country.

We recognize that South Vietnam has violated the Agreement by seeking and receiving military assistance principally from the United States. We also know that, long before this assistance reached its present level and long before the onset of open hostilities, North Vietnam had been deliberately violating the Agreement by organizing, assisting and encouraging activities in the South directed at the overthrow of the Government of South Vietnam.

A MINORITY REPORT

We have not only recognized this situation, we have a public and official statement about it. In June 1962, Canada and India, in a Special Report to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, concluded that the situation in Vietnam had "shown signs of rapid deterioration". Part of the responsibility for this situation, the report goes on to say, was South Vietnam's for entering into a *de facto* military alliance with the United States and for allowing the entry into its territory of armed personnel and equipment beyond approved levels. These measures of military assistance, the South Vietnamese Government had said, were necessitated by the growing interference by the North in the internal affairs of the South. The report also concluded that there was evidence to show that North Vietnam had sent armed and unarmed personnel, equipment and supplies into the South for aggressive purposes and that the North was allowing its territory to be used for hostile actions against the South....

In February 1965, with the beginning of air strikes against the North, it was decided that the Commission should send another Special Message to the Co-Chairmen. We made repeated attempts to convince our colleagues that this, too, should be a balanced and objective report in relation to all the facts, and not just a partial selection of them. Nevertheless it was decided, with Canada dissenting, that the Message would deal only with the air strikes.

In dissenting, we had no doubt that these strikes had been carried out and that violations of the Agreement had taken place. We were not attempting to cover up these serious developments — the Commission could scarcely hide something which was front page news all over the world. Our concern, and