

his impression that the North Vietnamese were not interested in talking to the United States at that time. The fact that Mr. Seaborn had seen the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister was reported to the House by my predecessor the Hon. Paul Martin on June 7, 1965.

Mr. Seaborn visited Hanoi for the last time from September 30 to October 4, 1965. We had told the United States Government in advance that we had serious doubts about the usefulness of giving him special instructions and on this occasion he carried no message. His only official contact this time was at a low level in the North Vietnamese liaison mission and he detected no sign of interest in discussions or negotiations. Shortly thereafter Mr. Seaborn returned to Canada at the conclusion of his normal posting in Vietnam.

It has been suggested that the Canadian Government knew, or should have known, that some of the messages it conveyed amounted to statement of an American intention to bomb North Vietnam. The Canadian Government knew of no such intention on the part of the United States. The messages we carried were couched in general terms and related to the possible consequences for the North Vietnamese Government of continued activities in South Vietnam.

It has been implied that the Canadian Government should not have carried any such messages on behalf of the United States. It was the view of the Government of that time that this was entirely consistent with its role as a member of the I.C.C., and indeed that it was implicit in the role that Canada should endeavour to promote a dialogue between the main parties to the conflict. The North Vietnamese made it abundantly clear to Mr. Seaborn that they did not regard our activity as in any way improper or inconsistent with our I.C.C. role.

It has also been implied that when the bombing of North Vietnam began the Canadian Government should have made some public protest on the basis of what it is now claimed that it knew about American intentions. The Canadian Government had no information that would have justified such a protest at that time. Canada, along with many others, accepted the United States Government's version of the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

We were not allied to the United States in its operations in Indochina and were not fully informed by the United States on its various plans and intentions. Throughout, the record is clear that the Government of that day acted in good faith and in a manner consistent with our responsibilities to the International Control Commission.