

It would, the Minister stated, be self-defeating if Canadian public statements were to have the effect of slamming doors instead of opening them, or of closing off potentially useful dialogues instead of stimulating and nurturing the confidential exchange of viewpoints. Taking all factors into account, the emphasis should be on quiet diplomacy.

Explaining what Canada was trying to do, Mr. Martin indicated that concurrent access to both the United States and North Vietnam placed Canada in a good position to probe and analyze the positions of the principal Parties and he went on to say that Canada had tried to devise formulas which stood some chance of bridging the gap separating the positions of the two sides thus bringing the problem closer to a negotiation. Canada had also suggested making the "good offices" of the International Control Commission available to the Parties concerned when the circumstances seemed right.

Mr. Martin indicated that the International Control Commission might not, in the end, be the instrument that would be used to promote a settlement, but it was Canada's duty to be ready to develop every possible opportunity to achieve that end. Adding that that opportunity might not be far away, he said, "I feel there are elements in the present situation that should convince India, Poland and Canada (the three nations represented on the ICC) to recognize that there may be a special role for them in the Vietnam situation as it is now unfolding."

Mr. Martin emphasized that the other channel of communication established by the two Ronning missions last year remained open, and he dismissed as without foundation reports that Mr. Ronning's services would no longer be used because of statements made by him in the exercise of his right to express his private opinions.

Mr. Martin then restated the Canadian position on the settlement of the Vietnam conflict under seven headings as follows:

"First, we believe that a military solution alone is neither practicable nor desirable. We have always made it clear that we look to negotiation to settle this conflict. We have said this because we think that the Vietnam situation cannot be isolated from the security and stability of Southeast Asia as a whole. We have not been alone in saying this. If there is to be a settlement which will hold out a reasonable prospect of long-term stability in that area of Southeast Asia, it will have to be based upon an accommodation of the interests of those primarily concerned. I do not believe this will happen as the result of military action alone.

"Second, peace discussions should take place on the basis of the Geneva Agreement. We believe that, without any prejudice whatsoever to the ultimate solutions, the first stage of any settlement will have to envisage a return to the status quo ante. By that we mean the conditions which were envisaged as ensuing from the Geneva Ceasefire Agreement of 1954. According to my understanding, the Government of North Vietnam does not take issue with that position. In practice this involves a continuing of the de facto division into two Vietnams, if only to allow time for the scars which have been opened by the conflicts of the past quarter-century to heal and for new dispositions to be agreed upon for the eventual reunification of the country.