

Cambodia-Vietnam Border Problems

One unfortunate offshoot of the war in South Vietnam has been a series of violent border incidents with Cambodia. South Vietnamese troops repeatedly cross the Cambodian border and we are told that they do so in hot pursuit of Viet Cong insurgents seeking to take refuge in Cambodia after operations in Vietnam. We in Canada -- and I have made this clear before -- support Cambodian neutrality and territorial integrity and therefore are doing what we can to try to find some way to bring these incursions to an end. Although this is not, strictly speaking, among the functions set out for the Commission in Cambodia in the Geneva Agreements, we have allowed it to be used to investigate such incidents and are ourselves trying to use it to see whether some more satisfactory arrangement can be made.

Yesterday Mr. Stevenson made a number of proposals in the Security Council in the course of the debate on the Cambodian complaints against Vietnam. The proposals concerned various means by which the Cambodian-Vietnamese border might be insulated from the effects of the Communist insurrection in Vietnam. These proposals merit careful study. We have long felt that the Geneva framework for Cambodia was not designed to deal with situations that might arise along the frontier with Vietnam. We should therefore welcome all suggestions that could lead to the lowering of tension on the frontier between these two countries. Whether they are related to the Geneva framework or not is of less importance than their possible efficacy in correcting a dangerous situation. I am sure that when we discuss the problems of these countries it is not easy for us to recognize the extent to which we in this interdependent world, whether we like it or not, are obliged in our own interests, as well as in the interests of world peace, to find that these matters are of vital concern to us.

A Divided Country

Laos is also the unfortunate victim of the confrontation between Communist and non-Communist forces. An attempt was made at Geneva in 1962 to bring about conditions which would permit Laos to be united, independent and neutral. My honourable friend the former Secretary of State for External Affairs attended the conference in 1962 when we were brought in as a direct member of the conference. At the present time that country is, in all but name, a divided country. One part of it is held by Right-Wing forces which have been far from blameless; they have done many things which have made the task of the Neutralist Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, more difficult. But at least they have co-operated in some measure with the Prime Minister, and the areas they hold are generally open to inspection by the International Commission of which Canada, I wish to emphasize, along with India and Poland, is a member.

The areas held by the Communist Pathet Lao are closed to the Commission except upon rare occasions, and the Pathet Lao faction has been unco-operative to such a degree that one is forced to the conclusion that it really prefers the partition of the country to its unification under a Neutralist Government. Their latest military attacks in the Plaine des Jarres cannot be justified by any political manoeuvring of the Right Wing in Vientiane. Our delegation to the Commission has consistently supported both the authority of