

decisions which are certain to face them in the months and years to come. We must be careful, however, not to draw false inferences from what is currently going on in South Viet Nam. In particular, I think it would be wrong to conclude that these manifestations of political dissent are based on support for the concept of a government which was composed of representatives of the Viet Cong or which included their participation. There are many strands to the current dissent in South Viet Nam but that, according to the best information available to me, is not one of them.

There is a great deal of public concern in Canada, as in other countries, with the situation in Viet Nam. As I interpret this concern, it is based on the risks that are inherent in the present situation and on the desire to see a fair and equitable peace established in an area which has been convulsed by conflict for the past twenty years. We share this concern. As a member of this Commission, with special responsibilities, we have felt that our position was not precisely that of other countries and of other governments. We feel very strongly that, if we are going to reach a settlement in this matter, every instrument that is capable of being used to encourage negotiation must be used.

We are strongly of the view—and we are not without considerable encouragement and support for this view—that the Commission has a role and that we, as a member of that Commission at the present time, have a role, and we are seeking to take advantage of this opportunity to the fullest extent possible.

I want to acknowledge that there have been other proposals made by a number of governments. One of them was a proposal made by His Holiness Pope Paul VI. I told his spokesman, on behalf of the government of Canada, that his proposal for entrusting to the alliance of NATO powers the responsibility of arbitration was one that would receive Canadian support. Unhappily, for practical reasons—and I suppose these included the fact that the offer was not accepted by the other side—the proposal was not realized. But I wish now to acknowledge a note that we have had from the Secretary of the Vatican State, indicating their approval of the Canadian initiative.

I want to acknowledge, as well, the efforts being made by other bodies and other agencies, and I wish to say that Canada is prepared to support any effort that will help to bring about the beginning of negotiations.

That is all I have to say on Viet Nam.

Mr. CHURCHILL: May I suggest at this point, Mr. Chairman, that we take a short recess.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; we will break for five minutes.

On resuming.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. MARTIN: It is to be expected that, although we have had debate in the House of Commons, there should be a government statement on the Rhodesian situation as we see it in this committee.

This declaration of independence has precipitated an African crisis which could have the greatest implications for the Commonwealth. The illegal regime