

Viet Nam War

It is entirely appropriate that Canadians, who by their proximity to the United States have a special and friendly relationship with that country, should speak out at a time when the senseless and cruel destruction of heavily populated urban centres of North Viet Nam by American aircraft has caused horror and revulsion throughout the civilized world, and not least on the part of many Americans.

It is not the enemies of the United States who feel most strongly on this subject. The good name of the United States of America is involved, and it is the friends of the United States who have believed that the United States is a great and generous nation who most deeply regret seeing the good name of that country besmirched by the action we are discussing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brewin: We in this party have consistently expressed our vigorous opposition to the American intervention in southeast Asia. We have done so when it has not been politically expedient to do so. We have from time to time condemned the silence and the evasion of our own government on this issue; therefore, all the more we welcome the fact that this resolution has been brought forward by the government.

We have felt that intervention was totally unjustified by international law. It flew in the teeth of the Geneva agreement of 1954 accepted by the community of nations. Its professed purpose was the defence of the right of self-determination for South Viet Nam. In fact, its result has been the imposition of an increasingly repressive dictatorship. The war has had disastrous consequences, not only through massive loss of life and devastation of a whole country but in its implications for the people of the United States itself and, indeed, people throughout the world.

It is fitting that Canada should join leaders of countries such as Sweden and, happily, our fellow members of the Commonwealth, Australia and New Zealand, in expressing what we do today and what has been stated by the Secretary General of the United Nations and religious leaders throughout the world. The leader of the British Labour Party, who is by no means unfriendly to the United States, has seen fit to cancel a lecture tour in that country, to try to impress upon them the feelings of other people on this subject.

We call upon the Congress of the United States to exercise to the full its powers to end the conflict. Just a few weeks ago an official American spokesman used the expression "peace is at hand", yet in a futile effort to influence these negotiations, massive terror has been directed at the civilian population of North Viet Nam. What a Canadian described as "carpet bombing" has been rained down on residential areas, hospitals and embassies. There has been no serious pretence that the bombing has been confined to military targets.

James Reston, the editor of the *New York Times*, a distinguished American writer, has called what happened "power without pity". Even a Republican senator, Senator Saxbe, has said that the U.S. administration has taken leave of its senses. I do not expect the government to make any such statement but I think we in this House are

entitled to echo what has been stated by a Republican senator.

Some years ago a famous U.S. general, General Curtis Lemay, said that American policy should be to bomb North Viet Nam back into the Stone Age. At the time, this was thought to be the mere ranting of an extremist but it now appears to have become the policy of the American administration. We, therefore, welcome the clause in the resolution that deplores the recent large-scale bombing. In our view, however, the resolution would be improved if it called for the cessation of bombing altogether. The present resolution limits this to welcoming the cessation of the bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong area. We think all the bombing should stop, and we would prefer to see the resolution amended in that light. As I have explained, we do not propose to make any formal amendment but we suggest that the resolution could be strengthened in this way. While we welcome the resolution, we wish it dealt with the question of signing the treaty negotiated in October, thus bringing hostilities to an end.

I do not wish to comment on internal political affairs of the United States, but the confidence expressed before November 4 that peace was at hand and the subsequent actions of the administration seem, to say the least, strangely inconsistent. As far as this party is concerned, we wish to state that all military action should be brought to an end and all U.S. troops and military personnel withdrawn from Indo-China. In our view they should never have been there in the first place, and after these many years of savage and barbaric war the only effective answer is complete withdrawal. The President of the United States has spoken of "peace with honour". There can be no honour without peace.

We hope, although the resolution does not mention it, that our government will raise this matter at the United Nations. It is our view that the United Nations is used too infrequently: it is the conscience of mankind and is an instrument that should be used by mankind in crises of this sort. The Secretary General has expressed his deep concern about the situation, and no doubt an overwhelming majority of the nations of the world deeply deplore the continuation of this war and the barbaric way in which it is being conducted. Surely an expression of world conscience, through the United Nations, would have a powerful impact upon the United States where, as I have said, fortunately a number of powerful voices have been raised against the policy that has been adopted by the administration.

I do not wish to delay the vote by making a lengthy speech on the subject; the sooner this resolution is passed, the better. I conclude by repeating the conclusion of a statement on Viet Nam made by our caucus a few days ago: in the name of humanity, the killing must stop.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): It is a great pleasure for me to take part in this important debate. I must immediately inform the House that our group support this motion in view of the useless massacres taking place every day in that part of the world. We believe it is important to end this killing which has lasted far too long.