



CANADA

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION · DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS · OTTAWA, CANADA

(C.W.B. March 31, 1965)

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Vol. 20 No. 13

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CANADA AND VIETNAM

In a speech to Editors of the Foreign Language Press in Toronto on March 26, reviewing the Canadian position on the situation in Vietnam, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, noted that, in spite of its very limited mandate, the ICSC had played a restraining role in Vietnam. Canada, he said, had been developing a policy in Southeast Asia on the basis of its own objective assessment made possible by the presence in Vietnam, for nearly 11 years, of a large number of Canadian observers.

Mr. Martin reminded his audience that Canada had never condoned the use of force by either side. Rather, it had tried to take a balanced view of the situation but could not ignore the fact that North Vietnamese support had taken "the form of armed and unarmed personnel, of arms and ammunition, of direction and guidance...." This judgement, he declared, was "fully supported by evidence, including evidence presented by the Commission". Mr. Martin stressed the fact that the war in South Vietnam must be looked at in its broader international context, and that any giving way in the face of Communist aggression might well have serious repercussions in other parts of Asia, and in Africa and Latin America.

He went on:

I have tried to set the situation in Vietnam in this broader context because that is the context in which, I think, recent developments in that country must be seen. Nothing could be more dangerous, in my view, than to oversimplify the problem we are facing. That would be particularly dangerous at a time when all our attention must necessarily be

focused on achieving a solution in Vietnam, because I very much doubt if we can expect an unrealistic assessment of the situation to yield either practicable or durable solutions.

As far as the Canadian Government is concerned, we are deeply concerned about the implications of the present situation for world peace. We appreciate the very grave risks of a widening of the present conflict, which must be avoided at all costs. We are directing all our efforts to that end. We wish to see peace restored in Vietnam — and when I say Vietnam I mean the whole of Vietnam. I believe that is also the course which the overwhelming majority of Canadians would wish to see followed. But I know you will understand me when I say that the peace that is established in Vietnam must be a genuine peace. It must not be a fraudulent peace. It must be a peace which will allow the South Vietnamese to live in conditions they have freely chosen for themselves and which will provide them with adequate guarantees against outside pressure or intervention.

PATIENT PROGRESS TOWARD NEGOTIATION

I do not think the problem in Vietnam is capable of solution by military means. I regard a negotiated solution of that problem at some stage as both right and inevitable. I should earnestly hope that that stage could be reached sooner rather than later, and we shall certainly continue to do what we can to help bring about the conditions that would allow negotiations to be undertaken with a reasonable prospect of achieving a solution. At the same time, we cannot be indifferent to the risks that would be

(Over)