

Inquiries of the Ministry

peace of the world will be endangered. I would ask the Prime Minister whether he will consider making a protest to Washington, as any escalation of the war will nullify all of the efforts of the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think the hon. member should put his question now.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I was simply asking the Prime Minister, in view of the efforts put forth by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and Mr. Chester Ronning being nullified by an escalation of the war, whether the Prime Minister is planning to make an appeal to Washington.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, our efforts to bring about peace in Viet Nam through negotiation—in so far as we are able to pursue those efforts—will not be nullified by any action which has been taken.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question. In view of the fact that an escalation of the war does endanger the peace of the world, is the Prime Minister planning to make any representations to the government of the United States?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, if I may deal with this point which has been raised, my understanding, which is based on the preliminary reports I have received, is that the United States government does not regard the bombing of oil storage installations in the vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong as any indication of a change in their policy of confining the bombing to military targets directly associated with North Viet Nam's involvement in the south; and that there is no intention to direct bombing to the populated areas.

Nevertheless, this does not alter the government's position concerning this matter of bombing, which is well known to the house. We have always held—and I think this was made quite clear by me in a statement I made in April last year—that a let-up in the pattern of air strikes against the north seemed likely to be one of the major elements in arranging or approaching a peaceful settlement. More recently, when the pause in bombing of North Viet Nam came to an end in late January, we made it clear that it was a matter of regret to us that it was found necessary to decide upon a resumption of the bombing.

[Mr. Douglas.]

I am sure that we would all be glad to see the bombing stopped, and we would all be glad to see the intervention of northern troops into South Viet Nam stopped. We would also be glad to see unconditional negotiations for peace begin.

Mr. Douglas: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that a spokesman for the defence department of the United States has stated that this bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi does constitute a further escalation of the war.

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, my attention has not been drawn to any such statement. I will be glad to look into it.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if the statement of the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam is accurate that the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong have been bombed. Have the civilians in those cities been bombed?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has just indicated, his understanding—and my understanding—is that the targets did not involve any direct intention to attack the population.

[Translation]

[Later:]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the confusion in Canada and outside, is the Prime Minister in a position to tell us whether the government of Canada is aware that Chinese troops or Russian troops are taking part in this war in North Viet Nam against South Viet Nam thus becoming aggressors against other aggressors called Americans. Are the troops actually there, physically?

[English]

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, we have no information that Russian or Chinese troops are taking part in this war.

NATO—VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIAL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the