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SUMMARY OF STATEMENT ON VIETNAM

BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON FEBRUARY 13, 1967

During the course of a debate in the House of Commons on February 13, the Secretary of State for External Affairs made a statement on the Canadian Government's policy in regard to the conflict in Vietnam. Mr. Martin first emphasized that the aim of Canadian policy was to find ways in which Canada, along with other countries, could usefully contribute to bringing the war in Vietnam to an end. He urged his critics in Parliament and in the country to understand the circumstances in which foreign policy must be conducted; he pointed out that, in matters of negotiation, particularly when questions of war and peace are involved, the government should not be expected on every occasion to make disclosures which were not in the best interests of achieving the objectives which everyone had in mind. Mr. Martin therefore urged the advocates of political activism to reflect on the practical consequences of some of their proposals.

Referring specifically to the question of the bombing of North Vietnam, Mr. Martin said: "I have said already that this may be the key to the whole problem. I am confident that if it is not the key element in the present military-diplomatic puzzle it is certainly a most important factor. There are other factors. Even though I hope the bombing does stop, there are other actions and responsibilities which must also be fitted into the total pattern of steps toward a peaceful settlement. Until at least some faint outline of a pattern can be established through what has been called quiet diplomacy, it seems unlikely that the bombing would stop for a long period simply in response to a Canadian Government demand or appeal, regardless of what individual Canadians or members of the government personally might feel about this aspect of the policy of the United States.