

experience and ability. He is well qualified for an important assignment of this delicate nature. He had an interview with the Foreign Minister on May 31, in which he expressed Canada's concern, and our willingness to play a helpful role if possible.

"He sought clarification of the North Vietnam Government's position including its reaction to the recent pause in the bombings. Naturally I cannot go into any greater detail about it at this time; but I should like to say that the Foreign Minister stated repeatedly that the four conditions which had previously been outlined by the Prime Minister of North Vietnam on April 8, taken as a whole, represented the Hanoi Government's approach to a settlement."

I should now like to give a full account of the nature of our Commissioner's mission to Hanoi during the time he was in Vietnam in 1964-65. In the spring of 1964, following a meeting between the U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, the Canadian Government agreed that the new Canadian Commissioner on the ICC in Vietnam might be instructed to probe what was in the minds of the leaders in Hanoi and help to dispel any misunderstanding they might have as to the future course the United States intended to follow -- that is, that the Americans were not thinking of pulling out of Vietnam and were prepared to increase their commitment there if this were considered necessary.

Canada's motive in agreeing to this special mission for the Canadian Commissioner was to try to promote a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Vietnam. Thus the Canadian Government considered it entirely consistent with, and indeed reinforcing, our role in the ICC. I should like to emphasize that the Commissioner acted at no time as a direct representative of the United States Government or President but only as a part of a Canadian channel of communication. It was clearly understood, of course, that messages to be conveyed in this way would be passed *via* Ottawa, that Canada did not associate itself with the content of the messages and that Canada would be free to add its own comments to any message passed in either direction. Our only commitment was that there would be faithful transmission of messages in both directions. The Canadian Government's purpose in agreeing to participate in this channel of communication was to provide an opportunity to reduce misunderstandings between the United States and North Vietnam, and was founded on a strong desire to ensure the return of peace to Vietnam and to Southeast Asia. This position was understood by both the Americans and the North Vietnamese throughout.

In the course of his tour of duty in Vietnam, Mr. J. Blair Seaborn, who was the Canadian Commissioner at the time, made six visits to Hanoi. Not