

*The Address—Mr. Brewin*

We now pass to the question of Viet Nam. As most members of this House are aware, there exists in Viet Nam at the present time a grave human problem of tremendous magnitude, exceeding in depths of human misery and cruelty anything that is occurring in any other part of the world. There is the clearest evidence that a very large number of political prisoners, over 100,000 in fact, have been subjected to continued detention and inhuman treatment, including torture. We have had before this House a host of reliable witnesses, British, American, Canadian and French. We have spoken to those who have spoken to these prisoners and heard their stories. We have seen vivid and authentic films of young men crippled by the treatment they have received in jails.

A large number of these persons are guilty of no offence except that they have sought peace between the warring factions in Viet Nam. They support neither the present regime nor the PRG or the communists. Their offence is one of neutralism and desire for reconciliation. This issue has aroused the conscience of many Canadians. Most of the members of this House—and I am sure that if the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) were here he would confirm this—have received numerous and spontaneous letters on this subject. A group of members of parliament and senators representing the three major parties of this House, most or many of them members of the external affairs committee, have presented a brief to the Secretary of State for External Affairs urging that Canada take the lead in bringing this subject to the attention of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations for investigation.

We have furnished ample legal authority that in international law this is a proper course to adopt and in accordance with precedent. The minister has encouraged us with expressions of deep interest and has promised to give the matter the fullest possible consideration, but so far he has not come up with an answer. We understand he has been in consultation with other like-minded nations. Our own limited inquiries have revealed that the Italian foreign minister, the Netherlands foreign minister, the Swedish prime minister, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of economic collaboration in West Germany, the West German parliamentary secretary of foreign affairs, and the prime minister of Australia have indicated their deep concern with this problem. If we took the matter to the United Nations, we would not stand alone in our humanitarian concern.

We do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of another country, but there is no doubt that where there is a consistent pattern of gross violation of human rights—and that condition certainly exists in South Viet Nam—then the international community has a right and an obligation to intervene, not indeed by military methods but by making clear what world opinion is. Even the most authoritarian governments are sensitive to world opinion. This is a case where Canada can give a lead, and I hope the members of this House will indicate to the Secretary of State for External Affairs their hope that the request of the non-partisan committee which has interviewed him on this matter will receive favourable consideration.

I now wish to refer to another aspect of Canada's policies in Viet Nam, and I do this on my own responsibility

[Mr. Brewin.]

and not on behalf of the committee, though some members of the committee may agree with me. It is perfectly clear that despite the clear words of the Paris agreement of 1973 calling for the total withdrawal of American advisers and paramilitary personnel, for the negotiation of the release of political prisoners, for the establishment of civil liberties, and for the formation of a national council of national reconciliation and concord, both the Thieu regime and the United States government have disregarded these provisions of the Paris agreement. Indeed, an article from the *New York Times* was reprinted in, I think last Saturday's *Globe and Mail* giving a detailed account of the situation. It indicated as follows:

The United States, far from phasing out its military involvement in South Viet Nam, has descended from a peak of warfare to a high plateau of substantial support dispatching not only huge quantities of weapons and ammunition but also large numbers of American citizens who have become integral parts of the South Vietnamese supply, transport and intelligence systems.

It may be said that this is a matter for the United States and not for Canada. But what has Canada's position been? First of all, we are talking about increasing our diplomatic representation in Saigon. Secondly, we have completely refused to recognize the PRG which was one of the parties to the Paris agreement and was thereby accorded juridical status amongst the nations. We act as though the PRG did not exist.

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As far as North Viet Nam is concerned, we have indeed granted diplomatic recognition but we have totally failed to make that meaningful. Accredited to the Hanoi regime is our ambassador in Peking. He surely has enough to do representing our interests in the People's Republic of China without taking on North Viet Nam as well. In the meantime, we rely for day to day diplomatic contacts entirely on the British ambassador and his staff. So far as I know, we have not even discussed reconstruction aid with the Hanoi regime. Whatever the future of Viet Nam may be, it is highly probable that the authorities now installed in Hanoi will have something to say about the future of that country. It really does not make sense for us to play favourites with the authoritarian and unstable regime at Saigon and ignore in practice both the North Vietnamese and the PRG.

There is another aspect of this matter, and that is that the Saigon regime is deeply dependent upon the United States and outside aid to be able to maintain its present system of repression and continued war. International institutions, in which Canada has a part, will be called upon to extend aid to South Viet Nam, if they have not already been called upon. There have been reports to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—incidentally, the reporters went nowhere except to Saigon and got all their information from the people there—and it is possible that the World Bank and many other institutions will be called on in a deliberate plan to get the rest of the world including Canada to finance the maintenance of the present regime in Saigon.

The immense, terrible war damage in all parts of Viet Nam cannot be repaired until the terms of the Paris agreement are accepted by all sides. Canada was one of the signatories to the final act of the International Confer-