

Inquiries of the Ministry

tion the full facts of which are not before him. The statement made by the secretary of state of the United States, as I read it—and I have not seen the actual text beyond what was reported—simply indicated that the United States was not prepared to negotiate as long as the present situation continued. It must be obvious to everyone that there can be no successful negotiation as long as there are hostilities and as long as infiltration from outside areas persists.

The position of Canada is that we have urged, through the Prime Minister and myself and along with the prime minister of India and the secretary general of the United Nations, that there should be a cessation of hostilities so that consideration can be given to steps designed to bring about some peace in this area. I assure the hon. gentleman that in the most effective way possible Canada is using diplomatic channels which we regard at this moment to be the most effective instrument available in the effort to try to bring about a suspension of hostilities and the resumption of discussions in proper conditions calculated to bring about peace in this regrettably disturbed area.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question. The minister has said that I am, naturally, not in possession of the facts which are available to him. That is quite true. Would the minister apply the same criterion to the secretary general of the United Nations, who now says that if the American people were as aware of the facts as he is they would agree with him that a continuation of the present conflict is pointless and that the sooner the nations are brought around a conference table the sooner there is some hope of a settlement? Would the minister not agree with the statement by U Thant, and lend his support to that end?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I have just indicated that in general we do lend our support to the statement made by the secretary general. The hon. gentleman has paraphrased some of the things attributed to him. The secretary general said a great deal more than what my hon. friend has paraphrased and, much as I respect the hon. gentleman's interest in and knowledge of this problem, I would not agree that the information before the United Nations secretary general was as minimal as that which, naturally, is in the hands of the hon. gentleman. I want my hon. friend to know that—

Mr. MacInnis: Translation?

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It should not require any translation. I simply say that I presume the secretary general had much more information on that subject as secretary general of the United Nations than a private member of this or any other parliament.

I know my hon. friend is concerned about the situation in Viet Nam. He is not any more concerned than we in the government are, nor any more concerned than is the government of the United States, but in this critical situation issues of the greatest importance to the peace not only of Asia but of the world are involved, and we can only hope that through the steps which are now being taken among particular countries we will be able to find some measure to deal with this extremely difficult situation.

Mr. Douglas: As a supplementary question, I am not claiming to know as much about the situation as either the minister or the secretary general of the United Nations. I cannot put the secretary general's full statement on the record of *Hansard* during the question period, though I would do so if the house gave consent. I am simply asking the minister whether he is publicly prepared to support the position which the secretary general took, a good part of which was broadcast to the people of Canada and with which they are familiar, respecting the situation in South Viet Nam.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I have already indicated that the government has urged a cessation of hostilities in Viet Nam. We have said that this should be a condition precedent to taking steps under the Geneva accord for the purpose of dealing with the situation. I do want to point out that under the Geneva accord there are arrangements provided for the resumption of a peaceful situation if the parties concerned—and in this case particularly North Viet Nam—are prepared to accept them.

Since the Geneva accord in 1954 there have been persistent violations of it, leading to the present regrettable situation, but the aggression was not one that was begun by the south nor was it one that was begun by the United States.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Removing all this verbiage, is what the minister is saying this; that the aggression is aggression on the part of communist China, and that the communist Chinese troops are there, and they are causing the difficulties which have resulted in