



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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CANADA WORKS QUIETLY FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

A Statement to the House of Commons on July 8, 1966, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin.

... Let there be no doubt; we are all concerned about Vietnam. On a number of occasions the Government has expressed its reservations with regard to the bombing of North Vietnam and about the whole sequence of events which led the United States to the conclusion that it had no option but to adopt this course. I made my views known before the recent bombings took place, and in a manner which I believe was the most effective way to engage in consultations with a country with which Canada has such close ties.

One could be dramatic. One could engage in particular public postures that might bring acclaim, but I want to say that as long as I am Secretary of State for External Affairs, and certainly with regard to this situation, I am going to carry on in the way which I believe will most likely yield favourable results, rather than seek acclaim by some public position that is not capable of yielding a satisfactory solution.

The Prime Minister made clear on June 29 that we should be glad to see the bombing stopped, that we should be glad to see the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam stopped, and that we should be glad to see unconditional negotiations for peace started. This has always been our position. We urged a cease-fire before the President of the United States said he was prepared to enter into peace talks without any preconditions. When we now urge a cease-fire, we must take into account some of the implications which were mentioned yesterday by Mr. Wilson. We could have talks if the parties were so disposed, without waiting for a cease-fire, and these talks in turn might lead to a cease-fire.

I think it important that we understand fully the implications of the action which has now been taken to bomb the oil-storage facilities in North Vietnam. I do not think we can limit our analysis merely to the military aspects of this operation. I propose to go beyond these aspects, to go into other implications which seem to me essential to a full appreciation of the present situation.

So far as the strictly military aspects are concerned, it can be argued that the general pattern of activity has not been significantly altered by the bombing of the oil-storage facilities of North Vietnam. On the understanding that has been communicated to me, it is not the intention of the United States Government to extend the bombing to targets which are not directly related to the infiltration of men and supplies from North Vietnam to buttress the insurgency in the South.

The fact is that the oil-storage facilities which have been the target of recent attacks are located in close proximity to major concentrations of population in North Vietnam. I take it from the preliminary reports that have been made available to the Government