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VIETNAM - CANADIAN REPLY TO BRITISH CO-CHAIRMAN'S
MESSAGE OF APRIL 2, 1965

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, today tabled in the House of Commons the text of his reply of April 27 to a message on Vietnam received from the Rt. Hon. Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, acting in his capacity as one of the two Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indo-China.

The texts of Mr. Stewart's message and of Mr. Martin's reply are attached.

MESSAGE FROM THE RT. HON. MICHAEL STEWART M.P.

AS GENEVA CO-CHAIRMAN

TO THE HON. PAUL MARTIN M.P.

The British Co-Chairman of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indo-China has noted with grave concern the dangerous state of international tension now existing in connection with Vietnam. Accordingly he invites the Governments members of the 1954 Conference and the Governments represented on the International Control Commission to furnish him with a statement of their views of the situation in Vietnam and, in particular, on the circumstances in which they consider that a peaceful settlement could be reached.

The British Co-Chairman also hopes that the forthcoming visit of his special representative, Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker, to South East Asia will afford the Governments of the countries he will visit an opportunity for further discussion of their views on this problem.

Foreign Office,

London, S.W.1.

2 April, 1965.

MESSAGE FROM THE HON. PAUL MARTIN, M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CANADA
to

RT. HON. MICHAEL STEWART, M.P.

In his message of April 2 the British Foreign Secretary, acting in his capacity as one of the two Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, has invited the Government of Canada, as a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, to furnish a statement of its views on the situation in Vietnam and on the circumstances in which the Canadian Government believes that a peaceful settlement could be reached.

The Canadian Government welcomes this initiative on the part of the British Co-Chairman and the opportunity which it provides for the Canadian Government to outline its views on these critical problems. The Canadian Government fully shares the British Co-Chairman's attitude of grave concern over the dangerous state of international tension now existing in connection with Vietnam and wishes to express its willingness to support any promising initiative which shows signs of contributing usefully to a lessening of tension and a resolution of the problems underlying these tensions.

The Canadian Government believes that if there had been a strict adherence to the Geneva Cease-Fire Agreement of 1954, the dangerous situation confronting the world today would not have come about. Unfortunately, this has not been the case and

the usefulness of the 1954 Agreement as a basis for the regulation of developments in Vietnam has been slowly eroded by violations on all sides. As a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control, Canada has been directly aware of the increasing dangers produced by departures from the terms of that Agreement.

In its Special Report of June 2, 1962 the International Commission drew attention to violations of the Agreement by North Vietnam in supporting, organizing and carrying out hostile activities against the armed forces and administration of South Vietnam and in allowing its territory to be used for inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities in South Vietnam aimed at the overthrow of the South Vietnamese administration. This same Report also drew attention to the fact that South Vietnam had requested and been given military aid by the United States in quantities which were greater than those permitted by the Geneva Agreement and that a de facto but not a formal military alliance had been concluded by the two countries. In this latter connection the Report noted the South Vietnamese Government's explanation that these measures of military assistance were necessitated by the aggressive policies being conducted by North Vietnam, that they were undertaken in the exercise of the right of self-defence reserved to all states and finally, that they could end as soon as the North Vietnamese authorities had ceased their acts of aggression against South Vietnam.

Again, in February of 1965, the International Commission presented another Special Report to which the Canadian Delegation

appended by way of supplement a Minority Statement which it considered essential to convey a balanced account of the situation in Vietnam. The Canadian Statement when read in the context of the February 13 Report as a whole indicated that the situationⁱⁿ/Vietnam, as the evidence before the International Commission shows, continues to be marked, on an increasing scale, by hostile Northern intervention in South Vietnam, in response to which South Vietnam and its allies have felt compelled to take retaliatory action.

These basic elements in the situation must be taken into account and brought into sharp focus if the problem of indirect aggression as manifested in South Vietnam under the guise of support for a so-called "war of liberation" is to be clearly understood and dealt with.

The Canadian Government believes that aggression, direct or indirect, cannot be tolerated. It must not only be outlawed by the International community but checked and shown to be unprofitable. At the same time, the Canadian Government recognizes that the continuation of hostilities involves a risk of further escalation and wider involvement.

For this reason, the Canadian Government has repeatedly appealed for the exercise of restraint in the present circumstances of mounting tension and danger. These appeals have been directed to all concerned, and the Canadian Government hopes that all other powers with a special interest in the situation and with special relations with any of the parties directly

involved in the conflict will attempt to exert such influence as they may be able to exercise to this same end.

The Canadian Government believes that an exclusively military solution to the problem of Vietnam is not possible. The circumstances now existing indicate that a truly satisfactory solution can be found only by negotiations leading to a fair, just and workable settlement. This settlement must not sacrifice essential principles such as the right of all peoples to choose their own path of political and economic development free from outside interference or the fear of aggression, direct or indirect.

The immediate problem in the view of the Canadian Government is how to bring about negotiations which look to an early and peaceful settlement.

The Canadian Government's initial and favourable reaction to the broad outlines and purposes of the appeal of the seventeen-nation group, which called for negotiations as soon as possible without preconditions, was announced in the House of Commons on April 1 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In this connection, the Canadian Government welcomed the subsequent offer by the President of the United States to enter into unconditional discussions with other interested governments. It must be a source of deep anxiety to all that initial reactions in Hanoi appear to have been negative. The Canadian Government hopes that this negative response is of a preliminary nature only, and that on further reflection a more favourable decision will be reached; to this end the Canadian Government has expressed

the hope that the efforts of all interested parties will be devoted to urging that these initial and negative reactions be reconsidered. This is a task of the first and most pressing priority, as indicated in the Canadian Government's reply of April 14 to the seventeen nations' appeal, a copy of which is attached.

If, however, despite the pleas of peace loving nations in all regions of the world, the Hanoi authorities refuse to take up the offer of the United States as it applies immediately to Vietnam, the possibility of exploring whether there is any common ground whatever on Vietnam might be provided by encouraging discussions looking towards the settlement of another and related dispute, such as that in Laos, or through discussion of development programs which, by establishing contacts in one field, might make possible discussions leading to the solution of the more acute problem of Vietnam.

Either in addition or as an alternative, such exploratory and reciprocal contacts might be conducted through any or all of the existing bilateral channels which are available provided that both sides wish to avail themselves of them. Although neither North Vietnam nor Communist China is a member of the United Nations, it is not inconceivable that the Secretary General of that organization, because of his position and personal prestige, might be able to play a useful role in this connection.

It is of course evident that the essential element in any forward step is a desire to negotiate on the part of the

governments directly involved in the dispute, regardless of where or how those negotiations begin. But it is equally evident that behind the Vietnam problem, but by no means unrelated to it, is the whole question of relations between China and the rest of the world community. Fostering the desire to negotiate could be encouraged by -- just as it could encourage -- the beginning of a move towards mutual acceptance and greater contact between China and the rest of the world community. An improvement in this wider area may prove necessary in order to bring about the sort of long-term settlement which is desirable. Conversely, if progress on this broader problem is not possible in the near future, a settlement in Vietnam could be a significant contribution to its eventual achievement.

Reference has already been made to the need to understand the facts before a solution can be found. In South Vietnam, outside pressure and interference have taken a military form on both sides, and before any genuine peace and stability can return to Vietnam these must be subdued and progressively eliminated in a balanced manner. Arranging this process should be a task of first priority for any discussions which may be initiated to deal with these problems.

To ensure that measures agreed to and obligations undertaken in negotiations are carried out and honestly kept, it would probably prove desirable to build some form of international control mechanism into the terms of the settlement not only to maintain reciprocal confidence between the parties in their obligations to each other, but also as an effective

demonstration of the interest of the international community in guaranteeing the durability of any settlement in which they would in a sense be direct participants. An effective international control and guarantee organization, whatever its composition and sponsorship, would have to be given sufficient backing to enable it to ensure that military interference could be genuinely eliminated and not simply temporarily concealed, and that expressions of political choice were not subject to coercion.

The perspective opened up by a period of tranquility in which the people concerned would be assured that efforts to solve their problems would not be eroded by coercive intervention and political subversion, would have considerable attraction for all members of the international community. The Canadian Government, like the U.S. Government, believes that the development potential of the Mekong River and its immediately contiguous areas offers possibilities for exploitation which could be richly rewarding for the people of that area. An imaginative program for the exploitation of these and other resources and their utilization to bring a more prosperous way of life to the people of the region, could be readily devised and would no doubt call forth a generous response from all countries able to contribute. The President of the United States has already indicated that sweeping and generous scope of the extent to which the U.S.A. is prepared to contribute. The Canadian Government has also expressed its willingness to participate in an appropriate way. Significant if limited progress has already been made in this direction, but in the light of the interest which this

imaginative proposal has created already, it should be possible to expand the scope of existing arrangements in terms of participants and beneficiaries as well as the projects undertaken.

Not only are the benefits which a regional development scheme such as this could bestow attractive, but so too might be the benefits accruing from the gradual development of economic and other exchanges between the component units of the region as arranged bilaterally or within the scope of a wider development scheme.

It is, however, difficult to see how these possibilities could be adequately realized as long as hostilities continue in the area.

A cessation of hostilities thus seems to be the basic requirement for any progress towards either a negotiated and durable political settlement or a development scheme; far from

being mutually exclusive, these two avenues -- if a first step could be taken -- would complement and reinforce each other and progress in one sphere could very easily stimulate or facilitate progress in the other. Both are aspects of the same geographical and political realities, and in the view of the Canadian Government they merit the earnest consideration of all governments who wish no more for that troubled area than that its people may enjoy enduring peace under institutions which they themselves have chosen as best calculated to ensure a brighter and more prosperous future.

Ottawa,
April 27, 1965.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT REPLY OF APRIL 14
TO SEVENTEEN NATIONS' APPEAL

The Canadian Government has given careful consideration to the 17-nation appeal officially presented to it on April 1.

The Canadian Government welcomes the spirit in which this appeal has been launched and commends the sponsoring nations for their initiative which reflects the anxiety of all responsible nations of the world over the deepening crisis in Vietnam and their concern for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In a statement to the House of Commons on April 1, the Secretary of State for External Affairs stated that there was much in the appeal with which the Canadian Government could agree. In particular Canada shares with the sponsoring powers the belief that only through negotiations looking to a peaceful solution can the conflict in Vietnam be terminated; and Canada supports the call of the seventeen powers for negotiations as soon as possible without either side imposing any preconditions.

The Canadian Government's view of the nature of the situation in Vietnam is of course based on Canada's membership in the ICSC, which provides an opportunity at first hand to examine the various factors contributing to this unstable situation. The conclusions to which Canada has come on the basis of this experience have most recently been put before the international community in the Commission's Special Reports

of June 2, 1962 and February 13, 1965, and in various statements on behalf of the Canadian Government by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs. While the appeal notes that there may be differences in appraising the various elements in the existing situation in Vietnam, there can be no doubt about the importance which Canada attaches to a renewed effort to solve the problems manifested in the Vietnam situation by negotiations undertaken in a genuine determination to achieve a mutually acceptable, just, and durable settlement.

The Canadian Government has noted the willingness expressed by the President of the United States on April 7 to enter into unconditional discussions looking to a peaceful solution. This offer is of great significance, and will no doubt be as gratifying to the sponsors of the appeal as it has been to the Canadian Government. This offer, and suggestions for a vast regional economic development scheme for Southeast Asia, provide grounds for hope that progress may be made towards solving outstanding problems in a peaceful and constructive context.

Discussions or negotiations, however, require a willingness of both sides to participate. The Canadian Government earnestly hopes therefore that all the other interested governments will respond affirmatively to the appeal as a demonstration of their concern for peace, and that they will not hesitate to take up the offer of unconditional discussions made by the President of the United States. The Canadian Government also hopes that the sponsors of the appeal will not be discouraged

by indications of preliminary unsympathetic responses from some quarters and will continue their efforts to impress on those concerned the need for a beginning to be made at talks without preconditions. To such an effort, the Canadian Government gladly lends its support.