



No. 23

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17-NATION APPEAL

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, today released the text of the Canadian Government's reply to the 17-nation appeal received on April 1. The reply is as follows:

"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".