



CANADA

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 65/8 Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, on Tabling in the House of Commons on March 8, 1965, the Special Message of February 13, 1965, of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam.

...I should like to table the text of the special message of February 13 from the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam reporting on the recent air strikes against North Vietnam and on the directly related problem of North Vietnam's long-standing and continuing aggressive interference in South Vietnam, which gave rise to the air strikes in question. This report was released this morning in London by one of the co-chairmen of the Geneva accord powers, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the United Kingdom.

This message comprises a majority report by India and Poland, which deals only with the air strikes in early February, a minority statement by Canada, which outlines some essential background to these air strikes, and, finally, separate Indian and Polish statements commenting on the position taken by Canada.

While not denying the facts on which the majority report is based, the Canadian Government believes it presents an oversimplified and misleading impression of the root causes of the dangerous instability in Vietnam. To correct such an impression, the Canadian delegation has appended a statement to the majority report in the hope that the special message as a whole might reflect more accurately the full scope of the problem in Vietnam. As both the Prime Minister and I have made clear on several occasions, the factor which underlies the grave situation in that country is the determined and long-standing attempt of the Hanoi regime to bring South Vietnam under its control through the pursuit of aggressive policies.

This factor has, of course, been evident to the International Commission in Vietnam for some time. The Commission's special report of June 2, 1962, presented a balanced account of the situation by drawing attention to northern violations of the Geneva agreement and also the military assistance the United States was giving South Vietnam at the latter's request to combat Northern interference....

That report's conclusion that North Vietnam had violated the Geneva agreement by aggressive policies toward South Vietnam was based on the work of the Commission's legal committee, which had examined a vast amount of material

relating to allegations of armed and unarmed intervention in South Vietnam over a number of years. In the special report, the Commission undertook to take action on the basis of a fuller report to be prepared by its legal committee. Faced since then with the unwillingness of our Commission colleagues to act on these promises, we have decided that it was necessary to go ahead on our own to fulfil these obligations.

The most significant conclusions of this legal study have, therefore, been quoted in Paragraph 3 of the Canadian statement of February 13. These indicate quite clearly that the so-called South Vietnam Liberation Front, of which the Viet Cong are, in effect, the armed forces, is a creature of the ruling party of North Vietnam, that it is their common aim to bring about the violent overthrow of the South Vietnamese administration, and that the ruling party in North Vietnam has assisted its agents in South Vietnam in attempting to attain this objective. I think I hardly need underline what these conclusions mean for the theory one often hears developed that the war in South Vietnam is essentially an internal revolt.

Both the Indian and Polish representatives on the Commission have questioned the status of the extracts of the legal committee's report quoted in the Canadian statement. I cannot agree that a document which has been carefully prepared by a properly constituted committee of the Commission, acting on a majority basis, in pursuance of Commission instructions and on the basis of material referred to it by the Commission, has no status.

The Polish representative has also questioned our right to quote from and append some recent South Vietnamese allegations, which were directed in the normal manner to the Commission for consideration. The allegations concerned do not, of course, pretend to be Commission conclusions. According to these complaints, however, large quantities of arms, munitions and supplies of Communist origin, and large numbers of military personnel, have been steadily infiltrated into South Vietnam from the north by land and sea, and secret base and related installations have been established by the Viet Cong with the support of North Vietnam. To omit reference to them in current Commission reports would imply that the Commission had not been apprised of them or that it was totally ignoring the major complaints of one of the two parties to the Geneva agreement. The Commission's silence since 1962 on the problem of subversion does not mean there has been any change for the better. On the contrary, judging by the evidence presented to the Commission (and there is a large quantity of material of more recent origin now being reviewed by the Commission's legal experts), it seems obvious that the hostile activities of the Hanoi regime have been steadily increasing.

Our independent observer position in Vietnam has brought us face to face with an insidious form of aggression, with which the free world has yet to devise adequate means of dealing. We have seen a new political entity emerge from colonial status only to be forced into a cruel struggle for survival against hostile pressures beyond its control. In whatever form aggression manifests itself, it must be recognized as such and it must be stopped, not least because we cannot afford to let the practitioners of this technique come to the conclusion that it pays dividends.

This is surely the basic issue at stake in Vietnam today, and it is of vital interest to all members of the international community. This is what we, by virtue of our membership on the International Commission, have established as the lesson of the past ten years. I think it is important for all of us to have this fact clear in our minds before we go on to the next and most vital task, which is to attempt to restore peace to that troubled area. And here I must stress that I do not believe that the answer which all concerned would accept lies either in escalation and all-out war or, on the other hand, surrender to Communist pressures.

We are all deeply concerned with the implications for world peace, no less than for the future of the Vietnamese people, of the continuation of the present situation. It contains the seeds of escalation and the dangers -- all too evident to us today -- of an open conflict of stark and terrifying proportions. As I have indicated on many occasions, we seek a peaceful and equitable solution, and our efforts are certainly being directed to that end. This is our immediate objective, to avoid the inevitable consequences of escalation. Clearly and firmly, but without panic or alarm, we must make our concern known to all -- I repeat all -- the direct participants in this conflict, always remembering that conditions on the ground, the actual deployment of power, will have an important influence on the willingness of the parties concerned to modify their policies. Only if all concerned are prepared to face up to their responsibilities and obligations, and only if all concerned are prepared to exercise the restraint for which we and other nations have appealed, can we take the next step toward the peaceful settlement which is our ultimate objective.

Finally, a satisfactory solution would be one which adequately protects and guarantees the independence of people who wish to remain independent. The 1954 Geneva agreements were designed to end war but failed to create a durable settlement and lasting peace. Canada has become acutely aware of the painful shortcomings of the 1954 settlement through more than ten years of experience in Indochina, where we have been forced to observe the slow erosion of the terms of a cease-fire agreement.

Perhaps a new and better arrangement could be achieved by some form of guaranteed neutrality, or through a stronger supervisory and policing mechanism, capable of preventing aggressive interference from outside. As the Prime Minister has pointed out, this is surely an international responsibility. To discharge it, the lessons of the past indicate that there will be required an international presence involving more authority and more freedom of action than have obtained in the past, and this must be balanced by a mutual acceptance of this machinery and a readiness to co-operate in using it. It is clear that to be charged with supervision yet to be powerless to check the slow erosion of a settlement is not enough.

It is not easy, under present circumstances, to define the framework within which new and stronger mechanisms could be brought into being. While the United Nations might be considered as providing an obvious basis on which a new approach might be built up, attitudes thus far have tended to lessen the acceptability of this framework and the chances of its being successfully used. It cannot, however, be entirely excluded as one possibility. Another might well be the sort of grouping of more directly involved nations which were represented at Geneva in 1954 and 1962. At this juncture I do not believe

it is as important to determine the eventual framework within which a settlement might be arranged as it is to try to ascertain whether there is any willingness and real basis for new negotiations.

The Canadian Government, for one, intends to continue using all means at its disposal to see if the prerequisites for negotiation exist and, where possible, to help create those conditions. If negotiations can be arranged (let me repeat, it is our hope that conditions conducive to such negotiations will be encouraged by all possible means), our extended experience in the field in Indochina will help us to be of assistance in making concrete and practical proposals as to how the Geneva or any alternative machinery could be developed to achieve a lasting and peaceful settlement.

I may say in conclusion...that I have noted the comments made in the majority report by the representatives from India and Poland.

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