



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE 17-NATION APPEAL FOR A VIETNAM SETTLEMENT

- (A) On April 14, 1965, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, presented to the Ambassador of Yugoslavia to Canada and the Chargé d'Affaires of the United Arab Republic the following reply to the April 1 appeal of 17 non-aligned nations for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam:

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

(1) The text of the appeal is appended.

can be no doubt about the importance which Canada attaches to a renewed effort to solve the problem 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 for 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.

(B) On April 1, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, in reply to an inquiry as to whether Canada had been "approached by the representatives of Yugoslavia and other non-aligned states who are planning to issue an appeal for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam" and, if so, what position would be adopted by Canada "in regard to such an appeal", made the following statements:

... Representatives of some 14 non-aligned nations met in Belgrade two weeks ago at the instance of the Government of Yugoslavia in an attempt to work out an appeal for a peaceful settlement of the problem in Vietnam. This morning I received the Ambassador of Yugoslavia and the Chargé d'Affaires of the United Arab Republic who made a formal presentation of the text of the appeal which invites the support of the Canadian Government. I might add that a few days ago the Yugoslav Ambassador called on the Prime Minister.

We have been following the deliberations of the Belgrade group with considerable interest as a manifestation of the genuine concern felt everywhere in the world at the development of the conflict in Vietnam and its potential dangers for world peace. I believe that any constructive initiative aimed at reducing tensions in the present instance, and in a longer view, at achieving an equitable long-term solution, deserves commendation and encouragement.

I have not yet had an adequate opportunity to study the text of the Belgrade appeal in as much detail as I would like, but on the basis of a first reading I think there is much in it that we can support. In expressing grave concern over the aggravation of existing tensions, in reaffirming a belief in the inviolability of and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and in advocating a peaceful solution through negotiations, the appeal seems firmly rooted in principles which are cornerstones of Canadian foreign policy.

Moreover, I believe the appeal has been formulated in such a way as to avoid dangerous oversimplifications of the complex factors contributing to the tension in Vietnam. It would appear to me that ideas such as the unacceptability of the use of force and the dangers of outside intervention, including military intervention, are intended to have a general applicability to all those directly involved in this conflict. Only if there is widespread recognition of the fact that these ideas in particular, and the appeal in general, are directed with equal persuasive intent to all parties to this dispute can there be any prospect of this initiative bearing the fruits of success which we hope it may have.

Seventeen-Nation Appeal

On April 1, the Secretary of State for External Affairs received the text of an appeal signed by the heads of state or government of 17 nations. Representatives of a group of these nations had met shortly before in Belgrade to consider the situation in Vietnam and had there adopted the appeal, which was also presented to the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Britain, France, Communist China, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Poland, the Vietnam Liberation Front (Viet Cong), and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The appeal, which was presented to Mr. Martin by the Yugoslav Ambassador and the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the United Arab Republic, reads as follows:

Pursuant to the final declaration of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries held in Cairo in October 1964.

We the undersigned heads of state or government, have noted with great concern the aggravation of existing tensions and conflicts in Southeast Asia and in certain regions of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, arising from oppression and foreign intervention, and regret the present deadlock in the United Nations which prevents it from exercising fully its responsibility in maintaining and safeguarding peace.

We solemnly reaffirm the right of peoples to self-determination and the principle that all states shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force.

We reaffirm our dedication to the principle of the inviolability of, and respect for, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

We express our conviction that recourse to force and pressure in various forms is contrary to the right of the people of Vietnam to peace, freedom and independence and can only lead to the aggravation of the conflict in that area and to its transformation into a more generalized war with catastrophic consequences.

We are deeply concerned at the aggravation of the situation in Vietnam and are convinced that it is the consequence of foreign intervention in various forms, including military intervention, which impedes the implementation of the Geneva Agreement on Vietnam.

We are firmly convinced that, irrespective of possible differences in appraising various elements in the existing situation in Vietnam, the only way leading to the termination of the conflict consists in seeking a peaceful solution through negotiations. We therefore make an urgent appeal to the parties concerned to start such negotiations, as soon as possible, without posing any preconditions, so that a political solution to the problem of Vietnam may be found in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people and in the spirit of the Geneva Agreement on Vietnam and of the Declaration of the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cairo.

We invite the governments of all countries interested in the maintenance of world peace to associate themselves, as soon as possible, with this appeal.

March 15, 1965.

s/c