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# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## SUMMARY OF STATEMENT ON VIETNAM

BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON FEBRUARY 13, 1967

During the course of a debate in the House of Commons on February 13, the Secretary of State for External Affairs made a statement on the Canadian Government's policy in regard to the conflict in Vietnam. Mr. Martin first emphasized that the aim of Canadian policy was to find ways in which Canada, along with other countries, could usefully contribute to bringing the war in Vietnam to an end. He urged his critics in Parliament and in the country to understand the circumstances in which foreign policy must be conducted; he pointed out that, in matters of negotiation, particularly when questions of war and peace are involved, the government should not be expected on every occasion to make disclosures which were not in the best interests of achieving the objectives which everyone had in mind. Mr. Martin therefore urged the advocates of political activism to reflect on the practical consequences of some of their proposals.

Referring specifically to the question of the bombing of North Vietnam, Mr. Martin said: "I have said already that this may be the key to the whole problem. I am confident that if it is not the key element in the present military-diplomatic puzzle it is certainly a most important factor. There are other factors. Even though I hope the bombing does stop, there are other actions and responsibilities which must also be fitted into the total pattern of steps toward a peaceful settlement. Until at least some faint outline of a pattern can be established through what has been called quiet diplomacy, it seems unlikely that the bombing would stop for a long period simply in response to a Canadian Government demand or appeal, regardless of what individual Canadians or members of the government personally might feel about this aspect of the policy of the United States.

It would, the Minister stated, be self-defeating if Canadian public statements were to have the effect of slamming doors instead of opening them, or of closing off potentially useful dialogues instead of stimulating and nurturing the confidential exchange of viewpoints. Taking all factors into account, the emphasis should be on quiet diplomacy.

Explaining what Canada was trying to do, Mr. Martin indicated that concurrent access to both the United States and North Vietnam placed Canada in a good position to probe and analyze the positions of the principal Parties and he went on to say that Canada had tried to devise formulas which stood some chance of bridging the gap separating the positions of the two sides thus bringing the problem closer to a negotiation. Canada had also suggested making the "good offices" of the International Control Commission available to the Parties concerned when the circumstances seemed right.

Mr. Martin indicated that the International Control Commission might not, in the end, be the instrument that would be used to promote a settlement, but it was Canada's duty to be ready to develop every possible opportunity to achieve that end. Adding that that opportunity might not be far away, he said, "I feel there are elements in the present situation that should convince India, Poland and Canada (the three nations represented on the ICC) to recognize that there may be a special role for them in the Vietnam situation as it is now unfolding."

Mr. Martin emphasized that the other channel of communication established by the two Ronning missions last year remained open, and he dismissed as without foundation reports that Mr. Ronning's services would no longer be used because of statements made by him in the exercise of his right to express his private opinions.

Mr. Martin then restated the Canadian position on the settlement of the Vietnam conflict under seven headings as follows:

"First, we believe that a military solution alone is neither practicable nor desirable. We have always made it clear that we look to negotiation to settle this conflict. We have said this because we think that the Vietnam situation cannot be isolated from the security and stability of Southeast Asia as a whole. We have not been alone in saying this. If there is to be a settlement which will hold out a reasonable prospect of long-term stability in that area of Southeast Asia, it will have to be based upon an accommodation of the interests of those primarily concerned. I do not believe this will happen as the result of military action alone.

"Second, peace discussions should take place on the basis of the Geneva Agreement. We believe that, without any prejudice whatsoever to the ultimate solutions, the first stage of any settlement will have to envisage a return to the status quo ante. By that we mean the conditions which were envisaged as ensuing from the Geneva Ceasefire Agreement of 1954. According to my understanding, the Government of North Vietnam does not take issue with that position. In practice this involves a continuing of the de facto division into two Vietnams, if only to allow time for the scars which have been opened by the conflicts of the past quarter-century to heal and for new dispositions to be agreed upon for the eventual reunification of the country.

"Third, we recognize the unity of the people of Vietnam. We have no wish to inhibit the reunification of Vietnam. We are bound to recognize, however, that the temporary division of that country reflects the political realities of the situation and cannot be abrogated by force. It is for the people in the two parts of Vietnam to decide how soon, and under what conditions, preparations for reunification can be set in train. This is not something which can be imposed upon the people of Vietnam from the outside or in disregard of the principle which they must enjoy like anyone else - of self-determination.

"Fourth, we believe that any Vietnam settlement will have to involve an international presence. We believe it is generally agreed that, as soon as conditions permit, there must be a withdrawal of all outside forces from both parts of Vietnam. This would be consistent with the terms of the Geneva Agreement. The same applies to military bases maintained in Vietnam.

"We believe that it is likely to be necessary - for some period at any rate - to have international supervision of any settlement agreed to by the Parties. The purpose of such supervision would be to give each side adequate guarantees that the terms of such a settlement were being fairly carried out. We have no firm views as to what form that international supervision might take.

"If it were decided that the three powers represented on the present International Commission should assume a new mandate in an expanded form, I can assure the House that Canada would be prepared to co-operate fully in the constitution of a new supervisory force. In that event we shall have to consider, in the light of our experience, what powers and what resources should be given to such a force if it is to carry out its mandate effectively and with the best interests of the Parties in mind.

"Fifth, we believe that it is for the Vietnamese people themselves to determine their own political future and the shape of the institutions under which they wish to live. We welcome the progress which has been made in South Vietnam to bring about the conditions in which a constitutional government, responsive to the interests of the people of the south, can be elected. We understand that this process will be completed within the current year. We would hope, when the hostilities have ceased and a settlement of the current conflict has been reached, that all segments of the people of South Vietnam will be afforded an opportunity to participate on a fair, constitutional and peaceful basis in the political life of South Vietnam, but so far as the representation of the Viet Cong at a conference is concerned, in the words of Mr. Goldberg's recent statement, this does not seem to present an insurmountable problem.

"Sixth, we can see merit in proposals which have been made for the neutralization, not only of Vietnam, but of a wider area in Southeast Asia.

"Seventh, we believe that in Southeast Asia, as in other parts of the developing world, there is a close link between the requirements of stability and the requirements of economic development."

Turning to the question of the sale of Canadian military equipment which might find its way to Vietnam, the Secretary of State for External Affairs referred to the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on January 18. He added that the Canadian Government does not itself authorize the shipment of arms directly to any theatre of war.

At the conclusion of his statement, Mr. Martin informed the House of the news of the resumption of operations by the United States against military targets in North Vietnam. He added, "In spite of this news, which I had hoped might be otherwise, we must renew our determination to contribute in some way to bringing about a cease-fire."

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