



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

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VIETNAM--CANADIAN REPLY TO BRITISH CO-CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

On April 30, 1965, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, tabled in the House of Commons the text of his reply of April 27 to a message on Vietnam received on April 2 from the Right Honourable Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, acting in his capacity as one of the two Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina.

The texts of this exchange follow:

Reply by Mr. Martin to Message from Mr. Stewart

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 report as a whole, indicated that the situation in 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 exert 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 17-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 17-nations' appeal.⁽¹⁾

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 programmes 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 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.

(1) The text of this document is appended.

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 toward 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 tranquillity, 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 programme 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 readily be 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 the 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 a

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.

Message of Mr. Stewart

The British Co-Chairman of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina 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.

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 now 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 in 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