

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.