

would not make sense for Western countries to be drawn into a conference where there is no chance, from the beginning, of an outcome reasonably acceptable to all.

Although not "geographically" European, we have a vital interest in Europe which has been recognized and, like you, we are concerned with negotiating solutions to the problems which still divide this continent. The courage and the realism with which Romania has sought to contribute to peace and security in Europe have greatly impressed us. We have a great admiration for Romania's ability and determination to express its own national character and to develop its own national course of action, within the realities of its geographic situation. As with Romania, it is our concern that all European countries, big or small, should be protected from outside interference and have their sovereignty and independence safeguarded.

There are, of course, other international matters which are of great concern to both our countries, and on which it is important to maintain an exchange of views. No one here needs to be reminded that the world situation in which we find ourselves is, unfortunately, marked by bloodshed and by the threat of a wider conflagration. I need refer only to the situation in the Middle East. I visited this area last autumn and, following conversations with Israeli and Arab leaders, came away more convinced than ever that the only way to achieve a real solution to the problems in the Middle East would be for both sides to moderate considerably their maximum positions. There is no evidence that any such moderating process has since occurred; if anything, an even more dangerous level of tension has developed. Canada's concern that some means should be found to move toward an accepted peace settlement on the basis of the Security Council Resolution of November 1967 has been emphasized to the parties, most recently when the Foreign Minister of Israel visited Ottawa several weeks ago.

The situation in Indochina is equally discouraging. We have watched with growing concern the spreading of the conflict from Vietnam into neighbouring Laos and Cambodia. The International Control Commissions in Indochina have obviously not deterred this development. We deplore this, as we do the apparent failure to date of the principals in this conflict to enter into substantive negotiations. A number of proposals have been advanced to try to get them to negotiate a settlement, but two months have gone by since the first of these initiatives was taken and we are no closer to a solution. We have not given up hope, however, that at the talks in Paris, or at a new conference, a lasting settlement can be reached to enable the Indochinese peoples to live in peace and to permit them to begin the essential work of economic and social reconstruction. We are ready to play our part in such a conference.

Turning to the present problem of global security and the nuclear arms race, the supreme challenge facing the international community is to find something better than the current balance of mutual fear and deterrence on which international security rests. There have been some recent positive developments. The first of these is the strategic arms limitation talks in which the United States and the Soviet Union are now engaged at Vienna. We do not expect instantaneous success in view of the complexity and the seriousness of negotiating the strategic balance of deterrence, but we hope that these negotiations