

Faced with this hostile policy directed by Hanoi, South Vietnam, in the exercise of the legitimate right of self-defence possessed by every state, has appealed for military assistance from abroad, and this assistance has been granted by a number of countries, of which the United States is, of course, the most important. It has been made clear that this assistance is of a temporary nature, and will end when North Vietnam decides to abandon its aggressive activities.

Canada has not rendered military assistance to South Vietnam; our direct interest in the situation in that country stems from our membership in the International Commission set up by the Geneva Conference in 1954 to supervise the implementation of the cease-fire agreement. Within the Commission, our representatives are directing all their efforts to ensuring that that body carries out its supervisory duties in a manner as close to that intended as possible. To the extent that we are frustrated in this attempt, whether by the two other members of the Commission or by one or other of the contracting parties to the cease-fire agreement, we intend to make it plain where the responsibility lies for such failure as we may be forced to accept.

There has been a good deal of speculation about the desirability of a new international conference to settle the problem of Vietnam. While I believe that such a conference might be necessary at some stage to arrange a more durable settlement, I am not sure what positive results it could pronounce at the moment. It is difficult for me to believe that the Communists would honour their existing international commitments, unless such a new agreement turned the whole country over to Communist control; and this is something, I am sure, the people of Canada, as well as the people of South Vietnam, would not wish to see happen. The sine qua non for peace and a durable solution to these problems is abandonment by the Communists of aggression as a means of achieving their ends. In the absence of a decision to this effect by Hanoi, the situation in Vietnam will undoubtedly continue to be potentially dangerous.

QUESTION (4):

The crisis of the Atlantic Alliance was central in recent international conferences. How does Ottawa see this crisis? Is France basically responsible for the present misunderstandings?

ANSWER:

There is no crisis in NATO. This is not a personal opinion. It is the obvious answer emerging from the meeting of NATO ministers that took place last week in Paris. There is thus no question of analysing the elements of a crisis; we must instead try to understand a complex evolution. I left Paris firmly convinced that none of the NATO members was trying to weaken the Alliance. Despite the diversity of choices and attitudes, NATO will once again find that its problems have a common denominator.

It is certain that in Europe, as in the rest of the world, there have been far-reaching developments that have presented the Alliance with serious problems of adjustment. In Canada, however, we find nothing surprising or necessarily discouraging in this. NATO was established 15 years ago; it is,