

The Government of India reaffirmed yesterday that they would be happy to see the Commission used to try and bring the parties together. Because we felt there would be some delay in trying to use the Commission for the purpose I have mentioned, the Government asked Mr. Ronning, a man born in China, who speaks Chinese, who knows many of the personalities involved, to undertake, if this could be arranged with the support of the governments concerned -- the United States, North Vietnam and South Vietnam -- a series of discussions to find out if there was a basis for a preliminary discussion between the parties.

We have made a commitment, and we intend to respect it, to the parties concerned that what went on in Hanoi is a matter that must rest with the Government of Canada until such time as we are in a position to report, finally, success or failure, It cannot be any other way....

We have had discussions only this week with representatives of the Government of the United States, right here in Ottawa, I have had discussions, as the Prime Minister has, with the Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union, who is visiting Canada. We shall continue these discussions next week. Other countries are engaged in similar processes. I want this House and the country to know that there is no item on our agenda that is more important than trying to bring about some process of discussion between the parties concerned, in order that we can bring an end to the conflict in Vietnam. That is the objective of all of us.

I believe that a military solution of this problem, of course, is not possible by itself. We are all aware of the dangers that flow from the conflict that has raged in that area. We are dealing with the situation as it is now; we are not dealing with its genesis. We have sought not to emphasize the history of this situation but to try to see if we could not make our position as a mediator more effective by taking the most objective position possible. I think thus far we have succeeded in doing this.

I can tell the House that no opportunity will go by without our making every attempt that we can, by ourselves, as a member of the Commission or in concert with other countries, to try to bring about peace talks. When they do take place, whether by a Geneva conference or as a result of the kind of situation that developed in Greece and Malaysia, namely by gradual process, then we shall address ourselves as one country in the international community to those methods by which we hope to bring about an effective neutralization of the whole area.

The objective that Lord Avon spoke of the other day will not be achieved without, of course, the use and support of the international community, through the United Nations or otherwise. I resume my seat after saying that this undoubtedly is one of the most serious situations the world faces. It is not a conflict in which we are engaged. It is not a conflict in which we have any intention of dispatching Canadian armed forces. This, we continue to repeat, would be inconsistent with our role on the International Control Commission