

Does this demonstrate that we have departed from the standards of impartiality in this particular sphere of our foreign policy? I think not. On the contrary, I think it demonstrates just the reverse. As I suggested earlier, the exercise of impartial judgment demands a concern for accuracy and a desire not to mislead or to be misunderstood. It also demands the maintenance of the same -- I repeat, the same -- critical standards towards both sides.

Unless one were to prejudge the issues at stake in Vietnam and to conclude that the South and the United States are totally wrong and the North wholly in the right, it is senseless to argue that Canada can demonstrate its independence of judgment only in criticism of United States policy -- and in criticism of that nation alone.

There have been other instances in which Canada has had to choose a course of action when there was little unanimity among its allies about what the general Western interest required. It has always been difficult to decide, for example, to what extent trade and other relations should be developed with the Communist nations. We have taken the view, however, that trade in non-strategic goods was desirable. We have tried to develop contacts and exchanges, provided the other side was prepared to deal with us on a basis of genuine reciprocity. Although we have not been prepared to support the entry of Communist China into the United Nations on the terms it has so far set, we have made it clear in our own statements of policy that we recognized the desirability of having that nation in the world organization.

In many ways in the United Nations, in the Commonwealth and in other international organizations, Canada has developed a reputation for independent action. I was told by a departing ambassador in Ottawa a few days ago that he had come to this country expecting to find us very much influenced by our giant neighbour to the south. He is leaving with the conviction that Canada has clearly established its own political identity in world affairs. He was grateful for some things which we had done for his country and he paid tribute to our willingness to help in the solution of disputes. Our representatives abroad report many such tributes to Canadian policies.

The fact of our independence in foreign policy seems to me, therefore, to be well established by the evidence available.

I believe that it is also important to consider why we are able to take an active and constructive role in international affairs. Proof of a genuinely independent Canadian role is to be found as much in an examination of the fundamental circumstances of our national existence and of our diplomacy as in an indication of viewpoints on current problems,

In examining these fundamental questions, I should like to comment on the views of those who ask whether the true logic of independence should not be to stay outside alliances and to avoid close economic relations with the United States, lest our independence be jeopardized.