

I want to make it absolutely clear that the Canadian Government fully shares the deep concern which so many individual Canadians feel about the dangerous situation in Vietnam. The question which has faced the Government is to determine what course it can and should follow to mitigate the dangers and de-fuse the conflict.

It has been my strong preoccupation in recent months to explore every possibility open to us that might afford some opportunity for a reduction in the scale of hostilities, including the cessation of bombing, and set the parties to the conflict on the path to a negotiated settlement. Because Canada has a role in the area through its membership on the International Commission, however little that Commission may seem to be able to achieve in the present circumstances, we do have an opportunity for exploring and assessing possible courses of action. It has been, and continues to be, my belief that constructive and unremitting efforts in this area hold out the best hope for the Government of Canada to play a useful part in the tragic situation in Vietnam.

It is a matter of judgment whether public exhortations addressed to one side or the other will enhance our capacity to influence the course of events. My own judgment has been that, in the circumstances obtaining up to now, the policies we have been pursuing have offered the best means of doing just that.

From a longer-term point of view, of course, the Vietnam conflict has re-emphasized the necessity of strengthening the means available to the international community as a whole to prevent such situations from getting out of hand. There is an almost universal desire to see the problems of Vietnam peacefully and justly settled, and yet the conflict goes on and becomes more and more menacing. Surely the nations of the world -- and, in particular, the great powers -- must realize that the time has passed when they could safely pursue their interests, or even their deeply-held convictions, outside the framework of an organized international community.

In this centennial year of 1967, we in Canada are being made particularly aware of the exciting potential which lies in the future for this country and, to paraphrase the theme of Expo, for "Man in his World". The conflict in Vietnam, the threatening situations in other parts of the world, and the distressing problems of hunger and poverty in so many of the developing countries are pointed and tragic reminders that truly formidable obstacles remain to be overcome if the bright promise of the future is to be realized.

Our foreign policy is concerned with overcoming these obstacles. The tasks ahead will require not only sound principles, but patience, wisdom and determined effort. In undertaking these tasks, I am confident that Canada will be serving its own interests, and those of the wider world community, if it strives in all things to be a "good citizen of the world".