

have professed it to be. The Geneva cease-fire agreement, which the Commission is there to administer, prohibits in its very terms the introduction of military forces into either part of Vietnam. It would scarcely be right for one of the powers which has been entrusted with the supervision of the Agreement to abet one of the parties in an infraction of its terms. Any other position on our part would certainly have the gravest consequences to our ability to carry out peace-keeping functions not only in this area but more generally and in other contexts. I believe we can all take pride in Canada's achievements in this field of international activity and I believe it is imperative in the interests of international peace keeping not to jeopardize our ability to contribute significantly to such activities.

Altogether apart from membership on the Commission, however, the Government's policy, as I have stated it twice in this House and as it was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister the other day, is that the Government has no intention to recommend at any time the commitment of our forces to Asia unless pursuant to an obligation under the Charter of the United Nations....

My next point is this. Our policy has been directed towards helping to bring the present conflict from the battlefield to the negotiating table. This has always been our position and it remains our objective. We have made it clear, and the Prime Minister did so again only the other day, that we do not look upon the present conflict as being amenable to a military solution alone. We have taken every opportunity available to us to probe the possibilities for peace and, indeed, we are doing that at this very time. We proposed a pause in the bombing of North Vietnam last April, not because we looked to one side only to make concessions but because we hoped that such a pause might provide a climate in which it would prove easier for the other side to respond in a positive way. We have welcomed the current pause, which has now been in effect for an entire month, and the search for a peaceful conclusion of the conflict which has accompanied it. Although the absence of any positive response from the other side has been a matter of deep disappointment to us, we have expressed the hope that the pause might be further extended until all reasonable possibilities have been exhausted. I simply ask: Have all reasonable possibilities been exhausted? I should hope that the pause would continue as long as possible. I should hope that before any final step were taken in this regard the most careful consideration would be given to an examination of any indication that North Vietnam was now seriously engaged in examining the possibility of negotiations. In the final analysis, however, we must recognize that it is not for Canada to take the crucial decisions which lie immediately ahead since we are not a party to the hostilities. On the other hand, we do think there may well be a contribution which Canada can make to an ultimate settlement because of the long experience we have had of the problems at issue in this whole area.

We have expressed our regret that, in a situation which so deeply engages the concern of the international community, the United Nations has been prevented from playing any effective part. We recognize, as the Secretary-General did again in his press conference on Thursday last, that there are reasons why the United Nations has been unable to act in the present circumstances.