

Second, there are responsibilities which we have in Vietnam as members of the International Commission. We have endeavoured to carry out these responsibilities with fairness and impartiality and we will continue to do so. I would be the last to deny that the course of events in Vietnam has in some important respects overtaken the mandate of the Commission. But there is agreement among all the parties that, as the representative of the Geneva powers, the Commission cannot simply wash its hands of the situation. There is also agreement that the Commission will have a role to play in the context of any final settlement and, quite possibly, in helping to pave the way for it. Because of these opportunities which are potentially open to the Commission, I believe I can say that it is the unanimous view of the three Commission powers that we are justified in maintaining our presence in Vietnam notwithstanding the anomalies and the frustrations of the present situation.

Third, apart from whatever role Canada may be able to play as a member of the International Commission, we have tried to use our national influence in promoting the course of peace in Vietnam. We have done this on the basis of our close relations with the United States and the access we have to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi, as well, of course, as the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon. I do not want to exaggerate the influence which a country like Canada can command in a matter of this kind, which has engaged the power and prestige of at least three of the great powers. Nor do I want to hold out any promise to the Committee that our efforts will turn out, in the end, to have been of more than marginal usefulness. But there is one thing of which I am sure and it is this: if our efforts are to be of any avail, they must be deployed within the limits of what the situation suggests is realistic. They are best directed towards arriving at some common denominator which the parties themselves are prepared to accept as reasonable. We will neither bludgeon nor shame the parties into accepting a course of policy which they regard as being contrary to their basic national interest. And this is something which I would ask those who would have us follow a different course to remember.

Fourth, the Canadian Government has made it clear that it is prepared to make its own contribution to an eventual settlement in Vietnam. Such a settlement is almost certain to involve some form of international presence which will afford to the parties concerned the necessary guarantees that the terms of the settlement are being fairly and effectively carried out. If, in the light of our first-hand experience of the Vietnam problem over the past 13 years, Canada were to be asked to participate in an international peace-keeping effort in Vietnam, whether under the auspices of the Geneva powers or under those of the United Nations, I am sure that we would be prepared to accept such a responsibility within the limits of our capacity. We have also recognized for some time that, in the aftermath of any settlement, it is likely to be necessary for interested countries to mount a collective effort for the economic recovery and rehabilitation of all parts of Vietnam. I want to remind the Committee that our commitment to contribute to such an effort is on the record and that we will meet that commitment when the time comes.