

The Canadian Government is very seriously concerned by the tragic situation in Indochina. Clearly a major military offensive is taking place in South Viet-Nam; we deplore this, and especially we deplore the suffering which it is causing for the civilian population. As I said in my statement of March 27, the Government deeply regrets that the parties concerned have been unable to find a peaceful political solution. We appeal to all the parties concerned to end the fighting and to work toward a negotiated solution.

Canada must recognize that it is not in a position to play a significant political role in the current situation. There are some things, however, that Canada can and should do. We can and should do what we can to alleviate the suffering of the civilian populations in the affected countries; I shall have more to say about that in a moment. We can and should do something to meet the desires of refugees for whom departure from those countries seems necessary, and the desires of Canadians who wish to take them into their own families in Canada. I am thinking especially of orphans and of the close relatives of Canadian citizens and residents of Vietnamese origin. My colleague the Minister of Manpower and Immigration has made statements in that connection. We must also be concerned for the safety and, as necessary, for the evacuation of Canadians in South Viet-Nam.