

When our national interests and our judgment of a particular situation coincide with those of other nations, then we are quite happy to be identified with others in a common policy. Canada is a mature and responsible nation. It sees no value in difference for the sake of difference, for the simple purpose of attracting attention.

Where there are good reasons to take a stand different from that of allies or friends, we do so. This is the point which tends to be overlooked and which I accordingly stress.

The record of such independence of viewpoint is abundantly clear. In a number of situations we have taken action or urged viewpoints clearly different from those of nations with which, otherwise, we had a close identity of viewpoint. I should refer, by way of example, to trade relations with Communist nations generally, the Suez crisis of 1956, relations with Cuba, the admission of new members to the United Nations, relations with China, the situation in Indochina, some aspects of peace keeping and the implications of common membership in NATO. Individual Canadians may agree or disagree with the decisions of the Government of the day, but they cannot justifiably deny that the decisions were Canadian ones. Our policies emerge from our own combination of interests, convictions and traditions -- they are not borrowed from or imposed by others.

It is impossible for me to describe Canadian policies in all the areas mentioned above. I should like, however, to say something about the situation in Vietnam. This is one problem concerning which there is a good deal of misunderstanding.

It is sometimes alleged that Canadian policies can be independent only where United States interests are not significantly involved. Conversely it is said that, where a major United States interest is engaged, as it undoubtedly is in Vietnam, Canadian policy can operate only within strictly defined limitations.

To put the issue more bluntly: has Canada maintained a mind of its own on the course of developments in Vietnam?

For more than 11 years we have maintained a substantial Canadian presence there as observers. Almost one-quarter of our foreign service officers -- not to mention an even greater number of members of the Canadian armed services -- have done tours of duty there with the International Control Commission. As a result of this continuing and very substantial presence, we have been able to form an accurate assessment of the issues at stake. We have not shut our eyes to violations of the Geneva Agreement which have helped to bring about the present dangerous situation in that country.

We recognize that South Vietnam has violated the Agreement by seeking and receiving military assistance principally from the United States. We also know that, long before this assistance