

There are, of course, other issues lying beyond Vietnam which must be resolved if peace is to be achieved and maintained in that country. Laos and Cambodia, which both aspire to a neutral status which would protect them against outside interference, must be given an opportunity to pursue their own destinies. In 1962 an agreement guaranteeing the neutrality of Laos was negotiated and signed by 14 countries. Despite this, the International Commission has reported major violations of the settlement by North Vietnam and is awaiting permission to enter Communist-held areas in order to investigate charges of United States violations. I think there is much merit in proposals which have been made for the neutralization of Vietnam and much of the rest of Southeast Asia, and I should think most of the countries of the region would wish to acquire neutral status if this could be effectively guaranteed and if it would prevent the constant interference in their internal affairs which is so prevalent today.

In the background, of course, is the great question of Communist China, without whose co-operation no lasting stability can be achieved in Vietnam or any other part of Southeast Asia. To some extent, the policies of China can be interpreted as the result of fear, insecurity and wounded pride. It is difficult, I know, to find a prescription which will eliminate these deeply-rooted elements of Chinese policy; on the other hand, I am convinced that it is in all our interests to continue our attempts to penetrate the wall of suspicion and hostility which surrounds the leaders in Peking.

Finally, we recognize the close links which exist between the requirements of stability in Southeast Asia and the requirements of economic development. The United States has already made an immense contribution to these requirements and has promised even greater commitments once peace is established. Canada, through the Colombo Plan, its participation in the Mekong Basin project and, through its commitments to the Asian Development Bank, is also playing its role in this area and we shall continue to do so.

The task of bringing permanent peace and stability to Vietnam and Southeast Asia is an immense one, which I am sure will occupy not only the countries of that region but the whole world community for many years to come. Any formula for peace will inevitably be as complex as the factors involved in the present situation, and the path to a right formula will be strewn with obstacles and disappointments. Nevertheless, the war in Vietnam must be brought to an end and the peaceful future not only of Vietnam but all of Southeast Asia must be assured. Since 1954 Canada has done its best to prevent a war in Vietnam. It is now doing its utmost to help to bring the war to an end. When a settlement is achieved, we shall do our best to ensure that it is a permanent one.