

world community, in the nuclear age, is becoming increasingly conscious of the need to create an international order in which necessary political and social changes can be accomplished by peaceful means, and disputes between nations and peoples can be settled without violence. The resources of the developed world are being used more and more to break the chains binding the peoples of Asia to the poverty and violence of the centuries. The war in Vietnam presents a serious obstacle to these massive efforts and, if the historical roots of discontent and insecurity in Southeast Asia are to be effectively removed, a way must be found not only to bring that war to an end but also to provide a basis for a more viable settlement than the one projected by the Geneva Conference in 1954 turned out to be.

When the Geneva powers met in 1954, the war in Vietnam had been in progress for eight years and had spilled over into Laos and Cambodia. It was not, as is sometimes stated, a war between France on the one side and all Vietnamese nationalists, led by the Communists, on the other. In the beginning, France certainly played the role of a colonialist power attempting to maintain some kind of presence in the states of Indochina, and the Communist-led Vietminh were strongly motivated by nationalist feelings. Before long, however, subtle changes occurred. Nationalist non-Communist elements within the Vietminh were gradually denuded of power and influence or completely eliminated. The French at the same time found themselves allied with many Vietnamese who were just as determined as the Vietminh to achieve an independent Vietnam, but who were prepared to pursue their objective by political, rather than military, means and who were at least as opposed to Communist control as to French colonialism. As the war progressed, the differences between Vietnamese became more pronounced and there emerged, as there had before so often in Vietnamese history, two Vietnamese communities struggling for the right and the power to govern all of Vietnam.

When the élites reflecting these two communities went to Geneva in 1954, "North Vietnam" and "South Vietnam" did not exist. There were only two governments - one Communist and one non-Communist, both claiming sovereignty over the whole of Vietnam and over all Vietnamese. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, recognized by all the countries of the Communist bloc, and the State of Vietnam, recognized by more than 30 other countries, both attended the Geneva Conference as sovereign states and as full participants in the deliberations of the conference, and the armed forces of both governments were intermingled in combat from the Chinese border in the north to the Camau Peninsula in the south. The State of Vietnam had, however, delegated command over its armed forces to the high command of the French Union Forces, which had the primary responsibility for the conduct of the war, and it was perhaps only natural, therefore, that the burden of negotiations on the Franco-Vietnamese side should have been borne by France, especially in a conference dominated by the big powers. A sharp divergence of policy developed, however, between France, which intended to withdraw from Indochina, and the State of Vietnam, which intended to exercise its right to govern Vietnam. The State of Vietnam, from the beginning of the conference, had opposed the partitioning of the country and had pressed for United Nations supervision until peace and order could be restored, at which time free nation-wide elections could be held under UN supervision. On the other hand,