

activities, including armed attack directed against the armed forces and administration of South Vietnam. This same report also concluded that the North Vietnamese authorities had allowed their territories to be used for inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities in South Vietnam aimed at the overthrow of the South Vietnamese administration.

It is against the background of these established facts that recent events must be judged. It is not my purpose to justify or condemn retaliation. Least of all would I seek to discount the risks it involves. What I do wish to point out is that to see the recent military action against North Vietnam as gratuitous and unrelated to what has been going on in South Vietnam for years is seriously to distort our appreciation of a complex problem.

The United States Government has made it clear that it seeks no wider war. In responding to provocation, its military action was limited and specific, in being confined to military targets forming an integral part of the network by which the North steers and supplies the rebel military forces in the South. As proof of its intentions, the United States has taken prompt action in informing the Security Council of what had happened.

This does not, of course, lessen the dangers. The situation calls for great restraint on the part of all concerned, and this means, in the first instance, restraint by the Viet Cong and the authorities in North Vietnam. Further attacks in the South, followed by further raids on the North, could lead to escalation, bringing with it Chinese and even Soviet military involvement. To avoid such a course of events, Canada has made an urgent appeal for caution, not only in Washington but also in Moscow and in Warsaw, where we have asked the Soviet and Polish Governments to use their influence in the interests of avoiding new incidents. Similar appeals have been made by the Government of India and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Is there anything more positive that can be done towards working out a durable settlement of the problem in Vietnam? In some quarters, a new Geneva conference has been urged. The machinery for such a conference exists within the framework of the 1954 agreements. As far as Canada is concerned, I have stated on many occasions that we are prepared to participate in such a conference provided it is held in the right conditions. But so long as the North Vietnamese authorities persist in their policy of intervention in the South, it is difficult to see what useful contribution could be made to the peace and stability of Vietnam by a new conference. Surely the right course is to embark on such a conference in conditions where there is a reasonable prospect of arriving at an accommodation.

What is required, I believe, is a period in which military pressure is not being exerted by either side and the build-up of tensions is allowed to relax. It might then be possible for all concerned to take a new look at the situation, including the prospect of a new conference.