

I should like to examine the special case of Vietnam in some detail, not only because of the broad international implications of the war in Vietnam but also because Vietnam in many ways represents the severest test to which international peace keeping has been put. There are many strands woven into the complex fabric of the Vietnam tragedy. As the Minister responsible for Canadian foreign policy, I shall examine the problem of Vietnam and peace keeping from the point of view of Canada as a member of the International Supervisory Commissions. The Canadian decision to accept the invitation to participate in the International Commissions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia represented the beginnings of a major Canadian involvement in Asia. Furthermore, nearly 13 years of participation in international supervision in the area has inevitably led the Canadian Government to concentrate today on ways of achieving not only a peaceful settlement of the war but also a settlement which may be more permanent than the one which was attempted in 1954. Our experience has, of course, conditioned our point of view; on the other hand, this should not be interpreted as indicating any insensitivity to other viewpoints, and particularly to the wide range of considerations affecting the policy of the United States in the area.

During the postwar era, Canada has played many roles in the world. It has been a loyal member of NATO throughout the many crises which have been faced in Europe; it was a member of the United Nations forces in the Korean war; it has been a participant in nearly every peace-keeping operation undertaken by the United Nations. In a sense, our role in Vietnam has been the most frustrating and disillusioning. Like many other countries, we have sensed a tragic inevitability in the developments leading up to the present war; as a member of the International Commission, with a direct responsibility for assisting in the maintenance of the peace in Vietnam, we have been particularly sensitive to the apparent inability of the countries involved in the area to deflect developments. As a result, we examine our own experience in an attempt to determine why the 1954 settlement went wrong and how, when a new settlement is achieved, the same mistakes can be avoided.

The Vietnam crisis cannot, of course, be explained or understood solely in terms of the events of the past decade or two. As with so many of the states of the world which are struggling to modernize their political and economic structures, the problems of Vietnam are the problems of history, of political traditions, and of centuries of rivalry and war. The present division of Vietnam is not a new situation; the fact that a wall separated two warring dynasties in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is not irrelevant to any analysis of today's problems. The isolation of the villages of South Vietnam from central authority is not a modern phenomenon but simply a continuation of a problem which even the most illustrious and powerful emperors of Vietnam were seldom able to resolve. The economic impoverishment of the area is acute when compared to the rising expectations of the modern age, but nevertheless is simply a continuation of an economic condition which has prevailed for hundreds of years. The effect on Vietnam's neighbours of the present political and military hostilities is little different from the clash of empires and the reactions to the steady territorial expansion of the Vietnamese people since the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, although it is necessary to recognize the continuity of these problems, the world of the mid-twentieth century is no longer prepared to accept their inevitability. The