

This is surely the basic issue at stake in Vietnam today, and it is of vital interest to all members of the international community. This is what we, by virtue of our membership on the International Commission, have established as the lesson of the past ten years. I think it is important for all of us to have this fact clear in our minds before we go on to the next and most vital task, which is to attempt to restore peace to that troubled area. And here I must stress that I do not believe that the answer which all concerned would accept lies either in escalation and all-out war or, on the other hand, surrender to Communist pressures.

We are all deeply concerned with the implications for world peace, no less than for the future of the Vietnamese people, of the continuation of the present situation. It contains the seeds of escalation and the dangers -- all too evident to us today -- of an open conflict of stark and terrifying proportions. As I have indicated on many occasions, we seek a peaceful and equitable solution, and our efforts are certainly being directed to that end. This is our immediate objective, to avoid the inevitable consequences of escalation. Clearly and firmly, but without panic or alarm, we must make our concern known to all -- I repeat all -- the direct participants in this conflict, always remembering that conditions on the ground, the actual deployment of power, will have an important influence on the willingness of the parties concerned to modify their policies. Only if all concerned are prepared to face up to their responsibilities and obligations, and only if all concerned are prepared to exercise the restraint for which we and other nations have appealed, can we take the next step toward the peaceful settlement which is our ultimate objective.

Finally, a satisfactory solution would be one which adequately protects and guarantees the independence of people who wish to remain independent. The 1954 Geneva agreements were designed to end war but failed to create a durable settlement and lasting peace. Canada has become acutely aware of the painful shortcomings of the 1954 settlement through more than ten years of experience in Indochina, where we have been forced to observe the slow erosion of the terms of a cease-fire agreement.

Perhaps a new and better arrangement could be achieved by some form of guaranteed neutrality, or through a stronger supervisory and policing mechanism, capable of preventing aggressive interference from outside. As the Prime Minister has pointed out, this is surely an international responsibility. To discharge it, the lessons of the past indicate that there will be required an international presence involving more authority and more freedom of action than have obtained in the past, and this must be balanced by a mutual acceptance of this machinery and a readiness to co-operate in using it. It is clear that to be charged with supervision yet to be powerless to check the slow erosion of a settlement is not enough.

It is not easy, under present circumstances, to define the framework within which new and stronger mechanisms could be brought into being. While the United Nations might be considered as providing an obvious basis on which a new approach might be built up, attitudes thus far have tended to lessen the acceptability of this framework and the chances of its being successfully used. It cannot, however, be entirely excluded as one possibility. Another might well be the sort of grouping of more directly involved nations which were represented at Geneva in 1954 and 1962. At this juncture I do not believe