

It is, of course, evident that the essential element in any forward step is a desire to negotiate on the part of the governments directly involved in the dispute, regardless of where or how those negotiations begin. But it is equally evident that, behind the Vietnam problem but by no means unrelated to it, is the whole question of relations between China and the rest of the world community. Fostering the desire to negotiate could be encouraged by -- just as it could encourage -- the beginning of a move toward mutual acceptance and greater contact between China and the rest of the world community. An improvement in this wider area may prove necessary in order to bring about the sort of long-term settlement which is desirable. Conversely, if progress on this broader problem is not possible in the near future, a settlement in Vietnam could be a significant contribution to its eventual achievement.

Reference has already been made to the need to understand the facts before a solution can be found. In South Vietnam, outside pressure and interference have taken a military form on both sides and before any genuine peace and stability can return to Vietnam these must be subdued and progressively eliminated in a balanced manner. Arranging this process should be a task of first priority for any discussions which may be initiated to deal with these problems.

To ensure that measures agreed to and obligations undertaken in negotiations are carried out and honestly kept, it would probably prove desirable to build some form of international control mechanism into the terms of the settlement, not only to maintain reciprocal confidence between the parties in their obligations to each other but also as an effective demonstration of the interest of the international community in guaranteeing the durability of any settlement in which they would in a sense be direct participants. An effective international control and guarantee organization, whatever its composition and sponsorship, would have to be given sufficient backing to enable it to ensure that military interference could be genuinely eliminated, and not simply temporarily concealed, and that expressions of political choice were not subject to coercion.

The perspective opened up by a period of tranquillity, in which the people concerned would be assured that efforts to solve their problems would not be eroded by coercive intervention and political subversion, would have considerable attraction for all members of the international community. The Canadian Government, like the U.S. Government, believes that the development potential of the Mekong River and its immediately contiguous areas offers possibilities for exploitation which could be richly rewarding for the people of that area. An imaginative programme for the exploitation of these and other resources, and their utilization to bring a more prosperous way of life to the people of the region, could be readily devised and would no doubt call forth a generous response from all countries able to contribute. The President of the United States has already indicated the sweeping and generous scope of the extent to which the U.S.A. is prepared to contribute. The Canadian Government has also expressed its willingness to participate in a