

as being contrary to their basic national interest. And this is something which I would ask those who would have us follow a different course to remember.

#### CANADA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SETTLEMENT

*Fourth*, the Canadian Government has made it clear that it is prepared to make its own contribution to an eventual settlement in Vietnam. Such a settlement is almost certain to involve some form of international presence which will afford to the parties concerned the necessary guarantees that the terms of the settlement are being fairly and effectively carried out. If, in the light of our first-hand experience of the Vietnam problem over the past 13 years, Canada were to be asked to participate in an international peace-keeping effort in Vietnam, whether under the auspices of the Geneva powers or under those of the United Nations, I am sure that we would be prepared to accept such a responsibility within the limits of our capacity. We have also recognized for some time that, in the aftermath of any settlement, it is likely to be necessary for interested countries to mount a collective effort for the economic recovery and rehabilitation of all parts of Vietnam. I want to remind the Committee that our commitment to contribute to such an effort is on the record and that we will meet that commitment when the time comes....

#### NORTH VIETNAM'S POSITION

To summarize...the North Vietnamese position would appear to be as follows: If the United States ceases the bombing and all other military action against North Vietnam permanently and without condition, the Government of North Vietnam would be prepared to enter into direct talks with representatives of the United States. The further information we have suggests that such talks could be initiated within a reasonable interval after the cessation of the bombing, such an interval being presumably required by the North Vietnamese side to give effect to their argument that the holding of talks would not, in fact, be regarded as a "condition" of the cessation of the bombing.

#### U.S. RESPONSE

...As regards the matter of talks, the United States Government would be prepared to enter into such talks with representatives of the Government of North Vietnam at any time and without any prior condition whatsoever. As regards the matter of a reduction in the scale of hostilities, the United States would be prepared to discuss such a reduction on a basis of reasonable reciprocity. What the United States is not prepared to do, as far as I understand it, is to discontinue for good what they regard as a significant aspect of their military activity in Vietnam in return for a mere undertaking on the North Vietnamese side to enter into bilateral talks....

#### CANADA'S POSITION

...We have maintained all along that the settlement of this conflict will require concessions on both sides. I believe that this is a view which is widely shared regardless of how the rights and wrongs of the Vietnam conflict are interpreted. In response to those

who have asked the Government to dissociate itself from the bombing of North Vietnam by the United States, we have made it clear that we would, indeed, like to see the bombing stopped, but that we would also like to see the infiltration stopped, and that we would like to see negotiations looking towards the peaceful solution of this conflict begun. As I indicated to the House on April 4, it is from this general perspective that we endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals of March 14 and that we shall continue to judge all proposals which are aimed at putting a halt to the fighting in Vietnam.

As far as the Canadian Government is concerned...it will continue to be the object of our diplomatic efforts to try to establish a basis on which the two sides might be brought together. There is, of course, no dearth of formulas for trying to do that. But the fact remains that the test of any such formula is its acceptability to both sides. This has been the experience of the Secretary-General; it has been our own experience; and it has been the experience of other countries which have tried to play a helpful part in this matter.

This does not mean, however, that any of those who have tried to lend their good offices to the parties intend to abandon this effort. Certainly, as far as Canada is concerned, I can assure the Committee that we have no intention of doing that. The question that arises is whether there is any new direction which it might be worth exploring in the hope that it might avoid the impasse which has apparently now been reached and which has brought us to the point where, for the first time in some 16 months, no new initiatives, either public or private, appear to be within sight.

#### PARITY AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION

It seems to me that, in trying to bring this conflict to a halt, the same principle may be applicable which we have found, in practice, to be applicable to the process of general and complete disarmament. In essence, that principle is that there must be a condition of parity between the two sides at all stages of the process. That is to say, care would have to be taken to avoid a situation where either side is placed or considers itself to be placed in a position of relative disadvantage at any given stage.

Having that principle in mind, I wonder whether it might not be worth while to take another look at some of the terms of the 1954 Agreement. The core of that Agreement lies in the conception of a cease-fire and a disengagement of forces. Surely, that is what we are seeking today as a matter of first priority. Would it be going too far to suggest that some thought might now be given to the possibility of discussing a stage-by-stage return to the Geneva cease-fire arrangements as a first step towards a more permanent settlement which would necessarily have to encompass many other factors? Of course, the cease-fire arrangements are only one aspect of the Geneva settlement and I recognize the difficulty of trying to persuade the parties to return to one aspect of the settlement in the absence of some preliminary understandings at least as regards the basis on which the other, and more intractable aspects of the settlement might be tackled in a subsequent negotiation.