

First, none of the interested parties has at any time suggested that the International Commission be withdrawn or its mandate cancelled. Not even the Chinese People's Republic has made this suggestion. On the contrary, it has been confirmed to us within recent weeks both by the Secretary of State of the United States and by senior personalities of the Government of North Viet Nam that they attach importance to a continued Commission presence in Viet Nam. Indeed, the committee might be interested to know that when Victor Moore, our new Commissioner on the Control Commission, made his introductory calls in Hanoi about three and a half weeks ago, it was represented to him that the North Vietnamese government would like to see the Commission hold more of its meetings in Hanoi than has been the case in recent years. I understand that this matter has since been discussed among the Commissioners and that there appears to be general agreement to act on the North Vietnamese suggestion.

I think this would be a good decision, and it would not be establishing a precedent. The Commission at another period has spent more time in Hanoi than it has during the past few years, so there would be no precedent involved in spending a longer period in Hanoi.

Secondly, both North and South Viet Nam continue to look to the Commission to consider and adjudicate their charges of violations of the Cease-Fire Agreement. While there can be legitimate argument over the usefulness of such a procedure in circumstances where the prospects of remedial action are limited, the fact is that the parties do attach importance to this function of the Commission and to the public presentation which the Commission is able to make on the basis of its investigations of breaches of the Cease-Fire Agreement.

Thirdly, if members of the committee examine the Cease-Fire Agreement which was concluded in Geneva in 1954, they will find that the Commission is, in fact, the only tangible instrument of the Geneva settlement as it affects Viet Nam. Even if we were to consider, therefore, that the Commission's presence in Viet Nam in present circumstances is of largely symbolic significance, we cannot, I think, discount the importance of the Commission as a reflection of the continuing interest of the Geneva powers in a situation which engages their international responsibilities.

I may say just by way of parenthesis, to Mr. Harkness, he will remember that during the debate on February 8 he asked me, in a constructive manner, whether perhaps the time has not come when the Commission's role might be abandoned. At that very time I was engaged in considerations that I will later discuss which caused me to feel that the future role of the Commission might indeed prove to be very great.

Mr. HARKNESS: I might just interject, Mr. Chairman, that my suggestion was that the number of control teams, and therefore the number of personnel, might be reconsidered in view of the fact that these control teams are not being allowed to carry out the function which it was anticipated they could carry out when they were sent there.

Mr. MARTIN: That is right; you made that point.

Mr. HARKNESS: That was my suggestion, rather than to do away with it altogether. I think this was my main contention or suggestion.