

*Viet Nam*

that we have serious doubts about what we are being asked to undertake. Our more formal decision will have to await our judgment of the degree to which our doubts turn out to be justified in practice. We will form that judgment in the initial period of participation, and our full reply to the invitation will be given, with whatever reservations we may find necessary, before the end of that 60-day period.

Meanwhile, let there be no misunderstanding about what Canada will be doing in Viet Nam. We will not be there to keep the peace ourselves; that is for the parties to the cease-fire. What we can do is observe how the parties are fulfilling their obligations under the cease-fire, and report upon this. From time to time, we may be able to help them through mediation. But it is not up to us whether or not there will be peace in Viet Nam. If the parties fulfil their obligations, there can be peace; if they do not, then nothing Canada or any other country on the commission can do will prevent the cease-fire from being broken.

The government will want these interim conclusions to be discussed in parliament. It will introduce a resolution to provide a basis for this debate. Meanwhile, it will provide the cease-fire documents to all parties in the House as quickly as it can. When everyone has had a reasonable opportunity to consider these texts, a time for debate will be fixed by agreement of the House leaders. For its part, the government would be ready to have this debate take place some time next week.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Viet Nam have endured beyond measure a tragedy of indescribable proportions. Every Canadian prays that the cease-fire will lead to a lasting peace. We can do nothing less than seek some means of contributing effectively to such a peace and to the reconstruction of that suffering region.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe):** Mr. Speaker, to the remarks just made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) I want to add that we all heartily welcome the announcement of peace in Viet Nam. This is a great day for humanity as a whole. Statements made from Washington and Hanoi meet the aspirations of all inhabitants of our planet and also of Canadians who, like their brethren throughout the world, now have greater faith than ever in negotiation as the real means of settling conflicts.

We hope and believe, Mr. Speaker, that the agreement reached yesterday in Paris will bring to Viet Nam a durable peace extending to all Southeast Asia and that the agreement will contribute to the future of peace throughout the world.

Such objectives incite us, as Canadians, to co-operate with other nations in ensuring that the agreement is carried out and in building up peace in Viet Nam and Indochina. This last concern must make us accept Canada's participation to the international conference which, under the very terms of the cease-fire agreement, must be held within the next 30 days. We would then sit with China, France, the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

Before agreeing to any participation by Canada in an international body in order to see that the peace agreement is observed, we have the responsibility to make sure

[Mr. Sharp.]

about the nature and effectiveness of the role which would be ours.

We have a particular responsibility to assume toward all our fellow Canadians, our soldiers, our peace officers, all other countries and, precisely, toward our eventual partners.

Our responsibility in the highly humanitarian task of building a lasting peace urges us, with regard to our participation in the peace control commission, to act with due reflection. We ponder over the pertinent points. It behoves the present government to enlighten the Canadian parliament, the Canadian people, even before a decision is taken. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I welcome with enthusiasm the suggestion of the Secretary of State for External Affairs that a debate be held in this House. In anticipation of this debate, I should like to mention a few questions on which the Secretary of State could reflect and to which he could perhaps give us an answer.

It seems to me that the government has had ample time to consider all the implications of the situation. For months now, the Department of External Affairs has endeavoured to anticipate the problems involved in our eventual role in Viet Nam. We therefore ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs when and how the last consultations were held with the Canadian ambassador in Paris and in Washington. To what extent did the political authorities of South Viet Nam participate in the Kissinger-Le Duc Tho agreement, notably with regard to the presence of North Viet Nameese troops in South Viet Nameese territory?

Does the Secretary of State know that the Paris agreement deals essentially with Viet Nam and little or not at all with Cambodia and Laos? Could he, in his statement, comment on the attitude of the government in this regard?

Could the minister inform the House and the Canadian people about the conditions of Canada's participation in the peace control operations in Vietnam, when and how, on each occasion, have those conditions been expressed and to what parties to the conflict? To this day, which party has accepted or refused the conditions put forward by Canada? In each case, what were those conditions?

More specifically still, to this day what position was taken by the outside organization to whom report is to be made? Will this organization be able to intervene in case of disputes?

What is exactly the clause of free access to every part of Viet Nam? Can this free access be extended to Cambodia and Laos?

Where does the present government stand as to the duration of a mission in Viet Nam?

Could the Department of External Affairs be getting ready to accept a provisional mandate as to the nature and duration of this mission so that it could later decide to continue or to withdraw?

Which countries will pay the costs of peacekeeping operations? Have representations been made to date in this respect? How many Canadians will be involved in the force?