

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

where in North Viet Nam be withdrawn, can the minister inform the house what action has been taken, and whether Canadian personnel on the international control commission are still at their posts of duty?

My second question, Mr. Speaker, is: In his opinion is this request made because the government of North Viet Nam wishes to cover up the fact that there has been a heavy inflow of troops into North Viet Nam and that more than 50 per cent of the forces fighting in Viet Nam are actually North Vietnamese forces?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the first part of the question, it is a fact that the government of North Viet Nam has asked the international supervisory commission, composed of Canada, India and Poland, to withdraw its fixed teams. In reply the commission has pointed out that it is prepared to take reasonable risks in discharging its obligations under the Geneva agreement. However, if the government of North Viet Nam insists on the withdrawal of the teams, the commission has suggested that the demands should be put in writing. It may be that the teams will not leave North Viet Nam, but be located at Hanoi.

The reasons for this course being taken by the North Vietnamese government are alleged to be related to the security of the personnel of the teams. At the moment that does not seem to be a well founded argument. Other reasons the government of North Viet Nam may have, need not be commented on until perhaps later this week when we have received a further report from the commission in respect of the incidents that have taken place not only recently but over a period of at least ten years.

**Mr. Douglas:** I have a supplementary question. I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether, in view of this request to the members of the truce commission to remove these teams, it would seem that now is the time to ask the co-chairmen to hold a meeting of the signatories to the Geneva agreement in order that those who gave the authority to that commission may now relieve it of its responsibilities or give their full support in the carrying out of the commission's responsibilities?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Speaker, if the teams were to be withdrawn completely and, in addition, if the commission were to be

disbanded, this would represent a fundamental breakup of the whole Geneva accord.

Canada is not opposed in principle to a conference, as the Prime Minister has said. If there is a general disposition to hold such a conference we would of course be willing to participate. It is our judgment that what is required at the present time is a period during which military pressure is not being exerted by either side, thus allowing time to encourage relaxation of the increasing tensions. It might be possible for all concerned at that time to take a new look at the situation, and in those circumstances, it might be possible to consider the prospect of a new conference with more sympathy than has been the case in the past. Admittedly this is a very serious situation, but it must be remembered that the means for keeping the peace in Indo-China and Viet Nam were provided by the 1954 accord. The present regrettable situation is that North Viet Nam, the main aggressor, has not faithfully lived up to the arrangements provided in the 1954 agreement. My hon. friend may be assured that we are in consultation with other parties to the 1962 Geneva accord as well as those to the 1954 agreement, in an attempt to bring about some *modus vivendi* in this situation.

**Mr. Douglas:** I have a further supplementary question. In relation to the minister's suggestion that there are no military pressures, does he not consider that the retaliatory air raids on North Viet Nam and the reports of the movement of Chinese troops into the area constitute very serious military pressure? May I also ask the minister whether the fact that some highly placed individuals in the United States government have said that they are prepared to negotiate but would prefer to negotiate from strength, is the main reason why the Canadian government is not pressing for a conference at an early stage?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Speaker, there have been no South Vietnamese forces in North Viet Nam for ten years. When the cataloguing of the various acts that have taken place during the past ten years is made public I am sure my hon. friend will concur in the view that the aggression began as we have stated. The suggestion that a conference should not take place until we can negotiate from strength I think is a misinterpretation of what I said. What is proposed is that a conference take place, and that there be in being a government of South Viet Nam capable of negotiating its own interests. This is a very