

unified Viet-Nam or one whose reunification by force would be justified on the grounds that the other Parties had not adhered to the Agreement. In Saigon, the leaders of the RVN were under no illusions about the ICCS as a workable organization and recognized the strength of the argument of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, which he put to leaders both in Hanoi and in Saigon, that because of its composition the Commission would probably never make a unanimous report unfavourable to the DRVN or "PRG", whereas Canadian objectivity could contribute to unanimous reports unfavourable to the RVN. The leaders of the RVN saw the Agreement as providing them with the opportunity to deal with the other South Vietnamese Party direct and without intervention from Hanoi. They believed that, in a relatively short period of time, they would know whether this opportunity held any prospect of leading to a negotiated settlement in South Viet-Nam.

Clearly the two South Vietnamese Parties needed more time to demonstrate the feasibility of their solutions and to seek agreement on the internal matters of South Viet-Nam through the establishment of a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord which would organize the general elections provided for in the Agreement. Should there be progress toward a political solution, peace would be strengthened and the mere presence of the ICCS would no longer be regarded as a vital part of the picture. If, on the other hand, there was no progress toward a political settlement, full scale hostilities could be expected to resume regardless of the presence of the Commission.

DECISION ON CONTINUED PARTICIPATION

In order to give the South Vietnamese Parties this extra time and to avoid any chance that a Canadian decision to withdraw after just 60 days would have a detrimental psychological effect on the fragile structure of peace in Viet-Nam, the Government decided to extend its participation in the Commission for an additional 60-day period on the same basis as its participation during the first 60 days. This was deemed to be the right decision even though it was recognized that Canada's criteria for participation in an international supervisory organization were not met. The Secretary of State for External Affairs explained that if there were not, in the next 60 days, a substantial improvement in the situation in Viet-Nam or some signs of an imminent political settlement, Canada would announce its withdrawal from the ICCS by May 31, with a grace period of up to 30 days to allow the Parties to the Agreement time to find a replacement.

In his statement to the House of Commons on March 27, announcing the Government's decision, the Secretary of State for External Affairs noted that the ICCS also had a role to perform *vis-à-vis* the political settlement, quite separate from its functions as an observer of the implementation of the