

international responsibilities. We do not withdraw from responsibilities because we may think a task is thankless, dangerous and difficult -- but we do when it has become futile.

Some of you may have wondered whether our experience in Viet-Nam did not turn out just as many feared it would from the beginning. In other words, with the benefit of hindsight, should we have gone at all?

Looking back I can confirm that our initial decision to participate was the right decision. Our reasoning then for joining the Commission, as well as our reservations, have been largely vindicated. In Paris, the negotiators envisaged that the ICCS, with its four members, would form part of an integrated package designed to accomplish a series of objectives. While the central objective of peace was not attained, the Paris machinery, including the ICCS, provided a working framework for a number of solid achievements. Although the fighting continued, the level of violence subsided when compared with the period preceding the Paris Agreement. The United States has been able to disengage and withdraw its ground forces from Viet-Nam. There was the long awaited exchange of military prisoners. These are not inconsiderable accomplishments and there should be satisfaction that we were able to contribute, even modestly, to their achievement.

Less than four months after our withdrawal from the Commission in Indochina the Middle East erupted again into war. The fighting between October 6 and October 22 was the most furious and bloody in that beleaguered area in modern times.

The mounting fury of the fighting was possibly the main reason why it so abruptly ceased. The great powers, who were supplying arms in increasing quantity to each side, fortunately realized that they were being drawn into a dangerous confrontation. It was at this crucial stage that the United Nations Security Council agreed to the establishment and dispatch of an emergency force to supervise a ceasefire and to prevent a recurrence of the fighting.

Canada did not seek participation in the emergency force. There was, at the time some criticism that we were actually looking for a role for ourselves and that the new crisis in the Middle East was being seized by the Canadian Government primarily as an opportunity to polish our reputation as an international peacekeeper. Let me be very clear on this. Canada did not seek a role in UNEF any more than we had sought a role in the ICCS. The Secretary General of the United Nations invited Canada to provide the logistic component to the United Nations Force. That role was assigned to us precisely because of the effective way that Canada discharged that same role from 1956 to 1967.

At one point, it is quite true that the Soviets raised difficulties about Canadian participation. They had nothing against Canada. This was because of their concern at the absence, in the original plan, of representation from the East European countries. I say East European -- and not Warsaw pact countries -- advisedly. This is because we do not see a "balanced force" balanced in terms of NATO and the Warsaw pact. Balance as I envisage it means the regions of the world -- divided geographically -- not ideologically. In the event, the Secretary General modified the arrangements with the result that Poland and Canada share the logistic support role. In fact, so far, this cooperative arrangement has worked out very well.