

Article 8

With a view to contribution to and guaranteeing peace in Indochina, the parties to this Act acknowledge the commitment of the parties to the Agreement to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and neutrality of Cambodia and Laos as stipulated in the Agreement, agree also to respect them and to refrain from any action at variance with them, and call on other countries to do the same.

Article 9

This Act shall enter into force upon signature by plenipotentiary representatives of all 12 parties and shall be strictly implemented by all the parties. Signature of this Act does not constitute recognition of any party in any case in which it has not previously been accorded.

Done in 12 copies in Paris this second day of March, one thousand nine hundred and seventy three, in English, Vietnamese, Chinese, French, and Russian. All texts are equally authentic.

Statement by the
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
The Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
to the Opening Session of the
International Conference on Viet Nam,
Paris, February 26, 1973

Mr. Chairman,

The first words of any representative of Canada to an international conference on the subject of Viet Nam must be to congratulate the authors of the Agreement signed in this same building a month ago. All the parties deserve the gratitude not only of their own peoples but of all those states which have come to regard the war in Viet Nam as affecting their own national aspirations and interests. My government is firmly of the opinion that the Agreement signed here last month represents a magnificent and hard-earned opportunity which must not be lost. This agreement, indeed, doesn't solve all the problems, neither does it meet all of our hopes; but its very existence is far more desirable than the absurdity of the armed conflict itself.

Although Canada's agreement to participate in the International Commission of Control and Supervision was conditional, the Canadian Delegation in Saigon has taken a leading part in getting not only the International Commission of Control and Supervision teams in place as required by the agreement, but also in facilitating the other organizations established under it to begin to exercise their functions. The Canadian Delegation from the beginning has been motivated by a desire to make the agreement work if this was at all possible. This will continue to be our attitude in Viet Nam for as long as we are there. It will also be the attitude of the Canadian Delegation here in Paris. I am sure that all other delegations at this conference are equally conscious of the importance of the part this conference has to play in transforming the present precarious ceasefire into a lasting peace in which the South Vietnamese people and only the South Vietnamese people will determine their future. Even though the Lao and Khmer peoples are not represented at this

conference, their futures too are bound up in peace in Viet Nam. They too are entitled to the right to determine their own futures for themselves without any foreign intervention.

The fact that there is yet another international conference being held on Viet Nam is in some respects sad inasmuch as it reflects on the rights of the Indochinese peoples to determine their own futures for themselves. But the fact remains that the struggle in Indochina has become an international struggle involving not only the nations of that peninsula but countries far removed from it. From the point of view of my government, the object of the Paris Agreement is not to perpetuate an international presence in Viet Nam but to eliminate it and on conditions that will ensure again a fresh internationalization. This conference should be able to provide for some of those conditions.

Canada has had the educative experience of having served 19 years on the international commissions in Indochina and from that experience we have come to a number of conclusions. If these conclusions seem to imply criticism of the existing agreement of Viet Nam, I hasten to assure you that this is not my intention. My primary purpose is to prevent my country from being once more involved in an intractable situation and an open-ended commitment. At the same time we are deeply conscious that Canada has a history of concern for and participation in international peacekeeping and is very jealous of its reputation in this area.

Canada sees itself, in its membership in the International Commission of Control and Supervision, not as the spokesman of any one point of view and certainly not as serving any direct national policy of its own, but as a representative of the International Community and invited by all the parties concerned to act as such. We therefore feel that we have an obligation not only to the parties to the agreement and indeed to this conference if it should decide to maintain an active interest in this agreement, but to the International Community as a whole.

We would obviously prefer to see all peace supervisory operations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with the charter. The fact that this has not been possible in the case of Indo-China reinforces, in our view, the obligation of the International Commission of Control and Supervision to act as if it were representing the world community. If this were not so it would be merely a quadripartite group with no claim to the description international in its title. Canada would have preferred greater Asian participation not only in the International Commission but also in this International Conference which is to discuss matters of vital concern to the future peace and stability of the Asian region. It is in the attempt to engage the International Community to the greatest extent possible that we have adopted the policy of giving full information on our International Commission of Control and Supervision participation. Apart from details of negotiations while they are still under way, we feel that the International Community has a right to know what is being done in its name in Viet Nam. For our part we propose to report regularly and publicly on this at least until other more satisfactory means are found for