

in the deployment of its teams and its investigatory capacities, and as a result, on the attitude of the Canadian Government toward continued participation on the Commission.

The International Commission is still attempting to carry out a detailed investigation of the incident, and until it is completed, not all details will be known. In the meantime, however, Mr. Speaker, I wish to provide the House with the following information, as we have it to date, on events leading up to Saturday's tragedy, what we know of the incident itself, and what has passed since.

Under Article 4(d) of the Protocol on international supervision, attached to the 1973 Paris Agreement, Lao Bao is a specifically designated team site of the ICCS. According to the Agreement, the Lao Bao team was to have been in place and operational within at least 30 days after the Agreement was signed. However, for a variety of reasons, it was not until March 17 that the first helicopter reconnaissance visit took place to Lao Bao, via Quang Tri and Gio Linh. For this visit the necessary assurances of safety were received from the Vietnamese Parties involved and the Viet Cong provided liaison officials to accompany the ICCS team. A second reconnaissance visit was planned for April 5, to see if the Lao Bao facilities were ready for ICCS occupation, but it was abandoned when the Viet Cong liaison personnel were prevented by officials of the Republic of Viet-Nam at Quang Tri from boarding the helicopter.

This reconnaissance flight was re-scheduled for April 7; on the morning of April 7, at Quang Tri, with clearances and safety guarantees for the flight received from both the South Vietnamese and Viet Cong authorities, the crew of ICCS helicopters numbers 006 and 115 were carefully briefed by Captain Parent on the exact routing designated by the Viet Cong as being safe for travel to Lao Bao. The two helicopters left Quang Tri at nine o'clock in the morning on April 7 for Gio Linh, where two Viet Cong liaison personnel boarded helicopter 006 and a third boarded helicopter 115. The helicopters departed at eleven-fifteen and proceeded along the route designated by the Viet Cong, from Gio Linh to Dong Ha, and from Dong Ha toward Lao Bao following Highway 9 at a pre-arranged altitude of one thousand meters within the corridor two kilometers either side of Highway 9. At ten minutes before noon, helicopter 115 reported that it was in its final approach to Lao Bao. Approximately three minutes later the ICCS team in Quang Tri received a transmission from the helicopters to the effect that one was receiving ground fire and that the other helicopter had been hit by a missile and was going down. Canadian personnel aboard the surviving helicopter confirm that their helicopter was fired upon at this time. They report that it took evasive action and landed in a hamlet on Highway 9, from where they walked to the crash site of the other helicopter, about two kilometers away. There is therefore no reason to believe that either helicopter was outside the flight corridor at the time of the incident, and the weather conditions were excellent. The helicopter which landed safely was fired upon with small-arms after it was on the ground, where its ICCS markings could not have been mistaken.