



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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A VIEW AT CLOSE QUARTERS OF THE PEACEKEEPING PROBLEM IN VIETNAM

A Report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on March 21, 1973, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp.

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I led a group of Parliamentarians, officials and journalists on a journey of 22,000 miles, Mr. Chairman, between March 13 and 18, in the course of which I had conversations with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Japan, and the Foreign Minister, Prime Minister and President of the Republic of Vietnam. I also met the head of the so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government's delegation to the Joint Military Commission in Saigon. In Laos I spoke with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and high officials of the Pathet Lao movement. In Hanoi, I spoke to the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In addition to these conversations, I talked with a representative cross-section of the Canadians who are serving with the Canadian delegation in South Vietnam and with our representatives in Laos. Our last representative on the old International Commission for Control and Supervision in Hanoi closed our operation there after close to 19 years and departed with us.

All these talks centred upon the question of continued Canadian participation in the International Commission for Control Supervision in Vietnam, and I may say that the views of those with whom I spoke were either very clearly, or by direct implication, to the effect that Canada should continue to serve on the Commissions and that the consequences of our early departure would be far-reaching. I have also received similar views from the Governments of the United States, Britain and China.

I made no commitment to any of them and can make no commitment now as to what our response will be, since the question is still before the Government. I hope at the meeting of this Committee today that I will hear some other views and I will certainly welcome the views that may be expressed by any of the members of this Committee as to the course of action that we might follow.

It is, I think, relevant to point out, however, that all the views that I heard and that I have received from other governments were not motivated by anything like identical considerations and purposes. Each party had its own particular reasons for wishing to have us stay on, but few, if any, of them had common motives among themselves or shared those of the