

From the outset we had determined to be as open as possible about our participation in the ICCS, about its successes, its failures and the reasons why. This became known as the open mouth policy. I decided to take this course essentially for two reasons. The first was to enable the Canadian Parliament and public to have the fullest information on which to base their judgment on this Canadian commitment in which Canadian lives, as was so tragically proven, were put at risk. Secondly, our experience on the old Commission had revealed to us the advantages of exposing obstructionist tactics to the full scrutiny of the international press.

In the first objective -- to inform Canadians -- I believe that we were very successful -- and for this much credit must go to Canadian press, radio and television -- both in Canada and in the field in Indochina. In its second purpose, that of revealing partiality and obstruction to impartial international journalists and commentators, the open mouth policy also achieved success. Regretably the second stage of that objective, which was to dissolve partiality and obstruction by open scrutiny, did not succeed.

But neither the limited success of the open mouth policy nor the enormous and painstaking efforts of the Canadian Delegation to make the Commission effective could have enabled it to discharge its duties properly without the underlying willingness of the parties to abide by the Paris Agreement. Everything ultimately depended on that. Even if sweet reasonableness and impartiality had characterized the attitude of every member of the International Commission, the task would have led to frustration if the parties of some of the parties to the conflict chose not to honour the agreement or take widely differing interpretations of its meaning.

I have made clear to you our reasons for withdrawing. I think it is equally important to make sure that the wrong inferences are not taken from our withdrawal. Our attitude about the Commission results in large part from Canadian experience with the old ICC and Canada's wider experience in more peacekeeping and peace observer roles than any other nation.

No criticism of the peace agreement was intended. We welcomed the Paris Agreement and regarded it as a good agreement that provided as sound and honourable a basis for peace as was negotiable.

During our long period on the old ICC and in the shorter run we had with the new Commission, we sought to be objective. We have not been anyone's stooge or anyone's representative. We were invited to take part not by one side to the conflict but by all of the parties. We insisted on that. We also insisted in seeking and participating in investigations of alleged violations by the United States and the Republic of Viet-Nam just as we did with regard to alleged violations by the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the other South Vietnamese Party. When, following the investigation, we found the Republic of Viet-Nam or the United States to have been at fault, we did not hesitate to say so. Because we strenuously objected to the obstruction of attempts to investigate alleged violations committed by the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam or the Viet Cong, we were charged with partiality. This was simply not true -- the record reveals those who have been attempting to be impartial and those who have not. We have every reason to be proud of Canadian objectivity in the Commission.

I think it should be clear from what I have said as much as from our record that withdrawal does not represent in any way a shrinking away from