

Secretary-General should chair it, that he should receive the reports from the International Control Commission and that he should reassemble the conference, if need be, because of a breach -- a serious breach -- of the truce. We put that proposal forward, and even the presence of the Secretary-General as the vehicle for transmitting the reports of the International Control Commission to the other members of the conference or as the instrument for recalling the conference was unacceptable. And what emerged instead was an arrangement whereby the four parties to the Paris agreement, that is the belligerents themselves, are responsible for conveying to the participants in the Paris International Conference reports from the International Commission which the Commission has to submit to them, and the views of its individual members. Now, this is not a fully satisfactory arrangement by any means, but you'll see that at any rate we made some progress. I'm quite satisfied, if Canada had not gone to that conference and if I had not from the very outset put forward a proposal of this kind, there would have been virtually no provision whatever for any continuing political authority.

-- We also made clear that Canada could not participate unless invited to take part by all of the parties concerned. And this, in many respects, was the most important condition. I was absolutely determined, and so was the Canadian Government, that we would not be there as the representative of any party, of any side in this conflict, that we were going to go there as the representatives of the international community acting in the interests of peace, and that we could not be labelled as the representative of Saigon or of the United States, or of China, or of North Vietnam, however unlikely that might be. This was obtained. All the parties asked us to participate on the Commission.

Now, as you can see, we were not altogether happy with the arrangements and they didn't comply fully with our conditions, and yet it is clear that an effort was made to accommodate our position.

With the signing of the cease-fire agreement in Paris we had to decide immediately whether or not to take part in the new International Commission. As we did not wish to obstruct in any way the path towards a peace settlement and as it was too soon to determine whether the arrangements for the Commission's operations would be workable, we agreed to take part for an initial period of 60 days and despatched immediately some 290 men and women to Vietnam to form the Canadian team on the International Control Commission, and we were very fortunate to have been able to assign to this responsibility two very distinguished men -- our Ambassador in Greece, Michel Gauvin, and General McAlpine, who is the military commander.

In this 60 days, which expires next week, we have to complete our own evaluation of the effectiveness of the Commission both in terms of its specific tasks and as a stabilizing presence.