

As I told the House on January 24, the texts embodying the international observer arrangements are complex. We are continuing our careful study and analysis of them, but their full meaning and implication will only become clear in the light of our experience in seeking to apply them. Our publicly stated conditions seem to have influenced those who wrote the agreements. But serious inadequacies remain.

It is important that the House be aware of what we consider to be the principal inadequacies of the international observer arrangements: one is that the agreements by themselves do not provide for a continuing political authority. It may be, of course, that the International Conference envisaged in the agreements will repair that deficiency.

The Government would have preferred the agreement and its supervision to come under the aegis of the United Nations. It is happy to note, however, that the Secretary General of the United Nations will be invited to attend the International Conference.

Another deficiency is the obligation of unanimity in the Commission's decisions and reports. It seems significant that the Parties, wanting an effective Commission, should nonetheless have provided that it must be subject to a rule of unanimity - in other words to a veto. The effects of that rule are alleviated by a qualified provision for reporting by individual members of the Commission if unanimity cannot be achieved; but such reports would have no status as Commission reports.

A further deficiency is that the new commission and each of its teams must act as a single body comprising representatives of all four members. This makes action by one, two, or three national delegations impossible. This could turn out to be virtually an invitation to paralysis. We shall also be testing by experience the qualified provisions for the Commission's freedom of movement.

Another is that the Parties have provided that each of the four Commission countries should pay not only the salaries and allowances of their personnel, but a fixed percentage of the general budget of the Commission as well. This percentage turns out to be small - 2%. The Government is not inclined to make an issue of paying it. But however small, Canada has on several occasions expressed opposition in principle to paying any share of the general budget of the Commission at all.

Then too, we have been concerned that the task of the international observers be realistic and realizable. Yet the agreement provides that the Commission shall supervise and control the entry into South Viet-Nam of military personnel and all military equipment. This seems to specify a task which is clearly beyond the means of an International Commission of this size - or indeed, of any likely size.