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Mr. Sharp reports on International Conference on Vietnam

On March 5, upon his return from the Paris International Conference on Vietnam, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp made the following statement to the House of Commons:

...Essentially, this was a conference of the great powers and the belligerents in the Vietnam War. Canada was present because of our participation in the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS). As Members will recall, I made clear, prior to my departure, that we were not going to Paris to sit in judgment on the political and military settlements embodied in the Paris agreement. I have made it clear repeatedly that Canada has not sought, and is not seeking, a truce-supervisory role in Indochina but was prepared to serve in such a capacity if we were convinced that the ICCS would be made to play a useful and effective role in restoring peace to Vietnam. I have also made clear in this House, and outside it, the conditions we would consider essential if we are to continue our participation in the ICCS. One of these essential conditions has been the establishment of an outside political authority, independent of the belligerents themselves, to which the Commission could send its reports and which could alert the international community to a serious threat to the peace in Vietnam. Provision for such a mechanism was lacking in the January 27 agreement and it was our hope that this deficiency would be corrected by this Conference. I therefore went to Paris to do all I could to see if a satisfactory authority could be established.

In my initial intervention at the Conference on February 26, I expressed our views on this subject clearly and forcefully and placed before the participants a proposal that provided for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to receive and circulate communications from the ICCS to the membership of the International Confer-

ence, and to perform a similar function regarding the comments of the membership of the Conference on such communications. The Canadian proposal also contained a provision for the reconvening of the Conference on any of four conditions:

on receipt of a request from the ICCS;

on receipt of a request from the Four-Party Joint Military Commission or the Two-Party Joint Military Commission;

on receipt of a formal request from five of the members of the Confer-



Wide World photo

Mr. Sharp (left) greets French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann at a reception for participants in the International Conference on Vietnam on February 26.