

of great comfort to me in making the decisions as they became necessary. Unless we had taken the public into our confidence we should never have known its response.

Among the details of the proposed arrangement, we learnt that the anticipated Commission would operate on a rule of unanimity. As the Prime Minister had said on this subject, Canada did not intend to be frustrated by such a rule. It became clear that we would have to find a way of applying our policy of keeping the public informed of the operations of the new Commission when it came into existence. Thus, to try to offset the worst features of the rule of unanimity, we first tried to have the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Vietnam act not as a negotiating body where the rule of confidentiality would be essential but as an international forum where all the facts and all the points of view of the parties concerned would be placed publicly on the record for all to see. We were not able to persuade our colleagues in the ICCS to go along with this, so we determined that at least Canada's position would be a matter of public record. Accordingly, I instructed the head of our delegation that he should, to the best of his ability, see that Canadian positions taken in the Commission were publicly available. This has become known as the "open-mouth policy"....

It is, I think, a somewhat new departure. It is, of course, subject to the law of diminishing returns and can be a strain on our bilateral relations with other countries involved who may not share our own view of what can legitimately be put in the public domain. Nevertheless, it has served a useful purpose during the formative period of the Commission's life and will no doubt continue to be of use for the immediate future. But it will not transform the sow's ear into an elegant silk purse.

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