

Thou shalt not kill, but needst not strive
Officiously to keep alive. [Document 406]

Canada's attitude to the Intergovernmental Conference on European Migration (ICEM), which helped organize the orderly flow of migrants from Western Europe to Canada, Australia and South America, was more malevolent. Despite the ICEM's strong support among Canada's allies in Western Europe, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was anxious to destroy the organization, which some Immigration officials thought favoured Australia. External Affairs was hopeful that its European representatives could marshal enough evidence to change Canadian policy, provided they used their "ingenuity, circumspection and some finesse." [Document 406]

In the Far East, Canada remained deeply involved in overseeing the uncertain peace in Indochina. Despite their imperfections, and there were many, Pearson concluded in early 1956 that the three International Commissions for Supervision and Control (ICSC) in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia remained the principal bulwarks "against a blowup in Indochina of the kind that could suddenly produce a major war." [Document 613] As France prepared to complete its withdrawal from Vietnam, Canada resolved to remain on the ICSC, convince Saigon to assume responsibility for the cease-fire arrangements, and reassure the sceptical Indians that the Commission would continue to function.

With Canadian support, the Commission weathered the succession crisis during the spring of 1956, before resuming its work investigating cease-fire violations by North and South Vietnam. Increasingly frustrated by Hanoi's ability to manipulate the ICSC, Canada sought more and more to restore a balance to the Commission's activities. It worked closely with South Vietnamese authorities to limit Saigon's exposure to Commission investigations into their infringement of "democratic freedoms." The Canadian Commissioner in Vietnam, Bruce Williams, eventually campaigned for the elimination of Commission outposts in North Vietnam in order to "dispel the illusion that arms control was effective." [Document 677]

Though the Commissions worked much better in Cambodia and Laos, Ottawa still found peace-keeping dangerous and burdensome. India vigorously opposed repeated Canadian efforts to wind up the Commission in Cambodia, where it had long since finished its work. As a result, relations with New Delhi and its mercurial diplomatic gadfly, Krishna Menon, suffered. In Laos, Ottawa welcomed efforts by Communist and non-Communist factions to resolve their differences through negotiations, but was disturbed to discover that Washington did not. "[B]y obstructing the desire for reunification of their country which we think is almost unanimously held by Laotians," Léger observed presciently, "we might eventually tend to drive them from the pro-Western into a strictly neutral or even anti-Western position." [Document 734]

Tired and easily irritated by the burdens of government, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent played a diminished role in the elaboration of foreign policy during the period covered in this volume. Nevertheless, he was actively involved in several important economic questions. He used his warm relationship with Eisenhower on several occasions to seek White House support for Canadian industries harmed by American subsidies and trade restrictions. He also played an important role in defining Canada's attitude toward the European Common Market.