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## Canada will continue as an ICCS member for a further sixty days

*The following statement was made to the House of Commons on March 22 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp:*

It has been a particular source of gratification to the Government that the attitude Canada has adopted toward participation in the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Vietnam has consistently enjoyed such a wide measure of public support. Our attitude toward a long-term commitment and the conditions that we have attached to our service appear to be understood and accepted within this country, and, indeed, to some extent outside of it. This has been especially encouraging since the problem of our original participation and now the decision on whether or not to continue has within it the elements of a dilemma. The Government was and still is highly conscious of the fact that there is no course of action it can choose which will meet all the demands being made upon us or command universal approval outside of this country. I venture to hope that the Government's decision will, however, receive the wide approval of this House and of the country and will not be considered unreasonable abroad.

Stated at its starkest, the dilemma lies in the desire of all Canadians to serve the cause of peace in Indochina as long as there is the slightest hope of a peaceful solution to the Vietnam problem. On the other hand, the Government is equally resolved that Canadians should not take part in a charade in which they would be required to supervise not a cease-fire but continuing and possible escalating hostilities. From the purely Canadian point of view, it is important that both aspects of the problem be squarely faced. Canada's reputation is closely associated with our contribution to international efforts to make "peace-keeping" a reality. Confidence in the feasibility of peace-keeping anywhere can only be maintained if activities

bearing that description are not only effective but are seen to be effective by world opinion.

During the latter stages of the negotiation of the Paris agreements on Vietnam, the Government therefore informed the negotiating parties that it reserved its position on whether or not Canada would participate as a member in the ICCS UNTIL it has seen and studied the agreed arrangements to see if, in the light of our experience, the arrangements were workable. At the same time, we presented to the negotiators a set of conditions which, if met, would have in our view made the peace-keeping arrangements for Vietnam practical and credible. Also, at the same time, we offered through the U.S. Government some detailed proposals regarding the organization and practical arrangements of truce supervising in Vietnam based on the conclusions drawn from 19 years experience in Indochina.

I will not stretch the patience of the House by repeating our conditions, which were given in full detail in my speech of January 5. I think it is fair to say that some of our points were accepted and incorporated in the documents that emerged. Nevertheless, when we saw the results of the negotiation as they were signed in Paris, it also became clear that, in spite of the best efforts of the negotiators, the truce-supervising arrangements left much to be desired. Moreover, one of our most important considerations, the establishment of a continuing political authority to which the ICCS and its members could report, was left for further consideration by an international conference to be held in Paris 30 days after the signature. As the House is already aware, I led the Canadian delegation to Paris at the end of