

the North, not in the leopard spots which bedevil the present situation but north of what is now called the demilitarized zone. But, of more importance at that stage, the principal parties wanted the agreement to work.

Unfortunately, the early successes of the ICC were not repeated. Commitments to the agreement gradually eroded and the International Commission slid into irrelevance. This was not because Canada had failed in its responsibility as a member of the Commission but largely because the adversaries in Vietnam repeatedly and violently broke the terms of the international agreement and, from watching over the peace, the ICC found itself watching a war.

You are familiar with the tragic escalation of the Vietnam war -- the hundreds of thousands of soldiers and innocent persons killed and maimed, the damage wrought on people in every sense -- socially, morally, economically and psychologically -- and, if I may add, not only in Vietnam.

As the Commission could do nothing to halt hostilities, you may ask: "Why did we stay on, with Canadians exposed to the hazards of war in both Hanoi and Saigon?" Some Canadians did lose their lives in Indochina. What possible Canadian or Vietnamese or humanitarian interest could we serve? Many have asked that question and, when I assumed the responsibility of Minister of External Affairs, I asked that question.

I can assure you that successive Canadian Governments had serious misgivings about staying on. We did so because we knew that ultimately the war must come to an end -- that it was unlikely one side or the other would obtain a clear victory, and that in these circumstances any peace supervisory machinery, however, rusty, might be needed and needed quickly. If in this small way we could help to facilitate a settlement of the war, we were prepared to swallow our frustrations and keep on a skeleton staff which could spring to life, perhaps in a revised form, when a cease-fire was reached. But once over that road has been enough.

There were other reasons, too. Although sometimes wrongly impugned as an American stooge, Canada and Canadian honesty in its work in Vietnam were generally respected by all sides. Some of the parties to the war, as did a number of Asian countries (indeed, even while I have been Minister of External Affairs, I've had these representations from Asian countries), indicated that they wanted us to stay on. They also wanted an international presence, symbolic of the old settlement, to remain intact.

Which brings us almost up to date. Let us look now at what has happened over the past three months:

- It's not three months since Hanoi and Haiphong were being bombed. That has now ceased.
- Negotiations for a cease-fire went on in Paris; and on January 28 a cease-fire agreement was signed by the four parties -- the four parties to that cease-fire agreement are the Republic of Vietnam (which is South Vietnam), the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (which is North Vietnam), the United States and the Viet Cong (or, as they have various names, the legal term is the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam).