

Canada's concept of truce observation and supervision. There are other points of view with which we do not quarrel. We were also well aware that some of the interested parties at least and many other countries such as Britain and Japan were of the view that Canada should continue to serve on the ICCS regardless of whether it measured up to our standards. In all honesty, Mr. Speaker, I must say frankly that very few countries believed, in spite of our efforts to make our position known, that there was a real possibility that Canada would opt out of the ICCS. My trip to Viet-Nam has, I am sure, convinced some that we were indeed prepared to take this step if in our judgment, the whole arrangement was unworkable and was not serving the cause of peace in Viet-Nam. This had at least one salutary result in that we began to hear less about everything being lovely in Viet-Nam and that the ICCS had the potential of becoming a really vital force in keeping the peace in Indochina. Instead, we began to hear somewhat more convincing arguments that there was a totally different but equally vital role that bore no relation to our previous experience and is nowhere hinted at in the text of the Agreement and Protocols. Roughly stated, this is to provide an international presence as an indication of the continued involvement of the world community in the Viet-Nam situation. Although the ICCS may not be necessary for the purposes of carrying out the Agreement, its absence would be taken as an indication that the Agreement lacked world support and consequently our withdrawal could become a further destabilizing psychological factor in a situation already very unstable.

There are two things I would like to say about this so-called psychological role. The first is that I am not convinced that the ICCS does play such a part in the thinking of the Vietnamese. The second is that I do not believe that Canada and Canadians can be expected over any protracted period to play this part. So far as the North Vietnamese are concerned, I formed a clear impression that they regard the texts of the Agreement and Protocols as untouchable. They undoubtedly have their own interpretation of precisely what each article means and this interpretation adds up to either a peacefully reunified Viet-Nam or one whose reunification by force would be justified on the grounds that the other parties had not "scrupulously adhered to the Agreement". Needless to say, some of the other parties do not share this point of view.

To the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam the Agreements are seen as an opportunity to remove the North Vietnamese if not from their territory, at least from the negotiating tables, and to give to them an opportunity to deal with their fellow South Vietnamese of the Provisional Revolutionary Government direct and across the table without intervention from the North. The Government in South Viet-Nam believes that in a relatively short period of time it will know whether this possibility holds any prospect of leading to a negotiated settlement in South Viet-Nam. It remains to be seen if this is a realistic aspiration.

It is no part of the responsibility of Canada as a member of the ICCS to judge the relative merits of these two positions. But it is now clear as it was not two months ago that all the Vietnamese parties will need a little