

VIET-NAM:

CANADA'S APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION

The first International Conference on Indochina reached agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam in July 1954 at Geneva. For the supervision and control, as distinct from the enforcement of this Agreement, the Conference established an International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) in Viet-Nam. Although regretting that the arrangement was not directly under the aegis of the United Nations and having had no part either in the Conference or in the formulation of the terms of reference for this Commission, Canada agreed to serve on it in the interests of peace. Despite Canada's best endeavours, hostilities did not long cease nor did the International Commission long control and supervise. Perhaps the most important change during this period was that the Americans replaced the French as the non-Asian element in the struggle. Meanwhile, in the hope that it might yet contribute to a settlement of the conflict, Canada continued its participation, and in the process acquired a knowledge, second to none, of all aspects of cease-fire supervision in Viet-Nam.

The war ground on, but the 1968 decision to begin talks in Paris between the combatants aroused some hope for peace. Given the prospect for an end to hostilities in Viet-Nam and the formation of a new international commission to supervise a cease-fire, and given Canada's record and experience in cease-fire supervision in the area, the possibility that this country might again be invited to participate in such a body could not be dismissed. Therefore, at the beginning of 1970, the Government, after studying Canada's experience in Indochina, agreed on those considerations against which future Canadian participation in the supervisory functions under a new Viet-Nam settlement would have to be judged. It was the view of the Government that Canadian participation should make a real contribution to peace and orderly political and economic development in the area, that no commitment should be of indefinite duration, that the supervisory organization should have adequate resources for its work and immediate access to any part of the territory to be supervised, and that its reports should go to a continuing political authority which would make them public, as might any of the participating supervisory powers. In short, Canada was ready to