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CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: RELATIONS ON TWO CONTINENTS

An Address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, in the Lecture Forum Series of the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations, Chicago, April 3, 1973.

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I ... welcome this opportunity to speak to an American audience about the relations between our two countries. It was less than a year ago that I spoke on this subject in the United States. Looking back over the rush of intervening events, it seems very much longer. The international monetary system is being shaken into significant and sometimes difficult adjustments. It has become increasingly evident that the postwar era is drawing to an end. Our economic geography is changing with the enlargement of the European Common Market and the ever-increasing economic power of Japan. But of considerably greater importance to you was the achievement of the ceasefire agreement in Vietnam -- bringing American military disengagement, a return of the prisoners and, it is still hoped, perhaps an end to a generation of bitter warfare in that unfortunate land.

A week ago today I announced in the House of Commons that Canada had decided not to exercise its option to withdraw from the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Vietnam after 60 days but to remain for a further period of 60 days -- that is, until May 31. At that time, unless there has been some substantial improvement or distinct progress made toward a political settlement, Canada will withdraw from the ICCS -- allowing a further 30-days grace period for the parties to find a replacement.

This was not an easy decision for us to reach. Our dilemma was this: Canadians remain anxious to serve the cause of peace in Indochina as long as there is the slightest hope of a peaceful solution to which the Canadian presence or function on the Commission can usefully contribute. But, at the same time, the Government was 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 possibly escalating hostilities.