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## THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

The following passages are from notes for a statement made recently to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, regarding the situation in Vietnam:

...There is one matter with which I should like to deal before giving the Committee some indication of recent developments in the Vietnam situation. This is the matter of Canadian participation in the International Commission in Vietnam....

I do not pretend...that the Commission is in a position, in present circumstances, to do justice to the mandate with which it was charged by the Geneva powers in 1954. That is not in any way the fault of the Commission which was set up to supervise a cease-fire and not to control an armed conflict. Nevertheless there are – and there will continue to be – a number of good reasons for maintaining the Commission's presence in Vietnam.

### WHY COMMISSION MUST REMAIN

First, none of the interested parties has, at any time, suggested that the International Commission be withdrawn or its mandate cancelled. On the contrary, it has been confirmed to us within recent weeks both by the Secretary of State of the United States and by senior personalities of the Government of North Vietnam that they attach importance to a continued Commission presence in Vietnam. Indeed, the Committee might be interested to know that, when our new Commissioner made his introductory calls in Hanoi, it was represented to him that the North Vietnamese Government would like to see the Commission hold more of its meetings in Hanoi than has been the case in recent years. I understand that

this matter has since been discussed among the Commissioners and that there appears to be general agreement to act on the North Vietnamese suggestion.

Second, both North and South Vietnam continue to look to the Commission to consider and adjudicate their charges of violations of the cease-fire agreement. While there can be legitimate argument over the usefulness of such a procedure in circumstances where the prospects of remedial action are limited, the fact is that the parties do attach importance to this function of the Commission and to the public presentation which the Commission is able to make on the basis of its investigations of breaches of the cease-fire agreement.

### ONLY TOOL OF GENEVA SETTLEMENT

Third, if members of the Committee examine the cease-fire agreement which was concluded in Geneva in 1954, they will find that the Commission is, in fact, the only tangible instrument of the Geneva settlement as it affects Vietnam. Even if we were to consider, therefore, that the Commission's presence in Vietnam in present circumstances is of largely symbolic significance, we cannot, I think, discount the importance of the Commission as a reflection of the continuing interest of the Geneva powers in a situation which engages their international responsibilities. Conversely, I think it is fair to say that the elimination of the Commission from the Vietnam scene in present circumstances would only serve to complicate what is already a situation which is fraught with serious risks for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Fourth, we have always thought it right to keep open the possibility that the Commission might be