

There is no question, however, of Canada, as a part of a new commission, attempting to maintain peace through the use of arms. The implementation of the cease-fire would be the responsibility of the belligerents and the role being contemplated for a new international commission would be to observe and report on the implementation of those parts of the cease-fire agreement which the commission is asked to supervise.

In considering the invitation to participate in a new commission, however, we would have an obligation to the people of Canada, to this House and to those Canadians who would be asked to go to Viet-Nam to implement our role there, which I should emphasize once again would not be a military role but would involve only observation and reporting to ensure that Canada's contribution could be a real and effective one, and to ensure that Canada's attempt to contribute to peace not be reduced once again to impotence as it has been in the supervisory arrangements in Indo-China that emerged from the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Conferences.

Having our past experience very much in mind, in our discussions with the American authorities and in communications with the other parties to the Paris negotiations as well as in public statements, the Government has developed a number of conditions and criteria on which it would base its judgement on whether Canada should participate in a new international commission for Viet-Nam.

The first condition, and indeed the ultimate one, is that the provisions for the operation of the new organization, when taken as a whole, should be workable and offer real prospects of being effective. Moving from the general to the particular, we have also stipulated that all the present belligerent parties, the United States, the Republic of Viet-Nam, North Viet-Nam and the Viet Cong, should be bound by the Agreement, the implementation of which the new commission would observe and report upon. In this same category we have required that there should be a "continuing political authority" which would assume responsibility for the settlement as a whole and to which the commission or any of its members would have access through reports or consultations. We would prefer it if such an authority could be provided for in the original agreements, but failing that, we consider that it could be established by the international conference which, as we understand it, will be convened thirty days after the cease-fire.

We have also insisted that the proposed new commission should have the freedom of movement and observation within the demilitarized zone and in South Viet-Nam necessary to achieve a proper exercise of its functions. Moreover, we have required that Canada should be invited to be a member of the new commission by all of the parties concerned.

In addition to these specific and essential considerations we have, from our broad experience in Viet-Nam, put forward a number of other suggestions and requests. The extent to which they were met would also constitute elements in our assessment of the viability of the operation as a whole. As an additional condition we have stated that if all the essential criteria I have already mentioned were satisfied except that which relates to the existence of a "continuing political authority", we would be prepared to consider serving on the commission for a minimum of sixty days during which we would assess the outcome of the international conference with particular reference to the establishment of a "continuing political authority". If no such authority was created or if, once created, it ceased to exist, Canada would have to reserve the right to withdraw at any time, even after the initial two month period. In any event, the Government would not accept a commitment beyond two years although some other formula for opting out on shorter notice might be acceptable.

We have also said that we assumed that the necessary logistic support for the new commission would be available from the outset to make its operation substantive and effective or even possible.