

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION FOR VIETNAM;
THE DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY CONTEXT.

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1948

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

March, 1975

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ABSTRACT.

On July 21, 1954, Canada was asked to assume, with Poland and India, the supervision of the Cease Fire Agreements (CFA) in what had been French Indochina. The CFA marked the end of French rule in Indochina, a rule that had never been unquestioned, and that, since December of 1946, had involved France in a bitter and costly war.

At the end of 1953 a series of events led to a decision to seek a negotiated peace in Indochina. After eight years of fighting that had drained away manpower and resources, France had lost control of large areas of Vietnam. The death of Stalin in Russia brought new leaders to power who were anxious to secure a lessening of international tensions so that they could turn their attention to improving the lot of the average Russian. The Chinese were about to embark on their first Five Year Plan, and wished to be free of the heavy burden that supplying the Vietminh war machine entailed. The Vietminh and the Americans, on the other hand, seem to have come to the conference table only on the insistence of their allies. The Vietminh considered that final victory was within their grasp and did not wish to stop short of their objective - control over the whole of Vietnam. The new Republican administration in the U.S. was committed to "rolling back" Communism, and foresaw another victory for Communism in the proposed peace conference.

Proceedings at the Geneva Conference soon showed the diversity and conflict of aims among the participants. The U.S. soon retired for all practical purposes from active participation, and for quite long periods there was not even an official head of the U.S. Delegation present in Geneva. The Laniel Government fell in France during the negotiations, and Laniel was replaced

by Mendès France, largely on the strength of his promise to conclude a peace within thirty days. Britain and the USSR acted as co-chairmen of the Conference and were active in moving their allies closer together; they share the responsibility for the eventual successful outcome of the Conference.

Of the differences that developed between the two sides at Geneva, the most significant was the difference of opinion over the composition of an International Control Commission (ICC) to supervise the Cease Fire. A compromise was finally reached on India, Poland and Canada.

During the first two years of the Commission's existence it supervised the withdrawal and regroupment of forces provided for in the Geneva Agreement. Particularly in the evacuation of Haiphong and Hanoi the ICC was able to render valuable service. By the end of this two year period, however, the ^{FRENCH UNION FORCES} (FUF) had left Vietnam, leaving the South Vietnamese to continue to enforce the Cease Fire Agreement, and the RVN had of course refused to consider itself bound by the Agreements. The Diem Government refused to contemplate the holding of elections that would have re-unified the country and brought to an end the ICC's task in Vietnam.

Of all the members of the ICC, it was India's foreign policy that most affected the decisions and the work of the Commission. Indian policy was non-aligned, and must even more importantly be clearly seen to be non-aligned. At the same time India had an almost instinctive dislike of Communism, a dislike that appeared in India's lukewarm support for anti-colonial struggles in Asia that were dominated by Communists. Although the Indian Delegation sided with the Poles more often than with the Canadians during the life of the Commission, on important decisions that affected the South's ability to maintain its security, India sided with the Canadians.

After 1956, the Commission became increasingly ineffective. Its

freedom to investigate was eroded, financial support was lacking, and eventually the increasing tempo of the war in Vietnam swept the ICC aside as largely irrelevant.

The ICC is only one of many peacekeeping operations in which Canada has been involved. UN missions have tended to be popular within Canada, while service on the ICC has not been generally approved. In fact Canada has not been as neutral or as partisan as public opinion has assumed. Certain conditions tend to ineffectiveness in peacekeeping missions, and these conditions have been present in other missions as well as in the ICC.

In recent years, Canada has been increasingly reluctant to take on peacekeeping duties where it is judged the chance for effective action has not been great. But Canada has not been involved in peacekeeping simply because it has suited her to be involved. In future dangerous and difficult situations the pressures on us to participate might well be too strong to resist.

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NOTE ON SOURCES.

The Reports of the International Control Commission for Vietnam have been printed by the British Foreign Office, as have the proceedings of the International Conference on Korea and Indochina at Geneva in 1954. The Canadian Department of External Affairs has from time to time published statements and articles on Indochina in its monthly publication "External Affairs".

Practically everyone involved in the ending of the Indochina conflict and the withdrawal of the French has published Memoires. A full account of the Geneva Conference, based on interviews and official sources, is found in Lacouture and Devillers, "La Fin d'une Guerre: Indochine, 1954".

The Canadian Government has not made public the documents relating to Canadian service on the Indochina Commissions. One work prepared with access to these files is invaluable as a source for material on the first year - Christopher Dagg's unpublished manuscript, "The Three Hundred Days". A copy is in the UBC ^{Library} Institute of International Relations library, and I understand that it will eventually be published by the Canadian Institute of International Relations.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION.

On July 21, 1954, Canada was asked to assume, with Poland and India, the supervision of the Cease Fire Agreements in what had been French Indochina. The Agreements had just been concluded, and were signed by the Commanders of the French Union Forces and of the People's Army of Vietnam. In March, 1973, the last members of the Supervisory Commission set up under the Geneva Agreements left Vietnam. In between lay what Paul Martin has characterized as " ... in many ways ... the severest test to which international peacekeeping has been put."¹

This paper describes the work of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICC) in Vietnam, with particular attention to the military and political context within which it operated. My own involvement with and interest in the ICC for Vietnam began in late 1959. From December 1959 to April, 1961, I served as Senior Political Adviser with the Canadian Delegation to the ICC in Vietnam, and then for the next year I was desk officer in Ottawa, for Vietnam originally, eventually for all of Indochina.

Events inside Vietnam and changes in the foreign policy of other powers inevitably affected the way that the Commission was able to carry out the mandate given it by the Geneva Agreements. The same is true of all peacekeeping operations. Such operations, within or without the United Nations, have resulted when a group of nations, particularly the Great Powers, have combined to achieve an internationally acceptable solution to a dispute, and when the powers engaged in the dispute have agreed to accept the settlement and the international force that is to supervise it. The settlement has seldom gone beyond an immediate Cease Fire and a separation of forces, and the continuation of that Cease Fire and the final solution to the problems that caused the original dispute are always out of the hands of the peacekeeping body. On occasion, and both Vietnam and the Middle East are examples, the Cease Fire has not been followed by an effective

solution of the original dispute. In that case the Cease Fire eventually breaks down, and a renewal of hostilities occurs. It is curious that in Vietnam there has been a tendency to blame the peacekeeping body itself, the ICC, for this breakdown. It is the contention of this thesis that the ICC in Vietnam accomplished all that it was originally set up to do - the separation of forces after the Cease Fire and the supervision of that separation for a period of two years. At the end of that time elections were to have united the two halves of the country and ended the job of the ICC. Instead, the fundamental divergence between the two parts of the country became evident and finally led to a renewal of hostilities, with the Government in the South openly supported by the U.S. and the government in the North supported by China and the USSR, although less openly and completely.

In fact the political settlement envisaged in the Final Declaration of the Geneva Agreement of 1954 can surely have been little more than a pious hope. The Commander of the French Union Forces signed the Agreement on behalf of all the anti-Communist groups in Vietnam, but during the Conference " ... a sharp divergence of policy developed ... between France, which intended to withdraw from Indochina, and the State of Vietnam, which intended to exercise the right to govern Vietnam."²

"The Conference ignored the position of the government who claimed to speak for the majority of the non-Communist community in Vietnam. The political objectives of the governments representing the two communities in Vietnam were in direct conflict, and this became more and more evident in the months following July, 1954. The Government of Vietnam, instead of collapsing, as many observers at the time expected it to so, consolidated its position, and by so doing it achieved the ability to resist in practice the political settlement which it had opposed throughout the Geneva Conference."³

When Canada was asked to serve on the International Control Commission for Vietnam, little was known in this country about Indochina. The situation in Indochina in general and in Vietnam in particular came up for review in late 1952, when Canada decided to recognise the three States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as States "within the French Union." There was no great enthusiasm for recognition, and the quite severe restrictions on sovereignty that these countries suffered, even

at that late stage, were well understood. Still it was thought that international recognition might help to encourage more rapid progress to complete independence. In a radio interview on April 23, 1954, Mr. Lester Pearson was asked in the course of a general tour d'horizon about the proposals for a Conference on Indochina which were then current. Mr. Pearson's comments could have been repeated almost verbatim for practically any part of the world. He said that Canada was "interested and concerned", although, unlike the case of Korea, we had no direct responsibility. "As a Pacific as well as an Atlantic country, we are naturally extremely interested in anything which can be done to stabilize the situation in Indochina, and to strengthen the security of Southeast Asia."⁴ It is probably true to say that Canadians in general knew far more about the struggle for independence in India and in Indonesia than they did about Indochina.

The Background of the Conflict.⁵

The earliest penetration of Vietnam by Europeans was by Portuguese missionaries. The Portuguese were early replaced by the French, and as happened so often in the story of European colonisation, the flag eventually followed the missionary and the merchant. The French occupation of Indochina was not completed until the late nineteenth century, when Cochin China was made a colony, and Annam and Tonkin in Vietnam became protectorates. (Laos and Cambodia became protectorates in the same period.)

The Vietnamese themselves gained little from the French occupation. Rubber trees were introduced into Vietnam, and in the North minerals were mined, but the benefits all accrued to the French colons who came to Vietnam. Some educational facilities were provided for Vietnamese, but in 1924, of 600,000 children of school age only 6,200 boys and 1,000 girls were receiving an education, and higher education was limited until 1918 to a combined faculty of medicine and pharmacy at Hanoi.⁶ Perhaps the main advantage that Vietnam derived from French rule was the fact that a middle class did develop out of the new opportunities for employment that were created by the French. This middle class later provided the leadership for an

independent Vietnam. It also of course provided the leadership for the various independence movements that began almost at once, partly because the possibilities for advancement and for the use of the education so painfully acquired were largely denied to Vietnamese. France never did develop a civil service based on merit to staff her empire as the British did. Positions in the colonies were largely the gift of political patronage, and most of those positions were reserved for the French. Even policemen and customs officials in Vietnam were French, not Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese had a long history of opposition to foreign occupation, and resistance movements soon sprang up. There was in time some provision for Vietnamese representation on regional Consultative Assemblies, but the number of enfranchised citizens was severely restricted, and the Assemblies' charters confined debates within narrow limits. The French authorities were successful in blocking or disrupting all attempts by the Vietnamese to reform their government or to obtain some relaxation of the restrictions on their liberties. The Indo-chinese Communist party was formed in 1929, and it was one among many groups seeking greater independence for Vietnam. The activities of these groups was severely repressed, and their members were jailed or exiled. It was the Japanese occupation in 1941 that finally gave Vietnamese nationalists their opportunity.

The Japanese occupation was at first almost invisible. After the fall of France Vietnam was in no position to resist Japanese demands, and in return for French co-operation the Japanese left the network of French administration intact. In 1945 the prospect of imminent allied victory led the French to organize the overthrow of the Japanese occupation. The Japanese, getting wind of the preparations, interned the French and seized power openly. Bao Dai was installed as a puppet emperor.

The new situation found only the Communist-led Vietminh ready to exploit it. In the period between the Japanese takeover in March, 1945, and the defeat of Japan in August, the Vietminh had "succeeded in establishing their authority, by

sheer audacity, sense of strategy, and exaggerated claims to allied support...."⁷

The Allied powers had agreed to divide the occupation of Vietnam, with Chinese forces accepting the Japanese surrender north of the sixteenth parallel, and British troops south of that line. North of the sixteenth parallel, the Chinese troops were "intent on exploiting to the full the possibilities of profit that the occupation of Tonkin offered."⁸ They were not anxious to see the return of the French, and under their benevolent neutrality elections were held which gave the Vietminh a clear majority of Assembly seats. In South Vietnam the British, using mostly Indian troops, cleared the way for the return of the French. General Gracey went beyond his instructions in so doing, but it seems unlikely that his activities were much disapproved in London, having regard to Britain's anxiety to maintain her own position in her Asian colonies.

In October, 1945, French troops returned to Cochin China, and General Leclerc embarked on "the pacification of the countryside." Late in 1945 conversations began between the French and the Chinese, and on February 28th, 1946, agreements were signed by which China agreed to withdraw her troops from the northern part of the country.

While France had secured Chinese agreement for the return of her forces, Ho Chi Minh's agreement was another matter. But Jean Sainteny had been in Hanoi since September, 1945, and negotiations continued almost non-stop until March 6, when an agreement was signed with Ho Chi Minh by which France recognized the DRVN as a free state, forming part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. French troops were to be allowed to occupy Vietnam, but in five years they were all to leave. The Vietminh signed the agreement because they had lost international support (Chinese and American), because they were economically unprepared to sustain a long struggle against the French, and because they hoped that post-liberation France would allow them to achieve independence peacefully.

The general aims of the March 6 agreement needed clarification, and later conferences at Dalat and Fontainebleau were called to spell out the exact degree of

independence the Vietnamese state was to enjoy. Nothing was attained, and a modus vivendi signed on September 14, 1946 did nothing to settle outstanding questions. The atmosphere became increasingly tense, and in late November French retaliation for an incident in Haiphong resulted in the destruction of the Vietnamese quarter with heavy casualties. On December 19 fighting broke out in Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh fled from the capital. From that moment on the French had lost any possibility of seeing a political settlement, and the military situation deteriorated steadily over the next eight years. In the end, and after a bitter and costly war, France was to concede to force of arms far more than she could have attained by more generous concessions in 1946. The Singapore Straits Times of December 30, 1946 saw the situation with prophetic accuracy:

"The position in Indochina now is that France is on the verge of a full scale colonial war - something that we hoped would never occur again in the history of Asia.... Any colonial power which puts itself in the position of meeting terrorism with terrorism might as well wash its hands of the whole business and go home.... Unless events take a very unexpected turn for the better, we are about to see a French army reconquer the greater part of Indochina, only to make it impossible for any French merchant or planter to live there outside barbed wire perimeters thereafter. Whatever may be the solution to the problems of colonial Asia, this is not it."⁹

CHAPTER 1 FOOTNOTES.

1. External Affairs, June, 1967, p. 222
2. Paul Martin, in a lecture at Columbia University on April 27, 1967, printed in External Affairs, June, 1967, p. 224
3. ibid., p. 226
4. ibid., May, 1954, p. 162
5. Material for this section has been drawn from Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina, and Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina.
6. Lancaster, op. cit., p. 67
7. ibid., p. 120
8. ibid., p. 126
9. quoted in Hammer, op. cit., p. 188

CHAPTER II.

THE ROAD TO GENEVA.

Any discussion of the International Control Commissions or of the recent history of Indochina must start with a consideration of the Geneva Agreements of 1954. The Agreements drew the boundaries and laid down guidelines for the conduct of the states that emerged from the French Empire in Indochina, and they defined the role of the International Control Commissions which were to observe and supervise the execution of the Cease Fire. But behind and beyond the actual wording of the Agreements, the attitudes and bargaining positions of the participating powers and the extent to which their main aims and objectives were either met or frustrated played a very considerable part in dictating the course of future events in Indochina. And since no peace-keeping operation can function unaffected by the context of events within which it operates, the conflicting attitudes of the two sides towards the Supervisory Commissions, and the dissatisfaction with the Agreements themselves that was felt to a greater or lesser degree by all participants, influenced from the outset the scope and effectiveness of the International Commissions' work in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

A series of events, diplomatic and military, had occurred during 1953 which paved the way to a negotiated settlement. At the end of 1952 the military situation had further deteriorated for the French, with a Vietminh offensive into Laos, resulting in the establishment of a revolutionary Government in the province of Sam Neua. On the diplomatic front, the death of Stalin in March 1953 brought a perceptible lessening of the tensions of the cold war. This bore fruit in Asia in a lessening of Chinese intransigence at Panmunjom. The Korean armistice was signed on July 27, 1953.

With the end of Chinese involvement in Korea, it was evident to the French Army that the Vietminh could expect to receive increased military aid from the Chinese. At the same time the French military position in the vitally important Red River Delta area was becoming increasingly untenable. On May 9, 1953 General Navarre was appointed Commander of the French forces in Indochina. His objectives, as he had related in his memoirs, were "...creer les conditions militaires d'une solution politiques honorable qu'il appartiendra de prendre le moment venu."¹

Perhaps the severest blow to rapidly ebbing French enthusiasm for the war in Indochina was dealt by the Vietnamese Government in Saigon. Bao Dai called a National Congress, held from October 12-17, 1953. The Congress demanded complete independence and the right to leave the French Union,

"Cette fois, le voile est déchiré. En France, chacun a compris enfin ce qui était, depuis le debut, si clair: meme victorieuse, la France devra quitter L'Indochine. Le climat parlementaire evolue rapidement. L'idée s'y fait jour que la France ne combat plus pour ses interets nationaux et que l'indépendance promise aux baodaistes,... aboutira simplement a l'arrivée au pouvoir d'ultra nationalistes tout aussi décidés que le Vietminh a eliminer la France de la vie vietnamienne. Dans cette perspective, la charge de la guerre apparait soudain ecrasante, intolérable."²

At the end of 1953 the Vietminh, who had withdrawn the bulk of their forces from Laos, made another foray into that country, striking almost as far as Luang Prabang. In order to protect Laos from further attack, and in the belief that the Vietminh could not supply a major attack in the difficult and mountainous border terrain, the French established and garrisoned a fortified camp at Dien Bien Phu. The stage had been set for the final tragedy in the French campaign in Indochina.

By the end of 1953 therefore, the increasingly shaky French position

in Indochina, and Russian and Chinese desire for an easing of cold war tensions, combined to produce a general consensus in favour of a negotiated end to the war in Indochina. On October 2 Premier Laniel declared himself willing to discuss terms of settlement with the Vietminh, and this was followed by Ho Chi Minh's statement to the Swedish newspaper Expressen in November that a negotiated end to the war was possible. In January and February 1954 Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. met in Berlin to discuss German re-unification and an Austrian treaty. The Berlin Conference failed to achieve its purpose but it did achieve agreement for a meeting some weeks later in Geneva to discuss Korea and Vietnam. Invitations were sent in due course to Britain, France, the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, China, the DRVN, the Republic of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia for the part of the Conference dealing with Indochina. Convened in Geneva on April 26, 1954 the Conference completed its deliberations on July 21.

If war weariness, a steadily worsening military position, and a realization that even her Vietnamese allies were committed to bringing French authority in Indochina to an end had brought France to the bargaining table, what considerations had influenced the Viet Minh? In fact, it seems from the evidence that there was no great enthusiasm for a negotiated peace among the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN). Amid a dutiful chorus of support for the principle of negotiated settlement for Far Eastern disputes in the press of Communist bloc countries during the spring and summer of 1953, the DRVN press and Government leaders remained stubbornly silent. In August and September articles appeared in the Cominform Journal entitled "We Are Sure of Final Victory" by Din (probably Ho Chi Minh) and "People of Vietnam will Win Final Victory in Struggle for Freedom and National Independence" by

Pham Van Dong.⁵ Then in November there was a major change in Vietminh policy. At the opening session of the World Peace Council in Vienna on November 23 the DRVN's Representative stated: "To stop the Vietnam war through peaceful negotiations is completely necessary and also possible. We Vietnam people long for peace, and we stand for an end to the Vietnam war and peaceful settlement of the Vietnam question by means of peaceful negotiations."⁶ This was followed a few days later by an interview with Ho Chi Minh which was published in the Swedish newspaper Expressen of November 29, 1953 in which Ho stated that if the French Government desired to solve the Vietnam problem by peaceful means, "the people and Government of the DRVN are ready to meet this desire."⁷

The DRVN Government leaders appear therefore to have given in to pressure from the Chinese and the Soviet Union for a negotiated end to the Indochina war. The most immediate and effective pressure probably came from China, whose help with war materials, training, advice, and even to a limited extent with personnel (it is thought that there were Chinese anti-aircraft batteries at Dien Bien Phu) gave the Vietminh the capability for the final successful push in 1953-54. The Chinese appear to have been in part supporting the Soviet desire for a general lessening of international tensions, in their advocacy of negotiations over Indochina and in the display of a more reasonable attitude at Panmunjom that resulted in the signing of a Korean armistice on July 27, 1953. But China's own best interests would be served by peace in Indochina. Nineteen fifty three saw the beginning of the first Chinese Five Year Plan, with its emphasis on industrialization. The continued provision of quantities of military aid to the DRVN (estimated to amount to 3,000 tons per month in 1953 and 4,000 tons per month in 1954)⁸ would have severely hampered the attainment of this goal. Moreover the Chinese could not have welcomed the re-appearance of an American threat on their borders, recently banished from Korea, now show-

ing every sign of replacing the weakening French. Finally, Geneva offered the first chance for China to play a role on the world stage commensurate with her power and importance, excluded as she had been from international forums by American opposition.

The main impetus for the Geneva Conference, on the Communist side, came from the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union remained the power most anxious to see the continuation of the Conference when it threatened to break down, the country which was willing to force concessions from her allies when their intransigence threatened the collapse of negotiations.

The death of Stalin in March, 1953 gave the leaders in the Kremlin the opportunity they had sought to relax tensions and to turn energies and economic resources away from the demands of the cold war and toward improving the living standards of the people of the Soviet Union. The growing strength of Germany in the west and in particular the threat of German rearmament through the proposed German participation in the European Defence Community (EDC) was the major pre-occupation of Soviet foreign policy. The Indochina war had weakened France to the extent that she was no longer able to contribute as effectively as in the past to European defence. In this situation she was under pressure from the United States to agree to German troops making up the difference. A strong France was a far more acceptable threat so far as the Soviet Union was concerned than a resurgent Germany would have been.

Europe was and always had been far more important in Soviet eyes than the Far East. The colonial Communist parties in the Far East had been considered largely as appendages of the Communist parties of the metropole, and the lead in colonial matters was left largely to their guidance. In 1946 and early 1947 it seemed quite possible that France would elect a Communist majority to the Chamber of Deputies, and in these circumstances an independent line by the

Indochinese Communist party in Vietnam could be more of an embarrassment than an asset.⁹ The French Communists in Saigon prepared a document for the Indochinese Communist Party, dated two days after the French had seized power in the city on their return after the Second World War. The document advised the Vietnamese before they acted too rashly to consider whether their struggle "met/ the requirements of Soviet policy." It warned that any premature adventures towards independence might "not be in line with Soviet perspectives."¹⁰ Although the Soviet line in Indochina changed in late 1947 and 1948, as it became evident that the power and prestige of Communism had passed their peak in France, Soviet attitudes as reflected in the press were more anti-French than pro-Vietnamese.¹¹

Soviet policy in Vietnam therefore had always been concerned first with the requirements of Soviet national policy, and particularly with the requirements of Soviet policy in Europe. The friendly assistance that the Soviet Union gave its Vietnamese brothers during the Geneva Conference was therefore a two-edged sword - it increased the strength of the DRVN's bargaining position, but it was exerted on behalf of the DRVN only to the extent that Vietnamese aims coincided with Soviet policy.

All this is not to say that a negotiated peace was entirely against the interests of the DRVN. The French were more war-weary than they had ever been, and in these circumstances gains could probably be made more cheaply than on the field of battle. Moreover although the Vietminh forces were in effective control of large parts of the countryside, they had yet to take a major urban centre. Haiphong and Hanoi were still in French hands, and although they were next on the agenda for conquest, could not be taken without a costly struggle. Above all, the advantage of time was on the Vietminh's side. The military balance could only continue to go against the French with every day that passed. In these

circumstances, protracted negotiations that held out the hope of eventually ending the war peacefully would effectively immobilize the French while it permitted the Vietminh to continue to widen the territories under their command.

What were the motives that influenced the other participants in the Geneva Conference? For their part, the Laotians and Cambodians hoped to gain a clear statement of their independence and an undertaking that Vietminh troops would leave their territory immediately. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam on the other hand was truly between the devil and the deep blue sea. It had no means of continuing the fight on its own, and realized that any concessions made by the French during the course of the negotiations could only be made ultimately at its own expense.

The British were as anxious to bring an end to the fighting in Vietnam as the Russians were on their side, and for reasons more intimately concerned with events in the Far East. The campaign against the Communist guerillas in Malaya was at that time in a critical phase. If all of Indochina had become part of the Communist bloc it seemed likely that Thailand would follow and if the Communist guerillas in Malaya had allies in a country with whom they shared a common border, the task of the British in Malaya would go from difficult to impossible. Sir Anthony Eden has said that "The restoration of peace in Indochina was the most dangerous and acute of the problems with which I had to deal during my last four years as Foreign Secretary."¹² Throughout the Conference therefore the British Delegation sought steadily to find some form of agreement that would permit the establishment of a buffer zone that would protect Malaya and the other countries of Southeast Asia from direct Communist pressure. They threw their considerable influence behind proposals that would buy security and independence for the southern part of the country at the expense of concessions in the north.

Of all the participants in the Geneva Conference, the United States

appeared less certain of what it really wanted and more divided in its assessment of how to go about it. American policy during this period often appeared as inscrutable to America's allies (and indeed to its own people) as it did to its adversaries. Indeed, books have been written to try to explain the twists and turns of U.S. policy at this time.¹³

American interest in and concern for Vietnam goes back to the period near the end of the Second World War when the Allies were starting to re-draw the map of the world. United States concern to be listed in the ranks of the anti-colonialists led to active discouragement of French efforts to return to Indochina and a good deal of sympathy and unofficial encouragement of Vietminh elements by U.S. personnel in Indochina.¹⁴ With the victory of the Communists in China there was a sudden demand for a re-appraisal of U.S. attitudes towards European colonies in the Far East. There remained a great reluctance to support colonial powers ^{which} ~~who~~ showed no signs of yielding to the legitimate aspirations of colonial nationalism, but the U.S. now was unprepared to support independence movements relying in any way on Communist support. The situation in Indochina therefore presented great difficulties for American policy makers, and they attempted to meet both requirements of U.S. policy by providing assistance for the French in the form of arms and money (it is estimated that by 1953 the U.S. was underwriting two-thirds of the French effort in Indochina) while prodding the French into meeting the demands of the nationalists in Indochina.

U.S. policy towards Indochina at this time was strongly influenced by events on the domestic political front. The Republicans took office in November 1952 after a long period of Democratic party rule. There would in any case have been a natural tendency to redesign U.S. foreign policy from the attic to the cellar, but the severe frustrations that the American people as a whole had felt in seeing all their economic and military might unable to prevent the "Communist takeover" of China and a military stalemate in Korea made it inevitable that a "new look" in

foreign policy would be one of the first tasks of the new administration.

In fact by 1950 the former bi-partisan approach to foreign affairs in the United States was already coming apart. Many Republicans believed that bi-partisanship was essentially wrong - it deprived the country of needed debate on foreign policy. Moreover as a matter of practical policies it was unwise in that it deprived the Republican party of recognizable issues of its own.¹⁵ The burden of continued vigilance against a potential enemy who could never be defeated and would never grow weaker was increasingly seen as intolerable by a large number of Americans.

The first blow for a new, recognizably Republican, foreign policy was struck by John Foster Dulles in an article published in Life, May 19, 1952. Denouncing the Truman policy of containment, he called for the liberation of those who lived behind the Iron Curtain. The only solution to reduce the threat of war was "... for the free world to develop the will to organize the means to retaliate instantly against open aggression by Red Armies [to] strike back where it hurts, by means of our own choosing."¹⁶ This became known as the theory of "massive retaliation", and probably terrified America's allies more than it did her enemies.

The Republican Party platform, adopted in convention on July 10, 1952, was largely written by Dulles. It promised to "end containment", "end the neglect of the Far East", and "repudiate all commitments ... which aid Communist enslavements."¹⁷ This party platform had a greater influence on the formation of American policy than platforms usually do, partly because the person most responsible for drafting it soon became charged with the responsibility for conducting U.S. foreign policy - (Dulles became Secretary of State in November) but also because President Eisenhower considered himself bound by the provisions of the party platform.¹⁸

The new Republican administration that assumed office at the end of 1952

had therefore committed itself to a more activist role in the Far East, to a more rigid opposition to Communism everywhere in the world, and to a promise that it would not agree to any more people "disappearing behind the Iron Curtain". These commitments meant that the Administration was opposed in principle to negotiations with the Communist bloc - indeed Eisenhower has said that he considered British faith in negotiations over Indochina "... unrealistic. To my knowledge the fact that Communists were to participate in any international conference never implied that they would either make concessions or keep promises."¹⁹ They also made it inevitable that when concessions were made to the Vietminh at Geneva, and in particular when partition became the agreed solution, the United States would repudiate the Agreement.

During 1953 while the French military position in Indochina was gradually becoming more untenable, and while the French were finally coming to the realization that a negotiated end to the war would have to be found, the Americans seem to have maintained their optimism concerning the outcome of the war. The French, dependent on U.S. aid in Indochina, were no doubt largely responsible for giving the Americans this impression. Consequently when the chief of the French General Staff, General Ely, visited Washington on March 20, his gloomy assessment of the future of Dien Bien Phu and of the effect of its fall on the whole French effort in Indochina, fell like a bombshell. The first major Vietminh attack on the fortress had occurred from March 13-15, and revealed that the impossible had been accomplished - the Vietminh had succeeded in carrying artillery and anti-aircraft guns to the top of the hills surrounding the camp. Within these first few days of the battle outlying defences were captured, the airstrip was made inoperable and from then on the French could supply Dien Bien Phu only by air - an impossible task for the meagrely equipped French air force in Indochina.

The news had a galvanic if confused effect on American policy. Admiral Radford offered General Ely a massive U.S. bombing attack on Dien Bien Phu if the

French thought that it would be effective. But by the time that an affirmative opinion could be received from the French commanders on the spot, the Americans had had second thoughts about the offer - or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the more cautious had prevailed over the advice of the interventionists.²⁰ From then until the opening date of the Geneva Conference, U.S. policy appeared to be thoroughly contradictory, with the Government's point of view varying from day to day and depending on who happened to be the spokesman at the moment. The administration appeared to be divided between the interventionists, notably Admiral Redford, the Chief of Staff, and Vice President Nixon on the one hand, and those who were opposed to intervention unless allied Governments could be persuaded to intervene too - the President, General Ridgeway, and probably Dulles belonged in the latter company. In the end, after a great deal of public fist-shaking, the non-interventionists won out and the U.S. did not go to war over Dien Bien Phu.

Attempts to find a clear cut line in the conflicting shifts of U.S. policy during the weeks preceding Geneva have been made,²¹ but are unconvincing at best. In fact the Administration was caught between what would seem to be the demands of its new foreign policy for resolute opposition to Communist expansion everywhere in the world, and the hard fact that neither Congress nor public opinion would support another war in the Far East. Disillusionment over Korea had had a great deal to do with the Republican electoral victory in the first place. A poll taken on Capitol Hill by the Administration in late April reported that "there were no more than five men at the most to be found in all of Congress who were positive and unequivocal in their approval of quick and decisive action."²²

President Eisenhower has summed up the requirements for U.S. action in Indochina at that time as being "... first ... a legal right under international law; second ... a favourable climate of world opinion; and third, favourable

action by the Congress."²³ In search of the latter two requirements, Dulles bent all his efforts towards achieving a promise of British intervention in Indochina. The British however refused to consider intervention until negotiations had been tried and failed. They were also quite aware that their agreement was needed largely for American domestic political requirements, as Eden makes clear in his memoirs. "Sir Winston summed up the position by saying that what we were being asked to do was to assist in misleading Congress into approving a military operation, which would in itself be ineffective, and might well bring the world to the verge of a major war."²⁴

The effect on the outcome of the Conference of U.S. belligerence has been debated. Whether it was in fact useful in strengthening the French position or whether it created ill will and suspicion while being unconvincing in itself as a credible threat, is even now impossible to decide. What it did do was to create a rift between the British and American Governments that was never really bridged over in the Far East, and that eliminated one more possible prop for the Agreement obtained at Geneva. U.S. belligerence also had an entirely negative effect on neutral opinion in Asia and particularly on Indian opinion. Since India was to become the key member of the body which was to supervise the Cease Fire, the Americans might profitably have been a little less cavalier in their dismissal of public opinion in the Third World.

The day that the Indochina phase of the Geneva Agreement opened the assembled Delegates heard the news of the fall of Dien Bien Phu. The timing was too pat to be accidental. The Vietminh could probably have captured the fortress at any time after the initial attack in the middle of March, but final victory was delayed until it would have maximum impact. In the interim the courage and the sufferings of the garrison had become the symbol of the whole French effort in Indochina. The wisdom of choosing to make a stand in that place had always been debatable, although perhaps the consequences could only have been clearly seen

with the advantage of hind sight.²⁵

The capture of the fort may have had little real effect on the validity of the French position in Indochina, although the French army lost its crack troops and with their loss the whole spearhead of the French effort in Indochina was blunted. But psychologically the defeat marked the end of the French empire in the Far East, and both sides knew it. The Geneva Conference to end the war could scarcely have had a worse beginning for the French. They were meeting a self-confident, successful adversary across the conference table, and the course of future events on the battlefield in Indochina only increased the determination of the DRVN Delegation. Finally it was only the insistence of the DRVN's more powerful allies that forced concessions which brought the conference to a close. In the end it was perhaps this fact more than any other that brought about the breakdown of the Geneva settlement of 1954 and the opening of another chapter in the long war in Vietnam.

CHAPTER II FOOTNOTES.

1. quoted in Lacouture et Devillers, La Fin d'une Guerre, p. 39.
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3. A.W. Cameron, (ed.) Vietnam Crisis, a Documentary History, Vol. 1 p. 218.
4. ibid., p. 223-4
5. King C. Chen, Vietnam and China, 1938-1954, pp. 285-6
6. A.W. Cameron, op. cit., p. 218
7. ibid. pp. 223-4
8. King C. Chen, op. cit., p. 276
9. Bernard B. Fall, "Tribulations of a Party Line: The French Communists and Indochina" Foreign Affairs, April 1955, p. 499
10. Harold R. Isaacs, No Peace for Asia, p. 173
11. W. Raymond Duncan, Soviet Policy in Developing Countries, p. 174
12. The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle, p. 77
13. See particularly Robert R. Randle, Geneva 1954, and Victor Bator, Vietnam: A Diplomatic Tragedy.
14. c.f. Jean Sainteny, Histoire d'un Paix Manque.
15. Norman A. Graebner, The New Isolationism, p. 13
16. John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness" Life, May 19, 1952, p. 150
17. Republican Platform of 1952 quoted in Current History, October, 1952, pp. 246-54
18. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 194
19. ibid., p. 349
20. LACOUTURE ^{et} Devillers, op. cit., pp. 73-77
21. See particularly Randle, op. cit.
22. The Christian Science Monitor, Apr. 29, 1954
23. Eisenhower, op. cit., p. 340
24. Eden, op. cit., p. 105
25. For a full discussion see Jules Roy, The Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

6A. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE AREA NORTH OF THE SEVENTEENTH PARALLEL WAS KNOWN AS THE "DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM" (DRVN). THE AREA SOUTH OF THE 17th PARALLEL WAS KNOWN AS THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (RVN)

CHAPTER III.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

The delegations gathered in Geneva on May 8 under the shadow of the fall of Dien Bien Phu. Their task was, as the Economist expressed it, "... to try to find a modus vivendi between the unacceptable and the unobtainable"¹ Formal discussions in the Indochina phase of the Conference began on May 9. Before the final settlement was reached on July 21, there had been eight plenary and eighteen restricted sessions. The plenary sessions promised to be "... a stage for the striking of attitudes by both sides",² and from May 14 until the final meeting, open sessions were therefore abandoned in favour of private meetings, either at restricted sessions, or more informally in talks between two or three of the participants.

The trend of negotiations was influenced by two factors outside of the Conference - by the political scene in France, and by the progress of the war in Vietnam. French political life had been increasingly embittered by the war in Vietnam, and the disaster suffered at Dien Bien Phu and the nearly imperceptible rate of progress observable at Geneva combined to topple the Laniel Government six weeks after the Conference had begun. The future of the European Defence Community was also a factor in the fall of the Laniel Government. Laniel supported the idea of German re-armament, and the Russians displayed an intransigence (particularly at the meeting on June 8) that made it clear to the French Parliament that the Soviet bloc were not inclined to negotiate with the Laniel Government on the question of Indochina.³ The Laniel Government fell on June 12, and was replaced on June 18 by a Government headed by M. Mendès France.

M. Mendès France was a member of the Radical-Socialist Party who had consistently denounced the war in Vietnam for the past seven years. He was

largely distrusted by his fellow deputies, but one sentence in his declaration of intent seized the attention of the Chamber. He promised to submit his resignation if within one month, on July 20, he had been unable to obtain a Cease Fire in Indochina.⁴ That promise obtained for him the support of the majority of the Chamber of Deputies. It also set a time limit on the Conference and inevitably had an effect on the shape of the final settlement.

"Diplomacy has rarely been able to gain at the conference table what cannot be gained or held on the battlefield." The words are those of Bedell Smith, the leader of the American Delegation, on his return from Geneva at the end of the Conference.⁵ They deserve to be quoted at the beginning of every comment or criticism on treaties that end wars, for they express a great truism that is often ignored. The progress of the war in Indochina had a very marked effect on the progress of negotiations, and was reflected in the final settlement.

There is not unanimous agreement on the state of the military balance sheet immediately after the fall of Dien Bien Phu and during the months that followed. The disagreements in great part reflect the rancors of French political life, with Mendès France and his supporters endeavouring to show that the French forces were on the verge of humiliating defeat, and with Laniel and his supporters concerned to prove that there was no military reason for the concessions made at Geneva. General Navarre's testimony must also be approached with caution - as the commanding officer in Indochina he was responsible for the decision to defend Dien Bien Phu, and he would naturally therefore wish to minimize the impact that the fall of the fortress had had on the French position in Vietnam.

The fall of Dien Bien Phu, coming as it did on the eve of the Conference's opening day, cast its shadow over all the proceedings. The heroic defense of the fortress, the no less heroic exertions of the Vietminh in taking it, had engaged the breathless attention of the world press for weeks. Certainly the importance

of the defeat was exaggerated in the process. General Navarre is undoubtedly right in claiming that the defeat was a grave tactical reverse, but not a strategic one. The defense of the fortress saved Laos, stopped serious reverses in the Delta and in other areas of Vietnam, and caused losses in the Vietminh corps de bataille in greater proportions than the French.⁶ Nevertheless the French loss of crack troops could not be made up as easily as Vietminh losses - indeed Vietminh recruitment was made very much easier after their spectacular victory. And the victory had ominous lessons for the future. The French were no longer faced with guerilla forces that would melt away at the first sign of really strong opposition, but with a determined foe that was well supplied with sophisticated weapons and that had demonstrated the capacity to use them. The attack on Dien Bien Phu was not only on a far greater scale than anything the Vietminh had attempted up to then, the battle was also in significant respects quite different in kind. From then on the possibility that armour and aircraft might be supplied by the Chinese haunted French military planners in Paris and in Hanoi and Saigon. Apart from the psychological shock that the fall of Dien Bien Phu had delivered therefore, there were also serious military repercussions on the French position in Indochina.

Even before the fall of Dien Bien Phu, General Navarre had recommended abandoning attempts to hold all of Tonkin. "Placé devant d'inévitables options, je pense que c'est en Tonkin que doivent être consentir les sacrifices. Aussi bien, c'est sur ce territoire que la situation politico - militaire s'est le plus dégradé au cours des années passées"⁷ General Navarre recommended that essential positions south of the eighteenth parallel should be re-inforced at the expense of retractions in the delta. The "delta utile" - zones around Hanoi and Haiphong and the road connecting the two cities - should be re-inforced and defended. Ultimately a fall back on the port of Haiphong was envisaged where the French army could hold out, supported by air and sea power.⁸

The essence of this strategy, particularly the recommendation to con-

concentrate French efforts south of the eighteenth parallel, became known as the "Navarre Plan" and received wide publicity at the time. Its acceptance by the French Defense planners made it inevitable, if the underlying military realities had not already done so, that the final settlement for Vietnam would leave the Vietminh in control in the north and the French in the south.

The Committee of National Defense met in Paris on May 14 and 15 to consider the future of the war in Indochina. The Committee met just a few days after the start of the Geneva Conference. There was no way of knowing if the Conference would be successful in achieving a settlement of the Indochina war - in fact it had just been made clear that it was unable to do so in the case of Korea. The Committee therefore decided that in formulating measures to be taken for the prosecution of the war the most unfavourable conditions should be assumed - inability to achieve a settlement in Geneva, and increased Chinese aid creating in effect 'another war'.⁹ The recommendations of the Committee were accepted by the Government and were sent as instructions to General Navarre. General Ely was sent to Saigon, accompanied by Generals Salan and Pélissié, to present the Government's directives.

The Committee of National Defense set as the principal objectives, before all other considerations, the safeguarding of the Expeditionary Corps. The situation below the eighteenth parallel was to be cleaned up to prepare for a withdrawal below that line if the situation made it necessary in the future. North of that line, political considerations must not come before military ones. The French forces should withdraw, first to the "delta utile", and secondly, should if necessary fall back on Haiphong where support by sea would be possible.¹⁰

Although these instructions seem to follow exactly General Navarre's recommendations to the Committee of Defense already quoted above, one part of the Government's directive was received by General Navarre with dismay. He was instructed to pull back French forces to the zone between Hanoi and Haiphong

within 10-15 days after receiving the directive. He felt that the proposed withdrawals would encourage a Vietminh attack, and, above all, would mean weakening the French position before the conclusion of the negotiations.¹¹ Nor did he feel that an immediate offensive in the Delta was probable, - enemy losses and the nearness of the rainy season made it unlikely that a full scale attack could be mounted before autumn.¹² On General Navarre's recommendation, and with General Ely's agreement, French forces holding positions in the south and west were replaced by units of the new Vietnamese army. These units were also pulled back in late June, leaving most of the delta, including the Catholic bishoprics, in Vietminh hands.¹³

The Committee of National Defense met again on May 26 to hear General Ely's report on his return from Vietnam. The deliberations of the Committee leaked to the press within a day or two. The Generals appear to have returned with a generally gloomy and alarming view of the situation in Tonkin; they reported that the French war map had deteriorated very much more than they had expected.¹⁴

Both Laniel and Navarre have denounced what they consider the over-reaction of the press and of the Mendes-France Government to the military situation after Dien Bien Phu, and what they describe as a "peace at any price" attitude.¹⁵ The U.S. State Department is reported to have thought at the time that the French regroupment was a mistake that weakened the French negotiating position at Geneva.¹⁶ But was the French Government really stampeded into concluding a worse peace than it might have obtained because of exaggerated fears of French military weakness? When the objectives of those who hold this view are compared to what was actually attained at Geneva, it is hard to conclude that it was. Nor does there seem to be much substance to this charge when the most optimistic assessment of the French military position is contrasted with the most pessimistic.

The optimists envisaged a really serious threat to the security of the French forces developing in the autumn, when a re-constituted, strengthened and equipped enemy would again face French troops.¹⁷ The pessimists thought that this situation would develop within a few weeks. Even if we accept the optimistic view as the accurate one, would the Vietminh have concluded an unsatisfactory peace in July when they could have obtained either a better agreement or a military victory in September? The optimists have said that the French could have held out indefinitely in Haiphong while the bulk of the French forces held a line along the eighteenth parallel. But why should one assume that the Vietminh high command would be so obliging as to tie up the bulk of their forces in attacking the French in Haiphong? Is it not more likely that they would have turned their major attention to infiltrating south of the eighteenth parallel, and that the likely outcome of this scenario would have been the loss of south Vietnam as well as north? By all reports the eighteenth parallel is more easily defended than the seventeenth, but in view of the Vietminh's proven capacity for mountain warfare and the French army's proven (and admitted) incapacity, this consideration does not seem to weigh very heavily.

Those who claim that the French concluded an unsatisfactory peace in Geneva have been vague about what they thought could have been attained. The French certainly hoped for a division along the eighteenth parallel, and Laniel speaks vaguely of compensation for French concessions in the north.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the seventeenth parallel guaranteed most of what the French considered essential - a large enough area around Hue and Tourane and possession of R.C. No. 9 connecting Laos with the coast of Annam.¹⁹ And as far as "concessions" to the French in North Vietnam are concerned, it is hard to imagine that they could have been worth the paper they were written on. Once the Vietminh were in full control north of the seventeenth parallel any concessions north of that line would depend entirely on Vietnamese good will.

SECRET

The Geneva Agreement was an unpalatable one for many people, on both sides. But it is hard to escape the conclusion that it accurately reflected what had been "gained [and] held on the battlefield".

The Geneva Conference lasted for nearly three months, and the discussions at times seemed to be headed for defeat. Near the end of June the main participants all left - Eden to visit Washington, Molotov to return to Russia, and Chou En Lai to visit India. In their absence meetings continued between the military representatives of the two high commands, but made little progress on the main issues. About a week before the end of the thirty days which Mendes-France had allowed himself for the conclusion of an agreement the leaders of the Delegations returned to Geneva, and in a last minute burst of activity the Agreement was completed early in the morning of July 21.

The U.S. Delegation took little part in the negotiations leading to a settlement. The U.S. had come to Geneva reluctantly, and the American Delegation seems to have been composed in large part, with the notable exception of its leader, Bedell Smith, of those chosen primarily for the purity of their anti-communism. (Eden remarked of Walter Robertson, one of their number, that his approach was "... so emotional as to be impervious to argument or indeed to fact")²⁰ During the Conference the U.S. continued its efforts to set up a Defense Treaty that would protect Southeast Asia against Communist expansion as NATO had protected Europe. They failed at that time to make headway with this project, largely because of Eden's conviction that the formation of a military alliance would hinder the achievement of a negotiated settlement and his reluctance (and Australian and New Zealand reluctance) to take any steps in that direction until every effort at negotiation had been tried and had failed.²¹

As the Conference proceeded the Americans were increasingly unhappy with the trend it was taking. It was becoming apparent that the core of any agreement would be the division of Vietnam, abandoning at least part of the country

to the Communists. A good deal of the British, and also of the French, effort at the Conference had to be devoted to keeping the United States at the conference table. Eden has said "I had never known a conference of this kind. ... we were in constant danger of one or another backing out of the door."²²

At the June meeting in Washington Eden and Churchill succeeded in pinning the U.S. Government down to a list of minimum terms which the U.S. (and Britain) would feel able to accept. The "seven Anglo-American points" as they became known, were communicated to the French Government. Both Governments declared themselves willing to respect an armistice agreement in Indochina which would:

- 1) preserve Laotian and Cambodian integrity and independence and assure the withdrawal of Vietminh forces.
- 2) preserve the southern half of Vietnam, and if possible an enclave in the delta; the dividing line to be drawn west from Dong Hoi. (Dong Hoi is about 50 miles north of the seventeenth parallel).
- 3) place no restrictions on the three states that would impair their capacity to maintain stable non-communist regimes, adequate forces for internal security, arms and foreign advisers.
- 4) contain no political provisions that would risk loss of the retained area to communist control.
- 5) not exclude the possibility of ultimate re-unification of Vietnam by peaceful means.
- 6) provide for the transfer of people from one zone to another.
- 7) provide effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.²³

The French Government agreed with the seven points (indeed at that stage it was hoping to secure a division along the eighteenth parallel, north of the line mentioned in the Anglo American note). But in spite of strong French representations, Dulles at first refused to send a representative of ministerial rank to Geneva for the concluding phases of the Geneva Conference. He sent a message to Mendes-France on July 11, claiming that the French would be unable to persuade

the other side to accept the seven points. It would be more damaging than useful if a high ranking American were put in the position of having to disassociate himself from the Agreement.²⁴ A few days later Dulles and Mendes-France met in Paris, and Mendes-France was able to persuade Dulles that there was a very good prospect that the seven points could be attained. Dulles agreed to send Bedell Smith back to Geneva for the concluding phase of the Conference.

There were three main areas of disagreement between the two sides at Geneva - the status to be accorded the Communist "governments" of Laos and Cambodia, where the dividing line between the two Vietnams was to run, and the composition and duties of a supervisory Commission to control and supervise the Cease Fire.

In his opening speech of the Conference, Pham Van Dong, the head of the Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) proposed that the Conference invite "the official representatives of the Government of Resistance of Khmer and the Government of Resistance of the Pathet Lao to take part in its work".²⁵ This proposal to inflate the importance of resistance "Governments" that were the creation of the DRVN was resisted by the non-communist delegations. The DRVN and its allies kept up the effort for over a month, but finally abandoned it on June 16 after Eden had strongly hinted at the possible breakup of the Conference. On that day Chou En Lai visited Eden to talk about Laos and Cambodia. He said he thought he could persuade the Vietminh to withdraw from these two countries, and that China would recognise their royal governments, provided there were no American bases in their territory.²⁶

The question of partition represented a particularly ticklish problem. Apart from American feelings on the question, there were those of the South Vietnamese to be considered, and the Vietnamese Government had declared itself unalterably opposed to the idea. The French were therefore unable to propose partition themselves, although most members of the French Delegation regarded

partition as inevitable. However, on May 25 in a speech in restricted session Pham Van Dong called for an exchange of territories, with each side acquiring holdings that would be relatively large, and that would facilitate economic activity and administrative control in each respective area.²⁷ From then on the question where the dividing line would run became the main issue of the Conference. The DRVN began by suggesting a line around the sixteenth parallel, but suddenly at the end of June, shifted their demands to the twelfth or thirteenth parallel further south. The tougher stand may have been in part a bargaining ploy, but was more probably the result of the absence of Molotov and Chou En Lai from Geneva, both of whom exerted a moderating influence over the DRVN Delegation. The most important factor in the stiffening Vietminh position however was undoubtedly the changes in the military balance sheet that occurred at the end of June. It will be recalled that French forces abandoned attempts to hold Tonkin except for the "delta utile". The strengthened Vietminh military position was undoubtedly reflected in a more intransigent attitude at the bargaining table. The question was not finally resolved until the last twenty four hours of the Conference, when Molotov suggested that both sides compromise on the seventeenth parallel.

The clearest and most carefully detailed of the clauses of the Geneva Agreement are those concerning the implementation of the Cease Fire and the regroupment of forces. The French were at first unwilling to talk directly to the Vietminh, but their inability to get the Russians to intercede on the question of prisoners of war finally brought them reluctantly to a face to face confrontation. Then on June 9 a Military Committee, headed by Colonel Ha Van Lau for the DRVN and Colonel de Brebisson on the French side began work on detailed plans for the Cease Fire and a regroupment of forces.

One of the most vexatious questions of the whole Conference was that of the supervision and control of the Cease Fire. What all the western powers would

have preferred would have been a Supervisory Commission under the direction of the United Nations, and the proposal was made by Eden at a plenary session on May 12.²⁸ But the fact that this proposal was rejected by the other side can have come as no surprise. The day before, M. Molotov had dealt with the question of a Supervisory Commission for Korea in a plenary session of the Korean Conference, and his statement slammed the door on any possibility of a role for the United Nations. "In the eyes of the peoples of the whole world the transformation of the United Nations into one of the belligerents has greatly impaired the authority of this international organization. In the situation which has arisen the United Nations has deprived itself of the possibility of acting as an impartial international organ"²⁹ Eventually, the Korean part of the Conference was wrecked on the shoals of disagreement over how supervision of the settlement was to be implemented. A declaration by the Sixteen Nations on June 15, 1954 (signed by Canada among others) declared that this question of the authority of the United Nations was one of "the principal issues between us" "Secondly ... it is clear that the Communists will not accept impartial and effective supervision"³⁰

The sudden ending of the Korean Conference is thought to have shaken Chou En Lai and to have brought about the concession on Communist forces in Laos and Cambodia that saved the Indochina Conference, widely rumoured also to be in imminent danger of break up.³¹ But it probably had in the long run an effect on the provisions of the Agreement relating to the International Control Commissions for Indochina as well. It was now evident that this was an issue on which the Conference could founder, and therefore neither side was willing to push their requirements to the limit.

How far apart the two sides were is evident from the record of the Conference. Western powers called for placing the implementation of the Agreement under the supervision of International Commissions.³² Detailed French proposals for these Commissions were circulated by the French Delegation, and

summarised in a speech by M. Bidault on June 8. He called in part for "... a complete supervisory system, partly fixed and partly mobile, and equipped with modern transport, communications, and observation facilities. ... a solid organization, numerous and flexible enough to meet changing needs Decisions ... will in all cases be taken by a majority vote".³³

On the other hand the first proposals of the Communist powers envisaged supervision by only "mixed commissions composed of representatives of the belligerent sides." (Speech by Pham Van Dong on May 10)³⁴ However, on May 14 M. Molotov suggested " ... a supervisory commission composed of neutral countries",³⁵ and on June 8 he specified that this Commission could be composed of India, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Pakistan.³⁶ In his reply to this speech, Mr. Eden referred to international supervision as " ... now the central issue before the Conference." He accepted the case for joint committees of the two belligerents, in addition to international supervision, but said it should be " ... clearly understood that their functions were mainly technical and clearly subordinate to the authority of an International Supervisory Commission." He suggested that the Asian Powers represented at the Colombo Conference - Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan - be asked to assume the responsibility of supervisory arrangements reached at the Conference.³⁷

The pattern for the Neutral Nations Commission proposed by the Communist powers was of course that of the International Commission which was supervising the Korean armistice. There Sweden, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia provided members for a Commission which had been thoroughly ineffective, with each side cancelling out the other. Bedell Smith, head of the U.S. Delegation, speaking in the Korean Conference on June 5, said that " ... the N.N.S.C. in Korea, which is a pattern of what we have been offered today, has been completely ineffective ...; this sort of a supervisory commission means, at least, no supervision at all."³⁸

It was not until the closed meeting on June 16, after the break-up of the Korean Conference and when it seemed likely that the Indochina Conference might also end in deadlock, that M. Molotov made a concession on armistice control - he proposed a Commission composed of Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Poland and Czechoslovakia, a Commission in which, for the first time, a majority of non-Communist states was conceded.³⁹

No further progress on the question of membership in the Commission was made until the last few days of the Conference. "The first indication that the Conference might at last be on the verge of success came on the afternoon of July 18, when Chou En-Lai proposed that the supervisory commission should consist of India, Canada and Poland. After all the argument, this was a definite step towards us and the proposal was accepted by all three Western powers. From that moment the tangled ends of the negotiations began to sort themselves out."⁴⁰ This was also the first time that Canada's name had been mentioned as a possible member. Canada had of course participated in the Korean phase of the conference that was going on concurrently with the conference on Indochina. John Holmes has said that "Canada had already acquired, over Korea and other issues, the reputation of being the most objective of the NATO countries, and it is believed that Krishna Menon persuaded Chou En Lai that Canada would be the best Western candidate."⁴¹

The Geneva Agreements that were signed on July 21, 1954 were concerned almost entirely with ending hostilities. There was little attempt to frame an enduring political settlement. In part this was the result of Mendes-France's promise to the Chamber of Deputies. The desperate haste of the last few days before the expiry of the thirty days he had given himself caused the postponement of all considerations except those necessary for the achievement of an immediate cease fire. The lack of a clearly defined long term settlement also reflected the lack of agreement between the delegations on this point. The Vietminh's

ambitions certainly extended well beyond the boundary at the seventeenth parallel. But their military successes had been largely confined to the north (although there were areas in the south under the Vietminh's control, notably the entire Camau peninsula south of Saigon) and their allies were not willing to back them in the immediate attainment of their aims in the south. The Vietminh had held out for elections within six months, but in the last few hours of the Conference Molotov suggested a compromise of two years. The provision for elections is not even mentioned in the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities for Vietnam - only in Article 7 of the Final Declaration, a Declaration that South Vietnam and the United States both refused to sign - in fact the Declaration was not signed at all, only initialled by some of the participants.

The "Geneva Agreements" consisted of three bilateral Cease Fire Agreements (for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), a number of unilateral declarations, and the unsigned Final Declaration of the Conference.

The Cease Fire Agreement for Vietnam⁴² provided for the fixing of a provisional military demarcation line and demilitarized zone (article 1, arts. 3-9). The regroupment of forces on either side of this line was to take place within three hundred days (art. 2). Articles 10-13 and 15 outlined principles and procedures governing the cessation of hostilities and the movement of troops. Article 14 was later known as the "freedom" article. Each party undertook to "refrain from any reprisals or discrimination against persons or organisations on account of their activities during the hostilities" (article 14c), and to permit and help "any civilians residing in one zone who wish to go and live in the zone assigned to the other party." (article 14d) Articles 16-20 prohibit the introduction of fresh troops and military personnel (rotation or replacement was allowed) of additional military equipment (again replacements were allowed), of new military bases or of any base under the control of a foreign state. The points of entry for rotation of personnel and replacements of material are listed (art. 20).

Articles 28 to 47 govern the establishment and the functions of a Joint Commission and of an International Commission for Supervision and Control.

Article 28 provided that responsibility for the execution of the Agreement "shall rest with the parties". The Joint Commission was given the responsibility for ensuring the execution of the provisions for the Cease Fire and regroupment of armed forces and of the observance of the demarcation lines. It was to help the parties to execute the provisions of the Cease Fire, and to try to solve disputes between them (art. 33). Article 35 governed the establishment and operation of "fixed and mobile inspection teams" of the International Commission. Article 36 listed the I.C.C.'s duties and responsibilities - the control, supervision of movement of armed forces and of movement into the country of military personnel and arms. Provision was made for investigation (art. 38) and for report to the members of the Geneva Conference (art. 43). Articles 41 and 42 dealt with voting in the Commission.

Recommendations of the International Commission were to be adopted by majority vote, except for "recommendations concerning amendments or additions" to the Cease Fire Agreement (art. 41) and "when dealing with questions concerning violations or threats of violations, which might lead to a resumption of hostilities." (art. 42) In these cases, decisions of the International Commission must be unanimous.

The Agreements for Cambodia and for Laos were similar in their provisions, with the exception of those governing the introduction of fresh troops, military personnel, armaments and munitions. During the final hours of the Geneva Conference, the Cambodian Representative refused to accept restrictions on Cambodia's sovereignty that were implicit in sections of the draft Agreement dealing with military alliances and foreign aid in war material. Molotov finally agreed that Cambodia - and Laos - should be permitted foreign military alliances if they chose. Accordingly the Cambodian Delegation made a unilateral Declaration

quoted in Article 7 of the Cambodia Agreement, that the Royal Government would not enter into any military alliance "not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, or as long as its security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases [for foreign forces]". Foreign military aid would not be solicited "except for the purpose of the effective defence of the territory."

Articles 6-8 of the Laotian Agreement prohibited the introduction into Laos of reinforcements of troops or military personnel from outside of Laos, or the establishment of new bases. Some French forces were permitted to remain. Article 9 however stated that the introduction of munitions and military equipment was prohibited, except for a "specified quantity of armaments in categories specified as necessary for the defence of Laos." And the Laotian Government made a separate Declaration in which it promised not to enter into an agreement for a military alliance "not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the U.N. [or of the C.F.A.]" or to establish bases on Laotian territory "unless its security is threatened."

The Laotian Agreement provided (Art. 14) that fighting units of the Pathet Lao "shall move into the Provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua". This article was to cause a good deal of difficulty in the months ahead, with one side declaring that the two provinces were intended to act as a zone of permanent occupation, and the other that the provinces had only the same status as other regroupment areas.

The regulations governing voting in the International Commission (articles 41 and 42) had been the subject of a prolonged struggle during the Conference. The Communist powers had at first insisted on unanimity in all decisions of the International Commission, and the English and French negotiators had called for majority vote at all times. The compromise proved an acceptable one, and in practice the Commissions were not to find themselves hampered in their activities by provisions for unanimity that survived in the Agreement.

The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference contains thirteen paragraphs, most of which merely "take note" of certain clauses in the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities. Paragraphs 6 and 7 are the only significant additions to the Agreements. Para. 6 provides that "the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary", and para. 7 mentions "free general elections by secret ballot. ... general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of ... the International Supervisory Commission" Consultations were to be held between authorities of the two sides from July 20, 1955 onwards. The only place therefore that elections are mentioned at all is in the Final Declaration; and both Vietnam and the United States refused to be associated with the Declaration.

The most serious weakness of the Geneva Agreements was their failure to provide adequate guarantees or sanctions against violations of the Agreements. Eden had given some thought to this problem, and his proposed solution was discussed during the visit of Churchill and himself to Washington in June. Eden favoured a system "of the Locarno type", so that "if the settlement were broken, guarantors could act without waiting for unanimity." In addition, he favoured a collective defense agreement, similar to the American proposals for SEATO.⁴³ Eden's idea of a "Locarno" type agreement, a reciprocal defensive arrangement in which each member gives guarantees, was inaccurately but firmly connected in American minds with Munich and the bad old days of appeasement, and was never implemented. Whether the idea would in fact have proved workable, and whether the co-authors of the Geneva Agreement would have been any more willing to take action under a Far Eastern Locarno than they proved willing to do under SEATO, is debatable. But an arrangement of this kind might at least have had value in establishing an "organization in being" to whom the International Commissions could report, and from whom they might have received guidance and direction from time to time. The Geneva Agreements provide for periodic reports from the International Commission to the membership of

the Geneva Conference (art. 43), and under the terms of this article the Commission has supplied the co-chairmen of the Conference, Britain and Russia, with interim reports of their activities. Occasionally they have asked for guidance and help. The co-chairmen publish the reports and send copies to other members of the Conference, but never on any occasion has the Commission received a reply to its requests for guidance.

In the end the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference was never signed. The United States refused to associate itself with the Declaration, although it issued its own declaration taking note of what had been decided and undertaking not to disturb the settlement. The Government of Vietnam, unable to accept the partition of Vietnam, also refused to sign. It too issued a separate declaration, undertaking not to use force to resist the procedures for carrying the cease fire into effect. The Final Declaration was in the end initialled by seven of the nine participants, although the names of all nine were given in a heading that listed the participants of the Conference. The three Cease Fire Agreements, for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, were signed by the Commanders-in-chief of the French Armed Forces on the one hand, and by the Peoples' Army of Vietnam and of the Pathet Lao and Khmer Issarak forces on the other.

In most of the world the signing of the Geneva Agreements was greeted with profound relief. This sentiment was not however universal, and the exceptions were significant. Although Bedell Smith on his return from Geneva referred to the Agreement as "the best which we could possibly have attained under the circumstances"⁴⁴ opinion generally in the United States thought that it was only the best of a bad bargain. Angry speeches in Congress referred to "appeasement" and "surrender",⁴⁵ and the administration emphasized that it was "pursuing discussions... with a view to the rapid organization of collective defense in Southeast Asia in order to prevent further direct or indirect Communist aggression in that general area".⁴⁶ The Vietminh leaders in their talks with Western press representatives were vocal in

their disappointment at what the peace settlement had attained for them. They blamed Chou En Lai and Molotov for agreeing to concessions that gave the Vietminh less than they should rightfully have attained, when within another year their forces could have driven the French from North Vietnam and could have taken most of the south.⁴⁷ Vietminh complaints have sometimes been dismissed as simply one more move in the game, but their assessment of their own military strength would seem to be fairly accurate - or at the very least to be based on reasonable assumptions. It should be remembered that the Vietminh demands had stiffened considerably as the Conference went on, particularly in the absence of Chou En Lai and Molotov. The concessions made in the closing hours of the Conference were made by Molotov, not by Pham Van Dong. The Vietminh disappointment would seem to be genuine; it was as poor an augury for the permanence of the settlement just attained as the American attitude was.

International agreements sometimes represent the achievement of genuine and lasting compromises. All too often the achievements are largely semantic - the production of a formula that all can agree on and that conceals a fundamental disagreement on important points. The Geneva Agreement contains examples of both kinds of achievement. The provision for the temporary division of Vietnam into two parts, and the regulations covering the cease fire and the disengagement of combatants represented genuine compromises. Although the working out of these provisions was not free from incident, in general they were satisfactorily carried out. In other cases however the wording of the Agreements concealed fundamental differences of opinion which were revealed again when the Agreements began to be applied. The two most serious areas of disagreement were over the final political settlement and over the role of the International Commission.

There was in fact no agreement over a final political settlement. Neither South Vietnam nor the United States agreed to the provisions for elections, and when in 1955 the South Vietnamese Government refused to hold consultations with

appropriate authorities in North Vietnam leading to the holding of elections in 1956, there was nothing that could be done about it. The truce so painfully established at Geneva rapidly broke down, and the two halves of the country drifted into progressively more intensive warfare.

Nor was the record of negotiations over the composition and role of the International Commission an encouraging sign for the future. The Communist states tried to obtain a Commission that would be powerless by the very fact of its composition, and that would be rendered even more helpless by the necessity of achieving unanimity on all questions. They tried to restrict and hamper the scope of the Commission's activities in every direction. The West won some significant concessions on paper regarding the nature and composition of the International Supervisory Commission, but the subsequent attitudes and reactions of the North Vietnamese party to the Agreements, and of the Polish member of the International Commission, could surely have been predicted from the record of the negotiations in Geneva.

CHAPTER III FOOTNOTES.

1. Economist, May 8, 1954, Vol. 171, p. 430
2. Eden, op. cit., p. 118
3. Lacouture and Devillers, op. cit., p. 205
4. *ibid*, p. 223
5. New York Times, July 23
6. Navarre, Agonie de L'Indochine, p. 259
7. Ely, Memoires: L'Indochine dans la Tourmente, p. 122
8. *ibid*, p. 123
9. *idib*, p. 128
10. Laniel, La Drame Indochinois, pp. 106-7
11. Navarre, op. cit., p. 269-70
12. *ibid*, p. 270
13. Ely, op. cit., p. 166
14. Lacouture and Devillers, op. cit., p. 165
15. Navarre, op. cit., p. 260, Laniel, op. cit., p. 111
16. Randle, op. cit., p. 303
17. Navarre, op. cit., p. 271
18. Laniel, op. cit., p. 111
19. Ely, op. cit., p. 203
20. Eden, op. cit., p. 113
21. *ibid*, p. 131
22. *ibid*, p. 128
23. *ibid*, p.
24. Lacouture and Devillers, op. cit., p. 247
25. Great Britain, Papers by Command, Cmd. 9186, p. 112
26. Eden, op. cit., p. 129
27. Lacouture and Devillers, p. 188
28. Cmd. 9186, p. 127
29. *ibid*, p. 43
30. *ibid*, p. 101
31. Lacouture and Devillers, op. cit., p. 217
32. Cmd. 9186, p. 110
33. *ibid*, p. 140
34. *ibid*, p. 119
35. *ibid*, p. 131
36. *ibid*, p. 145
37. *ibid*, p. 152
38. *ibid*, p. 71
39. Lacouture and Devillers, op. cit., p. 218
40. Eden, op. cit., p. 141
41. J.W. Holmes, "Geneva 1954", in International Journal, Vol. 22 p. 458
42. The Geneva Agreements are printed in Cmd. 9239, pp. 6-42
43. Eden, op. cit., p. 132
44. New York Times, July 23, 1954
45. New York Times, July 22, 1954
46. *ibid*,
47. New York Times, July 24, 1954

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST TWO YEARS.

The three nations comprising the International Control Commission, Canada, India and Poland, began the task that was to become so much longer, harder, and more frustrating than any of them foresaw at the time, in moods ranging from cautious optimism (Canada) to euphoric enthusiasm (India). The Polish attitude can only be guessed at, but it may be supposed that Poland welcomed the opportunity to play an expanded role on the international stage and to increase her usefulness and therefore her influence within the Communist bloc. But if conflicting attitudes towards the authority of the Supervisory Commission that had been revealed at Geneva had not dampened enthusiasm, then a consideration of the events taking place within Vietnam and in the Pacific area should have done so.

International peace-keeping forces often have to operate in an atmosphere of distrust and rancour - it is after all the very inability of the parties to agree that brings the international force onto the scene in the first place. But experience since 1954 has shown, and nowhere more vividly than in Vietnam, that intervention by outside interests can make the task of the peace-keepers an impossible one. This is particularly true if the interests concerned are those of the major powers. It seems a reasonable conjecture that if the International Control Commission had in fact undertaken the task it appeared at the time to have assumed - to supervise the winding down of a colonial war - then its duties would have been creditably discharged. And as a matter of fact had their duties ended with elections in 1956 as the Cease Fire Agreement provided, the Commission's work would still have stood as a successful example of peace keeping, in spite of the escalating cold war in the Pacific. Neither of these

conditions was to be fulfilled.

The United States had come very close in early 1954 to intervening in the war in Indochina. Only vivid memories of the Korean conflict among the U.S. public and the reluctance of its allies prevented military operations that a large part of the administration and the armed forces believed to be necessary. Although the United States undertook to do nothing to upset the Agreements, it refused to sign them or to agree to be bound by them. Neither would the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) sign the Cease Fire Agreement. The refusal of the Republic of Vietnam to accept the Cease Fire Agreement was particularly serious. Not only was its co-operation necessary if the work of the Commission was to be effective in South Vietnam, but the withdrawal of France from Vietnam (in accord with agreements signed between France and Vietnam in June, 1954) left the Cease Fire Agreement without a base in law. The International Control Commission decided simply to ignore this inconvenient fact and to operate as if the R.V.N. were legally bound by the Agreement, and the R.V.N. usually found it advisable to co-operate with the Commission. But the Agreement specifically stated (Art. 28) that the Parties were responsible for the implementation of the Agreement. South Vietnam's refusal to replace the French High Command Representatives on the Joint Commission, the body responsible for the implementation, after the departure of French troops in April, 1956, left the future of the Agreement in grave doubt.

Nor did events outside Vietnam contribute to the lessening of tensions and hostilities or provide an atmosphere of trust and goodwill that would have been conducive to peace and unity within Vietnam. It is ironic that Stalin's death should have brought a desire for a lessening of international tensions and a willingness to consider more pragmatic and less ideological solutions within the Communist bloc precisely at the moment when an opposite movement was taking place within the United States. U.S. foreign relations seemed often to be con-

ducted in a fit of bad temper, and bluster and threat characterized many, if not all statements of U.S. policy.

U.S. actions however, in contrast to speech, were often conciliatory. Up until late 1961 the U.S. tried itself to keep its aid to Vietnam within the limits imposed by the Geneva Agreements, and it put pressure on the Vietnamese to co-operate with the International Control Commission, even beyond the point where this policy aroused Vietnamese resentment. Evidence now shows¹ that the U.S. was in favour of holding the elections called for in 1956 by the Geneva Agreements, and tried to persuade the Vietnamese to do so. Once again the good effect of these intentions was lost. The advice of the Vietnamese to agree to elections was secret, but the swing to approval once Ngo Dinh Diem had approved obdurate was public and vociferous.

The world can hardly be blamed for taking U.S. belligerence at face value. In particular the conclusion of the SEATO pact at Manila on September 8, 1954 with its protocols specifically extending the protection of the pact to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia seemed to non-aligned states like India as well as to North Vietnam and China a direct threat to the Geneva settlement as well as to peace in the Pacific area. The fact that the pact was defensive in nature and that the help forthcoming was to be considerably less than automatic (nations would "act in accordance with their constitutional processes" in considering requests for help - a clear reminder that the U.S. would require Congressional approval for any action taken under SEATO) did not weigh nearly so heavily as the fact that a U.S. military threat had now moved into Southeast Asia. China had made compromises at Geneva in exchange for assurances that no U.S. bases would be permitted in Southeast Asia. The conclusion of the SEATO Agreement may well have made China more willing to support the DRVN in equipping it with the means to unify Vietnam by force if necessary.

The three members of the International Commission, and Canada in particu-

lar, were given little opportunity to prepare or to plan for the job that, in Canada's case, was not to end until nineteen years later. The invitation from the co-chairmen was sent on July 21. The Commission's teams were required to be in place by 8.00 AM on August 11, Peking mean time. India presumably had been able to give at least a little time to the consideration of the implications of serving on the Commissions, since India's name had been on every short list proposed for the composition of the Supervisory Commissions. Poland may have been given some advance warning by the Soviet Union. But the choice of Canada was a last minute compromise and the Department of External Affairs had no prior notice of the invitation to serve. The decision to accept had to be taken almost immediately, and planning was not only hurried, but was done with only the haziest idea of conditions in Indochina - geographic, climatic and political - or of the likely effects that service on the Commissions would have on Canada's own interests.

On July 28, 1954 Canada announced her decision to accept the responsibility of membership (India and Poland had announced their acceptance a few days before). A preparatory Conference opened in New Delhi on August 1, to make the necessary administrative arrangements. Tentative establishments were drawn up for the secretariats and requirements for accommodation for offices and living quarters, for transportation, and for communications were all considered. By August 11 at least a few people from each delegation were present at each headquarters - in Hanoi for Vietnam, Vientiane for Laos, and Phnom Penh for Cambodia. (A group of army officers who came by air from Korea provided most of the initial Canadian representation on the fixed and mobile inspection teams.) The Indian Air Force flew the Commissioners and staff from New Delhi to Indochina, and on August 11 the three Commissions held their first meetings.²

At the first meeting of the International Commission for Vietnam a meeting had been arranged with the Joint Commission. The Joint Commission, composed of representatives of the two armed forces, French and Vietminh, had been

in operation since the Cease Fire in July 27. It was the Joint Commission, the body representing the two signatories of the Cease Fire Agreement, which was responsible for the execution of the Cease Fire Agreements. As Brigadier Sherwood Lett, the first Canadian Commissioner in Vietnam, emphasized in a radio interview on September 27, 1954, "I should like to make it clear that the functions of the [International] Commission are supervisory, judicial and mediatory. It can make recommendations but cannot of itself enforce recommendations that it may make."³

This distinction between the functions of the International Commission and of the Joint Commission, between the obligations assumed by the parties and the duties of the International Commission, is extremely important. The fact that the International Control Commission was not responsible for executing or enforcing the Cease Fire Agreement is made clear in Articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Vietnam Agreement (and in comparable articles of the Laos and Cambodia Agreements), but the distinction was never clear in the public mind. Even today one will find writers who should know better declaring that the International Commission proved unable to enforce the Cease Fire Agreement. The International Commission may be fairly criticized for many inadequacies, but failure to secure compliance with the Agreement is not one of them; that is a task that was never entrusted to it and that it never assumed. The public failure to recognize that the International Commission had only "supervisory, judicial and mediatory" functions, led to unrealistically high expectations for the International Commission, and to consequent disappointment when these expectations were not fulfilled. In the process the modest successes that the Commission could claim were lost sight of.

The work of the International Control Commission for Vietnam might be considered to fall into roughly two periods - that of the first two years, and particularly of the first three hundred days, the period within which the "move-

ment of all forces of either party into a re-grouping zone on either side of the provisional military demarcation line will be completed...." (Article 2 of the Cease Fire Agreement), and the remainder of the time until the final winding up of the Vietnam Commission in 1973. The Commission was originally expected to complete its work during the first two years. The holding of elections in July 1956 as envisaged in the Final Declaration would have left nothing further for the Commission to do.

During this early period the I.C.C. for Vietnam was concerned largely with supervising the regroupment of forces and the transfer of territory, with the movement of civilian personnel from one zone to another according to their choice (article 14d), with the guarantee of "democratic freedoms" (article 14c) and with the clauses of the Agreement concerning the ban on the introduction of fresh troops and military personnel or of foreign military bases (articles 16-19). The Commission sent reports of its activities to the British and Soviet co-chairmen from time to time. (Because the responsibility for the supervision of articles 16-19 of the Agreement was to become a continuing and growing responsibility, it will be best to postpone consideration of that part of the Commission's duties until Chapter VI.)

Article 14c - Democratic freedoms.

Article 14 of the CFA concerns "Political and administrative measures in the two re-grouping zones" - i.e. north and south Vietnam. Section c directed the parties to "refrain from any reprisals or discrimination against persons or organisations on account of their activities during the hostilities and to guarantee their democratic liberties." The war in Vietnam had been more than an anti-colonial struggle - it had divided people along ideological lines as well. Although the vast majority of the Vietnamese wanted to bring about an end to French rule, they were not united in their choice of the means to accomplish this, nor in their views about the kind of government they wanted after independence.

There was as bitter opposition to the Vietminh among some sections of the Vietnamese population as there was among the French - in fact the Catholic bishoprics of Phat Dien and Bui Chu had organised their own militia to fight against the Vietminh.

The fate of the supporters of one party left behind in the territory of the other therefore had rightly concerned the delegates at Geneva, and Article 14c was an attempt to protect these pockets of opposition. It failed completely in achieving its purpose, and was perhaps bound to do so, affecting as it did the whole question of national sovereignty and the treatment extended to its own citizens by each government. The International Control Commission issued a press release on September 2, 1954 asking the parties to give wide publicity to the provisions of the Geneva Agreement regarding "democratic liberties" in general. It received petitions from individuals who complained that their rights were being infringed, and it set up a "Freedoms Committee" to deal with these petitions. The Committee acted through the Commission's inspection teams to investigate complaints, and the Commission then, on the basis of these reports, made recommendations to the parties. The Commission received 17,397 petitions alleging violations of Articles 14c and 14d in the period from August 11 to December 10, 1954.⁴ In fact, "by the end of the three hundred days these rather than more purely military armistice terms of the Agreement had become the ICC's principal pre-occupation."⁵

Although the Commission could properly claim some success so far as the implementation of Article 14d is concerned, it is doubtful if it improved the lot of anyone whose cause it espoused under Article 14c. In North Vietnam the DRVN Government soon established its authority throughout the countryside, and petitioners were no longer allowed to approach the Commission's teams. South Vietnam had not signed the Geneva Agreement and resented the Commission's interference with what it regarded as an internal matter. In time the defense to

all complaints from the north concerning the infringement of democratic liberties was that the people concerned were being prosecuted for activities that had occurred since the Cease Fire. The Commission accepted this as an adequate defence. Article 14c became, even more than the other provisions of the Agreement, simply an occasion on the part of one of the parties, in this case the DRVN, for propaganda against the other.

Article 14d.

Article 14d of the Agreement provided that, until the movement of troops was completed, civilians were permitted to move from one zone to another according to their choice. The Commission decided, and so advised the parties, that those affected by this section should not only be permitted to move, but should be actively assisted to do so.⁶

How far either north or south Vietnam was prepared for the large migration from north to south is debatable. Certainly the magnitude of the problem put an immense strain on the resources of the south, and on the ICC which was to supervise this movement. As much as one quarter of the formal meetings in the first eleven months were taken up with discussions of article 14d. Of 60 Mobile Teams deployed by the ICC during the first year in field investigations, thirty five were to investigate complaints about violations of article 14d.⁷

In all 892,876 northerners chose to move south of the seventeenth parallel within the time allotted. (In the other direction, 4,269 moved from south to north). The refugee problem received wide publicity - it was undoubtedly the aspect of the Commission's work that aroused most interest in Canada, and there were questions in the House of Commons and frequent public statements by the Government on the issue. The migration was interpreted by the RVN as a resounding propaganda victory, and every effort was made to encourage as many as

possible to move south. On August 3, 1954 Diem delivered a speech in Hanoi in which he exhorted the population to "rally to the south in order to continue the struggle for independence and liberty."¹⁰ He sent a message to President Eisenhower requesting American assistance in the evacuation of civilians. The Seventh Fleet was ordered to sail for Indochina.

American assistance arrived in another form. The Saigon Military Mission, the team headed by Edward G. Lansdale, occupied itself spreading rumours in Tonkin about the dreadful fate in store for those who remained under Communist rule.¹¹ These tactics quite probably did have some effect on the movement of refugees, but how much is debatable. They were perhaps as necessary to the success of the operation as the Watergate burglary was to the re-election of President Nixon.

The DRVN complained frequently to the Commission that those who moved had been subjected to systematic, false propaganda, and that many who had moved to the south regretted it and wished to return. The Commission's teams interviewed about 25,000 people in the refugee camps in the south, "and on the basis of this enquiry, reported that there was no foundation for the allegation that thousands of persons were victims of a systematic propaganda and many of them wished to go back to the ^(PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIET NAM) PAVN zone, and that none of the persons contacted by the teams complained of forced evacuation or expressed a desire to return to the PAVN zone."¹²

The Commission received many complaints that the DRVN authorities were obstructing the passage of refugees. While admitting that the DRVN authorities had the right to set up necessary administrative machinery for regulating the issue of permits, the Commission held that: "... the administrative processes should not be so clumsy, slow and complex as in effect to defeat the provisions of Article 14d."¹³

The Third Interim Report of the ICSC for Vietnam was sent to the co-

chairmen on April 25, 1955. On that date the Commission reported that progress in implementing Article 14d "... will continue to be unsatisfactory unless administrative arrangements and the provision of transport facilities are urgently improved; ... it is not possible to state at this stage that Article 14d will be implemented in full within the time laid down."¹⁴ The Canadian Delegation appended a note to this Report calling the co-chairmen's attention to this finding.¹⁵ The British Government then proposed to the Soviet Government that the two parties to the Agreement should be invited to continue to implement the provisions of Article 14d of the Agreement until the ICC was satisfied that the Article had been implemented in full.¹⁶ In their reply the Soviet Government declined to consider changing the clauses of the Agreement in this way, but "... intimated that the Vietminh were willing to continue for one month the evacuation"¹⁷

The ICC made its final report to the co-chairmen on the implementation of Article 14d in the Fourth Interim Report, submitted in October, 1955.¹⁸ The Commission stated that at each stage there had been difficulties, due to the "narrow and complicated administrative procedures" of the PAVN, and ^(FRENCH UNION FORCES HIGH COMMAND) /confusion/ and lack of system" in the areas under the FUFHC.¹⁹ "Religious, social and local influences" were used by both sides to try to persuade people to change their zone of residence.¹⁹ However "... by 18th May the bulk of the persons who wanted to change the zone of their residence had succeeded in doing so."²⁰

This even-handed apportioning of blame did not accurately reflect the views of the Canadian Delegation, and it accordingly submitted its own amendment to this section of the Fourth Interim Report.²¹ The Canadian Delegation complained of "obstruction and hindrance" of its work on the part of the PAVN. On occasion, intending evacuees were "forcibly dragged away" to prevent their meeting the team.²² These obstructions and hindrances amounted to "an organized plan." Article 14d had "still not been satisfactorily implemented."²³ The Canadian

Delegation thought that the Commission should continue to help those individuals who had expressed a wish to move from one zone to another before July 20, and that a further extension of time should be granted for that purpose.

When the record of the whole operation is considered now, some years later, the Canadian Delegation's desire for still a further extension of time for Article 14d seems somewhat unrealistic. As the Delegation itself acknowledged, "... given the political and social circumstances existing in Vietnam, ... the work that had been done by the Commission ... represents an achievement which should be recorded."²⁴ Throughout both Canada and the United States, intense interest had been aroused in the plight of the emigrants. Canadian team officers had witnessed at first hand the obstructiveness of DRVN authorities and the intimidation of those who wished to take advantage of the provisions of the Geneva Agreement, and the Canadian Amendment was an attempt to put this on the record.

The supervision of Article 14d is nevertheless one of the solid achievements of the Commission during the early years. There can be no doubt that without the presence of the Commission teams very few would have been able to take advantage of Article 14d.

The Cease Fire, Regroupment and Separation of Forces.

The actual title of the Vietnam Agreement is the "Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam." It is signed by the Commanders in Chief of the two sides, and of the 41 articles of the Agreement, almost half are concerned with the Cease Fire and Regroupment of Forces. These articles were the most carefully drafted of the whole, and are of course of least importance to the final solution in Vietnam. During the long weeks at Geneva while the delegates were unable to make progress on the larger issues, representatives of the French army and the PAVN were meeting at Truong Gia to work out the details of the Cease Fire. The agreed articles were then incorporated in the final Agreement.

The International Commissions were not required to supervise the actual Cease Fire. In Vietnam, the Cease Fire took place at different sectors of the country, at 8 AM on July 27, August 1 and August 11, 1954. The last Cease Fire had therefore taken place by the time the International Commission met for the first time.

The Commission did however render considerable assistance at some stages of the evacuation of troops, particularly of French troops from North Vietnam. The Armistice Agreement provided that the French Union Forces were to withdraw from Hanoi within eighty days, from Hai Duong within 100 days, and from Haiphong, in the final stage of evacuation from North Vietnam, within three hundred days. A similar timetable was set for the evacuation of Vietminh forces from south and central Vietnam. Assembly areas were allocated in Vietminh controlled areas in the Plaine des Joncs, the Camau Peninsula, and in Central Vietnam in the provinces of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh.

The separation of French and Vietminh troops, intertwined over the whole of Vietnam and without clearly defined battle lines, and the transfer of cities and provinces, was an enormous undertaking. Before the regroupment period was over, as many as 250,000 troops, 950,000 refugees and dependents and released prisoners had changed zones, taking with them over 200,000 tons of military supplies and equipment. Perhaps as much as one third of the territory of Vietnam formally changed hands.²⁵

The Joint Commission bore the burden of planning and co-ordinating this process. The International Commission as observer and mediator became involved only with the final steps in the process; they were not required to supervise the withdrawal of troops into provisional assembly areas and in fact they were not even asked to be present. It was in the transfer of the cities, and particularly of Haiphong, that the International Commission was able to make the greatest contribution. The Saigon Government wished to remove as much equipment as

possible, and ugly incidents threatened to develop. When the parties appeared to be deadlocked, the Commission was often able to suggest acceptable compromises and to get things moving again.²⁶

The transfer of Haiphong, in the words of the historian of the period, "stands out as the ICC's greatest success."²⁷ By that time feeling was running so high between the parties that they were unable, even with the Commission's help, to arrive at acceptable solutions. Then the International Commission imposed its own solution on the parties, "based not on a compromise between a reasonable position and a less reasonable one (as was often the case) but on what seemed sensible, fair and practical. Once it had imposed the solution it refused to deviate from it, rejecting or simply ignoring every attempt by authorities of either side to effect delays, to trim procedures to their advantage, or to interfere with the other's actions."²⁸

The Regroupment and Separation of Forces proceeded relatively smoothly because both sides wanted the operation to succeed, and because the clauses of the Agreement governing the separation of forces were carefully drafted and represented an agreed position. The differences of opinion that arose needed to be resolved immediately, and the Commission exerted itself to help to solve them. In later years, when the problems that came before the Commission reflected a much more fundamental division, it was often content simply to reflect the divisions that existed between the parties and to make no real effort to solve them.

Elections.

The Cease Fire Agreement itself refers only in passing to the elections that were to be held to determine the final political settlement. Explicit reference to these elections is found in para. 7 of the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference, which provided that "... general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an International Commission composed of

representatives of the Member States of the I.S.C....; Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from July 20, 1955 onwards."²⁹ Perhaps nowhere else in the whole agreement is the tendency of the Geneva Conference to sweep unsolved problems under the rug more clearly demonstrated than in this section of the Final Declaration. The Delegates at Geneva were simply unable to come to an agreement on the long term prospects for Vietnam, and rather than endanger the practical achievements in agreement on the terms of a Cease Fire, the whole question of arrangements for an election was left to the future. The prospect of elections can have seemed little more than a pious hope, depending as they obviously did on arrangements between the governments, one of which had specifically rejected both the Agreement and the Final Declaration. In due course the government of the southern part of the country refused to consider the question of all-Vietnam elections or to begin consultations with the DRVN authorities, marking their displeasure with the Geneva Agreement by a mob attack on the two hotels where the members of the International Commission were quartered, on the very day that consultations were supposed to begin.

Both Britain and France were anxious to avoid any public repudiation of the Geneva Agreement, and urged Diem to agree to talk to the DRVN. Contrary to what is generally supposed, the United States was not at first opposed to holding the elections. A draft policy toward all-Vietnam elections, produced in May, 1955 "... held that to give no impression of blocking elections while avoiding the policy of losing them, Diem should insist on free elections by secret ballot with strict supervision."³⁰ In Korea and Germany similar stipulations (free elections under International supervision) had been rejected. It seemed likely that these conditions would also be rejected in Vietnam by the DRVN, and Diem's Government could have avoided the opprobrium of refusing to hold elections. Diem proved adamant, and in a public statement on July 16 he refused

to consider any proposal from the Communists.

The Geneva Agreement had not made the International Commission responsible for conducting the elections, or for making preparations for them. The Commission was not even responsible for bringing the representatives of the two zones together to begin consultations. It was merely to supervise the elections when they were finally held. It could therefore do no more than look on helplessly as it became increasingly evident that the date when its duties might be concluded was retreating into the uncertain future, and as one of the two parties to the Agreement left the scene. (On April 28, 1956, the French Union High Command informed the International Commission that the last of its forces had been withdrawn from Vietnam.) In the Fourth Interim Report, submitted to the co-chairmen in October, 1955, the Commission informed the co-chairmen that it was "... faced with the prospect of continuing its activities indefinitely and ... so far as the zone under the control of the State of Vietnam is concerned, without any sanction for its working. It cannot, however, continue to function with any effectiveness unless the difficulties mentioned ... above ... are resolved satisfactorily by the co-chairmen and the Geneva Powers at a very early date."³¹ The co-chairmen then sent a message (May 6, 1956) to the French Government inviting them to discuss the problem with the authorities of South Vietnam and to try to work out some practical arrangement that would enable the Joint Commission to continue functioning.³² The International Commission believed that the Joint Commission was "an essential part of the machinery for the implementation of the Cease Fire Agreement, and that its non-functioning adversely affects the execution of the Agreement, particularly in respect of the administration of the demarcation line and the demilitarised zone."³³

Essential or not, the Joint Commission simply ceased to exist. The Government of the RVN was prepared passively to allow the International Commission to continue to exist; it was not prepared actively to assist it to function

effectively. Moreover the South Vietnamese Government then and later displayed the most lively repugnance at the prospect of any direct dealings with representatives of the Communist Government in the north. Besides refusing to serve on the Joint Commission they refused any longer to allow PAVN officers to serve as liaison officers to the International Control Commission in the south, or to send South Vietnamese representatives to serve as liaison officers in the north. This meant that from that time on the effectiveness of Commission investigations was much reduced; no member of the International Commission spoke Vietnamese, and the teams were therefore forced to accept the version of statements offered by the parties' own interpreters when interviewing witnesses, without the check that would have been provided by the other party's representative.

Whatever satisfaction the members of the International Commission may have felt in reflecting on the accomplishments of the first two years of the Commission's existence, they could not have looked to the future with any degree of confidence. Critics of the Commission's performance have often asked why it did not wind up its activities in 1956 when the prospect of elections was shelved indefinitely. Not one of the members, even Canada, who had been the most dissatisfied with the performance of the Commission, seems to have seriously entertained the idea. When the proposal is examined in the light of events in 1956, it is easy to see why.

In the first place, the Commission could rightfully feel a sense of accomplishment in its work for the first two years. After eight years of civil war, Vietnam had known two years of comparative peace. The Geneva Conference had seemed close to failure right up to the last few days, and the precarious agreement achieved there seemed well worth trying to preserve. Certainly the west had no cause to believe that any change would be in their favour. North Vietnam had found an international sounding board for its grievances, and had proved far more adept at dealing with the Commission than the South Vietnamese.

Neither China nor the Soviet Union was prepared for a direct confrontation with the United States, which had now completely replaced the French, and removing the shield of the Cease Fire Agreement might have provided the occasion for one. Britain and France were both anxious not to upset the truce in Indochina, and the United States, although not enthusiastic, was more reconciled to the status quo than it had been in 1954. India's enthusiasm for service on the Commissions was undimmed; to India's statesmen it was a perfect example of the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Panch Sheel) in operation. Poland maintained the objectives of the rest of the Sino-Soviet bloc. If therefore Canada had been determined to withdraw from the International Control Commission in 1956, she would have had to do so in the face of strong disapproval from all of her friends and allies, with the possible exception of the United States, and with the possibility that the withdrawal of the Commission would have brought about the collapse of the Cease Fire Agreement. It was a responsibility that no Canadian Government could have undertaken.

CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES.

1. Pentagon Papers, Gravel edition, p. 239
2. External Affairs, Feb. 1955, pp. 34-37
3. ibid., Oct. 1954, p. 299
4. First Interim Report of the ICSC in Vietnam, Cmd. 9461, p. 21
5. C. Dagg, "The Three Hundred Days"; Unpublished manuscript, Ch 4/21
6. First Interim Report
7. Dagg, op. cit., 4/24
8. Fourth Interim Report, Cmd. 9654 p. 30
9. ibid.
10. D. Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina, p. 343
11. Pentagon Papers, Gravel edition, p. 575
12. Fourth Interim Report, Cmd. 9654, p. 12
13. First Interim Report, p. 23
14. Cmd. 9499, p. 9
15. ibid., p. 4
16. ibid., p.3
17. ibid.
18. Cmd. 9654
19. ibid., p. 12
20. ibid., p. 13
21. ibid., pp. 19-24
22. ibid., p. 20
23. ibid.
24. ibid., p. 24
25. Dagg, op. cit., 4/21
26. ibid.
27. ibid. N/4
28. ibid.
29. Cmd. 9239, p. 10
30. Pentagon Papers, p. 239
31. Cmd. 9706, pp. 18-19
32. Sixth Interim Report, Cmd. 31, p. 9
33. ibid., p. 10

CHAPTER V.

THE EFFECT OF INDIAN POLICY.

The membership of most peace-keeping groups has been carefully chosen to provide as objective an assessment of the situation as can possibly be obtained. The case of the ICC in Indochina was different; its membership was deliberately chosen to represent both sides in the cold war. In these circumstances the views of the third member became vitally important, and it is not too much to say that as time went on the decisions of the ICC reflected considerations of Indian foreign policy as much as they did events in Vietnam. In these circumstances some understanding of what considerations affected Indian foreign policy, and how that policy changed over the years that the International Commission was in existence, becomes necessary in assessing what the Commission accomplished.

The first, the most important, and the most obvious fact about Indian foreign policy is that it was non-aligned. At independence, when India could for the first time command the direction of her own foreign policy, Nehru chose not to align India with either of the great power blocs. The decision was Nehru's, for Nehru was for all practical purposes and for at least the first fifteen years of India's existence as an independent state, the sole arbiter of India's foreign policy. But the decision was fully supported by the overwhelming majority of Indians, at least until the direct attack on India by China in 1960 brought discontent to the surface and public opinion forced a still reluctant Nehru to abandon at least some of his basic assumptions.

There were several reasons for this general satisfaction with non-alignment, and one of them must surely be that the doctrine of ahimsa or non-violence goes a long way back in Indian history, and has been adopted by influ-

ential figures in Indian political life from the Emperor Asoka to Gandhi. The policy moreover gratified Indian pride - it gave India a distinctive voice in world councils, and one that was listened to with respect if also occasionally with irritation by the major powers. The knowledge that in being in favour of peace and against war they were on the side of the angels gave the Indians deep moral satisfaction, a moral satisfaction that often seemed moral arrogance to outsiders, conscious as they often were that the safety of the Indian position depended more on the current military stalemate than on anything within India's own control.

The more immediate and practical reasons for non-alignment were described by Nehru. Non-alignment, he declared, was "absolutely essential for our own progress and growth. And if there is a war, big or small, it comes in the way of that growth which is for us the primary factor."¹ He did not think the lack of military allies would be dangerous. "I do not conceive of any kind of invasion or attack on India.... Any country attacking India merely adds to its troubles."²

It was of course non-alignment that gave India her place on the Indo-china Commissions. Indians were inclined to go farther and to emphasize the impartiality of their position. But non-alignment is not necessarily disinterested, and India was to find neutrality a difficult tightrope to walk. In truth of course India was not in any real sense indifferent to the outcome of the conflict between communism and its opponents, particularly where the conflict occurred in her own back yard. An analysis of Indian attitudes to the Korean war and to the struggle for independence in Burma, Indonesia and Indochina offers some interesting and instructive differences.

India's attitude to the Korean war was not one of indifference to its outcome. India strongly objected to the U.N. Command's decision to carry the war beyond the 38th parallel, but the original invasion was also denounced, and

India supported the U.N. military action in Korea, although she refused to contribute troops. Nehru explained that a troop contribution would be beyond India's capacity, and would in any case make little difference to the outcome of the war. However, India made what contribution she could (comparable for instance to New Zealand's) and an Indian Medical Mission was sent to South Korea. Throughout the Korean war the Indian Ambassador in Peking was the unofficial point of contact between China and the United Nations. India first proposed the formation of a repatriation commission, and this suggestion was accepted by the General Assembly and rejected by the Chinese and North Koreans. An Indian served as chairman of the United Nations Repatriation Commission.³

In the early days of Indian independence, nationalist leaders in Vietnam and in Indonesia appealed to India for support in their struggle for independence. The appeal struck a deep responsive chord among Indians of all levels. One of the pillars of Indian foreign policy was support for anti-colonial movements wherever they might be found in the world, but in particular in Asia. There had been much indignation in India at the end of World War II that the British Government should have used Indian troops to suppress local opposition to the return of Dutch and French authority in Indonesia and Indochina. Nehru told a political rally in Jaipur, "We have watched British intervention there with growing anger, shame and helplessness that Indian troops should be thus used for doing Britain's dirty work against our friends who are fighting the same fight as we."⁴

But if Nehru was unwilling to see Indian troops intervening in Vietnam on behalf of the French, he was equally unwilling to see them intervene on the side of the Vietminh. When the Vietminh resumed hostilities in November, 1946, after the bombardment of Haiphong, Ho Chi Minh sent a delegate to India to ask for Indian help. The request was made to Sarat Chandra Bose, a member of Nehru's interim cabinet and as older brother of the Subhas Chandra Bose who had formed an

army to fight against the British during World War II. Bose was sympathetic, and called on Indians "to rush in thousands and tens of thousands to help the brave Vietnamese."⁵ The call was answered enthusiastically in many areas, and volunteers and supplies were collected for service with the Vietminh. But Nehru refused to make the necessary travel arrangements, or to allow Indian volunteers to proceed to Indochina on their own.

An Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi from March 23 to April 12, 1947. At this conference, attended by delegations from twenty five Asian countries, Nehru was under great pressure to permit evident Indian sympathy for the Vietminh to be expressed in more practical ways. As the Vietminh delegate said "We have used enough words about Asian unity. Now let us act."⁶ Nehru replied that the Government of India "could not give more than moral support." Nehru "did not see how the Government of India could be expected to declare war on France."⁷ The mixed feelings that India had about the Vietminh is reflected in the fact that there were indeed two Vietnamese delegations at the New Delhi Conference - one representing the Vietminh and one the rather ambiguous French-supported regimes of Cambodia, Laos and Cochin China.

Indian reaction to the independence movement in Indonesia was very different. When negotiations between the Dutch and the Indonesian Republic broke down in 1947, India brought the matter to the attention of the Security Council. In January, 1949, Nehru called a Conference on Indonesia in New Delhi. India denied all facilities to Dutch aircraft and shipping, and persuaded Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Saudi Arabia and Iraq to apply similar sanctions. India sent a Red Cross medical unit to Indonesia, granted asylum to Sultan Sjahir, and extended de facto recognition to the Indonesian Republic.⁸

The difference between the amount of help India was prepared to give to independence movements in Indonesia and Indochina is too striking to be ignored. For the Vietminh the Indian Government was prepared to do little more than to make

sympathetic noises in favour of independence and to denounce the French. (Although India finally did give some practical assistance to the Vietminh: in response to public pressure, and after repeated requests from Ho Chi Minh, in February 1947 India prohibited French operational or combat aircraft from flying across India, although permitting ambulance and other non-military planes to cross.)⁹ In the case of Indonesia, Indian help went much further and was concrete and valuable. The conclusion is inescapable - the Indian Government disliked colonialism, but it disliked Communism just as much. Where the two elements of anti-colonialism and Communism were inextricably mixed, the Indian Government would not betray its origins and its own emotional roots by supporting a colonial regime, but it would not deliberately help a communist power to entrench itself either.

It is interesting to speculate how Indian policy would have been altered toward Indochina if a genuine and strong nationalist movement had evolved in opposition to the Vietminh. Such speculation is particularly interesting in the light of the situation in Malaya, where Britain had declared her intention of not granting independence until the armed rebellion of the Malayan Communist party was crushed. The Indian Government openly condemned that rebellion. The Indian deputy minister of External Affairs declared that the Malayan insurgents were "bandits", and Nehru told a press conference in Singapore in 1951 that Indians disliked terrorism "intensely". "This method of terrorism is degrading to the whole human race and reduces men to the level of beasts."¹⁰

Similarly in Burma, where the Communists attempted to overthrow the government through armed rebellion, the Indian Government supplied the Government of U Nu with arms, ammunition and money, and in March 1950 India contributed one sixth of the six million pound loan raised by five Commonwealth governments to assist the Burmese in their fight against Communism. At home Nehru cracked down hard on Communist terrorism wherever it occurred, and banned the Communist party

itself in a number of states.¹¹

These two strands in Indian foreign policy, a desire to be independent of both the cold war power blocs, and an almost instinctive dislike and distrust of Communism, were to influence Indian decisions on the International Control Commission. The two strands were to some extent incompatible, and gave to Indian actions on the Commission a certain air of unpredictability. Too often the inherent contradictions in the Indian stand led simply to paralysis. Where it was not clear that Commission activity in any particular circumstance could make positive contribution to halting the spread of Communist influence, and where a decision in favour of activity would on the other hand require the Indian member to decide in favour of one side rather than the other, the Indians preferred to sit on the fence; the inspection team was not despatched to investigate a particular incident, or the letter of censure was not sent.

There was a third factor influencing Indian policy on the International Control Commissions. The Indians saw their role as primarily one of encouraging and helping to create confidence and goodwill between the parties, of removing suspicions and de-emphasizing differences of opinion. They saw their role mainly as that of a mediator, not of a judge, and they hoped that the ICC could act together to accomplish this task. It is significant that Krishna Menon, in announcing the final communique issued by the advance committee of the ICC that had worked out administrative procedures, chose to emphasize that "every delegation displayed a genuine desire to reconcile differences and come to unanimous decisions on every issue that was raised."¹² The harmonious accord that was possible in organizational and procedural matters was not to last very long when important political questions arose - and could hardly have been expected to do so. But the Indian desire to avoid confrontation both within and without the Commission was emphasized again and again in public statements. As M.J. Desai, the first chairman of the ICSC in Vietnam, described the task of the ICSC, its purpose was

"not to point the accusing finger but to investigate and lead both parties to fulfill assurances they had given at Geneva."¹³

Perhaps no tendency of the Indian member of the Commission was to arouse more frustration and irritation in successive Canadian Delegations than this refusal "to point the accusing finger" in cases where it was warranted. But this approach of the Indian Delegation had deeper foundations than the passing demands of Indian foreign policy, nor was it founded simply on the spinelessness and pusillanimity of individual Indians, as exasperated Canadians were inclined to suspect. The whole Indian attitude to law and judicial procedure, although it shared with Canadians a common background in English common law, was profoundly influenced also by an indigenous Indian tradition that had never touched Canadian experience. The difference between Anglo Saxon and Indian conceptions of justice has been expressed as follows:

"The adversary mode of western procedure ... is expected to result in a declaration that one side has won and the other lost. [Indian legal practise as expressed in] village tribunals, on the other hand, [tries] to compromise differences so that parties to a case can go home with the appearance at least of harmony and with their dignity intact.... The village tribunal, because its members reside among the disputing parties and find their own lives touched by their discontents, is less anxious to find "truth" and give "justice" than to abate conflict and promote harmony."¹⁴

These two strands of legal tradition continue today to exist side by side, and all Indians have to some extent been formed and influenced by both of them.

"India's dual legal system continues to exhibit three legal cultures: within the parochial system, where most legal behaviour is still to be found, non-official tribunals continue to use traditional procedure and customary law to settle disputes, maintain order, regulate change; within the national legal system, the official administration of justice relies primarily but not exclusively on British legal ideas, procedures and law; and influencing both are the social norms of Brahman high culture law."¹⁵

As Canadians, we are perhaps too ready to accept the norms of our own particular system as the only acceptable ones, the "justice" achieved by our own

judicial system as the only possible definition of the word. Canadians should not forget that there are both other goals and other methods, and that these goals and methods are as honored and as valid for other societies as ours are valid for us. We need not necessarily accept the proposition that these other forms of justice are the best possible ways to tackle international problems, but we should at least understand that we are likely to encounter them in serving on international tribunals, and we should be flexible enough to recognise them for what they are and to retain at the very least our understanding, our equanimity and our temper in dealing with them.

Although the main goals of Indian foreign policy and the predispositions and attitudes of Indians conducting that policy have remained reasonably constant since independence, the changing balance of power in the Pacific has exerted an influence on the ways that India has gone about attaining these goals. In particular the victory of the Communists in China and the conflict between American and Communist influence in Vietnam have dictated shifts in Indian policy. The anti-Communist bias of Indian policy has remained, but the fact that a powerful Communist state now exists on India's northern frontier has dictated greater caution in expressing that bias. Nor have Indians been in favour of what they consider the frequently provocative American military presence in Asia, particularly as expressed in military alliance such as SEATO. Indian opposition to SEATO has been often expressed, and India refused to become a member. Indians have both privately and publicly warned Americans that China's fears for her safety must not be deliberately aroused.

Tensions developed early between China and India over the Tibetan question. The KMT Government in China had claimed sovereignty over Tibet, but it was exercised so loosely that Tibet existed almost as an independent country. This situation suited India very well. Then in 1950 the new regime in Peking claimed and imposed full authority over Tibet, and there was alarm and objection

from New Delhi. In 1954 the Chinese seized the opportunity with the Geneva Conference on Indochina to inaugurate a warmer and more relaxed era in Sino-Indian relations. Chou En Lai visited India on his way to China during the Geneva Conference, and an agreement was signed between the two countries on the "five principles of peaceful co-existence", or panchasheel. The agreement was highly gratifying to Indian susceptibilities, based as it was on Nehru's contribution to the philosophy of international detente, and it alleviated Indian fears for Chinese intentions, with its provision for mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and non-aggression.

The era of goodwill begun so auspiciously on the eve of the ICC's debut continued, and reached its highest point a year later at the Bandung Conference of non-aligned states. "Sino-Indian friendship reached its zenith in Bandung in April 1955. In the Bandung Conference of Asian-African nations, Chou En Lai and Nehru worked in closest co-operation with each other." It is reasonable to infer that the removal of India's anxieties concerning the safety of her northern border and the relaxed and friendly attitude toward China that had been inaugurated in this new era would have made India anxious to avoid disturbing the new relationship by decisions in the ICC that would not be welcome to China.

Then through the year 1959 steady Chinese pressure and a series of incidents on the northern boundary eroded the good feeling that had been built up over the previous five years. In January of that year Chou En Lai wrote to Nehru questioning the validity of the established border between India and China. In March there was an uprising in Tibet leading to hostilities between the Tibetans and Chinese armed forces. The Dalai Lama fled to India, and a storm of anti-Chinese feeling swept through India. Nehru, with the whole basis of his foreign policy threatened, struggled to restore calm and to play down the incident. The Dalai Lama was granted asylum, but the Tibetans were refused any further help inside Tibet. In July and October there were border incidents, with Chinese troops

firing on Indian border patrols. On September 8, 1959, China formally laid claim to 50,000 square miles of Indian territory.

The Prime Ministers and teams of officials met throughout 1960 to try to settle the border question, but without success. Then in September and October of 1962 the Chinese launched a full scale attack in both eastern and western sectors of the border. Indian troops proved to be badly prepared and supplied, and India suffered a rapid and humiliating defeat. On November 27, 1962, the Chinese troops suddenly broke off the engagement and withdrew, leaving behind the broken pieces of the Sino-Indian accord.

But in August, 1954, when the International Control Commission began its work this unhappy break in Sino-Indian relations was not even a cloud on the horizon. In fact a new era of peaceful co-operation appeared to have been ushered in. The far-reaching significance of Chou En Lai's visit to New Delhi in June, 1954 and of the agreement based on panchasheel that emerged from that visit seems to have been only dimly perceived in the west. To western statesmen whose experience of non-aggression pacts had made them cynical, the five principles of peaceful co-existence sounded like pious platitudes. But Nehru and the Indian people took them seriously. Nehru believed that changes in the direction of Communist bloc policy after Stalin's death and particularly the determination to bring about a negotiated settlement in Indochina heralded a new era in international relations. He believed that the Soviet Union and China were both genuinely seeking a period of relaxed tensions, and that this development should be welcomed in the west. The rather uneasy situation that had existed on India's northern border after the Chinese army occupied Tibet appeared now to have been dissolved, and Nehru was very anxious that new confrontations between the United States and China in Asia should not jeopardise the new era of entente. The Indian leaders believed that events had justified their approach, and that confrontation and power politics were out of place in the new atmosphere in Asia.

They were correspondingly impatient with all who wanted to bring confrontation into the settlement of disputes, within or without the International Control Commission.

If the Indians had been impressed with the peaceableness of Chinese policy, contrasted with what appeared to be the unwarranted belligerency of the Americans, they were equally impressed by what seemed to be the sweet reasonableness of the DRVN. "For at least two years after the Geneva Conference of 1954, India's relations with the DRVN were far more cordial than with the government of South Vietnam."¹⁷ The DRVN had signed the Geneva Agreements, and had, in Indian eyes, "in words and deeds largely demonstrated its willingness to implement the Geneva Agreements."¹⁸ Not only had the RVN not signed the Agreement, it took every possible occasion to express its dissatisfaction with the Agreement's provisions. (In its strident opposition to the Geneva pact, the RVN in fact often seemed less co-operative than in the event it turned out to be.) When Nehru returned from a visit to Peking in October, 1954, he stopped off in Saigon, where the rancorous public demonstrations that greeted him on arrival contrasted unfavourably with the warmth and cordiality of his public reception in Hanoi a few days earlier. Some months later the South Vietnamese Government chose the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreement (July 20, 1955) to demonstrate its dissatisfaction by mob attacks on the Saigon quarters of the Polish and Indian officers serving in the ICC¹⁹ - attacks that can only have had official sanction and approval. Throughout the history of the Vietnam Commission, this contrast, between the prudent and careful policy of the regime in the north toward the ICC and the intemperate folly of the Saigon government, was to continue to plague the efforts of the Canadian Delegation to secure a fair hearing for the South's cause. Many a case with genuine merit failed to secure the approval of a majority on the Commission, simply because of inefficiency or sheer 'bloody-mindedness' on the part of South Vietnamese government or officials.

A dispassionate appraisal of the survival chances of the two regimes in 1954 can hardly have pre-disposed the Indians in favour of the regime in the south. Vietnam south of the seventeenth parallel was divided among quarreling religious sects and their armies, and the capital city itself was under the thumb of the Binh Xuyen, a gang of river pirates who ran the gambling casinos and the police. The only advantage Diem appeared to enjoy was his certainty of American support. It would not be surprising if the Indians had agreed with Eisenhower that in 1954 80 percent of the people were likely to vote for Ho Chi Minh.

There was another factor. From my own experience, I should say that the prejudices of the individual members of Indian Delegations were not evenly divided between the north and the south. Although Indians, so far as I am aware, were always unanimous in their disapproval of the heavy-handed dictatorship that existed in North Vietnam, paradoxically the regime in South Vietnam was disliked much more than the regime in the north. This undoubtedly arose partly because the members of the Commission were much more isolated in North Vietnam than they were in the south, and in large measure they were unaware of the day to day effect of government policy in North Vietnam. For all of the Saigon government's dislike of opposition and its attempts to eliminate it, the defects and deficiencies of the administration in the south were there for all to see. The individual members of the Indian Delegation were irritated beyond measure by the hypocrisies of the Diem government, in particular, in South Vietnam. The Indians knew at first hand what a democracy was like. They enjoyed free speech at home, and saw that a government could operate perfectly safely and effectively in the face of often vigorous political opposition. In South Vietnam the government paid lip service to individual freedom and to liberty and democracy, but it persecuted and jailed and tortured all who were suspected of being less than enthusiastic in their support for those in power. The Indians tended to shrug their shoulders when these things happened in the north - what can you expect of Communists after all?

But in the south these were regarded as grave defects. I suspect that it was this irritable contempt for what they saw as south Vietnamese hypocrisy that lay at the root of some Indian-Polish majority decisions against South Vietnam, and particularly where charges were violations of Article 14c, the article guaranteeing the preservation of "democratic freedoms."

Analysts have at times tried to divine the trend of Indian policy in Southeast Asia by counting the number of times the Indians sided with the Poles against the Canadians in citing South Vietnam for violations of the Geneva Agreement, and subtracting the number of times they sided with the Canadians against the Poles. The arithmetical result is then held to represent the extent of Indian sympathy for and support of North Vietnam. The lack of detail in most of the Commission's reports and the deliberately undramatic method of presentation perhaps make such simplistic methods inevitable. More sophisticated analysis yields rather more interesting results.

In the early days of the Vietnam Commission, the differences and disagreements among the three members of the Commission did not appear on the surface; unanimous decisions were arrived at and the first three Interim Reports of the ICC for Vietnam show unanimous conclusions. This situation reflected the over-riding Indian concern to achieve a consensus. The fact that this early period of apparent harmony co-incided with the Commission's period of maximum usefulness has always appeared to Indian observers as proof that the one was the pre-condition of the other. The parties were prepared to pay attention to the Commission when it spoke with one voice; when it spoke with many, it lost its authority. This conclusion of course ignores the fact that the Polish Delegate was never independent - the Polish vote represented only what the DRVN wished or was prepared to concede. It could more reasonably be argued that the Commission's successes during the early period rested on Indian willingness to abandon attempts to achieve agreement between the parties and to impose a solution by the Commission where attempts to achieve agreement had evidently failed. The transfer of

Haiphong from French Union forces to the PAVN provides a good example. In the earlier transfer of Hanoi, the Commission "had tried to leave the two High Commissions to work out their disputes between themselves."²⁰ Haiphong, however, presented a different set of problems. Disputes arose over what property and equipment was to be transferred to the south. The three hundred days during which withdrawals could be made were drawing to a close. In these circumstances delay helped the PAVN, for anything not evacuated by the May 18 deadline must be left behind. The Indian chairman was not willing to carry inactivity to the point where it would give one side an unfair advantage. "The inability of the ... High Commands to work in concert ... caused a remarkable shift in the Commission's positions with respect to the role it was willing to play in the Haiphong transfer. Whereas in November it was willing to take the part of observer, and, if necessary, of conciliator, it had by February accepted the responsibility for ruling on the justification for each and every removal"²¹ The Haiphong transfer took place on time, and the ICC solution, "imposed on the parties" was "based on what seemed sensible, fair and practical,"²² not on compromise.

The first break in unanimity came with the Fourth Interim Report, when the Canadian Delegation submitted two amendments, one amplifying the record of the Commission's efforts to ensure freedom of movement for all those wishing to change zones, (article 14d),²³ and placing on the record in greater detail the efforts of the DRVN to obstruct the free exercise of this right, and the other explaining the difficulties of the French High Command in fulfilling its obligations in South Vietnam where authority had been transferred to the Government of the RVN. The report does not show the Indian Delegation as disagreeing with the Canadian Delegation in principle, but as evidently being unwilling to blame one party more than the other.

From the fifth interim report to the ninth (which covers the period up to January 31, 1959), the official record of the ICC gives an impression of con-

tinual violations of the Geneva Agreement by the South, and of largely Indian-Polish majority decisions. There were thirteen occasions on which India sided with Poland, and only six on which Canada and India formed a majority. The DRVN made good use of the official figures; DRVN propagandists and their friends could quote an impressive number of times in which the Commission had found the RVN guilty of non-co-operation or of violation of the Agreement (each citation usually covered a number of individual cases.) But as the Canadian-Indian majority noted in the eleventh interim report,

" ... there have been many instances of non-co-operation by both Parties which have impeded the work of the Commission and its Teams. These have not in all cases reached the stage of formal citations because of evasions and lack of co-operation on the part of the Party concerned. For this reason the two Delegations agree that, in the experience of the Commission, the number of formal citations in itself is no fair measure of the degree of co-operation received from either party."²⁵

The DRVN recognized the value of the ICC as a means of presenting their case against the South, and the Commission was usually flooded with complaints from the DRVN's Liason Mission to the ICC. Full details concerning the alleged violations were provided, and usually within a few days of the event. (This fact alone was proof of the extent and effectiveness of the DRVN's agencies in the south.) The RVN of course did not have an equivalent network in the north, and most of their complaints concerned DRVN activities south of the seventeenth parallel, complaints that the Commission for so long refused to consider.

But although the Commission's decisions in favour of the DRVN were morally damaging to the south, not one in all this time had the effect of diminishing the south's military potential or of weakening its security. Of the thirteen Indian-Polish decisions against South Vietnam, six concerned Article 21 (Prisoners of war and Civilian Internees); two concerned Article 14c (reprisals or discrimination against persons or organizations on account of their activities during the hostilities); one was in response to a South Vietnamese failure to

supply information on MAAG (the U.S. Military Aid Advisory Group); one concerned time limitations on team movements; and only three were concerned with Articles 16 and 17 (ban on the introduction of fresh troops, arms and munitions). Of the latter, two seem to be concerned with failure to notify, and one disallowed the importation of armoured launches into Vietnam before any credits under Article 17 had been established. "The Commission has, however, adjusted this introduction against a credit given subsequently."²⁶

There were, however, some cases when the Commission agreed unanimously that arms and munitions had been imported into Vietnam in violation of Article 17. In most cases, these violations were probably technical ones, and involved failure to notify the Commission's teams in time. In fact, of course, at least until military operations in South Vietnam increased after 1961, there was no need for the RVN to import war material illegally. Article 17c of the Geneva Agreement for Vietnam provides that "war material, arms and munitions which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cessation of hostilities may be replaced on the basis of piece for piece of the same type and with similar characteristics." The French Union forces in Vietnam had never suffered from want of equipment, and the credits which established what they had possessed in July, 1954, were ample to meet the requirements of the RVN forces until the introduction of U.S. troops in 1962.

In other ways the voting of the Indian delegation shows India's concern to preserve the balance of strength in Vietnam. The DRVN had never on any occasion notified the ICC of importation of war material, nor had the Commission ever found any in their routine checks, even though Article 17c of the Agreement allows the DRVN also to import replacements for material used up or worn out. This does not mean that the Commission was unaware that war material had been imported. Particularly after 1960, the DRVN did not even take great pains to hide the fact. (On one occasion the Commission team inspecting Gia Lam airport

outside of Hanoi saw helicopters with Russian markings in the process of being repainted.) If the Commission's teams were unable to stop the import of war material, they were nevertheless able to form a fairly shrewd idea of the military strength of both sides - the teams were after all made up of trained military observers and were stationed at widely spaced teamsites within each country. The Indian awareness of North Vietnam's military strength may well have affected their decision with regard to American assistance to South Vietnam.

On April 25, 1956 the Commission received a request for the entry of 350 military personnel of the U.S. Army Service Corps into South Vietnam, constituting a mission called TERM - Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission - "whose duties would be to examine war material and military equipment lying in South Vietnam which was the property of the U.S. Government for the purpose of selecting material to be exported from Vietnam and to protect and preserve this material."²⁷ The Commission asked for assurances that the functions of TERM would be solely as described, and for further details. It was of course expected that this mission would soon complete its duties and leave.

Complaints had also been received from the DRVN concerning the presence in Vietnam of the American training mission, the Military Aid Advisory Group (MAAG), a presence that was alleged to constitute proof of the existence of a military alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Vietnam. Asked to comment, the RVN replied that MAAG had been in existence since 1950, and that it had never exceeded its original strength nor had there been any change in its activities.²⁸ The Commission asked for further details, which the RVN was slow in supplying.

This therefore was where matters stood at the end of 1959, up to the end of the period covered by the Ninth Interim Report. India had often appeared to be more sympathetic to Hanoi than to Saigon. But the Commission's decisions, although gratifying to the DRVN, were not ones that were really very important. The Indian Delegation during this time were able to postpone making a decision

on TERM or MAAG, although by the very act of postponement they were tacitly allowing the existing military aid to South Vietnam to continue.

On the question of subversion also the Indian Delegation dragged its feet. This problem will be treated more fully in the next chapter, but briefly the subversion issue refers to complaints the Commission had been receiving from the South Vietnamese Liaison Mission for years, charging that acts of terrorism and murder and of armed insurrection against the Government of the RVN had been planned and directed from north of the seventeenth parallel. Subversion as such was not mentioned in the Geneva Agreement, and the Polish Delegation claimed that the South Vietnamese complaints did not, in the legal phrase, "attract" the Geneva Agreement and therefore the ICC could not deal with them. The Commission's Legal Committee examined this question, and concluded, by an Indian-Canadian majority (June, 1956) that the complaints did attract the Geneva Agreement. When the Legal Committee report came before the Commission, the Indian member changed sides and voted with the Polish delegate to send the question back to the Legal Committee (November, 1956). What the Indian Delegation had done of course was to keep all its options open. The majority decision of the Legal Committee was there if the Indians wanted to use it, but it could continue to be buried at the Committee stage if they should not.

The subversion issue was undoubtedly a very difficult one for the Indian Government. Whether or not the Hanoi regime was directing the insurrection in the south went to the heart of the whole question of American intervention. If the Saigon Government was in fact threatened by an external danger, then the American intervention was morally justified. If on the other hand the war in Vietnam was a civil war, conducted by an oppressed people against a repressive regime, American intervention was much harder to justify. This explains the extreme sensitivity that both the Polish Delegation and the Government of the DRVN displayed to the question of subversion.²⁹ And it also explains the reluctance of

the Indian Delegation to have anything to do with the thorny question, as long as they could put off making a decision. A decision either way on the subversion question would inevitably have been interpreted as proof that the Indians had chosen one side over the other.

Until the end of 1959, then, the Indian Delegation appeared from the record to have been more favourably disposed to the DRVN than to the RVN. Then, beginning with the Tenth Interim Report a change occurred, and a series of decisions that were unfavourable to the DRVN was recorded by the Commission. Two separate and apparently unrelated chains of events explain the change.

In December, 1959, there occurred the attack on the RVN army post at Thai Ninh near the Cambodian border that signaled a new phase in the war in Vietnam. Throughout 1959 the mounting assassination campaign had threatened the RVN Government control over villages all through Vietnam, and now practically the entire far western part of the country passed permanently into the hands of the Viet Cong. The end of 1959 saw a significant worsening of relations between China and India. In September, 1959, China had laid formal claim to 50,000 square miles of Indian territory. Strained relations culminated in Chinese attacks on Indian border patrols in September and October, 1962. Positions were becoming increasingly polarised in Southeast Asia, and the Indian Delegation was swept unhappily along in the wake of the gathering storm. Decisions in the tenth and eleventh Interim Reports and in the Special Report to the co-chairmen of June 2, 1962, reflected that increasing Indian involvement.

The last two regular Interim Reports of the Vietnam Commission (the eleventh and twelfth), show that the number of Polish-Indian majority decisions were now exactly balanced by the number of Canadian-Indian majority decisions - eleven each. But while the Polish-Indian majorities were in questions concerning Articles 14c, 14d and 21 (airport controls and the Demilitarized Zone), the Indian-Canadian decisions were far more significant, affecting as they did in several important ways the ability of the RVN Government to resist the challenges

to its authority within Vietnam. These decisions concerned TERM, MAAG, Law 10/59 and Subversion.

Mounting threats to the authority of the RVN Government resulted in the passing of a law that would in effect substitute military courts for civil for crimes against the state. The Commission received a complaint from the PAVN Liaison Mission that this law was being used in ways that would violate Article 14c. In April, 1960, the Commission decided (Canadian-Indian majority) that "... the law does not contain any provision specifically designed to discriminate against, or subject to reprisals, persons or organizations on account of their activities during the hostilities, and therefore Law 10/59 as such does not attract Article 14c or any other Article of the Geneva Agreement."³⁰

TERM had originally been introduced into Vietnam in 1956. The Commission had originally expected that its activities would end within a few months. There was widespread suspicion, no doubt well founded, that TERM officers were being used to train Vietnamese troops. Now, in December, 1959, the Polish delegate insisted that TERM be wound up immediately and the officers concerned be required to leave Vietnam within two months. The Indian Delegation voted with the Canadian to allow TERM's extension for another full year - until December 31, 1960.³¹

If the Indian Delegation had hoped that the question of MAAG's legality could be postponed indefinitely, it was to be disappointed. In April, 1960, the Saigon Government informed the Commission that it had requested the U.S. Government to increase the strength of MAAG from 342 (the number in Vietnam before the Geneva Agreement and the number that was therefore allowable) to 685. It was pointed out that this figure would still be below the combined strength of 888 MAAG and French instructors present in Vietnam at the time of the armistice. Whether American Advisers could be permitted to replace French under the terms of the terms of the Geneva Agreement was far less certain, and a good case could

certainly be made that they were not. However, the Indian Delegation proposed simply sending a letter to the Government of the RVN stating that "the Commission had noted the contents of the party's letter pertaining to the subject and that the Commission understood that additional military instructors will not be introduced except in conformity with the procedure stipulated in Article 16f and g of the Geneva Agreement."³² With the Polish Delegation dissenting, the letter was sent.

Finally, the deteriorating situation in Vietnam caused the Indian Government to decide at last to grasp the nettle of subversion. On June 24, 1961, a Canadian-Indian decision was taken that the Commission had "the competence and duty to entertain and investigate such complaints."³³ Subsequently the Legal Committee examined specific complaints and concluded that "there is evidence to show that armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies have been sent from the zone in the north to the zone in the south with the object of supporting, organizing and carrying out hostile activities, including armed attacks directed against the Armed Forces and Administration of the zone in the south."³⁴ The Commission also concluded that in receiving increased military aid from the United States after December, 1961, the South Vietnamese had been guilty of violation of Articles 16, 17 and 19 of the Geneva Agreement.³⁵

This report marked the high water mark of India's willingness to indict the north for its part in the civil war in Vietnam. A further Special Report to the co-chairmen³⁶ called their attention to the serious situation created in Vietnam by U.S. bombing attacks on military installations in North Vietnam. The Indian Delegation refused again to couple U.S. action with the DRVN's direction of the war in the south, and it was left to the Canadian Delegation in a minority report to do so and to quote from the 1962 Special Report to this effect.³⁷

The Commission's decisions on Law 10/59, TERM, MAAG and Subversion placed a severe strain on relations between the DRVN and India. Violent demonstrations took place in North Vietnam against both Delegations, but the main

force of the attack was against the Indians. Three months after the 1962 Special Report was made China and India were at war. The DRVN refrained from publicly supporting China in this event, perhaps as much because of concern to keep its relations with the USSR and China in balance as out of tenderness for Indian feelings. It was not until 1963 that the DRVN openly supported the Chinese.³⁸

Was the trend of decisions that were unfavourable to the DRVN after 1959 attributable to Indian difficulties with the Chinese? The DRVN certainly thought so, and taxed the Indian Delegate directly with the charge. (The Indian Delegate denied that this was so.)³⁹ As we have seen, however, these decisions were all in keeping with India's reluctance to see Communism make further gains in Southeast Asia, and earlier events in Indian foreign policy might have forecast their outcome. On the other hand would the Indian Delegation have been quite so forthcoming if Indian relations with the Chinese had been better? Perhaps we can say tentatively that the decisions on increased U.S. military assistance would not have been different, but that the clear statement on subversion may well have been an involuntary gift from the Chinese.

This does not at all mean that the Indian decision on subversion was based on political grounds without any regard for the merits of the case. If the Indians had thought that the RVN's case was unfounded, it would have been only too glad so to decide at an early date, permanently burying an embarrassing issue that, as it was, remained a bomb ticking in the cellar for years. The Indians did try to balance their condemnation of North Vietnam with a finding that South Vietnam had also violated the Geneva Agreement, but the impact of the two statements was not equal. The DRVN had never admitted it was implicated in the civil war in Vietnam. Both the U.S. and the RVN on the other hand freely admitted that the extent of U.S. aid was greater than that permitted by the Geneva Agreement, but they pleaded the necessity of combatting attacks from the DRVN. The Commission's decision provided support for that justification.

Although, as we have seen, there is little support in the record for the proposition that India favoured the DRVN in its decisions, in another way the demands of Indian foreign policy had an unfortunate effect on the way the Commission was able to carry out its duties. The first requirement of Indian foreign policy was perhaps less that it should be non-aligned than that it should be clearly seen to be non-aligned. As the inherently unstable situation in Vietnam drifted towards open warfare, it became more and more difficult for India to avoid coming down on one side or the other. For as long as she possibly could India avoided commitment, and the easiest way to do this was to be as inactive as possible - to postpone decisions for as long as possible, and above all to avoid conducting investigations that might turn up embarrassing results. As a consequence, what ability the Commission might have had to make any contribution to peace was severely crippled.

Although India welcomed her appointment to the ICC as an opportunity to play an active role in an area that was important to her, the results of her involvement can hardly have been a subject for congratulation. The Indian history on the ICC proves that in a fiercely contested game the lot of the umpire is a hard one. In the end neither Saigon nor Hanoi wanted continued Indian involvement. The absence of India's name from every list of proposed members for the new ICC's arising out of the US-DRVN negotiations may have been a relief; it must also surely have been a humiliation.

CHAPTER V FOOTNOTES.

1. M. Brecher, Nehru, a Political Biography, p. 356
2. ibid.
3. K.R. Pilai, India's Foreign Policy, p. 36
4. New York Times, January 1, 1946, p. 11
5. Times, London, January 22, 1947
6. Proceedings of the Conference, quoted in K.G. Bhansali, India's Role in the Settlement of the Indochina Conflict, Unpublished PhD Thesis, p. 31
7. ibid., p. 32
8. D.R. SarDesai, Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, p. 14
9. ibid., p. 18
10. ibid., p. 17
11. ibid.
12. New York Times, August 7, p. 3
13. London Times, September 27, 1954, p. 18
14. L.G. and S.H. Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India, p. 258
15. ibid., p. 254
16. Pilai, op. cit. p. 16
17. SarDesai, op. cit., p. 75
18. ibid.,
19. Fourth Interim Report, Cmd. 9654, p. 16
20. Dagg, op. cit., p. L 1
21. ibid., p. L 14
22. ibid., p. N 4
23. Cmd. 9654, pp. 19-24
24. ibid., pp. 24-25
25. Cmd. 1551, 1961
26. Eighth Interim Report, Cmd. 509, 1958
27. Sixth Interim Report, Cmd. 31, 1957, p. 25
28. Seventh Interim Report, Cmd. 335, 1957, p. 17
29. I was present at a meeting of the Vietnam Commission late in 1960 when it appeared for a moment as if the Indians might be on the point of bringing the subversion question back from the Legal Committee. The entire Polish Delegation turned green and clutched the edge of the table.
30. Eleventh Interim Report, Cmd. 1551, 1961, p. 9
31. Tenth Interim Report, Cmd. 1040, 1960, p. 19
32. Eleventh Interim Report, p. 18
33. SarDesai, op. cit., p. 203
34. Special Report to the co-chairmen, Cmd. 1955, 1962, p. 7
35. ibid., p. 10
36. Cmd. 2609, 1965, February 13, 1965
37. ibid., pp. 12-15
38. SarDesai, op. cit., p. 208
39. ibid., p. 202

CHAPTER VI.

THE FINAL YEARS.

July 21, 1956, the date on which elections were to be held that were to unite all of Vietnam, passed with scarcely a ripple to mark the occasion. When the RVN refused to send delegates to confer with the DRVN on preparations for the elections, there was nothing that the Commission could do except to take note of the fact. But no member, even Canada, which was always the most anxious to limit commitments, seems to have seriously contemplated winding up the Commission. John Holmes has said that by the summer of 1955 he was "already convinced there would be no elections, and I raised the question whether we should stay on or not."¹ But "We never walked out because we feared the vacuum that would be created if we did."² If the members could have foreseen that their task would last for another sixteen years, and that it would be carried out in increasing ineffectiveness and frustration, would their reactions have differed? At the time, what was certain was that the situation in July 1956 was infinitely preferable to that of July 1954. The withdrawal of the Commission would have been the sign of the collapse of the Geneva Agreements, and would probably have been followed by a renewal of the bitter fighting that had torn Indochina into rival factions. No member of the Commission would have cared to take the responsibility for bringing about the collapse of the Geneva Agreement, no matter how shaky the structure might have been.

By 1956, both North and South Vietnam appeared to be more evenly matched than two years before. The French army left in April of that year, but the Americans were pouring aid into Vietnam, both economic and military. Diem had subdued the sects, with their private armies, and the area south of the seventeenth parallel seemed more settled and unified than it had been. The enormous influx of Catholic refugees had placed a great strain on the regime, but with foreign aid

they had been settled and provided a bloc of support for the new President, Ngo Dinh Diem, and a pool of talent for the new Government. (The fact that so many northerners were in positions of power in Diem's government was of course a weakness as well, because their prominence was often resented by the Cochinese who formed the bulk of the population.) In the north, great strides had been made with the help of Soviet and Chinese aid, but the regime was still not completely in control. The over-zealous application of a land reform scheme copied from the Chinese and ill suited to Vietnamese conditions had resulted in a great burst of resentment against the Government. In October a full scale rebellion was under way among some small farmers, and the army had to be called out to subdue it. There were several shortages of food in the North, which had even under the French been a net importer of food.

The Geneva Agreements had been a compromise, as all such Agreements are. The Communist bloc secured the greater advantage because they held the stronger position militarily, and this too is characteristic of all Agreements that end wars. The Soviet Union and Chinese wanted a period of peace and consolidation, and so they were willing to restrain the Vietnamese and to bring the fighting to an end before North Vietnam's ultimate goals had been won. In exchange, they gained assurances that Indochina would be neutralized. The North Vietnamese were promised elections that they, and undoubtedly every one else too, expected would give them the South peacefully in two years time. By 1956, it was evident that the situation as it had been stabilized by the Geneva Agreements had been very much altered. The U.S. had replaced France as the main friend and support of South Vietnam, and it was unlikely that the new situation would be acceptable to the Russians or the Chinese, let alone the DRVN.

The DRVN had other reasons besides frustrated ambitions to seek to reunify Vietnam by force. Most of Vietnam's mineral resources and what industry there was was located north of the seventeenth parallel, but the area had never been self-supporting in food production. Access to the rice producing areas of

the Mekong Delta was therefore vitally necessary to North Vietnam if it was to feed its own population.

In several respects therefore the chances for long term success of the ICC's peacekeeping had worsened. The Commission was no longer operating in an area that had been neutralized, but in one in which at least two of the Great Powers were in direct confrontation. No other peacekeeping mission has had to operate in these circumstances. (It is significant that when a confrontation situation evolved in the Middle East, the heretofore successful UN peacekeeping operation had to be withdrawn. When in 1967 Egypt felt strong enough with Soviet aid to tackle Israel, she asked UNEF to leave. The UN force was withdrawn immediately, and it has never gone back.)

The ICC was not equipped to undertake a peacekeeping job that would last for years. It had no organization to report to, no-one to provide logistic support, no-one to alter its terms of reference when they became out of date. With personnel that never exceeded a few hundred, it was responsible for protecting the "Democratic liberties" of those who might be persecuted for what side they had chosen to fight on before 1954, for preventing the import of war material over amounts allowed under the Geneva Agreement, for preventing armed attacks across the border. It is worth remembering for purposes of comparison that UNEF's "sole important duty" was to prevent infiltration over the border, and that it required a force of 5,000 men and an annual expenditure of approximately \$17,250,000 to patrol a frontier of less than 200 miles, more than half of which ran through a desert. Even then sporadic raids across the border occurred.³ The ICC was moreover required to operate in the territory of parties, one of which had never considered itself bound by the Geneva Agreement, and the other had in practise bent every effort to frustrating the efforts of the ICC to fulfill its obligations.

In the early months, particularly during the first three hundred days, the Commission made a useful contribution, not only in the lessening of international tensions, but useful in the opinion of the parties. Both sides wanted

to end the fighting and separate their forces with as little further bloodshed as possible, and were happy to have the ICC around to settle disputes. But once the period of re-settlement and re-location had been completed, the ICC could only be a nuisance if it were to do the thorough job of investigating and reporting that it was supposed to do. Both sides settled down to using the Commission for whatever propaganda advantage they could get out of it, and frustrating any effort of the Commission to prevent them from doing what they wished to do. In the process, the prestige and authority of the Commission simply drained away. The mere passage of time also diminished the authority of the ICC. In the beginning, when the Geneva Conference was fresh in men's minds and when the Commission's activities commanded the attention of the world's press, its recommendations were likely to be heeded because flouting the authority of the Commission would be sure to bring unfavourable publicity. Five years later the Commission was no longer news; its pronouncements could safely be ignored because they were unlikely to attract much attention.

During the first few months of the Commission's life, practices developed or gaps in the Agreement became evident that were to affect very much the day to day operations and the effectiveness of the Commission. The methods were perhaps not of great significance at the time, but they were to become so later. The first part of the Cease Fire became effective six days after the signing of the Geneva Agreement, the last twenty one days later. There was no time to think out procedures ahead of time - the Commission had to devise its methods as it went along. This involved

"... taking decisions on such fundamental and crucial issues as the right of the Commission and its teams to move freely in Vietnam, the criteria to be used when determining whether a violation of the Agreement had occurred, the extent to which the Commission should take the initiative in verifying the implementation of the clauses of the armistice agreement, and the degree to which the Commission could dictate its will to the two High Commands. In short, the decisions made were

of such a nature that they determined the Commission's course and, indeed, its role in Vietnamese affairs, not only for the short term but for the duration of its existence. ... later ... the Commission was to become inflexible, unable or unwilling to change its direction or to reform its methods once they had been set. It was to become an organization unduly bound by precedents, many of them unfortunate and many dating from the three hundred days."⁴

Some of the factors which were to influence the capacity of the Commission to do the job assigned to it, particularly for the long term, were finance, freedom to investigate, and the rule of precedent.

Finance.

It was decided at Geneva that the costs involved in the operation of the Joint Commission and of its Joint Groups, and of the International Commission and its inspection teams, would be shared equally between the two parties. The contributions were established in detail at the initial meeting of the Supervisory powers (India, Canada and Poland) in New Delhi in 1954. The pay and allowances of all personnel were borne by the Supervisory powers. "Common Pool" expenses - food, lodging, medical services and transportation to and from the home country of Delegation personnel was borne by the contributing powers - China, France, the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. - in equal shares. Local expenses - particularly local transport - was assumed by the parties to the Geneva Agreement (i.e. the DRVN and France) in equal shares.

France later claimed that she had paid more than her legitimate share, and in December 1956 the French National Assembly voted to allow no further sums for the expenses of the Commission. In fact when India raised money to fill the gap, France claimed a refund for previous overpayment. When the French High Command withdrew from South Vietnam in August, 1956, the French Liaison Mission went too, and the Liaison Mission had provided transport for the ICC in both the North and the South.

Contributions were always late, and the Commission was perpetually in dire straits. This was particularly serious so far as expenses for local transport were concerned. The original equipment was never replaced, and became increasingly hard to repair. It was all too easy for both parties, who were each responsible for the care and maintenance of Commission vehicles in their own zone, to claim that patrols could not be undertaken because the Commission's cars and jeeps were under repair or were unsafe. The problem was so serious that the provision of transport to be owned and maintained by the Commission itself became one of the principal aims of the Canadian Delegation at the second Geneva Conference on Laos in 1962.

Freedom to investigate.

The Geneva Agreement did not give the International Commission the power to move freely in all parts of Vietnam. Fourteen Fixed Team sites were named in the Geneva Agreement, seven in the north and seven in the south. (These sites were also the points of entry for rotation of personnel and replacement of material.) The Commission was also empowered to establish mobile inspection teams, and the zones of action of the mobile teams were to be 'the regions bordering the land and sea frontiers of Vietnam, the demarcation lines between the re-grouping zones and the demilitarized zones. Within the limits of these zones they shall have the right to move freely...." "Beyond the zones of action as defined above, the mobile teams may, by agreement with the command of the party concerned, carry out other movements within the limit of the tasks given them by the present agreement." (Article 35)

The wording of Article 35 restricted the movement of mobile teams, but not of Fixed teams. During the early months of the Commission's life the Canadian Delegation fought hard to give the teams as much freedom and independence as possible. Communist bloc delegations at Geneva had insisted that any supervisory

body should respect the independence and sovereignty of the Parties. At an early meeting of the ICC, the three Delegations were in accord that Fixed Teams should have complete freedom of movement throughout Vietnam. Then the PAVN liaison Mission insisted on a strict interpretation of Article 35, and the Polish Delegation changed its stand.⁵ Authorities both north and south of the seventeenth parallel insisted on advance notice of all team movements "so that necessary arrangements could be made for the teams' security." "The ICC found itself in a difficult position. It was anxious to maintain the element of surprise, but it had also insisted that the Parties be completely responsible for providing transport, accommodation and services necessary for the operation of the teams. Ultimately the ICC found it impossible to object in principle when the Parties argued that if they were to discharge their responsibilities properly, they had to have advance notice of team movements."⁶

The teams were also limited to some extent in what they could accomplish by their mere size. It had been established at the preliminary meeting in Delhi in July 1954 that fixed teams were to consist of six members, and mobile teams of three. The difficulty of increasing their strength lay in the reluctance of the three supervisory governments, particularly Canada, to increase significantly what was already an onerous drain of manpower. The result was that "During the period of maximum coverage, ... the 3,500 mile long land and sea frontier of Vietnam was under the sporadic surveillance of only 96 men."⁷ When it is remembered that much of this frontier region is mountainous, it is evident that close control over the import of arms or military personnel was simply impossible. In this respect it was much easier to see what came into South Vietnam than what came in in the North, simply because everything that arrived in the South had to come by sea at points where the Commission's Fixed Teams were stationed, while in the North imports could also come across a land frontier, one that was in most places mountainous and inaccessible.

The rule of precedent.

The unfortunate effect of the rule of precedent has been mentioned. It was perhaps natural that the Canadians and Indians, with a legal system that was governed by precedent, should make use of this method in deciding cases before the Commission. Although it probably saved re-arguing points that had already been decided, and to that extent seems to have been an inevitable development, it gave the Commission's procedures an undesirable rigidity. The Commission "... was to become inflexible, unable or unwilling to change its direction or to reform its methods once they have been set. It was to become an organization unduly bound by precedent, many of them unfortunate"⁸ The Indian Delegation in particular often seemed adept at finding precedents to prevent the Commission acting where they might have found activity embarrassing. During 1961 for instance, the Indians managed to block a team investigation of alleged intrusion of armed personnel into the western part of the demilitarized zone because of some peculiarity in the way that the investigation had been asked for.⁹

The undesirable reliance on precedent that developed in Commission practice was undoubtedly a function of the lack of the kind of continual supervision and oversight that the UN Secretariat was able to give its peacekeeping operations. Other peacekeeping bodies have not had to look to past practice for guidance because the Secretariat could exercise continued direction. The Indians have found precedent a comfort in deciding which way to cast the deciding vote - a decision in accord with past practice is far less visible an indicator of policy than a new departure would be.

Liaison Officers.

In the early days of the ICC, the ICC's teams were always accompanied by liaison officers of both parties. This was a useful measure - for one thing it was to some extent a check on the accuracy of the translation that was provided by the teams' interpreter. No member of a Commission team was likely to speak

Vietnamese, and the translators the Commission could employ would be likely to be under the control of the Government of the area. But when the French left Vietnam and the Saigon Government assumed their duties toward the Commission, they refused either to provide representatives on the Joint Commission or to allow liaison officers of the PAVN to accompany Commission teams south of the seventeenth parallel.

The ICC had completed its responsibilities for a good part of the Geneva Agreement by July 31, 1956. What remained was responsibility for the supervision of Article 14c, "democratic freedoms"; Articles 1-9, the demilitarized zone: and Articles 16-20, a ban on the introduction of fresh troops, military personnel, arms and munitions.

Article 14c.

Of these responsibilities, Article 14c rapidly became, for all practical purposes, a dead letter. Perhaps it was inevitable that it should be so, for outside interference in a government's treatment of its own citizens is something that few governments would be prepared to tolerate for long. The question never became an issue in the North simply because a close and effective control over the population once the Government's authority had been established prevented anyone approaching the Commission with complaints. On the other hand the Commission was bombarded with complaints from the North about the treatment its supporters were receiving in the South. For a time the Commission's teams were able to investigate these complaints, but the Saigon Government eventually refused to permit them to do so any longer. On April 11, 1957 the ICC informed the co-chairmen that the GRVN had decided "not to give any more replies to the complaints [under Article 14c] and not to permit investigations of such complaints through the machinery of Mobile Teams The Commission is therefore no longer able to supervise the imposition of this Article by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam...."¹⁰ The Government of the RVN did in fact relent so far as replying

to the Commission's letters was concerned, but they never again allowed a mobile team investigation. The Commission's activity in relation to this article therefore consisted thereafter in relaying the complaints of the PAVN Liaison Mission to the RVN, and sending the RVN's reply back to the Liaison Mission.

The standard reply to the Commission's enquiries under Article 14c was that the people concerned were under arrest not because of activities prior to the cessation of hostilities, but because of illegal activities since the Cease Fire. The RVN's attitude toward the ICC was not enhanced by the fact that the Commission was diligent in enquiring about alleged violations of Article 14c, while it continued to defer consideration of complaints about the kind of activities that had led to the arrests in the first place.

Ban on the introduction of fresh troops and
military supplies.

The Commission did its best to discharge its responsibilities under this chapter of the Geneva Agreement, with more success in the South than in the North. In the South a War Materials Register was established, and credits were registered for all war material used up, destroyed or exported. Imports were checked against the register, and if there was no credit for the equipment concerned, the Government was ordered to export it again. In general, in the early years the Americans did attempt to live within the terms of the Geneva Agreement, although certainly they did try to stretch the terms of the Agreement as far as possible. "They embarrassed the Canadians from time to time by some of the proposals they thought up to strengthen the Vietnamese without technically violating the terms, but there is no doubt that their record was respectable".¹¹

In the North, the Government never reported the import of war material, and the Commission was never able to catch them in the act, although in later years the DRVN did not even trouble to hide modern arms or equipment of foreign make once they had been imported. The teams were able to move only after notice,

and there were many occasions when they were not permitted to leave the team-sites for days at a time.

As the situation south of the seventeenth parallel deteriorated, the Americans began to press harder against the restrictions in the Geneva Agreement. For as long as possible the Commission (or at least the Canadian-Indian majority on the Commission) accommodated the build-up of personnel within the limits established by the number of combined French and American instructors in Vietnam in 1954,¹² but finally the Americans intervened on a scale that exceeded the limits allowed, and all three members of the Commission found that this intervention was in contravention of the Geneva Agreement,¹³ although the Canadian and Indian members found that these hostile activities in the South against the RVN had been incited, encouraged and supported from the North.¹⁴

John Holms has said of this aspect of the Commission's activities:

"... in the North the ICC was unable to observe violations of the arms control stipulation but never able to maintain adequate inspection to be assured that no violations were taking place. In the South the struggle was with the indifference and reluctance of the authorities and the persistent effort of the Americans to press the terms of the Agreement farther than they could properly be stretched. The violations in the South were, needless to say, observable, and the attitude of the Americans was negative but decent. The Commission was in a position to prove Southern but not Northern violations. The Southerners and Americans inevitably complained and increasingly insisted that the known if not proved disregard of the arms control provisions by the Communists not only justified but made essential their doing likewise."¹⁵

Subversion.

From 1959 to 1962 the most difficult problem that the Commission faced was what came to be known within the ICC as the subversion issue. When it became evident that the elections called for in the Geneva Agreement would not take place, the RVN began to experience widespread challenges to its authority throughout Vietnam. These challenges were particularly serious when they took the form of

assassination of government officials, teachers and welfare workers. The pattern began to emerge in 1957, and by 1961 there were 4,000 assassinations a year. Those who had watched the experience of the French in Vietnam began to see a similar sequence of events developing again.¹⁶ Contact between the villages and the Government was broken, too many good men were lost, and too many others discouraged from supporting or serving the government. In Vietnam, the DRVN claimed that these troubles were a manifestation of opposition to the Government in the South, and that this opposition was completely independent of any direction or encouragement from outside. The RVN on the other hand claimed that irregular forces had been left behind and had not been repatriated north of the seventeenth parallel after the Cease Fire with the deliberate intention of siezing power later on. Both the French and later the RVN called the ICC's attention to evidence that it had found supporting this contention, particularly evidence of arms and munitions that had been hidden after the Cease Fire.

In the United States the question who was responsible for the war in the South was of academic interest until the increasing cost of the war to the American people and the wide exposure of the war on TV screens across the nation made the Vietnamese war the overriding and passionate issue of the 60's. In looking for the origins of the war, both sides espoused the theory that would give their own argument the greater moral advantage. The hawks saw the matter entirely as an insurgency directed from outside the RVN, the doves were equally convinced that the only explanation was to be found in spontaneous opposition to the oppressive regime of Diem and his American supporters. The question was undoubtedly muddled by the American (perhaps we should say North American) tendency to see all good on the side you are supporting, and all evil in your opponents. Since neither side has been above manufacturing evidence to support its own case, and since all the evidence is not in any event available, definite conclusions are not possible. But enough evidence is available to support the conclusion that both sides are

partially right and partially wrong. There was strong and vigorous opposition to the Government in the South, and the policies of the Government increasingly alienated the population, but the seriousness of the threat and ultimately the success of the opposition was undoubtedly dependent on outside encouragement and support - there is plenty of evidence that that encouragement and support existed.

The Pentagon Papers give a frank and persuasive assessment.¹⁷ It is long and involved, but the following quotations give a fair summary of the report's conclusions on this question.

"The primary question concerning Hanoi's role in the origins of the insurgency is not so much whether it played a role or not - the evidence of direct North Vietnamese participation...is now extensive - but when Hanoi intervened in a systematic way. Most attacks on US policy have been based on the proposition that the DRV move on the South came with manifest reluctance and after massive US intervention in 1961 so much of this argument as rests on the existence of genuine rebellion is probably valid. Moreover there were indications that some DRV Leaders did attempt to hold back southern rebels on the grounds that "conditions" were not ripe for an uprising. Further, there was apparently division within the Lao Dong Party hierarchy over the question of strategy and tactics in South Vietnam. However, the evidence indicates that the principal strategic debate over this issue took place between 1956 and 1958; all information now available (Spring 1968) points to a decision taken by DRV leaders not later than Spring, 1959, actively to seek the overthrow of Diem. Thereafter the DRV pressed toward that goal by military force and subversive aggression, both in Laos and South Vietnam."¹⁸

"The evidence supports the conclusions, therefore, that whether or not the rebellion against Diem in South Vietnam proceeded independently of, or even contrary to directives from Hanoi through 1958, Hanoi moved thereafter to capture the revolution. There is little doubt that Hanoi exerted some influence over certain insurgents in the South throughout the years following Geneva, and there is evidence which points to its preparing for active support of large-scale insurgency as early as 1958. in early 1959 ... the DRV ... undertook to provide strategic direction and leadership cadres to build systematically a base system in Laos and South Vietnam for subsequent, large-scale guerrilla warfare. Persuasive evidence exists that by 1960 DRV support of the insurgency in

in South Vietnam included material as well as personnel."¹⁹

The French became disturbed about continued subversive activity in the southern sector soon after the Cease Fire came into effect. In mid December of 1954 the accusation was made during a debate in the French National Assembly that it was "common knowledge" that demobilized Vietminh were really men destined to form a Vietminh administration in South Vietnam. The French complained of activities of Vietminh assassination squads and the presence of Vietminh arms caches. "The Commission did little more than subject them to perfunctory examination."²⁰

Both the French and the Vietminh had made use of guerrillas during the course of the war. The French had made an unsuccessful attempt at Geneva to include in the Agreements a specific provision calling for the disarming of army irregulars who were not regrouped. "... whether the units or personnel were "regulars" or "irregulars" ... did not matter; the maintenance of a military structure by one High Command in the other's zone would constitute a violation of the Agreement in either event."²¹

"According to evidence later put before the Commission - convincing evidence so far as the Canadian Government was concerned - the DRVN authorities did not confine themselves to leaving behind political activists and other sympathizers in South Vietnam; evidence also indicated that the DRVN authorities also left military personnel behind, not demobilized guerrillas who would be returning to civilian pursuits, but trained military cadres who remained in contact with Hanoi and whose task it was to continue hostile activities against the Government of South Vietnam and that these authorities, through personnel in South Vietnam who were responsive to Hanoi, directly interfered in the administration of the southern zone - all violations of the Cease Fire Agreement."²²

An account of how the RVN's complaints about subversion fared in the Commission has already been given in Chapter V. Finally the increasingly serious situation in South Vietnam forced the Indian Delegation to consider the whole question, at the same time that their deteriorating relations with China made them

willing to take a decision that would certainly be bitterly resented by the DRVN and by its friends and supporters.

The issue that finally convinced the Indian Delegation that it had to act was the public outcry over the kidnap and murder of Col. Hoang Thuy Nam, the Chief of the Vietnamese Mission in charge of relations with the International Commission. The RVN alleged that the authorities in the North were implicated in his capture and murder.²³ The complicity of the North has never been proved in this case, (indeed it seems on the face of it unlikely that they would have been responsible,) but the impatience of the South Vietnamese with the Commission's dilatoriness in dealing with their complaints finally overflowed. For a while Indians and Poles on the Commission were in some personal danger - their cars were surrounded and attacked and riots reminiscent of the July 1955 attack on the Majestic Hotel took place. In November, 1961, the Commission met to consider the allegations of the RVN, and evidence was sent to the Legal Committee for examination - not to see if the allegations were warranted, but if they attracted any provision of the Geneva Agreement.²⁴

The Legal Committee reported (Polish Member dissenting) that it had examined the complaints, and concluded that Articles 10, 19, 24 and 27 of the Geneva Agreement would forbid the kind of behaviour complained of.²⁵ It went beyond this narrow interpretation of its instructions, however, and examined the mass of evidence that the RVN had presented to substantiate its claim that the insurrection in the South was being supported from the North. It concluded that in specific instances there was evidence to show "that armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies have been sent from the zone in the North to the zone in the South with the object of supporting, organizing and carrying out hostile activities, including armed attacks directed against the Armed Forces and Administration of the zone in the South."²⁶ The Commission accepted the conclusions reached by the Legal Committee (the Polish Delegation dissented.)

The Special Report of June 2, 1962 represented the high water mark of the activities of the ICC in Vietnam. The Legal Committee report had promised to provide "in due course a full report setting out in detail the complaints made by the South Vietnamese Mission, the evidence forwarded in relation to these complaints, and our specific observations thereon",²⁷ but in spite of continual efforts by the Canadian Delegation to get the Legal Committee to act on this question, it never did. The eleventh Interim Report of the ICC in Vietnam covering the period February 1, 1960 to February 28, 1961²⁸ and submitted on September 18, 1961 was the last regular report that the Commission ever made. On February 12, 1965, the North Vietnamese authorities demanded the withdrawal of the Commission's teams. The DRVN asserted that it was no longer able to guarantee the teams' security because of US air strikes. In the late sixties, restrictions on the movements of teams in the South practically eliminated their activities there too.

The Commission came to life briefly on February 13, 1965 when it sent a further special report to the co-chairmen²⁹ drawing the co-chairmen's attention to the amount of US aid to the RVN and to the fact that "military action had been taken against military installations in the DRVN".³⁰ The report went on to state "These documents point to the seriousness of the situation and indicate violations of the Geneva Agreement."³¹ The Canadian Delegation, while agreeing that a report should be made to the co-chairmen, dissented from the terms of the majority report and submitted a minority statement. The Canadian Delegation thought that the majority report gave "a distorted picture of the nature of the problem in Vietnam and its underlying causes"³² and went on to note that the South Vietnam Mission had "brought to the Commission's attention mounting evidence to show that the Government of North Vietnam has expanded its aggressive activities directed against the Government of South Vietnam and has infiltrated growing numbers of armed personnel and increasing amounts of military equipment into South Vietnam for the purpose of overthrowing the Government of

South Vietnam by force."³³

In the late sixties, the war in Vietnam continued to escalate in scale and intensity, and the ICC seemed increasingly an anachronism. It stayed on, largely because it might prove to be an instrument of mediation or because it might have some useful function to fill in the disengagement of troops when the war was finally over. At least that was the Canadian Delegation's reason for remaining. The Canadians never acquiesced in the state of somnolence that the Commission seemed to have fallen into after 1965. "Canada from time to time sought to have the Commission fulfill its traditional function, e.g. investigating and reporting on the situation in the demilitarized zone; but the other members did not agree with this approach. Between 1964 and 1968, the Canadian Government which was publicly putting forward peace proposals of its own, also tried to interest the other governments on the Commission in using the Commission as a vehicle for "bringing the parties closer together"; to this initiative the others' response was unenthusiastic."³⁴

In 1964 and 1965 the Canadian Commissioner on several occasions carried messages to the DRVN from the US Government while in the course of official visits to Hanoi. Five messages were carried in all, and on three occasions a reply was brought back from the DRVN. Separately, in 1966, the Canadian Government sent Chester Ronning, a retired diplomat and Far Eastern specialist, to Hanoi as a special representative. "Mr. Ronning's mission, which took him twice to North Vietnam, was carried out with the knowledge and approval of the US Government and brought an offer of Canada's good offices as a means of initiating direct peace talks. There was no thought of mediation. The intention was merely to start a dialogue between the contending sides. Although that later happened, this 1966 Canadian effort came to naught."³⁵

The Commission in Vietnam came to an unhappy and undignified end. In 1972, India raised its diplomatic representation in North Vietnam from a consulate to an embassy, leaving its representation in Saigon at the consular level. The

move mortally offended the South Vietnamese Government, which instructed the Indians to leave. The Commission transferred its headquarters back to Hanoi, where it was not to remain for long. In March, 1973 the old International Control Commission, composed of Canada, India and Poland was replaced by a new International Commission for Control and Supervision, composed of Poland, Hungary, Indonesia, and, for a while, Canada.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

1. J. Holmès, "Geneva, 1954", International Journal, Vol. XXII, No. 3, p. 480
2. *ibid.*, p. 481
3. Wainhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 289.
4. Dagg, *op. cit.*, p. 4/18
5. *ibid.*, pp. B9-12
6. *ibid.*, p. B/56
7. *ibid.*, p. 6/38
8. *ibid.*, p. 4/18
9. See Eleventh Interim Report, Cmnd 1551, 1961, p. 7 para. 8 for a partial and incomplete account.
10. Cmnd. 2834, Misc. No. 25 (1965) Documents relating to British involvement in the Indo-Chinese Conflict, p. 128
11. J. Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 475
12. See Tenth Interim Report, Cmnd. 1040, para. 47 and Eleventh Interim Report, Cmnd. 1551, para. 50
13. Special Report to the co-chairmen, June 2, 1962, Cmnd. 1755 para. 20
14. *ibid.*, para. 9(3)
15. John Holmes, "Techniques of Peacekeeping in Asia", in Alastair Buchan, ed. China and the Peace of Asia, p. 245
16. B. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 360
17. Pentagon Papers, Gravel Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 242-346
18. *ibid.*, p. 260
19. *ibid.*, p. 265
20. Dagg, *op. cit.*, p. F/26
21. *ibid.*, p. F/6
22. *ibid.*, p. F/23
23. Cmnd. 1755, para. 8
24. *ibid.*,
25. *ibid.*, p. 6
26. *ibid.*, p. 7
27. *ibid.*,
28. Cmnd. 1551
29. Cmnd. 2609
30. *ibid.*, p. 4
31. *ibid.*,
32. *ibid.*, p. 12
33. *ibid.*, p. 13-14
34. Paul Bridle, "Canada and the International Control Commission in Indochina, 1954-72", in Conflict and Stability in Southeast Asia, M.W. Zacher and R.S. Milne, ed., p. 432
35. *ibid.*, p. 433

CHAPTER VII.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION

AS A PEACEKEEPING OPERATION.

Peacekeeping has been defined as "an international device that came into use after World War I to denote international action to deter, discourage, prevent or terminate threatened or actual hostilities".¹ The distinction is often drawn between "peace observation" and "peacekeeping", the latter being described as "a form of collective action by which a considerable military force is used to bring about a cessation of hostilities".² If Korea, the Congo and Cyprus are examples of "peacekeeping", then Kashmir, Indonesia, UNEF and the ICC in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are clearly examples of "peace observation". The distinction is not often maintained in casual speech, and will not be in the course of this chapter, but it is nonetheless a useful distinction. More than a question of semantics is involved here, for "peacekeeping" has a fine positive ring to it that is lacking in "peace observation", and undoubtedly the widespread use of the former term has led to unrealistic expectations, particularly of course in the case of the Indochina Commissions. The deployment of a large military force to bring about a cessation of hostilities has been used only three times in the entire history of international action to prevent wars, and the enormous costs involved would alone be enough to ensure that this method will not be the one usually chosen.

Peace observation is not a new phenomenon - about thirty disputes were dealt with under the League of Nations from 1920 to 1940. They usually involved disputed claims arising out of the break up of the Austrian-Hungarian and Russian Empires and were therefore in Europe. In most cases only Europeans, including

always at least one of the Great Powers, served as members of the League's investigative Commissions. Japan and the USA were on occasion represented, and two Canadians succeeded each other as members of the Governing Commission of the Saar. But the Saar Commission was the only one on which Canadians served. Canadian lack of interest in peace observation, in marked contrast to the events after World War II, was of course symptomatic of Canadian lack of interest generally in international obligations, and reflected Canada's conviction that she lived "in a fire proof house far from inflammable materials."

After the second World War had swept away the comfortable convictions that Senator Dandurand expressed so eloquently, Canadian attitudes to involvement in multi-national efforts at keeping the peace changed radically. "For Canadians this art and science has become of special interest because we have been involved in it more than almost any other country, and it has, in fact, been incorporated into our image of our role in the world."³ Canadians have served on nearly every United Nations force, and, outside the United Nations, on the International Control Commission in Indochina.

Participation in the Indochina Commissions came early in the Canadian experience with peacekeeping operations, and has gone on for longer than any other. Before 1954 Canadians had served on the UN military observer Group in India and Pakistan (Kashmir), Canadian troops had fought in Korea, and from February, 1954 Canadians had served on the UN Truce Supervisory Organization in Palestine. Canadian experience on UN bodies has therefore largely developed side by side with experience in Indochina, and the contrast between the two kinds of operations has often been painful. The apparent impartiality of Canadian policy on UN groups has contrasted unfavourably with the advocacy of one side's position that Canadians have had to assume in Indochina. Widespread public approval within Canada for our role in UN missions has not been echoed for our role in Indochina, where Canadians have often seemed advocates of the unpopular side in an unpopular

war. Above all, the apparent success of many UN missions has made the Indochina Commissions seem more ineffectual than perhaps they deserve to do.

Perhaps a clearer idea of how the Indochina Commissions in general and the Vietnam Commission in particular compare to other methods of keeping the peace can be gained if we examine a representative sample of UN operations.

United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB)

UNSCOB was created by General Assembly Resolution of October 1, 1947, to enquire into alleged border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other, and to use its good offices to settle disputed matters. The Secretary General was to supply staff for the Committee and to "enter into a standing arrangement with each of the four Governments concerned to assure ... full freedom of movement and all necessary facilities for the performance of its functions."⁵ The Commission of Investigation set up by the Committee consisted of eleven delegates, from Australia, Brazil, China, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Poland and the USSR. A subsidiary group was established at Salonika to investigate alleged border violations. Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia refused to co-operate with the group, and the Soviet Union also refused to co-operate declaring that the establishment of the group went beyond the terms of the Security Council resolution. On the spot investigations were therefore restricted to the Greek side of the border. Five observation posts were established on the border, each consisting of four observers from the delegations with six auxiliary personnel from the Secretariat. All delegations were therefore not represented at each observation post. The groups were lent mobile and radio equipment, aircraft and crews, radio operators, mechanics and interpreters by the various delegations, principally by the US, and by the UN Secretariat.

The Commission conducted on the spot investigations, interrogated witnesses and monitored radio broadcasts. The Commission in its report concluded

that Greece's three northern neighbours had "encouraged, assisted, trained and supplied the Greek guerrillas in their armed activities against the Greek Government,"⁶ and made certain proposals. The Polish and Soviet Delegations objected to the conclusions and the proposals.

On December 7, 1951, UNSCOB was dissolved. The political situation in Greece had been stabilized, and threats from guerrilla activities had almost disappeared. Although these factors were the most important, the UN operation undoubtedly made an appreciable contribution.

Palestine. The United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO)

The United Nations became involved in Palestine after April, 1947 when the British gave notice of their intention to surrender their mandate over Palestine. The problem has been continuously before the Organization since that time. There have been more than ten UN Committees, groups or authorized individuals with some responsibility for peace observation and fact finding. Of these the most important have been UNTSO and the UN Emergency Force (UNEF). A Security Council Resolution of November 16, 1948 called on both parties to seek agreement with a view to an immediate armistice. Negotiations were conducted under the chairmanship of a UN mediator, and resulted in four separate armistice agreements - with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Each agreement provided for a Mixed Armistice Commission (MAC) to supervise the truce. The Commissions consisted of an equal number of members chosen by each side, with a chairman designated by the Chief of Staff of UNTSO. UNTSO, although it had been recruited originally for the earlier Truce Commission, continued to exist after the armistice. It furnished the personnel and services needed to observe and maintain the Cease Fire and to perform the functions assigned by the Mixed Armistice Agreements. Originally personnel for UNTSO was provided by Belgium, the US and France, but after 1953 membership was expanded to include officers from Denmark, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and other countries.

As time went on, it became established that the jurisdiction of the MAC's was confined to the consideration of violations of the Armistice Agreements that had already taken place and had been brought to the MAC's by one of the parties, and UNTSO's functions were limited to providing personnel and services to the MAC's.

The MAC's were not of uniform effectiveness. When the boundaries were clearly delimited and followed formerly well recognized boundaries, (eg. that between Israel and Syria and Jordan,) there were not many incidents. In the case of the Syrian frontier, the instability of the Syrian Government and the bitterness that divided the two countries ensured however that what violations occurred would be serious ones. On the Jordanian and Egyptian frontiers there were "literally thousands of incidents." "The vast number of border incidents arose more from the artificial nature of the boundary than from political tensions. The boundary line frequently divided villages from the fields which supported their populations, from their sources of water, and even from their cemeteries. There had never been an international boundary line in this area."⁷

The Security Council resolution of August 11, 1949, noted that "the several Armistice Agreements ... provide for their supervision by the Parties themselves, relies upon the Parties to ensure the continued application and observance of these agreements."⁸

The machinery of the MAC's and of UNTSO proved inadequate to deal with the situation. Increasing bitterness and tension and an increasing number of border violations finally resulted in the Israeli invasion of Egypt on October 29, 1956. The Israeli attack came as a complete surprise to UNTSO. The Israel-Egypt MAC had had no advance warning of Israeli mobilization, even in an area where observers were stationed. The Israeli attack was followed by combined British and French attacks on the Suez Canal. When the United Kingdom and France vetoed a Security Council resolution calling on Israel to withdraw its forces from

Egypt, the security Council called an emergency session of the General Assembly to deal with the problem.

The U.N. Emergency Force.

From this emergency session of the General Assembly came the decision to place a U.N. force in the area between the Israeli and Egyptian forces. That force was made up of contingents from UN member states "other than permanent members of the Security Council." The first UNEF forces were airlifted to Egypt on November 15, and by March 8, 1957 the last of the Israeli, English and French troops had withdrawn.

The composition of an objective group, even leaving out permanent members of the Security Council, was by now means an easy task. In an aide memoire of January 23, 1957, the Israeli Prime Minister had declared that on no account would Israel agree "to the stationing of a foreign force, no matter how called, in her territory, or in any of the areas occupied by her."⁹ Egypt was willing to allow the stationing of UN troops in her territory, and so UNEF was able to operate only on the Egyptian side of the line. Egypt now began to raise difficulties about Canadian troops forming part of that force, particularly since the regiment perhaps unfortunately selected was named the Queen's Own Rifles.

The Canadian Government's proposal for a UN force for Suez had not met with unanimous approval at home. There were many who believed that Canada should have followed Australia and New Zealand in supporting the British at the UN. An Egyptian rebuff now on the question of Canadian troops would have been extremely embarrassing. In the end the Egyptians were persuaded to accept a Canadian contribution in the form of administrative and supporting troops.¹⁰

The Secretary General obtained the consent of the Egyptian Government to station the UN force in Egypt. That such consent was necessary seems to have been generally accepted. "The keystone of the theory of neutral policing operations is the principle of consent. Without consent the operation, by definition,

would be coercive: thus, for the General Assembly at least, both illegal and politically unwise: illegal because the Assembly has no authority to coerce; politically unwise because it would risk inciting opposition by a Great Power."¹¹

The General Assembly intention to make UNEF completely independent of the Great Powers proved impossible to obtain. Both the US and Britain have on occasion provided logistic support for the force.

The employment of a large number of troops to separate the two sides secured the success of UNEF, compared to the failure in this area of the Israeli-Egyptian MAC and UN observers. Focussing international attention on this troubled area probably also did much to reduce the number of incidents after UNEF was in place. "It seems certain the international concern for maintaining the armistice, and a willingness to take positive action in connection with violent breaches, influenced all the countries in the area to pursue more peaceful policies."¹²

But although UNEF has been accounted one of the success stories of UN policing operations, its contribution to peace in the area was only temporary. No progress was made in obtaining a lasting settlement, in fact perhaps progress was not possible. It might even be said that peace observation forces, intervening before a final military solution is reached, may even prevent the establishment of a lasting peace. As General Burns has remarked,

"... the UN has obliged the Arabs and the Israelis to stop their war, but it cannot oblige them to make peace. Usually peace is made when one side has won such victories in the war that its opponent sees that it would be better to agree to the victor's terms rather than continue, and find itself in worse plight. Or both sides become so exhausted or tired of the armed conflict that they prefer compromise or a negotiated peace to continued fighting. Neither of these conditions obtained when the UN succeeded in stopping the fighting in Palestine. Both sides claim that they could have defeated the other and have attained their objectives but for the interference of the United Nations."¹³

Throughout 1966 and 1967 incidents multiplied in Israel's other frontiers, particularly the Syrian frontier. Finally Israeli Prime Minister Leon Eshkol

warned the Syrians that if terrorism continued, "we shall choose the time, the place, and the means to counter the aggression." As leader of the Arab bloc, Nasser responded by moving troops across the Suez Canal. On May 17, Nasser asked the Secretary General to withdraw UNEF from its positions along the Israeli border. U Thant replied that the UN force would leave if the Egyptians asked it to do so. On May 18 Nasser asked that the force be withdrawn from Egypt. The "six day war" followed soon after.

Lebanon.

In 1958, both Lebanon and Jordan accused the Government of the United Arab Republic of interfering in their domestic affairs. Both complaints were brought before the Security Council. The Government of Lebanon claimed that armed bands from Syria were infiltrating Lebanon, and that the UAR was waging a violent radio and press campaign against the Lebanese Government, calling on the population to overthrow the established government. The Security Council adopted a resolution, on June 10, calling for the dispatch of an observer group to Lebanon.

The first reconaissance by UN observers began two days after the Security Council resolution was adopted. The observers were drawn from UN personnel already serving on UNTSO, and included a Canadian. By June 25, ninety five observers, supplied by eleven UN members, were on duty. Roads and border zones were patrolled, and permanent observation posts established, although the mountainous terrain in the border regions made observation difficult.

In its reports to the Security Council, UNOGIL stated that its patrols had reported substantial movements of armed men, but it was not possible to say if they had infiltrated from outside. "... there is little doubt, however, that the vast majority was in any case composed of Lebanese."¹⁴

In the middle of July tensions in the area increased greatly with the overthrow of the Government of Iraq. US troops were landed in Lebanon and British troops in Jordan.

There continued to be a difference of opinion between UNOGIL and the US concerning the extent of outside influence on events in Lebanon. "The mountainous terrain in which the group operated created problems in spotting infiltration. During the period when Lebanon was under French mandate, the French found it difficult to fully suppress the smuggling of arms by the Syrians who operated in the same terrain notwithstanding the presence of thousands of armed French soldiers. In comparing the performance of UNOGIL with a handful of men, and that of the thousands of armed French soldiers, it is not surprising that the former was handicapped in carrying out its mission."¹⁵

The situation in Lebanon was finally resolved by President Chamoun deciding not to seek re-election. President Chamoun was the candidate of the Christian, pro-western faction in Lebanon, and it was his decision to seek re-election contrary to the terms of the Lebanese constitution, that had aroused the opposition of the Mohammedan, pro-Arab sections of the country. With the removal of this problem the crisis in Lebanon evaporated.

Yemen.

In September, 1962, a republican revolt overthrew the royal government in Yemen. The republicans were supported by President Nasser of the United Arab Republic, and Saudi Arabia sent aid to the royalists. An agreement for a phased withdrawal of Egyptian troops in exchange for a halt to Saudi Arabian aid to the royalists was secured after negotiations supervised by the US. The UN was to play a role in observing and verifying the disengagement.

On June 13th the advance party of the Observation Mission in Yemen (UNYOM) under the command of Major General Carl Van Horn of Sweden, arrived in Yemen. The military operation included a reconnaissance unit and an air unit, the former composed of 114 officers and men from the Yugoslav contingent in UNEF, and the latter of fifty officers and men of the RCAF. UNYOM was to check and certify the two parties observance of the disengagement agreement, including the

withdrawal of troops.

UNYOM had more restricted duties than UNTSO, UNMOGIP, UNEF or UNOC. It had no mediation or conciliation functions, but was restricted to observing, certifying and reporting. General Van Horne resigned two months after UNYOM began its work, partly in protest against what he felt were inadequate terms of reference. The life of the Observation Mission continued to be extended for two to three month periods, although its presence was unable to prevent aid in men and materials from outside reaching the antagonists. The Secretary General's report of March 3, 1964 stated that arms and ammunition in appreciable amounts were reaching the royalists, and that UAR forces were active in ground and air operations within Yemen.

UNYOM was terminated on September 4, 1964. The Secretary General described the military position as "somewhat improved" in his final report, although a substantial amount of fighting was going on against royalist strongholds in North Yemen supported by the UAR airforce. The Secretary General felt nonetheless that the threat to peace and security had diminished during the Mission's existence "to a considerable extent because of its activities."

Just how effective are peacekeeping activities, either UN directed or under other auspices? From the examples related above, the results seem to be mixed, and success often seems to be related to factors outside of the control of the supervisory group. In the case of UNSCOB, for instance, the growing strength and stability of the central government in Greece was the main cause of the decrease in the number of incidents. In the Middle East, neither UNTSO nor UNEF proved ultimately capable of bringing about a permanent peaceful settlement. UN efforts to prevent hostilities were successful for a time, but the parties were unable to make progress in settling deep-seated differences, and UNEF was finally swept away when the war was renewed. Settlement of issues that disturb

the peace can only be undertaken by the parties to the disagreement, and if no progress is made in that direction the peacekeeping force will ultimately fail. Indeed there is some question if the establishment of a peacekeeping mission may not in fact help to prevent the emergence of a more settled situation. "The very act of freezing a dispute and of separating the protagonists is likely to reduce the pressures on them to come to terms on a viable settlement."¹⁶ If the failure of efforts to find a peaceful solution to the problems of the Middle East should not be laid at the door of the United Nations nor attributed to shortcomings of its organs, UNTSO and UNEF, neither should continuing conflict in Vietnam be laid at the door of the International Control Commission.

When the ultimate responsibility of the parties to find a solution is granted, there remain certain considerations that affect how helpful the peacekeeping mission can be in any given situation. The difficulties that affected the performance of the ICC have usually been traced to the ICC's troika formation. But although the fact that the ICC contained within itself the conflicts of the cold war certainly did affect the work of the Commission, many of its difficulties can be laid to circumstances that it shared with other peacekeeping groups.

The first requirement for effective peacekeeping seems to be that the issues involved must not be those in which a Great Power believes its own vital interests to be involved. It is of course the Great Powers' lack of willingness to submit their disputes to international arbitration that has made the peacekeeping functions of the Security Council (Articles 39-50 of the Charter) such a dead letter. But the effect of Great Power involvement goes further than that, and where it occurs international peacekeeping is as a matter of practice not possible. The Congo, Indonesia, Kashmir, Yemen, Cyprus and the Middle East were only possible areas of effective UN action because they were not areas where either the USA or the Soviet Union were prepared to push their opposing interests to a logical conclusion. The Middle East must now of course be subtracted from

those neutral areas. The increasing Soviet support for the Arab powers has now counteracted US support for Israel, and since the "six day war" there has been no UN presence on the border between Egypt and Israel,³⁵

The ICC in Vietnam has of course attempted to keep the peace in an area where two Great Powers have conceived their vital interests to be concerned. South Vietnam has been supported militarily and economically by the US and North Vietnam by China and the USSR. It should not be surprising that the effort has been a failure.

A second requirement for effective action seems to be that the supervisory group should not remain in residence for too long. The earlier and eventually ineffective UN operation in Palestine, UNTSO, has many parallels with the ICC in Vietnam. Both groups have been charged with the maintenance of an artificial boundary, when both sides have been dissatisfied with the settlement. Both groups have remained to supervise an armistice that was recognized as a temporary arrangement long past the time when they could continue to do so effectively. The conclusion has been drawn from the Palestine experience that "if an armistice lasts too long without turning into a peace, the prestige of the international organization conducting the truce supervision erodes. The parties show less respect for the international authority and deliberately flout the armistice. Violence increases and ultimately the armistice breaks down."¹⁷ The observation could be made, word for word, about the truce in Vietnam. In his report of September 16, 1948 to the Secretary General, Count Bernadotte observed:

"There is a period during which the potential for constructive action, which flows from the fact that a truce has been achieved by international intervention, is at a maximum. If, however, there appears no prospect of relieving the existing tension by some arrangement which holds concrete promise of peace, the machinery of truce supervision will in time lose its effectiveness and become an object of cynicism. If this period ... is not seized, the advantage gained by international intervention may well be lost."¹⁸

In Vietnam final settlement was provided for in the Geneva Agreements; elections were to take place in July, 1956 which were to end the division of the country. When the elections did not take place, the ICC was left in place simply because no one could think of a better arrangement. The prestige that the Commission had gained in its useful activities during the first year or two gradually eroded, and it was generally disregarded and treated with contempt, not only by the parties, but by world opinion in general.

In order to carry out its duties effectively, a peacekeeping mission needs to be able to move about freely. A good deal of attention has been paid to the question whether or not a country is required to receive a UN mission, and if it may decide at any time to call for the withdrawal of the UN force. The legal question hinges on how the parties are bound by the UN Charter, and the answer seems to be that consent is not necessary for action taken by the Security Council, but that for operations under the direction of the General Assembly consent is required.¹⁹ Where consent is required it may logically be withdrawn at any time, and this seems to be the majority opinion. U Thant defended his agreement to withdraw UNEF on the demand of Egypt in May, 1967 on the grounds that UNEF could remain only by defying the will of its host by force or the threat of force.²⁰

Canadians have generally been anxious to emphasize the obligations of countries accepting peacekeeping forces. The Canadian Government was very reluctant to concede in 1967 that Egypt had the right to decide which countries would contribute forces to UNEF, and when President Nasser asked UNEF to leave Egypt in 1967, Paul Martin, the Minister at the time, expressed the view that "in giving its consent to the establishment of the force the Egyptian Government accepted a limitation of its sovereignty, and ... it is now the prerogative of the UN rather than of the UAR Government to determine when the UN force has completed its task..."²¹

In the case of the ICC, the right of the Commission to be in Vietnam

depended on the restrictions on their sovereignty which the parties accepted when they signed the Cease Fire Agreement. (South Vietnam of course never accepted these restrictions). Similarly the right of the Commission to move about in pursuit of its duties in Vietnam rested upon the provisions of the CFA, which the Canadian Government has generally been anxious to interpret as broadly as possible, and which the parties on the other hand have sought to interpret as restrictively as possible. This difference of opinion is found to some extent in all peace-keeping operations. For example, General Burns describes the situation for UNEF as follows:

"... both sides restricted the observers' movements from time to time, especially when they thought that their "military security" would be prejudiced - that is, when they had something to hide, either offensive preparations or some infraction of the terms of the GAA, such as having troops or defensive works in zones where none should have been. In its resolutions the Security Council repeatedly requested the parties to allow the observers full freedom of movement, but these requests were disregarded when the next critical situation arose."²²

In his report of October 9, 1958 to the General Assembly, the Secretary General noted that "In Gaza and elsewhere in its area of operations, UNEF has been able to function without any question arising of its presence infringing upon sovereign rights on the basis that at the invitation of the Egyptian Government, in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, the UN assists in maintaining quiet...."²³ The Secretary General warned that "some of the above mentioned circumstances are of such a nature that it could not reasonably be expected that they would often be duplicated elsewhere. Nor can it be assumed that they provide a sufficient basis to warrant indiscriminate projection of the UNEF experience...."²⁴ In Egypt the UN forces were confined to a relatively narrow border area, and their duties were confined to preventing infiltration across the border or a renewal of hostilities. In Vietnam the ICC teams were stationed in many areas of North and South Vietnam, and their duties ranged from preventing the importation of war

material to protecting the "democratic freedoms" of the population. With such wide terms of reference and with such widely scattered bases it is no wonder that both North and South Vietnam sought to restrict the teams' activities as much as possible and often considered those activities to be an infringement of their sovereignty. Even in Jordan the Secretary General noted that "... the presence of a UN force has been regarded by the government as difficult to reconcile with its own exercise of full sovereignty over the people and territory of the country."²⁵

Whatever the legal basis may be for the presence and freedom of movement of a peacekeeping force within the host country, in practical terms the desire of the host Government cannot safely be ignored. Neither in fact can the will of those in control of any one section of the country, even if that authority is not the legally constituted government of that territory. When the question of UN troops' right of entry into Katanga province in the Congo arose, Hammarskjold maintained both that Katanga had an obligation to allow UN troops to enter, and that he could not direct troops to enforce their right of entry unless the Security Council decided to do this as an enforcement measure.²⁶

The difficulties that can face a peacekeeping force trying to assert its right of movement in a situation of civil war or disturbance within a country are obvious. During Canada's brief service on the second Vietnam Commission in 1973 (with Indonesia, Poland and Hungary) Canadians evidently decided to assert their right of free movement, even when unaccompanied by other team members. The members of the Canadian patrol were promptly seized and were beaten and in other ways mistreated by NLF forces in the area they were attempting to patrol. One cannot help but suspect both that the NLF had immediately understood the significance of the Canadian move, and that the experiment would have been unlikely to have been repeated had Canada remained on the Commission.

Financial support is necessary if a peacekeeping mission is to do an

adequate job. Adequate financial support has always been a problem in the UN because some powers, notably the USSR and France, have consistently refused to pay for operations that were not authorised by the Security Council. The willingness of the US to make extra contributions and the ability of the UN to continue running a deficit has disguised the problem for some time, but recently bad debts have been catching up with the UN. The Observation Mission in Yemen was financed by the parties to the dispute who paid the costs of the operation for two months at a time. The life of UNYOM after the end of each two month period was therefore conditional on the parties' willingness to pay. The ICC has also suffered from lack of finances, and the problem has been much more serious. The ICC is partly dependent on the financial contribution of the parties, partly on the contributions of the Geneva Powers. Lack of money for transport and equipment has severely limited the Commission's effectiveness.

Peacekeeping missions can work only within the terms of reference provided. In the case of UN peacekeeping missions, the terms of reference are set by the General Assembly or the Security Council; in the case of the ICC, the terms of reference were the Geneva Agreement of 1954. Where there is general agreement among the drafters of the terms of reference, then the mandate is a clear one and the task of the peacekeeping mission is made very much easier. But there have been situations where conflicting views have made the task of the UN a difficult one. Just how much of a strain this can place on the organization is described by a Canadian diplomat who served for a period in the UN Secretariat. Referring to the UN operation in the Congo, he said "Lacking solid support ... the Secretary General was frequently in a very difficult position. The prolonged ordeal drained away the patience and diplomatic skill of Secretariat officials, the morale and support of member states, and the material resources and political credit of the Organization."²⁷ Paul Martin, delivering an address on "Canada's Role in UN Peacekeeping" at Columbia University in April, 1967, pointed to "...

the risk that inadequate terms of reference might do serious harm to the prestige of the UN and to its future effectiveness." He said that "... the Canadian Government will be found to give more searching examination to requests for assistance if it is not satisfied that the mandate provides sufficient guidance for the conduct of the troops on the ground."²⁸

Mr. Martin was probably thinking as much of the Canadian experience in the ICC as he was of UN operations in delivering his warning. The ICC struggled for nineteen years under an inadequately drawn document. Inadequate to begin with, it rapidly became out of date, because of course its provisions were originally intended to be applied only for two years, until elections should re-unite the country. At least UN peacekeeping operations enjoy the advantage that terms of reference can be changed or redrafted as circumstances change or as the inadequacies of the original terms became evident. But as John Holmes has remarked, "there is bound to be improvisation in crises." In these circumstances, " ... where world order totters, battling armies and fleeing refugees are lighting flames which could spread anywhere, the important thing is to stop the fighting by getting some kind, almost any kind, of agreement. The only kind achievable, usually, is a procedural agreement. The most achievable form of procedural agreement is to set up a body of any kind to investigate or patrol, even if it is more symbolic than real."²⁹ In conditions of crisis, there is an inevitable tendency " ... to fuzz the terms, even in the awareness that this will cause trouble later. The later trouble, it is assumed, can be dealt with in a period of tranquillity."³⁰

Canadians struggling with the inadequacies of a badly drafted document have seemed at times to believe that clearly drawn instructions giving the ICC wide powers to investigate and patrol would guarantee an effective operation. But no document is worth the paper it is written on if it does not realistically reflect the situation that the peacekeeping force will be meeting on the ground. During

the second conference on Laos at Geneva in 1961-2, all three factions of the Laotian Government were adamant in their insistence that investigations could only be undertaken with the consent of the Laotian Government, and the right wing faction under Phoumi was more restrictive in what it would permit the Commission to do than were the other two. The principle of Laotian Government sovereignty had to be accepted because there was no alternative, but also because it was evident that if the Government had wished to prevent any particular patrol from taking place it had ample means at its disposal for preventing it besides outright refusal. Similarly in Vietnam a declaration that roads in the area were impassable, or that the security of the team could not be guaranteed, were quite sufficient to prevent team controls from taking place.

It has been a generally accepted principle in peacekeeping operations under the United Nations that the delegations represented must be as nearly neutral as possible. Although the Great Powers were originally represented on peacekeeping bodies, since UNEF it has been generally accepted that troops will usually not be contributed by the permanent members of the Security Council. (One exception of course is Cyprus where British troops have formed the largest contingent.) The importance of neutrality if a group is to be effective was noted by the Secretary General in his survey study of the experience derived from the establishment and operation of UNEF: "... the force has functioned under a clear cut mandate which has entirely detached it from involvement in any internal or local problem, and also has enabled it to maintain its neutrality in relation to international political issues. The fact that UNEF was designed to meet the ends of this specific situation largely determined its military components, geographical composition, deployment and status, and also its effectiveness."³¹ UN forces have not however been completely independent of Great Power support. Particularly in UNEF and the Congo American logistic support has been necessary. UN operations have taken place in the face of opposition from the USSR, but in view of UN dependence on American financial support, it is unlikely that they could take place if

they met with the disapproval of the USA.

Canadians have tended to stress their neutrality and the disinterested nature of their service on peacekeeping bodies, and they have often felt acutely uncomfortable at the partisan role they have been forced to assume in the ICC. But Canadian impartiality is not a quality that is universally taken for granted. Canada is a military ally of the USA, largely dependent in a nuclear world on American protection. Canada is also a member of NATO - in fact Canadians are proud of the fact that the idea of NATO was originally proposed by Prime Minister St. Laurent. The USSR raised objections when the Secretary General asked Canada to provide signals personnel for the Congo, pointing out that Canada was a NATO partner of Belgium. Although Mr. Pearson had been perhaps the single most important person in proposing and organizing UNEF, Egyptian objections kept Canadian infantry forces out of UNEF, and only with difficulty were they persuaded to accept a Canadian contribution in administrative and supporting troops. General Burns has said that

"It appeared that the Egyptian attitude towards contributions from the several countries was determined by her general political relations with them and her opinion as to how far they supported her policies in the United Nations."³² "... my impression ... that the real reason Canadians were not desired was the fear that Canadian policy, while so far favourable to Egypt in the General Assembly, might later veer to the "Western" if not the British stand in regard to the control of the Canal."³³

Alastair Taylor has pointed out that "Canada is a part of the deadlocked forces of the rival blocs, and there is perhaps an element of wishful thinking in seeking to be at once a loyal member of the Western alliance, and an unattached middle power with considerable freedom of action."³⁴

If Canada has not been so neutral a member of UN peacekeeping missions as she would like to believe, neither has she been as automatic a supporter of the US in South Vietnam as critics of Canadian Government policy have believed, or as the US would have liked her to be. Canada has always insisted that violations

of the Geneva Agreement would not be condoned. This has contrasted with the Polish attitude towards violations of the Geneva Agreement by the DRVN. Polish policy has been to support the DRVN in every way possible and in all circumstances, even when this policy has led to ludicrous extremes. To cite one example that I know of, in a control of Gia Lam airport (near Hanoi) in the spring of 1961, Fixed Team Hanoi noticed helicopters with Russian markings parked on the landing field (North Vietnam was not allowed to have helicopters under the terms of the GA, because it did not possess them before July 21, 1954). When the team returned to base to write its report, the Indian chairman referred to the helicopters. "Helicopters, helicopters?" said the Polish team member, "I saw no helicopters." An increasingly furious Indian chairman was unable to move the Polish member from his stand, and the team report when it went in contained a Canadian-Indian majority report that helicopters had been seen at Hanoi airport, and a Polish minority report that there were no helicopters there. Americans, and South Vietnamese, often felt that this kind of automatic Polish support for North Vietnam, contrasted with Canadian efforts to be impartial, gave the DRVN an unfair advantage. At the time of the 1962 Laos Conference there were rumours, rumours that were immediately believed in the Department of External Affairs, that the USA was looking around for a more reliable ally to serve on the re-constituted Laos Commission in place of the Canadians.

When the record of UN peacekeeping activities is read with the record of the ICC in Vietnam, it is evident that peacekeeping as a whole involves enormous effort and expense in relation to what can be accomplished. And in comparing the effectiveness of the two kinds of operations, the ICC does not come off as badly as first impressions might suggest. Where the two sides are able to take advantage of the breathing space that international intervention provides in order to compose differences and come to an understanding, then the peacekeeping mission has been described as a success. Where bitterness and fundamental differences

have prevented a settlement, then the truce imposed by the international presence eventually breaks down and war breaks out again. The latter situation has been the case in Indochina, but it has equally been the case in other parts of the world, notably the Middle East, where the United Nations has intervened.

CHAPTER VII FOOTNOTES.

1. David W. Wainhouse et al., International Peace Observation, p. 2
2. *ibid.*
3. Alastair Taylor et al., Peacekeeping: International Challenge and Canadian Response, p. vii
4. The examples are drawn from Case Studies, in Wainhouse, *op. cit.*
5. *ibid.*, p. 225
6. *ibid.*, p. 232
7. *ibid.*, p. 264
8. S/1376 (p. 257)
9. quoted in *ibid.*, p. 279
10. A full account will be found in ELM Burns, Between Arab and Israeli, pp.
11. Mona H. Gagnon, "Peace Forces and the Veto: The Relevance of Consent", International Organization, Vol. 21 No. 4, p. 819
12. Wainhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 288
13. Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 30
14. S/4040, pp. 8, 9
15. Wainhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 384
16. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 36
17. Wainhouse *op. cit.*, p. 272
18. A/648, pt. 2. p. 26
19. Gagnon, *op. cit.*, pp. 812-36
20. *ibid.*, p. 824
21. House of Commons, Debates, May 18, 1967, p. 342
22. *op. cit.*, p. 277
23. A/3943, Oct. 9, 1958, para. 150
24. *ibid.*, para. 151
25. *ibid.*
26. Gagnon, *op. cit.*, p. 821
27. G.S. Murray, "U.N. Peacekeeping and Problems of Political Control", International Journal, Vol. 18. p. 453
28. External Affairs, Vol. 19, June, 1967, p. 240
29. J. Holmes, "Geneva, 1954", International Journal, Vol. 22, p. 458
30. *ibid.*, p. 459
31. A/3943, para. 149
32. Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 235
33. *ibid.*, p. 200
34. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p.
35. UN FORCES RETURNED TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN OCTOBER, 1973

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSIONS - THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE.

The message from the co-chairmen inviting Canadian participation in the ICC's in Indochina was received on July 21, 1954. The Canadian reply was not sent until July 27. The Canadian Government announced its acceptance of the invitation "only after detailed study of the Cease Fire and Armistice Agreements ... and with full knowledge and appreciation of the responsibilities and difficulties that will go with membership. There are no illusions about the magnitude or complexity of the task."¹

These were the early days of Canadian involvement in peacekeeping operations, and public opinion in general seemed to welcome the opportunity to participate in any that came along. Newspaper comment was often rather critical of the Government's unenthusiastic response. However, the difficulties that the Government foresaw soon became clear to everyone.

Perhaps the most uncomfortable and humiliating aspect of involvement, so far as Canadians were concerned, was the extent to which participation in the Commission appeared to make Canada a supporter of the United States. Self respect has always appeared to Canadians to depend on how independent we could appear to be of U.S. pressures and influences. Participation in the ICC threatened our self respect, especially as there were many rumours circulating from time to time, particularly after the vastly increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1962, that threats and economic pressures were used to coerce decisions in the Commission that would be favourable to the U.S.

It is often forgotten that the western interests in Vietnam that Canada had presumably undertaken to defend were originally French interests, not American. And the way in which Canadians were led to become primarily the defenders of French

or South Vietnamese positions in the Commission has been described by the historian of the early months of the Commission as follows :

"... proceedings soon took on a pattern that was to become typical. The Polish delegate sought to ensure that the committee report included only such material as would reflect unfavourably on the South Vietnamese authorities and to exclude any references to the possibility that these authorities might have been justified in some of their actions. The Canadian member impressed on his colleagues the necessity of considering the arguments of both sides, and, to counter the Poles' tactics, drew attention to considerations put forward by the Franco-Vietnamese authorities. Inevitably and unfortunately, the Canadian Delegation reported to Ottawa, the member was forced by the tactics of his Polish counter-part to act in a manner that made him appear to be an "apologist" for the French Union side. The Indian member sought to effect compromises in an attempt to produce a unanimous report."²

So far as U.S. pressures on Canada are concerned, they appear to be more the product of overheated imaginations than anything else. My own period of concern with Commission affairs coincided with the period when there was most likely to be pressure - during 1960 and 1961, when the U.S. was trying to build up Vietnamese ability to resist armed insurgency while still staying within the limits defined by the Geneva Agreements. Persuasion there undoubtedly was, and anger and annoyance also on occasion, but never any attempt to use other pressures. After 1962, and particularly after the June, 1962 Special Report to the co-chairmen³ stating that the U.S. buildup was in violation of the 1954 Agreement, there was little that the Commission could have done in any case to embarrass the U.S. Nor was there any attempt by the U.S. to persuade Canada to vote against the finding of the Commission on this occasion - the U.S. always appeared to understand Canada's position that clear violations of the Agreement must be so declared.

As the tempo of the war in Vietnam mounted, Canada tried to use her special position on the Commission to encourage conversations between the antagonists. Hanoi was probably more isolated than any other capital, and Canadian access to the Government there was an asset that it was felt should be exploited.

"In 1964 and 1965, in the course of official visits to Hanoi, the Canadian Commissioner carried to the government there a total of five messages from the U.S. Government which, at its

request, the Canadian Government had agreed to convey; on three occasions he was also able to bring back North Vietnamese reactions."

"The Canadian Government believed that, in allowing its representative to carry these messages and to report reactions, it would reduce the possibility of misunderstanding, and it regarded this office as consistent with its responsibilities as a member of the International Commission."

Canadian public reaction to this well-intentioned effort, when it became known, was immediate, angry, and remarkably silly. The charge most commonly heard was that the Canadian Government had "carried U.S. threats to Hanoi." The fact that it undoubtedly must have carried Hanoi's 'threats' back to the U.S. appeared to occur to no-one. When two governments who have been engaged in bitter warfare begin to talk, the conversation is not usually noted either for courtesy or for moderation. The important thing is that they should begin to talk to each other. As General Bernard Montgomery rather inelegantly expressed it, "jaw-jaw is better than war-war."

What appeared to trouble critics in Canada was that the Canadian Government might be identified with U.S. policies in the minds of the North Vietnamese. That this was not so was demonstrated eloquently enough in the North Vietnamese reaction to the proposal that Canada should serve on the new ICC's to supervise the Cease Fire in 1973. North Vietnam was quite prepared to accept Canada as a member; it was the South that objected. Government spokesmen for the RVN complained that Canada had never been committed to their cause as the Poles were to the DRVN.

Canada's attitude to her responsibilities on the ICC has been well summed up by one who has frequently been concerned in recommending Canadian policies on the Commissions -

"Canada has tried to act impartially as a member of the Commissions. It was always understood that Canada would bring a western outlook to their discussions, just as India and Poland would bring neutralist and Communist outlooks respectively, but it was equally expected that, in judging a particular issue, all three would do their best

to be objective. Canadian delegations attached importance to this both in principle and in practice."

"It is important, when forming an opinion about the objectivity of Canada in the Commission, to have in mind the distinction, necessarily characteristic of the work of all three delegations, between their role as "advocates" and their roles as "judges". It was in the nature of things that Canadians should be alert to the interests of the non-Communist side and ready to defend those interests if necessary. This was neither reprehensible nor, in the long run, unhelpful if matched by impartiality in reaching conclusions and in taking necessary actions regardless of which side was in the dock. In this regard, Canadian delegations were seldom, if ever, found wanting."

Poland's Policy in the ICC.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Polish policy on the ICC was its consistency. We have seen how changes in the Indian outlook on the world tended to some extent to influence their decisions in the Commission. Nothing comparable happened in the case of Poland, even though at least as great changes took place within Poland over the lifetime of the Commission. By the early 60's Poland was able to exercise much greater independence from direction from outside than it had in 1954. But Polish support for the DRVN in the Commission was as unwavering at the end as it had been in the beginning. We can of course only speculate on the reasons for this, but it is possible that the Sino-Soviet split in the Communist bloc may have had some bearing on Polish attitudes.

The Asian Communist parties (even including, surprisingly, the Australian Communist party) followed the Chinese line. The European parties supported the Soviet Union. The one country which managed for years to keep a foot in both camps was the DRVN. It is at least a possible explanation that Poland felt the delicacy of her position as a supporter of the USSR and the advocate of the DRVN in the Commission. If her commitment to the DRVN's cause had ever seemed to waver it could have had the effect of pushing the DRVN closer to China. That at least seems the only sensible reason for a policy that was often, to say the least of it, counterproductive. Many of the Polish activities on the Commission did little to aid the DRVN, while they often earned the active ill-wind and resentment of the

Indian members of the Commission. Polish intransigence and refusal to compromise, on several occasions that I know of, pushed the Indians further in support of the Canadian position than they had intended to go.

Divergence between public opinion and
official policy in Canada.

Perhaps the unhappiest result of Canadian participation in the ICC was the degree to which it caused a rift between official policy and public opinion. This has occurred remarkably seldom since Canada began conducting her own foreign policy; Suez is perhaps the only other occasion. But as the Vietnam war became the over-riding issue in the United States, so it became a public issue in Canada. The evident misery of the Vietnamese people, and the growing certainty that the U.S. would eventually lose the war just as the French had done, made Canadians question any apparent Canadian contribution to the U.S. cause in Vietnam. Increasingly, Canadian support for the South's cause in the ICC, and therefore of course also for the U.S. came under fire in Canada.

In 1963 Paul Martin became Minister for External Affairs. He was on most issues an activist in international affairs, and, from all reports, he was particularly unhappy at the Commission's record in making public the South's case against the North on the subversion issue. The Special Report of June, 1962 had promised to examine and report on specific complaints, but the Indian delegation displayed a marked reluctance to begin work on the complaints. The Canadian Government's increasing frustration over Commission inaction on what was regarded as the basic cause for the war in the first place, ran headlong into public dismay over the effect that the war was having on the people of Vietnam. Government policy and public opinion began to talk at cross purposes, and the North American tendency to see all issues as either black or white further confused the issue. Those who were against the war for humanitarian reasons accepted as dogma the NLF contention that the war was entirely a matter of anti-government sentiment in

the South, and that "the U.S. had no business being in Vietnam." The Canadian Government, making such efforts within the Commission to put the origins of the war on the record, found itself having to re-iterate the same principles to disturbed public opinion in Canada. To public opinion it often seemed that those trusted with the conduct of Canadian foreign policy were callously indifferent to the overriding moral issue of the day.

Part of the difficulty in formulating policy on this issue undoubtedly arose from the fact that for all practical purposes Canada had no policy toward Indochina separate from her policy on the Commission. Anything that occurred in the area tended to be considered only in the light of the effect that it had on the ICC. Canadians could and did have strong and separate views on the course of events in China, and the U.S. was aware of them. On the conduct of the war in Vietnam or on U.S. policy there, there seemed to be little attempt to formulate independent views - Canadian attention was rivetted on events in the Commission. Great Britain supported the U.S. aims in Vietnam, but was often critical of the way those aims were implemented, and its views were undoubtedly made known to the U.S. The only indication there has been of any similar Canadian approach was given by Mr. Pearson in the course of an interview recorded for the television series "First Person Singular". He recalled that on his visit to the U.S. in 1965 President Johnson asked "what should we do about Vietnam?" To which Mr. Pearson replied "Get out of it".

The conflict between official policy and public opinion came to a head over the Special Report to the co-chairmen of 1965.⁶ In that Report the Indian and Polish majority drew the co-chairmen's attention to U.S. bombing in North Vietnam, quoting the U.S. communique announcing that military action had been taken against military installations in the DRVN, and the PAVN's request that the ICC "condemn without delay these violations...." The ICC requested the co-chairmen "to consider the desirability of issuing an immediate appeal to all concerned with a view

to reducing tension and preserving peace in Vietnam and taking whatever measures are necessary in order to stem the deteriorating situation."⁷ The wording of the majority report seemed innocuous enough, but the Canadian Delegation felt unable to sign it. It annexed its own report claiming that by concentrating on a very limited aspect of the situation in Vietnam, the majority report runs the serious risk of giving the members of the Geneva Conference a distorted picture of the nature of the problem in Vietnam and its underlying causes."⁸ The "continuing instability" in Vietnam had "as its most important cause, the deliberate and persistent pursuit of aggressive but largely covert policies by North Vietnam directed against South Vietnam."⁹ It went on to quote the Legal Committee's finding, quoted in the Special Report of 1962, supporting this assertion. The Canadian Delegation gave it as its "considered view" that "the events which have taken place in both North and South Vietnam since February 7 are the direct result of the intensification of the aggressive policy of the Government of North Vietnam."¹⁰

In tabling the Report in the House of Commons on March 8, 1965, Mr. Martin stated that Canada did not deny the facts on which the majority report was based, but believed that it presented an "oversimplified and misleading impression of the root causes of the dangerous instability in Vietnam."¹¹

"Our independent observer position in Vietnam has brought us face to face with an insidious form of aggression, with which the free world has yet to devise adequate means of dealing.... In whatever form aggression manifests itself, it must be recognized as such and it must be stopped, not least because we cannot afford to let the practitioners of this technique come to the conclusion that it pays dividends.

This is surely the basic issue at stake in Vietnam today, and it is of vital interest to all members of the International Commission."¹²

Although the Canadian Delegation may well have been justified in repeating the findings of the 1962 Special Report on the root causes of the war in Vietnam, it is difficult to see why it could not at the same time have joined the Indian and Polish Delegations in regretting the bombing. Paul Bridle has said of Canadian policy on the Commission that "... at least from the point of view of

the other delegations, Canadians sometimes had a tendency to be overly legalistic and to display missionary zeal in pursuit of goals."¹³ The Canadian Delegation's reaction to the 1965 Special Report seems to support the "other delegations" opinion.

Conclusion.

It was recognized right from the very beginning that the Commission's composition, embodying within itself the contradictions of the cold war, would make its operation difficult. However, as the Departmental Press Release of July 27, 1954, pointed out,

"... in carrying out their tasks the ICC's should be able to function more effectively than the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea which because of equal Communist and non-Communist representation, very often had effective action blocked, and which could report only to the two military commands."¹⁴

"A study of the information available has led us to the conclusion that the Commissions have a reasonable chance of operating effectively and of making a constructive contribution to the successful implementation of the Cease Fire Agreement, and hence to peace in Southeast Asia. If our expectations unfortunately prove ill founded, and the Commissions are frustrated by obstruction, then, of course, no useful purpose would be served by continuing their existence."¹⁵

The experience of the first two years seemed to bear out the Department's assessment that the Commission had "a reasonable chance of operating effectively". When it was implementing specific parts of the Agreement for which a definite understanding had been arrived at in Geneva, it functioned effectively. All three delegations usually worked together harmoniously, but when they did not the Indian Delegation felt no hesitancy in breaking the deadlock to ensure what seemed a reasonable and fair solution - as for example during the transfer of Haiphong. Even in the early years, however, the control of new material or military personnel imported in the South was unsatisfactory, and in the North this part of the Agreement was entirely a dead letter.

As time went on, and the final political solution retreated into the dim

and distant future, the inability of the Commission to contribute effectively to the situation became increasingly clear. The DRVN, in the period between the fall of Dien Bien Phu and the signing of the Geneva Agreement in July, 1954, had increased its effective control over large parts of Vietnam. When in 1956 it discovered that it was to be denied the control over all of Vietnam that it felt it had won by force of arms and had been for all practical purposes promised in the Agreement, it determined to continue the struggle to gain its objectives.

(FOURTEEN PLUS A MOBILE TEAM IN THE DENILITHORIZED ZONE)
Fifteen ICC teams, [^]consisting of three to six men each, and scattered over North and South Vietnam, were clearly unequal to the task of preventing this takeover.

The Commission could possibly have done more effective work than it did in investigating and in reporting its findings, if the Indian Delegation had not been so exposed in its position as tie-breaker, and if Indian policy had not been so concerned to be seen to be non-aligned. Too often the safest thing to do seemed to be to do nothing.

How far the Commission could have been effective in investigating where the host Government did not want an investigation is debatable. The Commission was given far too much to do over far too large an area for its meagre resources. The job it was given to do interfered in too many ways in too many separate areas where an independent state must take responsibility for its own activities. The teams were almost totally dependent on their host governments - for supplies, for transportation, and for their safety.

The co-operation of the Parties to the Agreement was essential if the Commission was to fulfil its duties. In the beginning both sides had something to gain by co-operating with the Commission. But in the long run, both tried to use the Commission as a sounding board for propaganda, while preventing the Commission from doing anything that was against their own interests.

The Canadian Government had warned that "if our expectations unfortunately prove ill founded, and the Commissions are frustrated by obstruction, then, of course, no useful purpose would be served by continuing their existence."¹⁶

The Vietnam Commission was "frustrated by obstruction" for almost its entire existence. Why did Canada continue to serve? It seems evident that it is much easier to get onto a peacekeeping mission than it is to get off. Various reasons were advanced from time to time for staying - that it was important to keep some evidence of international interest in the area alive, that the Commission might eventually have a useful role to perform as mediator if both sides finally were willing to come to an agreement, that the presence of the Commission had at least some restraining effect on the progress of events. These considerations were all valid and important. But the main reason for staying was probably simply that Canada could not take the risk of making the situation in Vietnam worse than it already was. Embarrassment, frustration, the consciousness of futility - all these have been worth bearing because Canada could not accept the sole responsibility for dissolving the Commission if its disappearance would in any way worsen a bad situation or delay its final settlement.

In recent years, Canada has shown increasing reluctance to take on peacekeeping responsibilities where the chance of effective action has not been great. As early as 1967 in a speech at Columbia University¹⁷ Paul Martin outlined what he felt to be the pre-requisites for effective UN action. Among other things, the force's mandate must "provide sufficient guidance for the troops on the ground", and the Canadian Government would "give more searching examination to requests for assistance if it is not satisfied that the mandate provides sufficient guidance", although Mr. Martin had earlier recognized that "if the situation involves internal disorder, it will be very difficult to lay down a clear cut mandate. There will be other kinds of situation where the degree of consensus existing in the Council is so fragile that nothing can be agreed on other than a general instruction to prevent conflict or to supervise a truce."¹⁸

These passages from the same speech show just how difficult it would be for the Canadian Government to lay down firm guidelines for occasions when it

would or would not agree to serve as part of a peacekeeping force. Was Mr. Martin really saying that Canada might refuse to serve where "internal disorder" was a factor, or where "the degree of consensus ... [is such] that nothing can be agreed on other than a general instruction to prevent conflict or to supervise a truce"? One would hope not, because these would seem likely to be precisely the situations most dangerous to world peace where it would be most important to make some contribution, however small, to easing tensions.

The 1970 White Paper on Foreign Policy, "A Foreign Policy for Canadians", suggested that there would be a change in direction, or at least a shift in emphasis, in Canadian foreign policy. No longer would the major effort be in contributing to world peace or in easing international tensions; the main emphasis now would be in looking after Canada's own interests. To many critics, it seemed that the framers of that new policy failed to show that particular Canadian interests had ever been neglected in the pursuit of world goals. And Canada probably has more to gain than most from the preservation of world peace. We no longer live in "a fire proof house, far from the scene of conflagration", if indeed we ever did.

It seems likely that those responsible for Canadian foreign policy have since found that the direction of that policy since the war has a momentum of its own, and cannot be changed overnight. It is true that Canada did withdraw from the 1973 ICC's for Vietnam, but there are several indications that that body was never intended in any case as more than window dressing behind which the U.S. could withdraw with some measure of dignity. (The fact that the U.S. accepted, apparently without prolonged objection, a Commission composed of two Communist and two non-Communist members, is one such indication. It will be recalled that this was precisely the composition of the old truce supervisory body in Korea; Communist efforts to create a body of that kind to supervise the 1954 Vietnam Cease Fire nearly brought the 1954 Geneva Conference to a halt and was only resolved in the final days.) Moreover after nearly twenty years it would have been

difficult to say that Canada had an obligation to stay on.

Canada has not been involved in peacekeeping so frequently simply because it has suited Canadians to be involved. In many cases Canada has been involved simply because she had capabilities that no other nation possessed. The fact that Canada is a bilingual country, our high state of industrial development, and the sophisticated equipment of the Canadian armed forces, as well as our long experience in peacekeeping, will no doubt continue to make us desirable members of peacekeeping bodies. We can expect then that in dangerous and difficult international situations there will be considerable pressure brought to bear on us to take part in peacekeeping operations.

It seems likely that in the world of the future there will be more dangerous and difficult international situations rather than less, more times when situations that are not to our liking occur. In these circumstances whatever contribution an international peacekeeping body can make may well be worth the effort, no matter how small that contribution may be. The chances seem good that Canada could find herself again a part of a peacekeeping group as difficult and as frustrating as the International Control Commissions in Indochina have been.

CHAPTER VIII FOOTNOTES.

1. Canadian Government Press Release of July 27, 1954. Quoted in External Affairs, August, 1954, p. 258
2. Dagg, op. cit., p. H/3
3. Cmd. 1755
4. Paul Bridle, op. cit., p. 432
5. ibid., p. 446
6. Cmd. 2609
7. ibid., p. 5
8. ibid., p. 12
9. ibid.
10. ibid., p. 14
11. House of Commons, Debates, March 8, 1965 pp. 12065-7
12. ibid., p. 12066
13. op. cit., p. 446-7
14. External Affairs, August 1954, p. 258
15. ibid., p. 259
16. ibid.
17. External Affairs, June, 1967, pp. 239-244
18. ibid., pp. 240-241

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Cmd. 31. Sixth Interim Report, January, 1957.

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