

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE FIRST CONTACT BETWEEN CANADA AND VIETNAM

1954-1956

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Before 1954, a majority of the Vietnamese people had never heard of Canada. And Canada also had no real interest in Southeast Asia in general and in Vietnam in particular. Even toward the end of the Second World War, the decision of the War Committee of the Canadian Cabinet during the Quebec Conference in September 1944 was that *"Canadian military forces should participate, as a matter of preference, in the war against Japan in operational theatres of direct interest to Canada as a North American nation, for example in the North and Central Pacific rather than in the more remote areas such as Southeast Asia."*¹ *"Vietnam, before 1954, was a remote and distant country to Canadians."*² However, the indifference of Canada toward this region was gradually replaced by a growing interest generated by the political turmoil in the region. *"Canadians could not but watch with mounting concern as Southeast Asia progressively acquired all the characteristics of the pre-1914 Balkans - disruptive civil, regional and international rivalries, aggravated by competition between traditional and progressive forces, and among the ideological adherents of nationalism, communism, anti-communism and colonialism."*³ Against this background, the first contact between Canada and Vietnam was made through the role played by Canada as a member of the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) created by the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam signed by the warring factions in Geneva, Switzerland on July 20, 1954.

CANADIAN BACKGROUND

Brief History of Canadian Diplomacy

After becoming a Dominion with full autonomy, for a long period of time, Canada was still under the umbrella of British diplomacy. All relations with other countries had to go *"through the Governor General, to the Colonial Office in London, to the Foreign Office, to the British diplomatic mission abroad, and through this mission to the foreign government. This was awkward, time-consuming, and inefficient, especially as Canada's overseas business became more important. Therefore, on 1 June 1909, legislation had been passed in Ottawa setting up the Department of External Affairs. Its first budget was a modest \$13,050 and its staff consisted of the undersecretary of state, two chief clerks, and four other employees. Its quarters were over a barber shop on Bank Street."*⁴ The Prime Minister was also Secretary of State for External Affairs. *"the Department's personnel during the first two decades of its existence did not exceed an undersecretary and three assistants, plus the necessary clerks and secretaries. Apart from the High Commissioner to London, and the Agent General in France, neither of whom had diplomatic status, the first official dispatched abroad in a diplomatic role was the Advisory Officer to the League of Nations, named in 1925."*⁵ Under constant and active lobbying by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, finally, the British recognized Canada's right to have diplomatic relations with other countries through the adoption of the Balfour Declaration at the Imperial Conference of 1926. This recognition of Canada's sovereignty was legalized through the Statute of Westminster in 1931. *"... the first legation was opened in Washington in 1927. By the outbreak of World War 2, diplomatic representatives had been exchanged as well with France, Japan, Belgium and the Netherlands. In other countries, British diplomats continued to look after Canadian affairs."*⁶ When the Second World War broke out, Mackenzie King *"summoned Parliament and submitted to it a declaration of war on Germany that was approved exactly one week after the British declaration ... The seven-day interval served to demonstrate that Canada was making the decision in her own right..."*⁷ This important event showed that Canada was now, officially, the real master of her diplomacy.

Canada's Role in International Community After World War 2

World War 2 was the lever that catapulted Canada into prominent position within the international scene. During the war, the total value of Canadian export was tripled from 0.924 billion US to 3.218 billion US.⁸ Canada was one of the two biggest war equipment production centers of the Allies. After the war, for more than a decade, Canada retained a very advantageous position. Thanks to the fact that Western Europe (including United Kingdom) and Japan still were not fully recovered from heavy damages, Canada became the second most important trading power in the world, which helped Canada acquire a strong position and voice in world diplomacy. This favorable economic factor was greatly reinforced by the internal political factor. *"In 1949, the St. Laurent Administration won the largest parliamentary majority in Canadian history until that time, including a majority of seats in both English and French-speaking Canada."*⁹ Thanks to this majority, St. Laurent and his Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, were able to maintain a very stable foreign policy. Besides, the leadership role of Canada within the Commonwealth also played an important part in the whole situation. All these factors have joined forces wonderfully to provide Canada with the position of the most important **"middle power"** in the world at that time. Canada played an important role in all international events, especially those within the jurisdiction of the United Nations, the international organization to which Canada had contributed significantly in the creation and administration. The important political event that marked the coming of age of Canada's diplomacy occurred when Prime Minister Mackenzie King no longer held the portfolio of External Affairs. *"Louis St. Laurent was sworn in as Secretary of State for External Affairs on September 5, 1946; the same day it was decided that L.B. Pearson should return from Washington to become his undersecretary."*¹⁰ Both St. Laurent and Pearson later became Prime Ministers of Canada.

Canada's Foreign Policy, 1948-1957

Under the leadership of Prime Minister St. Laurent and his Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson, Canada established and executed a foreign policy that was practical and fitting to subjective and objective conditions of the country. Right

from January 1947, while he was still Secretary of State for External Affairs, St. Laurent suggested a number of basic principles for Canada's foreign policy in the following order of priority: national unity, political liberty, respect for rule of law, values of Christian civilization, and international responsibilities¹¹. The principle of **"national unity"**, placed first on the list of priority, was based on the specific historical fact that the Canadian federation was co-founded by the English and the French people. The conflict between these two groups in the past, sometimes resulting in bloody fighting, was one of the main obstacles preventing Canada from having a rational and stable foreign policy. It was manifested clearly in the issue of Canada's participation in the two world wars and in the more specific issue of conscription resulting from this participation. Later, when the Cold War became an undeniable reality, Pearson has added another important principle: national security. He emphasized that the security of Canada should be put in the framework of an international effort characterized by a collective security and defense policy. *"In this process, questions of national status have been subordinated to the necessity of thinking in terms of national security, and to attempt to realize this security through international collective action... The main reason for this growing emphasis on national security through collective action has been, of course, the threat to the free world which is presented by Soviet imperialism."*¹² Based on these above-mentioned principles, Canada's foreign policy is characterized by the following: 1) Canada is a middle power, ally of the United States and member nations of the Atlantic community; and, 2) Canada supports the resolution of international conflicts within the framework of the United Nations.

Middle powers, are those countries *"which by reason of their size, their material resources, their willingness to accept responsibility, their influence and stability, are close to being Great Powers."*¹³ Canada was one among a small number of countries that satisfied almost all conditions mentioned in that definition. The role of a middle power was fitting nicely into the **"functional theory"** professed by Mackenzie King for Canada's membership in the United Nations¹⁴. This "functional theory", aimed at balancing the two extreme views for membership, suggests that each member country,

by its capability, can make good contributions to the work of the organization in certain fields of action. This theory was used by Canada as the basis for the nomination of member nations to different technical committees.

Canada, as a middle power, is a close ally of the United States by reason of geographical and economic conditions. The Second World War has shown that the almost absolute safety of Canada as a North American country was no longer true and that Canada needed a collective defense policy with its southern neighbor. This alliance had to be placed within the framework of the Atlantic community by reason of the direct connections (by history) with the United Kingdom and France and of the relationships based on the Western civilization with other countries. Canada, therefore, had a very active role in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The United Nations was the forum where Canada concentrated its efforts in resolving international crises and conflicts. Canada has contributed significantly in the resolution of international conflicts in Palestine, Korea and Kashmir, and has established a record for the number of United Nations peace-keeping missions in which it has participated. *"When South Korea became a victim of aggression in 1950, the Canadian government supported an immediate United States response but urged that it be made only after the Security Council had passed a covering resolution authorizing it as a United Nations operation."*¹⁵ Through these actions, Canada was able to gain a reputation as a middle power dedicated to the keeping of world peace. It was on the basis of this reputation that Canada was nominated to the Security Council in September 1947. Mr. Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his efforts to bring the Suez Canal Crisis to an end one year before. It was within this context that Canada was nominated to join the ICCS in Vietnam in July 1954.

VIETNAMESE BACKGROUND

Transformation of the French-Vietnamese War

Started in the autumn of 1945 as a local but courageous resistance of the people of Cochinchina (i.e. Southern Vietnam), the war against the French reached national scale after December 19, 1946. But as time passed, this war changed its character.

From the Vietnamese side, the Vietnamese Communist Party has succeeded in its efforts to eliminate the nationalist parties and emerged as the sole leader of the resistance war. Beginning in 1950, with a China under communist control as their safe rear and source of all kinds of supplies, Viet Minh's strategy now took the offensive, creating major difficulties for the French. From the other side, the French encountered more and more military and political difficulties, due to a lack of just cause and their limited economic strength. In such circumstances, the French had to create the nationalist government of Vietnam (Quoc Gia Viet Nam) as a respectable facade, in order to transform the war into a struggle against communist aggression, and with the purpose of securing military and financial support from the United States. The agreements reached at Ha Long Bay in Vietnam (June 5, 1948) and Elysee (June 21, 1949) in France paved the way for the creation of Bao Dai Government in July 1949. The next step was the American recognition of the three Free States of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in February 1950 and their military aid to the French Expeditionary Forces in September 1951. All of these supports, unfortunately, did not help the French win militarily. By late 1953, the option of negotiation as a solution for the war emerged within the French political sphere. From the Viet Minh side, under pressure from the Soviet Union and China, Ho Chi Minh, in an interview granted to the Swedish newspaper Expressen on November 29, 1953, also agreed to negotiate with the French.¹⁶ At the Conference of the Four Powers held in Berlin in January 1954 it was decided that an international conference would be convened in Geneva in April 1954 to discuss the problems of the wars in Korea and in Indochina. Negotiations to resolve the war in Vietnam *"finally began on May 8, the day after the fall of Dien Bien Phu."*¹⁷

Geneva Conference of 1954

After having resolved the biggest obstacle, namely the issue of representatives for the warring factions, the International Conference on Indochina began on May 8, 1954, with the two foreign ministers of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union taking turn to chair the meetings.¹⁸

Right from the beginning of the conference, all parties agreed in principle that the solution for Indochina had to start with a cease-fire supervised by an international body. At the meeting of May 29, 1954, the Viet Minh delegation suggested for the first time the idea of partition: dividing Vietnam into two regrouping zones. On the same day, the Conference issued a communique calling for an immediate meeting of the representatives of the High Command of both sides to discuss details of the issues relating to the regrouping zones. The Conference, however, could not make progress on the issues of Laos and Cambodia, mainly because of the demand made by both Viet Minh and China that Khmer Issarak and Pathet Lao representatives should be allowed to participate.

In June, a series of political developments happening in both camps helped the Conference overcome the stalemate. The Laniel Government, suffering from a non-confidence vote by the French National Assembly, had to resign. One week after that, the new Government was sworn-in after Mr. Mendes-France guaranteed that his government would end the war on July 20, 1954 at the latest. From the Government of Vietnam side, on June 17, the Head of State Bao Dai accepted the resignation of the Buu Loc Government and designated Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem to form a new government. On June 16, Chou En Lai of the Chinese delegation made a concession by dropping his demand for the participation of Khmer Issarak and Pathet Lao. All Foreign Ministers, heads of their country's delegations, left Geneva, making room for the representatives of the High Command of both sides to meet. Meanwhile, pressures were building on both sides. Premier Chou En Lai made an official visit in India, and on June 28, China and India issued a joint communique, emphasizing the friendship between the two countries based on the ***"five principles of peaceful co-existence."*** Mr Chou then met with Ho Chi Minh at the Sino-Vietnamese border from July 3 to July 5. From the British side, both Churchill and Eden flew to Washington on June 24 to confer with Eisenhower and Dulles. On June 28, the United Kingdom and the United States issued a joint communique reaffirming their support for French negotiating efforts and announced their support for the creation of a collective defense system in Southeast Asia. Both

governments also sent to the French a memorandum listing the minimum conditions for a solution for Indochina that they could accept.

In July, all negotiations were speeded up, pointing to an imminent conclusion for the Conference. In early July, French military forces withdrew from Nam Dinh, and Bui Chu, Phat Diem. *"Panicky citizens among Hanoi's 300,000 population flew out of this delta capital as fast as planes from Air Vietnam, the principal airline, could take them. The airline said all seats on planes to Saigon have been sold out until July 27."*¹⁹ All heads of delegations returned to Geneva on July 12. Chinese Premier Chou En Lai suggested that India, Poland and Canada participate in the international commission for the supervision of the cease-fire. On July 14, under the headline "U.S. and U.K Seen Agreed on Indo Split", *The Globe & Mail* said *"The conditions on which the two governments are in general agreement are these: 1) A partition of Vietnam somewhere between the 16th and 18th parallels..."*²⁰ After tough negotiations from both sides, in which Mr. Molotov, head of the Soviet Union delegation, played an important role, the partition line, dividing the two grouping zones, was placed at the 17th parallel. On July 18, Mr. Tran Van Do, head of the nationalist Vietnamese delegation, opposed this partition. The next day, July 19, he suggested a plan for a cease-fire without a partition line. This plan was ignored by the Conference because time was running out for the Mendes-France Government, which had promised to reach an agreement on July 20. The heads of the French, British, and Russian delegations had several separate meetings before the final text of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam was signed on the 20th of July, 1954 by General Delteil, representing the French Expeditionary Forces, and Mr. Ta Quang Buu, Vice-Minister of National Defence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.²¹

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CONTROL AND SUPERVISION (ICCS)

Membership and Mission of the ICCS

The major part of Chapter VI of the Geneva Agreement (Article 29, and Articles 34-46) was for the composition, functions and duties of the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS). The ICCS was composed of representatives of

Canada, India and Poland, with the Representative of India as Chairman. *"The International Commission shall be responsible for supervising the proper execution by the parties of the provisions of the agreement. For this purpose, it shall fulfill the tasks of control, observation, inspection and investigation connected with the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities and it shall in particular:*

- (a) Control the movement of the Armed Forces of the two parties effected within the framework of the regroupment plan;*
- (b) Supervise the demarcation lines between the regroupment areas and also the demilitarised zones;*
- (c) Control the operations of releasing prisoners of war and civilian internees; and*
- (d) Supervise at ports and airfields as well as along the frontiers of Vietnam the execution of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, regulating the introduction into the country of armed forces, military personnel and of all kinds of arms, munitions and war material."*²²

The ICCS was established in Hanoi on the 11th of August, 1954, with the following membership:

Chairman: Ambassador M. J. Desai, India

Members: Ambassador Sherwood Lett, Canada

Ambassador P. Ogrodzinski, Poland

Alternates: Major-General K. P. Dhargalkar, India

Mr. Marcel Cadieux, Canada

M. M. Bibrowski, Poland²³

Machinery of the ICCS

The ICCS has established the following machinery:

* National Delegations: Each Member of the Commission was Head of his national delegation. Each delegation included a number of military and political advisers and also furnished the personnel needed for the various Committees as well as the Fixed and Mobile Teams.

* The Secretariat General: *"The International Commission is serviced by a Secretariat General. The main functions of this Secretariat, which works under the control of the Secretary-General, are:*

- (a) To arrange and organize meetings and to keep the records of the International Commission;*
- (b) To follow up the decisions of the Commission;*
- (c) To maintain liaison between the Commission and other bodies which are responsible for implementation of the Agreement;*
- (d) To assist the Commission in controlling the operations of the Fixed and Mobile Teams;*
- (e) To examine petitions and complaints; and*
- (f) To give due publicity to the activities of the Commission."* ²⁴

The Secretariat-General included three main Branches:

- (a) The Administration Branch: dealing with all administrative problems like personnel, logistics, etc., and liaising with the French and Democratic Republic authorities
- (b) The Operations Branch: dealing with the work of the Fixed and Mobile Teams and special investigations
- (c) The Petitions Branch: receiving petitions from individuals and organizations, examining them and forwarding them to appropriate parties for investigation and report.

The Chairman of the ICCS is also Secretary-General.

* The Committees: The Commission also formed the following committees:

- (a) The Operations Committee: composed of military advisers, coordinating the work of the Operations Branch, and advising the ICCS on military and logistic problems
- (b) The Freedom Committee: composed of political advisers, coordinating the work of the Petitions Branch, and advising the

ICCS on the issues of democratic freedoms and freedom of movement

- (c) The Administration Committee: coordinating the work of the Administrative Branch

* Fixed and Mobile Teams: These teams were the eyes and ears of the ICCS, assisting the ICCS in the proper execution of its responsibilities of control, investigation, inspection and observation. *"Fixed Teams, composed of an equal number of officers of each Delegation, have been installed at the following places on the following dates:*

North of the Demarcation Line

<i>Lang Son</i>	<i>11.9.1954</i>
<i>Lao Kay</i>	<i>17.9.1954</i>
<i>Dong Hoi</i>	<i>20.9.1954</i>
<i>Hai Phong</i>	<i>7.10.1954</i>
<i>Tien Yen</i>	<i>14.10.1954</i>
<i>Vinh</i>	<i>14.10.1954</i>
<i>Muong Sen</i>	<i>(to be installed on 13.12.1954)</i>

South of the Demarcation Line

<i>Saigon</i>	<i>11.9.1954</i>
<i>Cap St. Jacques</i>	<i>17.9.1954</i>
<i>Tourane</i>	<i>20.9.1954</i>
<i>Qui Nhon</i>	<i>7.10.1954</i>
<i>Ba Ngoi</i>	<i>14.10.1954</i>
<i>Nha Trang</i>	<i>14.10.1954</i>
<i>Tan Chau</i>	<i>(to be installed on 13.12.1954)</i> ²⁵

In addition to these Fixed Teams, the ICCS also *"made use of Mobile Teams composed of an equal number of officers of each Delegation for the conduct of special*

enquiries and investigations, and for the supervision over operations to be executed by the two parties under the Agreement." ²⁶

Achievements of the ICCS

For the first two years of its operations (August 11, 1954 to July 31, 1956), the ICCS did a very good job with significant achievements. The regroupment plan was carried out on schedule and there were no major violations. Control over the introduction into Vietnam of war material was also effective. The release of prisoners of war and civilian internees, in spite of accusations from both sides, was implemented quite smoothly. The freedom of movement for people desiring to change their living area guaranteed by the Agreement was executed properly; the ICCS has sent many Mobile Teams to various locations to investigate allegations of violation of this particular provision in the Agreement, in particular the incidents in Tra Ly, Phat Diem, Luu My and Ba Lang. In its Fourth Interim Report, the ICCS reported that, up to July 20, 1955, there were 892,876 people moving to the South, and 4,269 people moving to the North. ²⁷ During these two years of activities, the ICCS has submitted to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference six interim reports for the following periods:

- * First Interim Report : August 11, 1954 to December 10, 1954
- * Second Interim Report : December 11, 1954 to February 10, 1955
- * Third Interim Report : February 11, 1955 to April 10, 1955
- * Fourth Interim Report : April 11, 1955 to August 10, 1955
- * Fifth Interim Report : August 11, 1955 to December 10, 1955
- * Sixth Interim Report : December 11, 1955 to July 31, 1956

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION WITHIN THE ICCS

Decision of Canada to Participate in the ICCS

At the beginning Canada was only invited to participate in the Geneva Conference discussing the Korean issue. However, before leaving Ottawa for Geneva on April 23, 1954, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Lester B. Pearson, in an interview of the CBC, recorded for broadcast on the weekly programme *Man Behind the News*, has said "*As a Pacific as well as an Atlantic country, we are*

naturally extremely interested in anything which can be done to pacify and stabilize the situation in Indo-China, and to strengthen the security of South-East Asia. Our Delegation will certainly, therefore, follow the discussions on Indo-China with great care and interest." ²⁸ After the collapse of the Korean part of the Conference, Canada still had one observer in Geneva to follow the talks on Indo-China: Assistant Undersecretary for External Affairs John W. Holmes. However, after some time, the Canadian Government decided to call back its only observer in Geneva because Canada was not still invited to participate officially in the Conference. Therefore, the St. Laurent Administration was caught by surprise when rumors about the possible invitation extended by the Conference to Canada to participate in the international commission to supervise the cease-fire in Indo-China reached the news. ²⁹ *"Mr. Pearson had an all-morning conference with his two chief aides - Acting Undersecretary R.A. Mackay and Assistant Undersecretary John Holmes. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister St. Laurent who is at his summer home in St. Patrick, a resort on the south bank of the St. Lawrence below Quebec City, and consulted Acting Prime Minister Howe, who is in Ottawa. The attitude here is, as usual, cautious."* ³⁰ The position of the Canadian Government was that Canada was willing and ready to make its contribution in the keeping of peace in Indo-China. However, the Canadian Government also wanted to clarify its conditions for the participation in the International Commission: the Commission should be made responsible only for the supervision of the cease-fire and the Great Powers, participants of the Conference, should be the guarantors of the cease-fire. On July 21, 1954, the Department of External Affairs issued a statement confirming that *"The Government will give immediate and sympathetic consideration to any request from the Geneva Conference to serve on the International supervisory commission for Indo-China. No final decision, however, can be reached pending the receipt of a formal invitation from the conference and of full information as to the functions and terms of reference of the commission and the obligations which membership on it will entail."* ³¹ At the press conference on July 23, 1954 to release the formal invitation extended to Canada to act with India and Poland on the International

Commission, Mr. Pearson stated that the Canadian Government will consider the invitation very carefully. He admitted that the task would be far from easy, but, as a country interested in achieving peace in South-East Asia, Canada would be taking a heavy moral responsibility on itself if it refused to accept the task. The Government's decision in this matter was made a lot more difficult since it could not consult Parliament, which was in recess. After careful consideration of all provisions in the Geneva Agreement relating to the responsibilities and activities of the international commission, the Cabinet, at its meeting on July 27, 1954, agreed to accept the invitation to participate in the ICCS. *The Globe & Mail*, on its issue of July 29, 1954 announced that *"Canada today agreed to serve on the international commissions which supervise the Indo-China armistice and sent two senior officials to New Delhi to help work out the preliminary arrangements."*³²

Activities of the Canadian Delegation within the ICCS

In the statement issued after the Cabinet meeting on July 27, 1954 announcing Canada's acceptance to serve in the ICCS, External Affairs Minister Pearson warned: *"We have no illusions that the task we are undertaking will be either easy or of short duration."*³³ Although regretting that the solution for Indo-China had not been worked out within the framework of the United Nations, Canada accepted the invitation mainly because of its responsibility of world peace and also because it believed this international commission had more chance to succeed than the one for Korea. On August 17, 1954, the Canadian Government nominated Mr. Sherwood Lett to head the Canadian Delegation for the ICCS for Vietnam.³⁴ In the interview granted to CBC reporter W.J. Herbert on September 27, 1954, Ambassador Lett confirmed that the Canadian Delegation included 120 military personnel and 20 civilian staff.³⁵ As representatives from a country of the Free World, the Canadian Delegation had a special interest in the execution of Article 14 of the Geneva Agreement., in particular paragraph c (on banning of all forms of discrimination and reprisals) and paragraph d (on freedom of movement). It has disagreed on many occasions with the contents of the interim reports of the ICCS, especially with the Fourth Interim Report, and, as a

result, has requested the ICCS to include in that report the full text of its minority report as Canadian Amendment to Paragraphs 24 to 34 of Chapter V concerning the freedom of movement, and as Canadian Amendment to Paragraph 21 of Chapter V and paragraphs 44 and 45 of Chapter VIII dealing with co-operation of the parties to the Agreement and problems of the future. In the first amendment, the Canadian Delegation has accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) of serious violations of Article 14 (d), especially in the incidents that occurred in Phat Diem, Tra Ly, Ba Lang, Luu My, Thuan Nghia, Tho Ninh, and Xa Doai. It also rejected accusations by North Vietnam that Vietnamese in the North were forced to move to the South. This rejection was based on the results of the investigations that the Canadian Delegation had conducted at various refugee camps in the South: *"Some 25,000 out of a total of 121,000 in these camps were contacted by the teams, which reported that there was no evidence of forced evacuation and none of the persons interviewed wished to return to the North."*³⁶ When the 300-day period of free movement between the two regrouping zones was drawing to an end, and believing that there was still a number of people desiring to go to the South, the Canadian Delegation recommended that the period be extended for two months to July 20, 1955. This recommendation was approved by the ICCS and passed along to the two signatory parties, which also accepted. In general, Canada's voting record was slightly more favorable to the South Vietnamese side.³⁷

Relationship between Canada and the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)

Because of its membership on the ICCS, Canada did not establish official diplomatic relations with South Vietnam in order to guarantee its neutral position in the execution of its responsibilities within the ICCS. From its side, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, in its statements issued on July 16, 1955 and April 6, 1956, repeated its non-acceptance of the Geneva Agreement. And, based on this policy of non-acceptance, *"South Viet-Nam one-sidedly notified the ISCC that it would no longer reply to inquiries concerning Article 14 (c) [Personal Liberties], which gave the northern regime a marvelous propaganda platform on the theme of "suppression of democratic liberties" in South Viet-Nam and gave the Southern administration another black mark in*

subsequent ISCC report." ³⁸ However, recognizing that the ICCS was an international body working for world peace, the Government of South Vietnam agreed to collaborate with the ICCS, and pledged to work for the security of the ICCS personnel and to provide all means necessary for the ICCS to carry out its responsibilities. *"Presidential Decree of July 30, 1956, was issued, creating a South Vietnamese Liaison Mission."* ³⁹ Vis-a-vis the Canadian Delegation, the Government of South Vietnam established and maintained good and friendly relations. It always praised the Canadian Delegation's highly responsible attitude in their work within the ICCS. In its letters of protest or its petitions sent to the ICCS, it denounced the partiality of the Indian and Polish Delegations, never the Canadian Delegation. The Canadian Delegation, in return, understood the position of the Government of South Vietnam regarding the Geneva Agreement, and welcomed the cooperation as well as the assistance provided by the Government of South Vietnam to the activities of the ICCS.

CONCLUSION

The first contact between Canada and Vietnam occurred in circumstances that were very special for both countries. Canada was thriving in post-war economic prosperity and was playing a very important role in world affairs. On the contrary, Vietnam was struggling through one of the most difficult times in its history, with its territory divided, and with the unprecedented exodus of almost one million of its population to the South. In these special circumstances, based on the respect for freedom and democracy, the leaders of both countries have succeeded in laying a good foundation for a long-lasting friendship.

The short-term result of that friendly relationship was Canada's agreement to extend the Colombo Plan and provide scholarships to Vietnamese students. The long-term result of that friendship was Canada's generous welcoming program extended to Vietnamese **"Boat People"** after the collapse of South Vietnam in 1975.

NOTES

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