

16. On 12th February the leader of the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/'Pathet Lao' Delegation closed the debate with a statement agreeing to instal a 'Pathet Lao' Liaison Mission with the International Commission but maintaining that a Mission which consisted only of 'Pathet Lao' Delegates was not sufficiently qualified to represent both the Vietnamese People's Volunteers High Command and the High Command of the Fighting Units of 'Pathet Lao'. According to their view the Vietnamese People's Volunteers Delegation, as one of the Parties of the Geneva Agreement, should continue to function in Laos until this Agreement had been fully implemented.

17. The Joint Commission ceased to function on 15th February, 1955.

12. The subject was discussed by the two Parties for the first time at their meetings with the International Commission towards the end of January, 1955. Considering that the Franco-Laoian Delegation had already, by a unilateral decision on their part, withdrawn from the Joint Commission, these meetings were held under difficult circumstances. Though this unilateral decision did not amount to a dissolution of the Joint Commission, it deprived the Franco-Laoian Delegation of all authority. In fact, from 31st January, 1955 following an express order from the Royal Laoian Government, the meetings had to be continued without even the physical presence of the Royal Laoian representatives. The French Union Delegation refused to make any fresh proposal that went beyond the instructions given them by the Royal Laoian Government.

13. The Franco-Laoian Delegation asserted their right to make a unilateral decision, citing International Law which allowed a party to denounce an agreement when the agreement did not set any definite time limit for its implementation. They pointed out moreover that Article 22 of the Geneva Agreement envisaged the creation of successors to the signatories to the Geneva Agreement.

14. The Franco-Laoian Delegation demanded that the Joint Commission, containing "a military foreign body", should be disbanded and that the Vietnamese People's Volunteers and French Union Delegations should cease to function in Laos in a Liaison Mission or in any other capacity. They suggested that the International Commission could be aided in its task by a Joint Royal Laoian/'Pathet Lao' Mission with Headquarters in Vientiane and that contact with the High Commands of the French Union Forces and of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam should, if necessary, be established through the French High Representative in Laos and the International Commission at Hanoi respectively.

15. The Vietnamese People's Volunteers/'Pathet Lao' Delegation agreed that the task of the International Commission could be facilitated if a Liaison Mission were established in Vientiane for a more direct contact between the Commission and the two Parties.