

Declarations of the Royal Government and the Fighting Units of the Pathet Lao. In this resolution it noted with satisfaction the outcome of the discussions concerning the political settlement and considered that the Joint Declarations formed a suitable basis for final agreement in respect of all outstanding matters in conformity with the Geneva Agreement (Annexure 9).

15. The Political and Military Committee commenced their work on 25 September 1956, that is, about 6 weeks after the signing of the Joint Declarations on August 5 and 10. This delay was to some extent due to the unavoidable absence of important personalities from Vientiane. However, on 31 October 1956, the Mixed Military Committee signed an agreement for full implementation of the cessation of hostilities (Annexure 10). The Parties agreed to issue a common order to the troops of both sides to remain in their respective positions and cease forthwith all actions which might lead to the renewal of hostilities. Two Mixed Mobile Teams were created to supervise the strict application of this order. As a result of these efforts, the Military situation in the two northern provinces improved considerably from August onwards and neither Party wished to initiate investigation of minor incidents which might have occurred in conditions where the opposing forces were close to each other. In these circumstances the Commission considered, shortly after the August Declarations, that the pending investigations should also be suspended.

16. On 2 November, another agreement for the implementation of the policy of peace and neutrality, was signed (Annexure 11). After emphasizing the importance of such a policy for Laos, the Parties agreed that diplomatic relations should be established with the least possible delay with neighbouring countries and with all others who desired such relationship. It was also agreed that from the beginning of 1957 the Government would ask assistance from all the countries which were willing to extend such aid without any conditions. The Commission transmitted both these agreements to the Co-Chairmen. The Commission hoped that the negotiations would bring about a complete solution consistent with the Geneva Agreement and noted with satisfaction the progress which these documents marked.

17. By the end of October, it was evident that progress on important matters which remained to be settled could only be achieved by a further meeting between the two Princes. The Prime Minister returned to Laos from abroad by the end of October and a new meeting between the two Princes was arranged at the Prime Minister's invitation which was promptly accepted by Prince Souphanouvong. On 7 November, 1956 Prince Souphanouvong arrived at Vientiane. With the opening of this series of meetings, the political negotiations between the Parties entered a new phase and the work of the Mixed Political Committee proceeded with greater speed. Thus on 24 December 1956, an agreement (Annexure 12) was signed on the measures to guaranteed civic rights and non-discrimination to the members of the Pathet Lao, to the people connected with the Pathet Lao and the former resistance fighters in the whole country, as well as on the measures to be taken to integrate the cadres of the Pathet Lao and the former resistance members in the administrative and technical services in the Kingdom at all levels.