

the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/'Pathet Lao' Delegation was that the Joint Commission had been created under the terms of the Geneva Agreement and of the Khang Khay Agreement of 30th August, 1954 and hence it could not be dissolved unless the clauses of the two Agreements had been fully implemented. There were various problems and incidents during the execution of the above two Agreements which required the attention of the Joint Commission. The dissolution would not only be against the letter and the spirit of the Agreements signed at Geneva and Khang Khay but create innumerable difficulties for the International Commission in the execution of its task of supervision and control.

11. It should be observed that these differences were never discussed between the Parties at any session of the Joint Commission.

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 Considering that the Franco-Laotian Delegation had already, by a unilateral decision on their part, withdrawn from the Joint Commission, these meetings were held under difficult circumstances.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-Laotian Delegation of all authority. In fact, from 31st January, 1955 following an express order from the Royal Laotian Government, the meetings had to be continued without even the physical presence of the Royal Laotian representatives. The French Union Delegation refused to make any fresh proposal that went beyond the instructions given them by the Royal Laotian Government.

13. The Franco-Laotian 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-Laotian 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 Laotian/'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 Vietiane for a more direct contact between the Commission and the two Parties.