

political settlement. The Polish Delegation did not take part in the detailed discussion of the text as their reservations were of a fundamental nature. The resolution was later forwarded by the Commission to the Co-Chairmen by a letter dated 15 February, 1956: this letter gives the views of the three Delegations on the resolution as also the reaction of the Parties to it (Annexure 4).

14. Meanwhile, following the installation of a new Government headed by Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma and the declaration (Annexure 5) of the Prime Minister about its policy towards the settlement of the political problem with the Pathet Lao, a series of letters was exchanged between the Prime Minister and Prince Souphanouvong, leader of the Pathet Lao, with a view to reopening negotiations. On 22 April, a letter (Annexure 6) was addressed by Prince Souphanouvong to the Prime Minister, suggesting that direct political negotiations should be reopened in the near future for full implementation of the Geneva Agreement and on the principles of peace, independence, democracy and unity of the country. There was some delay as to the basis on which these negotiations should proceed, as also about the place of meeting. However, by the end of July, partly as a result of various informal contacts between the Commission and the Parties, the Pathet Lao Delegation, led by Prince Souphanouvong, arrived in Vientiane and a fresh series of negotiations was opened. In co-operation with the Royal Government the Commission took special care for the stay and security of Prince Souphanouvong. The talks between the Pathet Lao and the Royal Government Delegation, led by the Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, commenced on 1 August 1956 and continued till 10 August. The Commission did not attend the talks. The Parties stated that the negotiations were proceeding in an "atmosphere of entire cordiality and good mutual understanding". As a result of the efforts of the two Parties, two Joint Declarations (Annexures 7 and 8) were signed giving in broad terms a programme for a final settlement in respect of all the problems which concerned both the Parties. In these declarations it was agreed between the Parties that the country would continue to base its foreign policy on peace and neutrality and good relations with all the countries, especially with the neighbouring ones. The principle of peaceful co-existence was stressed. It was agreed also that Laos would not adhere to any military alliance and would not allow any country to establish military bases except in so far as authorized in the Geneva Agreement. These Joint Declarations also stipulated that there should be effective cease-fire, full guarantee of democratic liberties to all citizens and civic rights and guarantees to members of the Pathet Lao and allied organizations against discrimination. Both the Parties agreed that there would be supplementary general elections in which both men and women would be able to participate by free and secret ballot and that there would be a Government of National Unity with the participation of the representatives of the Pathet Lao Forces. Both sides also agreed that the administration of the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua, as well as the Pathet Lao Fighting Units, would come under the authority of the Royal Government and would be reorganized in accordance with the national pattern. The Parties set up two Mixed Committees - Political and Military - to discuss and decide how the various problems indicated in the Joint Declaration should be implemented. On the initiative of the Polish Delegation, the Commission adopted on 24 September 1956 a resolution on the Joint