

## INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONS IN INDOCHINA

Time does not permit me to go into detail with respect to other parts of South and South-East Asia but in passing I would refer to the work of the International Commissions in Indochina. The task of the Commission in Cambodia is, in our opinion, about completed. There have been difficulties in the way of dissolving or disbanding the Commission. In Laos, where we are members of an international commission, after nearly three years of negotiations between the Royal Government and the Pathet Lao, an agreement has finally been reached whereby the Pathet Lao, which has been controlling one part of Laos, will be integrated into the national community. I seize this opportunity to say that we sympathize with the desire of the Laotian people to achieve a political settlement within the terms of the Geneva Agreements of 1954. We hope that this latest development will result in a strong Laos and a continuation of the democratic approach that has been followed by the Royal Government.

Viet-Nam remains divided. It is in this area where the sort of international supervision that is provided by the International Commissions has been most important for the maintenance of peace.

In relation to South and South-East Asia I would reiterate what I have endeavoured to say, namely that the recent visits of Ministers of the Government to that part of the world should be taken as indicative of our interest in the area, our close interest in Commonwealth ties, our desire to help the countries of the area to improve their standard of living and of our willingness to do our part in preserving peace.

## THE COMMONWEALTH

A few moments ago I mentioned the Commonwealth. May I interpolate here - and this is a personal note - that after I reached the United Nations in the middle of September I was asked to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth group. It was not a bloc but a group. I am sure that no one else in the room could appreciate how thrilled I was, indeed how excited I was, at that first meeting. Here sitting around a horseshoe table were representatives of ten independent nations of the British Commonwealth, men and women coming from various climes, of various religions and cultures. There they sat. It seemed to me - and this is the basis of my thrill and of my excitement - that there was before me a brilliant page of British history, the bringing of colonies to nationhood. There was no treaty binding them together. Indeed I would say, for the want of a better word, that there was something mystical in their adherence to common ideals of the dignity of the individual, of justice, fairness and fair play.