

Agreement has been signed, in order to implement effectively the cease-fire and the disengagement of the forces of the two Parties, with a view to a rapid re-establishment of a lasting peace in Laos, the fighting units of "Pathet-Lao" had to evacuate these bases, and overcome incredible difficulties entailed in marches of over a thousand kilometres to rejoin the two provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua, to await for a short while a final political settlement. These considerable concessions and these almost super-human efforts have sufficiently proved our will for peace and our sincere spirit of always wanting to negotiate to arrive at a freely consented unification of the two Parties.

It is in a spirit of concession that we accepted to assemble the fighting units of "Pathet Lao" in the two provinces of Sam Neua and Phong Saly only, entirely liberated and placed under the control of the "Pathet Lao" since April, 1953 and February, 1954, whereas the "Pathet Lao" forces controlled at this time large areas in the 10 other provinces. But we have reached the limit of our concessions and we consider that the Agreement giving the "Pathet Lao" the two provinces as a Provisional Assembly Area, pending a political solution which will settle the problem of unification of Laos, is an entirely reasonable measure, consistent with our sentiments and our peaceful stand which always remains unchanged from the beginning till the present.

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The point of view of the Franco-Laotian Delegation on this problem of the two provinces can be summed up in the two following points:-

- place this problem in the framework of military question in order to ask for its settlement before a political settlement;
- asking that the presence of the Laotian National Army in these two provinces be recognised in order to obtain a stationing area in these two provinces.

(a) As was mentioned earlier, the problem of the two provinces is a political problem to be solved by the representatives of the "Pathet Lao" Government and those of the Royal Government in the coming negotiations, at the same time as other political problems. As far as the military aspect of this problem is concerned, it has already been settled: this military settlement is the determination of a regroupment zone constituted by the two provinces and allotted to the fighting units of "Pathet Lao", pending a final political settlement, in accordance with the spirit of Article 14 of the Geneva Agreement.