

(a) That it had opposed the Royal reforms and that its opposition was responsible for King Sihanouk's abdication;

(b) That it had interfered in the internal affairs of Cambodia;

(c) That it was influenced by certain local political parties.

In view of the persistent nature of the press campaign, the Commission eventually wrote to the Prime Minister of Cambodia on the subject and having received a satisfactory reply, issued the following communique on March 14:

"For some weeks past the International Supervisory Commission has been the object of irresponsible and baseless stories which have found their way into the world press and radio. The tendency of these stories is to create an impression of tension in the relations between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the International Commission.

"With a view to correcting the false impressions created by such misleading stories, the International Commission wrote to the Prime Minister of Cambodia drawing his attention to them. In his reply, His Excellency Leng Ngeth has pointed out that neither His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk nor His Majesty Norodom Suramarit nor the Royal Government have in their messages, speeches and public declarations ever mentioned the International Commission. The letter also makes it clear that neither the Cambodian Press nor the Cambodian Radio has stated anything at all which might cast a slur on the reputation of the International Commission.

"The International Commission wishes to point out that at no time has any complaint regarding its activities been received by the Commission from the Royal Government. On the contrary the Commission has always enjoyed good relations with the Royal Government.

"The International Commission's sole responsibility in Cambodia is to supervise and observe the implementation of the provisions of the Geneva Agreement."

55. The communique helped to clear the air of misleading reports and in particular the impression that there was tension in the relations between the Commission and the Royal Government. With the publication of the communique, the campaign in the Saigon press also stopped. Prince Sihanouk's reference to the work of the Commission at Calcutta on March 16 also helped to correct wrong impressions. This was what the Prince said to the Press at Calcutta:

"The International Commission in Cambodia has been fulfilling its tasks satisfactorily. I have no observation to make regarding its activities. The main part of its job is finished with the evacuation from Cambodia of foreign troops. It now has only to assist at the elections which are to be held in September."