

It was not considered, however, that the Security Council would be justified in attempting to recall the International Commission against the wishes of the Laotian Government — that is, we did not think that the United Nations Security Council should ask that the Commission should be reconvened. This Commission is composed of India, Canada, and Poland. That is the membership of all three Commissions.

Canada therefore was in agreement with the proposal to set up a sub-committee of the United Nations Security Council. Our thinking was that, if a United Nations presence could be got into Laos, it would stop any spread of the trouble. We thought that would be the most effective way to stop a small brush fire becoming what might have been a very serious war in the area, or what might have in fact precipitated a world war.

The report of the Security Council sub-committee, which was made public early in November, noted that it was not clearly established that regular North Vietnamese troops had actually crossed the border to assist the rebels, but that the Pathet-Lao had received support from North Vietnam in the form of equipment, arms, ammunition, supplies and "the help of political cadres".

Since the publication of this report, the Secretary-General, Mr. Hammarskjöld, has visited Laos to gain a personal knowledge of the situation, and has named a personal representative, a member of the United Nations Secretariat, to report on the economic situation in Laos.

We understand that a proposal for co-ordinated action by the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies to assist Laos in the development of the basic sections of its economy is now under consideration.

In Laos itself, a new cabinet, which was formed early in January, is preparing for general elections, which are slated to be held on April 24. The Government has announced that, as far as External Affairs is concerned, it will follow a policy of neutrality and will respect international agreements concluded by the previous governments, including the Geneva agreements.

The military disturbances in the country have lessened since the visit of the Security Council sub-committee in September and October. A potentially dangerous situation still exists, but it is hoped that this may be lessened by the continued interest of the United Nations and the continued adherence of the Laotian Government to the Geneva Agreements.

Outer Space

Another subject on which brief comments might be helpful is the question of outer space.

The great strides made in the fields of ballistic missiles and outer-space vehicles have redoubled the urgency of the disarmament question.

At the same time, the prospective benefits to be derived from the peaceful uses of outer space and from the establishment of the rule of law in outer space are immense. For this reason the Canadian Government supported the resolution adopted at the last General Assembly creating a permanent committee in this