

39. In all this, the primary responsibility lay with the Joint Commission:-

Responsibility of the Joint Commission

- (a) Article 12 charged it with the task of fixing the site and boundaries of the Provisional Assembly Areas;
- (b) Article 3(b) required the Joint Commission to ensure the safety of the troops on the move or in the process of being withdrawn. "In particular, while the forces of one party are withdrawing by a line of communication passing through the territory of the other party (roads or waterways) the forces of the latter party shall provisionally withdraw two kilometres on either side of such line of communication, but in such a manner as to avoid interfering with civilian traffic";
- (c) under Article 4(c), it was to determine the routes for the withdrawal from Laos of the forces of the French Union and Vietnamese People's Volunteers (not of the "Pathet Lao");
- (d) Article 28 required the Joint Groups of the Joint Commission to follow the forces in their movement.

Co-ordination of the th Secretariats General

40. The International Commission was empowered to supervise and control the withdrawals under the following articles of the Geneva Agreement:

Supervision by the International Commission

- (a) Article 4(f), which charged the International Commission to supervise the implementation of measures to ensure the safety of the forces during withdrawal and transfer;
- (b) Article 27(a), which vested in it the right to control the withdrawal of foreign forces in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement on the cessation of Hostilities and to see that frontiers were respected;
- (c) Article 26, which empowered it to set up Fixed and Mobile Teams for the purposes of supervision, investigation and observation.

Forces to Progress Report

41. The final and effective disengagement of the forces depended on their regroupment in separate Provisional Assembly Areas. Article 12 stipulated that:-

Disengagement and Regroupment in Provisional Assembly Areas

- (a) the Vietnamese People's Volunteers and the French Union forces would each have 5 Provisional Assembly Areas;