

others moved out along with other surplus units from Seno. Thus, the main exodus out of Laos of the French Union Forces was from Seno.

Withdrawal of Viet-  
namese  
People's  
Volunteers  
and the  
"Pathet  
Lao"  
Forces

64. The Provisional Assembly Areas of the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" forces were located in the areas away from the main arterial roads. Access to these areas by surface transport was difficult and restricted in that all the tracks and roads leading to them had been damaged and the various rivers and small streams could not be forded by motor vehicles. Secondly, their routes of withdrawal too were mostly cross country along foot-paths except for a very small portion of the road in the area of Saravane. It was reported that these units had no facilities for providing wireless communication and consequently no exact information could be given with regard to the progress of withdrawal along the route or of last minute changes in their plans. Their plans were liable to interference by climatic conditions and occasional floods in the rivers across their routes. Lastly, they also had to organise special dumps of rice-supplies along their route and it was reported by them that the programme of dumping of these stocks was not always to schedule. This was due, according to them, to the fact that the Franco-Laotian side had failed to give them rice under the agreement of 13th September.

Identifi-  
cation of  
Units

65. Identification of either the Vietnamese People's Volunteers or the "Pathet Lao" units was not possible. No details as to the identity of these units were given, nor could they be checked by the Joint Groups or the International Commission Teams as they wore no badges or distinguishing signs by which personnel could be identified. It was only possible to ascertain the number of the personnel in a column, and whichever column was controlled its numbers were noted. The French Union Units, on the other hand, were easily identifiable. Their strength and identity was noted down whenever a check was made.

Co-operation  
between  
Two Parties  
in Joint  
Groups

66. The Commission would like to draw attention to the fact that owing to a considerable amount of distrust and also differences of opinion with regard to the positioning of Joint Groups, all the withdrawals were not actually followed by the Joint Groups. In the northern provinces only one withdrawal, that is from the "Pathet Lao" Provisional Assembly Area in the province of Luang Prabang, was actually followed by a Joint Group. The Vietnamese People's Volunteer forces withdrawing from the Assembly Areas of Sam Neua and Phong Saly and the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" forces withdrawing from the Provisional Assembly Area of Tourakom in the province of Vientiane, were not followed by the Joint Groups. But the troops from Tourakom were partly checked by the Joint Group along with an International Team at the frontier of Laos. The French Union Forces, leaving Luang Prabang and Plaine-des-Jarres and Vientiane by air, were not checked by the Joint Groups. In the southern provinces within the Paksong Sub-Commission zone, some attempt was made by the Joint Groups to follow the withdrawals, but there were a number of complaints by both the parties that some of the moves took place without the knowledge of the Joint Groups. Complaints were received