

MILITARY PHASE

4. Removal of Mines and Booby Traps

(a) Mine clearing operations have been carried out satisfactorily. In some cases, however, a few mines have been left because the persons who laid them cannot now be found. These mines, in inaccessible areas, have been adequately sign-posted.

Release of Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

(b) Prisoners of war and civilian internees have been released by both sides. This important task was tackled at several meetings of the International Commission and at a few meetings between it and the Joint Commission. The International Commission was able to expedite matters by resolving differences between the Royal Cambodian Delegation on the one side and the Delegation of the Khmer Resistance Forces and Vietnamese Military Units on the other, and by exerting tactful pressure on both sides to press on with the work. The Commission was naturally anxious to expedite the liberation of prisoners on humanitarian grounds. When faced with an impasse, the Joint Commission asked the International Commission for a ruling. The latter gave the following recommendations:

- (i) Both sides were to submit lists of prisoners of war and civilian internees held by them. These lists were to be submitted to the International Commission and to the Delegation representing the other side on the Joint Commission;
- (ii) All releases were to take place between 12-15 September at places nominated separately by the two sides;
- (iii) The International Commission or their representatives were to be present at all releases;
- (iv) Any questions on the lists submitted by either side were to be dealt with later. Releases were not to be held up for this reason.

These recommendations were accepted by both sides and the first release took place at Suong on the 11th of September. The last release took place at Kompong Cham on the 23rd of September when some 337 civilian internees were set free. On the whole, the operation went smoothly and last-minute differences of opinion were settled by the Commission on the spot. A press release on the liberation was later issued by the Commission. Nothing now remains of this phase of the Commission's work except a certain number of complaints on both sides that not all prisoners of war and not all civilian internees were released. These