



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA REMINDS THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF ITS SOUTHEAST ASIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

A Statement by Ambassador W.H. Barton, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, in the Security Council, New York, February 24, 1979.

It is a measure of Canada's deep concern over the current situation in Southeast Asia that we joined with Australia and New Zealand in what for us was an unusual step — namely, that of supporting, in a letter addressed to the President on February 23, the request for an urgent meeting of the Security Council. That we have also now sought to address the Council is again indicative of the importance Canada attaches to this debate. While Canada is neither a party to the many-sided disputes now disrupting the peace in Southeast Asia nor an immediate geographical neighbour, we regard ourselves as a member of the Pacific Community and Canadians are deeply troubled by the far-reaching consequences that the perpetuation of the present conflicts could bring about. We are concerned too, because of our 20-year exposure, as members of supervisory and control mechanisms authorized by the international community, for the aspirations of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia for justice. After a quarter of a century of strife, those aspirations have still not been fulfilled. And, finally, we are disturbed by the evident failure of existing international machinery to prevent the recurrence of violence and warfare.

I do not wish to rehearse in any detail the causes of the current confrontation, some of which are centuries old, others of more recent vintage, but all well known to the members of the Council. What is more important, and what made it imperative for the Security Council to meet, is that the Charter of the United Nations, in its very first article, declares, as one of its main purposes, the duty: "To bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

The Charter also makes clear that it is the Security Council that bears the primary responsibility in this regard. It is, therefore, the duty of this Council not only to review the facts of the present crisis but — what is more important — to consider practical measures that can help to defuse the situation and, in time, restore peace in that long-afflicted region. The facts are well known. The military movements across international borders and the continued armed confrontations between large forces are not denied. The resulting human suffering and economic losses are self-evident.

My country deplors the increasing resort to the use of force that we have been witnessing in the attempt to settle disputes in Southeast Asia, and we call here, as we have publicly and through diplomatic channels, for the exercise of restraint on the part of all those involved.

Beyond that, it should be evident that the first essential step to be taken by the
