

China's decision to agree to the communiqué represents a significant concession and suggests that China may move away from its long-standing insistence that the Khmer Rouge have a major role in the interim government. Such flexibility from the Chinese, who are the principal backers of the Khmer Rouge, is an important ingredient in ensuring the cooperation of the Khmer Rouge in the peace-building process.

As I have said in the past, we all wish that we did not have to deal with the Khmer Rouge. Unfortunately, the Khmer Rouge remain a major military reality, the strongest among the three resistance factions. To exclude them a priori from the peace would leave them no option but to continue fighting a civil war. We must instead find a way to include them in the process of peace while removing their ability to either wage war or to seize power and return Cambodia to the living hell it experienced under Pol Pot.

The next weeks will be crucial as details of the potential UN role are further discussed, and as options for resolving other key questions such as a cease fire and transitional arrangements are explored. Canada will be active in that process.

Should the Cambodian Parties return to the negotiating table with the kind of flexibility and commitment demonstrated by the permanent five in Paris, it is probable that a resumption of the Paris Conference will follow as a next step.

As a co-chair of one of its key committees, we expect to be closely involved in the preparations for a new Paris Conference. We will continue to work closely with our friends in Asia and elsewhere to help create the best possible environment for peace-building.

We will stress that a new window of opportunity to build a lasting peace has been opened, and that all the Parties to the conflict must approach the upcoming discussions willing to seek and make the compromises which will be required if Cambodia's long nightmare is to come to an end, and peace is finally to be brought to this once gentle and tranquil land.

Peace for Cambodia must become a priority for the world community. Canada has the experience, ability and commitment necessary to play an important role in the peace process. I can assure the House that we will do so.