

The Minister emphasized, however, that Canada values its relationship with Thailand in all its aspects. He noted that the two countries share wide ranging and complementary interests, for example, in the security of the Asia-Pacific region and in cooperation to achieve a more open and fairer world trading system in the new MTN round, in particular in trade in agricultural and resource products. In addition both countries share common goals in relation to achieving peace and stability in Indochina, especially for Cambodia's future. The Minister stated that during his visit to Thailand two years ago he had an opportunity to fully appreciate the tremendous burden placed on Thailand in offering a temporary haven to thousands of Indo-Chinese refugees. Canada is proud, the Minister said, to be part of the multi-national response in providing humanitarian assistance and resettlement for some of those refugees. Canada has taken 110,000 refugees since 1975, of which Alberta has resettled over 15,000. The Minister further stated that Canada is a strong supporter of the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) of which Thailand is a key member. Mr. Clark noted that he has over the past three years attended Annual Ministerial Meetings with his ASEAN counterparts, most recently in Singapore last month.

The SSEA stated that the Canadian commitment to its relationship with ASEAN and Thailand was a direct result of the Government's decision to place a high priority on the Asia/Pacific region in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy. Canada's future economic prosperity was inextricably linked to the region and every opportunity was being taken to build upon the historical ties that Canada has across the Pacific.

In this respect Mr. Clark noted that it was during his term as Prime Minister in 1979 that the concept of an organization to act as a catalyst to broaden Canada's relations with the Pacific region was first put forward. The idea was carried forward by the the new Government in 1984 and as a result today the Asia/Pacific Foundation is a well established institution which serves to enhance the understanding of Canadians about the Pacific region. One of the Foundation's recent endeavours was to organize the successful Canada-Thai Trade and Investment Dialogue in Bangkok in December of last year.

Mr. Clark emphasized that as Secretary of State for External Affairs he has continued to seek ways to raise the profile of Canada in the Pacific in accordance with this thrust of Canadian foreign policy. In October 1985 he had established the Canadian National Committee on Pacific Economic Cooperation whose mandate is not only to guide Canada's participation in the ongoing