

Mr. Chairman:

This is a milestone year for your Association. Twenty years ago, five leaders with great prescience met in Bangkok and pledged that cooperation, civility and concertation were to be the benchmarks for relations in Southeast Asia. Your countries, the region and the world have benefited enormously from their foresight. I noted Chairman Dhanabalan's remarks suggesting that dialogue partners take a "fresh look" at their relationship with ASEAN in anticipation of the ASEAN Summit in December and Canada will certainly do that.

Regional Security

Our agenda makes clear that, while peace and cooperation are the hallmarks of relations within ASEAN, there are forces at work beyond the region that threaten not only your security but that of the world at large.

I welcome the very positive formulations, starting with General-Secretary Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, that have increasingly characterized Soviet pronouncements relating to the region.

Unfortunately, expressions of good intention have not been followed by action. We can only take seriously the professed Soviet interest in constructive Asian diplomacy if there are concrete initiatives to end long-festering disputes. Like you, I am still awaiting such specific Soviet initiatives.

Moreover, while Soviet rhetoric about its peaceful intentions has grown, its huge military buildup continues. The Soviet nuclear and conventional arsenal in Asia and the Pacific is a threat to your security and to Canada's. Nothing would more dramatically prove the good intentions of the Soviet Union than a political settlement in Indochina, and the total withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

The brutal Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is the most eloquent statement of Soviet intentions in Asia.