

*Adjournment Debate*

Two major developments broke the old impasse respecting Cambodia. The first was the recognition by the Parties themselves, and countries close to them, that war would yield no winner, but would hold back the development of Cambodia and its neighbours.

The second was the decision to treat the search for peace as a regional responsibility and lift it beyond the immediate combatants. Seminal to that process were the Jakarta informal meetings which brought the six nations of ASEAN directly into the process, working with the Cambodian Parties, Vietnam and Laos.

The next step was to make that search for peace a genuinely international preoccupation, moving beyond the region, to involve permanent members of the Security Council, and other countries with a particular interest or contribution. The Paris Conference was convened. Canada was invited because of our unique experience in peace-keeping, our extensive relations in the region, and our acknowledged reputation as a trusted and moderate nation.

The Paris Conference succeeded in getting the agreement of all parties to involve the offices of the United Nations, in the form of a fact-finding technical mission sent to Cambodia. It also made substantial progress in the design of an international control mechanism and in refining the complex of tasks that such a mechanism will have to address.

Canada co-chaired that Committee with India, and Parliament can take pride in the skill and effectiveness of the officials in the Canadian delegation. That first Committee produced the agreement that could well be the basis of further progress now.

The Paris Conference may resume, and Canada and other countries may be called upon to participate in UN-led peacekeeping and transitional arrangements. It is important that potential participants be adequately prepared. As part of this process, officials from my Department and the Department of National Defence are reviewing Canada's recent experiences in Namibia and elsewhere. Lessons learned there can be applied to improving the planning and organization of future peacekeeping operations such as in Cambodia. The collection, exchange and assessment of peacekeeping information with both existing and potential peacekeepers, as well as with the UN itself, can only serve to strengthen the UN's effectiveness and reputation as a peacemaker.

In October, I dispatched a mission to Indochina led by Ambassador Alan Sullivan, Head of our delegation for most of the Paris Conference, to explore and encourage the resumption of negotiations. One of the major messages delivered by Ambassador Sullivan in Hanoi and Phnom Penh was that of the importance of accepting a major role for the UN in any settlement.

In November, the Government of Australia proposed the establishment of a UN interim administration for Cambodia. That proposal has Canada's full support. It overcomes the problem of how to share power between the Cambodia parties, by delegating to the UN the responsibility for administering the country in an interim period prior to elections.

Like the UN-based settlement recently achieved in Namibia, this proposal would effectively guarantee that no Cambodian party would retain or acquire political power sufficient to disrupt the process leading to free and fair elections. That is the most flexible and reasonable proposal currently in play.

It has been welcomed by all the key players in the dispute, with the exception of the Khmer Rouge.

Indeed it is becoming increasingly clear that the Khmer Rouge and its two non-communist coalition partners no longer speak with a unified voice.

At the same time, Canada and other countries recognize that the current régime in Phnom Penh—the Hun Sen régime—is more than simply one of the four factions. Over the last few years it appears to have provided adequate government, and its record in most areas is far better than that of the Khmer Rouge Government which preceded it. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of human rights and in basic respect for human life.

The peace process was moved forward in Paris last week in a meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The meeting resulted, for the first time ever, in a significant level of agreement between the mentors of Cambodia's warring factions.

Their views were summarized in a 16-point communiqué highlighting an enhanced UN role in the resolution of the Cambodian problem. 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.