

External Affairs Minister Clark Reaffirms Strong Links With Thailand

On July 15-18, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, paid an official visit to Thailand accompanied by his wife, Maureen McTeer and senior Canadian officials. The visit provided a further boost to the excellent relations which have developed over the last few years between Canada and Thailand. It also built on the warm rapport that had begun in his meetings with Thailand Foreign Minister Siddhi, at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

On arrival, Mr Clark was met by Foreign Minister Siddhi, who accompanied him to the well-attended official opening of the CAMP THAI (Champion Roadgrader and ItalThai) joint venture which is already successfully manufacturing road grader parts for export. A reception in the same evening was attended by 400 persons, including the Canadian community as well as senior Thai officials and businessmen. A luncheon on July 16 provided the opportunity for the Minister to present Canada's views on international trade issues and bilateral trade opportunities to a blue chip audience of Thai Ministers, senior officials and the business community. Foreign Minister Siddhi hosted a warm and informal dinner for the Minister's Party the same evening.

Comprehensive Discussions

On July 16, Mr Clark had an entire morning of discussions with Foreign Minister Siddhi, and later called on Prime Minister Prem (who had visited



Joe Clark and Maureen McTeer visit Khmer refugee camp during visit to Thailand.

Canada in April 1984). The Cambodian situation figured prominently in these talks, the Minister receiving detailed briefings on the situation in Cambodia and its effects on Thailand. Mr Clark reaffirmed Canada's full support for the independence of Cambodia and for Thai and ASEAN efforts to achieve that goal. The Thai Prime Minister and Foreign Minister expressed their gratitude for Canadian support, for Canada's continued contribution to the costs of refugees and displaced persons on the Thai-Cambodian border, and for the fact that Canada continues to be one of the major resettlement countries for refugees from Indochina.

Talks also covered international trade issues, regional political questions, transfer of technology, bilateral trade and investment, and the international drug problem. In terms of the latter, the Thais expressed their appreciation for Canadian cooperation with their authorities on enforcement and for the recent commitment to bilateral assistance, eg. in crop substitution projects. These meetings also witnessed the exchange of instruments of ratification of a double taxation treaty which will facilitate commerce and investment, as well as a memorandum of understanding on institutional linkages.

Visit to the Border

On July 17, the Minister and Ms McTeer visited the Thai-Cambodian border to see conditions in the camps. Briefings and a tour were arranged at Khao I Dang Refugee Camp (including two hospitals) and Site Two, home of 63,000 displaced Khmers. In the latter, the Minister saw an example of Canadian direct bilateral assistance to the non-communist factions of the CGDK, aid which will be doubled to \$40,000 this year. The delegation then travelled to Buriram province in the northeast to tour a successful Canadian-financed Integrated Community Development Project. This day outside of Bangkok exposed the Minister's party to the realities of the border situation and to rural development in Thailand and underlined the contributions a country like Canada can make there. In further developing the habit of cooperation and consultation between Canada and Thailand, and in establishing links between the new Canadian Government and senior Thai leaders, the visit proved to be an unqualified success.



Khmer refugees presenting Joe Clark and Maureen McTeer with floor mats and cloth.