

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire
d'État aux
Affaires
extérieures

91/35

AS DELIVERED

**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA MCDUGALL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
TO THE ASEAN POST-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
SIX-PLUS-SEVEN OPEN SESSION**

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia
July 22, 1991**

Affaires extérieures et
Commerce extérieur Canada
External Affairs and
International Trade Canada

Canada

Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to represent Canada at this important conference. I know that Canada has had, for the past six annual meetings, a perfect record of attendance. Therein, I believe, lies a tangible sign of Canada's commitment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and to the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) process.

Canadians are encouraged by the expansion of the ASEAN process and take particular pleasure in welcoming our new partner in dialogue -- the Republic of Korea.

We also salute our hosts for their foresight in inviting distinguished representatives of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China as guests to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

Canadians clearly recognize the success of ASEAN in advancing dialogue on issues of regional and international importance and we fully support the development of new forms of discussion on issues of common concern.

Distinguished Delegates, we are living in a world where change is the only certainty. But change can ensure progress towards a better future for the citizens of our respective countries and for the wider world community.

Key to that change is the direct involvement of the people in the decisions that will shape their lives and those of generations to come.

In Canada, at this time, we are undergoing a process of constitutional renewal through a broad dialogue among the Canadian people, a dialogue that includes a serious evaluation of our political, economic, social and cultural institutions. In our 125th year as a sovereign nation, we regard this process of renewal as healthy and essential to our continuing development as a prosperous and democratic country in the future.

In other countries around the world, democracy is seen as more and more fundamental to stability and prosperity.

Real and continued prosperity in this region depends on the expansion of political rights, liberties and responsibilities.

Modern states need recognition of both the rights and the duties of their citizens. When rights are infringed, or when duties to the state are felt to be too onerous, the people withdraw their support from the Government and the fabric of society is weakened.

In the land we used to know as Burma, Canadians deplore the regression of the democratic process. We call on the Government of Myanmar to release all political prisoners, to convene the National Assembly at an early date and to proceed promptly to end the systematic and forced oppression of the Myanmar people.

Ironically, as individual nations of the world strive to strengthen their own democratic functions, we are addressing an international agenda replete with issues calling for changes to our traditional ideas about the sovereignty of states.

The world is becoming more closely interconnected. We are witnessing unprecedented flows of people, goods, services and aid between countries. But these activities are only productive in a world with a strong foundation of confidence, collective security and individual freedom.

Out of the tragic after-effects of the Gulf War has emerged an important principle. And that is, the international community must respond to delinquent states who cause other nations to suffer. And more and more frequently, responsibility to people suffering within nations faces the international community. In other words, we are increasingly, in the international community, our brothers' and our sisters' keeper.

The struggle against political terrorism, territorial aggression and illicit drugs and our efforts to promote arms control are similar in that they affect our universal security and well-being. In that same sense, too, the problems of our common natural environment are a multilateral responsibility.

This broader concept of security and stability requires new thinking and calls for multidimensional solutions.

For example, we, all of us, are stewards of the world's resources -- our air, water, land and trees. We must accept that responsibility together and find multilateral solutions to the terrifying problems of the environment we all face.

We must also work together and individually towards broader economic equality. Within our national and regional boundaries, all sectors of society must be ensured of opportunity, of hope.

I believe that Canada's approach to co-operative security reflects this expanded definition -- as amply demonstrated by our actions in the Asia Pacific region. We see the potential to ensure Asia Pacific security in the expansion of dialogue which improves the opportunities for reducing tensions.

Many of you know that the ongoing Asia Pacific consultative framework is a key objective of Canadian foreign policy.

Consultative arrangements exist in other subregions of Asia Pacific, but in the North Pacific, where instability could affect adversely the interests of Canada and other nations, there is no multilateral forum to allow for the timely discussion of potentially difficult issues.

The North Pacific Co-operative Security Dialogue reflects our own concerns in this region. The North Pacific Co-operative Security Dialogue has both a governmental and a non-governmental track. It focuses on the North Pacific countries of China, Japan, North and South Korea, the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Canada.

In our efforts, we are not relying only on models which have worked in other regions. Rather, we are basing our initiative on the specific traditions, history and geopolitical dynamics of the North Pacific.

We are encouraged by ASEAN's renewed focus on regional security issues. We support the idea of holding informal security discussions between ASEAN and dialogue partners within the PMC framework. And we hope that consultations can be widened at an appropriate time to include non-dialogue partners such as Indochina as well as China and the Soviet Union.

Canadians are heartened by recent favourable development on Cambodia. Canada has consistently supported the comprehensive draft settlement proposed by the permanent five members of the Security Council.

At the same time, we believe that, in the end, it is of fundamental importance that any settlement be "made in Cambodia," for without the complete co-operation of all factions we cannot hope to have a durable peace.

We wish to thank publicly our Indonesian colleagues for their relentless efforts in support of the peace process.

The efforts of those others involved, those within the permanent five, Thailand and Australia, have, at one time or another, kept alive the prospect for peace in Cambodia.

Distinguished Delegates, I am pleased with the progress that we are making in Canadian relations with ASEAN.

The Canada-ASEAN Centre in Singapore has completed its first year of operations and is poised to expand Canada-ASEAN co-operation across a broad range of activities. Last October, Canada hosted Foreign Ministers of ASEAN countries, and senior officials successfully concluded their talks in Ottawa in April.

Much of the discussion at these meetings centred on economic issues -- particularly on improving the international trading climate and, urgently, on the priority of achieving a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN).

Canadians recognize that the ability to compete successfully in international markets is a key to our future growth and prosperity.

An important part of our international approach, one that I believe has created some concern for ASEAN countries, has been our focus on trade liberalization within our own continent, first with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and now with the proposed extension of this agreement to include Mexico.

I want to assure you that these initiatives are consistent with the overall goal of broadening multilateral trade around the world. We wish to strengthen our economies in North America, which will provide more opportunity for ASEAN suppliers, not less.

And I believe that the visible success of ASEAN suppliers in markets around the world says that you will benefit significantly from a more open, more efficient North American system.

We are all aware of ASEAN discussions regarding increased regional trade co-operation in this part of the world. We hope that the ASEAN partners will also see such arrangements as part of the global effort to extend trade liberalization.

Distinguished Delegates, ASEAN is the most successful regional organization in Asia Pacific. In time, it could come to represent all the countries of Southeast Asia.

As the world searches for new models, new mechanisms, ASEAN stands as a testimony to the benefits of international co-operation and goodwill.

May your successes grow and may your efforts be rewarded.