



Statements and Speeches

No. 81/18

A STEP TOWARDS SOLUTION OF THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the United Nations International Conference on Kampuchea, New York, July 13, 1981

During the past two years, the international community has found it necessary on a number of occasions to focus its attention on the tragic situation in Kampuchea. Ten years of war, deprivation, genocide and extraordinary abuse of human rights, famine and foreign invasion and occupation have changed a once peaceful land into a country beset by hostilities, a country which has had to depend on massive supplies of international humanitarian relief and whose government is totally subservient to foreign control.

It is unfortunate that the situation in Kampuchea continues to be such that we must come together again. Unlike previous meetings, however, which were concerned primarily with humanitarian relief for the Kampuchean people, this conference is attempting to come to grips with the basic causes of the problems in Kampuchea. We have previously treated the symptoms manifested through refugee outflows, starvation and deprivation. It is now time to treat the underlying problem itself. Within this framework, I am pleased to address the representatives of more than 60 countries and parties concerned with the situation in Kampuchea. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for having convened this conference in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 35/6 of last fall. Canada co-sponsored that resolution and has strongly supported the convening of this conference in the intervening months.

I regret that the political situation in Kampuchea is no different now from the situation in October 1980 when United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 35/6 was passed and, indeed, has not changed since January 1979 when the forces of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam invaded and occupied Kampuchea. In fact, actions have been taken to try to legitimize the present régime in Phnom Penh, actions which Canada does not recognize.

During the past three years, Canada has spoken out emphatically and forcefully before the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and in other international fora regarding the misfortunes which have befallen Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people. The vast majority of the international community has shared this view and has supported resolutions at UNGA 34 and 35 which provided the groundwork for a return to peace and stability in Kampuchea and throughout Southeast Asia. This overwhelming desire by the international community to achieve peace and stability in Kampuchea and Southeast Asia is the result of a deeply shared belief in the principle enunciated in the United Nations Charter with respect to the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and the principle enunciated in the International Charter of Human

Rights regarding the right to self-determination of sovereign states. These principles have been wantonly abused in Kampuchea, where over 200,000 foreign occupation troops uphold a régime of their own creation. The international community cannot accept this total disregard of these principles; principles which I note have been often espoused in the past by the offending party in this case. Canada believes that those nations not represented here today still share these universal principles, and Canada urges these countries to honour these principles in practice as well as theory in the interests of global peace and security. I use the word "global" advisedly: we know only too well that what happens in Indochina reverberates tragically throughout the region, and echoes around the world.

**Need of basis
for free
Kampuchea**

It is less important why Vietnam invaded Kampuchea and why it continues to occupy that country than that there should be a rectification of the violations of international law which have occurred there. Canada, for one, is not much interested in loud and emotional recriminations against Vietnam for its actions in Kampuchea. We wish only to see created the conditions necessary to establish a government in Kampuchea which, in the best and most practical way, reflects the political will of the broadest number of Kampuchean people. Canada believes that this view is shared by the countries gathered here. We have come here not to denounce Vietnam but to establish the basis for a free and independent Kampuchea.

How long must the Kampuchean people suffer? Indeed, how long must the Vietnamese people suffer while the government of that country continues to expend its resources on military pursuits? The Khmer nation has recovered from the brink of annihilation and the atrocities of the Pol Pot régime in the past two years. This has been due to the outstanding assistance of the United Nations' agencies, the International Red Cross and many non-governmental agencies. The generous and humanitarian response of countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia to refugees from Indochina is especially noteworthy.

A return to the genocidal policies of Pol Pot can never — must never — happen. I know that there is universal agreement to this conclusion. However, the great humanitarian achievement in Kampuchea will mean nothing if Kampuchea remains in conflict and if the Kampuchean people are not allowed to develop their country free from outside interference. War is the principal enemy of development, and it exacts, in the short term and in the long term, terrible costs from everyone.

**Is the suffering
necessary?**

Canada has been involved in efforts to achieve stability, development and progress in Southeast Asia for many years. We have seen the costs which war has inflicted upon the Indochinese states, and the benefits which peace has brought to other countries of the region. In this respect the urgent question uppermost in our minds must be: "Is the suffering necessary?" We insist that political ends, born of unnecessary fear and mistrust can never justify perpetual human suffering and the denial of fundamental human rights.

We have had presented to us proposals for a solution to the Kampuchean problem which includes, among other things, proposals for a cease-fire agreement among the conflicting parties, the creation of the United Nations' peacekeeping force for Kam-

puchea, the supervised withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea, and the holding of United Nations-supervised free elections. Canada believes that these are sound proposals which could offer the necessary guarantees for the parties involved. They are proposals which deserve our serious consideration and Canada is prepared to give serious consideration to them. We do not see them as necessarily final, and subsequent discussion may reveal a need for their amendment or adjustment. The essential point is that they represent a beginning, a first step in the right direction and the elements of a foundation on which we may build.

On this foundation, we can continue to work towards a solution to the Kampuchean problem that will make possible at last a durable peace in Southeast Asia. An independent, viable and prosperous Kampuchea is our objective, a Kampuchea living in harmony with prosperous, peaceful and independent neighbours.

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