

Statement

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STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

AT THE

CANADA-ASEAN DIALOGUE MEETING

SIX PLUS ONE

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

July 7, 1989.

Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

Your Royal Highness, it gives me great pleasure to have you as coordinating minister for the Asean-Canada dialogue. I have been gratified and impressed with the support from you and your officials, Your Highness, since the PMC in Bangkok last July. The transition has been remarkably smooth. I am confident that Canada-Asean relations will continue to grow with the guidance and support of Brunei.

Your Highness, in reviewing the state of Canada-Asean relations, I am struck by the range of cooperative activities. One of the most important areas is our bilateral trade.

Each year that I have had the privilege of coming to Asean, I have been able to report that our bilateral trade is growing by leaps and bounds. This year, Your Excellency, is no different. 1988 saw another 33% increase in our bilateral trade, reaching a total value of \$2.6 billion. This represents a 75% increase in trade over the last two years alone. I understand that preliminary figures for 1989 reveal that the trend continues upward. We could be close to \$3 billion in total two way trade this calendar year.

I am sure you would find this most encouraging, especially since Asean enjoyed a surplus of \$300 million in 1988. But we cannot be complacent. We must continue with our efforts to fully exploit the tremendous potential which exists in our industrial and economic relationship. I note that our trade accounts for about 1% of our respective exports. I would hope that number too will soon move upwards.

Your Highness, Canadian direct investment in Asean has increased ten-fold in the past decade, amounting to an estimated \$1.5 billion in 1987. In the past year, there have been at least five new joint venture or licencing agreements in Asean countries (Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand) in the agricultural, automobile manufacturing and construction sectors. We have also been referring Canadian firms to appropriate contacts in Asean for information on the Asean industrial joint venture scheme. Asean has made some important changes to the scheme which could be better publicized in Canada. I would encourage you to pursue vigorously the opportunities which exist in Canada.

We must continue to encourage and assist our private sectors to learn about, and seize, the opportunities in our respective countries. I hope that the private sector will be able to participate in the next meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee meeting in Brunei in November especially in light of the priority which your Heads of Government have placed on engaging the private sector in the dialogue process.

Canada and Asean continue to cooperate closely in the multilateral trade negotiations. We, like the rest of the GATT membership, were greatly encouraged with the results of the Mid-Term Review, begun in Montreal last December and completed in Geneva in April. We are delighted that the process is back on track. I would hope that we will continue to cooperate closely in ensuring that the momentum continues for a successful conclusion of the Round.

Canada is already moving to make access to our markets easier. Effective July 1, 1989 we reduced import duties on approximately \$146 million of imports of tropical products. This is of major interest to several members of Asean. Canada already provides duty-free entry on a major portion of tropical product imports. With the new reductions in place, 98 percent of these imports with a current value of \$1.2 billion, will enter Canada duty-free or at reduced rates under special tariff preferences.

Canada was also pleased with the success of the international conference on Indochinese refugees which His Excellency Datuk Abu Hassan, so ably chaired. The Comprehensive Program of Action reaffirmed the principle of first asylum, notwithstanding the tremendous burden which the mass exodus of Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples has imposed on ASEAN.

We also welcomed the development of a humane system for screening of new arrivals to determine whether or not they are Convention refugees. We expect this will contribute to orderly and legal departures from Vietnam under such programmes as Canada's family reunification program.

Yesterday, I confirmed that Canada is committed to help resettle the "longstayers" in camps in Asean and Hong Kong. Our commitment is to take a minimum of 16,000 persons over the next three years.

I also emphasized that Canada fully endorses the principle that any repatriation must be voluntary. To do otherwise would undermine the wide public support we have in our countries for these programs. Like other elements in the CPA, this must be carefully managed and given a chance to work.

Your Highness, let me now turn to the future and the important activities which are ahead. On Monday I will be in Singapore to formally open the Canada-Asean Centre. It has been my hope for some time to provide a focus in the region for Canada-ASEAN activities. The new Centre will do so. It will foster understanding between our governments and peoples, improve our existing activities, and add measurably to our relations.

I will be speaking at greater length about the Centre on Monday. But I would like to stress this morning that I see the Centre and its activities as serving both your and our objectives. I would welcome your guidance and suggestions on how it can help bring us closer together.

During its first year of operations, the Centre will serve as the base of our development co-operation program with ASEAN and regional institutions. After that, I hope it will evolve to cover a broader mandate.

Education and training will form a large part of the Centre's future work. I hope that it will bring together ASEAN and Canadian professionals as well as the young people of our countries. It is in non-traditional areas of cooperation and contacts where I see the Centre enriching our relationship.

Your Highness, Canada strongly supports the emphasis which His Majesty, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, placed on developing cooperative programmes for our youth. I hope to continue initiatives such as Canada's sending a young scientists delegation to the Second Asean Science and Technology Week, held in Manila last January.

Ministers will recall the successful MTN briefing program which we organized for Asean representatives early in the Uruguay Round. We are currently examining the possibility of having Carleton University in Ottawa provide a specially designed course on negotiating skills as a follow-up to that initiative. The course has received wide praise and is designed to focus on issues drawn from the professional activities of the participants. I hope it will be possible to have representatives from each Asean country join in the course.

Another area of future cooperation is the establishment of professional links between Canadian Law of the Sea Specialists and those from your countries. There is already some work underway in this area and I am hopeful that this can be expanded in the coming months.

Through such efforts as this, Canada can make a contribution to the realization of the Asean objective of fostering regional cooperation, including in respect to maritime issues.

Your Highness, we will look for other ways to ensure Canada-Asean collaboration on regional security issues, reflecting our support for the objective of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South East Asia. I should note that we also agree entirely that Asean and its dialogue partners should proceed with caution and care with a clear appreciation for what may be possible and practical.

There is another initiative, Your Highness, in which I hope Canada and Asean can work more closely together. We must achieve a cleaner and safer environment for our tomorrow and the tomorrows of our children. We face severe and complex challenges on a number of environmental fronts, including global climate change, pollution of land and water, depletion of the world's tropical forests, and more generally, the test of how to achieve economic development without destroying our natural environment. I was heartened by the creation of a Committee of Asean Senior Officials on the environment. I have directed my officials to look for ways to support this important initiative.

Canada is a strong proponent of sustainable development and we welcome Asean's undertaking to convene a regional follow-up conference on the World Commission on Environment and Development.

I would also like to convey my personal invitation to have your countries represented at Globe 90, an environmental conference and trade fair in Vancouver next March.

It is designed to demonstrate that protecting the environment and fostering economic development are compatible and that there are products, services, and technologies which offer the means of achieving sustainable development.

I want to raise again Canada's concern with driftnet fishing in the North Pacific. This is a scourge that must be regulated now in order to safeguard the various fisheries of the Pacific Ocean. Canada is working vigorously with other nations to curb the abuses of driftnet fishing. We are especially concerned with interception on the high seas and subsequent marketing of salmon and other species by countries which are not members of the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission (INPFC). I would hope that these countries will commit themselves to the standards for the use of driftnets and to other commitments affecting the harvesting of living resources from the Pacific Ocean. I hope that I can count on your strong support for multilateral efforts to curb these abuses.

Your Highness, this is my fifth Post-Ministerial Conference; the fifth time in which I have been honoured to be your guest at these annual meetings. With the next PMC scheduled for Indonesia, I will have visited each of the Asean countries for these important events. I would like, Your Highness, to take this occasion to invite you and your colleagues to come to Canada in the fall of 1990 to conduct a special session of the Asean-Canada Dialogue - Six Plus One Meeting. I would be honoured to be your host, to be able to return the warm hospitality which you have shown me over the last five years, and to welcome you to Canada.

Thank you, Your Highness. I look forward to continuing our discussions here today.