

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire  
d'État aux  
Affaires  
extérieures

## ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY DIALOGUE PROPOSALS

AUGUST 13, 1990

Affaires extérieures et  
Commerce extérieur Canada

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

Canada

Canadian proposals in these areas have been set out in recent speeches in Victoria, Tokyo, Jakarta and at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta.

They were the subject of discussions I had in Tokyo with my Japanese counterpart, Dr. Nakayama, as well as with Prime Minister Kaifu and Socialist Party leader Doi. Their reaction was positive.

I have had the chance to discuss them here in Jakarta as well, both in bilateral meetings with my colleagues and this morning in the general discussion on the theme of security in this region. Our exchanges this morning were very open, very interesting and very constructive. It is fair to say not just that my suggestions were welcomed but, perhaps more importantly, that the hard perspective I have put forward - that this region can gain real benefits from an expanded dialogue process that address security issues in their broadest sense - is one which is broadly shared by ASEAN and ASEAN dialogue partners.

The security challenge in this region is one which I define expansively.

Contemporary challenges to security now include a range of threats to human well being, economic growth and prosperity and democratic institutions. Real or potential armed conflict within or between states continues to be a major problem in the Asia-Pacific.

Whether internal or external, costs of conflict are high in terms of human suffering, economic stagnation and damage to the development of stable democracy. Internal conflicts, moreover, too often result in drawing others, directly or indirectly, into them. In many instances their impact is felt elsewhere in other ways, most notably through the forced migration of people and the creation of massive refugee problems - a burden that others, both inside and outside the region, are called upon to share.

Over half of Canada's annual intake of immigrants comes from this region. Many of them are escaping unrest or conflict in their own countries - Tamils from Sri Lanka, Vietnamese, Cambodians. In the past 10 years, Canada has taken in more than 125,000 Indochinese refugees: we expect to take more in the future.

The toll in social and economic costs has been no less daunting through the diversion of scarce economic resources to fuel arms races, and through the lost opportunities to stimulate the political, social and economic progress that has characterized other countries in the region which have been part of the "Asian miracle".

For example, much of our attention on the security front has focussed on the tragedy of Cambodia.

But real or potential problems exist all throughout the region. In Western Asia one can point to: the Afghanistan conflict and its implications for Pakistan and US-Soviet relations; the confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir; the tension between India and China on India and Nepal; the civil turmoil in Sri Lanka. In this part of the world we face the problems of Indo-China; a guerilla conflict in the Philippines; the unrest in Burma and Papua New Guinea; the potential confrontation in the South China Sea over the Spratly Islands. Further to the east are found the Soviet-Japanese disagreement over the Northern Territories and the dangerous stand-off in the Korean Peninsula.

These are all "traditional" problems of security. Others are equally pressing as was noted this morning by my colleague, Ali Alatas.

- the global environmental threats posed by ozone depletion, deforestation, marine pollution or dangerous practices such as driftnet fishing;
- the international trade in narcotic drugs;
- the threat of terrorist attack;
- the challenge to economic growth posed by protectionism;
- the abuse of human rights, the damage to democratic institution building and the associated harm to socio-economic development.

I would like to make clear what it is and what it is not, that we are promoting through these proposals:

1. We are not proposing dialogue or consultative arrangements or institutions for their own sake;
2. We are not proposing to diminish or cut across existing arrangements which have proven so successful - such as ASEAN - or others which are just now developing - such as APEC. If anything we want to see these strengthened and expanded. We are not out to fix what "ain't broke".
3. We are not proposing new military alliances for this region. Existing ones, including the American military and usual presence in this region, have worked well. We are not advocating any unilateral down-sizing of these. However, if some progress can be made towards enhanced confidence and security-building measures in this region, that would ease the burden on American resources and that would presumably be welcomed.
4. The USSR under President Gorbachev, has demonstrated a new reasonableness in its foreign policy in Europe. It has in the past put forward suggestions - most notably in Mr. Gorbachev's Krasnoyarsk and Vladisvostok speeches - to reduce tension in this region. Now that progress has been made in enhancing European security and cooperation we think it timely to test the intentions and good-will of the Soviets in this part of the world.
5. Asia and the Pacific, to be sure, is not Europe. It is as unique as in Europe. What has worked in Europe may not necessarily work in this part of the world and we fully recognize that.

That said, however, the objectives pursued in Europe are equally desirable here, and it may well be that some of the techniques used and lessons learned there can find resonance here. The point is, however, to see what European experience can be translated and what cannot. In the final analysis we may emerge with uniquely regional solutions, but we will not know what these could be until we actually examine the options before us.

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Backgrounder on Canadian  
Asia-Pacific Dialogue Proposals

The desirability of increased dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region on economic, trade, security, environmental issues among others has been highlighted separately and recently by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada and Japan.

At this year's Houston Summit, the U.S. Secretary of State noted that: "We expressed our concern that the Asia and Pacific region has yet to see the same process of conciliation, military disengagement, and reduction of tensions that has characterized East-West relations in Europe".

Various agendas and various geographic membership groupings have been suggested for such dialogue arrangements.

Only one regional institution is now well-established in the region - ASEAN - which has proved to be very successful but which includes only six member states. A South Pacific forum has been launched, and now includes a dialogue arrangement modelled on the ASEAN example. A regional dialogue on trade and economic issues is being developed through the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. The Canadian Government, in a series of speeches by its Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, has put forward a series of proposals to enhance dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region. These include:

- (a) the expansion of the existing ASEAN process of dialogue which currently involves the six ASEAN states (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) plus their six "dialogue" partners (Australia, Canada, Japan, the EEC, New Zealand and the USA). Specifically, Canada has proposed that this consultative process be broadened by reaching out to include other states in the region. This proposal was put forward by Canada at this year's ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Jakarta. It will be further pursued by Canada at the special Canada-ASEAN Ministerial meeting in Jasper, Alberta in October. Canada recognizes fully, of course, that any initiative to actually expand the ASEAN consultative process lies with the member states of ASEAN.

- (b) Canada has supported the work of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum since its inception. At the second Ministerial meeting of this Forum in Singapore, Canada will pursue further proposals already made public to enhance APEC's role in economic and trade issues, and, secondly, to expand its mandate to cover other issues - i.e. the environment - which are of immediate concern to states in this region.
- (c) Canada believes that there is a real need for enhancing confidence and security in the Asia-Pacific region. At this early stage, however, we do not believe that efforts to promote dialogue should be overly ambitious in terms of either participation or agendas. That said, however, some initial impetus is required to start the process rolling.

To that end the Canadian Government plans to convene, at the earliest opportunity, two meetings in Canada, to be co-hosted by another country from the region. These would include:

1. Non-governmental strategic experts; and,
2. Foreign Ministry policy planning officials.

The purpose of both meetings would be to explore possible agendas and processes for security-enhancing consultations. Both meetings would be designed to come up with recommendations to Foreign Ministers. At present, we would plan to solicit participation from the USSR, China, Japan, the USA and the two Koreas to facilitate a focus on the Northern Pacific region. These initial discussions would, we hope, lay the groundwork for further consultations, including possibly at the level of Foreign Ministers. The proposal to convene both governmental and non-governmental experts is designed to ensure that the broadest possible range of options and ideas is fully ventilated.

Department of External Affairs - Canada  
27 July 1990  
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