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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
FLORA MACDONALD,
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
PLEDGING CONFERENCE
FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
TO THE PEOPLE OF KAMPUCHEA,
NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 5, 1979

Mr. Chairman, the tragedy continues. Less than four short months ago you called us to a meeting in Geneva to focus world attention on the plight of the refugees in South-East Asia. From the response you received from so many countries at that time, it is clear that your appeal struck a warm chord in the hearts of the peoples of this globe.

Canadians have been in the forefront of the resettlement countries offering new homes to the Indochinese refugees. At the Geneva meeting I was able to commit Canada to accepting 50,000 of these unfortunate people up to the end of next year. I am pleased to say that that programme of resettlement is now well under way.

Thousands of private Canadian citizens have banded together in groups to sponsor refugees in their communities, and are welcoming hundreds each week to their new homes. Working in concert with the federal and provincial governments, individual Canadians have made it possible for us as a country to respond more fully and more effectively to the plight of the Boat People and other refugees than we could have done if the government had had to act alone.

The hopes born of that meeting in Geneva for a solution to the problems of Indochina have since been dashed on the rocks of hard reality. It is now clear that the entire Khmer people of Cambodia are faced with annihilation through famine and warfare. With the loss of nearly all children under five years of age, and the jeopardy in which older children are now placed, it appears that at the very least a full generation of Kampuchians will be lost.

During the brutal reign of the Pol Pot regime some three million Kampuchians were the victims of deliberate annihilation. The survivors are now afflicted by war, disease and famine on a scale unequalled in modern time. A fertile and productive country - one that formerly exported large quantities of food to its neighbours - lies devastated. Its people have not the means, the strength nor the physical security to plant new crops.

Unless we help, Mr. Chairman, they will nearly all die. Our ability to prevent death on such a scale will be a measure of the humanity of the world community and of the effectiveness of the global institutions we have built.

The work already done by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by UNICEF to gain agreement of the governments concerned to deliver the needed food and medical assistance to the suffering civilian population is to be applauded. To date, however, they have met with all too little success in gaining the cooperation of the warring regimes.

Even greater tragedy would have happened had it not been for the selfless response of the noble Thais. Their open asylum policy - affirmed on October 19 by Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak - and their generous aid to the starving stand out as a beacon of light in a dark sea of inhumanity.

It is now the turn of the international community to come to the aid of those who have so valiantly been trying to deal with the tragedy. An appeal for \$110 million has been made jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is asking for \$60 million in anticipation of an influx of hundreds of Cambodians into Thailand. Thailand itself has asked for \$30.8 million to enable it to continue its generous relief efforts.

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In response to these pleas I was able to announce a fortnight ago that Canada would make a contribution of \$5 million, to be apportioned between the two appeals. As the facts of the situation become ever more clearly known to the Canadian people, they have encouraged the government, on their behalf, to triple that contribution. I can announce, sir, that Canada's pledge to the relief of famine and disease in Kampuchea is \$15,000,000. In the coming weeks we shall determine precisely how these funds will be channelled into the coordinated international response.

It is the generosity and deep human feeling of the Canadian people that allows my government to make this pledge. I am confident that private donations will swell the contribution the government has pledged, just as private sponsorships have allowed us to accommodate more refugees than the government alone could have managed.

But generosity and compassion are not the only responses that the situation in Kampuchea has aroused in the hearts of Canadians. There is also a deep sense of outrage, of downright anger, at the man-made causes of this tragedy. They ask - nay they demand - that I convey this message.

A response that is restricted to the alleviation of the suffering is an inadequate response. Unless we can come to grips with, and solve the root causes of this appalling situation, we shall doom millions of people to continuing misery, privation, fear and death. The real challenge we face is to find a solution to the political problems confronting Indochina, and Kampuchea in particular.

First, the Vietnamese Government, along with the Heng Samrin and Pol Pot authorities, must stop playing politics with the very lives of millions of people. They must immediately

allow the full and free operation of the international relief organizations that are even now ready and able to stem this revolting flood of death. That they have not already done so must forever condemn them in the eyes of the world.

Second, as soon as possible for world security, stability must be restored to the area. Clearly, with so many outside countries affected both directly and indirectly this is a matter that could trigger conflict. That is why we must do everything possible while there is yet time.

Independence and territorial integrity must be returned to Kampuchea under a government that reflects the genuine wishes of the Cambodian people. Hostilities must be brought to an end, and the foreign forces now occupying much of the country will have to be withdrawn. Without a political settlement hopes for an end to human suffering will be in vain.

It is imperative that some satisfactory proposal be developed and accepted to allow the interested parties to come to the negotiating table. Any proposal that offers hope of this will receive the full support of Canada. I am pleased to note that this subject will be debated in the General Assembly in the near future. Unless it succeeds I can foresee nothing but continuing conflict, suffering, instability and tragedy for that part of the world.

Mr. Chairman, Canada thanks you for convening this conference. You have once again demonstrated the human concern and the leadership for which the whole world has come to respect and admire you. I offer the full support of Canada to all your efforts in combating a tragedy of such a magnitude that it has shocked the minds and seared the hearts of people all around the world.