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VISIT TO THAILAND
OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
JUNE 19-21, 1982

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today that he will make an official visit to Thailand from June 19 to 21, 1982 at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Sawetsila. This will be the first visit of a Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs to Thailand and will reciprocate Foreign Minister Siddhi's visit to Ottawa in April, 1981.

Thai-Canadian relations, which have always been close, have been strengthened in the past three years through Canada's support for Thailand as a front-line state in the face of the threat which Thailand faces from the continued occupation of Cambodia by over 200,000 Vietnamese troops and the outpouring of refugees from Indochina, over 500,000 of whom have found first asylum in Thailand. Canada has been impressed by the humane manner in which Thailand has dealt with its serious refugee problems and has responded sympathetically. Canada has wanted to establish a more extensive and mutually beneficial relationship with Thailand founded on closer economic ties and aimed at supporting Thailand's desire to ensure its continued peace and stability through improving the standard of living of its people. This includes both the provision of development assistance and increased commercial linkages with Thailand's strong, free-market economy.

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Dr. MacGuigan's visit to Thailand will focus on bilateral issues of interest to both countries although multilateral issues, such as Canada's support of ASEAN initiatives in the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to the Cambodia problem, will also be discussed. Canada's new development assistance programme for Thailand announced in 1981, trade relations, investment opportunities, the Indochinese refugee situation and international relief efforts for Cambodia, will be reviewed along with other bilateral and international issues. Dr. MacGuigan will visit the Thai-Cambodian border area during his visit to view firsthand the impact on Thailand of the appalling human tragedy caused by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge government and the subsequent Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. Canada has accepted over 25,000 refugees from Thailand since 1975 and has contributed over \$22 million to UN programmes which have provided humanitarian assistance to Cambodians in both Cambodia and Thailand as well as to Thais displaced by the refugee influx.

The visit of Dr. MacGuigan to Thailand reflects the importance which both Thailand and Canada attach to the broadening of relations. Dr. MacGuigan will also personally express Canada's congratulations during Thailand's celebration this year of the bicentennial of the Chakri dynasty and the founding of the capital city of Bangkok.