

VIETNAM AND ASEAN

Unofficial translation

S T A T E M E N T

by the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the
erroneous stance of the extraordinary meeting
of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

The Extraordinary Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Asean countries, held in Bangkok on February 11 and 12, released a statement repeating Asean stand on the so-called Kampuchea problem and shopworn slanderous allegations against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, misrepresenting the position and goodwill of the three Indochinese countries in solving problems related to peace and stability in South-East Asia.

Particularly serious is the fact that the statement calls on Western countries and China to increase military aid to the Pol Pot clique and the other Khmer reactionary forces.

Obviously this statement reflects truthfully the erroneous stance of China and Thailand on continuing to save and foster the genocidal Pol Pot clique, to maintain a state of confrontation in South-East Asia.

While the world people, including several ASEAN nations, are demanding the elimination of the Pol Pot clique in order to rapidly find a solution to the Kampuchea's question, the above-mentioned statement condemned the Kampuchean people, their armed forces and Vietnamese volunteer forces for attacking the genocidal Pol Pot clique. The ASEAN statement did not say a word about deliberate acts carried out by China against three Indochinese countries and the fact that the Pol Pot clique is free to use sanctuaries on Thailand's territory to oppose Kampuchea's revival.

The ASEAN statement puts the blame on Vietnam for hindering negotiations. It is common knowledge that so far Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have spared no efforts in conducting dialogues with the ASEAN countries so as to solve all differences. To this end, the Indochinese countries have put forth many initiatives. The Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and Laos have ^{on} many occasions visited the capitals of ASEAN member countries. The ASEAN and Indochinese countries have once reached agreement on a number of formula concerning the participants in the dialogue. The Indo-Chinese countries have appointed Vietnam as their representative and the ASEAN countries have appointed Indonesia as their repr s ntativ for th dialogue.

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However all these efforts have been obstructed by China and Thailand.

For its part, Beijing has sought by all means to sabotage the dialogues in the region. It openly obstructed the efforts of some Western countries to organize a meeting between some Kampuchean personalities living in exile and the representative of the People's Republic of Kampuchea so as to achieve national concord in Kampuchea.

On the other hand, China has instigated Thailand to invade and occupy 3 hamlets of Laos. China has rejected all proposals put forth by Vietnam to ease tension along the Vietnam - Chinese border and resume the talks between the two countries.

At the same time, over recent months, China has increased armed provocations and land-grabbing incursions against Vietnam while threatening to teach Vietnam another lesson.

In this context, the ASEAN demand that Vietnam create a constructive atmosphere before the dialogue could start is in essence a demand that the Indochinese countries must accept the erroneous stance of China and Thailand as a precondition for dialogue. This is an unreasonable demand and a stumbling block in the way of efforts toward a political settlement.

The stance of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea on solving the question of peace and stability in South-East Asia, including the Kampuchean problem, was expounded in a communique dated January 18 of the Foreign Ministers conference of the three Indochinese countries.

Any solution to the Kampuchean question must be based on a Vietnamese troop withdrawal paired with the elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique and their accomplices, respect for the fundamental national rights of the three Indochinese countries and other South-East Asian nations.

This fully conforms to the aspirations of the world as well as of the South-East Asian peoples.

However the ASEAN statement has put forth an unjust demand, i.e. that talks be held between Vietnam and the self-styled Coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea. This is, in essence, an attempt to legalize the Pol Pot clique in disguise.

The position of Vietnam is clear : The internal affairs of Kampuchea should be solved by the Kampuchean people. Vietnam fully supports the judicious policy of national unity and concord made public on many occasions by the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

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Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have advocated the solution of all issues concerning peace and stability of South-East Asia through dialogues with the Asean countries on the basis of equality, mutual respect and consideration of each other's stand. In this spirit, Vietnam warmly hails the Statement of the Malaysian Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmed Rithaudeen, the present Chairman of Asean, on the appointment of the Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Mochta Kusumaatmadja as representative of the ASEAN at the dialogue.

Hanoi 14 February 1985.

VIETNAM AND INDOCHINA

Extract from the Statement by Mr Nguyen Co Tach to the 39th Session of the UN General Assembly, 9 October 1984 *

"..... Asia and the Pacific has been the single region devastated by the three biggest and longest local wars, i.e. the Korean war and the two Indochinese wars. This is not counting the other wars unleashed by China against most of her neighbours. After the formation in Europe of NATO - the largest military bloc ever and a product of the US, the United States set up the greatest number of military alliance. However, all the efforts of imperialist and reactionary forces have met with one setback after another and Asia is the continent that has experienced the deepest changes in the world during the last four decades.

Despite repeated failures, imperialist and reactionary forces have not yet reconciled themselves to abandoning their scheme of hegemony and aggression against the Asian peoples. The United States is actively proceeding with the creation of a military alliance with Japan and South Korea. Japan is becoming an "unsinkable aircraft carrier, of the United States in Asia. The people living in the Asia-Pacific region are gravely concerned about the increasing collusion between the United States and China, and between Japan and China which is directed against the peace and independence of the nations in the region. Washington has never concealed its intention of forming a NATO bloc in Asia.

Such a situation demands that the peoples of Asia heighten their vigilance and their solidarity in their common struggle for a lasting peace in Asia. We welcome efforts by any countries towards this end. In this context, we highly appreciate the initiative of the People's Republic of Mongolia on signing a convention of non-aggression and non-use of force in the relations among countries of Asia and the Pacific.

The fierce struggle and profound changes in Asia have found their most vivid expression in the three Indochinese countries. The current so-called "Kampuchean problem" is simply a continuation of the situation which has developed in Indochina over the last four decades. In order to find a just solution to the so-called "Kampuchean problem" one has to proceed from the very nature of the situation in Indochina and Asia, which can be summarized as follows :

1. During the last 40 years, Vietnam, Lao and Kampuchea have been the only countries of the world ravaged by uninterupted wars with the quantity of bombs and ammunition over five times greater than the amount used in the Second World War.

* (From text supplied by Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Canberra).

2. The three Indochinese countries have been the main victims of aggression at the hand of the United States, China, Great Britain and France, all of whom are permanent members of the UN Security Council - an organization whose primary responsibility is to maintain world peace and to safeguard the sovereignty and independence of nations. But to find a pretext for their aggression, the imperialist and reactionary forces have acted like thief crying "stop thief" accusing the three Indochinese countries of being a tool of communist expansion and of threatening their neighbouring countries.

3. The three Indochinese peoples are victims of common enemy, i.e. the imperialist and reactionary forces. The aggressors have waged wars of aggression simultaneously on the territories of the three Indochinese countries with the aim of imposing their domination on them. That explains why solidarity in fighting against the common enemy has become a necessity for the three peoples. The armed forces of the three countries have always fought side by side for their respective independence and the independence of the three countries. Their armed forces have never gone beyond their border just as their solidarity has never infringed upon the interests of the neighbouring countries, this solidarity is of vital importance to the three countries, as is true of the solidarity among Arab nations, among African countries and among the front line states in Southern Africa. Imperialist and hegemonist forces have acted in collusion, using the ASEAN countries and their territories to oppose the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. They have tried to split the three countries, using the fiction of an "Indochinese federation" which was abandoned by the three Indochinese countries following the dissolution of "French Indochina".

4. The three Indochinese peoples' aspiration for independence has crystalized into an invincible strength. For the last four decades, fierce and uninterrupted wars as well as sustained economic embargoes and political isolation have all failed to subjugate the three countries. In the end the aggressors were compelled to agree to international conferences to end the wars and to recognize the independence and sovereignty of the three Indochinese countries. Ours has been the only region of the world where three such international conferences have been convened, involving five major powers which are currently permanent members of the UN security council and resulting in the only international accords which recognize the national rights of the three Indochinese countries.

5. The struggle in Southeast Asia during the last four decades has resulted in the formation of two groups of countries-ASEAN and Indochina-with differing political and social systems. Carrying out their "divide and rule" policy, imperialist and reactionary forces have put the ASEAN against the Indochinese countries. Therefore, peace and stability in Southeast Asia require both peaceful coexistence between the two groups of countries and an end to all forms of outside interference.

6. In the last four decades, the majority at the United Nations has kept silent in the face of the longest and most brutal wars of aggression waged against the three Indochinese countries. Today, at the UN, the majority is again taking sides with the expansionist forces by recognizing the genocidal Polpot criminals, who have massacred three million Kampuchean and who are trying to impede the Kampuchean people's rebirth. It is due to this state of affairs that solutions to the most protracted and bloodiest Indochinese wars were found outside the framework of the United Nations.

If the so-called "Kampuchea problem" has dragged on for six years without being resolved, it is because of an unwillingness to address the real nature of the issue : the struggle of the three Indochinese peoples for the defence of their independence and sovereignty against their northern neighbour's hegemonism and expansionism. Some have deliberately supported the actions of aggressors against their victims must as they have thrown their support behind the Polpot clique, which massacred three million Kampuchean, launched wars of aggression against neighbouring countries and which is trying to impede the recovery of the Kampuchean people.

During the last six years, the People's Republic of Kampuchea has become an undeniable reality. From the mass graves of the genocidal Polpot regime, the Kampuchean people have returned to life and have restored national unity and concord. They have exercised and are exercising their right to self-determination, for them, self-determination is first and foremost the right to live free from the genocidal Polpot clique. However, under the pretext of defending the right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people, imperialist and reactionary forces have been trying to bring this genocidal clique back to power in Kampuchea.

Vietnamese volunteer forces have, on three occasions, gone to Kampuchea to fight side by side with the Kampuchean people against a common enemy. Twice they have withdrawn from this country : the first time in 1954 when the French colonialist's war was terminated and the second time in 1975 after the end of American war. They will withdraw for the third time once China has ceased its threat. The People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist

Republic of Vietnam categorically reject the demand for a unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers, a demand designed to bring Polpot either openly or in disguise back to Kampuchea. The Kampuchean people's recovery has made possible a gradual withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea each year, starting in 1982. This has frustrated the design of those who would like either to demand the immediate and complete withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers, opening the way for the Polpot clique to return to power in Kampuchea or to keep these forces bogged down in Kampuchea unable to withdraw.

All the military, political, economic and diplomatic measures that China and ASEAN have taken against the three Indochinese peoples during the last six years have failed. All attempts to impose a unilateral solution on Kampuchea have come to naught. Now there is only one alternative : to engage in a dialogue, to jointly consider the proposals of both parties and to start negotiations on the basis of equality and mutual respect for each other's interests. We are of the view that if the parties concerned sincerely wish to settle their differences, the opportunity for doing so has presented itself. Such a development will conform to the interests of all parties in Southeast Asia and to the resolutions on Southeast Asia adopted by the Seventh Summit Conference of the Non-aligned countries held in New Delhi in 1983 : resolutions accepted by both the ASEAN and Indochina groups.

We welcome all initiatives by other countries to facilitate negotiations between the two groups of Southeast Asian countries to find a solution that ensures respects for each other's independence and sovereignty that guarantees peace and security in Southeast Asia.

Attempts to impose a solution aimed at thwarting the rebirth of Kampuchea, which would result in the return of the Polpot genocidal clique and which threaten Laos and Vietnam should be given up otherwise peace and stability in Southeast Asia will continue to be undermined. In this context, with the growing strength of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Vietnamese volunteers will continue their annual withdrawals from Kampuchea. Within five to ten years, when most of the Vietnamese volunteers will be withdrawn from Kampuchea, the People's Republic of Kampuchea will be able to shoulder its own defence, and the question of Kampuchea will thus resolve itself.

As a people who have endured centuries of foreign domination and half a century of wartime destruction, the Vietnamese people long for a life of peace more ardently than any other people. We wish to entertain friendly

relations with all countries and especially with neighbouring states we are ready to let bygones be bygones and to look to the future in our relations with those countries who have caused and are still causing so much suffering to our people.

A stable situation in Southeast Asia depends first and foremost on the relations between the two main groups of countries, i.e. ASEAN and Indochina. There is no alternative to these groups settling their differences through negotiations on the basis of equality and mutual respect, free from outside interference.

The peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea always respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Thailand and wish to develop neighbourly relations with its people. However, it should be pointed out that the main obstacles are the hostile policies pursued by the Thai authorities in collusion with the foreign reactionaries : using the Polpot clique to oppose the rebirth of the Kampuchean people, supporting acts of subversion against Laos, especially continuing their occupation of the three Lao villages as well as their hostile policies towards Vietnam, we hope that the Thai authorities will soon realize this, for their national interest and for the sake of peace, stability and peaceful coexistence in Southeast Asia, we demand that the Thai authorities will soon realize this, for their national interest and for the sake of peace, stability and peaceful coexistence in Southeast Asia.

We demand that the Thai authorities put an end to their interference in the internal affairs of the Kampuchean people. Thailand must immediately withdraw its troops from the three Lao villages it has illegally occupied since June 6, 1984, return the villagers they kidnapped, compensate the people for the loss of lives and property they inflicted and allow the three villages to return to their normal way of life before invasion.

The occupation by Thailand of the three villages-at a time when the differences between ASEAN and the Indochinese countries, having dragged on for six years have not yet been settled and may or may not soon be settled-further points to the urgency of reaching some agreement on peaceful coexistence between ASEAN and Indochina in order to defuse the explosive tensions which threaten to get out of control.

While constantly promoting and consolidating the friendly relationship and comprehensive cooperation with the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries , we always wish to restore traditional friendly relations with the Chinese people. It is our view that the normalisation of Sino-

Vietnamese relations and the restoration of mutual friendship are beneficial to both peoples and at the same time constitute a very important factor for peace and security in Southeast Asia.

Even though the consequences of the war conducted by Johnson and Nixon against our people will take US a long time to overcome, the people of Vietnam always consider the American people as their friends, the peoples of the two countries being twin victims of that war. If the United States government really wishes to contribute to peace and stability in Southeast Asia, their efforts will be welcomed, we once again affirm our willingness to settle with the United States all problems that concern our countries including the questions MIAS, Amerasians and criminals in reeducation camps, etc...

The relationship between Vietnam and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is one of enduring fraternal trusts that has stood the test of time. The Soviet Union is the only permanent member of the security council that has shown respect for Vietnam's independence and wholeheartedly supported its struggle for independence. Thanks to valuable assistance of the Soviet Union, Vietnam has been able to overcome the most serious obstacles in defending and building the country. The United States, China, Japan and ASEAN are now raising a din about the so-called "Soviet military base, in Cam Ranh. I should make it clear that, at present, there is no such Soviet military base, but our country has the right to let Soviet aircraft and vessels call^{at} its ports in Vietnam. Soviet aircraft and vessels calling at the Vietnamese ports do not pose a threat to any country. The only real threat to all Asian countries is posed by China with the largest armed forces of the world, as well as by the colossal US military bases in the Philippines, in Thailand and in Okinawa and particularly by Japan's position as the US's "unsinkable aircraft carrier, this fact can be underscored by the use of these territories as bases in the US war of aggression against Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries. The outcry by China, the United States and ASEAN about the purported "Soviet Military base in Vietnam, is simply aimed at obscuring the grave threat posed by China's gigantic military machine and by the colossal US military bases in Asia. If they are really worried about Soviet aircraft and vessels in Vietnam, why then do they reject the resolutions adopted by 1983 Seventh Summit Conference of the Non-aligned movement calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Southeast Asian region? Why then do they refuse to accept the concept of a zone of peace and neutrality in Asia (ZOPFAN) proposed since 1971 by Asean itself? Vietnam favours the idea of turning Southeast Asia into a zone of peace and neutrality as called for in the Seventh Summit resolutions and as proposed by ASEAN countries.