

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT MADE BY THE SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR A. RAHIM ISHAK, AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATING BUREAU OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AT SRI LANKA ON JUNE 9, 1979

I would like to first congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau and would like to thank you and the Sri Lankan Government for the most warm and gracious hospitality accorded to us. I must also thank you for giving me the floor today to address the meeting on a subject that is most crucial not only to the non-aligned movement but also to the community of nations at large.

The goals of the non-aligned movement like those of the United Nations can be fulfilled if members adhere to the principles set out which they have undertaken to observe. The non-aligned countries will succeed in fulfilling their role to build more stable and equitable international relations if each and everyone of them consistently stick to the policies they have proclaimed. This means that the non-aligned countries must themselves be exemplary in their conduct in solving disputes with other countries. They can best do this by peaceful means.

The non-aligned nations do not constitute a homogeneous group. In the early years after the Second World War the approach to the struggle for national independence varied from revolution to peaceful transfers of powers. Now that almost all countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific region, etc., have become independent and sovereign nations, they are pursuing economic and social development in the way they have decided to be the best method in the context of their own situations. If today Sri Lanka, India, Cuba or Vietnam arrange their economic order according to systems they have adopted, so be it. We wish them well. We can only do our best for our own people. We have no right to tell what others should do in not only economic matters but also in the political and social fields. That is the meaning of independence and non-interference. We must accept the fact of this diversity.

The recent ....2/-

The recent concern of members to re-examine the basis of the movement in view of a particular non-aligned country's open attitude to align the non-aligned to one bloc should be considered with the seriousness it deserves. As the decades passed, the struggle against colonialism introduced new elements and new characters in the concept of imperialism. Today we perceive a proliferation of imperialism. There are today new definitions of imperialisms going under the name of hegemonism, dominationism, neo-colonialism, social imperialism, neo-imperialism, etc., and what is revealing is that some of these are used by socialists against other socialists in the fraternity.

These can only lead to disunity in the non-aligned movement. The only consoling factor today is that the majority of our members can see clearly through this manoeuvre and will take steps to stop it to save the non-aligned movement.

Singapore has been following with interest the deliberations of the various meetings of the Co-ordinating Bureau since the bureau was elected at the Colombo summit in 1976. It has also participated actively as a member of the working group dealing with the item 15 of the Belgrade agenda or item 10 of this meeting's agenda.

Mr Chairman, the meeting has before it today an agenda that covers many important topics. However, because of time limitation and the importance of the subject, I will devote my attention to the situation in South-east Asia.

I understand that this subject has been discussed by our officials at the political committee. As such, I shall dwell on principles and not details.

Mr Chairman, I come from a region where there has recently been two armed interventions. One, we hope, has ended. However, the other is still going on.

Allow me to make two points first.

The Singapore delegation holds no brief for the Pol Pot regime. In fact, we have strong reservations about the actions of the Khmer Rouge and their atrocities within Kampuchea. They are the most barbaric and tyrannic actions in recent times. Like you, we also do not condone genocide. So any remark I make is not in defence of them or approval of their conduct.

The second point that I have to make is about the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to which I cannot avoid reference since her troops are in Kampuchea. I want to make it clear that bilaterally the Singapore Government does not have any problems with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In fact, we enjoy cordial relations. Hence I would like to say that it is not the intention of my delegation to pick a quarrel with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. What my delegation has to say must therefore be viewed objectively. For what we have to say about Kampuchea, cannot exclude Vietnam and her military intervention in the internal affairs of Kampuchea.

The situation in Kampuchea and the extent to which foreign forces are engaged in extending their military control over the country is well known and I need hardly remind distinguished delegates and observers of their need to take this factor into account in our deliberations.

Mr Chairman, the facts are very clear. There is no ambiguity. We must all recognise the fact that there has been a massive armed intervention by an outside power to change the government in Kampuchea. We cannot accept this act of violence by one state against another as it goes against the grain of international morality and the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of national frontiers. Moreover, we are all members of a movement which upholds the principles of the UN Charter.

Mr Chairman, the non-aligned movement has on many occasions claimed that it is more moral and more upright than the United Nations, if indeed we are then we must be able to distinguish between right and wrong, just and the unjust. We cannot afford to be opportunistic and ignore the fact that armed intervention has taken place in Kampuchea and that foreign forces are still in Kampuchea today.

It is important that we avoid being opportunistic as the consequences of such an act will indeed be far-reaching and we will all be vulnerable to this new norm that we would have a hand in establishing, accepting or condoning successful military aggression or armed intervention by one non-aligned country against another.

Mr Chairman ....4/-

Mr Chairman, it is the view of my delegation that the present situation in South-east Asia threatens peace and security. How then do we lessen the tensions and conflicts? In the view of my delegation, this can only be achieved if the people of Kampuchea are accorded their sacred and inalienable right to determine their own future without coercion from any quarter. It is the view of my delegation that any solution must comprise the following elements:

- (1) Full and complete withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea;
- (2) The withdrawal should be followed by proper and free elections under the United Nations aegis and without duress from any quarter; and
- (3) Non-aligned countries accept whoever secures the support of the people of Kampuchea.

We cannot but stress the urgency of this matter because unless this issue is resolved soon, one incident is liable to lead to another with the likelihood that the whole of South-east Asia being engulfed in total war. Such a prospect is definitely not comforting. It would mean that not only peace and security in South-east Asia would be endangered, but prospects for world peace would even be more gloomy.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

June 10, 1979

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