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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TOMMY KOH OF THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION
ON THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE QUESTION OF THE
REPRESENTATION OF KAMPUCHEA AT THE SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING
OF THE NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING,
NEW DELHI, 6 FEBRUARY 1981

On behalf of the delegation of Singapore, I would like to thank the government and people of India for the excellent arrangements and for their warm hospitality. There exists between our two countries, India and Singapore, bonds of history, culture and language. India's national heroes, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, are also revered by our people. As a democrat I must say that I am delighted to be in the capital of the most populous democracy in the world.

We would also like to thank the government of India for appointing Ambassador Garekhan as the Secretary-General of our conference. During his tenure as India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Ambassador Garekhan won the esteem and admiration of all his colleagues. I personally had the good fortune to serve under him during the United Nations Special Session on disarmament when he was the Chairman of one of the negotiating groups. I was able to witness for myself his qualities of intelligence, diligence, patience, humility, his fairness and integrity.

Owing to the shortage of time, the Ad Hoc Committee on the question of the representation of Kampuchea, was unable to undertake its work in New York. This question has therefore been referred to this conference.

I would like to make some comments on the ouster of Democratic Kampuchea from the seat of Kampuchea which occurred at the Sixth Summit in Havana. Before doing so, I wish to assure my good friend, Ambassador Raul Roa of Cuba, that nothing which I am going to say is intended to be

personal and that I shall continue to have a high regard for him as an accomplished diplomat and as a friend.

In April 1975, the government of Lon Nol was defeated by the forces of GRUNK, a coalition between Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge. The victorious forces formed a new government which styled itself, Democratic Kampuchea. The first meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held after the coming into power of DK, was the Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Lima, Peru, in August 1975. The seat of Kampuchea was occupied by a DK delegation and I remember that a warm welcome was extended to them, especially by the communist members of our movement. From Lima in 1975, to Colombo, 1976, to Belgrade, 1978, to Colombo in 1979, the seat of Kampuchea in our movement was always occupied by DK. This was true not only of the meetings at the levels of ministers and heads of States and Governments. It was also true of all the meetings held in New York, of the co-ordinating bureau, and of the movement as a whole. Indeed, just a few days before going to Havana, the seat of Kampuchea in the movement was still occupied by DK.

The question then is how was DK ousted from the seat of Kampuchea at the Havana Summit? Was it a result arrived at by the movement in accordance with its rules of decision making? The answer is no. DK was illegally deprived of its seat in our movement by the unilateral and arbitrary act of the host country. It was physically prevented by the government of Cuba from taking its rightful seat in our movement. Did Cuba, whether in its capacity as host or chairman, have the power to arrogate to itself to decide whether a member of our movement should be excluded from attending its meeting? The answer is clearly no.

We may draw a useful analogy between our movement and a club. There are certain criteria governing the admission of members to the club. There are certain rules for decision making. These rules apply to all decisions including decisions on such vital matters as the suspension and expulsion of members. The presidency of the club changes hands every three years. In 1979, Cuba became the president of our club. At the first meeting presided over by the new president, Cuba, it refused to admit to the meeting, DK, a member in good standing, a member in respect of whom the club had never taken a decision to suspend or expel it. Did

the president have the power to expel a member? The irrefutable answer is no. This is why I have characterised Cuba's action in barring DK from taking its seat in Havana as unilateral, arbitrary and illegal.

When the senior officials met in Havana on the 28 of August 1979, 24 members of our movement criticised Cuba's action in barring DK from taking its rightful place in our movement as unilateral, as arbitrary and as illegal. They demanded that the seat be restored to DK. Cuba refused to do so. It argued that there had to be a consensus before the seat could be restored to DK. Cuba's argument was, of course, absurd and illogical. DK lost its seat in our movement through the unilateral, arbitrary and illegal action of Cuba. It did not lose its seat as a result of a decision by our movement to deprive it of its seat. Subsequently, the Foreign Minister of Cuba ruled that there was a consensus in favour of keeping the seat of Kampuchea empty even though there was clearly no consensus since no fewer than 16 delegations opposed such a decision. The same sordid story was repeated in plenary.

The conclusion is therefore inescapable. Democratic Kampuchea was unilaterally, arbitrarily and illegally deprived of its lawful seat in our movement. This meeting has a duty to rectify the wrong that was done in Havana and to return the seat to DK.

Mr Chairman, some of my colleagues may respond to my arguments by saying that I am attaching far too much importance to procedural due process. They may argue that although Cuba's unilateral action in ousting DK may be questionable it was substantively the right thing to do because first, DK was an obnoxious government which had ill-treated its people; second, that it was overthrown by a popular revolt against the regime; third, that Cuba's action reflected the feelings of the members of the movement towards DK; and fourth, the regime headed by Heng Samrin controls most of the territory and population of Kampuchea.

I shall demonstrate that each of these four arguments is untenable:

First, the human rights record of a country is not one of the stated criteria for admission to our movement. Nor is it a criterion for considering the suspension or expulsion of a member. It is also pertinent for me to observe that those

who conspired with Cuba to oust DK from our movement were the very same countries which were defending the human rights record of DK in the UN Human Rights Commission until DK was attacked by its neighbour.

Second, the argument that the government of DK was overthrown by a popular revolt by the Khmer people is a lie. The truth is that Kampuchea's neighbour to the east, sent in over 100,000 troops and occupied Kampuchea by force. Today, there are over 200,000 foreign troops in Kampuchea.

Third, the argument that Cuba's unilateral action in ousting DK from our movement accurately reflects the feelings of the members of our movement is demonstrably false. Within weeks of the Havana Summit, an overwhelming majority of the members of our movement voted in favour of the credentials of DK's delegation to the 34 UN General Assembly. At the 35 UN General Assembly another challenge was made to the credentials of DK. Only 25 members of our movement supported the challenge. 41 members voted against the challenge. It is clear, is it not, from the votes cast by members of our movement on DK's credentials, at the 34th and 35th General Assemblies, that the overwhelming majority of the members of our movement continue to recognise DK as the legitimate government of Kampuchea.

Fourth, the regime in Phnom Penh, headed by Heng Samrin, is a puppet regime. It was installed by the foreign armed forces which invaded Kampuchea and kept in power by 200,000 foreign troops. This is why the world, including most of the members of our movement, have not recognised this puppet regime.

Mr Chairman, I shall conclude my statement by summarising its main points:

First, Democratic Kampuchea was deprived of its rightful place in our movement, not by virtue of a decision of our movement, but by the unilateral, arbitrary and illegal

action of Cuba, the host of the Sixth Summit and current chairman of our movement.

Second, the so-called consensus decision to keep the seat of Kampuchea empty was not a true consensus decision because it was opposed by at least 16 delegations, both at the level of Foreign Ministers and at the level of Heads of State and Government.

Third, it is the duty of this conference to undo the wrong done to Democratic Kampuchea by Cuba in Havana and to restore the seat of Kampuchea to IK.

Fourth, it is the responsibility of our host country, India, to issue visas to the delegation of DK to be in New Delhi and to ensure that the representatives of the puppet regime are not invited to any of the activities connected to this conference.

Fifth, our fidelity to some of the most sacred principles of our movement is being tested. Do we really believe in the principle that every state is entitled to its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity? Do we believe in the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states? If we believe in those principles we must act in congruence with them. Consequently we must continue to recognise the legal and legitimate government of Democratic Kampuchea and not the puppet Heng Samrin regime imposed by foreign armed forces.

Sixth, another issue which is being tested is whether the Non-Aligned Movement is a democratic movement or is it a dictatorship of one, the chairman. It is our contention that ours is a democratic movement and the chairman cannot act as a one-man dictator. The movement cannot and must not accept the unilateral and arbitrary actions of the chairman.

Seventh, the rule of consensus, which governs our decisions, must be applied in a uniform and consistent manner. We cannot allow any chairman to interpret the consensus rule in a heads-I-win, tails-you-lose manner, as it was done in Havana.