

B. MATERIALS ON SINGAPORE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

I. POLICY STATEMENTS

- (d) *SHOOTING DOWN OF IRANIAN AIRLINER: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement, 8 July 1988 (Singapore Government Press Release No. 14/JUL, 09-0/88/07/08)*

The Singapore Government deeply regrets the shooting down of an Iranian airliner by US naval forces in the Gulf. The unnecessary and tragic loss of lives underscores the urgent need to resolve the conflict in the Gulf.

The Singapore Government extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to the bereaved families and to the Government and people of Iran.

VI. SINGAPORE IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND CONFERENCES

- (a) *ASEAN-US DIALOGUE: Statement by Mr. S. Dhanabalan, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the "6+1" Session with the U.S.A. on 8 July 1988 (Singapore Government Press Release No. 15/JUL, 09-1/88/07/08)*

My ASEAN colleagues and I extend a very warm welcome to you and the members of your delegation to this meeting which will mark two transitions. With the conclusion of this meeting, Singapore will end its current term as the coordinator of the ASEAN-US Dialogue. Thailand will take over the role as Dialogue coordinator. Regrettably, it is probably also the last occasion at which we will have the pleasure of welcoming you as Secretary of State to the annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference. My ASEAN colleagues and I would like to record our deep appreciation to you for the friendship and support which you have given to ASEAN during your tenure as the Secretary of State of the United States. You have always addressed ASEAN-US issues, frankly, sincerely and constructively, an approach that has enabled us to lay a lasting foundation for our relationship.

ASEAN-US economic relations are healthy and we have made substantial progress since 1980, the start of the Reagan Administration. In 1980, the two-way trade between ASEAN and the United States was US\$21.7 billion. In 1987, it was US\$28 billion, an increase of 29 per cent. In 1980, US investments in ASEAN totalled US\$4.7 billion. In 1986, it was US\$9.8 billion, an increase of 109 per cent.

The prospects for increasing trade and investment between the United States and ASEAN in the coming years are good. We both believe in free trade and oppose protectionism. During the past seven and a half years, President Reagan has opposed the enactment of a number of protectionist trade legislation by the US Congress. ASEAN and the United States worked closely in GATT to launch the Uruguay Round. Both of us are determined to bring the round to an early and

successful conclusion. ASEAN is committed to policies which foster domestic savings and the formation of capital. At the same time, we welcome foreign investments in our economies. At the Third ASEAN Summit held in Manila in December 1987, ASEAN leaders took some important decisions to lower the barriers to trade and investment among the ASEAN countries and the rest of the world; to quicken the pace of economic cooperation, especially by our private sectors, and to enhance opportunities for multinational corporation to participate in ASEAN economic projects.

At our meeting in Singapore last year, you responded positively to my proposal to begin to search for consensus on the ASEAN-US Initiative. You appointed your able Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, Mr Allen Wallis, as the US Coordinator for the AUI. I am pleased to note that ASEAN and the United States have agreed to take an important first step, which is, to launch a joint study on ASEAN-US economic relations. The two sides have agreed on a study design. A joint meeting of the ASEAN-US Steering Committee and researchers will be held in Singapore on 14 July 1988 to commence the study. We hope that the report of the researchers will contain new and practical ideas for expanding and upgrading ASEAN-US economic relations. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on ASEAN-US Automated Data Exchange of foreign trade and tariff data has just been signed by our officials. Under this MOU, the United States will provide a technical assistance programme to ASEAN member countries to enable them to develop systems and procedures for automated data exchange between ASEAN countries and the United States.

The United States has played an indispensable role in maintaining a balance of power and political stability in East and Southeast Asia. The rebuilding of American defence forces and a buoyant economy have enhanced American power and prestige in the world.

The Geneva Agreement in Afghanistan is an historic agreement. The decision of the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan has already had a positive effect on the Cambodian question though there are many differences in the two issues. After almost 10 years, the political and diplomatic logjam on Cambodia has been broken. Many factors have contributed towards a new momentum in the quest for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Cambodia. These include improvements in US-Soviet relations and Sino-Soviet relations; the initiative taken by Prince Sihanouk to begin a dialogue with Hun Sen; the tenacity of the Cambodian resistance to Vietnamese occupation; the refusal of the international community to accept a Vietnamese fait accompli, and Vietnam's domestic economic problems resulting from its diplomatic and economic isolation.

ASEAN stands ready to play a constructive and creative role in bringing an end to the conflict in Cambodia and to help in the creation of an independent, neutral and peaceful Cambodia under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk, in accordance with the freely-expressed will of the Cambodian people. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers have, at their recent meeting, expressed their full support for the Jakarta Informal Meeting and emphasized its importance as a focal point in the search for the long-awaited political settlement. We believe the US

has a key role to play in helping to shape and underwrite the solution to the Cambodian problem.

Since the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, more than one million refugees and displaced persons have left Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. At the 1979 Geneva Conference, ASEAN and the countries of final asylum agreed that ASEAN would provide initial shelter and basic welfare to the refugees and displaced persons and the countries of final asylum would continue to absorb them. The inflow into ASEAN would be matched by the outflow to the countries of final asylum so that the ASEAN countries would not be burdened with a residual refugee population. In recent years, this equilibrium has not been maintained and the number of residual refugees in ASEAN countries has been steadily increasing. The ASEAN countries are distressed by this burden, and find their patience, forbearance and hospitality being stretched to unbearable limits.

At the 1979 Geneva Conference, Vietnam agreed that it would cease to encourage or permit persons who wish to leave Vietnam, to do so by sea, often in unseaworthy vessels. Instead, Vietnam agreed to allow those who wish to emigrate to do so under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP). In recent months, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Vietnamese leaving their country by boat for Hong Kong and the ASEAN countries, while the ODP has a back-log of over 60,000 persons. Vietnam is not living up to its 1979 agreement with the Secretary-General. We must seek ways to pressure Vietnam to abide by its 1979 Geneva Agreement and turn its attention to the welfare of its own people.

Mr Secretary, let me now turn to a subject which is very important and close to ASEAN, namely, the Philippines. The proposal for a poly-sectoral programme for the Philippines has the support of ASEAN. It is important for all of us who support the efforts of President Aquino to promote economic growth, social justice and democracy in the Philippines, to contribute in whatever way we can to the programme. The communist insurgency in the Philippines cannot be defeated by guns alone. President Aquino must win the hearts and minds of the Filipino masses. To do so she must demonstrate, within a short space of time, that her government is able to provide a better life for the Filipino people.

While much has been achieved during the past seven and a half years, it is also evident that we have just started the process of venturing into the newly charted territory of addressing more directly the terms of our economic and political relationships and constructing the institutional links that will endure political change, short-term pressures and the problems that are inherent in any close relationship. Our venture will be mutually sustained through the AUI and other cooperative schemes.

US influence and presence provides an important underpinning of the stability and security of the ASEAN countries, helping to create and increase economic growth, investments, trade and socio-cultural development in our countries. The US has helped to maintain the regional power balance in the Asia-Pacific region. We look forward to the continuation of close and warm ties with the US in the years ahead.

- (b) *SPEECH BY SINGAPORE'S MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE 43RD UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Speech by Mr. Wong Kan Seng on 26 September 1988 (Singapore Government Press Release No. 54/SEP, 09-1/88/09/26)*

For the past few years, we have been meeting here with the financial crisis hanging over the United Nations like the Sword of Damocles. Today the financial crisis continues unabated, primarily because of the reluctance of a few member states to meet their legal dues, but the Sword of Damocles has vanished. There is now a widespread global recognition that the United Nations is an indispensable instrument in the search for peace. After the Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq agreements, the critics of the United Nations have been silenced at least for quite a long while.

Under these auspicious circumstances, I am pleased to see you, Mr President, preside over a General Assembly session which will mark a turning point in the history of the United Nations. With your extensive international experience and your country's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations, I have no doubt that you will bring to this session the right measure of fairness, firmness and guidance. I would also like to place on record our appreciation for the excellent work done by your predecessor, Mr Peter Florin, who presided over one of the busiest years in the United Nations calendar.

There is no doubt that 1988 will go down as one of the most remarkable years in the United Nations history. Seemingly intractable problems are now making gradual progress at the negotiating table. A large part of the credit for this must go to the United Nations Secretary-General, HE Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar who never lost faith in the United Nations' ability to contribute to peace even in some of the recent dark days in the United Nations history. His courageous and dedicated efforts, combined with his unflagging patience, resulted in the agreements on Afghanistan and the ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war. We applaud his commitment to finding solutions to the other equally intractable problems in the Middle East, Southern Africa, Cyprus, Western Sahara and especially Kampuchea.

We are troubled that the hints of peace we get from Vietnam on the Kampuchean problem remain meagre and uncertain. As long as the invasion and occupation of Kampuchea continues to threaten the peace and stability of Southeast Asia, we are gratified that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr Rafeeuddin Ahmed, continue to work on the Kampuchean issue. We believe also that the United Nations commitment to search for peace in Kampuchea is in full conformity with the letter and spirit of the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, which declared in its latest Summit Meeting in Harare that "the United Nations represented the most appropriate international forum with the central role in the maintenance of international peace and security and peaceful settlement of international disputes and crises ...".

While the remarkable political developments of 1988 deserve our full attention and scrutiny at this General Assembly, they will not be the focus of my remarks. These recent developments represent

significant changes in the political currents. Underneath these currents, there are more significant tidal changes taking place which could significantly alter the political and economic landscape of our globe. These deep tidal changes are more difficult to perceive than the swift changes of currents we see on the surface but their impact could be more enduring and perhaps determine the shape of the Twenty-First Century.

These tidal changes are manifesting themselves in the remarkable change of attitudes of all the major powers as well as the richer and more developed nations. For the past few decades, the conventional wisdom in most multi-lateral forums has been that it was the poorer and struggling developing nations from the South that faced a precarious and uncertain future. The richer and more developed nations of the North, viewing the future with greater self-confidence, were expected to channel their resources, imagination and energy to helping the South.

Quite suddenly, in the past few years, it is the richer nations of the North that have begun to speak and behave like endangered species. Each of the major powers, perhaps with the rare exception of Japan, is now afraid that unless they make dramatic adjustments in their economic policies, they may slip badly behind in the new industrial and technological race that has unleashed itself. Nations that are able to ride on the new technological wave will assure themselves a privileged place in the Twenty-First Century; those who don't will be weakened considerably.

It is this realization that explains, for example, the dramatic reforms being undertaken in the Soviet Union under the banner of "Perestroika", a word that is now as easily recognizable in the English language as it is in Russian. Any nation that worries about its future today should attempt to carry out equally bold restructuring or "perestroika" in its social, economic and political systems. There is no other choice as demonstrated also by another large and important nation, China, which is attempting equally dramatic, if no less visible changes, in its economic system.

Significant as these developments have been, they are dwarfed by the changes taking place in the even more developed economies. The largest bilateral trading relationship in the world is between the United States and Canada, with total trade reaching \$ 130 billion per year. This trading relationship is likely to be further strengthened with the expected ratification of the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement by the two countries, resulting perhaps in the creation of a single but enormous North American market.

Large as this market may become, it could still be smaller than another giant economic animal that will emerge in four year's time: the Single European Market. The decision of the twelve Parliaments of the European Community to ratify the Single European Act in 1987 virtually guarantees its creation by 31 December 1992. The progress towards it may be slow since the process of formulating it will be based on 300 directives, 200 of which have been put to the EC Council of Ministers and 69 of which have been passed. However, the political will to create a 'Single Market' is manifest.

The economic benefits from such a 'Single Market' could be immense. Today, the Community has a population of 320 million and a combined gross national product of \$4.6 trillion. When the 'Single Market' is created, one study entitled 'The Economics of 1992' by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, published in 1988, predicted an increase of gross domestic product of between 3.2 per cent to 5.7 per cent in the medium term, a 4.5 per cent to 7.7 per cent decrease in consumer prices, and the creation of between 1.3 million to 2.3 million new jobs. There will be other equally important changes taking place with the creation of the "Single European Market", namely, the gradual dissolution of the administrative barriers that separate the twelve nations.

In 1992, or a little later, it will be possible for goods and services to flow freely among the twelve countries, perhaps an unprecedented development in the history of man since such removal of national barriers have only been accomplished in the past through empire building. Today, these frontiers are being dissolved voluntarily. To the citizens of the EC, this means that they would be able to go to college, or work, or retire in whichever European country they choose; travel around without having to show passports; or save their money in any of the twelve separate currencies which may eventually merge as one.

Just imagine what the world would look like if the other sub-regions of the world were to attempt equally dramatic reductions in the artificial barriers that separate nations. Here again, the established wisdom is that it could not happen in other parts of the world, which are driven apart by national, ethnic and territorial conflicts. This may be so. Yet it may be salutary to remind ourselves that only forty-four years ago, the battlefields of Europe were flowing with the blood of millions of soldiers trying to defend or extend frontiers. If some of these soldiers are alive today, and some of them surely must be, they must be puzzled that the frontiers they defended with enormous blood and sacrifice are now being voluntarily dismantled in some significant respects.

All countries which are at war today should pause to reflect on the European experience. If the armies of Vietnam, to cite just one example, were to return to their national frontiers and Vietnam were to live peacefully with its neighbours, it could easily become a dynamic and prosperous nation. Instead, its people today suffer considerable economic misery and deprivation, leading to the severe outflow of economic migrants who have put a heavy burden on the rest of Southeast Asia. These two examples indicate that the choice is clear: do we want to go the way of Europe or of Indochina?

Even though we commend the growing integration of developed economies, we are mindful of the dangers it could pose to the global economy. One fundamental reason why the global economy has enjoyed relatively steady and constant growth rates has been the creation of an open and fair trading system under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), in force since 1 January 1948. If the new economic giants of North America, Western Europe and Japan were to try to build economic fortresses that divide up the global economy, they could well aggravate the vast gap between the

rich and poor nations. Members of the United Nations should be vigilant and ready to defend the open global economic system. It would be ironic and tragic if economic integration, designed to remove national economic barriers, ends up creating even more formidable economic barriers which shut out most developing countries from the global economic system.

These are some of the major challenges we will face in the years to come. The United Nations has adjusted well to the new political currents, sweeping across the globe today. It needs to pay equal attention to some of the major tidal changes that are forthcoming. If this General Assembly session could begin to focus its attention on some of these issues, it may well make a historic contribution.