



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/40/PV.64

6 November 1985

ENGLISH

Fortieth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 6 November 1985, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

Mr. DE PINIÉS

(Spain)

- Question of Peace, Stability and Co-operation in South-East Asia [40]

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 40

QUESTION OF PEACE, STABILITY AND CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 12 noon today.

It was so decided.

Mr. RACZ (Hungary): The Hungarian delegation appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion of the question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia. Our participation is guided by the belief and hope that the General Assembly will be able, through its debate, to contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security.

To our deep concern, the region of South-East Asia continues to be burdened by tension. The prolongation of tension challenges the States directly involved to spare no effort to embark upon resolving this comprehensive problem in its entirety.

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

The Hungarian Government's position on the establishment of a durable and viable peace in South-East Asia continues to consist of three elements.

According to our position of principle, disputes among States or groups of States should be settled exclusively by peaceful means, through negotiations. In this respect too, we are convinced more than ever before that nations of our contemporary world must coexist peacefully, irrespective of their social systems.

Regional conflicts, including the one in South-East Asia, and specifically their prolongation, have a direct repercussion on the overall international political situation, an improvement of which would in turn - it should be acknowledged and emphasized - have a definite, positive impact on the resolution of regional conflicts. The events and developments of the past four decades provide us with tragic proofs of that.

As a particular phenomenon in the region of South-East Asia, the common heritage of historical and cultural bonds, and the economic and geographical circumstances, make it not only desirable but also imperative for the countries directly involved to find a common ground for the solution of outstanding issues. It is exactly this combination of factors which must not escape our attention.

We recognize and accept that historical developments have resulted in the formation of two groups of countries in the area, which have a common responsibility to act decisively on the question of peace, stability and co-operation. It is the Indo-Chinese States and the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) that have to engage in a dialogue, to consider jointly the proposals put forward by them. The only feasible and viable way open to them is to conduct negotiations on the basis of equality and respect for each other's interests, and free from any outside interference.

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

In accordance with this approach of ours, the Hungarian People's Republic has consistently stressed that direct talks between the interested States are irreplaceable. We are convinced that the genuine legitimate interests of every country in the region can be respected within this framework. It offers the best possibilities for understanding each other's positions and preoccupations, without trying to bring into the discussion illusory or artificial problems. Attempts to equate problems of South-East Asia with the issues relating to the "situation in Kampuchea" are doomed to failure and are aimed only at increasing tension. Therefore any involvement, under any pretext, of the genocidal Pol Pot régime is inconceivable.

The year 1985 has already given us some considerably encouraging and very noteworthy indications that there is common ground for the resolution of the comprehensive question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia.

In this respect we have particularly in mind the constructive proposals presented by the Tenth and the Eleventh Foreign Ministers' Conferences of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, aimed at giving a genuine impetus to the dialogue between the two groups of countries in the region. We welcome the ongoing talks between Viet Nam and Indonesia as designated representatives of the two groups of countries in the region. Also, we support and appreciate the readiness of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea to enter into talks with various Khmer opposition groups or individuals in order to discuss the achievement of national reconciliation on the basis of the elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique.

That list of major initiatives clearly shows the earnest readiness of Viet Nam, Kampuchea and Laos firmly to establish friendly and good-neighbourly relations

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

with the Member States of ASEAN. The General Assembly should welcome that readiness to settle the question of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

We once again take note with satisfaction of the constructive Vietnamese proposal to normalize Sino-Vietnamese relations and, by the same token, we reaffirm our appreciation for Viet Nam's willingness to settle all problems with the United States.

All those developments continue to deserve our closest attention, for they open the road to a constructive system of relations as a major step toward creating the possibility of establishing an Asian collective security system.

The Hungarian delegation believes that the role of the United Nations is to help create conditions for the countries of the region to engage in a dialogue and to negotiate, without any outside interference, a lasting resolution of the issues facing them.

The Hungarian People's Republic remains determined to contribute, within the limits of its possibilities, to bringing about peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia.

Mr. LE KIM CHUNG (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): At this important session commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the vast majority of States Members of our Organization have in their statements expressed their determination to combine their efforts in the struggle against the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, and for the transformation of various regions into zones of peace and stability free of nuclear weapons, for a firm and lasting peace throughout the world and for the independence, sovereignty and development of nations. In the context of a tense and complex international situation, those same States have also expressed the desire to bring about a settlement of global and regional problems by means of peaceful negotiations.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

Thus, one may note that peace is a powerful aspiration of mankind as a whole, and that peaceful coexistence has become an irresistible trend in our times. That observation is valid also for South-East Asia.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

That region is in fact the only one in the world that has known no peace throughout the past 40 years, having had successively to undergo the most severe trials as a result of the manoeuvres and acts of war of the forces of colonialism, imperialism and international reaction, aimed against the independence and sovereignty of nations and regional peace and stability. That is why more than any others the countries of Indo-China, Viet Nam among them, and the other countries of South-East Asia share the aspirations I have mentioned and desire to make of South-East Asia a zone of peace, stability and co-operation so as to be able to devote themselves entirely to building up their respective economies and establishing prosperity throughout the entire region. That desire has been specifically expressed in reciprocal visits undertaken in recent years with the aim of increasing mutual understanding and promoting relations of friendship and co-operation in the economic, scientific, technical, cultural and other areas among countries of the region. Proof of this same desire is also to be found in the various proposals put forward by States of the region, such as the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration by the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) concerning a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, the principles set forth in the ASEAN summit conference in Bali in 1976 and the seven principles governing relations between South-East Asian countries put forward by the States of Indo-China in 1981 in the United Nations General Assembly.

Thus it is clear that peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia are not merely an ardent desire, an urgent demand, of the peoples of that region but also a real, attainable possibility. The proposals I have mentioned provide a practical basis for the talks undertaken between the two groups of South-East Asian countries for the purpose of resolving the disputes in the region, including the question of Kampuchea, in accordance with the resolutions on South-East Asia adopted by the 1983 New Delhi Summit Conference of non-aligned countries and the

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned States in Luanda in 1985. Those resolutions were endorsed by the two groups of countries, the ASEAN countries and the countries of Indo-China.

Despite the differences that still exist on specific problems bequeathed to us by history, in recent years, through the proposals put forward by the two groups of countries and the bilateral or multilateral exchanges of views in the region, several common denominators have emerged that could serve as the basis for a political solution in South-East Asia, on the question of Kampuchea, among other issues. These are: the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces without permitting the return of the genocidal régime; national reconciliation among the various Khmer factions on the basis of the elimination of the Pol Pot clique; peaceful coexistence among States of the region; the cessation of all foreign interference in the affairs of the countries of South-East Asia; and an international guarantee of the agreements concluded.

The aforementioned exchanges of views and, more particularly, the recent talks between Viet Nam, representing the countries of Indo-China, and Indonesia, representing those of ASEAN, have produced encouraging results, initiating a process of substantive dialogue for the purpose of finding equitable solutions to all the problems of the region. The meeting between the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, and his Vietnamese counterpart, Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, in Jakarta last August, the visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic in October by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia and the bilateral talks between the heads of delegations of the States of South-East Asia during the Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Luanda in September and the present session of the United Nations General Assembly have, together with many other exchanges of views and visits undertaken this year, made an active contribution to progress in the regional dialogue.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

These diplomatic activities undertaken by countries of the region in the quest for a political solution in South-East Asia and the "greater convergence of views on the framework and the main elements around which a comprehensive political settlement should be built" (A/40/PV.61, p. 33) - to quote the assessment made two days ago by the delegation of a member country of ASEAN - have been welcomed by a broad sector of public opinion and are noted by the Secretary-General of our Organization in his report dated 17 October 1985 (A/40/759), which has been quoted by many delegations.

The situation in South-East Asia over the past six years has revealed the limitations of the policy of tension and confrontation in the region. All the measures used against the three countries of Indo-China have come to naught. All the nefarious activities undertaken with the aim of imposing a unilateral solution with regard to the question of Kampuchea have been doomed to failure. The three countries of Indo-China have survived the most difficult period and had considerable success in the construction and defence of their respective countries. At the present time, despite the many difficulties that remain, all three countries of Indo-China have made positive changes in every respect and continue to press forward with confidence. Steeled by the trials they have known, their mutual solidarity grows stronger day by day and represents a very important factor for the establishment of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

A fact of singular importance is the extraordinary growth of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which demonstrates the rapid process of maturity of the Kampuchean revolution, the forces of which are capable of assuming increasing responsibility for the defence of their country. That has made possible four partial withdrawals each year since 1982 by the Vietnamese volunteer forces, which will withdraw completely by 1990 as stated in the communiqué of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the countries of Indo-China held in Phnom Penh in August last. I should add that that decision was taken unilaterally in the absence of a political solution.

However, if a negotiated political settlement of the question of Kampuchea can be reached, the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces will take place simultaneously with the elimination of the Pol Pot clique, politically, militarily and as an organization. Thus it will be possible more rapidly and earlier to complete the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea. It goes without saying that the countries of Indo-China desire and are trying to contribute to a political solution acceptable to the parties concerned, so that peace and stability can be restored without delay in South-East Asia.

Furthermore, with a view to implementing its policy of national reconciliation, the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea has stated its readiness to hold talks with various individuals or groups of the opposition on the basis of the elimination of the Pol Pot clique, thus opening the door to a dialogue among the various Kampuchean parties and, thereby, to a settlement of the internal problems of Kampuchea. In that spirit, the Malaysian proposal for proximity talks is an initiative which deserves study.

Now that conditions are favourable for a political solution, the only way and the shortest way to settle the problems among the countries of South-East Asia is to strengthen the substantive talks in a spirit of constructive good faith among those countries. Time is on the side of those countries which, both within and

outside the region, are striving to contribute to peace and stability in the South-East Asian region. Quite clearly, the policy of confrontation promoted most particularly by the shrill cries of a certain country which deliberately works against the trend towards dialogue and peaceful coexistence, both in the world and in that region, is outdated and is surely doomed to failure.

Having made innumerable sacrifices to achieve peace, independence and freedom, the people of Viet Nam have done and will continue to do everything for peace, stability and co-operation in the South-East Asian region and for lasting peace throughout the world. In that spirit we call on all countries to combine their efforts in that noble cause. We express our deep appreciation for the efforts made in that connection by countries both within and outside the region and personally by the United Nations Secretary-General.

We desire the restoration of traditional relations of friendship with the People's Republic of China and the normalization of relations with the United States. Such relations could only benefit the peoples of Viet Nam, China and the United States, and serve the cause of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

We believe that the talks between the United States and Viet Nam on the question of the United States soldiers who disappeared during the Viet Nam war and on other questions of common concern, as well as the opening of bilateral talks on the normalization of relations between Viet Nam and China, as proposed on several occasions by Viet Nam, will actively contribute to a sound and lasting political solution to the problems of this still smouldering region of South-East Asia.

During the past 40 years mankind has enjoyed the longest period without a world war in this century. Nevertheless, war and instability remain a constant threat for many regions and subregions. Peace is indivisible. World peace, which all men on earth so ardently desire, requires that each region should enjoy real peace and stability, and that is something that South-East Asia has not known for the last 40 years.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

However, thanks to the considerable efforts of the countries of Indo-China, enlightened forces in the region and of other nations that cherish peace, the first and most difficult step, but a highly promising one, has been taken on the road towards regional peace, stability and co-operation.

We are convinced that, despite the obstacles raised by forces which, both within and outside the region, continue to cherish illusions regarding their policy of tension and confrontation, the rest of the course will also be covered, thanks to the joint efforts of two groups of countries, namely, those of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and those of Indo-China, whose endeavours have the sympathy and support of the international community.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): In the United Nations Charter the maintenance of international peace and security and the development of friendly relations among States and peoples are enshrined as the foremost aims of this world Organization. In view of the extremely serious international situation, and in particular the growing danger of a world-wide nuclear catastrophe, it is more imperative than ever to take resolute measures for a turnabout in international relations.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

In this connection, regional efforts and initiatives for diminishing tensions and for promoting understanding and confidence have gained in importance. Today, security is not possible through confrontation but only through co-operation.

This is not least true of South-East Asia. The peoples of that region have had to live through many periods of great suffering. For more than 40 years they have had no peace. Time and again attempts have been made to halt progressive development; tensions are encouraged and instability provoked. The main thrust is directed against Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea. Yet the wheel of history cannot be turned back, not in Indo-China nor anywhere else. The road to a durable peaceful future will be opened up not by confrontation but by mutual respect for the interests of all parties concerned and their co-operation. Existing problems must be solved through common sense, realism and dialogue on an equal footing.

Let it be said very clearly here that it is not Kampuchea that is the problem in South-East Asia. Even deliberately overheated debates in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly cannot obscure that fact.

We have repeatedly underlined that those useless exercises are in complete contradiction to the Charter. They are a futile attempt to prescribe to a people how to shape its own development. This is all the more true since the only legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people, namely, the Government of the People's Republic, is still denied the right to protect the interests of the Kampuchean people in the United Nations.

Incidentally, the agenda item on the so-called situation in Kampuchea will peter out in the not-too-distant future. Historical experience teaches that no one can forever refuse to recognize and respect the realities in the world, which today include the existence and successful development of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. More and more unprejudiced observers and realistic politicians share the view that the people's power in the country is steadily consolidating, that the

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

economy is advancing, that its entire social life is taking a normal course and that the armed forces guarantee the security and prosperity of the country.

The German Democratic Republic, which is linked to the People's Republic of Kampuchea by a treaty of friendship and co-operation, will continue to affirm its solidarity with the people of Kampuchea on its road to national and social rebirth.

The real problem in South-East Asia is the continued interference in the internal affairs of the sovereign State of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. The problem is that imperialism is trying to regain lost positions and implement far-reaching plans of expansion in the region. The problem, as was reported in the newspaper The International Herald Tribune, for example, is that "millions of dollars are spent annually" by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to stir up counterrevolution and to disturb the peaceful living together of peoples.

The international public rightly points to the topicality of the purposes and principles adopted at the Bandung Conference of 1955. What gives rise to optimism is the fact that 30 years after that Conference, which was so vital to the struggle against the imperialist colonial yoke and the implementation of the people's right to self-determination, the South-East Asian States too have reaffirmed their commitment to the 10 principles listed in the Declaration on the promotion of international peace and co-operation that was adopted at that time.

The talks in which the Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach took part in Djakarta were an important step on the road to peaceful coexistence in the southeast region of the Asian continent. At the talks both sides underlined their willingness to make every effort that could contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the region.

Furthermore, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the three Indo-Chinese States, held in Phnom Penh, has proved again that Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea are seriously and systematically seeking a dialogue with the member States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Their concrete and realistic

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

proposals are a clear expression of the wish to solve complicated problems in the region by way of negotiation. This is also true of the declaration on the withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea by the year 1990. It applies also to the readiness for negotiations with Khmer groupings and for talks with the group of ASEAN States.

It goes without saying that there cannot be any place at the negotiating table for a representative of the Pol Pot clique. A régime that was responsible for murdering more than 3 million Kampuchians has for all time forfeited its right to participate in deciding on the country's destiny. There can be no retreat from the total political and military elimination of that inhuman régime.

The constructive proposals made by the three Indo-Chinese States are aimed at creating a climate of confidence and co-operation. They are in accordance with the way in which these countries have been striving, for many years, to transform South-East Asia into a zone of peace and stability, establish good-neighbourly relations with all countries of the region and settle disputes through negotiation.

As is well known, that basic position has been underscored by a number of detailed proposals. We need only think of the proposals made for a regional conference to create a zone of peace in South-East Asia, to start a political dialogue between the ASEAN and Indo-Chinese States, and to elaborate the principles of relations between the aforementioned groups of States.

All these proposals submitted by the Indo-Chinese States are in conformity with the letter and spirit of the Bandung Conference. They require promotion and support. They are characterized by good will, respect for the legitimate interests of the other side and a readiness to compromise through negotiations.

The same is true of many other initiatives and proposals made by the Indo-Chinese States. Let us recall the humanitarian endeavours made by Viet Nam and Laos in response to the United States request to search for missing persons.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The steps taken to restore and develop friendly relations with all neighbouring and other countries in the region are of great importance. The proposal submitted by the People's Democratic Republic of Laos that it enter into negotiations with Thailand and its readiness to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements with Thailand based on international law are highly significant.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic supports these constructive proposals. It is glad that the ASEAN and Indo-Chinese States were able to agree on starting talks on problems relating to a political settlement with regard to peace and stability in South-East Asia, including Kampuchea. The meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Viet Nam and Indonesia is a first positive step in the right direction. Further steps must follow if peaceful coexistence is to become a prevailing aspect of relations between South-East Asian States.

Peace is indivisible: this is one of the most important principles of the foreign policy pursued by the Warsaw Treaty member States. Therefore, in their Sofia Joint Declaration, they reaffirmed the principle that conflicts and disputes among States should be settled by peaceful means and that each nation's right to decide its destiny for itself should be fully respected. That Declaration states:

"The promotion of peace and co-operation in Asia and in the Pacific Ocean basin, the settlement of the problems of South-East Asia by political means and the strengthening of confidence and security in those regions are of particular importance." (A/C.1/40/7, p. 10)

It must be the task of the United Nations to promote this course of dialogue and mutually beneficial co-operation. Only by fulfilling that task will the Organization live up to its purposes.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

May the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace serve as additional encouragement to all the parties concerned to reach through dialogue a comprehensive settlement of the problems and to bring about a strong and durable peace in South-East Asia. The peoples of South-East Asia need peace. Genuine international security requires peace in all the regions of the world.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet Union shares the view that there is a need for an active, persistent search for ways to normalize the situation in South-East Asia. Completion of that task would be in the interests of the peoples and States of that region and in the broader interests of strengthening peace and security in Asia and throughout the world. We therefore fully support the consideration at this session of the General Assembly of the question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia.

Unfortunately we must say that a tense situation still prevails in South-East Asia. The existence of a conflict situation created as the result of interference by external forces in the affairs of the region not only runs counter to the aspirations of the peoples of South-East Asia but, given the complicated situation in the world as a whole, could have serious consequences for all the States of Asia.

We cannot ignore the fact that recently discussion of the so-called question of Kampuchea was again imposed on the General Assembly. The Soviet delegation shares the position of the People's Republic of Kampuchea that any discussion at the United Nations of the "question of Kampuchea" without the consent and participation of its representatives constitutes interference in the internal affairs of Kampuchea, an independent sovereign State, and a violation of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

We believe that the commotion tendentiously stirred up around the question of Kampuchea at the United Nations is intended further to increase tension in that part of the world and not to assist in the finding of a political solution to the problems that persist in South-East Asia.

The People's Republic of Kampuchea is a political reality in the world today. In the almost seven years since it was established the workers of Kampuchea have brought their country out of the chaos and devastation into which it was plunged by the Pol Pot barbarians. Significant success has been achieved in the economic, social and cultural rehabilitation of Kampuchea. Together with Viet Nam and Laos, the People's Republic of Kampuchea is making an important contribution by seeking to improve the situation in South-East Asia and to transform it into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation.

As was stated at the Fifth Congress, in October of this year, of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party, Kampuchea is prepared to develop relations of friendship and co-operation with States of that region on the basis of the principles of respect for national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs.

It is absolutely untrue that, as some delegations have recently stated, tension in that region is caused by the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea. Such allegations are made in an attempt to distort the meaning of the events taking place there. The presence of Vietnamese volunteers in Kampuchea is merely a temporary, unavoidable measure made necessary by the ongoing outside interference in the affairs of Kampuchea. The main job of those volunteers is to assist the friendly country to clear its territory of bandits and firmly to prevent their penetration into Kampuchea, not to threaten Thailand and ASEAN countries. As was stated in August of this year by the Governments of Viet Nam and Kampuchea, the withdrawal from Kampuchea of the contingents of Vietnamese volunteers will take place on an annual basis and will be fully completed by 1990.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

As for the demands for the immediate withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea while freedom of action is maintained for the followers of Pol Pot, these are contrary to common sense and the principles of humanity. This would virtually mean confronting the Kampuchean people with a real threat of the return of the Pol Pot clique, with all its horrors. The Soviet delegation is convinced that such a turn of events would not suit not only the friends of the People's Republic of Kampuchea but most of the countries that, because of their various political aims, are supporting the Pol Pot so-called Coalition. It is generally known that at the present time Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea are focusing their efforts on resolving the many social and economic problems that they inherited from their colonial past or that are the consequence of the protracted military conflicts on the territory of those States and primarily the United States aggression. Quite naturally, those countries need favourable conditions to resolve their complicated problems related to economic and social development.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

The Soviet Union has given and will continue to give broad assistance to the countries of Indo-China and help to rehabilitate and develop industry and agriculture to enhance the well-being of the workers of those countries and allow them to satisfy their material, social and cultural needs. That is the meaning of the Soviet presence in Indo-China to which the representatives of certain countries sometimes refer.

The countries of Indo-China are not interested in confrontation with their neighbours or in maintaining a state of tension in South-East Asia. The policy of the countries of Indo-China, as has been made clear in the authoritative statements made by the leaders of those States, seeks to replace confrontation with dialogue so that the region can be transformed into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation.

The eleventh conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea that took place in Phnom Penh in August of this year again reaffirmed the willingness of the countries of Indo-China to engage in dialogue with their neighbours in the interests of reducing tension and encouraging an atmosphere of peaceful co-operation and mutual understanding. The conference communiqué stated:

"The five-point position put forward by the Indochinese countries on 18 January 1985 and which was welcomed by broad sections of public opinion in South-East Asia and the world, provides a basis for substantive dialogue aimed at attaining a political solution acceptable to the various parties."

(A/40/561, annex, para. 2)

The documents distributed by the delegations of Viet Nam and Laos and the statement made today by the representative of Viet Nam go into some detail about the proposal of the Indochinese countries to resolve contentious issues relating to the situation surrounding Kampuchea. An important element in that proposal is the withdrawal of the Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea and, at the same time,

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

the political and military elimination of the Pol Pot clique. The three Indochinese countries have again called for the convening of an international conference to discuss all problems relating to peace and stability in South-East Asia with an appropriately broadly based participation. In so doing, the Indochinese side reaffirmed its willingness to discuss all proposals that might be put forward by the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) at such a conference. The constructive attitude of the countries of Indo-China is borne out by their desire to normalize relations with the United States and the People's Republic of China.

In our view, the initiatives of the Indochinese countries merit the most serious and sustained attention by all countries that adopt an unprejudiced attitude in analysing the developments in South-East Asia. Those initiatives take into account the basic elements of the position taken by ASEAN. In this connection I should like to quote from the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on agenda item 22, in which he states that:

"a reasonable degree of convergence has emerged on the main elements of a comprehensive political settlement." (A/40/759, para. 13)

In a number of countries - primarily the ASEAN countries - there has recently been talk of the need for a national reconciliation in Kampuchea. What prevents such a reconciliation? The Government of Kampuchea takes a positive attitude to that proposal. In August of this year the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Mr. Hun Sen, at a press conference held in Phnom Penh, stated, inter alia:

"We have proclaimed our willingness to hold talks with all Khmer opposition groups or individuals, in order to bring about national reconciliation on the basis of the elimination of the Pol Pot clique, and to discuss the question of

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

holding general elections after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese volunteer forces."

At the same time, the Kampuchean leader noted that he was prepared to meet with Sihanouk and Son Sann anywhere, at any time.

In the light of that constructive position taken by the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the prospects are now favourable for dialogue between the representatives of Kampuchea and the opposition groups. Unfortunately no progress has yet been achieved in this area. The sticking point is that certain people, it would seem, do not want to renounce support for the vestiges of the Pol Pot clique that have for seven years now been vainly trying to white-wash their bloody crimes against the Kampuchean people and, to that end, those people keep the representatives of that clique in the United Nations. Following attempts to hide the Pol Pot clique behind the screen of the Coalition Government, there was recently a new manoeuvre: news of the so-called retirement of Pol Pot. The words of Sihanouk himself in this connection represent a very telling admission. In The Christian Science Monitor of 1 October of this year, he is quoted as saying: "Pol Pot will stay in the shadow, but he remains the boss." As they say, "No comment."

It is difficult to understand the logic of those who defend the Pol Pot renegades and yet prevent a political settlement of questions relating to the situation surrounding Kampuchea, particularly since this is directly linked to the timing of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from the People's Republic of Kampuchea. In a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hun Sen, stated:

"In case the concerned parties can reach a political solution, the total withdrawal of the Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea can be achieved even earlier." (A/40/723, p. 3)

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

The countries of Indo-China and ASEAN have no objective reasons for hostility and confrontation. Naturally, there are many difficulties involving in settling the situation in South-East Asia. However, it is important to look to the future, to stress commonsense and to try to transcend the usual clichés. We need to promote the attainment of political solutions to the region's problems by every possible means, not to delay that search, and if we truly look forward we must acknowledge that some positive elements have emerged. As an example, we would refer to the recent steps taken to develop a dialogue in which the countries of Indo-China would be represented by Viet Nam and those of ASEAN by Indonesia - in other words, there is a growing understanding among the countries of the region of the need for a speedy solution to problems that make the situation in South-East Asia more complicated, as well as an understanding that the only way to reach that goal is through dialogue.

It was precisely for such a dialogue, without any pre-conditions, that an appeal was made to the countries of South-East Asia, in the political declaration of the Seventh Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi. That appeal was also made at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Luanda in September of this year.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

It would be a political mistake and shortsighted to let slip the real opportunities that are emerging to reduce tension in South-East Asia, to bring about genuine peace and to create a climate of trust and co-operation. As was stated in June this year by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, on the occasion of the visit to the Soviet Union by a party and governmental delegation from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam:

"The Soviet Union continues to believe that there are no problems in South-East Asia that could not be resolved by political means around the negotiating table. That is why we fully support the consistent efforts that have been made by Viet Nam, together with Laos and Kampuchea, to establish relations of good-neighbourliness and co-operation in South-East Asia and to transform that region into a zone of peace and stability. The Soviet Union will in future do everything to promote steps in that direction."

The Soviet Union supports the proposal to convene an international conference on problems of South-East Asia with the participation of the Indo-Chinese States and the ASEAN countries and also other States that are willing to help to normalize the situation in South-East Asia. My country, as has been stated, is prepared, together with the other permanent members of the Security Council, to commit itself to guaranteed arrangements that could be brought about among the countries of Indo-China and those of ASEAN. An improvement in the climate of South-East Asia would undoubtedly be helped by the normalization of relations between China and Viet Nam, an idea which has been consistently supported by the leaders of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and also the holding of negotiations between Laos and Thailand to eliminate the consequences of the occupation by Thailand last year of part of the territory of Laos.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

We have sympathy for the proposal put forward by certain countries of South-East Asia that that region be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The question of proclaiming South-East Asia a zone free from chemical weapons is also an important matter. The Soviet Union favours good relations between Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea and the ASEAN States. It favours peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia. This is in the interests of Indo-Chinese countries and it is in the interests of the States members of ASEAN.

The Soviet delegation believes that United Nations efforts and the efforts of all those that cherish the interests of peace and international security should seek to promote the process of the normalization of the situation in South-East Asia. We are convinced that ultimately common sense will prevail and that that region will be transformed into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation.

Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): Once again the General Assembly is considering the important question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia. We believe that the debate on this issue will promote a settlement of the problems of that region by means of negotiations.

In the past four decades the countries of Indo-China - which constitute a significant part of the political configuration of South-East Asia - have been victims of unprecedented aggression and various schemes for foreign domination. However, neither bloody wars of aggression nor other attempts were successful in bringing about the subjugation of those countries to foreign Powers. The Indo-Chinese peoples were able to defeat the aggressors and force them to withdraw from Indo-China. The victory of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea brought them independence and freedom. The three Indo-Chinese States have strengthened their solidarity and co-operation. However, the establishment of the people's power in Kampuchea and the carrying out in that country of progressive

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

social and political reforms are not in line with the wishes of some foreign Powers. They would like the genocidal Pol Pot authorities to assert themselves once again in Kampuchea. Those Powers are thus provoking tension and jeopardizing peace and stability in that country and in the region as a whole. This policy of interference continues to arouse the concern of all peace-loving countries and harms the efforts of the countries of Indo-China, which yearn for peace and stability, to heal the wounds of wars and devote themselves to national reconstruction and development.

The Polish delegation supports consideration of the item before us in the General Assembly, because we should like to give a helping hand to the peoples of South-East Asia to find a way to ease tension, strengthen mutual contacts and bring durable peace and stability to that region.

We have to recognize the historical reality manifested through the formation in South-East Asia of the group of Indo-Chinese countries and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Though States belonging to these groups have different social and political systems, they share the same desire for peace and independence. They all belong also to the developing world, striving for accelerated social and economic progress.

Poland has friendly relations with all South-East Asian countries. It is our deepest desire to see the same type of relations established also among all countries of that region. We sincerely hope that through negotiations the obstacles to the creation in South-East Asia of a zone of peace and co-operation will be eliminated.

We are in favour of a political solution of all problems in South-East Asia, a solution in which the existing political realities will be respected by the parties directly concerned, without any foreign interference.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

As the General Assembly was informed by Mr. Vo Dong Giang, Minister of State of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, during the general debate on 4 October 1985:

"the recent talks between Viet Nam, representing the three countries of Indo-China, and Indonesia, representing the ASEAN countries, have yielded positive results; notwithstanding certain differences. These talks have paved the way for a process of substantive dialogue on an equal footing, in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual concern for each other's legitimate interests, ... with neither side imposing its views on the other and without interference from Powers external to the region, with a view to reaching an equitable solution to the questions of South-East Asia." (A/40/PV.23, p. 18)

In that process of dialogue an important role has been played by the five-point position put forward by the Tenth Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 18 January 1985.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

It is worth while recalling those proposals: first, the withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer forces from Kampuchea, paired with the exclusion of the genocidal Pol Pot clique; secondly, respect for the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination, and first and foremost the right to the restoration of a life free from the threat of genocide; thirdly, the holding by the Kampuchean people of free general elections, with the presence of foreign observers; fourthly, the transformation of South-East Asia into a zone of peace and stability wherein States with different social systems can live in peaceful coexistence without allowing their respective territories to be used against other countries, and respect by all the States external to the region of the national rights of South-East Asian countries; and fifthly, the establishment of an international form of guarantee and supervision of the implementation of the agreements.

We welcome also other proposals, such as the initiative of the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) regarding direct and indirect talks and Malaysia's proposal on proximity talks, as well as the readiness of the three Indo-Chinese States to negotiate and sign with Thailand treaties based on principles of peaceful coexistence. We are also convinced that the talks and contacts between the Lao People's Republic and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other, concerning Americans missing in action and other problems will facilitate the establishment of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

It seems that, after six years of continuous efforts and the presentation of many initiatives by both groups of South-East Asian countries, there is a real possibility of working out a framework for solving the question of peace and stability in that region, including the Kampuchean problem. That is why we are of the opinion that forcing the General Assembly to discuss the situation in Kampuchea

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

every year, without the assent and participation of the representatives of the People's Republic of Kampuchea - the only genuine representatives of the Kampuchea people - does not serve the cause of solving the problems of South-East Asia.

We welcome the progress achieved by the people of Kampuchea in the reconstruction of their country. We take note of the important declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea concerning its readiness to enter into talks with groups or individuals in the opposition, aimed at discussing the achievement of national reconciliation based on the removal of Pol Pot and the organization of general elections after the withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer forces from Kampuchea. The withdrawal, according to the announcement of the Governments of the two countries involved, will continue in the form of annual partial withdrawals, with the final withdrawal of all Vietnamese volunteer forces by 1990.

Poland welcomes these events and stands for the political solution of all the problems of South-East Asia through dialogue. The course of tension and confrontation in that and other regions is contrary to the interests and wishes of all nations, big and small alike.

The Polish delegation firmly believes that, in spite of all the difficulties and existing differences, the South-East Asian countries will continue their dialogue and achieve an agreement that will bring benefits to their peace-loving peoples. It is our firm belief that the debates in the United Nations General Assembly will promote dialogue between the States of Indo-China and those of ASEAN and the normalization of their relations.

As was underlined in the recent Declaration of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty:

"The promotion of peace and co-operation in Asia and in the Pacific Ocean basin, the settlement of the problems of South-East Asia by political means

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

and the strengthening of confidence and security in those regions are of particular importance". (A/C.1/40/7, p. 10)

Mr. MAHBUBANI (Singapore): I should like to begin my remarks with a harsh but unfortunately true statement: the debate on this item each year has become a farce.

For the sixth successive year, Viet Nam has proposed for the consideration of the General Assembly an item entitled "The question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia". We have met on it six times. We have discussed this issue six times. No resolutions have been adopted. Why? The answer is that Viet Nam is unable to put forward any draft resolution on this item because it - just like any other State in South-East Asia, and indeed the entire international community - knows that there is only one problem affecting peace and stability in South-East Asia, that is, the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Kampuchea.

We should therefore be grateful that this discussion today is taking place the very day after the discussion on Kampuchea; for if Viet Nam's purpose in inscribing this item on the agenda is to find out what the international community really thinks of the situation in South-East Asia, it should have been here yesterday to listen and to participate - and not to boycott - the discussions on the Kampuchean situation. If Viet Nam had participated in yesterday's debate, the discussion today would have been pointless for Viet Nam would have noted that there were more co-sponsors this year for the draft resolution on Kampuchea (58 compared to 55 in 1984), more speakers in the debate - speakers from all regions of the world (45 compared to 38 in 1984), and certainly more affirmative votes for the draft resolution (114 compared to 110 in 1984). Surely, in the face of this overwhelming message Viet Nam cannot be in any further doubt about the views of this body on the situation in South-East Asia.

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

Since it was only yesterday that we said that to achieve peace and stability in South-East Asia, Vietnamese forces should withdraw from Kampuchea and help bring about a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Kampuchean situation, today's debate is certainly redundant. Logically, we should say that no separate discussion is required. Indeed, given the pressing agenda we have each year, it is unfortunate that Viet Nam continues to burden the General Assembly with this item. Viet Nam would do the General Assembly a major favour by either withdrawing it from the agenda or - perhaps more logically - merging it with the discussion on Kampuchea. More critically - and this is the essential point - since Viet Nam has already rejected the views of this body only yesterday, why does it come here today, to the same body, to seek its views. Is this not a farce?

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

Frankly, that is all that I should say here today on this item. However, since Viet Nam in its previous statements and today has consistently reiterated some themes, there is a need to respond to those claims and a need to set the record straight.

I refer again to a joint statement dated 28 October 1985 in which the delegations of Viet Nam and Laos said:

"While the dialogue between the Indochinese and ASEAN groups of States has started addressing the substance of the matter, the continued polemics at the United Nations aimed at securing an erroneous resolution on Kampuchea as in the past six years appear all the more negative and outmoded."

There was only yesterday a comprehensive and eloquent rebuttal of this argument by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia as the last speaker on the Kampuchean situation. There is little for me to add here, but some of his words bear repeating. He said:

"At the same time we have scrutinized each and every statement from Viet Nam for signs of a genuine wish to engage in such negotiations.

"Malaysia for its part regrets that it is not yet able to see any such sign. Instead we have seen much obfuscation. We have seen much clever propaganda and sophisticated diplomatic evasions. Above all, and regrettably, we have seen Vietnamese action - and action speaks far louder than words - which raises fundamental questions about Vietnamese intentions." (A/40/PV.63, pp. 56 and 57)

The Malaysian Ambassador was referring to the continued Vietnamese military offensives against the Kampuchians.

I also have some questions for Viet Nam and Laos. First, what gives them the confidence or the right to assert that a resolution supported by 114 countries is

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

an "erroneous" resolution? What would happen to the legal or moral authority of this General Assembly's resolutions, if all other States decided to follow Viet Nam's example and declare that some resolutions are "erroneous"? Have Viet Nam and Laos paused to consider the possibility that, if over 100 nations have voted consistently in support of a certain resolution for over six years, those 100 nations may actually be demonstrating wisdom and good judgement in their voting? It is tragic that the Vietnamese leaders still fail or perhaps, more accurately, refuse to understand the reasons behind the principled stand of the United Nations.

The central argument being made here this morning is that this body should not disrupt or interfere with the ongoing "dialogue" - dialogue has been a magic word here all morning - which is supposed to be going on between the States of South-East Asia. For the record, therefore, I should again like to quote the position of the ASEAN States, expressed so well in the letter from the Acting Foreign Minister of the Philippines. Writing in his capacity as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, he said:

"there is as yet no regional dialogue in South-East Asia on the Kampuchean problem. It is therefore essential that this international community continue to be seized of this issue (on Kampuchea)."

This point was further reiterated in the statement made by the Indonesian Deputy Permanent Representative in his speech on Monday when he said:

"... as the Foreign Minister of Indonesia observed in the general debate on 26 September, while these ongoing talks between Indonesia and Viet Nam have brought mutual clarification on a number of aspects of the problem, differences still exist on some important points and these will have to be resolved if the process towards genuine dialogue is to be sustained. The

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

principal among those points is the need for recognition by all the parties that the Kampuchean problem is not one between ASEAN and Viet Nam or the Indochinese States but one between the Kampuchean people and Viet Nam. Hence, Indonesia's role as the interlocutor and ASEAN's involvement in general are essentially those of seeking to facilitate meaningful negotiation among the parties directly involved." (A/40/PV.61, p. 33)

This is the key point. If Viet Nam is interested in peace in South-East Asia, it should talk directly with the Kampuchians. The ASEAN States have made many helpful suggestions, including most recently a suggestion that there be a proximity talks between Viet Nam and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, led by His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk; and to ensure the participation of all Kampuchians, the Vietnamese-installed Heng Samrin régime could participate in the Vietnamese delegation.

It is astonishing that while Viet Nam claims to be engaged in a serious dialogue with the ASEAN States, it seems to be remarkably deaf to the suggestions made by those States. A dialogue does not merely involve talking. It also involves listening. When Viet Nam finally begins to listen, not just to its South-East Asian neighbours but also to the international community, we might then be spared this rather pointless exercise we are engaged in today.

Viet Nam has also claimed several times that it is responsive to the wishes of the Non-Aligned Movement. Yet at the same time, it does tremendous damage to that Movement by continuing to defy and obstruct the resolutions of this General Assembly, a body that the Non-Aligned Movement seriously believes in. Even more curiously, Viet Nam continues to claim that it supports the decisions of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation in Kampuchea. It is referring specifically to two paragraphs on South-East Asia, which have been endorsed at every Non-Aligned

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

meeting since the 1981 New Delhi Ministerial Meeting. Over the years, those two paragraphs have not changed. Yet we recall that when they were first drafted in 1981, Viet Nam announced its opposition to those paragraphs because they referred to the situation in Kampuchea. We are therefore puzzled how Viet Nam could reject those paragraphs in 1981 and then have endorsed them ever since 1982. We have not solved this puzzle.

If Viet Nam really wants to heed the views of the Non-Aligned Countries, I should like to suggest that it should study carefully the voting results of the resolution on the situation in Kampuchea yesterday. Almost two-thirds of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement voted for the resolution. Very few voted against. What clearer signal is Viet Nam waiting for to understand the views of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation in South-East Asia?

I certainly hope that Viet Nam is not going to believe that the speakers in today's debate are a representative sample either of the Non-Aligned Movement or indeed of this General Assembly. Most of them are indeed closely tied to one super-Power, as is Viet Nam. If Viet Nam is going to heed the views of that super-Power alone, it will be a long time before we see peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia. This morning, listening to the statements made, I have felt genuinely troubled as I hear nations from a distant continent claim that they know better the "aspirations" of the peoples of South-East Asia.

Finally, we are accustomed to hear in this Assembly discussions on principles, points for, points against, but perhaps to end my remarks, I should just recite some simple facts.

(Mr. Mahbubani, Singapore)

Viet Nam often claims that there are two groups of States in South-East Asia, the ASEAN States and the Indo-Chinese States. Let us ignore for a moment the fact that the Indo-Chinese States do not form a free association of States as do the ASEAN States. Let us merely try to judge the peaceful orientation of those States by facts, rather than by arguments. The facts are as follows.

The total population of the ASEAN States is approximately 275 million, five times that of Viet Nam and ASEAN's combined gross national product is over \$200 billion, more than 20 times that of Viet Nam, yet in spite of that Viet Nam alone maintains larger armed forces than all the six ASEAN States combined. Viet Nam in fact has the world's fourth largest military establishment. Of total armed forces, numbering 1,227,000 in 1984, the Vietnamese army numbered one million, an army which is the most experienced and battle-hardened in all Asia. An air force of 15,000, a navy of 12,000, an air defence force of 60,000 and assorted border defence forces and auxiliaries round out the figure for standing regulars. They are supported by half a million rapidly mobilized reinforcement reserves, a "strategic rear" reserve of two and a half million and militia numbering between one and three million. Incidentally, the total number of the Vietnamese armed forces is three times that of the population of Singapore.

I hope that the facts I have mentioned and Viet Nam's action in continuing its occupation of Kampuchea will speak more loudly here than Viet Nam's apparently peaceful arguments. Perhaps, therefore, we should tell Viet Nam that if it really wishes to bring about peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia it should not come here seeking the source of the problem. All it need do is look in the mirror.

Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand): South-East Asia was designated a regional entity at the same time that the United Nations was born, four decades ago. The term "South-East Asia", according to the diplomatic historian who chronicled the emergence of the region on the international scene, Professor Russell Fifield, was first used during the Second World War to designate a theatre of war in Asia. Since then, war has always seemed to be the distinguishing characteristic of the South-East Asian region. Today, as during the past 40 years, that region has still not escaped the scourge of war.

The first war, the first Indo-China war, was a war of national liberation against the former colonial Power - France - which had sought to reimpose the old colonialism on the emerging new nation of Viet Nam. The sympathy of the peoples of the region was wholeheartedly with the nationalist movement of Viet Nam. Thailand's co-operation with Viet Nam at that time was evidenced by the fact that one Vietnamese battalion was named the "Siam battalion". Because of the righteousness of its cause, Viet Nam was at that time, while at war with the colonial Power, at peace with its neighbour countries and enjoyed the moral support of the countries of the entire region.

The second Indo-China war was that between North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam to determine which socio-political-economic system should prevail throughout the whole of Viet Nam. Due to its ideological character, the Viet Nam war became a part of the East-West conflict. The region, as well as the world, was therefore divided in supporting or opposing one or other of the Vietnamese parties concerned.

Three years after the end of the Viet Nam war, peaceful coexistence between the Communist States and the non-Communist States of South-East Asia was broken. On Christmas Day 1978, Viet Nam invaded and occupied Kampuchea. On 8 January 1979, Viet Nam set up the puppet régime of Heng Samrin in Phnom Penh as the People's Revolutionary Council which, on 11 January, proclaimed the establishment of the

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

so-called People's Republic of Kampuchea. Three weeks after the invasion, on 18 February 1979, Heng Samrin signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Viet Nam which contained a clause whereby Vietnamese troops were invited to enter Kampuchea. Since then, the conflict in Kampuchea has become the crux of the problem in South-East Asia.

The third Indo-China war, therefore, is the Kampuchean war. That war, which has been going on for the past seven years, saw the hero of the war of national liberation become the spearhead of a new colonialism. By using its military strength to invade, subjugate and populate its smaller neighbour, Viet Nam now stands isolated from the majority of the countries in the region and from the international community, and it will remain so as long as it does not withdraw all its troops from Kampuchea and allow the Kampuchean people to determine their own future, free from any coercion.

The irony is, how can a country which has relied on military means to resolve the Kampuchean problem now seek to champion the cause of peace, stability and co-operation in its region? Yet my delegation believes that the peoples of the region, including the people of Viet Nam who have for far too long endured the hardships of so many wars, aspire to peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia.

Apart from disturbing regional stability and security, the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea also creates a huge burden of refugees and displaced Kampucheans who have had to leave their occupied homeland. Those people have been a cause of constant concern to host countries, countries of first refuge, politically, economically and socially. Thailand in particular found itself saddled with an enormous burden when Viet Nam extended its borders across Kampuchea as far as Thailand's eastern border. Repercussions soon followed, not only in the

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

form of a massive influx of refugees but also in the outbreak of fighting close to its own border with occasional spill-overs and deliberate armed incursions into its territory. Those incidents have occurred not only during Viet Nam's dry-season offensive but also throughout the past seven years.

Thailand and the ASEAN countries would like to see the restoration of peaceful coexistence in the region of South-East Asia. In principle, ASEAN, along with the overwhelming majority of the international community, cannot accept the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea as a fait accompli lest an illegal and dangerous precedent be established, not to mention other consequences. A solution taking into consideration the legitimate interests of all sides must therefore be found, but not at the expense of the Kampuchean people and nation.

Indeed, ASEAN has drawn up guidelines for the establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality for stability and security in the region. However, that zone has not yet materialized because of the armed conflict in Kampuchea and the resulting involvement of external Powers in the region.

The road to peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia today must, however, first pass through Phnom Penh. Only when the question of Kampuchea is solved can a strong foundation be built for constructive regional co-operation among all the countries of South-East Asia. History has shown that no peaceful co-operation can long survive if one of the parties seeks to undermine the independence and survival of another. The essential element of mutual trust between countries in the region must be in place before regional co-operation can grow and thrive. Thus the first step to bring about peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia is the restoration of Kampuchea as an independent, neutral and non-aligned country free from foreign occupation and coercion. Then and only then would the dawn of peace begin in South-East Asia.

As for Laos, our ethnic brother through the centuries, Thailand is always ready to discuss whatever issue poses a genuine problem for the two countries, but let the discussion be carried out in a fraternal spirit instead of a mood of confrontation on account of the interests of a third country which maintains some 50,000 troops on Laotian soil, and let both sides abide scrupulously by their obligations not to resort to subversion or any hostile action against each other.

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

Thai-Lao relations, unlike those of most other countries, have a unique character because the two countries are bound together by history, religion, race, culture and language. The establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic since 1975 did not impede the development of good Thai-Lao relations. On the contrary, the leadership of both countries tried to strengthen these relations even further for the mutual benefit of their peoples. This was evident from the regular exchanges of visits by prominent members of the two Governments. Many important documents were signed reflecting agreement on the various aspects of their relationship. The Thai-Lao border committee at both the national and local level was subsequently established as the machinery to oversee the general conduct of bilateral relations. This machinery to enhance relations and resolve problems between the two countries has indeed proved very useful and effective in the past. It continues to be available at present.

Unfortunately last year - as some speakers have pointed out in their statements - three remote villages on the Thai-Lao border with a population of fewer than 1,500 people became an issue when Lao troops harassed a Thai crew building a road nearby. To defuse the situation and bring about a peaceful solution, the Royal Thai Government redeployed the Thai military personnel that had been sent to provide protection for the Thai work crew to a position well within Thai territory in October 1984. Accordingly the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand announced this peaceful unilateral action at the United Nations General Assembly on 2 October 1984.

The issue involving these small border villages should therefore cease to be a political problem. Thailand also stands ready to conduct a joint technical survey to ascertain the exact boundary line between the two countries involving the site of these villages. Laos has thus far declined to co-operate.

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

Thailand has continued to search for ways and means of creating an atmosphere conducive to the normalization of Thai-Lao relations. In July 1985 the Foreign Minister of Thailand dispatched a special envoy to Vientiane, the Lao capital, with a personal message and a proposal for improving ties and contacts among the officials and peoples of the two countries.

At present Thailand is actively discussing with Laos ways and means of resuming talks between the two sides within the framework of existing machinery. Thailand is confident that with the sincerity and political will necessary to improve bilateral relations there should be no problems that cannot be resolved through the existing machinery, in particular at the provincial level, where the peoples and officials of both sides have continued to maintain close contacts and constructive co-operation as in the past.

As far back as 1967 South-East Asian peoples arrived at a number of basic conclusions: that there is an imperative necessity to embark on a regional approach in facing our common future, that there is the obvious importance of harmonizing our respective national interests with common regional aspirations, that there is an urgent need for the enhancement of mutual trust and confidence among nations in the area that will guarantee our respective sovereignty and integrity and the security and stability of the region as a whole. Therefore the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established. It represented, besides a practical framework for peace and stability in the region, a breakthrough as a practical framework for regional co-operation.

While war still rages in Kampuchea, regional co-operation among the six member countries of ASEAN is flowering. The Association's political goal remains the creation of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia. This is because the ASEAN countries envision a future South-East Asia in which war is no longer a distinguishing characteristic of the region because all countries will

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of their respective neighbours. The ASEAN countries also envision a future South-East Asia where the peoples will enjoy the rights inherent in their sovereignty, dignity and equality, and the ASEAN countries envision a future South-East Asia that is able to safeguard its common interests from any great Power rivalry to the detriment of the region. Irrespective of differences in their political, social or economic systems, all the South-East Asian States should invest their energy and resources in making our region a peaceful and prosperous part of the world.

It is a regrettable fact, therefore, that as long as the leaders of Viet Nam show no inclination to support a reasonable and just political settlement of the Kampuchean problem there can be little peace, stability or co-operation in South-East Asia. My delegation earnestly hopes that the day will soon come when all the South-East Asian States can respond to the genuine aspirations of their peoples for a more peaceful and stable South-East Asia and an improved climate for constructive regional co-operation.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.