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President: Mr. Ismat T. KITTANI (Iraq).

AGENDA ITEM 34

**Question of peace, stability and co-operation
in South-East Asia**

1. Mr. SOURINHO (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): The question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia is an extremely important one not only for all the countries and peoples of the region, since it concerns and directly affects their present and future existence, but also for international peace and stability, inasmuch as South-East Asia, because of its geopolitical situation, represents a strategic zone of the first order.

2. The motives which last year led a number of countries, including my own, to request the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly were clearly stated in the memorandum accompanying the request¹ and can be summarized as follows.

3. For the past 40 years South-East Asia has never known peace and stability. During the 1940s all the peoples and countries of this region suffered in varying degrees the adverse consequences of the Second World War, which took the form of a brutal invasion by foreign forces, followed first by occupation and then a bloody struggle for liberation. During the 1950s all the peoples and countries of South-East Asia carried out in different ways a struggle for their self-determination and total independence against the colonial yoke and foreign domination.

4. It was during that period that virtually all the countries of the region, except the three countries of Indo-China, which had to continue to struggle against neo-colonialism and the imperialist war of aggression until 1975, attained their independence, benefiting from their regained peace and freedom by devoting themselves to the task of development and national construction in the interest of the progress and welfare of their peoples.

5. But because of the continuance of the war in Indo-China, which attained its peak of intensity during the latter years of the 1960s and the early 1970s, the overall situation in the region nevertheless remained very unstable.

6. After the historic victory of the three peoples of Indo-China in 1975, an era of peace, independence, stability and co-operation began for all the countries of South-East Asia, but unfortunately did not last very long, owing to further interference by foreign Powers in the internal affairs of all those countries, albeit of varying degrees.

7. These new interventions are infinitely more subtle and devious inasmuch as they come from an Asiatic super-Power that nourishes unlimited expansionist and hegemonistic ambitions with respect to all its small neighbours and to the region as a whole and one that, moreover, is perfectly familiar with the terrain upon which it is carrying out its activities.

8. In order to achieve its sinister designs, this same super-Power has resorted to every means, including the cementing and constant development of its collusion and, indeed, its unholy alliance, with the imperialist reactionary forces that are also attempting to maintain their presence in South-East Asia.

9. Acting in close collusion with those evil forces and with other retrograde forces, the great hegemonistic and expansionist strength of the great nation in question is being methodically employed to encourage the resurgence in all countries in the region of the activities of the pseudo-revolutionary groups it supports and supplies, attempting to sow discord among the peoples of the region and within the same nation, turning the countries of the region against each other, particularly the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN] against the three countries of Indo-China, opposing the policy of peace, independence, friendship and co-operation adopted by the three countries of Indo-China and, worse still, openly interfering in the internal affairs of the people of Kampuchea, which is rising inexorably from the ashes of genocide.

10. There is no need to emphasize that such actions are doubly repulsive and degrading in that they emanate from a super-Power that proclaims to all and sundry that it is a "friend" of the third-world countries, that it is a part of the third world and, even more ironically, that it is defending the interests of medium-sized and small countries.

11. It is indeed those actions that constitute the fundamental source of the acute tension that is prevailing in South-East Asia at this moment. This tension, apart from the fact that it represents a serious threat to peace and stability in the region and in the world, constitutes a very serious obstacle to the normalization and development of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation among all the countries of the region, whose peoples at all social levels aspire only to live in peace and harmony among themselves and with the other peoples of the world.

12. Since time immemorial the peoples of South-East Asia have lived side by side, have moulded their history

and identity and have built their independence as States and nations in accordance with the specific conditions of each, and there is no doubt that they will be called upon to live together in this manner to all eternity.

13. Proceeding from this consideration, it is highly desirable and even necessary, in ensuring a guaranteed and prosperous future for succeeding generations, for the peoples and countries of South-East Asia, which possess vast economic, human and cultural potential, to work resolutely together in order to put an end to all foreign interference, in whatever shape or form, and to any such recourse to force as underlies their present differences and is the implacable enemy of their tranquillity and their progress.

14. These goals will certainly be attained gradually, given the firm will of all the countries of the region, which must in the process place above all other interests the higher, long-term interests of their nations. Moreover, history has clearly shown that confrontation leads only to deadlock. In the case of South-East Asia it is bound to increase misunderstanding, prolong suffering and exacerbate tension in the relations among the countries concerned. At the same time, it promotes all manner of intrigues and acts of interference by foreign Powers, and this will thus transform the entire region into a permanent hotbed of tension, with great danger to world peace and security.

15. We sincerely believe that the countries of the third world, the majority of which have endured and are still enduring imperialist and neo-colonialist intrigues and interferences and the hegemonism of the great nation, will understand perfectly the pernicious nature of the situation that prevails at present in South-East Asia. It is to them, first and foremost, and to countries that cherish peace and progress that we address an appeal for help in re-establishing confidence, peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in our region, which has suffered for so long a time.

16. The peoples of South-East Asia, in particular the three peoples of Indo-China, which have for over 30 years been exposed to great suffering and devastation provoked by imperialist aggression, ardently seek peace in order to reconstruct their countries and to improve the living conditions of their populations. They wish to live in mutual understanding and good-neighbourliness with all their neighbours and the other countries of the world, with strict respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and the principles of equality and mutual advantage. Moreover, the three countries of Indo-China have deliberately and irrevocably opted for a policy of peace, independence, friendship, non-alignment and peaceful coexistence.

17. Thus, is it not reasonable and just to ask the international community, specifically the United Nations, whose noble ideals are the strengthening of peace and the promotion of understanding and co-operation among all peoples, to assist us usefully and positively in the achievement of our goals and profound aspirations?

18. It is in that spirit that we wish to see the debate on the item now before the General Assembly directed. As the saying goes, each thing has its season. There is a season for tears and a season for joy, a season for confrontation and a season for co-operation. It is our keen hope that the season of tears and confrontation has now

passed away, making way for a season of joy and co-operation to reign permanently within the Assembly and elsewhere, whether with regard to the question of South-East Asia or any other matters.

19. Concerning South-East Asia, although, as pointed out in the memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of my country, there "still exists between the two groups of countries a number of divergencies regarding the underlying cause of the potentially explosive tension . . . and the ways of eliminating it" [*see A/36/561, annex*], that does not, nor should it, constitute an obstacle to our making sincere and sustained efforts to smooth out and eliminate such divergencies. The memorandum goes on to state:

" . . . only continuation of the dialogue between the two groups of countries"—those of Indo-China and those of ASEAN—"will make it possible to promote mutual understanding and trust, to eliminate such divergencies and to seek together means of settlement to remove the causes of the threat to the States' independence and sovereignty and in general to the peace and stability of the region.

"Such an approach is in line with the Final Declaration adopted at the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in February 1981, which urged 'all States in the region to undertake a dialogue which would lead to the resolution of differences among themselves and the establishment of durable peace and stability in the area, as well as the elimination of involvement and threats of intervention of outside Powers'."

20. I hasten to add that such an approach not only is in keeping with the goals and principles of the non-aligned movement but also forms part of the practice of other international bodies such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States, which have always held that regional problems should be settled in the first instance by the States concerned within the region. Moreover, such an approach is perfectly in keeping with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, which gives pride of place to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes.

21. Abiding by their policies of peace, friendship, co-operation and good-neighbourliness, the three countries of Indo-China recently proposed to the countries of ASEAN that they should reach agreement on some principles governing relations between them. Those principles, which were put before the Assembly at the 16th meeting by my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, during the general debate, are enumerated in the memorandum to which I referred earlier. However, for the benefit of representatives who do not have the memorandum at hand or who have not had the time to read it, I should like to take the liberty of recalling some of the principles which seem to me the most relevant and fundamental. They are:

"Respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, non-aggression, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence between the countries of Indo-China and the ASEAN countries, for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in South-East Asia.

"Respect for the rights of the people of each country to choose and develop freely their political, social, eco-

conomic and cultural system; to determine freely their domestic and foreign policy position in accordance with the objectives and principles of non-alignment and of the United Nations Charter; non-imposition of the will of one party on the other.

“The domestic and foreign affairs of each country in the Indo-China and ASEAN groups should be controlled by the people concerned and no country should have the right to interfere in those affairs individually or collectively, directly or indirectly.

“Settlement of questions in dispute and differences in relations between the countries of Indo-China and the ASEAN countries, as well as between the other countries in the region, by peaceful means through negotiation and in the spirit of settlement of all the problems of South-East Asia by the countries of the region in accordance with the principles of equality, friendship, mutual respect, understanding and regard for the legitimate interests of each, by mutual agreement, and without imposition of the will of one party on the other, without external interference and without the use or threat of use of force in their relations.

“Respect for the right of each country in Indo-China and ASEAN, as well as of other countries in South-East Asia, to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with the principles of non-alignment and of the Charter of the United Nations; no country should be allowed to use collective defence treaties to serve its particular interests and oppose other countries in the region.

“Continuation and development of bilateral and multilateral co-operation in economic, technical and scientific, cultural, sporting and tourist matters between the countries of Indo-China and the ASEAN countries, as well as with other countries in South-East Asia, on the basis of the principles of equality and mutual benefit, with a view to strengthening mutual understanding and trust and friendly and good-neighbourly relations, in the interest of the task of building up each country in accordance with its individual conditions.

“ . . .

“The countries outside the region must respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the region. There must be an end to all forms of pressure and threat from outside, creating a situation of tension and hostility between the countries of the region.

“The countries of the region should not allow any country to use their territories as a base for aggression and direct or indirect interference aimed at the others.

“They declare themselves ready to co-operate with the other countries outside the region and with international organizations and to accept their politically untied assistance.

“Under no circumstances should bilateral or multilateral co-operation between the countries of Indo-China, the ASEAN countries or the other countries in the region and countries outside the region, jeopardize the security and the interests of other countries of the region or be directed against any third country.” [*Ibid.*]

22. Those are the principles which, because of their cardinal importance, I wanted to remind the General Assem-

bly of, at the risk of unnecessary repetition, principles which the three countries of Indo-China have put forward for examination by the ASEAN countries and the whole world, with a view to restoring confidence in relations between the two groups of countries, thereby trying, as the memorandum suggested, to reach “the conclusion of an agreement or other form of commitment between the countries of Indo-China and the ASEAN countries, which are prepared to invite the other country in the region to participate” [*ibid.*].

23. There is no need to emphasize that entering into the commitment in question would be a decisive step towards the transformation of South-East Asia into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation, for the greater welfare of the peoples living there as well as the strengthening of international peace and stability.

24. My delegation urges the General Assembly to make its positive contribution in that direction. A situation as complex as the one now prevailing in South-East Asia cannot be settled overnight. Much effort in the dialogue and in the bilateral or multilateral negotiations between the countries of Indo-China and the ASEAN countries is absolutely necessary.

25. In this connection, we are pleased that in the consideration of this question a frank and constructive dialogue has been established between the representatives of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam on the one hand and the representatives of the ASEAN countries on the other. We shall do everything in our power to see that this dialogue is continued and intensified in order to come together with our partners in harmony to find solutions to all the matters of common concern. We are confident that, sheltered from all external interference, we shall succeed, together with the ASEAN countries, in overcoming the tense situation in our region and that we shall all begin a genuine era of peace, stability, friendship and fruitful co-operation.

26. Mr. ANDERSON (Australia): Australia is a part of the region of Asia and the Pacific and has the closest interest in peace and stability in South-East Asia and in friendship and co-operation both with and among all its South-East Asian neighbours. For these reasons, Australia has given strong and consistent support to the concept of ASEAN of a zone of peace, friendship and neutrality in South-East Asia.

27. My delegation has accordingly studied closely and carefully the memorandum from the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

28. We find most of these principles impeccable. Who could contest, for instance, the principle of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country in South-East Asia and for non-aggression, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence among them? Who would deny the right of the people of each country to choose and develop freely their political, social, economic and cultural system or to determine freely their domestic and foreign policy position in accordance with the objectives and principles of non-alignment and of the Charter?

29. It is when we look at the present situation in South-East Asia, and particularly the situation in Kampuchea, and ask how these principles are being applied in practice that difficulties arise. When we do so, we find that the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the

South-East Asian State of Kampuchea have been violated by the South-East Asian State of Viet Nam, whose military forces have invaded and continue to occupy Kampuchea in flagrant breach of the Charter. We find too that the people of Kampuchea have been deprived of their fundamental right to choose freely their own form of government and their own domestic and foreign policies.

30. As the Australian Foreign Minister said in an address to the Australian Asian Association of Victoria on 15 October last:

“Viet Nam’s proper future lies in a constructive relationship with its South-East Asian neighbours. But Viet Nam seems unable to understand the apprehensions aroused by its past military record and strength, its occupation of Kampuchea and its relationship with the Soviet Union. Viet Nam remains stubborn, and the problem of Kampuchea will remain intractable until there is a withdrawal of Vietnamese forces.”

31. Until there is a withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, until there is universal respect for the fundamental right of the Khmer people to self-determination, we cannot take this Lao memorandum seriously. The noble principles it recites are vitiated by the stark realities of the situation inside Kampuchea today.

32. But, we should not conclude without urging Viet Nam to respect and to put in practice the principles to which it has subscribed. We call yet again upon Viet Nam to withdraw its military forces from Kampuchea, to respect the rights and freedoms of its neighbours and to join with the overwhelming majority of the Assembly, in accordance with resolution 36/5, in working for a comprehensive political settlement of the problem of Kampuchea. For the achievement of such a settlement will in turn open the way to the restoration of conditions of true peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia.

33. Mr. HA VAN LAU (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): This is the second successive year the General Assembly, on the initiative of a group of countries that includes Viet Nam, has discussed the question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia. Over the past year South-East Asia has continued to be one of the most tense areas of the world; there are serious risks of explosion, with unforeseeable consequences. This situation justifiably arouses the concern of the international community.

34. Unfortunately, from the debates at the thirty-fifth session and at this session it is clear that differences still exist between the two groups of countries in South-East Asia regarding the origins and causes of tension and, therefore, regarding the solutions to be found. Views have been broadly expounded by both sides, and it is obvious that it will be impossible to eliminate these differences in the immediate future.

35. On the other hand, during the same year, the countries belonging to the two groups of the region have had numerous contacts and exchanges of views at different levels, including the visits made to most of the ASEAN countries by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the meetings between the Ministers and Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and their counterparts in South-East Asia. At this very session there have been bilateral talks between the Lao Minister for Foreign Affairs and his

counterparts of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore and working meetings between the representatives of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam and those of the five ASEAN countries. These contacts and meetings have helped the two groups of countries increase mutual understanding and gradually promote mutual trust and have been considered useful by both sides. It must be stressed that these exchanges of views show that the two groups of countries have the same fundamental interest in the peace and stability of the region and share the same aspiration to live as good neighbours in keeping with the principles of peaceful coexistence. These exchanges of views have also shown that there is a common will to pursue the dialogue and persistently to seek realistic measures to ensure a gradual settlement of the differences between the two groups of countries of Indo-China and ASEAN. That is a positive trend which responds to the desire and longing of the peoples of the region and the interest of peace and stability in South-East Asia and the world.

36. Peace, friendship and co-operation with the neighbouring countries in South-East Asia have been and still are the long-term basic policy of my country, Viet Nam. Over the past 40 years Viet Nam and other Indo-Chinese countries, through their struggle for national liberation and enormous sacrifices, have successfully regained and defended their independence and sovereignty and they have checked the schemes of intervention and aggression nurtured by imperialistic and hegemonistic big Powers and have foiled their manoeuvres aimed at sowing division and confrontation, thereby contributing to opening up a new era favourable to peace, stability, friendship and co-operation between the countries of the region.

37. At the end of the second Indo-Chinese war in 1975, Viet Nam, forgetting the past, proclaimed its four-point policy to normalize relations with the ASEAN countries; and our leaders made official visits to various capital cities in South-East Asia. Great efforts were made on both sides to promote and develop relations of peaceful coexistence, friendship and co-operation in all fields between the countries in the region. This brought encouraging initial results.

38. However, the restoration of peace in Indo-China, welcomed with joy and relief by all peace-loving and justice-loving peoples in the world, including those in South-East Asia, was not, unfortunately, to the taste of our great neighbour to the north, whose hegemonistic ambitions were suddenly being thwarted. That resulted in the implementation of a policy of open intervention and aggression by that Asian Power against the three Indo-Chinese countries, first of all the reunified and independent Viet Nam, plunging the region once again into the abyss of war and sowing disagreement among the countries in the area. The relations between the Indo-Chinese countries and the ASEAN countries have worsened day by day. In spite of that, Viet Nam, together with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the People’s Republic of Kampuchea, persists in its policy of peace and friendship with the ASEAN neighbours. The three Indo-Chinese countries have taken the initiative of putting forward, on repeated occasions, constructive proposals aimed at removing fears, restoring mutual confidence, improving relations between the two groups of countries and re-establishing peace and stability in the region.

39. In July 1980 the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the three Indo-Chinese countries, held at Vientiane, proposed specific and realistic measures in order to

reduce tension along the Kampuchean-Thai border, to restore peace and security in the border areas between the two countries and to work for a solution of problems of common interest.² In that spirit, and with the agreement of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, at the 36th meeting of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Viet Nam proposed a measure which would lead to a partial withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. Unfortunately, that constructive proposal was not welcomed by our neighbours.

40. This year the Foreign Ministers of the three Indo-Chinese countries met successively at Ho Chi Minh City in January [see A/36/86] and in Phnom Penh in June [see A/36/328] and undertook new peace initiatives of great importance.

41. In the course of the thirty-sixth session the goodwill of the Indo-Chinese countries was once again displayed in the important memorandum of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which set forth seven principles governing peaceful coexistence between the two groups of countries—the Indo-Chinese and the ASEAN—for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in South-East Asia. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has just explained the content and significance of those principles.

42. An objective analysis should clearly stress two aspects of the situation now prevailing in South-East Asia: on the one hand intervention by Powers outside the region and on the other the problems between the countries in the region. Those new proposals and initiatives on the part of the Indo-Chinese countries are in conformity with that reality of South-East Asia because they are based on the distinction between those two aspects of the situation. Proceeding from that assessment, the Indo-Chinese countries have proposed different, yet appropriate, approaches with regard to the solution of each type of relations.

43. For the reasons which we have had the opportunity to explain before the Assembly, we are convinced that the cause of the absence of peace and the instability in South-East Asia and the deterioration of the relations between the countries in the region was and still is the intervention by outside Powers in the region. That is why, in order to restore peace and stability, it is fundamental and urgently necessary to put an end to that intervention.

44. Whatever may be said about the origin of tension in South-East Asia, the existence of a real conflict, provoked by China, against the three Indo-Chinese countries cannot be denied. A peaceful settlement of the conflict—which is what the three countries of Indo-China have always advocated—can and must be reached through direct negotiations between the three Indo-Chinese countries and China. Certainly the intervention of China, in collusion with the United States, against the three countries of Indo-China has an international dimension. But the last United States war of aggression against Viet Nam represented a much greater threat to world peace and it too was resolved between Viet Nam and the United States directly.

45. Persevering in its desire to resolve the conflict peacefully, the Vietnamese Government has made numerous constructive proposals to the Chinese Government in order to remove the tension and to restore peace and normal relations between the two countries. We have proposed to China that Vietnamese-Chinese negotiations be resumed and have declared our readiness to start the third round of talks at any time. The three Indo-Chinese coun-

tries have proposed to China the signing of treaties of non-aggression and peaceful coexistence between China and each of the three countries. It is the Chinese side which has repeatedly refused all these proposals by adopting such an intransigent attitude, and has thereby shown that it is determined to pursue its policy of hegemony, which is hostile to the Indo-Chinese countries and prejudicial to peace and stability in the region.

46. Viet Nam, like the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Kampuchea, values the traditional solidarity and friendship which has existed between the Chinese people and the three Indo-Chinese peoples. We ardently desire to re-establish relations of good-neighbourliness with China and will spare no effort in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, with the profound conviction that in the end the just cause will win and that friendship between peoples will always prevail.

47. As to the disputes in the relations between the countries of Indo-China and the members of ASEAN, my country, as always, believes that any solution should be based on the idea that all the problems of South-East Asia should be resolved by the countries of the region by means of negotiations, without pre-conditions, on the basis of mutual respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and respect for legitimate interests, without the imposition of one party's point of view on the other and without outside interference. This basic idea is observed in practice in the relations between States of many regions—in Europe, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere—and for the settlement of regional problems. It is in full conformity, moreover, with the principles of the countries of the non-aligned movement and with those of the Charter.

48. Concerning the region of South-East Asia, experience has shown that as long as intervention by outside forces in the region persists it will be impossible to solve the radical differences between the two groups of countries. Nevertheless, we think that what could and should be done urgently at this time is to start and to continue dialogue between the two sides, to seek together means to promote mutual understanding and trust, and to refrain from any action which might further aggravate the situation. By doing this, the two sides would create a favourable climate for the gradual elimination of differences, improve relations between the two groups of countries and limit the possibilities of outside intervention, proceeding step by step towards the restoration of peace and stability in the region.

49. Given the complexity of the problems, this delicate work of normalization of relations between the two groups of countries cannot be completed either overnight or in the framework of contradictory debates which do nothing but exacerbate the existing tension. In our view, this great aim can be achieved only with great perseverance at many levels and through a process of direct contacts among the sovereign countries concerned, which are equally animated by the political will to put an end to their disputes and to solve their own problems in the common interest of the region and that of each country as well.

50. It is in this spirit that the three countries of Indo-China have proposed a framework sufficiently broad for negotiations on the basis of universally accepted principles. The principles that we have proposed to the members of ASEAN encompass the issues of common interest in the relations between the two groups of countries in the immediate future and in the long term as well in very

varied fields of co-operation, both bilateral and multi-lateral, ranging from the economy, science and technology to culture, sports and tourism, including co-operation between the coastal countries of the so-called South China Sea and co-operation between the countries in the region and countries outside it.

51. These proposals are being put forward by the countries of Indo-China with a sincere desire for negotiations and without any pre-conditions. As for the issues for negotiation and the procedure to follow, the three countries of Indo-China have shown themselves to be flexible, advocating an open agenda so that each group of countries and each country may raise any issue it deems necessary related to peace and stability in the region. The discussion would proceed on the basis of strict equality, taking up alternately the issues raised by the two groups of countries. The negotiations might be conducted in a regional conference as well as through bilateral and multilateral consultations between countries of the region, provided that the process of dialogue leads to a solution acceptable to all countries of the region. An international conference would be convened afterwards to endorse and guarantee the agreements reached by the countries of the region.

52. Considering the difficulties which certain countries of the region might have, it was carefully specified that the fact of participating in the conference or consultations did not imply reciprocal recognition at the political or diplomatic levels. The three countries of Indo-China have agreed to propose the formula of one or two representatives for each group of countries. Finally, the regional conference or regional consultations could take place in the presence of observers from outside the region; the Secretary-General of the United Nations or a certain number of countries agreed upon by the two groups, Indo-China and ASEAN, might be invited.

53. The three countries of Indo-China welcome the good offices of the Secretary-General in promoting mutual understanding and trust between the two groups of countries for the settlement of questions related to peace and stability in the region.

54. Numerous delegations in the course of previous debates at this session have wondered rightly whether the maintenance of the Pol Pot clique in the Organization constitutes a major obstacle to the United Nations playing its role in the problems of peace and stability in the region of South-East Asia. Furthermore, the countries of Indo-China have declared that if the United Nations were to discard Pol Pot and his followers the Organization could be entrusted with the initiative in convening an international conference to endorse and guarantee the agreements achieved by the countries of the area in the course of their regional conference or regional consultations.

55. We say that the proposals of the three countries of Indo-China are equitable because they are not aimed in any way at defending our interests at the expense of those of the countries of ASEAN; on the contrary, they are beneficial to both sides. As has been clearly indicated by the experience of the past three years, any attempt to impose a solution beneficial to just one side could lead only to an impasse, aggravate the confrontation between the two groups of countries and create conditions favourable to increased intervention and interference on the part of outside Powers in the region. All the countries in the region realize that such a situation, which could well lead to uncontrollable consequences, would not be in the interest or to the advantage of the ASEAN countries, Indo-

Chinese countries or peace and stability in the region. It would benefit only those who are interested in perpetuating the tension and confrontation among countries in the region so as "to fish in troubled waters" with a view to realizing their hegemonist and expansionist ambitions in the whole region.

56. In short, the proposals of the three Indo-Chinese countries, stemming as they do from a constant long-term policy, are based on reality. They are sensible and reasonable, realistic and flexible; they are fair proposals for open and frank negotiations.

57. The three Indo-Chinese countries are conscious of the complexity of the present situation. We nurture no illusion that the differences between the two groups of countries can be easily resolved. Intervention by outside Powers hostile to our common objectives of peace and stability always constitutes a big obstacle.

58. However, we have a basis for optimism and reasons to be optimistic. First, between the countries of Indo-China and ASEAN there exist many things in common: historical and cultural links; similar suffering and humiliations in colonial times; the same present aspiration to peace and security, without outside interference; a similarity of human and natural resources; and similar problems to confront in the process of economic development. What brings us closer together than anything else is the common interest in peace and stability in the area so that we may concentrate all our efforts on national construction on the lines freely chosen by each country.

59. There was a time when the relationship between the two groups of countries developed happily on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence. The confrontation of the years before 1975 and the present deterioration in the relations between the two groups of countries were not caused by us but are linked to the policy of intervention and aggression on the part of Powers outside the region. The three Indo-Chinese countries are convinced that the process of consultation and dialogue between the two groups of South-East Asian countries will, sooner or later, help us to reach a just and reasonable settlement of all the problems of common concern.

60. Choosing the path of dialogue is the path of wisdom, which is in conformity with the present general tendency of the non-aligned movement. The Conference of Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries which was held at New Delhi in February 1981 "urged all States in the region to undertake a dialogue which would lead to the resolution of differences among themselves and the establishment of durable peace and stability in the area, as well as the elimination of involvement and threats of intervention by outside Powers" [A/36/116 and Corr.1, annex, para. 85].

61. That appeal was reiterated at the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 25 and 28 September last [see A/35/566]. This course is also in conformity with the general tendency of the international community as a whole, clearly expressed during this session of the General Assembly, in favour of the maintenance of détente, the calming of situations of tension, and the settlement of differences through negotiations. Representatives of many countries that cherish peace and justice have appealed for the promotion of a dialogue, or at least that nothing be done to hinder the existing process of consultations among the countries of the region.

62. The decision taken at this session of the General Assembly to include in its agenda the item entitled "Question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia" proves once again the great concern of the international community over the tense and explosive situation in this area.

63. We are happy to inform the General Assembly that the consultations between the countries in the area continue to proceed in an atmosphere of frank and friendly co-operation. The delegation of Viet Nam has made every effort to present an objective analysis of the situation and of our proposals, with a view to giving the General Assembly certain food for thought. We sincerely hope that the Assembly will make a positive contribution to the cause of peace and stability in South-East Asia by encouraging the tendency to move towards a dialogue which now exists between the countries of the area.

64. For its part, Viet Nam, together with the other Indo-Chinese countries, remains determined to work tirelessly for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in South-East Asia, and for peace in Asia and in the world.

65. Mr. ZAINAL ABIDIN (Malaysia): Today, once more our attention is drawn to the region of South-East Asia, under item 34 of our agenda. Only a few days ago we heatedly debated the existing tension and danger in the region arising out of the explosive situation in Kampuchea. By an overwhelming majority the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/5, in which it endorsed the Declaration and resolution of the International Conference on Kampuchea.³ Our colleagues from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, together with their supporters, voted against the resolution. But now we are asked to deliberate upon the question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia on a higher plane, in isolation from the serious and protracted events that are taking place in Kampuchea today and ignoring the series of resolutions that have been adopted thus far by the United Nations. I must humbly submit at the outset that this is an exercise in futility. We are not involved in this body in an academic exercise. The problem before us is real and concerns the lives of millions of people, including hundreds of thousands of refugees astride the Thai-Kampuchean border. The problem cannot simply be swept under the carpet, or whisked off by pretending that it does not exist.

66. The item under discussion is so broad in its perspective, so general in its theme and so lofty in its objective that nobody could ever disagree. Who in South-East Asia does not desire peace? Who in his right mind does not require stability, which is so essential for development? Who in the region does not consider co-operation as a guarantee of progress and well-being for the area as a whole? In fact, all of us envisage a grand design; an edifice of regional co-operation which needs to be painstakingly built; an edifice that must be based on a strong and sound foundation of principles of international relations, principles that must be held sacrosanct by all concerned. Such principles have been well enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in the Bandung Communiqué⁴ and in the non-aligned movement. It is not necessary for me to reiterate them. They were clearly incorporated in our proposal for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, which has been in existence since 1971.⁵ It must, however, be emphasized that a violation of any of these principles would immediately undermine the very foundation of regional co-operation that needs to be earnestly built,

and would make a mockery of the ideal and aspiration embodied in the item under discussion.

67. It is generally understood that the prerequisite for any form of bilateral or regional co-operation is the existence of mutual trust and confidence among States. These have to be carefully nurtured, especially if it is envisaged that coexistence between the two political systems prevailing in the region should be promoted. Such coexistence has to be positive in content and not merely a state of mutual tolerance or, worse still, regarded as an opportunity to be used by one side covertly to undermine the integrity and stability of the other. As I said at the 46th meeting of the thirty-fifth session of the Assembly, we were at first encouraged by the development in the region and have striven hard in the direction of such coexistence since the end of the war in Viet Nam in 1975. We have in fact initiated moves towards meaningful regional co-operation. As far as Malaysia is concerned, we have embarked on a programme for the rehabilitation of the Vietnamese natural rubber industry, which was destroyed during the war years.

68. Unfortunately the open Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea at the end of 1978 gave us a rude shock. How could we extend the hand of co-operation to a country which unhesitatingly and readily ignored the rudiments of international law and the basic principles governing international relations? How could we be asked to believe the protestation of good intention of the leaders of Viet Nam, when they conveniently and willingly sought the involvement of a super-Power before mounting such an invasion? When the boundary of Kampuchea could be ignored in an alleged exercise of self-defence, what other boundaries could similarly be ignored for the same reasons? I am reminded of a theory which I heard many years ago, the theory that asserts that in the vast span of the ocean the big fish eats the medium-sized fish, the medium-sized fish eats the small fish and the small fish eats the shrimps. Sometimes, however, some of these shrimps prove to be poisonous. The oceanic law cannot therefore be applied by Viet Nam whatever the circumstances. Its application to Kampuchea has totally destroyed Viet Nam's credibility and has eliminated whatever trust and confidence existed among countries in the region. If Viet Nam is true to its intention to seek peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia, then it has to respond to appeals by the international community by withdrawing its forces from Kampuchea and seeking a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean problem. Such a solution would be in the direct interest of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam and of all of us in the region as a whole.

69. Our colleagues from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam have asked us to face and accept the reality in Kampuchea and in South-East Asia. We are asked to recognize the reality that the Heng Samrin régime is entrenched and in full control of the country and that the situation is irreversible. The reality, however, appears to us to be somewhat different. We see in Kampuchea a régime that would immediately collapse without the presence of the 200,000 Vietnamese troops in the country. We see a country still at the height of a civil war fought between the guerrillas, who are Kampuchean, on the one hand and the Vietnamese forces on the other. We see a country still heavily dependent on foreign food aid to feed its hungry millions. We see a land that still forces hundreds of thousands of people beyond its boundary to seek food and shelter—people who are still reluctant to return to their homeland. We see a human tragedy of

enormous proportions which still touches the tender hearts of human beings around the globe. We see a people that brought about the civilization of Angkor being down trodden by abject famine and deprivation. We see the innocent Kampuchean being sacrificed for wars which are not their own. We see a small and weak country becoming the victim of a big neighbour.

70. In short, we see ourselves, if we are not careful, falling victim to a similar situation and facing the same fate and tragedy. That is the reality that we see. Our response is therefore clear. We want the Vietnamese and the Lao to sit down together with us, as envisaged by resolution 36/5, to seek a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean problem as quickly as possible. To us, their readiness or reluctance to do so is a measure of their credibility, by which we can assess their intention to build, or otherwise, the desired regional peace and co-operation.

71. It has been stated that in seeking solutions for the various problems in South-East Asia, Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic do seek the path not of confrontation but of co-operation. Countries of the area must therefore get together without interference from outside. Indeed, the non-confrontational and regional approach to resolving common problems is an approach to which Malaysia has always subscribed. It is consistent with the principle of the non-use of force in settling disputes. I can only wish that Viet Nam had not forgotten this principle and this approach before it decided to invade Kampuchea a few years ago. We would not now be facing the present problem. We cannot therefore, at this stage, commit ourselves to an obvious ploy in the name of a non-confrontational and regional approach. We cannot, in the first instance, be asked by ignoring the Kampuchean conflict to accept, however indirectly, the *status quo* in Kampuchea. Nor can we be involved in any initiative in the name of regional co-operation to mount a posture of confrontation towards any country outside the region. In our view this is a step in the direction of greater problems, which would bring about greater major-Power involvement and confrontation in the region itself.

72. The Kampuchean situation in particular, and peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia in general, cannot be viewed in isolation. While we agree that we should steer clear of major-Power rivalry, we realize that we need the respective co-operation of those Powers in order to achieve our objective. The path of confrontation will not bring about the desired result. The legitimate interests of major Powers in our region must equally be recognized.

73. For this reason, it is our sincere belief that the formula presented by the International Conference on Kampuchea in July, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 36/5, is the most viable and practical proposal for all concerned. It is an approach that can guarantee permanent peace, non-alignment and neutrality for Kampuchea, that would bring about peace and stability for Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and that would ensure peace, stability and co-operation in the region of South-East Asia. It is a proposal that could harmonize relations between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam on the one hand and their big neighbour in the north and smaller neighbours in the south on the other. It is a way to ensure at the same time the legitimate interests of the friends of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. Above all, it

can mean bright prospects for peace, progress and happiness for all of us in South-East Asia.

74. Mr. SUJA (Czechoslovakia) (*interpretation from Russian*): Unfortunately, in the past year it has again been impossible to put an end to the unslackening tension and persistent disquiet in one of the most explosive regions of the world, namely, South-East Asia. The situation in the region continues to be fraught with a serious threat to peace and security and is, naturally, the source of concern to a number of countries, not all of which are necessarily within that region.

75. The primary cause for that situation is to be found in the continuing adventurist policy of creating instability in that region from outside, and the promotion of distrust and conflict. This is the product of collusion between imperialism and Chinese hegemonism. These are the forces which, in flagrant contradiction to the principles of the Charter and the rules of international law, are undermining the independence of sovereign countries of the region, violating their territorial integrity, inciting psychological war against them and committing acts of direct aggression, including armed attack, which they call "lessons". As long as there is a threat from Beijing to give Viet Nam "a second lesson", as long as attempts from outside to maintain and artificially to increase tension on the Kampuchean-Thai border continue, as long as there is no end to the generous foreign military, material, moral and diplomatic assistance being given to the remnants of the Pol Pot group and other groups which are not supported by the Kampuchean people, it will not be possible to eradicate the sources of tension, disquiet and instability in South-East Asia.

76. This destructive category also includes attempts to cobble together a so-called front, or even some sort of coalition Government, for one of the sovereign States of the region, the people of which have already freely and unequivocally elected the highest organs of their government authority. Those organs are conducting a policy which has already led to considerable success. Matters are proceeding successfully towards the consolidation of internal living conditions.

77. In the area of foreign relations, the People's Republic of Kampuchea is conducting a policy of non-alignment and friendship with all the countries of the world. As we emphasized in the joint statement signed during the official friendly visit to the People's Republic of Kampuchea in February of last year by a Czechoslovak Party-Government delegation headed by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the President of Czechoslovakia, Gustav Husak, our country fully supports its foreign policy orientation and welcomes that policy of peace, mutual understanding and non-alignment, which is aimed at expanding co-operation with all Governments, in particular with the countries of South-East Asia, based on the principles of equality and peaceful coexistence.

78. The solution of the problems of this region in accordance with the vital interests and aspirations of the peoples of the countries of South-East Asia must necessarily be initiated, in our view, through the elimination of the causes of distrust, disquiet and instability. In the first place, a speedy end must be put to the interference by the imperialists and hegemonists. With the elimination of these causes—which necessitate the presence of the Vietnamese people under an arrangement for a specific period of time in the Republic of Kampuchea—the Socialist Re-

public of Viet Nam will be ready, as its representative has stated from this rostrum, to withdraw its troops.

79. A positive basis for the solution of the problem of South-East Asia is to be found, as we see it, in a whole spectrum of realistic and constructive proposals by the countries of Indo-China, which are a clear and unequivocal illustration of their genuine will to conduct a regional conference in dialogue with the countries of the region as the only reasonable and acceptable path towards a solution that can have positive results.

80. The way to peaceful negotiations is clearly stated in the memorandum of 28 September 1981 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, containing principles governing relations of peaceful coexistence for the purpose of securing peace, stability and co-operation between the two groups of countries of South-East Asia. It confirms indisputably the desire for a solution. It confirms the genuine desire of the countries of Indo-China for a dialogue with the ASEAN countries and clearly formulates the principles for the development of mutual understanding and trust between those countries. The implementation of those principles and the opening of negotiations and consultations for the purpose of achieving an agreement or any other form of undertaking between the countries of Indo-China and ASEAN would, we are convinced, contribute to eliminating the most serious barriers in the way of attaining lasting peace and security in the region.

81. We also welcome the fact that the aforementioned memorandum and the proposal concerning the continuance of a political dialogue contain highly concrete ideas relating to the expansion of co-operation between the countries of South-East Asia in the economic, technical, scientific, cultural and other spheres. Any other course involving any manoeuvres or subterfuge aimed against dialogue and pursuing the purpose of pitting the countries of Indo-China and ASEAN against one another and any other attempts to misuse the authority of the Organization for the purpose of interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State will merely lead to maintaining a situation of disquiet and instability in South-East Asia. It is precisely the elimination of this serious source of tension that is the the urgent task of the United Nations, for the purpose of strengthening universal peace and global international security.

AGENDA ITEM 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs (continued):*

(c) Election of five members of the International Court of Justice

82. The PRESIDENT: In connection with the election of five members of the International Court of Justice which is scheduled to take place on Thursday afternoon, 5 November, I would draw the Assembly's attention to the relevant documents: document A/36/301-S/14501, dated 11 June 1981, sets out the composition of the Court and the procedure for the election in the General Assembly and in the Security Council; documents A/36/302 and Add.1 to 3-S/14502 and Add.1 to 3 list the candidates; and, document A/36/303 and Corr.1 and 2-S/14503 and Corr.1 and 2 contains the curricula vitae of the candidates.

83. In view of the changes in the original list of candidates as communicated in documents A/36/302 and Add.1 to 3-S/14502 and Add.1 to 3, some Member States have indicated that they feel it would be desirable, in order to facilitate the election, that at the time of election the Assembly should have before it a consolidated and updated list of candidates. Accordingly, I request the Secretariat to issue a revised list of candidates which would contain the latest information received since the issuance of the original list, thus facilitating the election for all representatives.

The meeting rose at 12:15 p.m.

* Resumed from the 35th meeting.

NOTES

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 119, document A/35/193 and Add.1 and 2.

² See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-fifth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1980*, document S/14071.

³ See *Report of the International Conference on Kampuchea, New York (13-17 July 1981)* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.I.20).

⁴ See *Asian-African Conference, April 18-24, 1955*, New Delhi, Government of India Press.

⁵ Declaration and joint communiqué issued at Kuala Lumpur on 27 November 1971 by the Foreign Ministers of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (see A/C.1/1019).