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Letter dated 22 January 1990 from the Permanent Representative
of Singapore to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a statement made by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. Wong Kan Seng, on a United Nations interim administration for Cambodia.

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "The situation in Kampuchea", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. CHAN Heng Chee

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ANNEX

Summary of statement dated 22 January 1990 by the Minister
for Foreign Affairs of Singapore on a United Nations
interim administration for Cambodia

Singapore welcomes the proposal to set up a UN Interim Administration to govern Cambodia and to prepare for free elections. Singapore has always believed that only the UN has the authority, impartiality and expertise to end the bloodshed and to create conditions that will allow the Cambodian people to exercise their right to self-determination.

2 The meeting of the Five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council in Paris that was concluded on 16 January 1990 was a very significant development. It reflected the growing international consensus that only the full involvement of the UN can break the current impasse on Cambodia. Vietnam and Hun Sen have finally conceded that no solution is possible without the UN. Hopefully they will agree with the Five Permanent Members that free and fair elections must be conducted under direct UN Administration and in a neutral political environment in which no party would be advantaged.

3 Many have contributed to this emerging new consensus. ASEAN's role is widely recognised. The Foreign Minister of Australia deserves credit for seizing the opportunity to develop the concept of a UN Administration that was first mooted by HRH Prince Norodom Sihanouk* in March 1981 and further elaborated by US Congressman Stephen Solarz. The US initiative in convening the meeting of the Five Permanent Members in Paris was timely. The Foreign Minister of Indonesia is now engaged in consultations to see how ASEAN can help move the process further forward.

* In an interview published in Asiaweek of 6 March 1981.

4 While the concept of a UN Interim Administration has received growing acceptance, many crucial details have to be worked out. The basic political role of a UN Interim Administration is to ensure a level playing field on which all Cambodians can compete in free elections in an atmosphere of peace and trust. The UN Interim Administration will have to be scrupulously fair both in the governing of the country in the interim period and, more importantly, in ensuring that elections are fair. For the UN to play such a role effectively, several issues must be addressed, for example:-

- (i) The establishment of a sufficiently large Administration with adequate numbers of civilian UN officials to keep the country running and ensure that it is efficiently and fairly administered in the interim period;
- (ii) The creation of a strong and adequately armed peace-keeping component to verify the withdrawal of all foreign forces, maintain law and order and to ensure that the electoral process is conducted without intimidation by any armed groups;
- (iii) An adequate interim period to allow calm and normalcy to return to Cambodia and also allow all parties to prepare themselves adequately for elections. This could take more than a few months;
- (iv) An effective institutional apparatus to ensure that the elections are conducted freely and fairly; and
- (v) The selection of an UN Administrator of stature, accountable to the UN Security Council and respected by all Cambodians.

Other issues are less important. For instance, the status of the UN seat will be clarified once agreement is reached on the creation of a UN Interim Administration.

5 The UN Security Council has a key role to play. As in the case of Namibia, a UN Security Council resolution will have to authorise the setting up of such a UN Interim Administration. The Five Permanent Members should continue their discussions to stimulate thinking on the actual modalities and mechanisms of a UN Interim Administration.

6 The difficulties should not be underestimated. However, this is the most promising approach to take. The details can be negotiated. All parties should negotiate seriously the creation of a UN Interim Administration on the basis that it should give the Cambodian people the right and the opportunity to freely exercise their right of self-determination. At an appropriate time, the Paris Conference on Cambodia could be reconvened to serve as the negotiating forum.
