U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF ASEAN AND INDOCHINA

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) taken together is the seventh largest trading partner of the U.S. Trade with the U.S. was $34.4 billion in 1988. In that same year, U.S. imports from ASEAN were $21.9 billion, while U.S. exports reached $12.5 billion. U.S. investment in ASEAN exceeds $10 billion.

ASEAN and the U.S. generally agree on the value of liberalizing international trade and the importance of market forces in economic development. However, trade relations have become more contentious. ASEAN is concerned about the persistence of protectionist measures in the U.S. and about the impact of U.S. agricultural policy. Despite recent improvements the U.S. remains concerned about the effectiveness of protection of intellectual property in ASEAN countries.

As the ASEAN states have cultivated their economic and political strength, they have accepted increasing responsibility for policy leadership in the region which the U.S. welcomes. And the U.S., I believe, will continue to work closely with our ASEAN friends on such key issues as Cambodia, refugees, regional security, narcotics control, and human resources development.

U.S. bilateral relations with each of the ASEAN countries are excellent. The United States has a special security relationship with Thailand, as well as the Philippines. This will continue in the years ahead.
In bilateral discussions with ASEAN leaders, U.S.-Japanese relations and Japan's role in the region often comes up. There is, of course, appreciation expressed for Japan's economic assistance and the Japanese steps to open markets to goods from the ASEAN countries. At the same time the countries of Southeast Asia do not want to become dependent economically on Japan and, therefore, want to see a strong and powerful U.S. economic presence in the region. And certainly the American market remains critical to their export requirements. On the security side, the ASEAN nations want the U.S. to remain the major force in the area. They express pleasure that Japan has no interest in a regional security role in the Pacific and want to ensure that this remains the case.

On Indochina, the United States and the vast majority of nations remain united in calling for Hanoi both to withdraw completely from Cambodia and to join with the Cambodian parties in a conscientious effort to negotiate a settlement. Only a comprehensive political solution acceptable to all sides can bring to an end the suffering of the Cambodian people, reestablish a free and independent Cambodia, and restore regional stability.

Hanoi now says that it will have all of its troops out of Cambodia by the end of September of this year. The Vietnamese-established government in Phnom Penh is in conversation with Prince Sihanouk about ways to bring the fighting in Cambodia to an end and establish a viable system of the Cambodian people's
choice to handle the affairs of the country.

The U.S. remains unalterably opposed to a return to dominance of the Khmer Rouge. A durable settlement in this conflict must contain effective measures to ensure that the Khmer Rouge can never regain control. Murderous Khmer Rouge leaders, such as Pol Pot, must not be allowed to play any role in a future Cambodian government. The U.S. government has continued to speak in strongest terms to the Chinese about this and the Chinese clearly affirm that there is no role for these discredited leaders in Cambodia's future. At the same time, the U.S. urges the Chinese to cease their assistance to the Khmer Rouge and provide greater support to the noncommunist resistance elements led by Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann.

The Chinese continue to say that they cannot halt all aid to the Khmer Rouge until all Vietnamese troops are out of Cambodia and all outside assistance to Cambodian groups is ended. The United States must, however, continue to press the Chinese on this matter so important to the future hopes of a free Cambodian people.

The United States' position on the necessary components of an acceptable settlement is clear: the verified and complete withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces, effective safeguards against a Khmer Rouge return to power, and the restoration of genuine self-determination to the Cambodian people. The U.S. believes that in such a solution Prince Sihanouk's role is crucial, as leader of an interim government preceding elections and as the
focus for national unity. Until a settlement is reached, the U.S. is continuing its support for Prince Sihanouk and the Cambodian noncommunist resistance in their valiant struggle for a free and independent Cambodia.

In February of 1989, President Bush met with Prince Sihanouk in Beijing and in late April Vice President Quayle met with him in Jakarta. I was present on both occasions and listened to Prince Sihanouk describe the current situation as he saw it and what he believed the future of Cambodia might be. He is dedicated to the restoration of an independent Cambodia, free from foreign interference and allowed to determine its own fate in open and fair elections. In my opinion, Prince Sihanouk is a man beholden to no one and is clearly the person best suited to lead Cambodia through the difficult times ahead. There is an astonishing unanimity about Prince Sihanouk's role. He is supported not only by the United States but also by ASEAN, China, the Soviet Union, and Japan.

In my numerous meetings with Norodom Sihanouk, I have always been deeply impressed by his vision for a free and independent Cambodia. He understands the essence of negotiations and how to resolve difficult situations relating both to substance and to protocol. In a meeting with Sihanouk we basically listen as he gives his insights on the current situation and his views of how to proceed to achieve success. One is left with the impression of having been in the presence of a consummate politician and leader whose confidence and self-assurance are infectious.
As is well known, the U.S. has worked closely and energetically with the ASEAN countries to resolve the Cambodian situation. The U.S. has strongly supported ASEAN efforts to mobilize the international community in opposition to Vietnam's occupation, demonstrating to Hanoi the economic and diplomatic consequences of its policy in Cambodia, and that this effort should be continued until Vietnam has ended its occupation. On the regional level, the U.S. has welcomed ASEAN's energetic and sustained diplomatic attempts to achieve a comprehensive solution in Cambodia through its Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM) process.

The formal U.S. precondition for normalization of relations with Vietnam is a political settlement in Cambodia involving the complete withdrawal of Vietnamese forces. As a practical reality, the pace and scope of the development of relations will depend on Vietnam's continued cooperation with the U.S. on the Prisoner of War-Missing in Action (POW/MIA) issue. The U.S. is pursuing vigorously with Vietnam and Laos the POW/MIA matter and the objective is the fullest possible accounting. Although much remains to be done, it is clear that cooperation to resolve this issue of highest national priority is on track.

The U.S. continues to support a generous admission program into the U.S. for Indochina refugees. In this connection I hope and expect that the Vietnamese will continue to cooperate on the Orderly Departure and Amerasian Programs and agree on a program for reeducating center detainees.

The U.S. welcomes Vietnamese positive announcements and
attitudes which indicate that Vietnam may have come to the inevitable conclusion that its past policies have simply not worked to the benefit of Vietnam and that entry into the international community can only be helpful to the country and its people.

As Vietnam moves to improve her relations with neighboring countries of ASEAN and with the United States, it should, at the same time, give reconsideration to its special ties with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union provides Vietnam with some $3 billion a year in economic and military assistance and the Soviet Union has a major naval base at Camranh Bay. It can be argued that it would be much to the advantage of North Vietnam and the Soviet Union to have Hanoi lessen its dependence on Moscow. If this were to occur Vietnam would then have a much easier time of entering into close and good relations with the ASEAN countries. And it might happen that the Soviet Union would reassess the importance of Camranh Bay to its military strategy in the Pacific and withdraw militarily from Southeast Asia. This scenario would certainly contribute mightily to peace and stability in the Pacific and to Vietnam's integration into the economic and political evolution of the Southeast Asian region.