

The foreign minister said that, during the visit, he met the Vietnamese prime minister, the general secretary of the CPV, and the Vietnamese deputy prime minister and foreign minister. He said that the Vietnamese prime minister commended Thailand for the big advancement it made and said Vietnam wished to send officials for studies here. He hoped that the forthcoming visit to Vietnam by Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan will further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

On his meeting with the general secretary of the CPV, the foreign minister said Vietnam told Thailand that it would make efforts to end the fighting in Cambodia, in other words, to find a settlement to the Cambodian problem as soon as possible so that Vietnamese troops could be brought back to Vietnam for national development.

On his meeting with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, he said both sides agreed on various points. Both realized the need for and mutual benefits they would gain from expanding cooperation to solve the Cambodian problem, to clear obstacles blocking development of relations between the two countries and of peace and stability in Southeast Asia. Both sides agreed that a settlement of the Cambodian problem must be a comprehensive one—involving troop withdrawal, an end to external interference, and national reconciliation among the four Khmer factions. Sitthi said he congratulated Vietnam for its decision on an earlier troop pullout from Cambodia by September this year, and agreed to hold more talks to discuss details on troop withdrawal, an end to external interference, and Cambodian national reconciliation, especially on the meeting of the four Khmer factions which would pave the way for an international conference of concerned parties later on.

On bilateral relations between Thailand and Vietnam, he said Vietnam has shown good will by offering to free 281 Thai fishermen, 10 among that number have already returned to Thailand today. They also discussed technical and business cooperation between Thailand and Vietnam as well as measures to solve the problem of Vietnamese boat people.

More on Talks With Nguyen Co Thach

BK1301013189 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English
13 Jan 89 p 1

[Text] Details of a timetable for a Vietnamese withdrawal are likely to be settled at the second Jakarta Informal Meeting next month, a senior Foreign Ministry official said yesterday.

Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila, who returned to Bangkok yesterday from his four-day visit to Hanoi, and his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Co Thach discussed the timetable of the troop withdrawal, but did not go into details.

Mr Thach announced on Wednesday that if a political agreement is reached, a Vietnamese troop withdrawal could take place within the next three months or by September at the latest.

ACM [Air Chief Marshal] Sitthi said yesterday at a press conference after arriving home: "Vietnamese leaders said firmly that the complete withdrawal will take place by this September despite any problem."

He quoted Vietnamese leader Nguyen Van Linh as saying that sending troops to Kampuchea has caused a great loss to Vietnam and it will speed the peace process to enable those troops to return home and develop the country.

ACM Sitthi said "I also told Mr Thach that he could talk to (Phnom Penh premier) Hun Sen and Heng Samrin to soften their stance towards the resistance forces to facilitate an agreement."

On the problem of boat people and refugees, ACM Sitthi said Vietnam agreed to join in an international conference on refugees called by ASEAN in Geneva for the middle of this year.

The Vietnamese also agreed to increase measures preventing their people from fleeing and to expand the Orderly Departure Programme so that Vietnamese refugees can be settled in third countries without risking the hazardous journey to first asylum countries.

Vietnam also agreed to receive refugees who return voluntarily.

ACM Sitthi added that Vietnam will send a team of officials to Bangkok next month to discuss a voluntary repatriation programme.

A Foreign Ministry source noted that both Thailand and Vietnam have grown "less stubborn" and "more realistic" regarding the Kampuchea problem, and the change of attitude has increased the possibility of a solution.

The source predicted a flurry of diplomatic activity on Kampuchea in the next few months following ACM Sitthi's successful visit to Vietnam.

ACM Sitthi also clarified some points pertaining to the Kampuchean solution that were announced on Wednesday in a joint press statement.

The "international mechanism for control and supervision"—the term Vietnam agreed to instead of an International Control Commission and an International Peace Keeping Force—will control and verify withdrawal, a ceasefire, and oversee the election, ACM Sitthi said.

Speaking at a news conference upon his return from Vietnam, Sitthi said Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach informed him of the new developments toward a settlement of Kampuchea during his three-day visit there.

Sitthi said Vietnam has clearly demonstrated intention to solve the Kampuchean conflict with a pledge to withdraw its remaining forces from Kampuchea by September. Hanoi also promised to help facilitate attempts to reach a political solution among the four warring Khmer factions.

Sitthi said Thach told him yesterday morning that Sihanouk, now in Paris, has already dropped his demand to have the Vietnamese-supported government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in Phnom Penh dismantled before he would have any more talks with it.

He said he was also told the prince has stated his intention to attend the second informal meeting on Kampuchea in Jakarta next month.

Sitthi said he was "very pleased" with the success of his trip to Vietnam which would contribute to the peace process in Kampuchea.

Sitthi said both Thailand and Vietnam agreed in the talks in Hanoi that the most desirable solution to the Kampuchean problem would be a comprehensive one involving the total withdrawal of foreign troops, the cessation of external aid and intervention and the realization of national conciliation among the four Kampuchean parties.

Sitthi said the three elements are inseparable.

He said the Jakarta informal talks next month should lead to an "expanded meeting" that would include China, the Soviet Union and other countries concerned.

"An expanded meeting is necessary in laying down a groundwork for international recognition of a Kampuchea settlement," Sitthi told the news conference.

The foreign minister said he also asked Thach to help persuade Phnom Penh leaders to be more flexible in talks with the three other Khmer resistance forces of Sihanouk, Khmer Rouge Khieu Samphan, and Khmer People's National Liberation Front Son Sann.

On refugee problem, Sitthi said Vietnam will send a delegation to Bangkok next month to discuss repatriation of Vietnamese refugees in Thailand who want to return home voluntarily.

It would be the first meeting between the two countries on the question of refugee repatriation. Vietnam has already concluded repatriation agreements with Hong Kong and Malaysia.

He said during the Hanoi talks, Vietnam agreed to attend the international conference on refugees to be held in Geneva in the middle of this year.

He said Vietnam also promised to try to prevent its people from fleeing the country illegally and at the same time to step up the implementation of the orderly departure programme.

Calls Meetings 'Great Success'

BK1301070189 Bangkok THAI RAT in Thai
13 Jan 89 p 14

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Speaking to newsmen at Don Muang Airport upon returning from his visit to the SRV, Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Sitthi Sawetsila said he considered his discussions with Vietnamese leaders to be a great success and that Vietnam regarded his visit as beginning a new chapter in Thai-Vietnamese relations.

Thailand and Vietnam agreed on a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian problem through withdrawal of troops, cessation of external interference, and Cambodian national reconciliation. Sitthi said he briefed Vietnamese leaders on his approval of the Vietnamese intention to withdraw all its troops by this September and suggested that at the same time other political processes should be speeded up.

The foreign minister said of his meeting with CPV Secretary General Nguyen Van Linh, the latter assured that it was his intention to settle the Cambodian problem quickly so that Vietnamese soldiers could return home to help national development. The CPV secretary general admitted that it was a great loss in sending Vietnamese soldiers to Cambodia, including in terms of their death. He also commended Thailand's progress and said Vietnam could learn many things from Thailand.

The foreign minister said he had a long meeting with SRV Premier Do Muoi, who asked him to convey his New Year's greetings to the king and said the Thai prime minister's coming visit to the SRV will greatly promote Thai-Vietnamese relations. Sitthi said: I am very satisfied with the visit to Vietnam. [passage omitted]

Comments on Refugee Talks

BK1201131389 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai
1200 GMT 12 Jan 89

[Text] The foreign minister and his delegation, including members from the private business sector, had a successful visit to Vietnam thus opening up a new chapter in Thai-Vietnamese relations which will greatly contribute to security in Southeast Asia. The visit is also a golden opportunity to open trade between the two countries. Reporting on the visit, Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Sitthi Sawetsila told the mass media after returning from Vietnam and arriving at the Air Force Headquarters Airport this evening:

[Begin Sitthi recording] On the first day of our arrival, delegations assigned to specific areas held separate discussions with their Vietnamese counterparts. We have a problem about the refugees to be solved with Vietnam. I assigned the secretary general of the National Security Council and the director general of the International Organizations Department to head the discussions. Officials of the two countries achieved the following results during the discussion—we received pledges from Vietnam to help solve the problem as follows:

1. To participate in the international conference on refugees in accordance with the appeal from ASEAN, which will be held in Geneva in the middle of this year.
2. To increase measures to stop the outflow of Vietnamese people who are a burden to Vietnam's neighboring countries.
3. To expand the Orderly Departure Program, or ODP, to allow orderly and direct settlement of Vietnamese people in third countries without having to go through first-asylum neighboring countries, including Thailand, before reaching Western countries. The expansion of the ODP program will help reduce the number of Vietnamese refugees illegally entering Thailand.
4. Vietnam is ready to take back Vietnamese refugees if they wish to return to Vietnam. In February, Vietnam will send a delegation to Bangkok for discussions of the details of this matter, especially concerning the repatriation of refugees.

In short, I am very pleased with the outcome of this visit by our delegation. [end recording]

Commentaries, Editorials on Sitthi Visit to SRV

MATICHON Views 'New Attitude'

BK1301104789 Bangkok MATICHON in Thai
12 Jan 89 p 9

[Editorial: "New Attitude of Our Foreign Policy"]

[Text] Thai Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Sitthi Sawetsila has just completed talks with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach in Hanoi. According to reports, the talks went smoothly and both sides achieved good mutual understanding. Everything went well not only concerning the Cambodian problem, in which Thailand has urged Vietnam to accelerate its troop withdrawal from Cambodia, but also about trade between the private sectors of Thailand and Vietnam. Everything indicates a possibility for improvement of the relations between the two countries.

Foreign observers describe Sitthi's visit to Vietnam as an end to Thailand's cold attitude toward Vietnam. Looking back in history, since Vietnam sent its military troops to occupy Cambodia on 7 January 1979, Thailand has openly opposed the Vietnamese action on the grounds that Vietnam had violated the UN Charter.

Thailand has joined hands with other ASEAN nations to inspire the world community to put political and economic pressure on Vietnam.

Most countries in the world support ASEAN's stand and oppose the Vietnamese action of encroachment of Cambodia's sovereignty. For this reason, most of the UN member countries do not recognize the Vietnamese-established puppet government in Cambodia. Despite Thailand's opposition to Vietnam's aggression in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam have still maintained diplomatic relations.

However, Thailand's attitude toward Vietnam has been based mainly on the Cambodian problem which Thailand regards as an important issue. Thailand wants Vietnam to withdraw all its troops from Cambodia without any conditions because Thailand does not accept any country's military occupation of another country. Based on this policy, Thailand has for years adopted an attitude of coolness toward Vietnam for its violation of the UN Charter. Thai Foreign Minister Sitthi has declared, time and again, that he would not make a visit to Vietnam as long as the Cambodian problem has not been settled.

Anyway, the question of Cambodia and its impact on relations between Thailand and Vietnam cannot be counted upon by the three concerned countries only. There are other important external factors for it—the roles and changing policies of the superpowers. It can be said that the shift in the Soviet Union's policy under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev has sparked off a positive impact on other countries.

Gorbachev has changed policy toward Afghanistan by withdrawing the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, opening talks with the United States on nuclear disarmament, and introducing economic reforms in the Soviet Union. Another important factor is the fact that the Soviet Union is in the process of normalizing its relations with China. This factor has influenced Vietnam in adjusting its policy toward being more flexible concerning its occupation of Cambodia.

It is not only Vietnam that has to adjust its policy; Thailand will also have to adjust to the changing situation. The saying goes that there are no eternal friends or enemies in international politics; only the interests are eternal. This seems to be an enduring truth. The policy to turn Indochina from a battlefield into a marketplace is therefore a timely adjustment of Thailand's stand.

NATION Praises 'Cordiality'

BK1301043589 Bangkok THE NATION in English
13 Jan 89 p 8

[Editorial: "Thai-VN (Vietnam) Cordiality Speeds Up Settlement in Kampuchea"]

[Text] Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila has good reasons to be "very pleased" with his successful four-day visit to Vietnam. The success was actually beyond all expectations.

long conflict. His visit, the first Thai foreign minister to visit Hanoi within 13 years, registers the cornerstone of Thai relations with the communist country, since it also paves way for the visit of Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan to Vietnam, also the first Thai prime minister to visit Vietnam in many decades.

On his trip, Foreign Minister Sitthi brings with him, apart from the government officials, nearly 30 members of the delegation from all sectors—such as the businessmen, academicians, reporters—to improve ties between the two countries in every aspect. But the most important task, which is the aim of this trip, is to narrow down the gap between Thailand and the SRV in their differences on the Kampuchean conflict. After two rounds of talks between Foreign Minister Sitthi and his counterpart Nguyen Co Thach in Hanoi, Sitthi can win his [words indistinct] in reducing the differences, especially on the issues that Vietnam could not accept for quite a long time, that is the timetable for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea which comprehended with the cessation of the external aid to the Kampuchean resistance forces, the national reconciliation between the Kampuchean parties concerned, and an effective international control mechanism to monitor the peace process in Kampuchea. Both countries also felt that the so-called JIM 2, or the Jakarta informal meeting that provides the venue for the four warring Khmer factions to meet and solve their own differences in the problem for the second time, should be expanded to involve other concerned countries in the peace process.

Air Chief Marshal Sitthi not only wins the efforts to solve the Kampuchean conflict, but also achieves the goal of reaching closer cooperation between the two countries in every aspect, especially in the economy to serve the government's policy of increasing economic ties with the countries in the region—especially Laos, Vietnam, and Kampuchea. For Laos, Thailand's economic relations are improved in many fields. For Vietnam, Foreign Minister Sitthi paves the way for better economic cooperation in his trip by resolving the obstacles that (?spread) the two countries for nearly a decade, that is the problem of occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese force, and that also prepare for the improving ties between Thailand and Kampuchea after the problem has been solved. [sentence as heard]

Air Chief Marshal Sitthi's achievement in his Vietnam visit is not only reducing the gap in the Kampuchean problem with Vietnam, but also achieves the better understanding and better cooperation with Vietnam for brighter future of the countries and the people in South-east Asian region as a whole.

'Shut Out' Policy for Refugees To Continue
BK1301020589 Bangkok THE NATION in English
13 Jan 89 p 4

[Text] Thailand will continue to "shut-out" Indochinese refugees, said a senior Interior Ministry official who was

responding to an American human rights group's claim that the policy has caused the deaths of several boat people on the high seas.

Somphon Klinphongs, deputy permanent secretary for interior affairs, denied that Thailand is pushing off Indochinese asylum seekers who manage to avoid naval guards and reach the Thai shore.

"Our policy is to prevent boat people from landing here. But if they can sneak in, we will keep them for a while before sending them to a third country," he said.

The New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights said in a recent report that the Thai government's refugee policy has opened the way for abuse of refugees by pirates and even Thai military personnel.

The report called on Thailand to allow all refugee boats to land and for the refugees to be granted asylum.

Somphon insisted that Thailand will maintain the "shut-out" policy. "But we have told the United Nations many times we will accept those who land," he said.

Somphon claimed the allegation of human rights abuses by Thai authorities was spread by Vietnamese racketeers who organized the Indochinese asylum seekers' escapes to Thailand. Due to Thailand's tough measures, the number of the syndicate "customers" have dropped significantly, according to the official.

Thai authorities last year arrested a Vietnamese man suspected of being a leading organizer of the asylum-seeking trips, Somphon said. He added that the man's accomplices lied to London-based Amnesty International when he said Thailand is responsible for inhumane measures being taken against the boat people.

The lawyers' human rights group, citing internal documents from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], said there have been a number of cases in which refugees were robbed, raped or killed.

The group's report said "hundreds" of refugees have drowned due to the Thai policy—initiated last January due to large influx of boat people, some of whom were considered by Thai authorities to be "economic migrants".

Somphon said some boat people drowned because they were told by escape organizers to swim to the Thai shore to avoid detection.

"Should we be held responsible for that?" he said.

An American journalist sought an interview with Somphon, who oversees refugee affairs, yesterday morning. Somphon said he was asked "whether Thai soldiers are either pushing off boat people or shooting them."

Somphon later signed an agreement with UNHCR Thailand director Pierre Jambor on the UN agency's Bt [baht] 259 million aid project for refugees this year.

Somphon said the Interior Ministry is maintaining 103,000 Vietnamese, Laotian and Kampuchean refugees in seven camps throughout the country. However, he said the number of boat people had dropped dramatically, from 18,000 in 1987 to 4,000 last year.

He added that an average of 10 refugees enter Thailand each month at present.

Another 76 Burmese Students Sent Home
BK1301022189 Bangkok THE NATION in English
13 Jan 89 p 2

[Excerpts] Another group of 76 Burmese students flew home yesterday from the repatriation centre in Tak as a Burmese correspondent for an international news agency dismissed a U.S. charge that some of the students who had returned earlier were arrested and killed.

The Burmese were flown aboard two Burmese aircraft to Rangoon, bringing to 260 the number who have returned since the repatriation programme began Dec 26, officials in Tak said.

The students were seen off by Tak Governor Sombun Phrommet and Thai Red Cross officials and welcomed aboard the planes by Burmese military officers. Another 44 students were to return the same way today, accompanied by Thai and foreign journalists invited by the Thai military to try to dispel charges that the students were being forced back to harsh treatment by Burmese authorities. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Sein Win, a Rangoon-based Burmese correspondent for the ASSOCIATED PRESS, yesterday also dismissed the Amnesty International's charges. He said he and five other Burmese reporters flew from Rangoon to Tak that day to accompany the 22 students back to Burma.

Sein Win, 67, who is on a business trip to Bangkok, said he saw no signs that suggested the group was forced to go back.

He also rejected as "rumour" an allegation by the U.S. State Department that the Saw Maung military government killed a number of pro-democracy students who returned home from exile.

The allegation, he said, was probably based on information sent by the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon which in turn "had gathered it from local staff who listened to rumours."

Sein Win, who is to return to Burma today, was arrested by Burmese authorities at the height of the people uprising in Burma in August.

The Burmese "would believe any anti-government rumours," he said. "We have been living with rumours for 26 years. There is no means of confirming anything and we always believe in rumours."

"The (Burmese) people have great resentment against the government so whatever rumours against the government, everybody believes it," he said.

He said he and other Burmese reporters have tried very hard to verify the rumours about the fate of the students. "There was no way of checking," he said.

Sein Win cited random interviews with 28 Burmese returnees from Tak as a confirmation of their safety. He said the 12 local reporters who did the interviews got the returnees' addresses from Burmese authorities.

He said there was one case in which a plainclothes policeman approached one of the returnees to request an interview.

The boy's mother rejected the request saying she would inform military officers, prompting the policeman to leave, he said.

But he said the returnees have expressed fears that they could be arrested.

Chawalit Returns From Laos, Refuses Comment
BK1301014589 Bangkok THE NATION in English
13 Jan 89 p 3

[Text] Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Chawalit Yongchaiyut made an unpublicized one-day visit to Laos yesterday.

Chawalit, who was accompanied only by a handful of senior military officials, declined to discuss the purpose of the trip with the press.

Before leaving for Vientiane yesterday morning, Chawalit told reporters there was nothing "urgent" about his trip. "I will talk about it when I return," he said.

But the army chief avoided meeting with a group of reporters who were waiting for him upon his return to the military airport.

Group Capt Wira Intharaphrom, an air force staff officer, quoted Deputy Supreme Commander Gen Phat Akkhanitbut as having ordered the security men at the airport to prevent reporters from interviewing Gen Chawalit about the trip.

He described the trip as "confidential".

Chawalit was met by Air Force Commander-in-Chief Woranat Aphichari upon his return to Bangkok.

Conference on Indochinese Refugees Opens

Abu Hassan on SRV's Commitment

BK1306130089 Kuala Lumpur BERNAMA in English
1130 GMT 13 Jun 89

[Text] Kuala Lumpur, June 13 (OANA-BERNAMA)—The early removal of the refugee burden placed on first asylum countries and Vietnam's commitment to tackle the refugee woe at source are among the basic issues that must be addressed by the international community, Foreign Minister Abu Hassan Omar said Tuesday [13 June].

Abu Hassan, who was unanimously elected president of the International Conference on Indochinese Refugees (ICIR) now taking place in Geneva, said although a decade had passed since the first such conference, "we are still faced with the continuing influx of Vietnamese boat people into countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia."

Addressing the ICIR, he said first asylum countries in the region had lately been experiencing an increase in the frequency of arrivals and numbers. The text of his speech was released here by the Foreign Ministry.

He said a comprehensive and workable solution to the problem should be found to remove the burden of first asylum countries and also to prevent any further misery suffered by the asylum seekers.

Abu Hassan also said the refugees had brought about a new set of problems that placed a strain on the political, economic, and social fabric of the countries concerned.

Stating that the refugee problem had been shouldered by countries in the Southeast Asian region for too long, Abu Hassan said one of the three basic issues required the early removal of the burden placed on first asylum countries.

The other two issues were the full commitment of Vietnam to take effective measures to prevent clandestine refugee departures, to expand orderly departures, and to accept repatriation of those determined to be non-refugees and the continuing commitment by third countries to readily and quickly resettle refugees.

He added: "It is also the expectation of all of us here that Vietnam, the country of origin, would also work closely with all countries and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to stem the outflow of people from its shores."

In 1979, it was agreed that the Vietnamese refugee problem would be tackled at source with an arrangement provided for all those wishing to leave Vietnam to do so in an orderly manner without having to resort to clandestine and illegal departures.

Abu Hassan said Vietnam's "renewed" commitment to work in accordance with the principles set out in this arrangement would certainly be viewed as a positive contribution.

Nguyen Co Thach, Japanese Official Meet

OW1306060889 Tokyo KYODO in English 0348 GMT
13 Jun 89

[Text] Geneva, June 12 KYODO—Japan's parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Naoki Tanaka on Monday told Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach that peace should be brought to Kampuchea through the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops under international supervision and the prevention of a resurgence of the "inhumane" policies of the Pol Pot (Khmer Rouge) faction.

Tanaka said he explained the basic stand of the Japanese Government on a political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict in a meeting with the Vietnamese minister here.

Co Thach said he understood the Japanese Government's position very well, according to Tanaka.

Tanaka and Co Thach are currently visiting Geneva in order to take part in an international conference on Indochinese refugees organized by the United Nations.

Earlier Tanaka had a talk with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, Jean-Pierre Hocke on Monday.

Tanaka informed Hocke that Japan was going to announce at the conference its intention to receive 1,000 Indochinese refugees over a three-year period and to contribute 15 million U.S. dollars for a refugee aid plan.

Japan To Accept 1,000 Refugees

OW1306143289 Tokyo KYODO in English 1243 GMT
13 Jun 89

[Text] Geneva, June 13 KYODO—Japan will accept 1,000 Indochinese refugees now living in Hong Kong and member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) over three years, a Japanese official said Tuesday.

Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Naoki Tanaka made the disclosure in an address of a U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Indochinese Refugees which opened a two-day session here.

Tanaka said Japan will accept the refugees at the request of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

He also said the Japanese Government will donate 11 million dollars for the relief of Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong.

Tanaka said Japan has so far accepted 6,070 Indochinese refugees for settlement in the country and has donated 650 million about 50 percent of such all donations [as received], to the UNHCR's plans to rescue such refugees since 1979.

Sitthi Urges Repatriation

BK1406010989 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English
14 Jun 89 pp 1, 3

[By Anurat Maniphan and Phonphimon Kanchanalak in Geneva]

[Excerpt] Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila yesterday urged the international community to accept the mandatory repatriation of non-refugees as part of a new plan of action to stem the flow of Indochinese refugees.

ACM [Air Chief Marshal] Sitthi made this point in a speech at the International Conference on Indochinese Refugees, which is to adopt a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for dealing with some 83,000 Vietnamese boat people and 75,000 Laotian asylum seekers encamped in Southeast Asia.

The conference is being held under the auspices of the United Nations with 46 countries participating.

The repatriation issue is a striking point. Mandatory repatriation is opposed by Vietnam, which so far has insisted on voluntary returns only, and the United States, which is under pressure from strong human rights currents.

"My delegation feels that the crucial issue at this point in time which will either make or break the CPA is the issue of repatriation of non-refugees," ACM Sitthi said.

"We hope those concerned will come to realise that this is the only realistic and humane alternative," he added.

The CPA encourages voluntary repatriation but allows for "alternatives" acceptable under international practice to be considered if, within a certain period of time, voluntary repatriation does not make sufficient progress.

ACM Sitthi stressed that provisions of the CPA were "inter-related" and could not be "selectively implemented."

He said Thailand saw the following elements in the CPA as also "essential to a comprehensive and durable solution":

—Effective measures to curb illegal departures and expansion of the orderly departure programme.

—Resettlement of present camp populations and those determined to be genuine refugees within a specific time frame.

—Safe-reception and status determination of all new arrivals.

ACM Sitthi urged speedy formation of the Steering Committee—scheduled to meet on June 15—in order to oversee implementation of the measures.

ACM Sitthi said a "near-crisis situation" greeted this second international conference on Indochinese refugees as large-scale outflows from some of these states continue.

He noted that the outflow over the years had "taken on an increasingly migratory character."

The 1979 conference, while saving genuine refugees fleeing persecution, "also served to induce mandatory outflows and to compound the humanitarian problems in Southeast Asia," he said.

Thailand sought re-affirmation of the principle of "international burden-sharing."

In a veiled reference to Vietnam, he said "in particular, we seek to have the countries concerned openly assume responsibility for their own citizens." [passage omitted]

Evans Supports Tougher Screening

BK1406044789 Melbourne Overseas Service in English
0300 GMT 14 Jun

[Text] Australia has supported international plans for tighter screening of Vietnamese refugees to end the flood of boat people arriving in Southeast Asian countries. Australia's foreign affairs and trade minister, Senator Gareth Evans, told the international conference on Indochinese refugees in Geneva that boat people who were not genuine refugees should be sent home. But he stressed that those repatriated had to be returned on conditions of safety and dignity free from recrimination and retaliatory action.

Senator Evans was outlining Australia's stand at the 2-day meeting which is being sponsored by the United Nations to endorse a new plan for handling the refugees. The plan includes tough screening procedures by Southeast Asian countries to see if the boat people fled political persecution or just left home to earn a better living.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS says that if the plan is adopted, Australia will take in up to 11,000 Indochinese refugees over 3 years. Senator Evans told the meeting that Australia had already accepted 120,000 refugees since the Vietnam war ended in 1975.

Vietnam

FBIS-EAS-89-146
1 August 1989

Joint Statement With U.S. on Emigration *BK0108150889 Hanoi VNA in English 1446 GMT* *1 Aug 89*

[Text] Hanoi VNA August 1—The following joint statement was issued here on July 29 at the end of a meeting between representatives of Vietnam and the United States:

Representatives of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States at a meeting in Hanoi July 27-29, 1989, announced that they hope to commence by October 1989 a program for the resettlement in the United States of released reeducation center detainees and their close family members who wish to emigrate to the United States. The Vietnamese delegation was led by Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Vu Khoan. The U.S. delegation was led by Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert L. Funseth, acting director of the Bureau for Refugee Programs.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States of America, in order to resolve one of the issues of mutual concern to the two countries and consistent with their humanitarian policies and with the commitments undertaken in the declaration and the comprehensive plan of action adopted by the United Nations International Conference on Indochinese Refugees, will—in addition to existing programs—allow those released reeducation center detainees who were closely associated with the United States or its allies and who wish to do so to emigrate, together with their close relatives, to the United States.

The United States delegation declared that released reeducation center detainees coming to the United States would be subject to all U.S. laws, including those affecting the activities of U.S. residents towards other countries. The U.S. delegation reaffirmed that the United States has not encouraged nor does it have any intention of encouraging or using released detainees to engage in any illegal activities hostile or harmful to Vietnam—and is opposed to any such activities—and that the United States will accept these persons solely for humanitarian reasons and not for any hostile actions against Vietnam. The Vietnamese delegation also reaffirmed that Vietnam has not and will not encourage or use released detainees to engage in illegal actions hostile or harmful to the United States.

The two sides drew up a draft agreement which included a technical annex, and agreed to establish a joint working group to coordinate implementation of the program. The two sides agreed that the program would be in addition to the existing Amerasian and orderly departure programs.

The two sides expressed great satisfaction with the results achieved and expressed hope that the first group of 3,000 persons for resettlement in the United States under this agreement will depart Vietnam before the end of the year after processing is completed.