

JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE SEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNCIL

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1. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Korea the Seventh Ministerial Meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council, comprising Australia, the Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam was convened in Seoul, Korea, from 14 to 16 June 1972. The Ministers warmly welcomed the Observers from the Khmer Republic and the Kingdom of Laos as well as the representative from the Republic of Indonesia as an official guest of the host Government who attended all sessions of the Meeting.

2. His Excellency Park Chung Hee, President of the Republic of Korea, welcomed the visiting delegates and the other participants in the Meeting.

He stated that more than ever before the nations of the Asian and Pacific region were required to reconcile through dialogue and discussion differences that might arise among them, and to sublimate confrontation into harmonious coordination.

President Park stated that ASPAC, which is not a political or military arrangement directed against any other nation or group of nations but is working for peace and progress in the region, would need to explore new avenues of practical cooperation in the economic, technical, social and cultural fields so that common benefits would multiply for the countries in the region. He called upon other nations in the region to join ASPAC's effort to bring peace and prosperity throughout the region.

3. The Ministers had a frank exchange of views on question affecting the region. Noting particularly the various steps taken recently by the United States in the interest of peace including President Nixon's visits to Peking and Moscow, they recognized that any easing of tension that reduced the danger of conflict would benefit the countries of Asia and the Pacific.

4. That Ministers agreed that ASPAC had a particularly important part to play in the new situation. It provided a forum in which countries from various parts of Asia and the Pacific could come together to discuss the problems of the region as a whole. It also afforded opportunities for them to collaborate on economic, social and cultural projects that were of benefit to all. Among other regional organizations ASPAC had helped encourage the habit of consultation that is essential for effective international cooperation, and made a substantial contribution to the stability and progress of the region.

5. The Ministers expressed grave concern over recent developments in the situation in Indochina in general and in Vietnam in particular. They hoped that the conflict would be settled at the earliest possible date, and reaffirmed their sympathy towards the effort of the Republic of Vietnam to maintain its independence and territorial integrity. The Ministers agreed that the restoration of peace would give new scope for harmonious cooperation and development in the ASPAC region and

called on the conflicting parties to engage in more meaningful negotiations in order to settle the conflict.

6. The Ministers welcomed the efforts and initiatives of the Republic of Korea to reduce tension in the Korean Peninsula, including the initiative in the Red Cross talks for mutual visits and reunion of separated families. They hoped that these efforts would succeed and eventually lead to a peaceful reunification of Korea. They noted that the people of the Republic of Korea are taking an active part in the New Village Movement which is carried out throughout Korea in the spirit of industry, self-help and cooperation. They paid a tribute to the continued progress and development achieved in the Republic of Korea under the inspiring leadership of the President of the Republic of Korea.

7. The Ministers welcomed the endeavours among the ASEAN member countries to maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia and took careful note of the efforts of those countries to secure the recognition of, and respect for South East Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers. The Ministers agreed that the Kuala Lumpur Declaration to this effect was a movement towards the creation of a new structure of peace for the region.

8. Emphasizing the necessity for closer relations between ASPAC and other like-minded organizations in the region, the Minister expressed the hope that ASPAC and ASEAN might begin looking into all possible avenues of cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and other functional fields including close cooperation and coordination among the various projects of the two regional organizations.

9. Recognizing that the Angkor Wat Temples constitute an invaluable cultural treasure for humanity, the Ministers sympathetically endorsed the proposal of the Khmer Government to demilitarize and neutralize the Angkor Wat Temple Zone under international control over a view to preserving the area from war damage.

10. The Ministers were pleased to note that ASPAC had made significant contributions toward promoting mutual understanding among member countries and peoples. Cognizant of the need for more active participation of a larger number of countries in regional cooperation, they reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen ASPAC with the following principles and objectives:

a. ASPAC is an organization for regional cooperation pursuing peace and progress in the Asian and Pacific region.

b. ASPAC is not a political or military arrangement directed against other nations.

c. ASPAC will make endeavours to promote cooperation in the economic, technical, social, cultural and other fields.

d. ASPAC is not an exclusive organization; it is open to nonmember countries within the region, ready to make a constructive contribution to its objectives and purposes.

11. Recognizing that economic development is an important factor in

achieving peace in the region, the Ministers agreed that the Standing Committee would study, in collaboration with the Economic Cooperation Centre possibilities of