

**TRANSCRIPT OF DOOR-STOP INTERVIEW BY
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS GEORGE YEO ON
THE TEMPLE OF PREAH VIHEAR AFTER THE ASEAN
MINISTERIAL MEETING INFORMAL WORKING DINNER,
20 JULY 2008**



Minister: Ladies and Gentlemen of the media, thank you for coming this evening. We would like to issue a Chairman's Statement on the recent issue of the Temple of Preah Vihear between Thailand and Cambodia.

Statement by ASEAN Chair, 20 July 2008.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers were briefed by both Cambodia and Thailand on the situation in the area around the Temple of Preah Vihear and noted this with concern. We urged both sides to exercise utmost restraint and resolve this issue amicably, in the spirit of ASEAN solidarity and good neighbourliness. We hope the General Border Commission (GBC) between Thailand and Cambodia which will be meeting tomorrow, and other bilateral talks, will find a way to defuse the situation. Both sides affirmed that they would abide by their ASEAN and international obligations and exert their utmost efforts to find a peaceful solution to the issue.

Recognising the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers also decided to offer its facilities to be placed at the disposal of Cambodia and Thailand, in the event that they felt the need for further support to find an early resolution to the issue.

End of statement.

I'll be happy to take two or three questions on behalf of the ASEAN Ministers now. Can you please tell us who you are and where you are from?

Q: I'm Suryanarayana from The Hindu newspaper of India, based in Singapore. There were some reports that Cambodia has already moved the United Nations on this issue. Is that true? Was that discussed?

Minister: Cambodia has informed the UN Security Council of its position because this matter has hit the international headlines. It's for information. Second question please.

Q: Remy from Straits Times, Singapore. What were the main issues discussed at the dinner table? Any particular issues?

Minister: We discussed two main issues. One was on Myanmar, which I will give a press conference after this, but just by myself, and the other is on Preah Vihear, which is an issue which is an issue which has suddenly cropped up but is of great concern to us as Foreign Ministers. May I have a last question, please?

Q: I am Jim Gomez from the Associated Press. Have there been any assurances from both sides involved in this dispute that this will not escalate into an armed conflict or anything near that state?

Minister: The statement made it very clear that both sides will exert their utmost efforts to find a peaceful resolution to this issue and they will abide by their ASEAN and their international obligations.

Q: With the arms elements in those areas, was there any proposal discussed to draw back the armed elements?

Minister: I'm sure this will be discussed tomorrow when they have the meeting of the General Border Commission.

Thank you very much.

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