

*Adjournment Debate***Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona)**

I welcome the opportunity to reply to the Secretary of State today on this government's change of policy with respect to Indochina.

We in the New Democratic Party are pleased at the government's decision today to extend development assistance funding, through CIDA, to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. This is a positive move, one which will be welcomed by the non-governmental organization (NGO) community which has long been calling for an extension of aid to the region.

We are also heartened today by the Canadian government's acceptance of the Hun Sen government as legitimate and significant participants in the Cambodian political process. The recognition of the dramatically improved human rights situation in Cambodia since Hun Sen took power is also a new and positive step in Canadian policy towards Cambodia.

I feel it necessary, however, to comment on some of the revisionism that the Secretary of State for External Affairs appeared to be indulging in today. In particular, Mr. Clark stated the following, and I quote,

"Each position we, as a government, have taken on the Question of Cambodia has been grounded in a determination never to allow the Khmer Rouge back into power".

This is a difficult assertion to accept given the fact that this government has recognized the Khmer Rouge-Led coalition as the legitimate representatives of Cambodia at the United Nations. This government's diplomatic support of the reprehensible Khmer Rouge has been, in a word, immoral. It's refusal to deal with the Hun Sen government during this period has been very regrettable.

So, much as we appreciate the government's moves today, I also feel compelled to ask the question, why did it take so long? Why did it take so long to accept the Hun Sen régime—it had been receiving reports for some time about the popularity of the régime and its positive record in government. Why did the Canadian government wait so long to give humanitarian aid to Cambodia and Vietnam—these countries have long been facing a desperate economic situation and have been in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

On the point of assistance, given the extensive economic crisis in the region, we hope the aid is substantial and that it moves from humanitarian aid to also include long-term development assistance programs.

With respect to Vietnam, it is now time to work to reintegrate Vietnam back into the international community. The Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia last year proceeded as promised, and this has certainly earned it some international good will.

The New Democratic Party is pleased by the recent diplomatic progress internationally regarding Indochina. The Australian proposal is a promising one, China's acceptance of a process which involves the UN is also much welcomed. Perhaps we can replicate the Namibian process—one which has proven to be a major success in terms of UN involvement in bringing about peace and democracy.

I urge the Canadian government to support its rhetoric here today, and to show its commitment to peace by playing an active and positive role in the peace process, to ensure that the people of Cambodia, so deserving of peace, have the opportunity to experience it in the near future.