

*Adjournment Debate*

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I want to provide a progress report to the House on international efforts to end the violence that has gripped Cambodia for fifteen years. The Cambodian people have suffered greatly from invasion, unparalleled abuses of human rights, and civil war. We wish to ensure that Canada does its part in helping to break the cycle of suffering in Cambodia.

There are measures Canada can take to address the suffering of Cambodia, and which will contribute to the building of a lasting peace.

The recent history of Cambodia is a saga of unending war, turmoil and death. During the Vietnam war, approximately 600,000 Cambodians were killed.

At war's end, in April 1975, the Khmer Rouge forces overthrew the Cambodian government of Lon Pol. The criminal acts perpetrated afterwards by the Pol Pot régime between 1976 and 1979 were condemned by the international community and by Canadians of all walks of life.

The expulsion of the Khmer Rouge by the Vietnamese in 1979 resulted in a long civil war opposing three Cambodian parties to a government put into office by the Vietnamese army. Eleven years later, despite diplomatic efforts, the war is still raging on and more Cambodians are dying. The limited resources of Indochina are tragically wasted on the battlefield.

In September 1989, Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia. Since then, the civil war has intensified. The front lines have changed somewhat, but, in general, have remained the same as those drawn up eleven years ago. In many instances, military solutions have been sought instead of political solutions.

The victims remain the same: the people of Cambodia, and indeed all of the people of Indochina who have borne too long the burden of protracted military struggle.

From the beginning of the war, Canada has helped fund the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to care for the 300,000 Cambodians seeking refuge on the Thai-Cambodian border. Our commitment continues to these people, and this fiscal year it will amount to \$3 million in food and other aid.

We also recognize the need to assist the 8 million Cambodians still living in their country whose lives have been disrupted by the armed struggle. Their needs are immediate and real. A response to their suffering must not be held forever hostage to progress towards a political settlement.

With that in mind, the Government is now in the process of re-establishing the eligibility of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, the three countries of Indochina, for official Canadian development assistance.

The exact nature of this aid is now under study by CIDA. As part of that process, an officer from our Embassy in Bangkok is currently in Cambodia with representatives of Canadian non-governmental organizations to examine how best to resume an aid relationship there.

In the short term, these programs will be small scale and focussed on humanitarian needs. Over the longer term their expansion will be predicated on progress towards peace and the political realities in the areas affected. We will not have Canadian aid channelled into the military efforts of any group. Nor will we permit it to be used by groups or governments whose records demonstrate a fundamental disrespect for basic human rights. We will, for example, insist that no Canadian aid be distributed in areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge. The central problem in the Cambodian conflict remains how to deal with the Khmer Rouge in an eventual settlement process. The reign of terror of the Pol Pot régime was one of the most brutal chapters in human history. 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.

We have called upon the Chinese, Soviet and other military suppliers to the Cambodian parties to cease their support. There is no benefit to Cambodia to be found in the further import of weapons. The people of Indochina have seen enough implements of war to last for all of history.