



Australian cabinet documents show position on Khmer Rouge January 3, 2011

Newly released cabinet documents show Australia's foreign minister in 1980, Andrew Peacock, recommended continued recognition of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia.

The documents have just been released by the National Archives.

The newly released papers include a cabinet submission from Mr Peacock on the highly sensitive issue of what to do about recognising a government in Cambodia, then Kampuchea.

The Pol Pot regime had been pushed aside by Vietnam's invasion in 1978 and 79. But Mr Peacock's submission argues the Vietnamese backed regime in Phnom Penh should not be recognised because ASEAN states and China didn't support it.

China backed and armed Pol Pot. And the Australian public was against recognising a regime that had killed a quarter of the population.

Mr Peacock recommended that view should not be ignored in policy decisions. But he recommended continued recognition of the Khmer Rouge.