

PC Party Leader Stevens joins Joe Clark on refugees

Progressive Canadian Party Leader (and former local MP?) Sinclair Stevens has stated he personally and the party share the concern raised by former prime minister Joe Clark on the Syrian refugee crisis.

“As a member of the Clark Cabinet at the time of the Vietnamese ‘boat people’ crisis in 1979, I was part of a government that took human rights and the plight of refugees very seriously,” Stevens said. “We acted. Numbers to be accepted were raised to 50, 000. “As in the Tehran crisis, we did not posture for political or election purposes, even though we quickly found ourselves in a second election campaign later that year,” he added. “We acted decisively. We saved lives. That is what Canadians expect. That is what Canadians demand now.”

“Liberal governments did so too, with no more or less success,” Stevens observed. “The Progressive Conservative party was a very different party, a very different government, than the party and government led by Mr. Harper today.”

Clark, who was Canada's prime minister in 1979 and early 1980, as well as foreign minister in the Mulroney government, which took leadership in North America and in the Commonwealth opposing apartheid and working diplomatically to free Nelson Mandela, recently cited in interviews the important work his Progressive Conservative government and later governments did at that time. The Clark interviews noted the difficulties of security and impossible scale of the problems faced by his and later governments posed by refugee emergencies, urging the same determination by the Canadian government today and by the new government of Canada after the Oct. 19 election.

“Canadians expect our government to take a leadership role in international emergencies and to be a presence on the world stage,” Stevens declared. “We’ve lost that part of reputation in recent years because of the agenda-driven Harper government. We must do better.”