

Vietnam and the PRK immediately rejected the Japanese offer which they described as being "coercive" and closely tied to Japan's economic strategy. A few months later, however, on 12 September 1984, in an interview with the correspondent for the *Kyodo News Service*, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach, mentioned that henceforth Vietnam would be willing to accept an international peacekeeping force and that it would view Japan favourably as a mediator. The following month, talks in Hanoi between Thach and Abe rapidly put an end to the hopes which had arisen from this Japanese attempt at mediation. The Vietnamese government fell back on its previous intransigent position by refusing to allow the Khmer factions a part in any international conference and insisting that demilitarized zones be established on both sides of the border between Thailand and Kampuchea. The Vietnamese Minister also proposed that an international conference be held which would be attended by the six members of ASEAN, the three states in Indochina, the United States, China, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and India. Nguyen Co Thach made it clear, to those who questioned him on this point, that if Japan wished to take part in an international conference on Kampuchea it would have to distance itself from the positions taken by ASEAN and China.⁸³

The Japanese were bitterly disappointed since they felt that Hanoi had made use of Tokyo's intervention to gain time and take the opportunity to reiterate the points on which it was not willing to yield. In other words, Vietnam had shown that the level of importance it attached to the security of Kampuchea could not change even by the attractive possibility of obtaining from Japan the economic and financial aid it so desperately needed.

The most controversial intervention at this time was that of Australia. When the Labour Party came to power in March 1983, the Hawke government wished to show that Australia was a natural part of Southeast Asia; this led it to take a more active part in negotiations concerning the conflict in Kampuchea.⁸⁴ The Vietnamese government

⁸³ *Ibid.* page 16 and 18.

⁸⁴ See E.M. Andrews, "Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1985," *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Summer 1985, page 389.