

opinion the Americans were not now "indispensable in the pursuit of a settlement."¹³⁴ It certainly remains true, however, despite official pride and determination, that US economic cooperation would be greatly appreciated in the current effort to restore Vietnam.

This brief account of how Vietnam views the United States is by no means irrelevant here since it relates to the fact that many Vietnamese to whom I spoke thought any discussion of Canada must be prefaced by a reference to US policy. As far as Vietnam is concerned, Canada is virtually assimilated with the United States; certainly the distinction between the two countries becomes self-evident when one refers to their respective roles in the recent history of Indochina but there is a strong tendency to associate the policies followed by Ottawa with those of Washington since 1978-1979. In general, Canada's policy is either misunderstood or ignored; mention of it in several interviews was greeted with skepticism, perplexity or even derision and a failure to understand why Canada, which has no direct interest in the conflict, should be as intransigent in its relations with Vietnam as is the United States. Those to whom I spoke, regularly referred to the policies pursued by Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands and France, and pointed out that it was possible to maintain relations with a country without necessarily agreeing with it politically.

Despite the fact that Ottawa maintains diplomatic relations with Hanoi, the contacts between the two countries amount to very little. The Vietnamese Ambassador in London is accredited to Ottawa and the Canadian Ambassador in Bangkok is accredited to Hanoi. Occasional meetings give symbolic legitimacy to this diplomatic recognition. As was shown in the first section of this study, since 1979 Canada has been a loyal supporter of the large coalition which has excluded Vietnam from the international community ever since Vietnamese troops invaded Kampuchea. To use the words of Kim Nossal: "Canada's persistent policy of punishing Vietnam — a policy which has been in effect for eight years — is easier to understand if one regards the sanctions against

¹³⁴ Interview with Nguyen Co Thach, "L'Indochine neutralisée," in *Politique internationale*, no. 31, Spring 1986, page 237.