

commented with great shrewdness on the thaw which was taking place in Sino-Soviet relations. He said that one must wait and see how this was translated into action and added:

We have had experience with the Chinese. When you go to the circus you shouldn't pay too much attention to the hand the magician waves about. What you should watch is the one he doesn't move. It is the same with China. One should not pay too much attention to what is said but rather to the things which are not said. We are well aware that the thaw in Sino-Soviet relations will create a good atmosphere for international relations and that includes Southeast Asia.⁹⁰

On the question of a possible settlement, the Minister pointed out that throughout the whole of its history the fate of Indochina has been decided on the battlefield and not by the great powers. "The second factor," he said, "is that we are independent."⁹¹

This remark underlines two essential elements in Vietnamese policy to which they continue to be attached; it may also show that they retain certain illusions and have failed to adapt to changing circumstances. Certainly in April 1985 Vietnam emerged as the victor and was full of self-confidence after its major offensive against the resistance camps in Kampuchea. This enabled it to announce that its forces would unilaterally withdraw from Kampuchea in 1990. It also felt confident enough to dictate the conditions for a settlement, using the Kampuchean Foreign Minister, Hun Sen, as an intermediary to pass this on to his Australian counterpart, William Hayden, when he met the latter in Ho Chi Minh City, on 8 March 1985.

Among the proposed conditions were the following:

- the complete withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces once Pol Pot had been eliminated;
- the holding of "free elections" in accordance with the

⁹⁰ *Le Monde*, 6 April 1985, page 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*