

difficult to refuse a role that was the logical outcome of its frequently expressed desire that the US withdraw from Vietnam. Another factor was that, as in 1954, China seemed to be in favour of Canadian participation. This was at the time of a rapprochement between Canada and China, and trade negotiations were already underway between Ottawa and Beijing.

The Canadian government was very canny, however; it agreed to send a contingent of 290 soldiers and civilians to Vietnam, but only for an initial period of sixty days. In February, Ottawa recognized the Republic of Vietnam, thus giving legal recognition to the two Vietnams and thereby making the task of the Canadian delegation to the Supervisory Commission correspondingly easier.<sup>4</sup>

The following month, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp, visited Indochina and met government officials in Saigon, Vientiane and Hanoi. On his return, Sharp told the Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence that despite all the efforts which the Canadian delegation had made, the Commission was not accomplishing the tasks which had been assigned to it by the terms of the ceasefire. There had been thousands of incidents including some large-scale military engagements. Nonetheless, Canada agreed to serve for another sixty days so as to avoid endangering the ceasefire by withdrawing from the Commission. At the end of this second period, however, Sharp announced on 29 May 1973 that Canada would withdraw from the Commission.

The events of 1975 had little effect on Canada's attitude to Indochina. When the Khmer Rouge captured the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh on 17 April and overthrew the Lon Nol regime, Canada recognized this new government of Kampuchea, though it did not establish diplomatic relations with it.<sup>5</sup> The staff of the Canadian Embassy in Vietnam was evacuated from Saigon, and on 25 June 1975 it was

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<sup>4</sup> See Gérard Hervouet, *Le Canada face à l'Asie de l'Est*, Montréal: Nouvelle optique, 1981, page 110.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, page 112.