

region in Canada. The continuing crisis in Southeast Asia cast a long shadow over the discussions. Although Trudeau managed to secure a pledge from his Australian host "to hold high level consultations," it seemed clear that Australian officials and politicians were hardly enthusiastic about Canada and its new prime minister. When reviewing the visit with Arthur Menzies, Canada's long-serving and trusted high commissioner in Canberra, Australian politicians complained loudly that Trudeau had made no effort to understand Australia's perspective on Indochina. Menzies' conclusion was disturbing: "Until circumstances arise in which some effective Canadian initiative can be taken in helping to end the hostilities in Indochina, I think that we will find ourselves still rather far apart from the Australians."<sup>44</sup> Indeed, when Trudeau declared that the plug could be pulled on the Indian Ocean for all he cared, Australian officials made it clear that they "now wished that [Trudeau] had never concerned himself with them."<sup>45</sup>

Many of the differences separating the two countries disappeared suddenly in December 1972 when Gough Whitlam was elected prime minister of Australia's first Labour government since the 1940s. Critical of Australian foreign policy, with its lingering loyalty to Britain and its faith in an American globalism that seemed woefully mismanaged, Whitlam was determined to seek a new direction for Australia. For at least part of his inspiration, he looked to Canada, which he had visited regularly during the 1960s as leader of the opposition. He especially admired Trudeau's determination to distance Canada from the United States and the clear sense of nationhood that guided Trudeau's efforts to modernize the Canadian constitution. The two politicians quickly developed an easy and natural rapport.

With Whitlam's encouragement, a stream of Australian officials travelled to Ottawa to learn about Canadian policy initiatives. These included the recognition of China, the new cabinet committee system, and policy on royal prerogatives and honours. Canadian officials were delighted to see this evidence of Australia's "exceptional" interest in Canada.<sup>46</sup> Equally important, they were intrigued by Whitlam's effort to shape a more independent foreign policy, a project that seemed likely to increase Australia's role in the Pacific and to make it a more dynamic partner for Canada. The relationship was clearly "in the process of taking on new perspectives."<sup>47</sup>

Despite Labour's defeat in the 1975 general election, there was no need to qualify this assessment. Australia's conservative prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, seemed to adopt a harder line on cold war issues than his predecessor but shared Whitlam's determination to shape an independent foreign policy for Australia. Throughout the Pacific, Fraser's government pursued a strong set of regional and bilateral links with Japan, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Korea and Communist China. The new prime minister also promoted a renewed Australian interest in the