

former ally was no longer fighting beside them in defence of freedom. Sadly, recorded the Canadian high commissioner in 1968, the war in Vietnam had come to "impose an emotional barrier between us."⁴⁰

Pacific Partners: 1968-1995

With the election of Pierre Trudeau as prime minister in the spring of 1968, there were some grounds to hope that the obstacles to harmonious bilateral relations with Australia might soon be removed. The new prime minister had long been critical of Canadian foreign policy and the disproportionate amount of attention it seemed to lavish on the United States and Western Europe. Canada would be better served by a "pragmatic and realistic" foreign policy which extended the nation's diplomacy beyond its traditional range. Though Trudeau made it clear that he intended to recognize the People's Republic of China, he insisted that this was only part of a more broadly based review of Canada's approach to the Pacific region:

We shall be looking at our policy in relation to China in the context of a new interest in Pacific affairs generally. Because of past preoccupations with Atlantic and European affairs, we have tended to overlook the reality that Canada is a Pacific country too.⁴¹

Australia, added the secretary of state for external affairs, Mitchell Sharp, "will play a very important role in all this."⁴² The Australian foreign minister, Paul Hasluck, found Trudeau's interest in Asia encouraging; he and his officials were cautiously optimistic that the new government, unlike the old, might embrace the Australian perspective on the crises in Asia before proceeding to recognize China.

Despite objections from several Canadian allies, including Australia, Trudeau moved ahead with plans to recognize China. The war in Vietnam also continued to divide Ottawa and Canberra. Canadian efforts to strengthen its relationship with Australia as part of its plan to redefine itself as a Pacific nation ran aground on these differences. When Jean-Luc Pepin, the minister of industry, trade and commerce, sought Australian agreement for a regular program of ministerial visits in order to revitalize the relationship, he met with little interest. In dismissing Pepin's demarche, the Australian minister for foreign affairs was blunt: "[Canada] could not expect to make much headway in [its] relations with Pacific Rim countries if [it] persisted in seeking relations with Communist China."⁴³

Trudeau himself fared little better when he visited Australia in June 1970 as part of an exercise to highlight the growing importance of the Pacific