

Asia, 1945-1954: Three Wars in One

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ABSTRACT

The conflicts waged in Asia between 1945 and 1954 are examined here as part of the anti-colonial struggle and national independence, giving rise to free and original Asian practices. The background is the emergence and consolidation of the bipolar powers of the superpowers involved in the cold war. The decolonization of the region was part of the Western Allies' ideals. However, the Cold Conflict's political conveniences lead the Truman Administration to tolerate and support the colonial presence. American policy on Asia-Pacific feared that independence would jeopardize regional stability. This *desideratum* frustrated the aspirations of the local populations and elites and the communists. After 1949 starting its huge task of national reconstruction, the People's Republic of China recovered imperial diplomatic practices. In addition to expanding his agricultural and industrial production bases, he supported the communist side in the war between the two Koreas and Vietminh, in Indochina. Exercising dominance over its allies the Maoist China, it consolidated its regional projection, suggesting to several important actors on the western side that the three conflicts were part of a single war against communism that they believed to be expanding.

Keywords: Colonization, Decolonization, World War II, China, Cold War, Superpowers.

INTRODUCTION: PRESENTING THE PROBLEM

Japan's surrender, signed on August 15, 1945, ended World War II in the Asia-Pacific region, plunging the region into revolutionary conflicts and national reunification. [1] They were the Chinese civil war, that of Vietminh in Indochina against France and the conflict between the two Korea. The world context was that of bipolar politics dividing the world between superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Its ideological blocs fought political and economic clashes during the Cold War. [2] The notion of bipolarity is mitigated because the Asian protagonists developed autonomous actions, building new hierarchies, translating the multifaceted character of the ideological conflict and national reconstruction that they undertook. Robust sinologists like Fairbank and his mentor, T. S. Tsiang, argued by demonstrating the malleability of Chinese culture breaking with the past, maintained as "tradition." [3]

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The regeneration of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the PRC) after 1949, regained the position of regional hegemony that led it to intervene in the wars fought in the ancient

flaps of the Chinese Empire, the Indochina and Korea peninsulas. In this way, the PRC was more interested in protecting itself from attack through the regions that surrounded the old Middle Kingdom, than disseminating its peculiar form of communism and ensuring the stability of its borders.[4]

According to the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551a. C.- 479 a. C.), war is a necessary evil, which, in our article, we employ for the notion of Plato's drug, according to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. A drug can be a medicine if applied in the correct dose and poison if it is in the wrong dose. We consider that the Second World War as a drug was so devastating that it taught all the protagonists lessons so harsh that they withdrew from the desire to apply it. As such, both the USSR and China convinced their communist partners in Korea and Indochina to avoid military actions that would lead to a new world war, winning them signing peace or armistice agreements.[5]

THE CENTRAL QUESTION OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter's central question was pick from the works written by the French General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny (1889-1952), commander of the French Expeditionary Corps of the Far East, hereafter named as CEFEO. For this chief, the war that his France was waging in Indochina was not a mere colonial fight, but it was part of a unique and vast conflict against communism. Other central protagonists, as General President Eisenhower, adopted this perception in the context of the Cold War. De Lattre considered it essential to win Indochina, with a body of French shock troops, significant firepower, and high mobility. However, the key to victory for him, regardless, lay in what will be the frustrated dream of American intervention: the support of a democratic government in South Vietnam and a Vietnamese national army.

France's defeat in Indochina was reflected in the Asia-Pacific context, leading the American intervention. The ambiguous perception that the United States had of the French conflict in Indochina reinforced the naive belief that only America could win in Southeast Asia. This policy fueled the *Hybris* that led the United States to wage an unstoppable war. On the other hand, France's defeat accelerated his colonial Empire's liquidation, including a bloody war of Algeria's independence.

As a fundamental primary printed source, we have the books of General de Lattre de Tassigny in two essays writing by him. The first one, called *Ne pas Subir* (Do not suffer) and the second, *Écrits* (Writings). In both essays, he describes his military and political mission in Indochina, commanding the CEFEO, developed under his short command. In his analysis of France's colonial position. He expresses his diffuse sympathy for Indochinese independence, all but a capitalist one, and in a French context.

He strongly stresses the idea that his fight and the fight in Korea in a single war. His command in Indochina developed parallel contact with the Korean American front where the United States and U.N. troops were led by General McArthur, who replaced on December 26, 1950, by General Matthew Ridgway. France has engaged in Korea an efficient reinforced battalion, the *Bataillon du Corée*, battle-hardened elite troops, as Bernard Fall points out. As a combat regiment, named GM 100, it was annihilated by Vietminh, in May 1954, in the vicinity of AnKhé. Its rubbles haunted American soldiers decades later.

THE WAR IN ASIA: AN OVERVIEW OF METHODS OF STRUGGLE

The Asian wars fought in the Cold War's global context included long-term processes originating in the History of these countries. In China's case, the communists completed national unification and regeneration based on the ancient tradition of the Middle Kingdom. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), following his notion of perpetual peace, considered a nation more than a territory or heritage. It is a society commanded by the nation's central ideas, and a tree endowed with a renewed trunk of power.

[6] After 1949, under Chinese Communist leadership, the Kantian notion suggested that the roots of the Chinese national tree plunged into the past dominated by the traditional Sinocentric system. It was disseminated widely by the vast peripheral region to China in the form of cultural clusters. They penetrated and shaped the culture and culture of these countries. Such clusters departing from the Han Chinese center moved to a "barbaric" outer zone. All of them accepted China as a sovereign power and cultural matrix [7] The values of the Sinocentric clusters constituted a mirror in which the regional elites sought what Arne Odd Westad called points of orientation.[8]

After 1949 (if we use the Kantian tree concept), the Chinese nation acquired a political branch of power represented by the central government based on the Chinese Communist Party. During the struggle for national regeneration waged by the communists against the Guomindang and the Japanese militarists, they received the respect of the rural masses. For whom, the communists endowed with the "mandate of Heaven." The PRC, winning the Civil War, engaged in the process of national reconstruction. However, she involved in the Korean and Indochinese conflicts, exercising as a regional policy the defense of her threatened borders at sensitive points. In this case, it seems to us that it employed war as a drug of limited employment. [9] It was not an easy decision for China during national reconstruction. With its economy still in shambles and its national unification far from complete, it faces the most significant military power on the planet.[10]

However, the PRC, in addition to maintaining an army fighting on the Korean peninsula and materially supporting its North Vietnamese ally on the Indochina peninsula, has shown restraint in convincing these Sinocentric protégés, to accept a *fait accompli* that could be bitter for its partners, but it was favorable for China. In the Indochina War, after Dien Bien Phu and the 1954 Geneva Accords, the PRC insisted that the Indochinese leadership accept to see their country divided, leaving their desire to unify the peninsula further ahead, leaving the Vietminh leadership frustrated and resentful.

As in Korea, the Geneva agreements divided Viet Nam into two countries, with South Vietnam under American tutelage and the North with a communist government. In Indochina, the United States, replacing France, began its intervention by supporting the Diem government in the South. Its progressive involvement led to a protracted war that ended with its withdrawal from Viet Nam in 1973. Then the Viet Cong forces and North Vietnam defeated the Saigon regime, unifying the peninsula in 1975.

This event sparked a desire by the North Korean leadership to invade South Korea to reunify the peninsula under Communist tutelage. The PRC, however, exercised its traditional regional power, and imbued with the notion that war is a drug, capable of healing or poisoning, this time, it refused

to prevent a military initiative that it had supported, initially reluctantly, in 1950.[11] A new war in these conditions would poison and destabilize the entire region and the whole world.

DECOLONIZATION IN ASIA: BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST COMINTERN AND WILSONIAN IDEALISM

The restlessness that pervaded Asia in the 1920s and 1930s resulted from the arrival of Western ideas of national self-determination and social justice and international communism. [12] The new ideas were stimulated by the Comintern, interested in accelerating the world proletarian revolution, resulting, in some European colonies, in the outbreak of ephemeral and brutally repressed insurrections. [13] Meanwhile, liberal sectors in the United States of America were striving to practice an ambiguous anti-imperialist policy. [14]

President Wilson's idea of making the world safe for democracy, while President F.D. Roosevelt, assumed the contours of American anti-colonialist sentiment, emphasizing America's predestined vision to lead immature peoples towards self-government. [15]. Meanwhile, Asians transformed imported ideas, changing them, by intermingling foreign dogmas with local solutions, achieving their national goals originally and autonomously.

Asia-Pacific: between Japanese Expansion and Defeat and the Rise of Superpowers

In the 1930s, the Roosevelt administration, concerned with the Japanese expansion towards the Philippines and Australia, contempORIZED with the growing Japanese aggressiveness in China. It supported the Guomindang, of the nationalist (and corrupt) leader, Chiang Kai-Shek, supplying it with financial and military resources. [16] By the year of 1941, the European war had become global, and the United States' number one priority was to defeat Nazi Germany. After Pearl Harbor, however, the Roosevelt administration accelerated its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, mobilizing vast financial and warlike resources against the Empire of Japan. [17] At the end of the war, the secret protocol of the Yalta treaty, as the State Secretary. Mr. Stettinius (1900-1949) led to the USSR's emergence in the Pacific basin fighting against Japan, bringing new concerns to American planners.[18]

After 1945, the USA's world power, the first country since Rome, to assume a global scale consolidated. Bacevich described this dominant position as "the providential gift of leadership they contended, endowed the United States with a unique capacity to decipher history and in inescapable responsibility to bring it to fruition" [19] Besides, a portion of the American public feared the new imperial role brought about by victory. Exercising world leadership meant keeping troops stationed overseas when the public immediately repatriated them. However, General Mark Clark (1896-1984), American commander for the Far East, in 1952, sharply criticized this position, which he believed was due to a kind of the fifth column of American communist sympathizers. [20]

DECOLONIZATION AND THE COLD WAR

Throughout World War II, the decolonization of Asia debated at numerous conferences. This time, contrary to the failed attempts of the first interwar period, the local movements' strength threatened the supremacy of the European colonial powers already weakened by the war against Germany. The illusion of nationalism and Marxism-Leninism in the region has radically changed the conditions of the struggle. However, as Fairbank points out, these Western concepts soon changed.

They took on original forms thanks to patience, discipline and determination, and other Asian ways of thinking. At the end of the war against Japan, intellectual tools would change the region's destiny. After 1945, for the newly elected Truman administration, contrary to Roosevelt's doctrine, it was a priority for its international policy to rebuild Europe and the world economy. Then stop what believed to be the worldwide expansion of communism. However, European issues were reflected in the Asia-Pacific region, vital to the strategy of Harry Truman, who wanted America to lead the confrontation with the USSR.[21] This situation worsened after the defeat of nationalist China in 1949 to the PRC Army. The new situation threatened U.S. interests in the region and created an intense sense of loss in the Senate.[22]

Meanwhile, in Europe, countries like the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands, aspired to recover their colonies, considered fundamental for the reconstruction of their economies ruined by the Second World War.[23] Europeans deluded, thinking that their colonies awaited their former masters. When the Japanese defeated and humiliated the Europeans, taking over their Asian colonies also broke the mystique of European power. For local populations, previously submissive, Asian Japan had snatched the "sky mandate" from Europeans. Members of local populations and leaders collaborated temporarily with their Japanese liberators. In short: Asians could defeat Westerners. [24]

Without taking into account this new context of forces, after 1945, the European colonizers returned. The Cold War, the new alignment of European instead of coming as villains, were now allies of the USA in the fight against communism. Under the Truman administration, American foreign policy towards Asia sought to secure a world for its interests. It aspired to model the region's countries so that they function according to Western democratic norms and standards. The conciliation between the local populations' aspirations and the designs of the ambiguous superpowers fell into the conflict. Thus, in Layne's sense, the United States increased its security by eliminating the ideologies that threatened its "open door" policy. If there were a general conversion of the region to democratic American and evangelical values, the international system would know peace and stability. [25]. American foreign policy unleashed an intense media campaign in his country and Asia, extolling his capitalist ideals and values, spreading racist stereotypes of Asians. [26]

The Cold War, Superpowers and Their Allies

The cold war was an industrial competition fought between the United States and the USSR, including the localized wars in Asia.[27] For Waltz as a background to the more massive conflict, the superpowers focused on regional struggles from where they would obtain political and economic gains, avoiding the risks of a total confrontation.[28] The confrontation between the superpowers by the zones of world influence was determining the direction that the Cold War would take, thus deciding the fate of the whole world. The superpowers followed what Raymond Aron called ideological positions that, in the 20th century, determined the way of thinking, acting, and believing. [29]

To ensure American dominance, the Truman administration maintained an aggressive international policy against the USSR, a country that emerged from World War II as a military power. Soviet imperial and political aspirations clashed with the American project. The resulting hostilities manifested in Europe and the Asia-Pacific context in cold belligerences such as the Korea War and

the Berlin Crisis.[30] The complexity of these regional tensions is due to the fact that both the United States and its associates, as in the area of the USSR, had satellites that did not constitute monolithic blocks. In their zones of influence, dissensions and accommodation broke out, sometimes even ruptures caused by internal contradictions in the process.[31]

NATO and the Cold War

General Mark W. Clark, in charge of the Korean peninsula's intervention forces, criticized the policy's interference in the final results of World War II. Overcoming military aspects, politics, and accommodation allowed the Soviets to take Berlin, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. The U.S. has faltered before the USSR on the issue of Austria. The Soviets, defeating Nazism, imposed unelected administrations in the liberated countries. The governments of western Europe, in the face of the fait accompli, devised countermeasures to stop a Trojan horse in the form of the prestigious European communist parties. The communist coup in Czechoslovakia, adding this country to the Soviet bloc, turned on the warning light. After the Treaty of Brussels, signed on March 17, 1948, NATO founded on August 24, 1949. It would be a military shield designed to protect a weakened Europe about to succumb in the face of an alleged Soviet attack. A CIA report took for granted the invasion of Europe by the USSR, a military tour in the face of European military fragility, and its internal dissensions after the world conflict.[32]

In the meantime, President Harry Truman endeavored to rebuild the international economic system, avoiding a repeat of the crisis that occurred after the first post-war period. However, the controversial issue of return of Europeans to their colonies in Asia affected the efficiency of some European countries that belong to NATO, such as France, which diverted financial and military resources to their war in Indochina.

The Cold War in Asia: A Cultural Debate

It was not long before, after 1945, the North American perception of the colonial issue changed according to its Asia-Pacific theater conveniences. This realpolitik began when President Harry Truman declared, on June 27, 1950, that his strategy in the region was to prevent the spread of communism. The speech dramatically changed the perception and conduct of the war waged by France in Indochina against Vietminh. North American Asian politics came to see in the European country, no longer a colonial antagonist, but an ambiguous partner, "Who distrust or disagree with each other." [33] In 1950, the Truman administration supported French efforts by sending financial and material resources. Meanwhile, American information agencies sought to attract Vietnamese elites and minorities to their ideological, political, and economic tutelage. It proved to be the only power capable of guaranteeing their independence and overcoming the communist threat.[34]

The Cold War's ideological principles, derived from the USA and Europe that landed in the conflicts in Asia, were a maneuver designed to supplant China as the dominant country. [35] For some authors, the real objective of confrontation between the USSR and the USA in Asia, resided in possession of the central position enjoyed by China. Chinese communist leaders convinced that they should rebuild the stabilizing power of the Middle Kingdom.[36]

ASIAN ACTORS DEVELOP AUTONOMOUS WAYS

The modernization of Japan Meiji has raised the first barriers against Western domination in Asia. Enthusiastically adapting Western industrial and transport technology and armaments, it

consolidated its national state. Then he created a colonial empire. The construction of the Asian nation-state involved interstate wars within which recent tensions and friction evolved. [37] The reception of novelties from the West was initially due to the suitability practiced by local Sinocentric clusters. If, on the one hand, Asia received ideas from the West about freedom, rights, culture, its interest in an age of Imperialism, it turned mainly to industrialization. [38].

The result was controversial hybrid intellectual products in European media. So it was with Chinese communism with a peasant base and not an industrial proletarian. For a long time, Stalin and the Soviet Politburo have sustained a bitter ideological and theoretical debate with the Politburo of the PRC. They defended the thesis that the Chinese revolution was a theoretical mistake, a deviation that, sooner or later, would adopt anti-Soviet policies. [39] In 1945, faced with the threat of uncontrollable Asian insurrectional explosions, the USSR considered that the European colonists' return would stabilize local political turmoil. Another controversy occurred between Moscow and the Indochinese leaders. Stalin reacted with disgust when, in 1945, Ho Chi Min dissolved the Indochinese Communist Party. [40]

The United States of America and the Asia-Pacific context

American projection in Asia dated the 19th century grew with the conquest of Pacific territory and opened trade with Japan in 1854. His complemented with the conquests obtained from the Spanish-American war. In 1922, the USA was the largest partner in trilateral trade in Asia, but its commercial interests did not interfere with its local and international projection. In 1922 in the Washington Conference and the 1935 London Conference, when the American delegation voted, reducing the tonnage of the Japanese imperial navy left Japan deeply resentful. [41]

In the face of tensions resulting from growing Nipponese aggression, the Washington government drafted the first war plan against Japan that relentlessly pursued its Asian goals. When Nazi Germany in the years 1943 and 1944, suffering setbacks on the Eastern Front, pressured Japan to attack the USSR, it received a peremptory refusal. [42] In 1945, the USSR attacked the Japanese Empire, recovering the supremacy of the Russian Tsarist Empire in this region, lost after the defeat of Japan in 1904-1905. For some scholars, Stalin's Asian agenda, after Yalta, repeated the old tsarist diplomacy.

As a superpower, the United States appeared not to be ripe to exercise a worldwide peacetime projection. In 1945, Harry Truman commissioned Lord Louis Mountbatten to liberate the Dutch Indies, half of Indochina, and from Thailand, fears arose in the North American chancellery. Diplomats feared that local nationalists would interpret the nomination as the green light for Europeans' colonial return. [43] The North American scientific ignorance of local movements and Asian originality did not take into account the substantial internal divergences between communists and nationalists. They did not wholly interpret the unexpected convergences between these and the Chinese nationalist leader, Chiang Kai Tschek. [44]

THE WARS OF ASIA I; THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR

In the first decade of the 19th century, the once-powerful Chinese Empire ruined. Its internal weakness invited to new foreign interventions. Ironically, for centuries, its only European neighbor to the Central Empire was the Russian Empire. [45] The Chinese Republic, proclaimed on August 25, 1912, was born from the inspiration provided by foreign models. It reflected the circulation and

dissemination of ideas in modern times and its local supporters, avoided getting involved in internal disputes so as not to appear weak, and to provoke new foreign interventions. The leading Republican leader, Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925), fought the warlords of real autonomous powers while creating the Guomindang, a party designed to promote China's regeneration, an essential topic for the population educated urban.[46]

However, the nation's concept did not exist for Chinese Republicans because, for the Han Chinese majority, being nationalist meant being anti-Manchu. During the 1920s, among the libertarian ideas that landed in Asia, the most seductive was Marxism-Leninism, which, triumphant in the Bolshevik revolution, was configured as the panacea capable of solving all China's problems. [47]

In 1920, the Comintern drafted a document containing 21 conditions, supporting the independence of colonial peoples. [48] Asia moved to the center of the revolutionary expectations of the world revolution when the Chinese Communist Party, founded in 1921, and the Communist Party of Indochina in 1929. Conquering supporters and stirring up intense debates, their Asian theoretical tools forged the notion that, in the region, the revolutionary class was not the weak urban workers, but the immense peasantry.

After Sun Yat died in 1925, the struggle between the two sectors of Guomintang won by General Chiang Kay Tschek, which brutally stifled the communist uprising that took place in Shanghai 1927. Threatened with defeat and death, the Communist leadership of Mao Zedong and Zu en Lai fled and recruited peasant armies. The rural regions assured the Communists access to an inexhaustible human reservoir. In 1934, to escape the destruction by Guomindang forces, the communists started the "nomadization", better known as the Long March, with many moving columns. That strategical withdrawal in search of a secure sanctuary proved decisive for their ultimate victory. [49] In 1937, the second Sino-Japanese war against the nationalists began, saving Chinese communists from annihilation. These took advantage of Chiang's vacuum of power in many regions where they replaced the old imperial loyalties with that of the Communist Party, reinforcing the Kantian concept of a nation: roots and trunk-ruler.

However, after 1949, the PRC paid a high price in defeating Japan and the nationalists. In an extraneous effort, she rebuilt her economy, and her regional power lost through cruel internal purges. Meanwhile, the defeat of Chiang Kai Tschek shook American public opinion, although it did not surprise experienced critics like General Stilwell, whose opinion of the Generalissimo was the worst possible. [50] After winning the civil war in 1949, the PRC reached the borders of Indochina. In October of that year, when the alliance between the PRC and the USSR negotiated, the request for help that Ho Chi Min sent to Mao granted immediately.[51] The rapprochement between both disturbed the French and North American colonial intelligence services Americans. [52]

The Wars of Asia II: The War of Indochina

Since the end of the 19th century, France had capitalized on the Indochina colony, building a transport infrastructure, rationally exploring the hevea and the rice. Despite the developmentalism of the French socialist governors, nationalist spasms periodically agitated the colony. Some French promises to support local social and political elites thwarted after 1919.[53] Since then, some local upheavals have occurred; then came the usual repression, leading French colonial authorities and social structures, to believe that French domination in Indochina had a long future.[54]

Everything changed dramatically when, in 1940, the Nazi victory over France left Indochina's administration vulnerable to Japanese pressures. [55] France not occupied by the Nazis becomes a right-wing country whose capital was Vichy and which saw Japanese expansion with a mixture of sympathy and veiled apprehension. The Vichist administration in Indochina, coexisted with the Japanese, while the Vietminh spread its presence throughout the country, physically eliminating your opponents some of the nationalists.

Around 1943, after the Casablanca agreements, the movement's leadership, aware that France planned to retake its colony, rushed to ensure independence. Meanwhile, the Japanese defeated in the Pacific by the Americans, annihilated the French military and administrative presence on March 9, 1945, through a coup de force. In the resulting power vacuum, the Vietminh positioned itself at the center of events, calling the country to a general uprising. Ho Chi Min declared himself provisional president of the republic, accelerated the elimination of local élites, nationalist, dissidents and opponents. [56]

The Wars of Asia IV: The Korean War

However, the future and destiny of Asia-Pacific were in the hands of the allies and the Great Powers. At the Cairo Conference, in 1943, the allies proclaimed that Korea, freed from Japanese domination, would be managed by a condominium allied to the millennial country deemed immature to be independent. As was the case in Indochina, at the end of the war, Soviets and Americans would receive Japanese surrender by establishing the 38th parallel, which became a permanent border from a diplomatic fiction. [57] However, according to Hastings, "the abysmal ignorance of Korea" and the Koreans by the American authorities led them to employ former collaborators of Japan, hated by the population, and even despised the Japanese councils warning about the communist influence. [58]

While South Korea received funds from the Marshall plan, experiencing strong capitalist growth, [59] in the Soviet-occupied areas, a profound social transformation occurred under the leadership of young leader Kim Il Sung. This veteran of the anti-Japanese struggle organized a Stalinist state, carrying out agrarian reform and consolidating a mighty army. Meanwhile, southern politician Syngman Rhee, who turned his government machine into an anti-communist dictatorship, obtained Washington's approval for a government separate from its neighbor. When the leading political coalition won the local elections, the Southern Communists, unhappy with the victory of the rival capitalist party, reacted. They sought to discredit him and destabilize the southern regime, weakening the American occupation.[60]

Meanwhile, the North planned to invade the South by obtaining Stalin's goodwill but not formally that of the PRC. Only in August 1950 did his ambassador obtain an agreement in Pyongyang. This argument appears to reduce the PRC's responsibility for supporting the invasion, encouraged by Stalin. Although leader Kim il-Sung relies on the fait accompli represented by a quick victory, the offensive could hamper the PRC's plans, which is committed to recovering its rebel province, Taiwan. On June 25, 1950, the northern army invaded the South and occupied its capital. This decision represented a significant obstacle for the PRC because the military mobilization that took place in the face of a probable American invasion seriously threatened the painful Chinese economic reconstruction efforts. [61]

The Expansion of Localized Wars

The rise of the PRC signaled to the Truman administration that the communist expansion in Asia was part of a worldwide offensive and sought to stop it. He wanted to avoid a repetition of world apathy at the occasion of the Nazi rise. Although Korea is not on what Kissinger called the American defensive line, Truman ordered a military action that surprised Stalin. [62] Meanwhile, the swift advance of the Northern army surrounded American troops on the perimeter of Pusan's port. On June 27, 1950, a U.N. resolution placed troops in Korea under General MacArthur's command. The General in a bold move, landing in Inchon, an operation so successful that it intercepted the logistics of its antagonist and made him retreat to the North.[63]

MacArthur's greed startled the PRC's Politburo, which, fearing an American invasion, sent subtle signals. He expressed his unease to the American government, but his calls ignored. However, the Truman administration ordered MacArthur to stop at the 38th parallel. Ignoring the orders, the General reached the Yalu River. In this area, under glacial conditions, U.S. troops were surprised by the offensive unleashed by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and retreated, but, supported by reinforcements and their technological superiority, they stopped the communist offensive and took them back to parallel 38. [64] The offensives and counter-offensives, in addition to the dismissal of General MacArthur by President Truman, demonstrated to experienced diplomats like Dean Acheson, also knowledgeable about the power of the drug, that it was better to withdraw from the war with a tie than to risk a world war. [65]

In 1951, the USA and China no longer wished to prolong the war in Korea. While Mao Zedong took advantage of the conflict with the United States to consolidate his internal positions, Stalin was opposed to peace initiatives, considering that an armistice would be a victory for the United States. In 1952, the USA, tired of a futile war, elected General Dwight D. Eisenhower as President of the Republic, and which, despite the increase in military spending, and the consolidation of the military-military complex, led the country to an armistice with the communists and brought the boys back. [66]

INDOCHINA: FROM THE JAPANESE COUP, IN 1945, TO THE VICTORY OF PEOPLE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 1949.

In 1944, the Roosevelt administration, projecting American power into the Asia-Pacific context, organized strategies to prevent European colonial empires' return. [67] It acted locally through an intelligence agency, the Organization of Strategic Services, the celebrated OSS. Her teams established a connection with Ho Chi Minh, who enthusiastically welcomed her boss, Major Archimedes Patti. The latter supplied the Vietnamese leader with weapons with a hostile attitude towards French sovereignty. [68] Jacques Dalloz maintains that the anti-colonial discourse employed by Ho Chi Minh and his followers, in addition to the emblematic representations used, is of American origin. at their 1945 meetings. [69] In the opinion of Major Patti, all the Vietnamese wanted was independence. The Americans were the only sufficient guarantee of non-colonial support that Viet-minh had.[70] However, some European diplomats criticized the American emissary's amateurism and a new zeal for Ho Chi Minh and its Communist Movement.[71]

The Colonial Return of France

During the years 1943 and 1944, the provisional government of Free France, headed by General de Gaulle, planned to reoccupy Indochina, restoring French sovereignty. The General defended the

thesis that the colonies would make France a power again. George C. Herring asserts that "French policy towards Indochina dominated by the desire to reestablish control in order to reassert her prestige in the world as a great power (...) The United States recognizes French sovereignty over Indochina." [72] A CIA report suggested to President Truman to allow certain European countries, like France, to keep colonies like Indochina to support his economies shaken by the Second World War. [73] Thus, following the designs emanating from the Brazzaville Conference, France decided not to grant independence to the colonies. On the contrary, it planned to establish a French Union along the lines of the British Commonwealth. [74] General De Gaulle himself and his government desire a regeneration of France as a high world power keeping colonies like Indochina. [75]

Accomplishing this desideratum, in 1945, France sent the French Expeditionary Corps of the Far East to Indochina. CEFEQ should initially be the contribution of Free France to the fight against Japan. Its second mission was to reoccupy Indochina. The Potsdam agreements foresaw a partition of the Indochinese peninsula as it did for Korea after the Japanese defeat. The dividing line would be the parallel 16, with Chinese Guomindang troops receiving Japanese surrender in Tonkin, to the North. It was up to the British to receive Japanese surrender in the South. [76] However, the presence of Chinese troops stationed in Tonkin worried Ho Chi Minh so much that he agreed with the French Expeditionary Corps' disembarkation from the Far East to speed up the departure of the Chinese. [77]

After the withdrawal of troops from Guomintang, the French government and the Communist leadership of Viet Minh did not reach an agreement. In 1946, the so-called *modus vivendi* broke while a new mandarin installed: the controversial emperor Bao Dai. [78] Faced with French pressure, the Vietminh went underground and hid in the impenetrable forest from Viet Bac. From there, he ruled the country until victory in 1954. [79]

The arrival of the PRC at the borders of Tonkin brought weapons and training to General Giap's troops. The partnership resulted in the successful offensive unleashed by Giap in 1950, annihilating the withdrawing French troops in the so-called border battle. In France, alongside the ignorance of the colonial issue, opposition to the war grew in the face of disaster. The disagreement was led by the French Communist Party, which wanted independence from the colony while the Socialists aspired to open negotiations with Ho Chi Minh. [80] After the French humiliation of the defeat at Lang Son, French President René Pleven (1901-1993), appointed an observer commission to assess the situation. Among the points listed was the reorganization of CEFEQ that should be commanded by a prestigious military chief. Finally creating the pawn on which the Nixon government, decades later, would bet everything: a Vietnamese national army [81]

On December 6, 1950, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny (1889-1952) was appointed to lead the French effort in Indochina, a hero of Germany's final advance in 1944-1945. A brilliant military, he stabilized the situation on the battlefield, although he was skeptical of a definitive military victory. He recovered CEFEQ's morale shaken by the recent defeats and inefficient commands and accelerated the creation of the Vietnamese national army. He said that this war was theirs at a graduation of the Dalat Military Academy before the Vietnamese cadets. "Soyez des hommes, c'est à dire, se eu êtes communistes, rejoignez le Viêtminh; il y a là-bas des individus, that stop bien pour une cause mauvaise. " (Be men, that is to say, if you are communists, join the Vietminh; There are

individuals there fighting hard for a wrong cause). Surprisingly, Its antagonist, General Giap, referred to de Lattre as a “brilliant professional military”. [82]

Throughout 1952 and 1953, the EPV's offensives undermined French efforts, despite the brilliance of the shock troops, paratroopers and legionaries, and Generals like Salan, Gilles and Linares. For the more realistic, the situation was unsustainable in the long run. In 1953, faced with the opening of negotiations for a ceasefire in Korea, it threatened to isolate France from the international scene. Moreover, leave CEFEQ fighting alone against triumphant communism. Fear grew that a Korean-style Chinese attack would annihilate the French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina without receiving any support from the U.N.

The government of the IV Republic cunningly chose to lead CEFEQ, a soldier who not knows Indochina. The new French commander, General Henri Navarre, was tasked with General Mark W. Clark in Korea to seek an honorable way out of France in this unfortunate war. The French government ambiguously intended to protect Laos from a communist offensive that would seriously threaten southern Vietnam. Navarre, however, according to some authors, saw his plan to gain positions of strength to negotiate, abused by the self-centered commander of Tonkin, General René Cogny.[83] The Dien Bien Phu air-land base, it was an essential route to Laos. However, Vietminh despised holding fixed positions. He would invade Laos, as he invaded, without having to step on Dien Bien.

Général Navarre, Ignoring criticism, garnished the airbase by elite troops, legionnaires, and paratroopers, and North Africans tirailleurs, to face the enemy offensive. Meanwhile, the French government, without communicating to General Navarre, opened peace talks in Geneva with Viet Minh. Seeing this situation as a unique military and political opportunity, General Giap launched an offensive against Dien Bien to capture it and weaken his opponent in Geneva. Analysts believe that, on this occasion, CEFEQ's command should have been prudent and evacuating the exposed position. [84]In about two months, the fortified field's heroic defense ended: the accurate shots by the artillery provided by China interdicted Dien Bien airstrip, ensuring the brilliant victory of the People's Army. [85]

After the withdrawal of the French in 1954, the Americans consolidated their position in the strategic region. They supported Catholic Mandarin and anti-communist Ngo Dinh Diem, whose Republic of South Vietnam, fought the best-armed Communist client state of the Cold War. [86] By replacing France as a hegemonic power on the peninsula, American planning neglected the previous experience. He underestimated the fighting potential of Viet Cong and the expertise of the People Vietnamese Army. It also ignored the Asian ability to find solutions that could neutralize the use of innovative technologies and heavy weapons employed by the United States, who almost annihilate the country that America come to save.[87]

Asia's Triple War III: Three Wars in One

The Chinese civil war concluded in 1949 seems to be intertwined with that of Korea and Indochina, reflecting China's millenary regional presence in the region, when in the past, his expansion was a way of life.[88] The notion of triple war shared by the PRC leadership reflects the perceived threat to her safety, which made her fight in the operating theaters of Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam. [89]President Truman, on December 30, 1949, tells: The extent of communist authority over China

represents a severe defeat to us. If Southwest Asia is swept away by communism, it will represent a further political defeat for us, whose reproaches will spread throughout the world. [90] The notion was also perceived as intertwined in the West, although for different reasons. General Eisenhower, in an interview dated July 28, 1964, three years after leaving the presidency, declared that the French were fighting a colonial war in Indochina instead of fighting for freedom against communism. He declared that it was up to the United States to support the creation of a South Vietnamese national army, an essential instrument for overcoming the Communists.[91]

French politicians and military personnel who wished to retain Indochina's possession viewed with satisfaction the Western intervention in Korea to which they sent troops—seeking international and American support for his struggle in Indochina, Édouard Frédéric Dupont. a French deputy wrote in 1950: "Following the arrival of the Chinese communists on the border of Tonkin, Indochina became the border of western civilization and the Indochina war joined the Cold War." [92] General de Lattre, with his military and political experience, consolidated the proposal that the war he was fighting in Indochina was part of a threefold struggle against communism. In his view, the PRC was an antagonist who, although undeclared, unconditionally supported Giap's army. De Lattre further declared that the victory of the PRC in 1949, snatched the leader of communism in Southeast Asia from Ho Chi Minh and made it a Chinese satellite. The French General feared that China would invade French Indochina as it did in Korea, a French disaster. When he attended the Singapore Conference in 1952, he voiced this fear by obtaining the U.N. guarantee that he would send troops to rescue France if the PRC invaded Indochina.[93]

American politicians and high-ranking military men believed in the notion of triple warfare. De Lattre, in a letter to General Gosse, on September 4, 1951, wrote: " General Eisenhower recognizes that the Corée war and the Indochina war are the same war (...) He also recognizes that the loss of Indochina would not only have incalculable consequences for the defense of the West). In October 1951 de Lattre expressed an opinion that precedes Aron's notion of superpowers, describing that, in the modern world, "des blocs Gigantes s'affrontant". The General believes fighting against "the same furious tide, the same tide crashes against the promontories of Korea and Indochina, trying to fade against the beaches of Europe." [94]

Completely involved in the Indochina war, in a rhetorical outburst, De Lattre wrote that the war waged by France in Indochina was not a colonial war. It was a crusade against communism in Asia. When visiting the United States looking for military materiel, while the Korean War continued, he declared that these Asian wars were one: "American soldiers and French soldiers serve jointly in Asia fighting in the crudest of wars, which is the same war, against the same enemy." "[95]

Solemnly declares to combat modern colonialism, "red colonialism". However, considering the Tonkin, due to its strategic location, the "clef du southwest asiatique". Unlike Korea, the fall of that region threatened by General Giap would contaminate Asia's whole. Worse, the communist conquest of Indochina would lead to the "end of Islam, which in Asia has about 2/3 of its faithful. If Tonkin fell under communist rule (...), the next loss would be the Suez Canal ". [96]. For De Lattre, it was wrong to assume that the communists were fighting France for independence from Vietnam. From his point of view, France did not exercise tutelage over the country, "But a mutual insurance company. France did not limit itself to giving independence: it guaranteed it, it defends it (...) Its not a colonial war Because Indochina is not a colony." [97] The joint of chiefs of French army staff, in a

note regarding the visit of General de Lattre to the USA, also put the conflict in the rhetoric of crusade. [98]

CONCLUSION

After 1945, Asia plunged into two decades troubled by wars of liberation inserted in the Cold War's global context. The supposed threat of the communist regional offensive was the nightmare of American foreign policy for the region. The American National Security Council, in a 1952 report (NSC-68) using the domino theory, stated that the French defeat in Indochina for the communists, the West would lose Southeast Asia.[99]

For important Western military and politicians, General Jean de Lattre, the Indochina war, and that of Korea was part of a conflict triggered after the PRC's victory against Chiang Kay Chek in 1949. De Lattre defended the Vietnamization of the conflict to beat his challenger, employing a Vietnamese capitalist elite and a national army. The French colonial war in Indochina, doomed to failure from the beginning, ended with the wrong choice of Dien Bien Phu, the battlefield where, if victorious, France could honorably emerge from the conflict.

When the Eisenhower administration refused to bail out Dien Bien Phu's garrison, Kissinger's statement about the dilemma experienced by the General President was proven. If it sent military aid, France would support colonialism and risk a war with the PRC. The former Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in the European Theater during World War II avoided the Total War against the PRC.[100] Initially, by accepting in 1953 an armistice with the communists in Korea, and secondly by denying support to France in Indochina. Finally, the conclusion of these localized Asian wars was also the triumph of China's strategy to protect its borders by restoring its regional power while evading world conflict.

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