

Question: The settlements of the Korean War and the Indo-Chinese War with the legacy of those settlements for the international politics in the post-Cold War era

From the closing ends of the Second World War, the Western Powers' colonies were clamouring for self-determination throughout Africa and Asia, which means they sought to achieve these goals ranging from peaceful negotiation to armed insurrection. The independence movements were likewise diverse. They were not all communist, although communists actively involved themselves in most of the "wars of liberation", forming blocs within other movements where they did not have the strength to stand alone. Most of those movements were purely nationalist with the particular political colour (supported by the Soviet Union or the United States) representing the interests of a privileged caste. They united in their common goals, but were frequently divided into rival factions, split along political, religious, ethnic or special interest lines. Even after independence was achieved, the new nations were wrecked by bitter and internecine conflicts between such factions.

The colours of political maps changed as these emerging nations either retained or repudiated old allegiances and declared new ones, such as to the World Communist Movement. Nowhere was this trend more evident than in the region of South-east Asia, especially in the Vietnam and the Korean Peninsula, which I'm going to focusing on in this essay about the relationships of settlements between the Korean War (1950-1953) and the First Indo-Chinese War (1946-1954) and its legacy of those for the international politics in the post Cold War era. For the first part of this essay, I will outline some background information about these two hot wars; I will then talk about the war and its settlements, and combine those settlements with their relationships. Finally, I will move on to discuss the legacy of these settlements for international politics in the post Cold War, as well as to make a conclusion.

Following the 50 years of Japanese occupation since 1895, after victories in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War for Korea, the Japanese defeated both the British and the French colonial army at the start of the Second World War as well as succeeding in the war of Vietnam, destroying the myth of western supremacy for good. Thus, after the war, when the French colonial powers returned to reclaim their former colony of Vietnam, they found themselves confronted by armed and aggressive resistance movements, many of whom had gained skills and experience in fighting the Japanese. Most of these resistance movements were adopted as signs of independence and nationhood.

However, in the Korean Peninsula, in the years before and after Korea fell victim to Japan's imperialism, the struggle for the freedom from Japanese colonialism drew the attention of world powers to Korea. The leaders of the United States of America (U.S.A), United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of China (R.O.C) agreed that Korea would become an independent state after the surrender of Japan in the Cairo Conference in 1943. This was reaffirmed by the 1945 Potsdam Declaration and subsequently by the Soviet Union (S.U). But the Leaders of the U.S.A, U.K and S.U reached a secret agreement that included the division of the Korea Peninsula at the 38th parallel, their plans were for a path to self-governments, supported by the Soviet Union in the area north of 38th parallel and by the United States in the area south within a new 'commonwealth' at the Yalta Conference in 1945.

THE KOREAN WAR (1950-1953) & ITS SETTLEMENTS

After a republic was set up in the South helped by the United States in August 1948, a Communist government was installed in North Korea in September 1948 by the Soviet Union. The communist government promoted and supported an insurgency in South Korea in an attempt to bring down the recognized government and gain jurisdiction over the entire Korean peninsula. Not quite two years later, after the insurgency showed signs of failing, the communist government undertook a direct attack, sending the North Korea People's Army south across the 38th parallel before daylight on Sunday, June 25, 1950. The invasion, in a narrow sense, marked the beginning of a civil war between people of a divided country. In a larger sense, the cold war between the Great Power blocs had erupted in open hostilities.

The western bloc, especially the U.S.A, was surprised by the Communist Korean decision. But it then took advantage of a Soviet boycott of the United Nations to have the U.N. Security Council condemn North Korean aggression and create a U.N. military force that would defend South Korea. That U.N. force included soldiers from 16 nations, with the largest contingent coming from the United States, all under the command of U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur. At first, the U.N. troops were helpless against the North Korean assault and for a while appeared on the verge of being driven away from the peninsula. But a daring attack behind North Korean lines at the port of Inchon rolled back the North Korean advance.

The North Korea's neighbour, the People's Republic of China (founded in 1949 by the Communist Chinese after moving the R.O.C government from Mainland China into Taiwan), watched with alarm as U.N. forces drove the North Koreans out of the South. MacArthur assured U.S. President Truman there was no possibility of China entering the war, but unknown to Western leaders, 500,000 Chinese, (known as the People's Volunteers) were preparing to enter Korea. In November 1950, after repeated warnings through diplomatic channels, China attacked, sending the surprised U.N. forces reeling southward.

After Chinese troops crossed into Korea Peninsula, U.N. troops stopped the advance by North Korean and Chinese forces near the 38th parallel and the war developed into a painful stalemate. Truman dismissed MacArthur, who had called for the bombing of Chinese cities and pursuit of the war into China. By the summer of 1951 armistice talks began. It wasn't until July 1953, after months of pointless fighting and the death of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin that a cease-fire was finally agreed to.

The armistice provisions forbid either force to bring additional troops or new weapons into Korea, although replacement one for one and in kind, was permissible. To oversee the enforcement of all armistice terms and to negotiate settlements of any violations of them, a Military Armistice Commission composed of an equal number of officers from each side was established. A Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (N.S.C) assisted this body whose members furnishing an umpire and custodial forces, formed a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (N.N.R.C) to handle the disposition of prisoners repatriation. By September 6 of 1953, all prisoners wishing to be repatriated had been exchanged. On February 1, 1954, the Neutral

Nations Repatriation Commission dissolved itself after releasing the last of the non-repatriates as civilians free to decide their own destinations.

The provision of the armistice recommended that the belligerent governments convene a political conference to negotiate a final settlement of the whole Korea in Geneva, Switzerland on April 6, 1954. The Geneva impasse leaving Korea divided essentially along the pre-war line could scarcely be viewed as merely re-establishing the land's status. This should have been through the way of free elections but these resolutions were without any effects.

Despite the armistice, the final settlement of Korea is still in question today. The Korea peninsula remains divided into two – the Communist Korea in the north of 38th parallel and the Republic Korea in the south of 38th parallel.

THE FIRST INDO-CHINESE WAR (1946-1954) & ITS SETTLEMENTS

Let's go back to Yalta conference in 1945, the leaders of U.S.A, U.K and S.U not only agreed on division of the Korea Peninsula, but had also invested the responsibility of disarming the Japanese in Vietnam north of the 16th parallel with the Republic of China government and with the U.K and French government in the South. As soon as this happened, the Communist Chinese resumed a civil war against the R.O.C government in Mainland China in 1946. The government of R.O.C then had to withdraw their troops from North Vietnam into battles with the Communists and they left Ho Chi Minh's (the leader of Indo-Chinese Communist Party, I.C.P) government in place. At the same time, the British commander, Maj. Gen D. D. Gracey, who released and rearmed the French colonial prisoners of the Japanese, permitted them to oust the Committee, thus setting the scene for the return of the French forces under General LeClerc. By December 1945, they had control of Vietnam to the 16th parallel. However, the French were not able to gain control of the North and negotiations were opened with Ho in March 1946. These negotiations culminated with the Dalat and Fontainebleau conferences, but failed to satisfy Ho that the integrity of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (D.R.V) would be preserved. Admiral Thierry d'Agelieu, the French High Commissioner in Vietnam, proclaimed the Provincial Republic of Cochin China within the French Union on 30 May 1946 and on 23 November 1946, bombarded Hanoi's port, Haiphong, with naval gunfire, killing at least 6,000 Vietnamese. This was followed by landings at Tourane (Da Nang) and Nha Trang. The first Indo-Chinese war had begun.

From the 1946 to 1949, the Viet Minh (Vietnam Hu Chi Minh)'s forces suffered from shortages of arms and equipment, they were unable to undertake more than guerrilla operations. By the end of 1949, the situation had radically changed with the success of the Chinese Communist People's Liberation Army (PLA) against the government of the Republic of China. The PLA controlled the border with Vietnam, contact was made with the Viet Minh and the way was opened for large-scale support (food, weapons and training).

Since the 1950, the war moved from the passive to the active stage for the Viet Minh's force. French troops were concentrated in fortresses in North Vietnam fighting a static war. During this year the Viet Minh swept along the frontier road with China, capturing forts after fort over a distance of 100 miles within 6 weeks. Then came Vinh

Yen, a "set-piece" battle fought along conventional lines that resulted in a decisive French victory. This forced the Viet Minh to revert to a passive stage of revolutionary warfare and gave the French a false sense of security that the Viet Minh could never match them in a "set-piece" battle.

The Viet Minh started rebuilding their forces in the Red River Delta and gaining control over, and support from, the villages. They again took the initiative, consistently interdicting French use of the roads. However, the French force was continuing to try to draw them into "set-piece" battles. Dien Bien Phu was occupied and established as a major fortress in 1953. It was a serious tactical error, being sited too far from major centres where support resources were, and the enemy's capabilities were grossly underestimated. General Vo Nguyen Giap spread his forces widely, neutralising French reserves. He then ringed the fortress with artillery and entrenchments; cutting off all French support except by air and that was severely interdicted by anti-aircraft fire. Finally, after much costly and bloody fighting, on 7th May 1954, Dien Bien Phu fell and the surviving defenders were marched off into captivity. The loss of Dien Bien Phu had broken French forces and on 20 July 1954 hostilities were ended after negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland.

In May 1954, an international conference in Geneva took up the problem of this war. Participants at the conference included the U.S.A, U.K, France, S.U and the P.R China as well as a D.R.V delegation by Pham Van Dong. As a result of this conference, came the end of the war with France and the chance to consolidate and rebuild Vietnamese economy. It was allowed for D.R.V to control over the northern half of Vietnam with election within two years to establish a unified government of the whole country. The French dominated 'Associated State' gained control over the South. The key point of this settlement was over the division of the country into two parts at the 17th parallel, this is according to the Korean model.

However, this was not a final settlement of Vietnam. The D.R.V government and the U.S.A government were both highly unsatisfied with this result. The war was not over until support for the Southern Vietnam regime by the U.S.A in 1973, failed. The fall of the capital of the South in Saigon by the Communist Vietnamese in April 1975 was quickly followed the withdrawal of American troops and assistances. Today, there is only one Vietnam in the world under Communist rules. So from the overview of the 1954 Geneva settlement, it is not surprising that conflict in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula was soon renewed.

THE SIMILARS AND DISSIMILARS OF THE KOREAN WAR SETTLEMENT & THE FIRST INDO-CHINESE WAR SETTLEMENT

There are some similar points between the Korean War settlement and the first Indo-Chinese War settlement, indeed they were both armistice agreements, with imposed cease-fire. They also both drew a line (38th parallel in the Korea peninsula and 17th parallel in the Vietnam peninsula), which divided the country into two parts, The Soviet Union and Communist China supported both northern parts (Northern Korea and Northern Vietnam respectively) against the other side (Southern Korea and the Southern Vietnam), which were supported by the U.S.A in Korea and by the French colonial power in Vietnam, which especially for communist China, played a decisive role in achieving both settlements of the two wars. This is because the Chinese

preoccupation in the immediate aftermath of the Chinese Civil War (the Communist Chinese fought with the Nationalist Chinese) with maintaining peace on its borders in order to concentrate on domestic development. In view of the anti-communist fever in the U.S.A and the Western World, Communist China was particularly anxious to avoid another confrontation and if possible, wanted to establish buffer zones between itself and any areas of anti-imperialist conflict. The final point to do with similarity between the settlements is the wish for re-unification of the country by free elections that took no effect. However, as a result of this point, both seemed to fail with the two settlements. Vietnam was finally reunified by the armed Northern Vietnam and Korea today, still remains with two opposed forces.

However, the final settlements of the Korea War and the First Indo-Chinese are also quite different. In fact, even today there is still not a final settlement in the Korean Peninsula. The Geneva settlement for the Korea War left the North and South deeply hostile towards each other and condemned to decades of misrule. The military inferiority of the South was mitigated by the American reinforcement- a UN force commanded by the American general remained in the country and a vastly better economic performance. At another side of the Asian continent, the Geneva settlement for Vietnam caused the French colonial power as a means of escape. They were able to conclude the war, whereby they were losing control of the Vietnam Peninsula. This is because the first Indo-Chinese war was a colonial battleground; the French colonial power could not get international sympathy and support. The 1954 Geneva settlement gave the leader of Northern Vietnam - Hu Chi Minh, half the country and about two years to prepare the unification of the country. As a result of the final settlement, the Viet Minh force launched a successful battle against with the South Vietnam and American forces, and then controlled the whole country by 1975.

THE LEGACY OF THESE SETTLEMENTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE POST COLD WAR ERA

The legacy of the Korea War settlement and the first Indo-Chinese War settlement gives us a chance to learn and compare between the capitalism and socialism at the end of cold war in the international politics.

During the cold war, the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified became more hostile and ideologically based. Much of the international politics polarized to one of the two sides, although the U.S-Soviet competition was initially focused in Asia, which brought hot wars into this region, such as the North Korea with the South Korea, and the North Vietnam with the South Vietnam (despite all, it has finally been reunified by the North).

However, at the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union, which meant the end of the cold war, also signalled the end of the bipolar system. Simply stated, there is no single state remaining that had sufficient military power and politically influential to challenge the United State, although communism was sustained in some states, the most notable, North Korea, Vietnam and the P.R China, they have been lost the political, economics and technologies supported from the S.U and its global threat ended. This is also a big victory for South Korea in international politics. This proves that capitalism is much better than socialism.

On the other hand, South Korea achieved amazing economic growth, with per capita income rising to 13 times the level of North Korea today. However, North Korea and Communist Vietnam are both two of the poorest countries in the world, especially the North Korea relies heavily on international food aid to feed its population, while continuing to expend resources to maintain an army of over 1 million, the fifth largest in the world. All of those economic performances achieved must be determined with a good, steady political environment. This again, identifies the positive points of capitalism, which is the best political ideology.

CONCLUSION

The war's impact reached far beyond these two areas, despite the armistice in Korea, there was "no substitute" for victory," the UNC had upheld the U.N. principle of suppressing armed aggression. True, the U.N. Security Council had been able to enlist forces under the U.N. banner in June 1950 only in the absence of the USSR veto. Nevertheless, the UNC success strengthened the possibility of keeping or restoring peace through the U.N. machinery in the Korea Peninsula, and in the Vietnam Peninsula, the 1954 Geneva settlement for the first Indo-Chinese War was not successful, it was not a final settlement and gave a chance to start another war after a few years. But both of those settlements provide us with an opportunity to look at and compare between two completely different political systems in post the cold war.