



Chapter 1

2045 in the Course of an Independent Viet Nam

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Viet Nam aims to become a developed country by 2045, the 100th anniversary of its independence. After independence, Viet Nam was in a period of war for a long time. The Doi Moi proposal in 1986 was to put an end to the era of war, but it was only in 1991 that Viet Nam was finally released from the actual war. After independence, the era of war continued for 46 years. Independent Viet Nam must wait until 2037 for the era of peace and development to be longer than the era of war. 2045 will be the time when peace and development finally become dominant in the course of an independent Viet Nam.

So what did the long war era mean? When many people in the world thought that the basic task of the modern history of Asia, including Viet Nam, or the Third World was to resist imperialist aggression and win national autonomy and independence, the era of war, the Indochina War against the French, and the Viet Nam War against the United States (US) could be evaluated as typical examples of national liberation movements. However, now, with the economic development of Asian countries, many people have begun to think that the basic problem of modern history is economic development. From this point of view, modern Viet Nam, which was developed under the Doi Moi reforms, deserves attention, but the Viet Nam War is a side stream that has deviated from the main stream of historical development. I think this kind of summary of history is extremely one-sided. I believe that Viet Nam's achievement of North-South unification through the era of war had great significance for Viet Nam to achieve rapid development in the subsequent era of peace and development. The unification of Viet Nam helped not only Viet Nam itself but the entire Southeast Asian region to break out of the Cold War structure early. The realisation of Viet Nam's accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the realisation of ASEAN10 were events that were realised because of the existence of a unified Viet Nam.

From this perspective, in this chapter, after surveying the era of war in Viet Nam briefly (Furuta, 1991, 1996, 2002, 2018; War Review Steering Committee, 2002), I would like to explore the relationship between the Viet Nam War and the economic development of Southeast Asia, and the significance of the existence of a unified Viet Nam in the era of economic development (Furuta, 2012).

1. The Era of War

1.1. The Indochina War

When the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam declared its independence in September 1945, France, the former colonial power, was not yet ready to recognise it. After World War II, when France began to return to its colonial rule, wars broke out between the independent forces of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos. This was the Indochina War, known in Viet Nam as the Anti-French Resistance War. Amongst the wars of independence that took place in Southeast Asia after the end of World War II, the Indochina War had the same characteristics as the Indonesian War of Independence. However, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (hereafter, China), the Indochina War was incorporated into the confrontational structure of the Cold War. Whilst the US supported France from an anti-communist angle, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam began to receive support from China and the Soviet Union. The Indochina War was prolonged, and only after the Cold War tensions between the East and West eased in 1954 was a ceasefire finally reached through the Geneva Accords. The Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 was a battle fought over which side would take the initiative in this ceasefire, and the surrender of the French army to the army of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam here marked the end of French colonial rule. On the battlefield, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam had the upper hand, but at the Geneva Conference, which was a major power-led peace conference, although Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos were recognised for their independence, China and the Soviet Union did not want the war to be prolonged or the US to intervene. Under pressure from the Soviet Union and China, the 17th parallel, which roughly bisects Viet Nam into north and south, was defined as the Military Demarcation Line. Despite the promise of unification elections two years later, Viet Nam was temporarily divided into North and South.

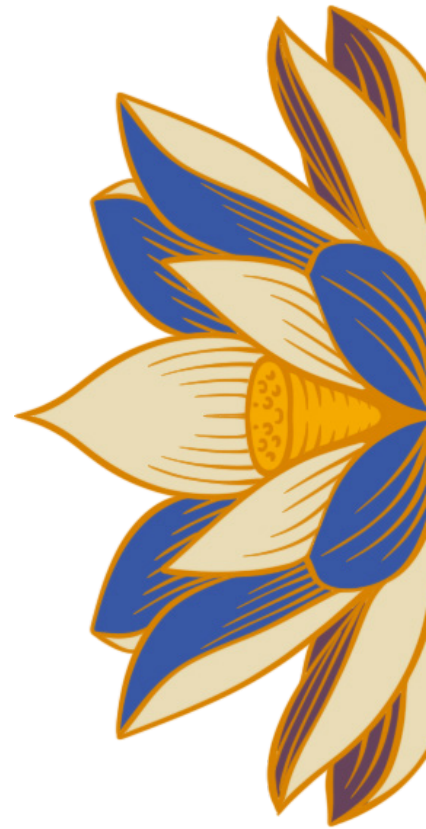


1.2. The Viet Nam War

The US, which had supported France since the end of the Indochina War, regarded the Viet Nam Military Demarcation Line as a line that demarcated the 'territorial boundaries' of the East and West sides that confronted each other in the Cold War. The unification of Viet Nam under communist-led northern leadership was unacceptable to the United States as it would mean the loss of part of its 'free world'. The leaders of the United States at the time only saw Viet Nam in the context of the Cold War. If China's influence were to be prevented from spreading into Southeast Asia, the presence of a unified and powerful Viet Nam would have been the most effective bulwark. Such a calm geopolitical judgment was not possible for the US leaders at the time.

The Viet Nam War was a war fought between two sides: one was the United States and the anti-communist pro-American regime in the South (initially the State of Viet Nam, then the Republic of Viet Nam after 1955), and the other side was the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (North) and the Southern forces that tried to overthrow the pro-American regime and achieve North-South unification.

In the early stage, the war was basically fought between the South Viet Nam National Liberation Front (NLF) with the support of the North, and the Ngo Dinh Diem government that ruled South Viet Nam with the support of the US. The Diem government, which skilfully eliminated pro-French factions, seemed to have achieved stable rule for a time. The Viet Nam Workers Party (VWP, the ruling party in the North, which also had a party organisation in the South), which expected the implementation of the unified North-South elections promised in the Geneva Accords, was refraining from launching an armed struggle in the South. In 1959, the VWP, which faced the threat of the collapse of the party organisation in the South due to the suppression of the Diem government, allowed the resumption of the armed struggle in the South. This played a role in spurting a backlash against the Diem regime, and a series of uprisings against the regime spread in the rural areas. In the midst of these movements, the NLF was formed in December 1960 under the leadership of the VWP, which launched an armed struggle in the South, and also wanted to avoid full-scale intervention by the US military. According to the VWP, during the Korean War, North Korean troops openly crossed the Military Demarcation line at the 38th Parallel and entered the South, leading to US military intervention. The VWP, therefore, sought to hunt down the Diem government within the South as much as possible, rather than openly sending the North's regular forces southwards.



What was formed there was the NLF, which emphasised that it was a southern organisation. After the birth of the NLF, the weakness of the Diem administration gradually became apparent, and the Kennedy administration in the US dispatched a large number of military advisors. However, the Diem government became more and more authoritarian, and in 1963 there was a large-scale anti-government movement amongst Buddhists in the cities. The military in the southern government, feeling a sense of crisis about the situation, staged a coup d'état in November 1963 to overthrow the Diem government. In response, within the VPW, hardliners led by the First Secretary of the Party, Le Duan, emerged, saying that this opportunity should be used to corner the South's regime. At the Central Committee meeting held in December 1963, it was decided that the strategy up to that point would be changed and that the combat units of the People's Army of North Viet Nam would be sent to the southern battlefields.

Faced with such a situation, the Johnson administration of the US decided that in order to maintain the anti-communist regime in South Viet Nam, the United States had no choice but to put the US forces at the forefront, and that the North, which was supporting the rebellion in the South, had to be defeated. After the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in 1964, regular bombing of North Viet Nam began in February 1965, and in March of the same year, the US ground combat troops were dispatched to South Viet Nam. In response, the North also sent a large number of its People's Army combat units to the battlefields of the South, and the Viet Nam War became the largest limited war during the Cold War. The limited war in which the US military directly participated lasted from 1965 to 1973. At its peak, more than 500,000 US troops were dispatched, resulting in heavy casualties for North Viet Nam and the South's NLF, with 1.2 million killed in action and 3 million casualties in North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam, including civilians.

However, this did not mean that the war had unfolded as the United States hoped. During the Korean War, the US ground forces crossed the Military Demarcation Line and advanced northwards, inviting the



intervention of the Chinese military, which caused many casualties. In the case of the Viet Nam War, instead of taking the option of invading North Viet Nam with land forces, the US limited the grand ground battle to the south. The US military was good at battles in which their superiority in firepower and mobility was used to push the front line facing the enemy towards the enemy's line, but because the ground battle was limited to the South, such a battle was not possible. Instead, they were forced to fight guerrillas without a frontline. Here, the US military adopted an 'attrition strategy' that inflicted casualties on the enemy in excess of its manpower supply capacity. However, the North sent troops from the North to the South to make up for the heavy casualties, and the US military strategy did not work effectively.

The mass attack on cities in South Viet Nam by the People's Army of the North and the NLF during the Lunar New Year in 1968 (the Tet Offensive) strongly impressed the US public with the feeling that the war was not progressing well. The number of US casualties in the Viet Nam War was just over 58,000, which was far less than the casualties on the Vietnamese side. Considering that it was a limited war in which only a limited amount of national power was invested, it was an 'unbearable sacrifice' for US society. The Tet Offensive sparked anti-war movements domestically and abroad, and the Nixon administration, which came into power in 1969, was forced to reduce the involvement of the country's military in the war. Taking advantage of the large casualties in the North and the NLF in the adventurous city attack known as the Tet Offensive, the Nixon administration expanded the war to neighbouring Cambodia in order to maintain the South's anti-communist and pro-American regime.

However, this expansion of the war into Cambodia did not produce the results the United States hoped. Conversely, in Cambodia, where pro-American forces had a weak foundation, anti-American forces expanded into areas controlled by them, and this had an impact on the battlefields of South Viet Nam. The Spring Offensive of 1972 allowed the North Viet Nam People's Army and the NLF to reverse the post-1968 deficit. As the war situation in South Viet Nam reached a stalemate, the Paris Peace Accords were signed in January 1973, and the US combat units were withdrawn from Viet Nam.

Fighting continued in South Viet Nam. From 1971, the US tried to keep North Viet Nam in check and maintain the anti-communist regime in South Viet Nam by improving relations with China. However, it was impossible to maintain the South Viet Nam regime



without US military involvement. The US public's lack of support for the Viet Nam War progressed beyond the expectations of the administration. On 30 April 1975, the Republic of Viet Nam collapsed before the military offensive of the North and the NFL, ending the Viet Nam War. In the following year, in 1976, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam was established with the unification of the North and the South.

1.3. War after the Viet Nam War

When the Viet Nam War ended, many in Viet Nam and around the world thought it would bring peace to Viet Nam, but that hope did not materialise. The war around Viet Nam continued for 16 years.

The most basic factor behind the post-Viet Nam War conflict was that China and the Pol Pot faction of Cambodia did not want the influence of a unified Viet Nam to grow in the Indochina Peninsula. Pol Pot's attack on Viet Nam, which had been taking place since around the end of the Viet Nam War, gradually intensified. In 1977, it reached the entire border area between Viet Nam and Cambodia. When Viet Nam countered, in late 1977, the Pol Pot faction, Democratic Cambodia, announced that it would sever diplomatic relations with Viet Nam, and the conflict between the two countries became public. In 1978, China clarified its stance of supporting the Pol Pot faction, and the confrontation between China and Viet Nam over the ethnic Chinese in Viet Nam also became public.

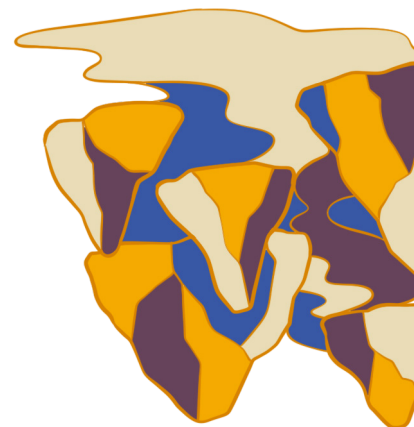
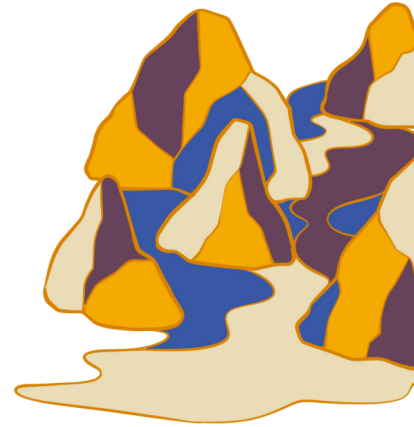
Sensing the security crisis that the newly unified Viet Nam would be attacked from both sides by China and Cambodia, in January 1979, Viet Nam supported anti-Pol Pot faction Cambodian forces by transferring its military to Cambodia and driving the Pol Pot faction from Phnom Penh to the border with Thailand. In February 1979, China invaded Vietnamese territory along the entire Sino-Vietnamese border under the guise of 'punishing' Viet Nam. China announced its withdrawal from Viet Nam in about a month, but military clashes continued in the Sino-Viet Nam border area until 1991. In Cambodia as well, military clashes continued between the stationed Vietnamese forces and anti-Vietnamese forces led by the Pol Pot faction. Viet Nam announced in 1989 that it would withdraw its forces from Cambodia, but it is said that Viet Nam's systematic military involvement continued until 1991.



2. The Significance of the Era of War

For 46 years during its era of war, Viet Nam was compelled to engage in a prolonged armed struggle to secure its independence as a unified nation. What is the significance of this era of war, especially the Viet Nam War, in world history and for Viet Nam? It is relatively easy to understand that it was the war in which the US was defeated, and the Viet Nam War was the war in which Viet Nam achieved its independence and unification. In addition to this, the role that the Viet Nam War played in shaping modern democracy is also easy to understand. This war, in which the small country of Viet Nam repelled the military intervention of the superpower, the US, and realised its independence and unification by linking with various social movements, including the anti-Viet Nam War movement, which spread around the world during the same period. This situation pushed the recognition of the rights of the socially 'weak' in various dimensions, including ethnicity, minorities, and women. If we call this democracy that is conscious of the 'weak' a modern democracy, distinguishing it from the former type of democracy of the 'strong', we can say that the Viet Nam War played a major role in its formation (Furuta, 1999, pp.27–28).

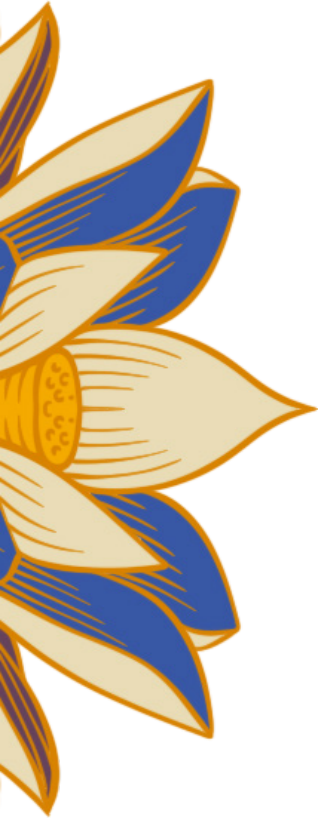
However, it is also true that today, in some aspects, it is difficult to see the significance of the Viet Nam War in terms of world history. There seem to be some reasons why the significance of the Viet Nam War in world history is becoming more difficult to see. At the time the Viet Nam War was unfolding, the background to the war being regarded as the 'focus of the world' was the so-called 'general crisis theory', which viewed modern history as a period of transition from capitalism to socialism. However, the validity of this 'general crisis theory' has been lost due to the subsequent collapse of the socialist camp. Within the 'general crisis theory' framework, Viet Nam's war against the US intensively embodied the driving forces for progress in world history: socialism, the national liberation movement, and the capitalist state's anti-war and anti-regime movements. However, when the Viet Nam War ended with Viet Nam's victory, it was the 'revolutionary forces' that exposed various limitations. The framework of modern historical understanding that supported the understanding of the Viet Nam War as described above has lost its effectiveness (Furuta, 1991, pp.156–61). Even without extending the discussion to the whole 'general crisis theory', it should be clear that 'socialism and the Viet Nam War' is a subject with many problems to be discussed today.



The collapse of the socialist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe also collapsed the socialist camp that divided the world into two during the Cold War system. As a result, it seems today that the meaning of socialism's existence as a camp post-World War II is becoming less visible. However, during the Viet Nam War, the existence of the socialist camp played a big role. In 1965, President Johnson limited the scope of the large-scale deployment of US ground forces into South Viet Nam. This was done in order to avoid intervention by the Chinese military, as in the Korean War. As a result, the United States was forced to engage in a war of attrition against the guerrillas in South Viet Nam, a battle in which it would be difficult for the US military to demonstrate its superiority. In reviews of the Viet Nam War by the US, it is a choice that is often criticised as a 'mistake' of the Johnson administration. According to these hawkish arguments, the Chinese leadership at that time was on the road to confrontation with the Soviet Union and had no intention of fighting the US in Viet Nam. However, there was a belief amongst the Chinese leadership that depending on the actions of the US, a clash between the Chinese and US forces in Viet Nam would be unavoidable. In that case, they would have had no choice but to take the path of working together with the Soviet Union. In fact, in May 1965, Mao Zedong and others confirmed the intention of the Johnson administration not to send ground troops to the North, and if that were the case, China would not take actions that would lead to a direct conflict with the US forces. After sending a message to the United States, from June 1965 onwards, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, consisting of multiple air defence units, railroad units, and engineering units whose main mission was to secure a supply route from China to North Viet Nam, was dispatched to North Viet Nam (Zhu, 2001, pp.242-412).

The Soviet Union's military expert group on North Viet Nam also emphasised air defence issues, including the operation of missiles to counter US forces' bombing of North Viet Nam. At that stage, the possibility of an invasion of North Viet Nam by the US ground forces could not be denied, as the leader of the advisory group was an experienced infantry armoured division commander with comprehensive military knowledge. The fact that the socialist powers of the Soviet Union and China were willing to support Viet Nam, including the possibility of dispatching a large-scale combat force as in the Korean War, restrained the Johnson administration from deploying ground forces to North Viet Nam.





During the Viet Nam War, it was the People's Army and the NLF that took charge of the ground battles with the US forces in the south. This was very different from the Korean War in which the Chinese volunteer army became the main force in the battle with the United Nations forces. However, the significance of assistance from both from the Soviet Union and China to Viet Nam cannot be underestimated. In April 1965, the Soviet Union dispatched a group of military experts to North Viet Nam, consisting mainly of air-missile defence personnel. The format took the form of a 'training centre' for the Viet Nam People's Army's air and missile defence unit, but in reality, Soviet soldiers directly commanded combat with US military aircraft and launched surface-to-air missiles. At its largest, the Soviet military expert group consisted of 500 personnel, with a total of 6,359 personnel dispatched, of whom 13 were killed. On the other hand, China also provided a total of 320,000 support units by 1968, mainly in support units for the defence and repair of transportation routes and national defence facilities in areas adjacent to China in North Viet Nam. It is said that 1,100 people in these Chinese support units were killed during the Viet Nam War. As the small country of Viet Nam took on the task of liberating the South and achieving unification of the North and South, which has the character of challenging the superpower of the US, the socialist countries, including the nuclear powers of the Soviet Union and China, have a significant role in international politics. It should be said that the fact that they existed as a camp was extremely important. At the time of the Viet Nam War, the conflict between the Soviet Union and China had already deepened, but in order to keep their positions as the 'leaders of the world revolution', the Soviet Union and China had no choice but to support Viet Nam, which was at the forefront of fighting against 'American imperialism' (Kurihara, 2000).

However, the 'compensation' that Viet Nam had to pay for gaining its position as a member of the socialist camp or as the frontline was not small. One big form of 'compensation' was the fact that Viet Nam had no choice but to accept the 'universal model of socialism' embodied in the Soviet Union and China as the basic policy for construction within Viet Nam. The story went back to before the Viet Nam War. In February 1950, immediately after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Ho Chi Minh attended a meeting with Stalin in Moscow, where Mao Zedong was also staying. At the time, Ho had declared the dissolution of the Communist Party and did not propose land reforms aimed at the abolition of landownership in order to rally as many people as possible to the war against France. During a meeting with Ho, Stalin questioned these matters, pointing to the two chairs in front of him and saying, 'This is the peasant's chair, that is the landlord's chair. In which chair will the Vietnamese revolutionary sit?' (Do, 2000, p.6). The aid from the socialist camp was, from its first steps, accompanied by the intervention of imposing a 'universal model'. This structure remained unchanged during the Viet Nam War.

However, the fact that socialist construction in North Viet Nam during the Viet Nam War was strongly characterised by the mechanical introduction of the 'universal model' does not mean that such



North Vietnamese socialism was useless in the war. Rather, the 'universal model', which has a strong character of 'socialism sharing poverty', was a powerful foundation for the wartime regime and played a major role in the Viet Nam War. That is why, although it was a 'universal model' that was 'forced', it should be seen that it took root in its own way during the Viet Nam War. North Viet Nam was an agricultural society at the time of the Viet Nam War, and socialism was basically the collectivisation of agriculture. In 1958, when the socialist transformation began in North Viet Nam, agricultural collectivisation also began in the form of the construction of agricultural production cooperatives. The first five-year plan, which began in 1961, aimed to reorganise these cooperatives into high-level cooperatives in which farmland and livestock were completely owned by the cooperatives. However, it was difficult to demonstrate the economic superiority of collective farming to farmers, and the formation of high-level cooperatives went back and forth repeatedly. In 1965, when the Viet Nam War intensified and North Viet Nam was exposed to constant bombing by the US military, the participation of more than half of the farmers was finally seen, and since then this has been established as the basis of the wartime regime.

There was a big change in the evaluation of this collective farming in Viet Nam. First, in the period immediately after the end of the Viet Nam War, it contributed greatly to the victory of the war and was evaluated as demonstrating the 'superiority of socialism'. In the 1980s, the reform of collective farming in the form of the introduction of the production contract system began, and it came to be evaluated that collective farming during the war contributed to the war victory but was economically unreasonable in many ways. Furthermore, after the end of the 1980s, when collective farming was dismantled, conventional collective farming was evaluated as the mechanical application of foreign models, and it hindered the development of Vietnamese agriculture. There is even an argument that collective farming's contribution to the war was not due to its 'advancement' as an economic system but due to its 'backwardness' that embodied the egalitarianism that existed in traditional village communities.

From the 1960s, when agricultural collectivisation took place, to 1975, when the Viet Nam War ended, agricultural productivity barely improved. Whilst a large amount of manpower was invested in the war and the agricultural labour force was reduced, the cooperatives were obliged to provide heavy food supplies. Under these circumstances, the *raison d'être* of cooperatives for farmers was to realise an egalitarian distribution of the fruits of their production. This egalitarian distribution contributed greatly to the input of human resources from rural areas to the war.

The Viet Nam War, which escalated into a limited war in 1965, forced the US military to limit its ground fighting to South Viet Nam, adopting a strategy of attrition that would inflict damage on the revolutionary forces in the South that exceeded their troop supply capacity. This strategy of attrition did not work well, and the strength of the revolutionary forces in South Viet Nam was maintained at a constant level despite the heavy casualties, due to the large capacity for recruiting personnel from North Viet Nam. From 1959, when the Viet Nam Workers' Party decided to launch an armed struggle in South Viet Nam, to 1975, when the Viet Nam War ended, personnel sent from the north to the south included combatants and political cadres. It is said to have reached 2.3 million (14,000 during 1959–1964, 400,000 during 1965–1968, and 1,888,000 during 1969–1975). This number was more than 10% of the population of North Viet Nam at the time. Despite North Viet Nam being an agricultural country, North Viet Nam achieved a war mobilisation comparable to that of industrialised nations. The foundation that made possible the large-scale war mobilisation after 1965, which had a decisive influence on the outcome of the Viet Nam War, was collective farming, called cooperatives (Furuta, 1996, pp.31–37).

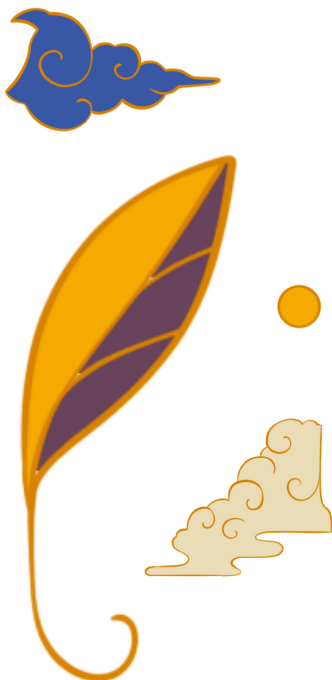
In today's economically developing Viet Nam, collective farming during the war tends to be seen as a relic of the past. However, there is a 'positive legacy' of collective farming. Despite the establishment of farm management rights of individual farming households, small farm management is still universal in Viet Nam, and farmland consolidation has not progressed much at present. One of the reasons for this is that in the farming villages in northern and central Viet Nam, farmland was distributed equally amongst the members of the villages when the land use rights of farmers were established. Despite the problem of slow progress in land accumulation, the widespread maintenance of small-scale farming provides a safety net in terms of food and other items in a rapidly fluctuating market economy. It also serves as a brake on the population influx from rural to urban areas. This is one of the reasons why Vietnamese society has been able to maintain stability even during the COVID-19 crisis. Some argue that the equal division of farmland in the northern and central regions is a revival of the traditional communities of villages. It also seems to have an aspect of the legacy of socialism before Doi Moi. There is also the aspect of the formation of homogenous farming villages through the land reforms of the 1950s and the legacy of thorough egalitarianism in the subsequent collective farming. The relationship between the legacy of socialism and the development after Doi Moi is an issue that should be examined from multiple perspectives (Furuta, 2013, pp.341–69).



3. The Viet Nam War and the Economic Development of Southeast Asia

The decision to limit the deployment of US ground forces to South Viet Nam was a decision made by the US based on the 'lessons learned from the Korean War'. The socialist camp also responded by learning from the lessons of the Korean War and making sure that China and the Soviet Union did not confront the US military directly. This made the Viet Nam War a much more 'ruled' limited war than the Korean War. In the case of the Viet Nam War, there was a 'tacit agreement' between the great powers of both the East and the West that the battlefield would be limited to Viet Nam and Indochina (the ground war would be in South Viet Nam) and that the war would not expand into a direct war between the great powers or a world war. As a result, major powers became able to introduce the latest weapons, excluding nuclear weapons, onto the battlefield without worrying about the outbreak of a world war, clearly increasing the intensity of warfare on limited battlefields. The total number of artillery bombs used by the US military in the Viet Nam War and in Laos and Cambodia is said to have reached 2.4 times that of World War II. The enormous casualties of the war, with about 3 million Vietnamese casualties, including combat personnel and civilians, and more than 60,000 US and allied forces, show the severity of the war.

On the other hand, the fact that the Viet Nam War was a 'ruled limited war' meant that neighbouring countries could pursue their economic interests without worrying that the war would expand and spread to them. The economic prosperity of neighbouring countries, including Japan, and the violent development of wars in Viet Nam and Indochina were not separate events but were closely related.



Southeast Asia had a regional framework that had great significance in relation to the economic prosperity of countries such as Japan. From the beginning, the Viet Nam War was closely related to the formation of the region of Southeast Asia. It was after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 that the regional concept of Southeast Asia became strongly conscious amongst US policymakers. The strategic meaning given to Southeast Asia by the US was that it could serve as a region that could stop the spread of the influence of the Chinese Revolution and support Japan's economic reconstruction. The first piece of the existing frontline was Viet Nam and Indochina, where the Indochina War was being fought at the time. Such logic formed the basis of the US intervention in the Indochina War in the 1950s, known as the domino theory.

However, the concept of 'Southeast Asia to support Japan's economic development' did not come to fruition immediately. It was the special procurements from the Korean War that brought the Japanese economy back to life in the early 1950s. Rather, the idea of 'Southeast Asia, which supports Japan's

economic development', seems to have materialised through Japan's provision of war reparations to Southeast Asian countries in the late 1950s, and the 'dollar scattering' accompanying the Viet Nam War in the 1960s.

For the Japanese economy, the special procurements for the Korean War accounted for more than 60% of the export volume at that time, whilst the special procurements for the Viet Nam War accounted for only 7%–8%, both directly and indirectly, and the impact was less than that of the Korean War. However, the role that the Korean War played for the Japanese economy was fulfilled by the Viet Nam War for the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and some Southeast Asian countries. Considering the fact that Japan was able to become an economic superpower through its strengthening ties with Southeast Asia, it seems to be quite valid that 'Southeast Asia to support Japan's economic development' was materialised through the Viet Nam War. In particular, due to the import substitution orientation of Southeast Asian countries, Japan secured a stable market for its heavy and chemical products, whilst Southeast Asia formed the basis for early industrialisation, and a mutually complementary relationship between Japan and Southeast Asia was formed (Kawamura, 2010, pp.303–48).

The fact that the US saw the Viet Nam War in the context of the regional developments in Southeast Asia seems to explain why the US made a full-scale intervention in the Viet Nam War in 1965. For the US, Southeast Asia in 1965 was in an extremely critical and fluid situation. In January of that year, the Sukarno government of Indonesia declared its withdrawal from the United Nations due to the conflict with Malaysia, and the Communist Party expanded its power in the country, deepening the conflict with the national army and Islamic forces. In May, Cambodia's Sihanouk cut diplomatic ties with the US. In August, Singapore separated from Malaysia. Under these circumstances, if the US had not shown a strong stance to maintain the pro-American regime in South Viet Nam, there is a possibility that the influence of the US in Southeast Asia as a whole would have been shaken. Judging that the credibility of its global commitment was at stake, the United States made the decision to send a large number of US military combat units to Viet Nam in July 1965. It can be seen that the fluid situation in Southeast Asia at that time had a great influence (Furuta, 2002, pp.182–88).

As a result of the 9/30 Incident that occurred in Indonesia in 1965, the Communist Party of Indonesia collapsed and the pro-US, anti-communist Suharto administration was born. However, it took several more years for the Southeast Asian countries, which had taken an anti-communist stance, to gain prospects for political stability and



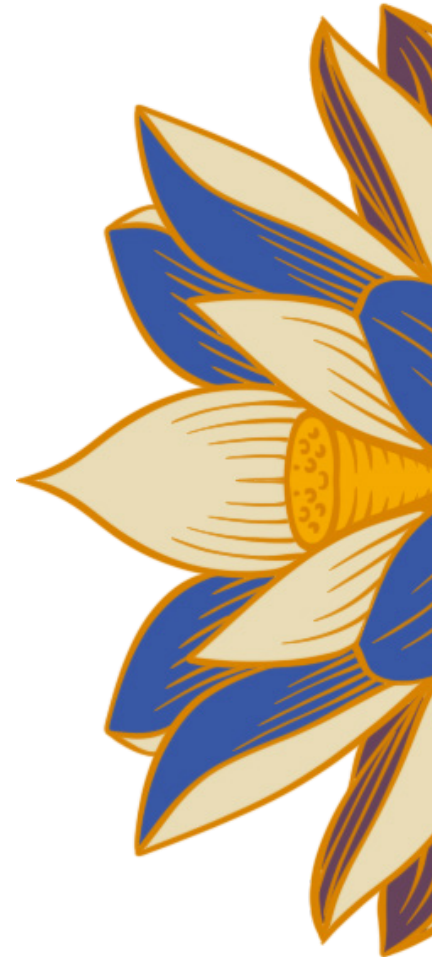
economic development. From the perspective of the leaders of anti-communist Southeast Asian countries, the US intervention in Viet Nam was a time-buying effort to hold back the communist threat until the country's economic development became clear (Ang, 2010, pp.28–29). For these Southeast Asian countries, it was fortunate that the Viet Nam War had an economic ripple effect and provided an opportunity for economic development. In the 1970s, Southeast Asia entered a full-fledged 'era of development'. This situation undermined the international significance of the US military intervention in Viet Nam, but by that time, the Viet Nam War had already become the longest-running foreign war for the US. In this way, when looking at the Viet Nam War from the perspective of Southeast Asia, the war and economic development have an inseparable and close relationship, and the two cannot be discussed separately.

4. ASEAN's Active Role and a Unified Viet Nam

The development of Viet Nam after the war era was remarkable. One of the important factors that supported Viet Nam's development was the country's accession to ASEAN and the formation of ASEAN10, which encompasses the entire Southeast Asian region, enabling peace and active development in the region.

Currently, ASEAN is not only playing a major role in the integration of the Southeast Asian region as a regional cooperation organisation encompassing 10 Southeast Asian countries, but also in the East Asian community, Asia-Pacific regional cooperation, and dialogue between Asia and Europe. It has played a leading role in the development of regionalism and the formation of free trade blocs in East Asia, including the multilateral integration of free trade blocs. One of the reasons why ASEAN, which was originally an alliance of small nations, is playing such an active role is that ASEAN has become an alliance of nations encompassing 10 countries in Southeast Asia. It seems to be a short-sighted view to understand the realisation of ASEAN10 solely as the economic development of ASEAN's original member countries and the Indochina countries following it.

It is believed that the achievement of the unification of the north and south of Viet Nam was of great significance for Viet Nam's accession to ASEAN in 1995. It is only after the Cambodian dispute was settled and the stability of the Indochina region could be expected that the voices of the ASEAN original member countries to approve the accession of Viet Nam became louder. If Viet Nam's North-South division had continued, the Indochina region could not have become stable, and voices amongst the ASEAN original member countries to embark on an 'adventure' to have such an unstable Indochina in ASEAN would not have been strong. In this respect, the achievement



of the unification of Viet Nam's North and South created a foundation for Indochina to become a stable region, which had great significance in motivating the ASEAN original member countries to include Viet Nam as a member of ASEAN.

In the 1980s, in order for the reformists to become more powerful within the Communist Party of Viet Nam and to start Doi Moi, it was important that Viet Nam had achieved unification of the North and South and the foundation of its own security was secured to some extent. The reason why the Doi Moi reform line occupied the majority within the Communist Party of Viet Nam in 1986 was that the extremely delicate power relationship between the reformist forces and the conservative forces within the party turned at the last minute in favour of the reformist forces (Furuta, 2009). Considering this, if the North–South unification of Viet Nam had not been achieved and the leadership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam had continued to feel a great threat to the security of North Viet Nam, reforms within the party in the late 1980s would have been extremely difficult, and perhaps the Communist Party of Viet Nam would have been forced to maintain a rigid line similar to that of the North Korean leadership regarding security and economic management. I believe that there is a big difference between the political cultures of North Korea and Viet Nam, and that the Communist Party of Viet Nam is more realistic than the Workers' Party of Korea. However, the main reason for the difference between North Korea and Viet Nam can be found in the fact that North–South unification was achieved in Viet Nam, whilst the North–South division continued on the Korean Peninsula. The start of the Doi Moi reform was decisive in leading Viet Nam to prioritise the creation of a peaceful international environment that supports economic development, as well as the shift to omnidirectional diplomacy, including improving relations with neighbouring countries and leading Viet Nam to ASEAN,

Furthermore, the significance of the unification of Viet Nam as a premise, so to speak, must be reconfirmed. Since Northeast Asia's international relations have not overcome the division of the Korean Peninsula, the military alliances that were formed during the Cold War remain the cornerstone of its international relations there. Since the legacies have been liquidated with the realisation of ASEAN10, Southeast Asia is playing a very active role in the new regional integration. Today's ASEAN includes both countries that experienced the Cold War era by fighting through wars of national liberation and countries that experienced economic development. If these two currents shape ASEAN today, it would be an extremely short-sighted view of history to determine which was the main aspect, war or economic development. Considering this, from the



time ASEAN was formed in 1967, ASEAN has not been an anti-communist alliance but rather a group of Southeast Asian countries that agreed to the Bangkok Declaration for regional cooperation centred on economic growth and social development. It should also be noted that the fact that it started as an open organisation has a very important meaning (Sato, 2011, p.340).

Of course, the long war era had various aftereffects on Viet Nam, including the great sacrifices made by the Vietnamese people. The question of whether there was any other way for Viet Nam to achieve the unification of the North and South than by making the enormous sacrifice of 3 million people is the most important question posed in the modern history of Viet Nam. The divisions the war left for the Vietnamese people still remain a major challenge today. In times of war, when we do not know what tomorrow will be, people's ideas tended to be short-sighted. However, I would like to emphasise that the basic foundation for the rapid development of Viet Nam after 1991, which has now enabled Viet Nam to have a 'big dream' of becoming a developed country in 2045, was formulated through the long era of war.



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