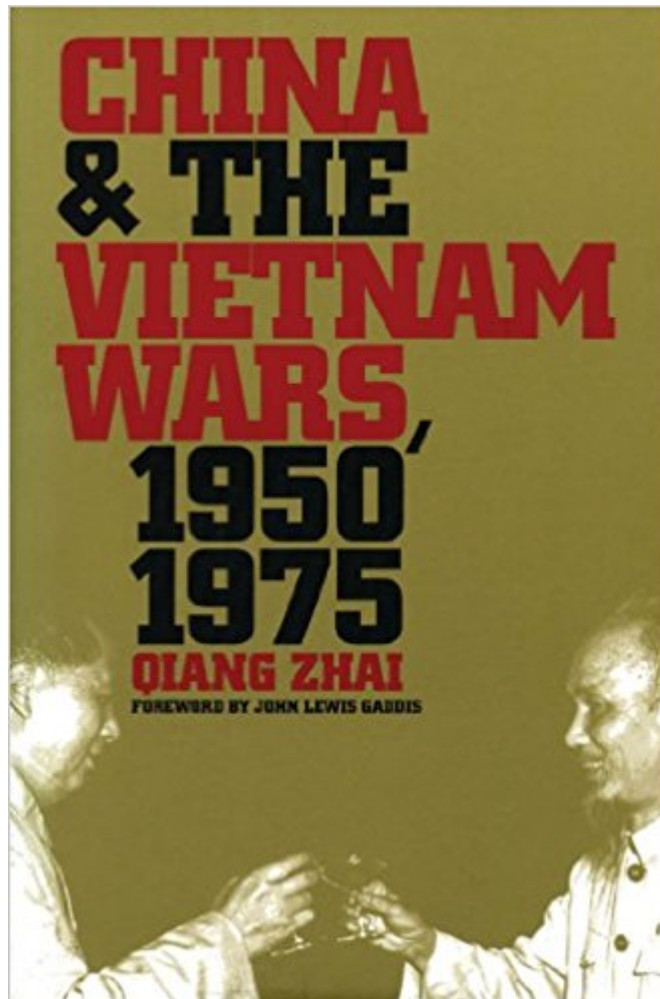


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China And The Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975 (The New Cold War History)



Synopsis

In the quarter century after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Beijing assisted Vietnam in its struggle against two formidable foes, France and the United States. Indeed, the rise and fall of this alliance is one of the most crucial developments in the history of the Cold War in Asia. Drawing on newly released Chinese archival sources, memoirs and diaries, and documentary collections, Qiang Zhai offers the first comprehensive exploration of Beijing's Indochina policy and the historical, domestic, and international contexts within which it developed. In examining China's conduct toward Vietnam, Zhai provides important insights into Mao Zedong's foreign policy and the ideological and geopolitical motives behind it. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he shows, Mao considered the United States the primary threat to the security of the recent Communist victory in China and therefore saw support for Ho Chi Minh as a good way to weaken American influence in Southeast Asia. In the late 1960s and 1970s, however, when Mao perceived a greater threat from the Soviet Union, he began to adjust his policies and encourage the North Vietnamese to accept a peace agreement with the United States.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the introduction to this scholarly and impassive, but very interesting, study of China's relations with Vietnam during the height of the Cold War, Author Qiang Zhai, professor of history at Auburn University Montgomery in Alabama, explains his rationale for writing this book: "The rise and fall of the Sino-Vietnamese alliance is one of the most crucial developments in the history of the Cold War

in Asia in general and Chinese foreign relations in particular." According to Zhai, he drew on "fresh Chinese documents to present a full-length treatment of the evolution of the Sino-DRV relationship between the two Indochina wars, focusing on its strategic, political, and military aspects." During the course of his research, Zhai found "a complex blend of motives behind Beijing's Indochina policy," and one of his main premises is that the "Beijing-Hanoi relationship was composed of both agreements and contradictions, cooperation and confrontation." China and Vietnam had a complicated relationship long before the Indochina wars of the mid-20th century. According to Zhai, the Vietnamese "had a tradition of looking to China for models and inspirations," but there also were "historical animosities between the two countries as a result of China's interventions in Vietnam." Zhai writes that Mao Zedong was "eager to aid Ho Chi Minh in 1950" because Mao believed "Indochina constituted one of the three fronts (the others being Korea and Taiwan) that Mao perceived as vulnerable to an invasion by imperialist countries headed by the United States.

China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975 examines the relationship between Communist China and Communist Vietnam in the course of the two wars in Vietnam: The first Indochina War and the Vietnam War (the second Indochina War). The author provides many interesting insights on this love/hate relationship over the two decades with documentary support from Chinese archival sources and published collections. The relationship between the PRC and the DRV was complex because of the influence of the Soviet Union over Vietnam and the role of the United States in the Cold War period. North Vietnam was able to take advantage of the Sino-Soviet conflict to receive aids from both masters, perhaps thanks to the U.S. escalation of the war which was perceived as threat to both China and the Soviet Union. Chapter One: This chapter reviews the history of the Sino-Vietnamese relationship through the early contacts between Ho Chi Minh and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). During this time, Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh seized power in Hanoi in 1945 and began the war against the French, starting the first Indochina War. The CCP was fighting against the more powerful Chiang Kai-Shek's KMT forces. There was limited mutual assistance between the CCP forces and the Vietminh. Subsequently, after Mao founded the PRC in 1949, Ho vigorously sought assistance from the CCP and the Soviet Union. In their meeting in 1950, "Stalin told Ho that assisting the Vietminh was primarily a Chinese business" (p. 17). The author believes that the reason why Mao was eager to help Ho was Mao's vision of revolutionary internationalism when China was at the time also supporting North Korea. China's assistance to the DRV included both military and advice on land reform program.

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