Justifying Invasion in the Third Indochinese War: Humanitarian Intervention and Chinese Just War

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyzes Vietnam's Cambodian regime change and the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979 through the lens of Just War Theory. Although Cold War *realpolitik* was very much operative in the region and era, ending the genocidal regime of the Khmer Rouge yields more insights if it is considered within the contemporary framework of humanitarian intervention (HI). 21st-century revisionists have reassessed Vietnam's "successful intervention" not only as undeserving of the opprobrium it received from the UN but also in recognition of its "humanitarian consequences." It is also useful for present and future international affairs to consider when the People's Republic of China sees fit to allow, enter, or initiate wars. In the Sino-Vietnamese War, different moral values, perhaps even different cosmologies dating to antiquity, may also have been in play. These invasions' *ad bellum* causes and *post bellum* results diverge greatly in terms central to Just War Theory. The intentions and consequences of these Vietnamese and Chinese military interventions call into question whether a successful regime change without humanitarian intent can be just and whether to countenance a Sinocentric concept of "punitive" war. The smaller scale of the Sino-Vietnamese War, despite intentions to "punish" what some now see as at least *unintentional* HI, may render it more just than the more consequential Cambodian regime change. When analyzing military interventions like these and elsewhere, intentions are difficult to verify, but consequences are even harder to predict.

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"The crime of genocide is being committed in Kampuchea today." --*Communist Review* (Vietnam), Aug. 1978.[1]

"You had no intention, you were just following orders, so according to Buddha's teachings you need fear no punishment. If there is no intention, there can be no sin, you understand? You did not have the intention, therefore you committed no sin." --Nuon Chea, "Brother Number Two," to a pair of confessed Khmer Rouge killers, in the 2009 documentary film *Enemies of the People*.

"The Western press wrote off the Chinese punitive action as a failure. I believe it changed the history of East Asia. The Vietnamese knew China would attack if they went beyond Cambodia on to Thailand. [… The Chinese declared] that their military action was a 'punitive' action and was not intended to capture Vietnam." --Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew[2]

Was the Third Indochinese War just? If Just War is to transcend its status as a concept and tradition to become a theory, it must be loosened and expanded from its Eurocentric origins. This essay will analyze its *ad bellum* and *post bellum* phases in an inhospitable context, Southeast Asia in the penultimate decade of the Cold War. The titular "invaders" in this case, China and Vietnam, are of exceptional interest for how they justified their invasive initiations of war as

[1] As cited by Sophie Quinn-Judge in Simms & Trim (Eds.), pg. 352: Quyet-Tien, "Cac nha cam quyen Trung-Quoc dang ung ho Bon Phat Xit Diet Chung o Cam-pu-chia" [Chinese Support for the Fascist, Genocidal Gang in Kampuchea], *Tap Chi Cong San* [*Communist Review*], pg. 17.

[2] Lee, pg. 603.

self-defense, to comply with UN Article 51.[3] As Brian Orend notes, Vietnam is intimately connected to Just War Theory (JWT) not only for capturing America's moral imagination in the "Second Indochina War" but immediately afterwards for joining an elite group of states which has successfully undertaken a war of regime change in the last several decades.[4] Can its invasion in 1978 and occupation until 1989 of Cambodia be viewed as just, on humanitarian intervention (HI) grounds? Secondly, and closely related, what moral judgments can be made about the PRC response in 1979, to invade its fellow communist neighbor in retaliation for aggression? To what extent does justice, in retrospect, turn on the alignment of "right intentions" and successfully carrying out the withdrawal plan when the war is over?[5]

To answer these questions in brief further justifies this study. While this inquiry adopts humanitarian intervention and Just War Theory as theoretical frameworks for analysis, these

[3] Article 51 allows the use of force in self-defense only. Neither of these states currently supports exceptions for humanitarian intervention, and in the late 1970s, a liberal consensus calling for such exceptions did not even exist. Thus, both Vietnam and China justified their invasions in terms of self-defense. Both claims were rejected by the UNSC.

[4] Orend, pg. 91, agrees with Walzer that Vietnam's Cambodian intervention was clearly a justified one, though the pages he cites in *Just and Unjust Wars* are more generally about HI and don't mention Cambodia by name. Walzer does call Vietnam's invasion justified as a kind of intervention "best carried out by neighbors," even unilaterally, as multilateral agreement is likely to be slow or not forthcoming at all. See "The Politics of Rescue," pg. 55. Walzer mentions Cambodia repeatedly in "The Argument about HI," asserting that "Pol Pot's killing fields had to be shut down—by a foreign army if necessary," in Meggle (Ed.), that a strategy of putting pressure on the Khmer Rouge government or Khmer majority "obviously isn't a strategy that would have worked," pg. 6. His point is that it is better to address "the forces actually engaged in the barbarous acts" rather than mete out punishment on civilian non-combatants or those not in the government. Quinn-Judge, pg. 344, also calls Vietnam's regime change an "undeclared but successful humanitarian intervention."

[5] This assumes that "probability of success" has been carefully analyzed in the *ad bellum* stage.

invasions fit neither precisely. Instead, they illustrate the difficulties of stretching Western-derived theories with ambitions or pretentions of universality across cultural divides. By showing where exactly these invasions run afoul of theoretical requirements, in the reflections of an Asian or--with more intellectual baggage—oriental mirror, understandings of HI and JWT are deepened for highlighting where they are tied to Western thought and traditions. If every culture has its own traditions, still deeply held and sometimes contradicting Western standards, a so-called universal theory is little more than an imposition with very limited applicability beyond the context in which it was formed. On the other hand, finding commonalities or placing related concepts in cross-cultural conversation could yield a more inclusive theory. The Third Indochinese War offers examples of both situations, in a region of increasing global concern.

Some political scientists might object that the Cold War is or will soon be the domain of historians. Without insisting, as realists do, that the international anarchic system has not changed the imperatives of self-help, how should a political scientist approach cases in the late 20th century? This paper suggests that the Third Indochinese War can illuminate ongoing debates regarding the justice of HI, as well as the pressing question of whether—or when—rising China will go to war, having abstained from international militarized conflict since the 1979 invasion of Vietnam. Notoriously secretive communist archives are slowly opening to

scholarship, and revelations aplenty confirm that we in the West knew very little about top East and Southeast Asian decision-making processes, even during "hot" flashes in the Cold War. New evidence shows that even an opaque, communist regime is not incapable of harboring humanitarian intentions and motives behind military acts.[6] The case also offers a dyadic illustration of when Michael Walzer requires that just wars be "limited" in their goals versus when the monumental task of regime change is justified to end atrocities which "shock the conscience of humanity."[7] In short, it appears that "murderousness" of the target regime transforms limited goals from a virtue to a moral failure for the intervening party.

[6] As with any state, however, both the sincerity and the primacy of humanitarianism must be thoroughly questioned. The doubt plaguing JWT since its earliest articulation and at least as much today is whether militaries are generally sent into battle for non-humanitarian reasons such as material gain, then given *post-hoc* justifications in noble, humanitarian language. Nearly equally pressing and likely is the possibility that HI rhetoric alone is insufficient to motivate an entire population, as is necessary for modern warfare. If noble language, fighting for such ideals as freedom and democracy (or in this case, the advancement of communism), fails to stir the hearts of soldiers, mixing in material gain and long-standing enmity or rivalry can and often does shore up a marginal case for war. The first half of this paper may well turn on whether the reader believes Vietnam sincerely wanted to end Khmer Rouge crimes against its own population and Vietnam or whether Vietnam was merely imitating the imperialists it had come to know all too well.

[7] Walzer makes the general guideline for limited aims in war in *Just and Unjust Wars*, pg. 122. Channeling Walzer, Terry Nardin notes that "systematic" atrocities require "longer-term involvement," in a *post bellum* phase, as Walzer himself also outlines in his 2006 article. In "Regime Change and Just War," Walzer asserts that merely aggressive states should be contained, but murderous regimes should be changed by force, as in a HI. An implicit question for direct comparison in the final section of this paper is whether Vietnam's *ad bellum* cause was strong enough to excuse a botched *post bellum* occupation. Similarly, were the PRC's clear and very limited aims in invading Vietnam, prevention of encirclement (pre-emptive self-defense), "punishment" and "rectification" enough to justify its brief war with a recent ally?

Vietnam's intervention was an example of successfully changing a regime and ending a genocide, two unfortunately common goals of HI and contemporary Just War rhetoric. Communist Vietnam's apparent lack of humanitarian intentions, albeit in an era preceding the existence of HI language, paired with its lengthy and reviled occupation of Cambodia in the ten years following the invasion, cast this intervention as clearly unjust—at least until the recent formation of a global, liberal consensus against genocide. The consequences of Vietnam's actions may be contrasted with more recent interventions in which humanitarian intentions are explicitly stated, but ensuing and ongoing consequences are more ambiguous.[8]

We must also be careful not to overuse the humanitarian lens to view Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, lest the Chinese response be seen as punishing a just military action. China arguably maintains its own, unique world view, and as a result, justifies wars differently than the West. Books like Alastair Ian Johnson's and M. Taylor Fravel's are likely to be more predictive of future ones than any universal theory because they examine ancient and recent

[8] Iraq and Afghanistan remain open cases. Libya and Syria are other obvious candidates for analysis. ISIS is emerging as another regime whose nature and deeds have fomented multilateral military engagement from its neighbors and Western powers. East and Southeast Asia, meanwhile, seem to be arenas for wars of previous generations, despite the ongoing rule of unsavory regimes and a declared "pivot" toward Asia by the U.S.

Chinese wars.[9] This paper adds to a scholarly consensus that Chinese leaders' attitudes toward war are both culturally continuous and in some ways comparable to the West.

Examined together, these two invasions are notable and useful for their almost fully Asian context, which will add to analysis of Just War Theory in a non-European setting. If international law is universal but often violated, a global moral understanding—if not agreement—regarding the initiation and ending of war remains a worthwhile theoretical objective. The Third Indochina War is a logical entry point for discussion of HI with Asian countries and citizens who do not share the same *jus ad bellum* criteria as invoked by cosmopolitan liberals in what global "moral entrepreneurs" call "the international community."[10] As China's rise, evolving self-image, regional and global roles will be among the

[9] John Mearshimer is one of the most prominent proponents of realism's concern with status quo and revisionist powers, the latter needing to be contained to preserve a stable balance of power. See also Bernstien & Munro, Johnston (2003), Friedberg, and the Jan./Feb. 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs* for several essays on the topic of rising China, the inevitability or possibility of conflict with the U.S. Three current geographic areas with potential to escalate into war with China include the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands, where China recently declared a no-fly zone repeatedly defied by Japan and the U.S., the semi-independent island of Taiwan, and the South China Sea. Significantly, Vietnam's violent response in June 2014 to Chinese placement of an oil rig in the South China Sea (or East Sea to Vietnam) is drawing frequent comparison to the 1979 war. To examine the conditions in which China last went to war would be valuable for assessing the potential for war in these three arenas.

[10] As a moral entrepreneur seeks to either establish or enforce a norm among an influential group, a global one directs his/her efforts at international organizations and people with a transnational identity. The term "international community" is understandably seen as a bit wishy-washy by realists or others who focus exclusively on nation-states, but promoters of democracy, activists against human trafficking, and countless other groups provide a large and growing audience toward whom global moral entrepreneurs direct their pleas. For a book-length description of the role of international organizations in creating a sense of global community, see Akira Iriye.

most important issues of the 21st century, the great power's philosophy of war will have to be integrated into Just War Theory.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, a very basic history of the Third Indochina War will be sketched for background, supported by the timeline in APPENDIX A.[11] The second section considers how Vietnam's Cambodian invasion has been reevaluated in the past two decades. Thirdly, China's traditional attitudes regarding the morality of war will be presented, keeping an eye towards affinities with the Western tradition. The paper will conclude that 1. Vietnam's forcible regime change in Cambodia bears much in common with Western actions in the 1990s-2000s, but the global context has changed greatly in the last 25 years to allow new justifications for war. 2. As evident in Deng Xiaoping's need to reassure the U.S. before acting, China's invasion was less justified but resulted in a *post bellum* phase of little lasting consequence.

Even if 1. could be judged as more morally just than 2., its far more ambitious goals and extended *post bellum* phase continue to render it more questionable than the less just but far smaller Chinese "lesson" in regional hierarchy. Especially with the passage of time, an unjust but very limited war concluded well may come to be seen as more just than a larger, messier

[11] Readers unfamiliar with state leaders and events of the Third Indochinese War should turn immediately to the APPENDIX, as the main text gives only the briefest of summaries.

war begun with the best of self-defensive and humanitarian intentions. Not only on pacifist grounds, war itself, especially large wars of regime change which do not end in or lead to real reconciliation, may be the greatest evil. We may well predict which side will win a militarized conflict—the more powerful one—but recent history has shown victors to be rather less than clairvoyant about war's aftermath and reconstruction.

This is an interesting, important case not only for its Asian context, largely leaving out the two major state sponsors of the Cold War in actual combat. It offers an early but not too distant genesis of the debates on humanitarian intervention and the softening of absolute sovereignty. The context is also unique, offering a "hard case" for those who oppose intervention. All the states involved in fighting were developing countries, a terrible genocide was ended, and both of the intervening/invading states are now firmly in the camp of non-intervention advocacy, with the PRC among the world's most outspoken in this regard.

The Third Indochinese War also created many ironic positions and paired several strange bedfellows. It turned the Soviet Union into a defender of human rights at the UN and the outspoken dove Senator George McGovern into a hawk, allied with the conservative ideologue William F. Buckley, Jr.[12] It also highlights some, like Stephen Morris, who maintain that a regime which caused and presided over the deaths of a fifth of its population—called

[12] See Power, pg. 134.

"worse than Hitler" not only by the intervening party--is not necessarily genocidal. It is, in short, necessary to examine why Vietnam was a watershed war for Michael Walzer and consideration of Just War in the U.S., while in the conflicts immediately afterward America's Cold War positions may have stood on even shakier moral foundations.

Just War Theory as it stands today consists of three phases: *jus ad bellum*, before and leading up to declaration of war, *jus in bello*, how warfare is conducted, and *jus post bellum*, how war is ended. This paper withholds judgment on which is most important, however, it will not discuss the *in bello* phase at length.

The central theoretical question of this paper is how JWT would interpret the case of the Third Indochina War. Just War Tradition, as a moral concept, is rooted in Christianity and the history of the West. Neither the Tradition nor the Theory should be confused with theories of international relations, which extend far beyond war. Just War, instead, resides in a sort of middle ground between realism and pacifism. The former, where one might get confused[13], states that war is natural and inevitable, therefore devoid of moral considerations. The latter claims that war is never necessary or moral and therefore can and should be avoided at all costs.

Just War Theory in this paper is taken to be a set of moral guidelines for going to, fighting, and concluding wars, of special import when state actions and declarations

[13] In IR theory, realism is usually contrasted with liberalism and constructivism.

intentionally find their way into international law's cracks and gray areas. Rather than a conclusive, standard checklist as some accounts of *jus ad bellum* can seem, the most useful part of the tradition is the ability to talk about the justice of particular wars in a common language. Whether this language can be translated into Asian tongues remains to be seen. It should be of interest to examine how basic tenets like right intent and motivations, just cause, and legitimate authority are interpreted in an almost exclusively Asian context. The Third Indochina War also offers insights into *jus post bellum*, a fairly new concept pioneered by Brian Orend and Alex Bellamy, in an area and era outside and before the current universal preference for democracy. Let us turn, first, to the facts on the ground.

Events of the Third Indochina War. The Third Indochina War can be divided into two discrete sections, containing several wars within each. The first section includes the conclusion of the Second Indochina War, consisting of civil wars and coups.[14] The second section includes the two declared, interstate militarized conflicts between Vietnam and Cambodia, the PRC

[14] The Second Indochina War, locally known as the American War, was ultimately a Vietnamese civil war which unified the country, and included in its conclusion are other revolutions and coups which changed the ruling regimes in Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. This is not the place to debate at what point an insurgency becomes a revolution or a civil war. Bloodless or minimally violent coups in Thailand and Cambodia are included not because they were wars but because they were largely contained within national borders (i.e. intra- rather than interstate) and changed the official leadership of the country, though not always the regime type (if holding to a simple dichotomy between democracies and non-democracies, which still certainly included worthwhile distinctions between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes of the region and era). The First Indochina War pitted the Southeast Asian subaltern nations against their French colonialists, who departed in 1954 with independent Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in their wake.

(People's Republic of China) and Vietnam, generally the more scrutinized and morally ambiguous for Just War concerns.[15] This section and the paper generally focus on the second category, and for the sake of brevity it will begin with events in Cambodia, after the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam. More detailed events from 1970 to 1979 can be found in the APPENDIX.

While King Norodom Sihanouk was away from Cambodia in the early 1970's, a coup led by Lon Nol and supported by the CIA held tenuous rule over the country amidst American bombings in the Second Indochina War.[16] Soon before the end of that war in April, 1975, Lon Nol's regime was toppled by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, a highly secretive revolutionary regime which successfully de-urbanized the entire country. Pol Pot's revolution, known for setting the Cambodian clock back to "Year Zero," also achieved far more ignoble accomplishments. The regime cut off nearly all international ties and expelled all "foreign" influences, including both journalists and ethnic minorities, the latter forming the basis for claims of conventional

[15] Search for the Third Indochina War on Wikipedia, and a disambiguation page appears for the Sino-Vietnamese War and the Cambodian-Vietnamese War. Ever so authoritative.

[16] Until this point, Zhai Qiang (in Roberts, pg. 374-5) says that the Cambodian prince was distancing himself from leftist forces over the excesses of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Pol Pot, by contrast, likely drew great inspiration from it, as he visited the PRC in 1965-66. Zhai, on pg. 383, notes that Sihanouk and Pol Pot agreed soon after to oppose the U.S., with Chinese persuasion, even as China's relations with the U.S. were thawing. Sihanouk seems to have been rather fickle, fitting for someone whose political friends killed much of his family, bombed his country, and led a coup against him. He's also noted by the Guinness Book of World Records for having held the widest variety of top political positions.

genocide.[17] As top Khmer Rouge leaders had also visited China during the height of its "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," the new regime was inspired to achieve a far purer, more extreme communism than that which had alienated King Sihanouk in China.

While shielded from the eyes of the West, Cambodia's neighbors were acutely aware that the Khmer Rouge was dangerous.[18] Irredentism related to French colonial borders led the Khmer Rouge regime, once in control of Cambodia, to instigate skirmishes, raids, and even massacres within Vietnam and Thailand. In the context of fearing Vietnamese imperialism, both China and Thailand were able to downplay or ignore this bellicosity while the West was largely, even willfully unaware of Khmer Rouge activities.[19] In the face of documented Khmer

[17] A rather unfortunate debate continues as to whether killing one's *own* ethnic group rather than an ethnic "other", as the Khmer Rouge did disproportionately, counts under the strict definition of the term. While ethnic cleansing of minorities was certainly accompanied by killing, the variety and relatively smaller numbers of the Kampuchean minorities do not lend themselves to atrocity documentation.

[18] Vietnam, unlike Thailand, came to this realization only after initial friendship with Pol Pot as a fellow anti-American revolutionary. Power argues that the Khmer Rouge owed much of its initial popular support to the American bombings in Cambodia during its Vietnam War (pg. 93-5). Kiernan, in his book's introduction, finds that domestic resistance to the Khmer Rouge was "inferior but not ineffectual," and after Lon Nol's regime fell, right-wing Cambodians repeatedly entered Democratic Kampuchea from Thailand to harass the Khmer Rouge (Rangswadisab, pg. 14). From the American perspective, communism itself was still "monolithic," and the Khmer Rouge was thought to be a "mere extension of the Vietcong" (Power, pg. 97). The U.S. remained largely in the dark about conflict between Cambodia and Vietnam, and not knowing about their frequent border skirmishes and massacres after 1976 made it much easier later to reject Vietnam's claims that it invaded in self-defense. In Westad's account, pg. 8, the U.S. only saw its old enemy going imperialist in the 1978 invasion.

[19] Power and Quinn-Judge both make note of gruesome accounts from Thai refugee camps and a briefing in the U.S. House of Representatives which might have swayed the West, if not drowned out by Cold War imperatives and the thaw in U.S.-PRC relations, the latter being the Khmer Rouge's staunchest ally.

desire to "retake the Mekong," an influx of refugees, and no reconstruction aid forthcoming from the U.S., the restraint of Vietnam's war-seasoned military was severely and repeatedly tested.[20] After several incursions and reprisals, Vietnam offered to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge on at least three occasions in 1978, ultimately deciding that only regime change would stop the attacks.[21] Better known than these factors, largely confined to remote areas on jungle borders, and perhaps more salient than Cold War considerations in the region, were the ambitions of a victorious Vietnam.

After uniting the country, there was widespread fear in the region that the Vietnamese communists would seek to expand their power through Cambodia all the way to Thailand and Burma. The scourge of Vietnamese imperialism would allegedly spread by military force and by supporting local communist movements like the sympathetic regime which took control in neighboring Laos.[22] Vietnam's swift and decisive invasion confirmed not only genocide but

[20] While villages on Thailand's border suffered attacks similar in frequency to those in Vietnam and almost went to war with Cambodia while under military rule, those in Vietnam were perhaps more often related to control of territory in addition to being deadlier for civilians. This is to say that the KR faced little right-wing harassment from Vietnam, unlike Thailand.

[21] Wheeler, pg. 81. Vietnam first tried to accomplish regime change by arming its many Cambodian refugees, growing greatly in number as Pol Pot carried out party purges in the country's eastern region, broadcasting Khmer radio propaganda comparing Hitler favorably to Pol Pot.

[22] Morris claims that successfully installing a "client regime" in Laos in 1975 made Vietnam believe it was possible to dominate the entire region, attempting to do the same in Cambodia. Perhaps this fact was the key to stirring the fears of its neighbors. Wheeler, pg. 82, disputes whether there was any plan for a "Greater Vietnam", even in the Mekong Delta and Valley, which it occupied briefly in reprisal for Cambodian incursions. As evidence, he cites Vietnam's many offers to negotiate with the Khmer

also neighbors' suspicions, especially as it installed a pro-Vietnamese puppet regime in 1979.

The regime change from Democratic Kampuchea under the Khmer Rouge to the People's Republic of Kampuchea under Vietnamese occupation was immediately and long condemned. That there had been any humanitarian value in the invasion went largely unacknowledged in the West until after the Cold War and Bill Clinton's signing of the Genocide Act in 1994. The Vietnamese didn't help their case by overstaying their welcome until 1989, while the Khmer Rouge retained Cambodia's UN seat and channeled most international aid to the tiny corner of the country still under Pol Pot's control. Behind this gross misappropriation of funds were none other than the U.S. and China.

Since the Sino-Soviet split of 1960, the PRC was increasingly taken by fear of "encirclement" by states unfriendly to it, arguably still the case today.[23] Seeking allies wherever it could, China was always highly supportive of the Khmer Rouge militarily, as was the Soviet Union of Vietnam and most other communist regimes across the globe. The U.S. famously capitalized on this split in the late stages of the Vietnam War, coming to rapprochement with the PRC even as it based its support of other countries primarily on the strength of their anti-

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Rouge, as Pol Pot had been particularly close with the Vietcong during America's war. Quinn-Judge also greatly downplays Vietnam's ambition, noting that the country was war weary and poor, having received no reconstruction aid after its U.S. war.

[23] Military-led "rogue states" like Burma and North Korea, for example, have had few other allies than the PRC since the Cold War. John McCain's 2008 proposal to form a "league of democracies" likely stoked encirclement fears anew.

communist fervor. Getting along with China coincided with supporting the Khmer Rouge against recent U.S. enemies in Vietnam, at least until the extent of the Khmer Rouge's unsavoriness became known to the American public.[24] The Vietnamese intervention, almost universally reviled except by Cambodians, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia, revealed that horrid refugee tales were not scripted, fabricated, or isolated but representative of a systematically genocidal regime. Most in the West would initially have seen this particular conflict as one of Nincic and Nincic's "Bad versus Bad" dilemmas, but with time it clearly became more accurately "Bad versus Worse," and moreover, the U.S. was tied by alliance to the worse side.

Meanwhile, Vietnam's border with China was becoming increasingly fortified and attacked on both sides, with incidents beginning early in 1978 and disputed continuously in terms of who initiated the relatively minor conflicts. Allies only recently, the 1970's as a whole can be read as a gradual deterioration of Sino-Vietnamese relations, from aiding to doubting to invading in early 1979. Communism in Vietnam meant confiscation of private businesses disproportionately owned by ethnic Chinese, and prominent refugees as the "boat people" further blackened the eyes of the regime which had only recently been the pride of the

[24] Of course, as Samantha Power's chapter on Cambodia laments, most Americans preferred not to know what was happening in Cambodia, while many others who did know insisted that Cold War imperatives were still the priority.

developing world (for expelling the U.S.).[25] The grounds for and limited aim of the Chinese invasion were announced by Deng to the U.S. ahead of time. Opposing "liberation" armies conducted battle for about three weeks, and then China withdrew, with deaths totaling in the tens of thousands. The justifications for both operations, as self-defense, were rejected by the UN. How have politicians and scholars evaluated these two violations of Southeast Asian sovereignty? Let's visit Cambodia first.

Reclaiming an Invasion as a Humanitarian Intervention? Cambodia, asserts David Chandler, is "easy to invade."[26] Several authors note that the Cold War context and America's recent involvement in the region vastly inflated the importance of Vietnam's Cambodian regime change,[27] to the exclusion of India's intervention in 1971 and a near-concurrent ousting of Idi Amin by Tanzania. Bellamy notes the lack of global outcry over Amin's overthrow, suggesting

[25] Ethnic Chinese also poured into China via land borders with Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces, where they were resettled in "camp farms" still populated today and considered a "Vietnamese minority" in China. See Han's 2013 article for an account of these.

[26] His chapter in Lahneman (Ed.), "Foreign Interventions in Cambodia, 1806-2003," notes that Cambodia as a nation-state may have been rescued by French imperialists in the 19th century, as Thailand and Vietnam were ready to swallow it up. Being small, Cambodians have throughout history tried to play its larger enemies against one another.

[27] For example, Jones opens a Cambodian chapter, pg. 75, with the observation that ASEAN scholars have "lavished" attention on the organization's negative response to the Vietnamese invasion, said to illustrate defense of ASEAN's founding principle of non-interference in domestic affairs. Jones' book seeks to show that ASEAN states have consistently meddled in each others' internal affairs, that "sovereignty regimes" espoused by ASEAN are more often used to limit the scope of transnational challenges to the state, such as communism.

that the real issue in such cases is *realpolitik* rather than sovereignty.[28] Whatever the reasons, these early cases of intervention by neighboring countries, all in the developing world, suggests that the selective action for which humanitarian intervention is now criticized was originally a matter of selective attention.[29] No one, whether in the North or South, intervenes to stop the genocide that no one has heard about, and retroactive condemnation of genocides which preceded the term could compile a very long list indeed. This section summarizes how politicians and scholars evaluated Vietnam's Cambodian intervention, then and now.

The logic of HI is that inaction in the presence of crimes against a population—especially atrocities which "shock the conscience of humanity"—enables and emboldens those who perpetrate them.[30] War may itself be a wrong, but a liberal consensus believes that allowing a greater wrong to occur by withholding an intervention within one's power turns all parties against humanity. As terrible as the ensuing decade under Vietnamese occupation was for

[28] Bellamy (2009), pg. 11.

[29] See Nincic and Nincic's third "dilemma", pg. 58-60. Intervening only when a particular resolution of a conflict is in one's "national interest" is also a sure way to mix humanitarian and strategic concerns, leading critics to challenge every action's motives.

[30] See Orend's evaluation of "consequentialist pacifism," pg. 250-3, "whose principles exhibit a profound abhorrence for killing people" yet when presented with a preventable mass atrocity would dogmatically adhere to these principles and "allow *an even greater number of people to be killed* by acquiescing in the violence of others less scrupulous" [emphasis in original]. Addressing this conundrum directly, the Brunstetters' "engaged pacifism" of the German Greens offers a practical compromise for an anti-war party which found itself wielding actual state power. Nardin's article credits Walzer with changing the discursive framework to consider the justice of *not* acting.

Cambodia, the hypothetical question of how long the Khmer Rouge would have ruled the country if Vietnam hadn't invaded is one we must ask. Reasons for its continuance would have included a firm grip on domestic power, constant vigilance against foreign and domestic rivals, a permissive global environment including odd but strong allies in China and the U.S., and on the individual level in the West, views ranging from helplessness among detractors to actual approval of hyper-communist experimentation.

As Beachler's 2011 book details, the Khmer Rouge regime initially found many supporters among left-wing academics in the West, notably Malcolm Caldwell in Britain and Noam Chomsky in the U.S.[31] Samantha Power believes that the U.S. had very little moral credibility left after its withdrawal from Vietnam, so reports from the likes of President Ford on Khmer Rouge atrocities were taken by many on the left to be exaggerated for the purpose of justifying another military foray into Southeast Asia. Aided by an expulsion of all Western media when the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh in 1975, a mix of support, skepticism, and ignorance resulted, which Power blames for the uninterrupted death of 1.7 million people in

[31] Caldwell was murdered very shortly after interviewing Pol Pot in Phnom Penh in Dec. 1978, detailed in *The Guardian* in 2010 (see Anthony). Chomsky's views remain controversial, not least for whether he fully repudiated the regime after its genocidal nature became clear, and he continues to emphasize that focusing on the Khmer Rouge's faults ignores the role played by U.S. bombing of Cambodia.

Cambodia.[32] Those who were still paying attention to Southeast Asia after the U.S. withdrew from Vietnam did so very selectively and largely for their own ideological reasons.

A Western consensus on the justice of HI to end mass atrocities was very slow to form and rise above the Cold War discourse of realism. Power's chapter on Cambodia helpfully traces the process by which American politicians gradually recognized that genocides didn't end with the Holocaust, and this recognition was furthered greatly by dramatizations and commemorations of the Jewish experience. President Carter's emphasis on human rights, crusading senators, and intrepid journalists on the Thai border all contributed to a growing American consensus that the Khmer Rouge was evil, but Power finds that, in the absence of the concept of legitimate humanitarian intervention—based on the "responsibility to protect", RtoP—most felt helpless.

[32] Kiernan counted between 1,671,000 and 1,871,000 unnatural deaths as a result of Khmer Rouge rule from 1975-9. Power, pg. 109, notes that "inaccessibility is a feature of most genocide," with Cambodia perhaps "the most extreme case." On pg. 121 she suggests that the readily available information about the genocide by 1985 had failed to "become knowledge" for most people, contributing to the Khmer Rouge keeping Cambodia's UN seat until 1991. Beachler, pg. 37, cites some asking for a new term, "politicide," to cover political mass killings of the kind perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, excluded from legally defined genocide. Evans, oddly, claims on pg. 12 that because the Cambodian actions were against "exactly the same nationality, ethnicity, race and religion," the standards for genocide need to be lowered to include this case, either ignoring or forgetting that entire groups of ethnic minorities (the Muslim Cham, Buddhist monks, Vietnamese, and even ethnic Chinese) were all targeted and virtually eliminated from the country.

Agreement that something needed to be done to stop the killing in Cambodia did not yield multilateral action of the kind the 1990s made familiar. Instead, Vietnam acted unilaterally, justifying its actions in terms of self-defense, satisfying almost no one, least of all the increasingly legitimate authorities at the UN. Several scholars since then, from an evolving concept of Just War, have reassessed Vietnam's forcible regime change on grounds of humanitarian intervention, even though no such justification was made by the Vietnamese themselves. This could lead to the formulation of a tenuous concept of "unintentional humanitarian intervention," and all historical wars which, in Power's terms, were not fought for humanitarian concerns but had humanitarian consequences could be similarly reassessed.[33] Starting not too far in history, what would the concept look like in the context of the Third Indochina War, and is it worth theorizing about it?

It's first worth addressing the difference between justification and motivation for military action. Virtually all use of force can be assumed to have at least some strategic motivation, as not even the UN is seen to be wholly or solely motivated by altruism and kindness. Justifications, while they can certainly include mention of national strategic interests—note the inclusion of genocide prevention in the U.S. 2010 National Security Strategy

[33] Power, pg. 141, describes Vietnam's intervention this way, dividing "consequences" and "concerns."

on the grounds that it protects our "values"—almost always emphasize humanitarian concerns above all.[34]

The reality, not to sound like a heartless realist, is that military actions are likely to be taken for mixed reasons. Although James Pattison notes that today's private security soldiers' material interests are often perceived to delegitimize, especially in humanitarian missions, lacking pure motives doesn't look likely to offend anyone enough to change the practice.[35] Terry Nardin's 2013 examination of Walzer's positions on HI cites precisely the Vietnamese case to show that a "clean-hands criterion" for the intervening party is neither fair nor necessary.[36] While Gareth Evans claims that Vietnam's motives "were no doubt less than high-minded," he too finds that "self-defense has been invoked where the military action in question has in fact provided some useful protection to civilians of another country."[37] Perhaps true intentions, not

[34] Wheeler, quoting Leifer on pg. 88, makes similar points in differentiating between humanitarian justifications and strategic motivations. A page later, he outlines three reasons for Vietnam *not* to have invoked HI in its justifications for invading Cambodia, though he still concludes that it *should* have and would have been just.

[35] Pattison is more concerned with showing that combatants' right motives are above intentions, but that both are "insignificant in the grand scheme of war" (pg. 148).

[36] Nardin, pg. 71. "The real reason for invoking the 'clean hands' criterion is a concern with politics, not morality. If one opposes an intervention, pointing out the moral defects of those who intervene might be rhetorically effective. Any stick will do to beat a dog."

[37] Evans, pg. 24 for the first half of the quotation, pg. 135 for the second half. He continues by citing India's action in E. Pakistan and Tanzania's in Uganda as good examples of this, while Vietnam was more interested than either of them in "regional strategic advantages." For Morris, Vietnamese desire to install sympathetic regimes throughout Indochina, amounting to simple imperialism, was the operative motivation.

to mention overall competence and the extent of preparation, are revealed not in the declarations of the *ad bellum* phase, but in the victor's *post bellum* attitudes and behavior.[38]

Michael Walzer asserts that "humanitarian intervention radically shifts the argument about endings, because now the war is from the beginning an effort to change the regime that is responsible for the inhumanity."[39] If one's motivations for regime change are strategic rather than humanitarian, as all indications suggest Vietnam's were, it should be logically impossible for a humanitarian end to be achieved. A pure humanitarian consequentialist, by contrast, would not question the regime type or motives of the intervening state, though s/he would likely put greater emphasis on the *jus post bellum* phase, for which Vietnam was roundly criticized, largely losing the support of the Cambodians who initially welcomed them "as liberators," as in the Iraqi fantasy scenario.[40] The far more conservative Stephen Morris provocatively suggests that Vietnam's invasion was "understandable," but hardly even on grounds of self-defense. Rather, it was "a choice, not a necessity" based on longstanding

[38] A victorious party whose strategic and material motivations vastly outweigh humanitarian concerns, for example, will spend the *post bellum* phase securing the spoils of war, to the neglect of the losing party's population.

[39] *Arguing about War*, pg. 19.

[40] See the articles by Cima, McGregor, and Ross for details of the long Vietnamese occupation and its consequences after the collapse of its Soviet patron.

imperial ambitions in the region.[41] He finds Vietnam's *jus ad bellum* case to rest entirely on the need to end Khmer Rouge aggression, driven by the latter's "hyper-Maoism," but satisfying the ambition to dominate its weaker neighbor weighed just as heavily in its motivations to invade.[42]

With these considerations in mind, Nicholas Wheeler's pro-Vietnam chapter is at least refreshing. By the contemporary era, the replacement of a bad, genocidal regime with another in one's normatively desirable image has been all but accepted by the international community. Most of the controversy now lies in the means and whether a neighbor, a powerful state acting unilaterally, or only the UN has the legitimate authority to undertake the change and preside over *post bellum* reconstruction.[43] By Wheeler's account, Vietnam knew that regime change wasn't proportional, but "missed an opportunity" to argue for it on humanitarian grounds.[44] Only regime change would stop the massacres within the Vietnamese border and, concomitantly, the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam also had to stay in Cambodia because the Khmer Rouge was still being materially supported by

[41] Morris, pg. 112. Quinn-Judge, in Simms & Trim (Eds.), puts the "choice" to intervene differently, whereby the decision was forced on a reluctant, even confused comrade. Hanoi, she claims, didn't anticipate the KR's ferocious irredentism, fully expected diplomacy to solve any issues between the two communist states even after losing the common American enemy, and the Vietnamese were surprised by the initial reactions to the regime change—not least China's reciprocal invasion.

[42] Morris, pg. 229-30.

[43] Vietnam, it should be noted, may not have exactly installed a liberal democracy in place of the Khmer Rouge, but it was certainly trying to put in place its favored regime type, instead of what it called "fascism."

[44] Wheeler, pg. 86. Earlier, on pg. 79, he asserts that Vietnam met the minimum requirements of humanitarian intervention.

the UN, as the recognized occupant of Cambodia's national seat. Self-interested strategy in this case coincided with the prevention of Pol Pot's return, which one must wonder how anyone (but not any state) could have desired.[45]

Brian Orend toes a revisionist line when he asks whether Vietnam may in fact have had some inkling of humanitarian motivations when invading Cambodia.[46] Power is not far behind when she claims that, especially with the evidence of mass killings and torture which the invasion uncovered, Vietnam "thought it would earn praise if it overthrew Pol Pot."[47] How sure can we be that Vietnam's post-hoc justifications of the invasion, which did contain explicit humanitarian appeals, played no role in motivating the regime change?[48] Perhaps ASEAN, with its guiding principles of "mutual respect" and the greatest proximity to the conflict, could be seen as the most neutral and well-informed observer in this regard.

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[45] Wheeler, pg. 102-3.

[46] He asks this as a provocative aside within his explanation for the regime change invasion, on pg. 191. He suggests that the country not only had to defend itself, it had a genuine interest in stopping the massive flow of refugees across its border with Cambodia. Vietnam also must have known that the Vietnamese minority population in Cambodia, originally numbering half a million, had been decimated along with the Chinese and Muslim Cham.

[47] Power, pg. 142.

[48] Why do we dismiss the Vietnamese radio broadcasts into Cambodia, urging the Kampuchean army to revolt against the "genocidal Pol Pot/Ieng Sary clique" as insincere propaganda but credit the high-minded justifications of freedom and democracy from our own leaders? Perhaps the Vietnamese should have directed their loudspeakers much farther West, at least to the UN, so that today's revisionists would have more to grasp than "unintended humanitarian consequences."

ASEAN is said to have feared its own regional, domino effect regarding Vietnamese imperialism, and the new organization excluded Vietnam until its perceived aggression was resolved. By rejecting the invasion, ASEAN claimed to be protecting sovereignty, adhering to its own founding principles of mutual non-interference in the affairs of its member states.[49] The expulsion of Pol Pot was "not regretted," though not "excused" either.[50] This moral quagmire could also be seen in the views of individual ASEAN states for the duration of the conflict. Despite being invaded by Cambodia in 1975 and 1977, 98% of Thai elites saw *Vietnam* as a threat to national security as late as 1985.[51] Oddly, Noel Morada's Asian chapter in a recent book on RtoP gets the facts wrong, claiming that "ASEAN didn't consider the Vietnam invasion of Cambodia as a form of humanitarian intervention, which was Hanoi's main excuse for ending the mass atrocities committed by Pol Pot."[52] Perhaps this shows that history is even more

[49] Deng Xiaoping is described as being "thrilled" by ASEAN's statements in this regard, "eerily" euphemizing the crimes of the Khmer Rouge while strategizing with Ieng Sary about how to respond, in the brief interim between the Vietnamese victory and the Chinese invasion (Westad, 175-77). Leonard's 2008 book argues that China is actually a far more sincere and forceful advocate of the "ASEAN way" than ASEAN itself, preferring what he calls a "walled world" of inviolable sovereignty. See also Jones, who shows ASEAN states have throughout the organization's existence meddled in each others' "internal affairs."

[50] Koji (Ed.), pg. 120, in the ASEAN chapter by Tay and Sukma. Southeast Asia has certainly had its fair share of unsavory regimes and wars for regime change in recent history, so its principle of non-interference should be seen as highly consequential, though it may stem as much from belief in sovereignty as humanitarian exhaustion and futility.

[51] Rangswadisab, pg. 4, 18.

[52] In Genser & Cotler (Eds.), pg. 141.

subject to selective attention than the present, and in the future Vietnam may be considered the first successful example of ending a genocide against the will of the international community.

That some scholars have retroactively bestowed just status on Vietnam's invasion can hardly be more than a cold comfort. Vietnam and the region as a whole in the late 20th century experienced enough turmoil that it could at least be forgiven for doubting both the West's humanitarian intentions and Just War Theory as a whole. Without existing language of HI in the 1970s, it would be doubly unrealistic to expect this communist, Asian government to justify itself in the terms of a liberal, anti-genocide coalition which even today struggles to elicit attention or action from Western policymakers. Furthermore, if the forceful Cambodian regime change was just, must we join China in forgetting its "punitive" war in response, or does the Sino-Vietnamese War automatically revert to injustice? The next section considers how Chinese moral and military traditions intersect with contemporary JWT.

Reconsidering the Justice of a Chinese Cold War Imperative? It should surprise no one that a civilization as old and large as China has its own traditions regarding the initiation, conduct, and conclusion of warfare. This section places the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in the context of traditional Chinese moral discourse on war, within a uniquely Chinese cosmology of *tianxia* 天下, "all under heaven." It draws next on Chinese morality generally, sourced from

secular philosophy rather than religious texts as in Western Just War tradition. Next, we examine various attempts to merge classical Chinese texts on war strategy, in which moral prescriptions are present but not a primary concern, with contemporary Just War Theory. Of special note will be the concept of *yi zhan* 义战, "righteous war," which is judged to be even more just than self-defense, bearing hints of both neo-conservatism and HI. The PRC's record of going to war or, far more often, resolving conflicts by other means, will be examined next. Throughout, attention will be drawn to examples where a near pacifistic "Confucian-Mencian" Chinese tradition appears to have been more influential than the dictates of Alastair Ian Johnston's "cultural realism." Finally, the section closes with analysis of the lead up to the Sino-Vietnamese War, mostly from the Chinese perspective.

The 21st century may seem an odd or late time to reconceptualize the world, but China's rise could make *tianxia*, "all under heaven," a term to reckon with.[53] At very least, the

[53] None of the contemporary Chinese scholars using the term *tianxia* is very explicit about how the term developed or what precisely is included or, if anything, excluded by it. In ancient times it's not difficult to imagine the limits of Chinese alterity being constrained by how far one could ride a horse. Internal, external, and unknown others were very much at play and confined to Asia. I don't think the Muslim, Ming eunuch explorer Zheng He's voyages to India and Africa expanded the geographic reach of *tianxia* because the Ming Dynasty attempted to destroy all record of them. Similarly, the Qing emperors were infamously uninterested in where the first European visitors came from. Chisheng Chang, a critic of the concept's recent promotion, points out on pg. 8 that "China" itself had six or seven meanings in antiquity, at least two of which were near-synonymous with a more historically accurate *tianxia* which was "inclusive but not all-containing." In the golden age of Chinese history, the Tang Dynasty, Chang notes that *tianxia* was particularly bounded and narrow. In the same linguistic line of reasoning, those looking for religious meaning in Chinese cosmology should be heartened by the sometimes worship, general

traditional Sinocentric worldview is a prerequisite for understanding China's just war tradition. This section opens with a discussion of Sinocentrism, which meant much more than the near-universal custom of ancient and current polities placing themselves at the center of the universe.

Beyond Chinese borders which have expanded and contracted over 5000 years of civilization, the concept of *tianxia* idealizes a Confucian past of government striving for virtue and harmony rather than power. These Confucian values, embodied by the Chinese emperor, or "son of heaven," strove to inspire surrounding countries to pay tribute to China's greatness.[54] The tautological *tianming* 天命, or "mandate of heaven," not only gave the emperor's dynasty legitimacy to rule; it also commanded him to set a virtuous example for less civilized tribes and kingdoms to follow.[55] Where barbarians failed to take China's lead, the emperor was duty-bound to spread the near synonymous Chinese culture and civilization, and this included careful but considerable use of force. Only in the 19th century was Qing China dragged kicking

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veneration of *tian* 天 as a deity of sorts. *Tian*, most generally used to mean "day" or "the sky," is also (obviously) the highest realm of Chinese cosmology, including the rest of the known universe, while the lowest is *di* 地, the earth, with *ren* 人, humanity, as the intermediary between the two realms. Wikipedia counts at least 17 different meanings of *tian*.

[54] Confucianism itself is a conservative, nostalgic, and even revivalist philosophy, as Master Kong himself lived in a time of disorder and government corruption. The problems of his era led Confucius to hark back to a bygone era of virtuous kings who ruled the states of Zhou, all many centuries B.C. and before China was unified in 221 B.C.

[55] The political ethics of Confucianism require subjects to overthrow unjust rulers who have "lost" the mandate of heaven, as evidenced by great natural disasters, disorder, corruption, and generally poor governance. Whenever a new dynasty was proclaimed, the mandate was said to have passed from the previous one. Successfully deposing an emperor showed that the heavens were on the side of the victors. Ruling itself was evidence of having the mandate.

and screaming out of a *tianxia* cosmology into the Western world of nation-states by a pair of "opium wars" and semi-colonization, and it could be argued that the term has never ceased to resonate in Chinese hearts.

As William Callahan's article and book chapters note, the *tianxia* system is conceptualized as a fundamentally orderly and peaceful one, while the system of competing nation states has mainly wrought disorder and war.[56] Wars commenced by the emperor, the very most legitimate of authorities, were by definition justified because they rectified disorderly sub-humans on the periphery of *tianxia* and fulfilled a Yellow Emperor's burden to spread civilization.[57] While Confucianism finds war to be an inauspicious tool for statecraft and civilizing barbarians, it openly embraces paternalism, and the alternative of *luan* 乱, chaos, was and continues to be seen as far worse.[58] Any breach of harmony or disrespect of the center in

[56] This contrasts directly with Timothy Mitchell's account of colonization in Egypt. Where the Europeans saw themselves imposing their own, supposedly objective concept of order in all aspects of Egyptian society, which apparently lacked both a conceptual grasp and material application of it, *tianxia* (and likely the view of developing countries which have experienced Western "intervention") is a reaction to Western impositions seen as morally empty and fundamentally disorderly.

[57] Not being racist here with the "yellow man's burden" analogy. *Huangdi* 皇帝, translated as "emperor," is often modified by "yellow" in scholarship, at least in part because *huang* is a homonym for yellow, 黄.

[58] Following the chaos and violence of Maoist and Tiananmen attempts at revolution, all encapsulated in the feared concept of *luan*, the contemporary PRC has become veritably obsessed with order and stability. Arguments for the PRC as a "status quo power" often reference the concept, and Susan Shirk's *Fragile Superpower* is particularly forceful in emphasizing China's current preference for domestic stability. The most telling objective of the PRC government's past five-year plan has been President Hu Jintao's aspiration to build a "harmonious society". The "harmonization" of society is now taken as a euphemism for censorship of dissenting viewpoints, exemplary perhaps of how the establishment of a *tianxia* system would be established in practice.

the *tianxia* system is analogous to children disrespecting their parents, grandparents, or ancestors, and like relations within a household, merits punishment.[59]

A veritable granddaddy of Just War scholarship, James Turner Johnson notes that even as the concept transitioned from a Christian tradition to a secular theory, neither has ever contained a "presumption against war"—only one against injustice.[60] If the West's pacifist tradition is also firmly rooted in the church, the Chinese traditions' secular origins offer illuminating contrast.[61] Whereas the preeminent and pioneering Chinese historian John King Fairbank famously declared Chinese tradition to be nearly pacifistic, few other than Chinese

[59] In Confucian terms, Chang outlines on pg. 10 the belief that each of the family, state, and *tianxia* (three traditional Chinese levels of analysis) has an ideal to which the virtuous are duty-bound to aspire. Filial piety is as close to Confucian dogma as anything, so when Chinese people rail on Japan's WWII behavior as mistreating grandparents, they make the complaint in Confucian terms expected to be mutually understood. Incidentally, the primary religious elements of Confucianism, for which the quite mundane philosophy gets lumped into the category of "world religion" in some studies, involve rituals of ancestor worship. Ritual in general is very important in Confucianism, perhaps especially government ceremony and mourning the dead, but rituals with overt spiritual elements paying tribute to the heavens are not the majority. Solemnity can be secular!

[60] On pg. 181, he finds since the Middle Ages "a resort to force is just if it seeks to repel an injury, to restore something wrongly taken, or to punish evil." This statement is remarkably similar to the Chinese tradition, to be described forthwith! Lo, pg. 417, also engages Johnson directly in comparing Western and Chinese *jus ad bellum* requirements, even getting in a jab that the principle of "last resort" is relatively new in the West, while it has always been present in the Chinese tradition. "Victory without bloodshed" has always been the highest mark of skill and a guiding principle in the "Art of War" titles, most dating to the B.C. millennium. The West, and if this paper were treating *jus in bello*, might respond by questioning the prominent and encouraged use of deception as dishonest and therefore unjust.

[61] Edmund Ryden's comparison of Western and Chinese pacifism and JWT is adamant that there would be "no pacifism without Christianity." Writing from a Taiwanese religious institute, Ryden may be forgiven for overlooking Liu's 1992 book on "oriental pacifism," published in the officially state atheist Mainland, which I've unfortunately returned long ago to interlibrary loan and probably don't have time to translate now.

schoolchildren still believe this. Several book-length studies, beginning with Alastair Ian Johnston in 1995, have done very deep analysis of both Chinese philosophical classics and history, finding several strands of sometimes contradictory thought regarding war.

Although the previously cited authors have pointed out the ability of China to have a largely secular morality, I argue that removing morality from discussion of war is truly sinful.[62] Two 2011 books have reintroduced structural realism into the analysis of the Third Indochinese War, especially with regard to China. Nicholas Khoo's *Collateral Damage* rightly says very little about justice, as the true test of a realist is to remain focused on state interests, even in the extreme case of genocide. Cambodia, in Khoo's book, was simply "the arena in which the Sino-Soviet conflict played itself out by proxy."[63] Even if their parsimonious, neorealist explanations are convincing, which area specialists, pacifists, and Just War scholars alike will dispute, morality should not be thrown out the window with international law and institutions.

[62] Again, it's important to separate the Chinese classics which treat morality generally, in which war is inauspicious at best, from the more realist strategy and tactical guides such as the *Art of War*.

[63] Khoo, pg. 142. Genocide doesn't even make it into his index, and his analysis of the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot escape any detailed condemnation. Perhaps here realism, by omission, is the moral middle ground between those on the left who initially supported the Khmer Rouge and those who, for any ideological or humanitarian reason, condemned the regime throughout its existence. For a pure realist, the new information that genocide was occurring did not change states' interests.

From a moral standpoint, most Chinese are taught from a young age that war is irredeemable, that its use renders all causes and actors categorically base and unjust.[64] Foundational philosophers like Confucius, Laozi, and Mozi each tend toward the pacifist end of the spectrum, leading some to suggest that Chinese culture as a whole is against war on principle.[65] The last, viewing population reduction itself as an evil, specifically condemned the organization of armies to invade and annex their neighbors.[66] Even military classics written for the expressed purpose of *winning* wars, studied by Johnston, Kane, Graff, Lo, Godehardt, and contemporary MBA students have strong moral statements sprinkled throughout them, generally advising that overt force and violence make leaders appear unwise, uncivilized,

[64] Wang's 2011 book, *Harmony and War*, begins with the author questioning what he learned in school, that China has always been a peaceful, civilizing force for good, much like other countries' early education, but with a rather longer timeline than most. Much like the increasing use of Mandarin across the PRC, school textbooks in China are highly standardized, as much a remnant of the days when the Chinese Communist Party had a "line" (published in the Party mouthpiece media and hundreds of millions of "little red books") as for the modern need to construct a single nation with a single, national narrative from what is a very diverse population.

[65] In Chan, pg. 44-5, Confucius' comments suggest only that soldiers must be well trained before being sent into battle. Laozi has a more recognizable "presumption against war," as little could be less daoist than a bloody battle. Among Laozi's guidelines (pg. 154-5) are that generals should be restrained, not seek to dominate the world, and follow victory not with glorious celebration but funeral ceremonies. Graff's chapter, in Hensel (Ed.), also notes the denial of glory in ancient texts.

[66] Chan's translation of Mozi, on pg. 227, finds barely the slightest benefits of war. War kept husbands and wives from seeing each other, exhausting and scattering the people, not to mention "killing the people of heaven" by preventing their patrons from making proper sacrifices.

perhaps lacking the virtue to rule.[67] And if invoking the old sages is too distant, more recent texts like Liu's treatment of "Oriental Pacifism" renews the drumbeat of peace for the end of the Cold War, while the loudly stated objective of "China's peaceful development" has remained in official rhetoric since the early 2000's.[68]

Wang's long historical analysis, by contrast, finds China to have been aggressive when strong and defensive when relatively weak, as in dynastic transitions or periods of high corruption. This goes farther than Johnston's earlier work in *Cultural Realism*, wherein the aforementioned philosophers did not provide much restraint on the central kingdom's use of force during the Ming dynasty.[69] A civilization so confident in its virtue and justification of war as a civilizing force presumably didn't need to ponder its *jus ad bellum* cause or authority very much, though that has certainly changed today, with China's staunch opposition to the trendiest of humanitarian causes.

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[67] Kane (in Robinson) and Graff (in Hensel) both have chapters in books which compare different, global Just War traditions, and they find moral commentary to be rather piecemeal. The classics' primary concern is to prevail in a conflict, but Lo, pg. 409, especially finds explicit moral guidance, despite the authors being "[i]n a sense…'realists'."

[68] The original title of "China's Peaceful Rise" was seen as too confrontational and changed, as in the book by the PRC's top traveling propagandist, Bijian Zheng. Kurlantzick's *Charm Offensive* goes farther, to say that China's soft power is very real and growing, especially in Southeast Asia.

[69] By that measure, Walzer's selection of China to illustrate the problem of *jus in bello* to fight fair, even "when the sky is falling," might be illustrative of a modern corruption of an Oriental Just War tradition, as such restraint is famously portrayed by Mao as "asinine ethics" which might stand in the way of victory. Again, no *jus in bello* here.

Yet by the accounts of Ping-cheung Lo and Nadine Godehardt, the groundwork for Chinese HI exists clearly in the military classics.[70] *Tianxia* itself makes the entire region's problems China's problems, and it is rare that a state with over a dozen international borders, more than any other state, is quiet on all fronts. Andrew Scobell's concept of a "cult of defense" in Chinese tradition enables a neoconservative sense of national security, whereby peripheral nations may be attacked if doing so defends the center against higher-order threats like encirclement by hostile regimes or imperialism.[71] After noting that the *tianxia* system makes no distinction between the internal and external in authority or war, as the emperor ruled over "all under heaven," Godehardt offers an interesting paragraph on the connection between righteous and punitive wars:

> "[A] 'punitive expedition' is valued differently from general warfare and represents the type of war which is morally justified. A punitive war is different because the reason for war lies in the moral decline of the political order. This means that an attack can be justified when the harmony between the emperor and his people is disturbed. Annexation by another kingdom or rebellion against an immoral and unjust emperor is legitimized because it is viewed as the *emperor's righteous punishment*."[72]

[70] Lo's introduction, pg. 407, makes an important point: since the "seven military classics" of Chinese warfare are themselves revered works of philosophy, war cannot be inherently bad.

[71] Godehardt finds Scobell's analysis problematic, ultimately less convincing than Johnston's *Cultural Realism*, on pg. 86-7 of Howe & Kondoch (Eds.). On pg. 92 she does find, however, that "Confucians legitimize punitive warfare because of a 'potential danger.'"

[72] Godehardt, in Howe & Kondoch (Eds.), pg. 92. Emphasis added.

Humanitarian interventions, in theory, not only punish the wrongdoing of the foreign leader but also rescue the people subject to the defeated tyrant. There is, in short, considerable room in traditional Chinese statecraft for HI, but the legitimate authority to make a *jus ad bellum* claim lies with the Chinese emperor only. Whether an institution like the UN could rule a true *tianxia* is debatable, but clearly neither a non-Asian hegemon nor a local, former tributary state could be so endowed.

Professor Jia Qingguo of Beijing University offers a helpful summary of China's opposition to (armed) humanitarian intervention in Koji's edited volume, in contrast to the traditional support just mentioned. Jia objects that strong countries always intervene in the affairs of the weak, often selfishly, despite humanitarian rhetoric. There is generally no legitimate, international authority to authorize it, as it often *bypasses* the UNSC, and it generally does more harm than good.[73] While China would never allow intervention within its own borders, Jia nonetheless defines "exceptional circumstances" when the PRC would support intervention: a racist government, mass killings by a government, or state failure.[74] Only the UN would be able to determine when any of these conditions are present, and in the recent case of Darfur, China's own domestic media was very proud of its own humanitarian work in

[73] In Koji (Ed.), pg. 20-23.

[74] In Koji (Ed.), pg. 31.

support of the Sudanese government.[75] These last developments suggest that even China has inched away from absolute sovereignty since Deng Xiaoping came to power. Returning to our case, it's worth noting that China led a very red cheerleading squad in Cambodia, even as it must have known better than any of the expelled nations what was going on in its back yard.

Interestingly, China also tried to mediate the conflicts between Thailand and irredentist allies in Cambodia. Certainly, an explanation for why both Thailand and Vietnam were victimized by Khmer Rouge border raids, while only Thailand intervened to stop them is worth some consideration,[76] especially in light of regional concerns about Vietnam's quest for regional hegemony. In June 1978, half a year before the linked invasions, a Thai foreign minister and the recently deceased Ieng Sary[77] met in Beijing with Deng Xiaoping to discuss the border skirmishes. While the raids didn't stop after the meeting, Robert Ross claims that China still got what it wanted as a result of the talks: the Khmer Rouge transferred most of its troops east to

[75] In 2009 I investigated the online edition of China's *Global Times (环球时报 Huanqiu Shibao)*for coverage of Darfur and found glowing reports of China's role in helping Sudan develop, unlike critical, Western NGO's. The g-word is carefully debunked, downplayed, or most preferably, avoided altogether. They didn't have an English edition back then, but in the past couple years they've seen fit to expand their pro-China world news to a global audience.

[76] Briefly, in addition to the following paragraphs, it should be noted that Democratic Kampuchea's incursions into Vietnam involved more territory and caused more civilian deaths than on the Thai border. And as mentioned previously, conflicts with Thailand were more ideological, initiated by right-wing remnants of Lon Nol's U.S.-supported regime, than territorial.

[77] Ieng Sary, who died in March 2013, was standing trial for crimes against humanity in Cambodia when he died, reducing by one the dwindling number of top Khmer Rouge leaders who can still be held accountable for the crimes of the regime. As of writing, the highest-ranked living KR leader is the one quoted after the title of this paper, Nuon Chea.

the Vietnamese border, where the more serious conflict lay.[78] It would only be a temporary transfer, of course, as the remnants of the Khmer Rouge regime retreated back to the Thai border after losing the capital in January of 1979.

The Chinese hand would then guide the majority of the UN's food aid to the Khmer Rouge fighters in refugee camps along the Thai border, while Thailand touted itself as the real humanitarian for accepting the camps and refugees into its territory.[79] Thailand had to justify its support of the refugees and the guerilla war which was conducted throughout the Vietnamese occupation, and it did so with the claim that "if Cambodians didn't support Pol Pot, the 30-40,000 guerillas would have deserted him."[80] China, still chillingly unaffected by its ally's atrocities, largely defended the former regime in the UN, and while much less vocal, the U.S. also played a role in keeping the old regime alive.

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[78] Ross, pg. 194-5.

[79] Rungswadisab, pg. 34-36. Puangthong Rungswadisab's paper title, "Thailand's Response to the Cambodian Genocide," is a bit needling, as it largely focuses on the economic and humanitarian image benefits the country received for its dealings with the Khmer Rouge. Rungswadisab claims that border towns, businesses especially, actually benefitted from the refugees, while Thailand had great access to the former regime's leadership, its natural resources (lumber and gems), all the while effectively reviving and sustaining the Khmer Rouge army (pg. 52). He notes that Thailand was also the transit country for China's military aid to the Khmer Rouge throughout the 1980's (pg. 27). The invasion itself turned the Khmer Rouge from an enemy into an ally of Thailand (pg. 21), and for a long time the Thais believed Vietnam's puppet regime was worse than Pol Pot's, killing *more* than both U.S. bombing and the Khmer Rouge (pg. 32).

[80] Rungswadisab, pg. 32. Power's observation that Vietnam's operation was carried out with the help of Cambodian refugees and that Pol Pot was easily defeated offers evidence that he "lacked popular support." It should be noted that the Khmer Rouge, on Maoist grounds, did eventually overthrow Pol Pot from within (Kiernan, pg. 3), and he died in the jungle in 1998.

Can the justice of China's three-week invasion of Vietnam in 1979 be defended, especially if it is seen as punishing a humanitarian intervention? Undergoing the PRC's most momentous leadership transition might explain but not excuse Chinese actions.[81] Robert Ross notes that despite its tense and factious political succession from Mao, Chinese leaders were unified in opposition to Vietnamese policy.[82] Thus, after Caldwell was murdered by his revolutionary idols, Deng Xiaoping was likely Pol Pot's most ardent and prominent supporter—certainly not Thailand, nor the ideologically opposite Americans, Chomsky and Kissinger. Kissinger himself only acknowledged that the "execrable" Pol Pot and his fighters "constituted the best organized element of Cambodia's anti-Vietnam resistance."[83]

Another elder statesman, Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew, "unfortunately" conceded this, but had illuminating experiences regarding China's very different assessment. Despite having

[81] With the PRC's founder, Mao, dead, the country was still in the grips of its "Gang of Four" and a somewhat ineffectual chairman successor, Hua Guofeng, after its tempestuous Cultural Revolution. Rising again after his second purge, Deng Xiaoping may have been eager to show both his own and China's strength after gaining the upper hand in a power struggle with Hua in 1978. In a review of Khoo's book, calling it overly simplistic and ignoring domestic factors, Zhai Qiang makes a brief argument that if Hua Guofeng had retained power, he would not have invaded Vietnam. Later I argue that if Vietnam hadn't invaded Cambodia, neither would Deng.

[82] Ross, pg. 214.

[83] Kissinger, pg. 371. He affirms that Americans "could not support Pol Pot" and were assured by the Chinese that he "no longer exercised full control of the Khmer Rouge." The calculation was that Vietnam had to be resisted somehow, and that after the occupation ended the Cambodian people would reject a return of the Khmer Rouge to rule the country, which thankfully occurred a decade later. He calls this an encounter between "American ideals" and "geopolitical reality" on pg. 372, as if no other arrangement were possible at the time.

met the Khmer Rouge's top diplomat, Ieng Sary, personally in 1977, finding him "the softest, kindest person," Lee realized that "except for the PRC the rest of the world believed that Pol Pot was murderous and mad."[84] That China operates in a realist world, existing in a moral vacuum, has been strongly suggested by Khoo, but to invade a country which ended a genocide and then continue to uphold the genocidal regime's legitimacy afterwards seems exceptional even for China. This could explain why the 1979 war with Vietnam is not prominently featured in PRC school textbooks, and many Chinese would likely respond to an inquiry of China's most recent war with the "War to Resist American Aggression in Korea" rather than this one.[85]

Yuan-kang Wang explains the "punitive" Sino-Vietnamese war as having much less expansive goals than China's supporting role in the Korean War, its "main objective" only to "compel Vietnam to reverse its pro-Soviet behavior."[86] Regarding the justice of the invasion, he says only that China "did not conform to the idea of 'attack only after being attacked'" but rather "took the initiative" because it feared encirclement. Like many authors, Wang finds the

[84] Lee, pg. 326 for the description of Ieng Sary, pg. 606 for his agreement with Sihanouk that no one should be working with the Khmer Rouge after their disastrous four years in power. Notably, Lee is one of the world's foremost advocates of distinct "Asian Values" and has frequently made reference to ancient philosophers in the course of everyday politics in Singapore.

[85] There may or may not be irony involved, but it's interesting to note that the Korean War is the U.S.'s "forgotten war" while China's with Vietnam is forgotten there. Zhang (2010) says in the introduction, "Regrettably, in China the war with Vietnam is forgotten history. The event is rarely discussed in the media, and scholars in China are prohibited from studying it." This may alter my plans to supplement this paper with interviews on the border! For a 2014 news article on China's Vietnam War veterans' protests, demands for recognition and health benefits, see Tom Hancock, writing for AFP.

[86] Wang, pg. 189-90.

operation unsuccessful overall, as Vietnam only nestled closer to the Soviets after China withdrew its People's Liberation Army.[87]

Like Wang, Khoo considers realism to offer the best explanations of the conflict, but he goes further and with more pure faith in theory that it was an example of a war occurring "via the security dilemma, as security-seeking states respond to shifts in the distribution of aggregate power to prevent exploitation."[88] Vietnam becomes simply a circumstantial extension of the Soviet Union in this view, as Womack's book explains clearly that no bilateral relationship of such "asymmetry" could be a serious security threat to a state as large as the PRC.[89] For Shen Zhihua, the Vietnamese relationship was a clash between realism, which offered a chance to reconcile with America against the Soviets, and ideology, which obliged the PRC to support the Vietnamese against America.[90] After America withdrew, ideology was not enough to sustain the alliance, but as Ross notes, from 1975 to mid-1978, over 2000 border

[87] A casualty toll of some 25,000 on the Chinese side alone prevents characterization of this short war as only a minor conflict, though Ross and Kissinger both note that China was willing to go much farther and didn't see (or portray) the war as a failure at all. Wang gives only a paragraph to discuss it as an example of China's war experience in the "modern era," while Khoo at least devotes a few pages to the events before launching into neorealist analysis.

[88] Khoo, pg. 131.

[89] He states that neither side expected the other to become a serious security problem (pg. 189), and from 1975 to 1978 he bluntly states that "Vietnam was not that important to China" (pg. 193).

[90] Roberts, pg. 350.

incidents occurred without being publicized by either side.[91] The "peculiar" war was fought only to stalemate, culminating in a "full cycle of systemic misperception resulting from asymmetry" as the two countries were reconciled as isolated, nominally communist allies after the Cold War.[92] Morality is elided not by realism in this frame of analysis, but by eventual and perhaps unspoken admission that war was based on a temporary flare of insecurity based on mistaken impressions. While Vietnam was said to believe that its Cambodian expedition would be forgotten in a few years, it was instead the less just reprisal which has been quietly swept under the regional rug.

System-level theory may be the first stop for contemporary China watchers concerned about whether China will seek to alter the global balance of power or challenge the hegemon, but when concern from realists is so focused on a single state, it makes a lot of sense to examine the history of that state.[93] In that regard, the Sino-Vietnamese War is not particularly unique

[91] Ross, pg. 202. Chinese media reported that "PRC citizens" (ethnic Chinese in Vietnam) were being "persecuted" and "expelled." Later, on pg. 224, he finds Deng defending China's great restraint in the media, enumerating having taken "11 steps" before invading, in traditional Chinese rhetorical style.

[92] Womack, pg. 209. The situation since the Cold War, "normalcy," he defines as a "mature asymmetry" grounded in a mutual learning experience and far greater ability for "handling the perspective and interests of the other" (pg. 212).

[93] By "system-level theory" is meant any in IR theory which bases its prescriptions and predictions on assertions about the nature, current condition or perception of, or constructed agreement about the world at its highest and most abstract level. Lower levels include the regional, bilateral (i.e. between two states), and the individual. Realism, liberalism, and constructivism are examples of system-level theories contending for scholarly favor, each having fundamental ontological differences. The

but rather fits into a geopolitical genre of border skirmishes which have escalated to warfare. Fravel's 2008 volume compiles over a dozen cases of similar disputes involving the world's most bordered country, and his findings of restraint are heartening. If ancient culture and philosophy didn't keep past dynasties very effectively out of war, pragmatic calculations and a keen magnanimity appear to have done so in the 20th century. That the PRC has only participated in two wars over its sixty plus years is rather extraordinary.[94]

Scholarly accounts of the buildup to the Sino-Vietnamese War naturally emphasize different factors. For realists like Khoo and Wang, Hanoi's ever-closer alliance with the Soviet Union was the driving force behind China's concerns.[95] Sophie Quinn-Judge and especially

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topic sentence of this paragraph suggests that an individual state's history is often and unduly left out of IR analysis in favor of vague, system-level theoretical boilerplate, especially problematic for a state as idiographic, large, and important as the PRC.

[94] It has, however, faced more than its fair share of internal rebellions, a recurring theme in Chinese history since antiquity. In Wang's realist analysis, internal rebellions would be a sign that China is relatively weak and in no position to conduct interstate wars or behave aggressively on its borders. As liberals of different kinds are keen to note regarding the likelihood of China to challenge the current international system, any state which must occupy its military to quell internal ethnic clashes and pro-liberalization protests among the general population cannot be much concerned with establishing itself as a new hegemon. Instead, it will favor both international and domestic stability while constantly attempting to shore up domestic legitimacy, possibly in a losing effort whereby economic development fosters liberal values, in turn increasing calls for political liberalization/democratization.

[95] Khoo incisively dismisses the mistreatment of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam as a factor leading to war because the ethnic Chinese in DK fared much worse, yet the Khmer Rouge remained closely allied with China. It is nonetheless worth asking how well even the allied Chinese Communist Party knew what was going on in the ultra-secretive revolutionary regime. As no author focuses primarily on treatment of ethnic Chinese, we may conclude that it made only a small contribution to the Chinese *ad bellum* cause. In short, border skirmishes, minority mistreatment, and Soviet cooperation had all been occurring for years

Kosal Path find that economic aid for reconstruction was Vietnam's primary concern, rather than any particular affinity for the USSR. When China pledged more funds to Vietnam after the American War, delivered far less, simultaneously gave $1 billion to the Khmer Rouge, and then abruptly cut off aid to Vietnam entirely in 1975, Hanoi simply had nowhere else to turn and believed that China was trying to keep it weak.[96] Xiaoming Zhang's account gives the most detailed account of Chinese decision-making, attributing much to Deng's rise over Hua Guofeng and a desire to give the People's Liberation Army (PLA) field practice and a status lift after the Cultural Revolution cast it into disrepute.[97]

In terms relevant to Chinese Just War, Zhang's account is most helpful. When Chinese intelligence reported to top officials that Vietnam intended to invade Cambodia, the PLA staff decided to change tactics from operations "carefully designed to avoid escalation" to a "military

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but were not enough to precipitate a Chinese declaration of war; Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia was the catalyst for changing *ad vim* proposals to *ad bellum* plans.

[96] See the timeline and Path for more detail. Quinn-Judge (in Simms & Trim) also shows that negotiations to get reparations from the U.S. looked promising until the Cambodian invasion.

[97] Zhang also notes that the border disputes with Vietnam, largely dismissed as insignificant in Womack's book, were what first led the Chinese to consider using force in response. On pg. 6, he notes that the number and severity of clashes rose greatly in the late 1970s, including a peak of 1,100 of them in 1978. It's worth noting, then, that both the Vietnamese and Chinese invasions were preceded by considerable border skirmishes. Skirmishes, clashes, disputes, violence, massacres, use of force, etc. all, however, are excluded from the scholarly standard definition of "war," a declared, interstate militarized conflict with a minimum number of casualties. While by no means large wars, both the Vietnamese-Cambodian and Sino-Vietnamese conflicts pass the minimum casualty threshold, while the violence immediately preceding the invasions is not included in the wars themselves. After capturing Phnom Penh and after the PLA withdrew from Vietnam, the wars officially ended, although outbreaks of violence continued in many of the same areas for the following decade.

action which must have a significant impact on Vietnam and the situation in Southeast Asia."[98] China no longer had a border issue with Vietnam; it had another imperialist enemy allied with what Khoo calls the PRC's "principle enemy," the Soviet Union, intent on overthrowing a close ally, the Khmer Rouge. Chinese discourse throughout the two months of deliberation from November 1978 on various proposals always centered on two themes: using military "punishment" to "teach Vietnam a lesson." In the new year of 1979, Deng's historic diplomatic tour to the U.S. turned immediately toward garnering support for a strike into Vietnam, which Zhang says "came as a surprise to his Americans hosts" [sic].[99] Edward O'Dowd's book on Chinese military strategy argues that the removal of Vietnam from Cambodia remained China's primary goal throughout many campaigns along the border throughout the 1980s, but that use of the PLA proved to be highly ineffective toward this end. Citing the scholarly consensus,

[98] Zhang (2010), pg. 7. On pg. 9, he notes that two high-ranking CCP members even proposed sending "Chinese troops or a naval detachment" to Cambodia to defend against the impending invasion.

[99] Zhang (2010), pg. 23. On the following page, Zhang finds Carter's response to be far less than condemnatory, at first only urging restraint. After a second meeting, Carter's "handwritten note…argued that a limited punitive war would have no effect on Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, and he warned that it might drag China into a quagmire." Zhang notes that Deng was quite undeterred, "confident that opinion would favor China in the long run," while both Deng and Carter made their statements in terms which the other expected to address each nation's primary concerns. Deng said that an invasion would counter Soviet expansion, while Carter knew all too well the dangers of Vietnamese invasions and that the PRC could not tolerate the loss of their Khmer allies.

Xiaoming Zhang concedes that "[i]t was China, not Vietnam, which actually received the lesson."[100]

In Vietnam's Cambodian invasion culminated all of China's fears, piercing to the very heart of its tradition of righteous war. Here was a former tributary, unappreciative of the virtuous center kingdom's decades of aid, attempting to create its own empire, at the expense of a country which was enthusiastically taking Mao Zedong Thought to its logical extreme. This was disorder of the worst kind because it would threaten the center itself with encirclement by unfriendly regimes. So soon after the death of a leader most resembling an emperor in the 20th century, the situation was ripe for a true successor to rectify the land with the heavens. Communist generals would be ill-advised to use terms from the "feudal" past, but the idea of China as a teacher endowed with the duty to impart lessons on the less civilized is pure Chinese righteous war rhetoric.

[100] Zhang (2005), pg. 851. Zhang does argue, however, that the invasion itself accomplished China's primary military objectives and showed that the PRC was willing to go further if Vietnam carried out any more aggressive acts. The PLA's poor performance, as it suffered heavy casualties in a very brief war which was nonetheless "deadly and atrocious on the ground" (pg. 864), is often cited as the impetus for modernization of the PLA away from Maoist principles and tactics which O'Dowd finds detrimental to achieving military objectives. Zhang's (2010) conclusion, pg. 27, agrees with O'Dowd on the point that "the war [as it was carried out, not withstanding larger-scale proposals by PLA officials] was designed to present no substantial risk to Hanoi and merely to erode Vietnam's will to occupy Cambodia."

A final point is worth making about China's justifications for war with Vietnam: the importance ethnic Chinese played in Vietnam and the near abandonment of them in Cambodia. As Morris notes, Vietnam was increasingly unkind to its three million citizens in "ethnic Chinese societies" as the 1970's progressed, closing parochial schools and resettling minorities in more densely Vietnamese areas, eventually stripping ethnic Chinese of citizen rights altogether in 1978.[101] As refugees were created and increasingly flowing into Yunnan and Guangxi provinces, a marginally humanitarian case for intervention in Vietnam might have been made, but this would have been as unlikely then as now. China eventually complained about both border aggression and mistreatment of ethnic Chinese, and while Chinese media inveighed against Vietnam on both counts, China, like Vietnam, only made a case for self-defense before the UN to justify its invasion.[102] Despite not defending its actions on humanitarian grounds, the contrast with Cambodia remains stark.

It shouldn't be surprising that the propagandistic Chinese media failed to report on the killing of Chinese in Cambodia, and one wonders if the PRC would have claimed them as

[101] Morris, pg. 174-6. He also says that Vietnamese policy "made no sense," as both came to behave as if the two allies were at war (pg. 190).

[102] Khoo, pg. 134, notes that Vietnam also attacked Guangxi, but in response to the initial Chinese invasion. Wheeler, pg. 97, notes that the Chinese claim was rejected very quickly at the UN. Kissinger's account gives much detail of Deng's conversations with U.S. officials to reassure them of China's very limited aims, only to be carried out on the assumption that the Soviet Union would not respond in kind.

citizens as it did in Vietnam. Kiernan's report would likely make hard reading for patriotic Chinese, as he found that even as the two countries were allied, Chinese refugees complained bitterly that the Chinese embassy in Phnom Penh provided no asylum from the killings, and half a million ethnic Chinese died in Cambodia between 1975-8. Worse still, after the Khmer Rouge were routed to the border, many Cambodians wanted to take out their anger on the remaining ethnic Chinese and had to be restrained by the Vietnamese invaders.[103] This goes unmentioned in Khoo's 2011 book, but although I'm accustomed to defending the PRC, this is quite a crass example of the "collateral damage" China was willing to absorb to further its larger interests.

China's Just War tradition, in summary, holds many similarities with the Western theory while in some regards going well beyond it. Especially in terms of using war to preserve a traditional Confucian sense of regional order, the responsibilities of establishing and preserving harmony in *tianxia* may one day extend to a more global scale, in language which should sound familiarly righteous. It's also worth noting that, given the choice to make a HI, self-defense, or traditional Chinese justification for invading Vietnam, the first was hardly considered, the second was concocted for the UN, but the third appears to have clearly

[103] Kiernan, pg. 301-4, provides a fascinating account of relations between people of each ethnicity in post-1979 Cambodia. The Vietnamese even encouraged those Cambodians who wanted to fight the ethnic Chinese to join them on Vietnam's northern border, to resist China's invasion. This was clearly a time when violence was the answer for everything.

motivated top Chinese leaders while also constraining their intentions. Having examined both of this study's cases in detail, there is much room left for comparison and synthesis of how they relate to one another and to JWT.

Discussion, Comparisons, and Implications for Just War Theory. This section begins by addressing revisionist Just War theorists like Jeff McMahan and Orend, who make at least two dubious contentions which implicate the Third Indochina War. Both are fairly new, perhaps products of a post-Cold War world in which liberal democracy is the sole, though not undisputed, normatively acceptable regime type for a state government. Extreme liberal fundamentalists revise their views of *jus ad bellum* to say that an illiberal regime cannot have justice on its side—perhaps in extreme cases like those of the Khmer Rouge or other genocidal regimes, the state absolutely cannot initiate a just war and may even forfeit the right to self defense.

The second revisionist claim is made on the level of the individual soldier. Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* states clearly that all soldiers should be treated equally, without regard for the justice of the side of a conflict they are on. Soldiers, he reasons, are trained to follow orders unquestioningly, and are decidedly discouraged from doubting whether their leaders send them into war for a just cause. This almost universal military code effectively

shields individual soldiers from moral judgment directed at them from the opposing side or scholars and arguably upholds much *jus in bello* code.[104] Revisionists, by contrast, believe that every soldier, deep down, knows if they are fighting "on the wrong side of history." Again, and buttressed by the Democratic Peace Theory, revisionists claim that a soldier fighting for a liberal democracy has a sizable advantage in knowing that his or her side of a conflict is just.[105] Neither the PRC nor the SRV would qualify for Just War eligibility, a problem when both regimes still enjoy high legitimacy among their citizens.

One might rightly object, as in the case of HI, that applying these post-Cold War revisionist criteria to conflicts before the Cold War ended is at least anachronistic. Yet again, moral statements on the region's wars were omnipresent. By the time of the Third Indochinese War, the "Free World," as seen in the U.S. House of Representatives and President Carter's emphasis on human rights, was quite ready to step away from realist analysis and make moral judgments about the justice of war. In defense of this analytical frame, while the PRC and SRV were far from liberal democracies in 1979, most standardized measurements in political science

[104] If all soldiers are morally equal and not held accountable for the wrong-minded ideologies or unjust orders of their superiors, this is a sound basis for a standard treatment of POWs, the Geneva Conventions, and Walzer's famous observation that it's not right to shoot a naked soldier.

[105] The logic of this belief follows from the ever-growing consensus that democracies are 1. Normatively the best kind of government and 2. (as both a result and an illustration of this normative value) very unlikely to go to war with other democracies. Thus, if a democracy goes to war, it is almost certainly to be against a normatively less good, non-democracy. Today's soldiers are expected to make this distinction.

still show very little political liberalization in these two countries today.[106] As should be apparent, this study takes the position that paired non-democratic regimes does not make moral discussion of the Third Indochinese War moot. Fortunately, since the Cold War's end, consideration of the conflicts in moral terms has in fact grown greatly in quantity and depth.

Moral assessments of these two invasions have, in the West, taken opposite trajectories. While both were defended to the UN on grounds of self-defense, the only language in the UN charter which authorizes force, Vietnam's initial actions have been more than exonerated by a liberal, global community favoring humanitarian intervention. Doing so requires a collective forgetting of China's invasive response to Vietnam's campaign to overthrow the Khmer Rouge.[107] As one was in large part a response to the other, it is not logically possible for both to have been just, unless different moral values are emphasized. How would the different moral claims of all sides look, if compiled together? A figure follows.

[106] Incidentally, the populations of both countries generally extol the changes in China and Vietnam over the past decades. This can either be interpreted as democracy indicators obviously not measuring economic development and growth (which would be appropriate for how the measurements are intended to be used), as questioning the assumption that democratization is what's most relevant in improving people's quality of life (which could be disastrous for political science), or challenging the assumption that democratization can only be measured in terms of political liberalization.

[107] Just to remind the reader of this study's contemporary justification, the 21st century is not a good time to forget the most recent war of the rising power voted by realists as "world's most likely to be revisionist."

Invasion ↓ Justice Judgment →	Very Just	Questionably Just	Morally Ambiguous	Probably Unjust	Very Unjust
Vietnam invades Cambodia	"self-genocide"/ "politicide" ended	V made a few humanitarian claims. Self def.: stop C incursions into V. New regime (changed from KR). Invading army incl. C rebels. West now largely acknowledges value, calls it a "successful intervention."	Soviet alliance & aid. "C a pawn of PRC"	long *post bellum* occupation…but UN, PRC, T aid & arm KR	V puppet regime (Khmer nat'lists say still ongoing). V imperialism. Created a lot of refugees.
BOTH		War lasted less than 1 month.		War was not much of a "last resort."	UN rejected rationale for war.
China invades Vietnam		Ltd. aims stated clearly, largely met. No captured territory annexed. "Punish" V for treatment of Chinese minority, violation of PRC sovereignty. Check V imperialism. Keep "disorder" from spreading.	War is largely forgotten. Neoconservative (pre-emptive def.). Showed U.S. that PRC was serious about opposing USSR (that communist ideology & anti-Americanism were not binding). "V is a pawn of USSR."	Very weak claim of self-def. Largely ignored KR crimes, incl. killing/expulsion of ethnic Chinese C minority (which was part of reason for invading V)	"Punish" a HI.
		V inv. C			V inv. C
		V seeks regional hegemony. V seeks security by ending C incursions. V balances w/ USSR against PRC.			Tot. casualties pre-1979 from military conflict unknown. 15,000 casualties in 1979.
		PRC inv. V			PRC inv. V
		PRC is vulnerable to encirclement. PRC defends alliance w/ C. War is a proxy for Sino-Soviet rivalry. PRC gains credibility w/ U.S. to balance against USSR.			6,954-62,500 PRC casualties, 10,000-100,000+ V casualties
Other war morality frameworks →		AMORAL/REALIST			IMMORAL/ PACIFIST

ABBREVIATIONS: C = Cambodia, KR = Khmer Rouge, V = Vietnam, PRC = China, U.S. = USA, USSR = Soviet Union, incl. = including, inv. = invades, Ltd = limited, Def. = defensive, Tot. = Total

FIGURE 1: Invasive Justice Claims in the Third Indochinese War.[108]

[108] FIGURE 1 assesses claims by multiple sides of both conflicts according to Western or Chinese Just War Theory. To be on either extreme of justice, very few people would have to disagree (i.e. that genocide should be stopped, that a HI should be

Intentions and consequences of both invasions are ripe for moral comparison. Interestingly, Brian Orend's *Morality of War* devotes several pages to "consequentialist pacifism", while the consequences of just wars—and especially humanitarian interventions—are often left to be described by critics.

The Chinese *jus ad bellum* case for invading Vietnam was almost certainly weaker than Vietnam's for invading Cambodia. Deng Xiaoping's intentions, however, were also far more limited, clearly announced to world powers on both sides of the Cold War divide, and ultimately in line with what actually happened on the battlefield. If just wars are limited wars, do these factors attenuate the injustice of the Chinese invasion?

Having very limited goals and accomplishing them in a particular war is probably easier for a particular state if it initiates the war itself. As mentioned previously, Chinese warcraft

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praised rather than punished, that imperialism is unjust, etc.), whereas the "questionable" and "probably" cells make claims that the other side of the conflict would dispute or interpret very differently, though not likely persuading many more neutral observers. If opposing claims are approximately equal in volume and persuasiveness, they've been placed in the "morally ambiguous" cell, approximately on par with the amoral expectations of realism. This being mainly a Just War study, the realism cells are derived from realist scholarly analysis, judged here to be insufficient at least, perhaps also inaccurate, and certainly unsatisfying from a moral standpoint. It is assumed that a convinced pacifist would not find any morality in using war as a means to any end, thereby mainly concerned with minimizing the number of war deaths and damages. Note that Wikipedia's casualty counts in the "IMMORAL/PACIFIST" cells are contested and highly politicized, combat neither began nor ended completely with the wars, both China and Vietnam claimed victory in the war. Wikipedia estimates 150,000 total casualties in Cambodia from 1979-1989 (incl. civilians but excluding famine).

reserves a great deal of space and reverence for deceptive tactics, on the grounds that tricking the enemy usually reduces bloodshed. Xiaoming Zhang notes several occasions at the onset of the Sino-Vietnamese War when the Vietnamese side was utterly baffled by the invasion, unable even to determine the basic Chinese aims or strategies, and thereby unsure of how to respond militarily.

Thirdly, to add *post bellum* considerations to Just War Theory inevitably creates a consequential counterbalance to the intentions stated in the *ad bellum*. That is to say, in terms related to the previous two paragraphs, a war begun with modest objectives will almost certainly have a smoother withdrawal of opposing militaries from enemy territory. If limited aims themselves cannot redeem an *ad bellum* cause when analyzed in isolation, a just and orderly ending to war very likely will improve the image of the aggressor and the lives of the vanquished. The "probability of success," whether or not carefully considered by the party initiating war, is greatly influenced by whether the victor can simply return its military to the homeland or keep it in the defeated country as a very awkward, perhaps inappropriate, and almost invariably unwelcome tool of reconstruction and "nation-building." Over-emphasis on post-war justice or truly horrible and irreparable war damage thus threaten to render *jus ad bellum* all but irrelevant, from a consequentialist perspective. This may be questionable in a case where an indisputably well-intentioned intervention goes terribly wrong, but in more

ambiguous cases like ours, in which a strong *ad bellum* case is available but not convincingly made, justice is very fragile and can be wiped out in an instant.[109]

Perhaps, as Walzer and most who embrace the concept of *jus post bellum* note, Vietnam lost the moral high ground when it overstayed its welcome and placed Hun Sen as the head of the PRK. As Quinn-Judge notes, however, Vietnam would have gladly accepted UN aid for reconstruction (of both Cambodia and itself). Attention to legality and the confluence of Western, Chinese, and ASEAN power, however, necessitated that the Khmer Rouge retain its seat and receive the lion's share of reparations. Whether or not Cold War *realpolitik* was the over-arching cause of the Third Indochina War, following realist and legal prescriptions resulted in immoral outcomes long after the primary fighting ceased. Vietnam's intervention could hardly have worsened the situation for Cambodia's small and dwindling population, and full blame can't be placed on the newly united and war-weary nation for failing to make the situation significantly better.

As the West's record of HI and otherwise intervening militarily without invitation is at best mixed, arguably doing more harm than good in many cases, we cannot expect states like

[109] A well publicized scandal in the media, which may turn the tide of the global community against the victor's *post bellum* efforts or cast doubt on humanitarian intentions, can arguably be more effective in dashing the righteousness of the cause than simply mediocre or poor reconstruction performance (which is more likely to affect only the domestic population, which is unlikely to have the ear of the global community).

China and Vietnam to conform Western standards of Just War anytime soon. As mentioned, China has a robust tradition of justifying war on its own terms, while Vietnam's extensive experiences with war would make it a good candidate to write its own, modern version for the global South. Indeed, representatives of both nominally communist regimes have taken on a more integrated view to represent developing countries' desire for more respect of sovereignty, in defiance of liberal interventionists in every arena. Both countries "missed opportunities" to make cases for HI before invading their neighbors in the late 1970s, but there is strong reason to doubt whether either state would do so today, even in the case of a well-established genocide and a RtoP-sympathetic UN.

Conclusions. Donald Beachler has recently suggested that the Cambodian people themselves may have been "little more than props in the rhetorical, ideological, policy strategies of academics, journalists, and governments."[110] More generally, he conjures further disgust to state that "only when political capital can be gained from lamenting their suffering" do victims of genocide become of interest to "most people and most governments."[111] The danger of bringing moral evaluations into any analysis is apparent in that it may be co-opted or based on incomplete information at best. Basing actual policy, especially something so consequential as

[110] Beachler, pg. 35.

[111] Beachler, pg. 58.

military interventions, on moral pleas is inherently as subjective as the judgment of which side fights for justice and which for the forces of evil. Vitoria's invincible ignorance lives on!

Why are a pair of brief, perhaps obscure wars over 30 years ago still relevant to political science? Scholarly books and articles have attempted to reinterpret these events by fitting them with the guise of humanitarian intervention and just war, and this has prompted a pushback from structural realists like Khoo and Wang. Has the international system changed, or have previous analyses neglected crucial pieces of evidence? Just as the Khmer Rouge leaders should not be taken to represent Buddhism, Just War Theory should not be hijacked by neoconservatives, whether American or Chinese.

In stirring language which parallels and highlights the hyperbole building up to the Gulf Wars, in June 1978, half a year before it forcibly molded Cambodia's regime in its own image, Hanoi called the "Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique…the most disgusting murderers in the latter half of this century."[112] Justification of its invasion was not merely made of post-hoc attempts to legitimize a cold, imperialist strategy. It did, as Westad notes, muddy the picture of imperial ambition (illegitimate), regime change (questionably legitimate), and retaliation for provocation

[112] Morris, pg. 105. He follows to say that "[t]he call to save the Kampuchean people from genocide was not merely rhetorical. It was…an attempt to legitimize its impending overthrow of the Cambodian communist regime."

and attacks (likely legitimate).[113] If nothing else, we in political science should be skeptical of any monocausal explanation for war and pay close attention to the context, the actual statements of governments and leaders, both public and private.

Obvious objections to this analysis include that Cold War calculations, realism providing the foremost theoretical guidance, were all that mattered at the time, in the region, among the states acting. Historians are also right to focus on the contingencies of each action, calling into question the inevitability of major events and the distantly systemic causal factors of realism. This essay has not been about the causes of the Third Indochina War or the Cold War itself. If there is now a Cold War balance, it is between historians and political scientists, and with every passing year the former rise in number as the latter are increasingly tied to the present decade or two. The most pressing, relevant questions for political science, even in the context of war, now have less to do with capabilities than with justice and justification of actions—be they acts or "measures short" of war.

[113] Westad, pg. 10. Nothing short of regime change would have stopped the attacks, he claims, along with the accounts more sensitive to Vietnam's Cold War plight. In another chapter by Christopher E. Goscha (pg. 175): "While I do not think the Vietnamese Communists intervened in late 1978 to save the Khmer people from genocide (they were well aware of the CPK's policies before 1978), there is no doubt that they put an end to the CPK's butchery when other countries did nothing." The question of justice lies largely, then, in whether intentions or consequences are decisive.

Using only the two interventions in this case, two points remain troubling. First is the gradual about-face in assessing Vietnam's action, from international denunciation to acknowledgement of positive "humanitarian consequences", even as the *post bellum* phase was an extended disaster. This fits with the general and ongoing reassessment of Western policies in developing countries, based largely on realism, during the Cold War. Secondly, and related to the botched occupation partially sabotaged by the UN, China's hardly humanitarian but less ambitious invasion stands largely forgotten by comparison. Can a war begun on shaky grounds be the more just if its *ad bellum* goals are simply more modest and its *post bellum* phase is tidier? Vietnam's Cambodian invasion may stand with Iraq and Afghanistan in the ambiguous examples of regime change: the initial task of overthrowing the unsavory regime was not particularly difficult; the enormity and unpredictability of rebuilding a country from scratch, however, may be all but prohibitive for undertaking an invasion or intervention with such a goal.

Any "engaged" or otherwise conflicted pacifist as well as anyone with a true "presumption against war" must look at the mixed record of humanitarian intervention and wonder whether limited goals and probability of success are in fact the most important *jus ad bellum* criteria. Consequentialists are by definition predisposed to find the relatively new phase of *jus post bellum* to be of primary concern. Indeed, were some recent wars not so thoroughly

botched after "major combat operations" ended, the term may well not have been embraced by theorists or accepted into JWT. One must hope that recent wars of regime change will be ended justly before new causes are militarized. Judging by the ongoing lack of reconciliation within Cambodia and intentional omission of the Sino-Vietnamese War from textbooks on either side, doubts about wars' justice (and unresolved *post bellum* issues) are sure to rear their ugly heads in the future whenever they are of use to current national leaders.[114]

When the international community and individually intervening states alike have mishandled or simply missed so many egregious cases of genocide, it does not inspire confidence that lowering the bar for intervention would lead to improvement. Pattison suggests that selectivity should mean taking into greater account the number of lives which could be saved, but that "saving some lives is better than saving none."[115] Being sure that a state is acting simply to save lives, however, requires a great deal of blind faith, unbecoming of a scholar. From the case of the Third Indochina War, we can see that adherence to realist prescriptions not only removes morality from the equation for those who prefer a streamlined frame of analysis; it can also turn morality and justice upside down for the vast majority of

[114] And we can be fairly sure that the lack of reconciliation or even remembrance—the recommendation of Hun Sen that Cambodians "dig a hole and bury the past"—will cause these festering "heads" to be even uglier than they would be otherwise, as past atrocities and wars not carefully studied and judged by scholars and the public will be subject to greater inaccuracy and intentional alteration of facts. See also Japan's WWII legacy.

[115] Pattison, pg. 7.

people who believe that war requires moral judgment more than any other human act. This paper has attempted to show that Asian states in the Cold War are a hard test for a Western-derived theory, that justifying war in the same way the West does is still a long way off.

APPENDIX: Timeline of events in the U.S., Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand relevant to the Third Indochina War.

	KEY: U.S. = USA; USSR = Soviet Union; PRC = China; V = Vietnam; C = Cambodia (incl. all regimes); T = Thailand; KR = Khmer Rouge
YEAR/APPROX. DATE	EVENT
1969	Sihanouk warms to U.S. as KR rises. March: Sino-Soviet border conflict. Sept.: Ho Chi Minh dies (Le Duan top V leader since mid-1960s)
1970	C coup ousts Sihanouk for Lon Nol. Veering right, C launches anti-V campaign. Saloth Sar adopts name "Pol Pot." March: North V. invades C at request of KR. April: 800 V laborers killed in C with support of Lon Nol (Rainsy, pg. 33).
1971	Lon Nol suffers stroke but continues to govern.
1972	Feb: Nixon meets Mao in PRC
1973	Paris Agreement ends hostilities of 2nd Indochina War (Vietnam War/"American War"). June: PRC promises to keep aid to V constant over next five years (Path, pg. 535).
1974	KR begins shelling of Phnom Penh. V sides with USSR post-war advice to build industry over PRC's to focus on agriculture (Path, pg. 545).
Jan.-Mar. 1975	April: Phnom Penh falls to KR w/ PRC aid, Lon Nol escapes to Hawaii. Saigon falls to V communists, ending 2nd Indochina War.
Apr.-Jun. 1975	May/June: V & C island clashes. KR executes 500 V civilians. June: Pol Pot receives "hero's welcome" from Mao in Beijing, PRC pledges over $1 billion to C in economic & military assistance (Path, pg. 543)
2nd Half 1975	Sept.: Mao tells Le Duan to stop looking to PRC for assistance (Path, pg. 542).
1ST Half 1976	April: Democratic Kampuchea gov't headed by Pol Pot declared.
2nd Half 1976	V & C relations are OK (according to Morris). T has a coup. Mao Zedong dies, Hua Guofeng leads PRC. Aug.: Vietnamese Socialist Republic declared.
Jan.-Mar. 1977	Jan: KR soldiers invade T in border dispute
Apr.-Jun. 1977	May: KR attacks kill 222 V civilians. June: KR purges East Zone of C, fearing internal enemies. Future (& present) C prime minister Hun Sen crosses into Vietnam.
Jul.-Sept. 1977	Jul.: U.S. Int'l Relations Subcommittee on Cambodia held. 100's of V civilians massacred, T village massacred by KR. PRC offers to mediate. Sept. 27th: Pol Pot declares CPK not descended from ICP, denies V leadership of SE Asia (Khoo, pg. 122). Sept. 28th: Pol Pot arrives in Beijing for sole foreign tour while in power (also visiting N. Korea in Oct.) (Thayer).
Oct.-Dec. 1977	Nov.: KR again attack Thai villages. Dec.: V launches major attack on C, C severs diplomacy until withdrawal in Jan. "Late 1977-early 1978": PRC "sought to mediate the C-V conflict" (Khoo, pg. 120) Nov. 20-25: Le Duan visits PRC to ask for more aid, gets none. Dec. 3: PRC delegation to C not well received (as it was critical of C's "defense policy efforts") (Khoo, pg. 124).
Jan. 1978	C almost goes to war w/ T. As negotiations between KR & V in Beijing go nowhere, PRC & V "set on a collision course over C" (Khoo, pg. 124).
Feb. 1978	PRC & V border conflict. V offers to negotiate with C (Wheeler, pg. 81), but mostly as propaganda (Nhem, pg. 101). 25th: KR attack V with 30K troops (Nhem, pg. 98)

Mar. 1978	V nationalizes all private enterprises, many of which are Chinese-owned. Vietnamese "boat people" flow out of the country, sparking outcry.
Apr. 1978	U.S. Pres. Carter denounces C. V offers to negotiate with C but also starts arming C rebels under Hun Sen's command. V counter-attacks after Feb. KR invasion. U.S. House of Reps. condemns "atrocities and killings" in C (Ross, pg. 195).
May. 1978	PRC denounces V for treatment of its ethnic Chinese. PRC sends a vessel to pick up ethnic Chinese refugees, V makes this difficult, and none board.
Jun. 1978	V tells T about border wars, but T sides w/ KR despite its own, recent border raids. V offers to negotiate w/ C, after C rejects offer V wants regime change in C. 16th: PRC closes V consular offices in PRC & V.
Jun. 1978 Cont.	PRC increases military aid to C, U.S. media pays more attention to C. After surviving KR leaders of eastern purge escaped to V, V bombs eastern C border areas.
Jul. 1978	C & T relations are much improved.
Aug. 1978	U.S. Sen. McGovern urges military intervention in C, U.S. submits report based on C refugees to UNCHR. After much anti-KR propagandizing, V gives up arming C rebels.
Aug. 1978 Cont.	25th: disputed border incident between PRC & V at "Friendship Pass", debate about this continues between PRC & V until invasion.
Sept. 1978	
Oct. 1978	
Nov. 1978	Deng Xiaoping has upper hand over Hua Guofeng in PRC. V signs treaty of friendship and cooperation w/ USSR.
Dec. 1978	7th: PRC decides to invade V. 15th: U.S.-V relations normalized. 25th: V invades C.
Jan. 1979	V & C rebels capture Phnom Penh. Camps in Thailand open to aid the KR. Pol Pot urges Sihanouk to represent Cambodia at the UN. 11th: Sihanouk urges world to cease aid to V and not recognize new regime of PRK. UN passes resolution condemning Vietnam. 28th: Deng visits U.S., meets w/ Pres. Carter twice about V (Zhang, 2010, pg. 23-4).
Feb. 1979	PRC invades V. USSR provides $1.4 billion in military aid to V.
Mar. 1979	2nd & 4th: PRC captures northern V provincial capitals of Cao Bang & Lang Son. 6th: PRC withdraws from V.
Apr. 1979	T helps 15,000 KR troops re-arm and cross into C.
May. 1979	PRC media explains roots of border conflict with V again. V offers T non-aggression pact, is rejected.
Jun. 1979	
Jul.-Sept. 1979	
Oct.-Dec.1979	"as many as one million Cambodians in various camps along the Thai border" (Rainsy, pg. 47) Oct: Right-wing Khmer People's National Liberation Front formed in refugee camps.
1980s	Sino-Vietnamese border clashes occur repeatedly. 1981: PRK Constitution promulgated, famine further decimates population. 1982: Sihanouk agrees to re-associate w/ KR to gain aid from China & UN. 1985: V thoroughly dependent on USSR aid. Hun Sen appointed PRK Prime Minister, attempts to incorporate former Cambodian leaders into gov't., gradual withdrawal of V military, completed by 1989.

1991 International Peace Conference on Cambodia signed in Paris, ending V occupation, establishing United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

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