

The Indochina Wars in Retrospect: The Correlations with the Korean War and Implications for Korean Unification

Phung Chi Kien

Vietnam and Korea shared many things in common when it came to national history during the early Cold War. Despite the divergence of each nation's approach to the unification method and the theories behind them, there are still several implications from the case of Vietnam that should be taken into account as far as the Korean Peninsula is concerned.

This study focuses on several questions as follows: How did the Korean War correlate with the Indochina Wars? How did the Vietnamese revolutionaries overcome the external challenges posed by the involvement of regional and world powers concerned? What implications from the case of Vietnam for the Unification and peace process in the Korean Peninsula?

The author answers the first question by analyzing the Korean War as a strong catalyst for the Indochina Wars to become a prominent flash point of the East-West confrontation and also as a model for solving the problem of the Indochina Wars. The second section concentrates mainly on the Vietnamese ways of dealing with the world powers' political calculations in the Indochinese Peninsula, especially the US-USSR-PRC triangle relationship during the Vietnam War. The first two questions are to interpret the unification process in Vietnam, especially its motives and how the Vietnamese overcame the external challenges posed by the involvement of regional and world powers concerned, which are strongly related to the Korean circumstances.

Regarding the last question, the study draws several implications from Vietnam based on the significance of the following perspectives: guiding doctrine and determination on unification, peace-loving spirit, legitimacy of unification, assessment of regional and international situations in the run-up to unification, and preparation for the post-unification period. The takeaways from the Vietnamese case are applied to discovering the status quo of the Korean unification process and, most importantly, further specifying several scenarios for a peaceful and socially integrative unification.

Phung Chi Kien, PhD, is a lecturer in political science at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University (VNU-USSH). His studies mainly focus on international political relations, world political institutions, and Vietnam's foreign policy. He is the co-author of *New International Institutions and Policy Recommendations for Vietnam* (2024, book, in Vietnamese), *Political Patronage in Vietnam* (2023, book chapter, Cambridge Uni. Press), and *Populism in World Politics and Recommendations for Vietnam* (2023, book, in Vietnamese). His book *Bipolar or Multipolar? International Political Relations 1945-1955 and the Correlations with the Vietnamese Revolution* (in Vietnamese) is forthcoming.

Date & Time: December 3rd, 2024. 11:00-12:00

Place: SNUAC Room 304 (3rd Floor)