

How did the Cold War and Decolonisation Intersect?

The thirty years following the end of the Second World War saw the dismantlement of the formal Euro-Western empires in Africa and Asia. India was released from British control in 1947,¹ and the independence of African states was effectively completed by 1975, when the Carnation Revolution ended Portugal's desperate grip on Angola, Cabo Verde, São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique.² However, as this essay will demonstrate, decolonisation did not take place in a vacuum – it was greatly influenced by the Cold War.

As is evident in the ideologies of decolonial leaders, as well as their former colonisers and global superpowers, the events of the Cold War are inextricable from decolonisation. The Global South was home to all of the Cold War's 'hot wars', fought to fill the power vacuum left by departing colonial powers. Decolonisation also presented the chance for the global superpowers to prove the efficacy of their modes of modernity, as both the US and USSR engaged in massive foreign aid projects to build infrastructure and show the superiority – and universality – of their ideological and economic systems. In addition to these ideological links to Cold War, Africa's natural resources had fuelled the affluent west for nearly a century; both global markets and socialist economic plans desperately needed the wealth that decolonising nations could provide. Thus, the Cold War saw – to a degree – a new 'Scramble for Africa', in which former colonial powers sought to retain their privileges while the superpowers loomed, seeking oil and uranium among other sources of wealth.

Nonetheless, formerly colonised peoples were not powerless in the Cold War. Anti-colonial

¹ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Independence Day: Indian Holiday', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Independence-Day-Indian-holiday>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

² Nina Santos, '10 Things to Know About Portugal's Carnation Revolution', *Culture Trip* <<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/portugal/articles/10-things-to-know-about-portugals-carnation-revolution/>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

struggle and thought was quick to recognise the threat of neo-colonialism, highlighted by leaders and thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon. Moreover, some African leaders – such as Nkrumah in Ghana – were adept at playing the superpowers off against one another to their own benefit. Therefore, while the Cold War is often portrayed as a divide down the Iron Curtain – a struggle for the future of Europe – the Global South provided a critical stage for the superpowers' ideological and material struggles, through open war, diplomacy, and covert actions.

Decolonisation and the Cold War most clearly and violently intersected in the many 'hot wars' that plagued the Global South between 1945 and 1975. Revolutionary socialist and reactionary forces regularly clashed, backed by the superpowers as well as former colonial powers, each desperate to maintain what was perceived as necessary for their security. The US policy of Containment and its counterpart in 'Domino Theory' meant that any expansion of Soviet or Communist influence was intolerable and had to be met with resistance. The policy of Containment was proposed by US Foreign Service Officer George F. Kennan in 1947, who argued that 'the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union [...] must be that of a long term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies'.³ The Domino Theory, proposed by President Eisenhower in 1954, described the spread of communist politics through the metaphor of 'a row of dominoes set up' – that when 'you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly.'⁴ Defined by these two points, US foreign policy focused on halting communist, socialist, and otherwise left-leaning governments and

³ 'Kennan and Containment, 1947', *Office of the Historian* <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

⁴ Peter T. Leeson and Andrea M. Dean, 'The Democratic Domino Theory: An Empirical Investigation', *American Journal of Political Science*, 53.3 (2009), 533-551 (p. 533) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25548136>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

leaders wherever they appeared. The policy of containment can be seen throughout ‘hot wars’ in the decolonising world. Korea (which while not under the control of a Western power was still a colonial holding)⁵, Lebanon,⁶ and Vietnam were all examples of US interventions in the name of halting the spread of Communism in the Global South.⁷

The Korean War was overtly fought against communist expansionism in Asia,⁸ and while this conflict differed from other decolonial conflicts due to the Korea’s division and occupation by the US and USSR,⁹ it was fundamentally a more conspicuous instance of US-Soviet rushes to fill power vacuums across decolonising nations. Indeed, when Korea was officially divided into the Northern and Southern Republics in 1948,¹⁰ a massive guerrilla campaign was launched in the South in protest against the division of their country and the dissolution of their ‘people’s committee[s]’,¹¹ much as would be seen with the National Liberation Front in Vietnam over a decade later. The Korean war – which formally lasted from June 1950 to July 1953,¹² reaching a stalemate after massive Chinese and US intervention and two and a half million deaths¹³ – exemplifies the intersection of the Cold War and Korea’s decolonisation. While both the North and South were effectively independent at the point of the war –

⁵ Kornel Chang, ‘Independence without Liberation: Democratization as Decolonisation Management in U.S.-Occupied Korea, 1945-1948’, *Journal of American History*, 107.1 (2020), 77-106 (p. 78) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaaa009>>.

⁶ Jacob Abadi, ‘Perception and reality in US-Lebanon relations’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 56.2 (2020), 305-326 (p. 309) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2019.1678466>>.

⁷ ‘Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force: I – Vietnam and the United States 1940-1950’, *National Archives* (p. A-7) <<https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

⁸ ‘President Truman’s Statement on the Situation in Korea 6/27/1950’, *DocsTeach* <<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/truman-statement-korea>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

⁹ Martin Hart-Landsberg, *Korea: Division, Reunification and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998) p. 87.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid p. 88.

¹² Liam Stack, ‘Korean War, a “Forgotten” Conflict That Shaped the Modern World’, *New York Times*, 01 June 2018, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/01/world/asia/korean-war-history.html>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

¹³ Alan R. Millet, ‘Korean War’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

highlighted by the meagre air assistance provided by the USSR¹⁴ – the conflict took place as a result of the two superpowers' rush to secure their interests and deny those of the other in the power vacuum created by Japan's exit from Korea.

In Lebanon, although the 1958 crisis did not escalate to war, it led to the occupation of parts of the country by some 14,000 US troops,¹⁵ supported by a massive fleet of 70 ships in the Mediterranean.¹⁶ Having won its independence from France some 15 years earlier in November 1943,¹⁷ Lebanon had a fairly stable, US-aligned, government under the anti-communist President Camille Chamoun.¹⁸ However, Chamoun's acceptance of the Eisenhower doctrine and attempts to secure an illegal second presidential term provoked unrest.¹⁹ Pressure from Arab nationalists within Lebanon and Nasser's United Arab Republic (UAR),²⁰ as well as domestic dissidents who accused Chamoun of breaching Lebanon's foundational National Pact,²¹ led the US to fear revolt and the installation of a socialist Nasserite government,²² or the integration of Lebanon into the UAR. Interestingly, this conflict did not involve the USSR directly,²³ but in this case the 'spectre of communism' was

¹⁴ Zhihua Shen, 'China and the Dispatch of the Soviet Air Force: The Formation of the Chinese–Soviet–Korean Alliance in the Early Stage of the Korean War', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33.2 (2010), 211-230 (p. 228) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01402391003590291>>.

¹⁵ Alasdair Soussi, 'Legacy of the US' 1958 Lebanon invasion', *Al Jazeera*, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2013/7/15/legacy-of-us-1958-lebanon-invasion>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

¹⁶ Bruce Riedel, 'Beirut 1958: America's origin story in the Middle East', *Brookings* <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/10/29/beirut-1958-americas-origin-story-in-the-middle-east/>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

¹⁷ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2012) p. 108.

¹⁸ Douglas Little, 'His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis', *Diplomatic History*, 20.1 (1996), 27-54 (p. 31) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24913444>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

¹⁹ *Ibid* p. 34; K. S., 'The Lebanese Crisis in Perspective', *The World Today*, 14.9 (1958), (p. 378) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40393919>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

²⁰ *Ibid* p. 375.

²¹ Little, 'His Finest Hour?', p. 35.

²² *Ibid* p. 39.

²³ Riedel, 'Beirut 1958'.

raised by Nasser's – decidedly non-aligned – UAR,²⁴ formed in February of that year between Egypt and Syria.²⁵ Still, Eisenhower claimed that Lebanon was threatened by the USSR,²⁶ and deployed marines to maintain Lebanon's pro-Western leadership. Although this crisis did not develop into a true 'hot war', it highlighted the extent of US anxieties about anti-colonial nationalism, particularly in the Middle East and Mediterranean, where the US held significant interests. For a country the size of Connecticut to be met with an entire US fleet as well as 14,000 marines could be viewed as an enormous overreaction,²⁷ however, it perfectly illustrates the absolute necessity to the US of preventing any perceived expansion of communism into its sphere of influence over recently decolonised states.

The Vietnam war – arguably the most famous 'hot war' due to its prominent place in US public consciousness – was inextricably bound into the nation's colonial history. Parts of Indochina had been under French colonial rule for nearly a century when the nationalist Viet Minh party declared the independence of Vietnam in August 1945.²⁸ Having been trained and funded by the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during the Second World War,²⁹ Ho Chi Minh's nationalist party was launched into 30 years of war after declaring independence from France.³⁰ While the French and US wars are technically divided into the First and Second Indochina Wars, they are both rooted in colonial conflict. Indeed, despite

²⁴ Don Peretz, 'Nonalignment in the Arab World', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 362 (1965), 36-43 (p. 36) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1035788>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

²⁵ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'United Arab Republic', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Arab-Republic>> [accessed 2nd June 2021].

²⁶ Riedel, 'Beirut 1958'.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Indochina', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Indochina>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

²⁹ E. Bruce Reynolds, 'Review: Temporary Allies: The OSS and Ho Chi Minh', *Diplomatic History*, 31.4 (2007), 775-778 (p. 775) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24916207>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

³⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Indochina'; Ronald H. Spector, 'Vietnam War', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

its anti-colonial rhetoric,³¹ the US provided substantial support to the French colonial forces between 1950 and 1954,³² fearful of the communist leanings of the Viet Minh as well as the need to maintain French goodwill for the European alliance – especially given the success of the *Parti Communiste Français* in French elections.³³ Thus, after France’s crushing defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the Geneva Accords of the same year, the United States took the initiative to fill the power vacuum left by France’s decolonisation of Indochina, installing ‘its own government in South Vietnam.’³⁴ The South Vietnamese state developed its own distinct character and was not solely a US puppet; in particular, the authoritarian President Ngo Dinh Diem proved notoriously difficult for the US to control.³⁵ But the Vietnam war fought from 1954-75 was essentially a colonial conflict. The Democratic Republic in the North received support from the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China,³⁶ even whilst retaining its independence and autonomy of action, as well as its fundamentally nationalist character, as highlighted by Vietnam’s brief war with China in 1979.³⁷ The Vietnam War was inherently linked to its decolonisation, and while the conflict – at least from the Western perspective – took on an ideological bearing, and was staged as a clash of ideologies, it was critically underpinned by colonialism and decolonisation.

³¹ Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005) p. 64.

³² *Ibid* p. 235.

³³ *Ibid* p. 89.

³⁴ ‘Dien Bien Phu & the Fall of French Indochina, 1954’, *Office of the Historian* <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/dien-bien-phu>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

³⁵ Edward Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013) p. 254.

³⁶ Kurt L. London, ‘Vietnam: A Sino-Soviet Dilemma’, *The Russian Review*, 26.1 (1967), 26-37 (p. 27) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/126862>>

³⁷ Bruce Burton, ‘Contending Explanations of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War’, *International Journal*, 34.4 (1979), 699-722 (p. 699) <<https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/intj34&i=709>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

Not all decolonisation resulted in violent conflicts over ideologies and superpower influence, but it proved impossible for decolonisation to separate itself from an all-encompassing Cold War. Neutrality – as ever – was a political act. This did not mean that decolonial ideologies and leaders were straightforwardly directed and informed by Washington and Moscow. Movements of Pan-Africanism, Non-Alignment, and nationalist anti-colonialism sprung up organically across the Global South, and while they undoubtedly intersected with the Cold War, they created genuinely new and original political forces.

Pan-Africanism emerged as a movement in the 20th Century with the first Pan-African Congress of 1900,³⁸ and progressed in leaps and bounds, pushed further by theorists such as Marcus Garvey, C.L.R. James, and Léopold Senghor.³⁹ By 1945 at the fifth Pan-African Congress, the Second World War had been fought and won in the name of freedom by over 600,000 British African troops,⁴⁰ and over 200,000 from French colonies.⁴¹ The hypocrisy and violence inherent in imperialism was increasingly apparent, and the 1945 Pan-African Congress highlighted this popular sentiment. Hosting Jomo Kenyatta, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Kwame Nkrumah, the delegates gave a scathing denunciation of the worlds systems, declaring that:

³⁸ J. R. Hooker, 'The Pan-African Conference 1900', *Transition*, 46 (1974), 20-24 (p. 20) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2934952>>.

³⁹ Peter Kuryla, 'Pan-Africanism', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Africanism>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

⁴⁰ Jack Losh, 'Britain's violent conscription of African soldiers is finally coming to light', *New Statesman*, <<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/03/britain-s-violent-conscription-african-soldiers-finally-coming-light>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

⁴¹ Myron Echenberg, "'Morts Pour la France"; The African Soldier in France During the Second World War', *The Journal of African History*, 26.4 (1985), 363-380 (p. 365) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/181655>> [accessed 3rd June 2021].

‘We are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world’s drudgery, in order to support by our poverty and ignorance a false aristocracy and a discredited Imperialism.

We condemn the monopoly of capital and the rule of private wealth and industry for private profit alone. We welcome economic democracy as the only real democracy.’⁴²

While Pan-Africanism was not bound to socialism or the USSR, this excerpt from the Congress’ *Challenge to the Colonial Powers* clearly places itself in opposition to the values and systems furthered by Western capitalist ‘democracies’. With this ideological basis, Pan-Africanism proved immensely popular across the continent as well as throughout the African diaspora in the Americas. Its development was widely embraced and hugely influential, as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta and Léopold Senghor all went on to lead their newly independent states (Ghana, Kenya and Senegal, respectively) with the necessity of Pan-Africanism in mind. Through these ideas, leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah proved adept at manipulating the superpowers for development aid while retaining independence.⁴³ While there remained a degree of domination in some states by colonial powers and Pan-Africanism did not secure a truly unified Africa, the ideology remained greatly influential and was perceived as a significant threat to superpowers as well as former colonial influence in the decolonial power vacuum. The perceived need to prevent Africa

⁴² ‘History of the Pan-African Congress, George Padmore (editor) 1947: The Challenge to the Colonial Powers’, *Marxists Internet Archive*, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/padmore/1947/pan-african-congress/ch02.htm>> [accessed 4th June 2021].

⁴³ Allesandro Iandolo, ‘The Rise and Fall of the “Soviet Model of Development” in West Africa, 1957-1964’, *Cold War History*, 12.4 (2012), 683-704 (p. 688) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2011.649255>>.

becoming unified against outside exploitation was highlighted by the assassination of Pan-Africanist socialist leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961, with Belgian and CIA involvement.⁴⁴

As illustrated by the involvement of key US actors such as W.E.B. DuBois, Pan-Africanism proved greatly significant in the US Civil Rights movement. Activists such as Kwame Ture pushed for solidarity with Africans worldwide, and emphasised the unity of their struggle.⁴⁵

The ideology of Pan-Africanism is a key intersection of the Cold War and Decolonisation; its nature as a truly anti-colonial movement – not imposed by Europe, the West or the superpowers – marks a uniquely significant contribution to the 20th Century.

Another crucial intersection of Decolonisation and the Cold War is seen in the development of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) from the 1955 Bandung Conference. Founded in Yugoslavia, the NAM was not an exclusively Global South organisation, but it strongly aligned itself with the struggle of decolonising and colonised nations. Pushed by leaders from Indonesia, Egypt, and India,⁴⁶ the Non-Aligned Movement sought to protect newly decolonised nations from the growing spheres of the Cold War superpowers with a policy of ‘insurgent neutralism’.⁴⁷ Indeed, certain members of the Movement were not even yet independent at the formation of the Movement. In 1955, Algeria was only a year into its bloody eight-year independence war that cost the lives of 1.5 million Algerians,⁴⁸ however

⁴⁴ Edouard Bustin, ‘Remembrance of sins past: unravelling the murder of Patrice Lumumba’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 29.93/94 (2002), 537-560 (p. 543) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240208704637>>.

⁴⁵ Alfred Zack-Williams, ‘Pan-Africanism and Communism: the Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 43.150 (2016), 681-684 (p. 681) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2016.1249707>>.

⁴⁶ J. J. Byrne, ‘Beyond Continents, Colours and the Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria, and the Struggle for non-Alignment’, *The International History Review*, 37.5 (2015), 912-932 (p. 913) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2015.1051569>>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ ‘France admits torture during Algeria’s war of independence’, *Al Jazeera*, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/9/13/france-admits-torture-during-algerias-war-of-independence>> [accessed 4th June 2021].

the Front de Libération National (FLN), its independence party, was still a key part of the NAM.⁴⁹ The revolutionary nature of such non-state actors meant that the policy of ‘insurgent neutralism’ became inherent to the Non-Aligned Movement in its early years,⁵⁰ reflective of the pace of decolonisation and the high tensions of the Cold War. However, due to US Cold War alignment with Europe’s imperial powers and the NAM’s decidedly anti-colonial stance, the NAM often found itself at odds with the interests of the US and its allies. For example, during the Algerian War of Independence, the US took a consistently pro-French stance, despite internal sympathies from the American public and organisations.⁵¹ The US exploited the NAM’s leftist tendencies to engage in ‘anti-communist’ action against its leading states, coming into conflict with the movement over Lebanon in 1958 as discussed above, and engaging in massive covert action against Sukarno’s regime in Indonesia.⁵² The CIA backed numerous armed rebellions in 1958,⁵³ and in 1965 was complicit, planning with the Indonesian army, in the purges of the Indonesian Communist Party and suspected sympathisers that killed up to one million people.⁵⁴ In the wake of these bloody purges, the US-backed general Suharto took power and ruled Indonesia as dictator for over thirty years.⁵⁵ Further, while the USSR was incapable of exerting military influence far beyond its border like the US, decolonisation gave the opportunity to build trading relationships with newly independent nations, especially the left-leaning states of

⁴⁹ Byrne, ‘Beyond Continents’, p. 913.

⁵⁰ Ibid p. 914.

⁵¹ Miloud, Barkaoui, ‘Managing the colonial *status quo*: Eisenhower’s Cold War and the Algerian war of independence’, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 17.1 (2012), 125-141 (p. 128) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2011.586402>>.

⁵² Vincent Bevins, ‘What the United States Did in Indonesia’, *The Atlantic*, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/the-indonesia-documents-and-the-us-agenda/543534/>> [accessed 5th June 2021].

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

the NAM. In 1955, Soviet-aligned Czechoslovakia made an enormous arms deal with Nasser's Egypt,⁵⁶ and throughout the 1950s and 60s the USSR engaged in expensive economic development projects across Ghana, Guinea and the Congo.⁵⁷ These examples show that while Non-Alignment hoped to create a third way outside of the Cold War – to protect the newly decolonised countries that wished to retain their hard-fought independence – it was unable to avoid the superpowers' Cold War interests and perceptions. In the eyes of the US, any leftist politics in states perceived vulnerable to the aforementioned Domino Theory was intolerable; for the USSR, any such leanings could be exploited for diplomatic and economic influence.

Linked to both Non-Alignment and Pan-Africanism, yet defined by neither, the doctrine of nationalist anti-colonialism proved highly influential across the decolonising world. It aimed to separate itself from the Cold War ideologies, with a centre of freedom from oppression that could appeal to both superpowers. For example, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's declaration of independence directly quotes that of the United States:

'My country men,

"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the nations on the

⁵⁶ Motti Golani, 'The Historical Place of the Czech-Egyptian Arms Deal, Fall 1955', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31.4 (1995), 803-827 (p. 804) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4283762>> [accessed 6th June 2021].

⁵⁷ Iandolo, 'The rise and fall of the "Soviet Model of Development"', p. 683.

earth are equal from birth, all the nations have the right to live, to be happy and free.’⁵⁸

This quote opens the declaration, emphasising its importance and making a key overture to the US. In its declaration of independence, Vietnam seeks to highlight the nationalism inherent in its revolution and makes clear parallels with the US war of independence from Britain. The US had cooperated with the Viet Minh throughout the Second World War,⁵⁹ and the Atlantic Charter of 1941 – a joint statement made by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill – seemed to explicitly declare support for nationalist struggles, proclaiming ‘respect [for] the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live [and] sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them’.⁶⁰ However, echoing President Wilson’s principle of self-determination,⁶¹ Churchill stated that the Charter applied only to European nations.⁶² The blatant racism that this contrast displayed reveals why imperial powers could not be relied upon to grant independence to colonised peoples, highlighting the need for militant anti-colonialism. Emerging as the absolute victor of the Second World War with almost no damage to its homeland and a massive boost to its economy, the United States became a status quo power and the emergence of militant anti-colonial nationalism – as in

⁵⁸ ‘National Flag, emblem, anthem, declaration of independence’, *Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Government Portal*, <<http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/TheSocialistRepublicOfVietnam/AboutVietnam/AboutVietnamDetail?categoryId=10000103&articleId=10002648>> [accessed 5th June 2021].

⁵⁹ Reynolds, ‘Review: Temporary Allies’, p. 775.

⁶⁰ ‘Joint Declaration of the United States of America and Mr. Winston Churchill, representing His Majesty’s government in the United Kingdom, known as the Atlantic Charter’, 14 August 1941, <<https://iowaculture.gov/history/education/educator-resources/primary-source-sets/world-war-ii/atlantic-charter>> [accessed 5th June 2021].

⁶¹ Erez Manela, ‘Woodrow Wilson and “the Ugliest of Treacheries”’, *New York Times* <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/09/opinion/egypt-revolution-wilson.html>> [accessed 5th June 2021].

⁶² Jeremy A. Yellen, ‘Wartime Wilsonianism and the Crisis of Empire, 1941-43’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 53.4 (2019), 1278-1311 (p. 1287) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000397>>.

Vietnam or Algeria – was perceived to threaten this stability. While decolonial nationalism was not explicitly informed or dominated by the superpowers, its iterations proved unable to avoid the all-encompassing nature of the Cold War. However, in this overlap, it became a key intersection of the Cold War and Decolonisation, and a driving force of the mid-late 20th Century.

In conclusion, the Cold War and Decolonisation were inherently bound into one another, in multiple ways, as the Cold War was critically shaped by the end of empire and the opening up of the Global South to new spheres of influence. For people held under the yoke of imperialism, new-found freedom could finally allow them to build the societies that they wanted. However, freedom from colonial rule did not always grant benefits in the context of the Cold War, as nationalist movements in decolonised states were often co-opted by the superpowers to fight an ideological battle. Fights for independence regularly escalated into conflicts of ideals and 'hot wars' that collectively cost millions of lives, and lasted as long as thirty years in the case of Vietnam. The utopian ideals presented by the US and USSR drastically shifted the international discourse from the Eurocentricism and imperialism that had dominated, and inspired anti-colonial movements across the globe. Liberty and equality stood at the forefront of what was deemed important, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and while the many CIA-backed dictatorships and Stalinist-Maoist inspired regimes stood in stark opposition to what the superpowers had propagandised, their ideals continued to represent a better world.

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