

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA  
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ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA

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Professor Roman Sławiński  
(1932–2014)



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## Introduction

Dear Readers!

We are presenting you yet another, already the 28th, issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* devoted to the countries and culture of Asia. Over the years of its activity the journal started to be issued in English and it has hosted on its pages many eminent experts on Asia, yet still it remained faithful to its formula which was proposed thirty years ago by Professor Roman Sławiński, the founder of the journal and its permanent editor in chief. This formula stipulated that the Asian cultures should present themselves in the journal and talk directly with their own voice. The idea was both: to include in the group of authors and editors of the magazine scientists who grew up in Asian cultures, as well as to publish materials based on or referring to the texts – philosophical, linguistic, historical, sociological, religious studies or political studies – which were created by the Asian culture. These could be proper names as an object of linguistic research, religious texts, political documents, ideological declarations, but also biographical materials, historiographical elaborations, experience of meeting other cultures and mutual acculturation phenomenon resulting from the relations.

Professor Roman Sławiński left us in November 2014. The more time passes from his death, the more I feel his absence and the more I realize how unique a character he was in the world of research on China. Professor Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, a prominent French scholar from Institut de France in Paris, who met Roman Sławiński in the times of his studies in Beijing, writes about that fact. Most striking is the variety of interests and multidimensionality of research on China which he ran. He was trained as a linguist, and he knew perfectly well not only the classical language, but also many dialects. There was even a time it was appreciated by Mao Zedong himself. Roman Sławiński was interpreting a conversation of the Chinese leader with the Polish state authorities. During the conversation Mao Zedong changed as usual from the classical language to the dialect of Hunan province, which was his place of origin. When he realized he was using the dialect, he noticed that it was not a slightest problem for the interpreter to understand his statements. Then he asked: „Who is that young man who understands the Hunan dialect?” It was known that many Chinese from the surroundings of the Chairman did not understand him when he spoke in the native dialect. It so happened, that Roman Sławiński knew the dialect.

He was interested not only in the language. History, politics, culture as well as China's economy were the subject of his interest and research. His views, opinions and insights on these matters were the inspiration for many researchers of China, some of which are the authors of the materials contained in this issue. Of the many research interests of Professor Sławiński in recent years at least two may be mentioned. First one became Confucianism, especially its latest colours and shades. Professor persistently sought and discovered them in the texts of Chinese scientists, government documents, archives and everyday citizens of China. In this regard he was a dedicated explorer and a keen observer. Even the slightest detail was important to him. Minor personnel changes on the bureaucratic ladder were important for the formation

of general conclusions. From my conversations with him, I got the impression that he was rather skeptical about the possibility of a revival of Confucianism under the supervision of the communist authorities. So he concluded after examining many texts of the so-called new wave of Confucianism in China. His works on the latest Chinese historiography constitute an invaluable contribution to global research on contemporary China. His second passion was the research on the minorities of China Southern. The field research among the peoples of Miao and Tujia that he ran and in which I had the opportunity to participate assumed getting to know the nature of change in the cultural identity of these minorities in the era of globalization and accelerated socio-economic transformation in China. These studies had not been completed, and we can only hope that one of the students of Professor will continue them in the near future.

The arrangement of contents offered to you in the 28th issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* refers to the research passions of Professor Sławiński. The first article, written by Stanisław Tokarski – Indologist and long-time associate of Professor Sławiński, concerns dialogue between the East and the West and the possibility of mutual understanding and agreement. Understanding another culture is also the ability to read the symbols contained in the letters and that aspect of the intercultural dialogue interested Professor Sławiński in particular. The question of so-called Asian values – presented in the articles written by Adam Jelonek, Adam Raszewski, Artur Kościański and Larisa Zabrowskaia – was very close to Professor Sławiński and he dealt with it for many years as part of his research on the so-called new Confucianism. The issue of Chinese migration in the world was also in the interests of Professor – mainly in the context of global economic and social phenomena. This part of the research on China is presented in the article on the Chinese migration to France by Nicolas Levi. The issue of Chinese language was obviously important for Professor Sławiński as a linguist and he always welcomed in the columns of *Acta* the authors writing about language and linguistic issues. This area of research is presented in the current issue in the article on Chinese names written by Irena Kałużyńska. On the other hand, the artistic part of the culture is referred to in the articles by Izabella Łabędzka, Lidia Kasarełło, Ewa Chmielowska, Fu-sheng Shih and Diana Wolańska. The first three of these articles relate to Taiwan, where Professor conducted research for many years which resulted among others in a monograph *History of Taiwan*. The further three articles penned by Waldemar Dziak, Iwona Grabowska-Lipińska and Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska refer to the political sphere. Political sphere is inextricably linked with the ideology which was also the case of China. Confucianism and the new Confucianism emerged and developed in the shadow of the emperors, presidents and chairmen of the Chinese Communist Party. Researching them without the analysis of the political scene was not possible. The part of articles is closed by two texts unrelated with China, but with the Middle East. Their authors – Dorota Rudnicka-Kassem and Marcin Styszyński present materials based on the Middle Eastern sources and thus relate to the traditions of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*. The issue is closed by the report from field research in southern China by Professor Sławiński and me. For me it was a unique opportunity to get to know at least a little piece of China – a unique one, because my guide was Professor Sławiński – such a great scholar and such a seasoned expert on Asia.

I would like to thank the authors – students, colleagues and friends – for participation in the preparation of the issue, and the Directorate of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the possibility to dedicate the anniversary issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* to Professor Sławiński.

Jerzy Zdanowski

IWONA GRABOWSKA-LIPIŃSKA

## The Culture and Policy of the People's Republic of China towards Southeast Asian Countries 1949–1976

### Abstract

The aim of the article is the analysis of the Chinese political strategy in 1949–1976.

In the paper People's Republic of China policy toward the Southeast Asia countries in respect of the internal and international political circumstances is presented. Author is focused on the presentation of the main factors having impact on/ influencing the shape of the Chinese policy in two periods: since People's Republic of China Proclamation until Geneva Conference and since Geneva Conference until the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Moreover Geneva Conference Accords impact on the policy of People's Republic of China is discussed. Cultural, economic and political situation of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia countries is highlighted in the paper.

Issue of PRC policy toward Vietnam is emphasized. Observations on the paper lead to the conclusion that Chinese policy is unique in local as well as in global magnitude.

**Key words:** China, Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Geneva Conference, Chinese diaspora

Since the proclamation of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo* 中华人民共和国) in 1949 until the present day, the geopolitical, political and economic position of China has deeply changed. China, situated in the southeastern part of the Eurasian continent, is the country of the world's largest population – 1.372 billion approximately (September 2015), a huge territory, of about 9.6 million square kilometers and the third-largest country in land size in the world. Chinese tops the list of the most popular of world languages (with the approximate number of speakers at 2 billion), and remains unbroken for more than a thousand years with state continuity not just regionally but also globally. The leaders of China define their system as socialism with Chinese characteristics, meaning socialism is adapted to Chinese conditions.

From the very beginning Chinese politics and its economy focused on relations with the Soviet Union, United States and the Southeast Asian countries, the region historically influenced by China. During this period various methods and means were employed by China to achieve this objective: of economic, political and military co-operation and pressure. The shape of Chinese policy towards Southeast Asia was decided, in accordance with internal and international circumstances, primarily in terms of geographical location, proximity of neighbours, historical ties, Chinese migrants – *huaqiao* 华侨 and the natural resources of the region.

It has to be mentioned that what Chinese civilization was for the Far East, equates to what Ancient Greek and Roman culture were for Europe, and Chinese characters, an important culture-forming factor, played a role similar to the Latin language in European culture. Until the superpowers expansionism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for over 2000 years the Southeastern countries recognized the suzerainty of the Chinese sovereign, paid tribute and were subordinated to China as the largest, and the most developed country economically and politically in the region. China gave to the neighboring countries an example which operated for centuries, influenced by their political, social, and economic systems as well as by the culture, philosophy (Confucianism, Daoism)<sup>1</sup> and morals and ethics.<sup>2</sup>

After making contact with Vietnam,<sup>3</sup> China started to develop its relationships with Jawa, Sumatra, and the Malayan Peninsula countries. By the end of the second century contemporary Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and the islands of Indonesia were strongly influenced by China. According to historical records the first encounters between China and Vietnam took place as early as over two thousand years ago. The rulers of China used to treat other countries as certain vassals. Those relationships usually took the following shape: China, being the suzerain, did not engage itself in wars conducted by the vassal states which remained practically independent but did formally accept the supremacy of the Chinese suzerain. These countries were similar in agricultural character and climate, as well as in rice cultivation (staple food), the use of chopsticks, and technical achievement, such as: the use of sluices/water gates/floodgates and irrigation systems. The direction of Chinese politics was also affected by the national factors and Chinese reasons of state.

Until the industrial revolution in the West and colonial expansion, China had remained an unquestionable power, having no equal in Central or Southeast Asia. The traditional domination of the Chinese over its neighbors became a fact.

Until the middle of the XIX century China basically did not maintain diplomatic relations with other countries. Those relations were purely based on a specific tribute system, which contributed significantly to the maintaining of a Sinocentric foreign policy.

<sup>1</sup> See R. Sławiński (ed.), *Konfucjanizm i jego współczesne interpretacje*, [Confucianism and Its Modern Interpretation] Warszawa: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Kultur Orientalnych i Śródziemnomorskich, 2013; *Shenmin xinyang yu wangao zhengzuo. Rujia wenhua de xiandai jiazhi* [Lifetime Beliefs and Policy of the Road of the Emperor. Contemporary Values of the Confucianism Culture], Taipei 2004.

<sup>2</sup> For more details about China's history see R. Sławiński, *Geneza Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej* [Genesis of the PRC], Warszawa: PAN, 1987; Idem, *Historia Chin i Tajwanu* [China and Taiwan History], Warszawa: ASKON, 2002; D. Twitchett (ed.), *Cambridge Encyclopedia of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; J.K. Fairbank, *Historia Chin, nowe spojrzenie* [China History, New Review], Gdańsk: Marabut, 1996; B. Ryczyło, I. Grabowska, *Pekin* [Pekin], Warszawa: ASKON, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> In 111 BC Nanyue were incorporated into China for a thousand years, and Guangxi and Guangdong forever. Vietnam has been exposed to more Chinese influences than any other country in Southeast Asia, because the Chinese rule was the longest and has the deepest results. The Chinese patterns in many spheres of life were adopted and the Vietnamese population mixed with the Chinese. During a weakening of the central government in China there were numerous uprisings in Vietnam, and in 1939, was established a Vietnamese dynasty, however Chinese institutions such as law and public organizations or habits continued working. See I. Grabowska-Lipińska, *Strategia polityczna Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej wobec krajów Azji Południowo-Wschodniej w latach 1949–1976* [The Political Strategy of the Peoples Republic of China toward the Southeast Asia Countries in 1949–1976], Warszawa: ISP PAN, 1995.

In the middle of the XIX century China itself, for the first time in a few thousand years of history, found itself as a weak and dependent country. The traditional Chinese domination of Southeast Asia was weakened by the colonial conquests of Western powers. China itself became an object of exploitation.

For centuries Chinese society was based on a patriarchal social structure. The basic social unit was a multi-generational family. State power was strictly authoritarian. From historical specifics arose a cult for the unit, together with the traditional and important role of the army. It was implemented on societies that remained under Chinese influence. The determinants of Chinese policy were: historical heritage, which included the geographical proximity of China to the Southeast Asian countries, a political and economic center of the region, and historical experiences – war against Japan, and civil war with Guomindang 中國國民黨, which affected internal and international circumstances.

The analysis of the documented history of the relations between China and the Southeast Asian countries after the Second World War justifies a thesis, in that China dominated over Asia with regard to politics, economy as well as culture and China tried to eliminate any influence of the United States and the Soviet Union upon the region.

After the Second World War China appeared and emerged as a new power,. Furthermore it was the only Asiatic country among the world superpowers that attributed itself the right of an active presence with an enhancement of political, economic, and cultural influences in Southeastern Asia.

The chronological boundaries of the paper were determined by the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 on one side, and on the other by the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*Wuchan jieji wenhua da geming* (无产阶级文化大革命), as well as political operations on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. The most important of these was the Vietnam re-unification, and what is strictly associated, with the end in some part of Chinese politics regarding Southeastern Asia countries.

It has to be emphasized that during the period of the cold war, confrontation between the two superpowers also existed on the discussed territory. Initially China had an alliance with the Soviet Union, and afterwards left the alliance and approached the United States, and what is strictly associated with (the pro-Western) Southeast Asian countries.

Southeast Asia consisted of 10 countries: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, which all vary in terms of population, natural resources, tradition and history.

They also differ from each other in terms of national structure. A common feature concerns the presence of a Chinese diaspora in the Southeastern Asia countries, estimated in the discussed period at around 20 million people, however it constitutes a different percentage in some particular countries, and usually plays an important economic and political role. Chinese people throughout the centuries have emigrated to Southeast Asian countries, and therefore this region was the territory most influenced by the Chinese diaspora.

In Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia all trade was basically in the hands of the *huaqiao*. Also in Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia, the Chinese diaspora was engaged mainly in trade and finance, by dominating some branches of light industry, and the clothes, food and tobacco industries. As the position of the Chinese diaspora strengthened it started to have an important impact on the politics of the particular countries.

The most significant impact was observed in Vietnam, and outside of the Southeast Asian countries in Japan and Korea. The presence of Chinese culture in these countries prove that

China was one of the major global centers, however its impact differed in other particular countries. Initially, Chinese foreign policy towards Southeast Asian countries was based on support in armed conflicts, cooperation with neutral countries (Myanmar, Indonesia) and avoiding close relations with the pro-Western countries: Philippines and Indonesia.

On 2nd September 1945 the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was proclaimed. Vietnam became the first country of the region in which a revolution was successful. At that time in China there was an internal struggle which resulted, four years later, in the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

During the first years of the PRC very close co-operation existed with Vietnam. Vietnam received vast Chinese assistance. The PRC established diplomatic relations with the DRV on 16th January 1950, Myanmar in 1949 and Indonesia on 27th March 1950. It has to be emphasized that at the time the Taiwanese government pursued active policies towards the southeast Asian countries and the Chinese diaspora. As a result diplomatic relations with Taiwan were strengthened and Treaties of Friendship were signed by Taiwan, Philippines and Thailand.<sup>4</sup>

The discussed period can be divided into two parts:

1. 1949–1954 – since the PRC proclamation until the Geneva Conference,
2. 1954–1976 – from the Geneva Conference until the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China.

During the 1950s Chinese politics in China was based on co-operation with the Soviet Union and East European countries. After the 1950s there was a breach in Chinese and Soviet Union diplomacy and even some common border incidents. At the time there was fighting in Vietnam. China offered Vietnam important economic, military and political support. On Vietnamese territory one could observe a rivalry of influences, that China had against the USSR. Initially China claimed that Vietnam was an example of a people's war and was against a 'peaceful parlay'. The change of the Chinese stance occurred following changes in Chinese foreign policy. A normalization of relations with the United States contributed to support concerning the end of the war in Vietnam, and the signing of the Paris Agreements, as well as ending the fighting in Indochina.

Mao Zedong – was the Chairman of the Communist Party of China (*Zhongguo gongchandang* 中国共产党) Central Committee during the period of the Chinese Republic radicalism. With the capital in Yan'an (延安), in the 1930s he emphasized many times the uniqueness of China's road to communism, and the fact that Marxism was to be adapted to Chinese specifics. It was associated with the fact that the East had its own country model of development, by applying European theories to the Asian reality.<sup>5</sup> However the ideological factor, influencing post-war history, did not play the dominant role in the Chinese policy towards regional countries over the discussed period.

It has to be emphasized that in China the highest level authority was divided into two main factions. The differences between each other basically concerned internal affairs (modelling the development of China) and foreign policy – co-operation with the USSR or with the West, and the problem concerned with resolving the wars in Vietnam, and then in Indochina.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fifield, *The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia 1945–1958*, New York: ULANPRESS, 2012, p. 261.

<sup>5</sup> See Li Zhisui, *Prywatne życie przewodniczącego Mao* [The Private Life of Chairman Mao], Warszawa: Philip Wilson, 1996; [http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2011-07/04/content\\_22917108.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2011-07/04/content_22917108.htm) (accessed 15 September 2015).

At that time Mao Zedong's impact on Chinese policy both internally and regarding foreign affairs was undoubted. An alternative to the winning faction was the pro-Soviet group, which as a result of internal fights within the Chinese leaders group was eliminated. The "serious fight of two lines" was concluded by the death of the Lin Biao in 1971.<sup>6</sup>

Basically during 1949–1954, Chinese political policy was demonstrated by the support of the Communist party in the region, by maintaining close bilateral relations with the DRV and aiming to maintain good relations with neutral countries throughout the region, however between 1957–1966 China adopted a new policy. According to this policy it was decided to develop diplomatic relations with all Southeast Asian countries, reducing the support for the socialist party.

During the period of the eight year 'dirty war' China offered Vietnam economic, military and political support. As the war in Vietnam was conducted in its 'neighborhood', China strongly opposed France's support to the Guomindang army. China was the first country to recognize the DRV on 18th January 1950, and on 11th February 1950 with the establishment of the 'Vietnam – China' Friendship Association.

It is hard to estimate the level of the Chinese support for Vietnam, which included weapon delivery, transport of vehicles, training and technical support. After the end of the war in Korea, China delivered tanks, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft cannon and heavy equipment to Vietnam. Also aid was provided with the training of Vietnamese soldiers and officers and the provision of Chinese military advisors.

On 10th June 1950 a confidential military pact was signed between the two countries, and accordingly China was supposed to provide free arms, near the Vietnam government's Chinese mission.<sup>7</sup> Even the Chinese delegation claimed that the Chinese army had taken part in fighting on the border and also in the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Since 1951 China was the DRV's main trading partner. Vietnam exported mainly food products and wood and from China imported heavy tools, devices and household articles. Ho Chi Minh did not want to appear subordinate to China, however he was learning Yan'an Chinese Martial Arts to practice during periods of intensified terror at the Vietnam communists' meetings taking place on Chinese territories. In 1920 the Partai Komunis Indonesia was created, and after the unsuccessful uprising in 1948 in Madion some leaders

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<sup>6</sup> Lin Biao, Marshal of the People's Republic of China, died in September 1971 when a Hawer Siddeley Trident plane, he with his family were aboard, crashed in Mongolia. According to the Chinese government he attempted a coup against Mao Zedong. The events of "the Lin Biao incident" is a source of speculation. Lin Biao and Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing were labeled as "Lin Biao and the Jiang Qing Counter-Revolutionary Clique" of the Cultural Revolution. Jiang Qing, Madame Mao, the fourth wife of Mao Zedong married Mao in Yan'an in 1938. She played a major role in the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 as deputy director of the Central Cultural Revolution Group and forming the radical alliance known as the "Gang of Four" (*siren bang* 四人帮). In 1969 she gained a seat on the Politbiuro. In 1976, after Mao Zedong's death a fight for authority started between two different fractions: a cultural revolution fraction, led by the widow of Mao Zedong, and Jiang Qing with Kang Sheng and a group of pragmatics led by Deng Xiaoping. Finally the "Gang of Four" was brought to trial and condemned, accused of revolutionism, rightism and counter-revolutionism. The power took a pragmatic viewpoint. Jiang Qing was arrested in 1976. and sentenced to death, a sentence that was switched to life imprisonment in 1983. She died in 1991. See R. Terrill, *Madame Mao: the White Boned Demon*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999; <http://www.britanica.com/topic/Gang-of-Four> (accessed 20 September 2015).

<sup>7</sup> *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 December 1950.

found shelter in China. After the Republic proclamation of 2nd November 1949, the United States of Indonesia was recognized by the PRC but diplomatic relations were not established. In 1950 the name of the country was changed to the Indonesian Republic, and later Indonesia stood for “active neutralism”. At this time China supported the Indonesian communists; in 1965 Partai Komunis Indonesia had 3 million members and was the biggest communist party in Southeastern Asia.<sup>8</sup>

The PRC also supported the illegal Communist Party of Malaya (created in 1931), where Chinese nationals were also members. In 1948 an English authority banned the Communist Party, and eight years of military conflict started. In 1957 the Malayan Federation was proclaimed as part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The PRC recognized the Malayan Federation but was not recognized itself in turn by the Malayan Federation.

Close co-operation also joined Chinese communists with communists from Myanmar. The PRC and Myanmar established diplomatic relations in 1949, but Myanmar did not maintain similarly close relations with China. After military incidents an agreement concerning borders was signed in January 1960. Leaders of the Communist Party in the Philippines (Partido Komunista ng Philipinas) also maintained close relations with the CCP.

The Chinese diaspora in Southeastern Asia divided countries because of the PRC and the establishment of the Republic of Taiwan. The important part of emigration was due to the PRC, especially, as it was caused from the fact that the PRC was actively engaged in all emigration affairs/matters. However recognition of the Chinese principle *ius sanguinis* created problems for dual citizenship, and since October 1949 Chinese nationals have lived in Southeast Asian countries as citizens of the PRC, or of Taiwan. Because of the lack of diplomatic relations with particular countries and specifically with Taiwan, they were treated as stateless or as Chinese without citizenship, waiting for citizenship of the country of residence, or just as citizens of the particular country.

The first act to regulate these matters was the signing by China with Myanmar and Indonesia of an agreement whereby dual citizenship was restricted. It was stated that the *huaqiao* have the right to choose citizenship, and those who had chosen citizenship of their country of residence were no longer considered as Chinese citizens. This complicated issue was exacerbated by the size of the Chinese diaspora. For this purpose different criteria was used. For example in Malaysia, even if the Chinese had Malaysian citizenship they were still considered as Chinese. The main reason for the lack of social assimilation was due to the fact that the official religion in this country was Islam. In Thailand they were treated as Chinese if they defined themselves as foreigners, the same applied in the Philippines, where those who were of Chinese origin were also included.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore during the first half of the 1950s Chinese policy towards Southeast Asian countries was based on maintaining close relationships with Vietnam, with support for the

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<sup>8</sup> In 1965 in Indonesia a *coup d'état* took place. The massacres began in October 1965, more than 500,000 people were killed. The purge was to eliminate the Communist Party of the Indonesia. The communists were purged from political, and social life and the Communist Party was banned. Probably more than 1,000,000 peoples were imprisoned at the time; <http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-killings-of-1965-66> (accessed 1 October 2015).

<sup>9</sup> A new act concerning citizenship was accepted in China during the third session of the 5th National People's Congress, referring to those who accepted citizenship of the different country and would subsequently lose Chinese citizenship. The 5th National People's Congress was in progress from 1978 to 1983. It passed the Constitution of the PRC and the current constitution of the PRC in 1982.

communist party in the region, including fighting against Great Britain in Malaya, France in Indochina, Holland in Indonesia, and the pro-Western governments in the Philippines and Thailand, whilst maintaining good relations with the neutral countries of the region, e.g. Myanmar and Indonesia.

From the middle of the 1950s China introduced new policies – consequently support for communist parties was muted, China stopped criticizing their governments and started trying to establish diplomatic relations. China adopted the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. These five principles, which included for the first time a Sino-Indian agreement concerning Tibet in April 1954, are: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and co-operation for mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.<sup>10</sup> The *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* were accepted officially as a basis of mutual relations with Myanmar in June 1954.

An important historic event of the 1950s was the Geneva Conference in 1954 where countries discussed the possibility of restoring peace in Indo-China. (8th May–21st July 1954). Chinese participation in the conference resulted in China's recognition in the arena of international politics. At the time Taiwan still had membership in the UN (until 1972), and many countries did not recognize the PRC and maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The battle of Dien Bien Phu started on March 13th, 1954. The Geneva Accords were issued on July 21st, 1954 and set out the following terms:

1. A provisional military demarcation line running approximately along the 17th Parallel,
2. A 3 mile demilitarized zone each side of the demarcation line,
3. French forces to regroup to the south of the line and Viet Minh to the north, with neither zone allowed to join any military alliance or seek military reinforcement,
4. An establishment of an International Control Commission, comprising of Canada, Poland and India (the latter as chair), to monitor the ceasefire. The agreement was signed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, the Peoples Republic of China, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. The State of Vietnam rejected the agreement whilst the United States took note of the ceasefire agreements.

The conference participants were mutually obliged to respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and not engage in internal affairs. The purpose of the Geneva Accords on Indo-China was to stop any military action.

“The Final Declaration” provisioned for a general election, to be held by July 1956 to create a unified Vietnamese state. In Laos, the Pathet Lao Army was obliged to leave and move to the Northeastern provinces – Sam Neua and Phong Saly – and Khmer resistance was obliged to become demobilized within 30 days. The Laos government was recognized as the only legal authority. Zhou Enlai concluded the conference results which emphasized Indo-China's significance of neutrality

The United States did not sign “The Final Declaration” of the Geneva Conference, as the American delegate Walter Badal Smith declared that the United States took cognizance of the agreement on the cessation of war and of the first twelve articles of “The Final Declaration”.

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<sup>10</sup> *Zbiór Dokumentów* [Set/collection of Documents], No. 5, 1954, pp. 1157–1158; <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/geneva-conference-begins-Apr.26,1954> (accessed 6 October 2105).

At the time China served as a “model” for the countries of the Third World. China stressed that Cambodia and Laos should adopt a neutral foreign policy and establish friendly co-operation with the PRC. The Chinese view stipulated that the only way of solving the conflict was by the implementation of the Geneva Conference.

In 1958 diplomatic relations were established and in 1960 “The Treaty of Friendship” and mutual non-aggression signed. Norodom Sihanouk, the charismatic leader of Cambodia pursued a policy of active neutrality. After Lon Nol’s *coup d’etat* in 1970 China broke off diplomatic relations and continued to consider Norodom Sihanouk as the real leader of Cambodia. He, along with his government and the United National Front, had established himself in China as a leader in exile. Finally in 1975 the Khmer Rouge won in Cambodia.

After the passing away of Ho Chi Minh, the differences between China and Vietnam were publicized. During the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, especially at the very beginning, relations with other countries were practically frozen, the only exceptions being the Indo-Chinese and Chinese help during the Vietnam (Indochina) War (1964–1973). There are many variations in the numbers given for the value of the China’s assistance to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The People’s Republic of China assisted North Vietnam in their political, military and economic fields. The Vietnamese policy at the time was to keep a “middle of the road” stance in relations with China and the Soviet Union, both of which were helping Vietnam in its struggle against American intervention.

On January 27th 1973 “The Agreement for Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam” (also known as the “Paris Accords”) was signed. This ended direct military involvement by the United States. Like the Geneva Agreements it mandated “free and democratic general elections under international supervision” in Vietnam. Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho were awarded the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts as primary negotiators of the agreement. America’s withdrawal brought an end to foreign involvement in the country of Vietnam for the first time in 114 years, since the first incursion by the French in 1858.

The People’s Army of Vietnam entered Saigon on April 30th 1975. After Vietnam’s reunification in 1975 bilateral relations soured. The end of war did not solve the problems, but only created new conditions.<sup>11</sup> Although the national liberation forces had won in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and the countries proclaimed themselves as socialist, there remained, however, problems which made the stabilization of the situation in Southeast Asia difficult. These problems included border disputes, the question of national minorities, and the rule of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

One of the most complicated problems was the dispute between China, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines over the islands of the South China and East China seas, specifically Paracel Island (Chinese Xisha Qundao (西沙), the Pratas Islands (Chinese Dongsha Qundao 东沙群岛, meaning “Eastern Sandy Archipelago”), the Spratly Island (Chinese Nansha Qundao 南沙群岛) and the Macclesfield Bank (Chinese Zhongsha Qundao 中沙群岛).

Chinese foreign policy analysis lets us conclude that despite the many common features of China and other countries, its characteristics are unique. One can distinguish the main features by determining its role in history and tradition as well as the different western, moral, religious, and political systems. One can hypothesize about the incompatibility of the western theories of international relations, with the tradition and presence of Chinese foreign policy. The difference in Chinese policy is caused by a characteristic mutual

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<sup>11</sup> From 1979 to 1990 China and Vietnam fought a prolonged border war.

independence in 'Chinese-Southeastern Asia' as well as with the specifics of the Chinese point of view.

Its contemporary characteristics are impossible to understand without the knowledge of history. The policy was and still is currently connected strictly with Chinese internal affairs subordinated to the needs of the national interests.

The Chinese policies towards the Southeast Asian countries during the years 1949–1976 evolved according to the domestic situation, and external conditioning. However, their basic purpose did not change. In the period discussed, with respect to the changes after the Second World War, Chinese policies undoubtedly achieved successes in terms of development and ensured an important place in the new international order. The policies were characterized by different attitudes towards the discussed region and were caused by historical tradition, the specifics of the relations in Asia together with a change of method in operation depending on the particular conditioning towards certain countries. A different problem occurred from the activities of the communist party in Southeast Asian countries and the Chinese role in these activities.

During the 1950s the PRC pursued a policy of peaceful coexistence, but since the middle of the 1960s during the Cultural Revolution, China's relations with most countries was frozen, except with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. China continued to provide assistance to this country and the DRV which was probably the only country with which China maintained friendly relations at the time. But during this period there existed two Vietnamese states: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and South Vietnam both with strong close ties to the USA.

At the beginning of the 1970s the situation in the region changed profoundly. The PRC was admitted to the United Nations (1971), the Paris Accords was signed (1973)<sup>12</sup> and the process of normalization of relations between the PRC and USA began.

At the time China aimed to ensure a friendly political environment. China also stopped supporting the leftist partisans in the countries of the region and intended to maintain the correct relationships with legal authorities. Moreover the PRC was interested in the gradual normalization of international bilateral relationships. However at the time, the PRC did not maintain diplomatic relations with the majority of the countries of the region. Relationships were established respectively: with Malaysia (31st May 1974), the Philippines (9th June 1975), and Thailand (1st July 1975). After the establishment of these diplomatic relations economic exchange was improved, especially with Thailand and Singapore. However diplomatic relations with Indonesia came to an end in 1967, but were later re-established in 1991. Diplomatic relations were established with Singapore in 1990, the final country in Southeastern Asia.

The analysis of the Chinese political strategy in the preceding years may also be of help in understanding current Chinese policy, not just towards Southeast Asia, but also on a global scale. It seems that Chinese policies with regards to the characteristics of Southeast Asian countries are more unique than universal and cannot be treated as even a partial model for other countries.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/paris-peace-accords-signed> (assessed 8 October 2015).



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