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Introduction by Christopher E. Goscha, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)

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Introduction by Christopher E. Goscha, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)

In the late twentieth century, scholars began writing in greater numbers on the cultural dimensions of the Cold War in particular and that of international relations in general. Many factors explain this cultural turn in international history – the impact of Saidian and Foucauldian work on the connection between culture and power, new theoretical approaches to national identity, the rise of global, postcolonial, race, and gender studies, a renewed interest in interdisciplinary approaches, and of course the normal shifts that occur as new generations challenge the preceding ones and their paradigms. Since the 1990s, historians, political scientists, and others have produced a rich body of research on the cultural dimensions of international relations ranging from the role of race in defining perceptions and policy to the use of sports as a diplomatic weapon. Others have shown how culture, unlike pure propaganda, could escape the control of the state and could even be turned against the powers that be. Penny M. Von Eschen made this point well in her classic, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*.¹

It is not my intention to write an historiographical state of the field piece here. H-Diplo's round-tables provide the best account of the cultural shift in our field. Nor can I summarize the main arguments of each of the chapters in this edited volume, *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture*.² The roundtable participants do this below. I would, however, like to frame the discussion of the edited volume under review here by welcoming a widening of the cultural dimension of the Cold War beyond the West. To be sure, Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat's book is not the first to do so. One of the exciting things about Von Eschen's book was precisely its ability to plot Louis Armstrong's trajectory as he dropped his musical bombs across the globe, from Washington to Moscow by way of Tbilisi, Baghdad, Accra, New Delhi, and Bangkok. Palgrave/MacMillan, who published the *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia*, are also clearly monitoring this "southern" shift in the cultural study of the Cold War. In 2005, their *Cold War History Series* published James R. Vaughan's study of British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East.³

Moreover, it would be wrong to think that Asia has not attracted its share of cultural attention in international history. Akira Iriye's and Louise Young's work on the cultural dimensions of Japanese diplomacy and imperialism certainly comes to mind.⁴ More

¹ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

² Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat, eds., *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2007).

³ James R. Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945-1957* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2005).

⁴ Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) (among others) and Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

recently, scholars have drawn upon Michel Foucault and especially Edward Said's work (*Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*) to provide new studies of American foreign policy towards Southeast Asia in a time of decolonization and Cold War. It is hard not to pair Mark Philip Bradley's study of the American "imagining" of Vietnamese nationalism with that of Frances Gouda's studies of Washington's "visions" of Indonesian nationalism.⁵ Accompanying these works is a wide range of scholarship examining the cultural politics of American power in Asia.

Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat's volume stands out in the existing historiography in international relations in that it patently shifts the emphasis from the American side of the Cold War to the Asian ones. Many factors have prevented this from happening sooner. Not only did the cultural turn in international history take off in North America (both Foucault and Said produced much of their work and followings there), but primary sources in diplomatic history were always more abundant and easily accessible in North American and European archives during and since the end of the Cold War. Only recently have historians begun to gain access to archives and primary sources in China, Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea, and elsewhere.⁶ And while things are changing today, the limited job openings in non-Western diplomatic history meant that relatively few young historians could invest the time and resources in learning difficult Asian languages when access to the primary materials was unsure.⁷ The authors in this book make it clear that things have changed greatly since the end of the Cold War. Many of them come from the region, have mastered their respective languages, and have truly gone to the sources, not only in Asia but even in Eastern bloc countries that had special relationships with communist Asian states. This is new and without this linguistic turn there will be no cultural one when it comes to studying the non-Western sides. Language, after all, is absolutely vital to decoding and understanding culture in all its complex forms.

This is all the more important since Asia was arguably the deadliest place of the Cold War between 1950 (Korea, Malaya, Indochina) and 1991 (end of the 3rd Indochina War, the debut of the 1st Afghanistan one), if not to this day (Iraq and Afghanistan depending on how you define Asia). Scholars have examined the diplomatic military aspects of the Cold War in this part of the world, but few have examined its cultural dimensions. The edited volume under review here makes it clear that culture was as important a tool for Asian states as it

⁵ See: Frances Gouda (with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg), *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia: US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920-1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002) and Mark Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁶ The work of the CWIHP in facilitating this process is well known.

⁷ A remarkable exception to this rule is John W. Dower. Fluent in Japanese, this specialist of American-Japanese relations has penned what may well be the founding texts of the cultural history of Asia in the 20th century. John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books 1986) and above all *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

was for the superpowers trying to influence them. Moreover, by taking up the Asian side, authors in this book consistently demonstrate that Asians were actors on the cultural front. Ideology, identity, and culture combined in complex and very real ways during the Cold War, changing the countries in question and demonstrating their agency in the battle for the Asian hearts and minds. While this should not really come as a surprise⁸, this volume gives us a glimpse of the rich topics and approaches that await young scholars who like foreign languages and cultural diplomacy.

Lastly, as we all know, the Cold War intersected in Asia with another major historical transformation of the international system – decolonization. Almost all of Asia, except for Japan and Thailand, became colonial possessions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Scholars such as Gouda, Bradley, and Anne Foster have provided penetrating accounts of the American perception of communism, nationalism, and the decolonization of the international system during this period. What scholars may have missed, Tony Day reminds us in his review, is the extent to which culture became a vital ingredient in the making of the postcolonial state (nationalism is after all a cultural construction, too). For postcolonial states at war, culture also became an essential ingredient in propaganda drives and mass mobilization campaigns. One might add that it was also a major concern for European powers intent on maintaining their colonial states or at least their influence in the region. Not only did European colonial powers use culture and information services to persuade the colonized to stay the colonial course, but they also used culture to win over the support of their own public opinions, ones which were not necessarily interested in the idea of Empire. The Cold War only added another layer of cultural competition, as the Americans and the Soviets entered into the fray, sometimes to the intense frustration of colonial and national leaders, who resented this postwar superpower meddling in their cultural *chasses gardées*.⁹

The reviewers describe and critique the main chapters of the volume. I will not repeat what they have already said. I would, however, draw the attention of H-Diplo readers to Tuong Vu's introduction and his chapter 3 in which he challenges what he sees as the Western-centered view of the Cold War. In ways reminiscent of Chen Jian's entry into the field¹⁰,

⁸ Piero Gleijeses reminded us years ago that small states in the international system, even in the Soviet bloc, had agency and could manipulate their larger allies. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

⁹ Pierre Journoud, 'Face-à-face culturel au Sud Vietnam (1954-1965)', in *Contributions à l'histoire de la diplomatie culturelle. Entre rayonnement et réciprocité* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), pp. 139-166. For what it's worth, I have argued that the late 20th century Francophone project was born in Asia, in Indochina, in the 1910s as a French cultural reaction to continued Vietnamese reliance on Chinese civilization and the fear that the British and especially the Germans would exploit this to their advantage prior to and during World War I. "The Modern Barbarian": Nguyen Van Vinh and the Complexity of Colonial Modernity in Vietnam', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, volume 3, no. 1 (2004), pp. 99-134.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Chen Jian and Tuong Vu were both on the wrong side of communist power in China and Vietnam during their youth. Both completed their Ph.D.'s in the United States. Few would deny that by daring to challenge established Western paradigms on communist China and Vietnam these two scholars have enriched our understanding of the Asian Cold War in its local and international dimensions.

Tuong Vu questions whether scholars of the Cold War got it right when dealing with the Asian Cold War in general and that of Vietnam in particular. A specialist of communist Vietnam, one of the touchstones for a generation of scholars working in diplomatic history since the 1960s, Tuong rejects the idea that the Cold War was imposed on Vietnamese communists, including Ho Chi Minh. Vietnamese communists, like their Chinese and Korean counterparts, believed in communism and willingly joined the communist bloc. The Vietnamese welcomed the Cold War, saw opportunities in its ideological spread eastward, and used it to push the internal dynamics of their local revolutionary policies and projects. It was part of their worldview and the identity they sought to build for their populations.

In Tuong Vu's view, scholars have missed the importance of ideology and the complexity of cultural identity *for* Asians because Western and American centered approaches of the Cold War in general and those of the Vietnam War in particular (including liberals) have implicitly denied Asians agency. What he argues for Vietnam holds for the rest of Asia, he tells us. Asians, communist or not, were actors and their agency directly influenced the course of the Cold War locally, regionally, and globally. As he writes: "It is more accurate to say that the Cold war would not have extended into Asia had some Asian actors not desired it and worked hard to get what they wanted". And their decisions and actions impacted upon the course of the Cold War far beyond the Asian region.

In short, Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat's edited volume under review here marks an important contribution to our knowledge of the cultural dynamics of the Cold War in Asia during the second half of the 20th century. All of the reviewers welcome this book. The reviewers also set up a lively yet diplomatic debate, one which H-Diplo readers will find of great interest. Two topics stand out. On the one hand, Tony Day, who is publishing this year his own edited volume of the cultural Cold War in Asia, suggests that the editors have overstated the internationalist communist and transnational dimensions of the cultural dynamics of the Cold War in Asia. He goes so far as to write that the "essays in this collection demonstrate, against the grain of the stated aims of the book, that during the Cold War, the state increased its grip on the populations of Asia. But they also provide ample evidence to suggest that nationalism, no less than internationalism, was a primary force that shaped the nature of cultural responses to the Cold War at both the state and popular levels."¹¹ On the other hand, Jessica Chapman, herself a specialist of the Vietnam War, wonders whether Tuong Vu is overdoing his post-revisionist recasting of Vietnamese communists as inveterate internationalists.

I'll leave it to the editors to respond and I'll let the reader reach his or her own conclusions. What is certain is that this book and the debate it stirs will surely advance the study of the cultural dimensions of the Cold War in Asia.

May a hundred flowers bloom ...

¹¹ Tony Day also authored *Fluid Iron, State Formation in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).

Tuong Vu is assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Oregon. He is the co-editor of *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, author of *Paths to Development in Asia: South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), and co-editor of *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region, and Qualitative Analysis* (Stanford University Press, 2008). His articles have appeared in *World Politics*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *South East Asia Research*, *Theory and Society*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, and *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. He is writing a book on communist ideology and revolution in Vietnam.

Wasana Wongsurawat is Lecturer in modern Chinese history at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Wongsurawat's recent publications include "The Foreign Print Capitalism that Founded a Nation: The Role of Overseas Chinese Newspapers and the Emergence of Thai Nationalism," *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1:3 (September 2008) and "Contending for a Claim on Civilization: The Sino-Thai Struggle to Control Overseas Chinese Education in Thailand," *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 4:2 (November 2008).

Tuan Hoang is a PhD candidate in the Department of History, University of Notre Dame. His article "The Early South Vietnamese Critique of Communism" appears in Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat, eds., *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Christopher E. Goscha is Associate Professor in International Relations at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). He is editor (with Christian Ostermann) of *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) which was featured in an H-Diplo roundtable (<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XI-37.pdf>) and author of a *Historical Dictionary of the Indochina War: International and Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies and University of Hawaii Press, in press).

Jessica Chapman is an assistant professor of history at Williams College. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2006. She has recently published articles in *Diplomatic History* and the *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*. Chapman is currently completing a book manuscript entitled "From Disorder to Dictatorship: The Domestic and International History of Ngo Dinh Diem's Construction of South Vietnam, 1953-1956."

Michael W. Charney is Reader in South East Asian and Imperial History in the Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies where he has worked since 2001. His research focuses on the history of culture, technology, and religion in Asia and Africa. His three monographs include *Southeast Asian Warfare, 1300-1900* (Brill, 2004), *Powerful Learning: Buddhist Literati and the Throne in Burma's Last Dynasty, 1752-1885* (University of Michigan Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), and *A History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and is the author of numerous articles and chapters.

Tony Day is an independent scholar, a resident fellow of Calhoun College at Yale, and a visiting professor of history, Wesleyan University. His publications include a book on state

formation in Southeast Asia, edited volumes on Indonesian literature and culture, and an edited collection of essays on cultural expression in Southeast Asia during the Cold War. He is currently working on an essay about Southeast Asian film and the representation of history, as well as a study of Indonesian film, literature, and painting during the 1950s.

Jessica Elkind is an Assistant Professor of History at San Francisco State University, where she teaches U.S. Foreign Relations and Southeast Asian history courses. She received her Ph.D. in 2005 from the University of California, Los Angeles. Jessica is currently working on an article about American involvement in the Vietnamese "refugee crisis" of the mid-1950s. She is also preparing for publication a revised version of her dissertation, *The First Casualties: American Nation Building Programs in South Vietnam, 1955-1965*.

Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat's edited volume, *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture*, is the product of a conference convened in Singapore in March 2008. The essays all rely on fresh sources from socialist bloc countries, mostly in Asia, to contribute to the editors' goal of "asserting Asian perspectives and their roles in the Cold War." According to Vu's introduction, this volume differs from existing scholarship by focusing on "ideology and identity, asking how Asian actors depicted themselves, their friends and enemies in their imagination; what role ideology and identity played in shaping their policies of alliance or non-alliance; and how cultural resources such as concepts, arts, and media were employed by Asian elites to assert their identity or ideological beliefs." By focusing on these phenomena, and the cultural networks Asians constructed to "fulfill their ideological commitments," the editors intend the volume to prove that "Asian actors—while possessing limited military and economic capabilities—were neither victims nor puppets of the superpowers as conventionally believed" (2).

Vu situates this volume within two new trends in scholarship on the Cold War: increasing attention to the "cultural dimensions of the conflict" and "greater scholarly attention to the roles played by minor powers." He makes a case for reconceptualizing Cold War historiography in three key ways to deepen our understanding of Asia's role within that global struggle. First, he claims, "The geographic pattern of evolution of the Cold War...commonly described as spreading from Europe and engulfing Asia at the initiative of the superpowers...should be reconceptualized as an intercontinental synchronization of hostilities in which Asian actors shared equal responsibilities with the superpowers in the spread of the conflict" (3). Second, he notes that while most studies focus on the effects of the Cold War on Asian events, scholars should begin to direct their attention to how indigenous political processes in Asia...had critical *reverse* impact on the Cold War" (3). And third, he argues that close study of Asian actors suggests that the nation-state should be decentered from analyses from the Cold War, since their "visions and political loyalties during the Cold War spanned a much wider range—not limited to the nation-state as the ideal political community" (3). Vu suggests that it is by introducing considerations of culture and ideology into discussions of topics typically consigned to the realms of political and diplomatic history that scholars can "help rescue Cold War scholarship from the grips of the nation-state" (12). The volume thus focuses on "ideology, identity, and the cultural networks that undergirded Cold War blocs in Asia" (13). Chapters address Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, China, North Korea, Kampuchea, and the Philippines. The essays, based on significant new non-Western sources, focused on understudied Asian actors, and engaging with questions about culture, identity, and ideology, constitute important contributions to the literature on Cold War history and decolonization.

This review will focus on the essays pertaining to Vietnam to assess Vu's claim that "the Vietnamese case... is a test case on the important role of Ideology in the Cold War," and to suggest that the contributors to this volume and other scholars working on related topics might seek to refine their treatment of culture and ideology (13). The volume would be strengthened by more effectively theorizing these concepts, and by dealing more

systematically with the challenges of determining ideological conviction and authenticity, and the related problem of identifying the role of ideology in shaping states' policies and behaviors.

Vu notes in his introduction that "concepts like 'culture' and related concepts like 'ideology' and 'identity' are difficult to define" (9). Yet, given the fact that this volume seeks to employ these concepts as vehicles for revolutionizing scholars' understanding of the structure and power dynamics of the Cold War in order to reclaim agency for Asian actors, and to decenter the nation-state from histories of the Cold War in Asia, it is incumbent upon the editors and the individual contributors to provide sophisticated and nuanced definitions of these terms. Vu's introduction and each of the three chapters on Vietnam fall short, using these terms without defining them satisfactorily. This undermines the claims set forth in each individual chapter as well as the overarching claims of the volume. In a brief discussion of culture, Vu simply refers to two popular quotes on the subject by Clifford Geertz and Max Weber, and suggests the concept can be divided into two broad categories, systematic and conscious on the one hand and unsystematic and subconscious or partly conscious on the other. He does not define ideology at all, except to imply that it can be located within the conscious, systematic category of culture (10). Likewise, Tuan Hoang, Tuong Vu, and Bernd Schaefer all draw conclusions about the importance of various ideological commitments to Vietnam's participation in the Cold War without defining ideology or discussing any of the challenges of ascertaining the authenticity of ideological pronouncements, determining whether those pronouncements reflected genuine ideological commitments or the mobilization of ideological rhetoric to advance other goals, and drawing concrete links between ideological beliefs and specific actions. To a limited extent, they address these considerations in passing, but all three essays would benefit from a more systematic treatment of these questions.

Tuan Hoang, in his essay, "The Early South Vietnamese Critique of Communism," asserts that his essay will "clarify what Vietnamese anticommunists believed about their opponents as well as the basis for their beliefs" (18). Tuong Vu, in the chapter entitled, "'To Be Patriotic is to Build Socialism': Communist Ideology in Vietnam's Civil War," argues that "Vietnamese communists never wavered in their ideological loyalty during the period when key decisions about the civil war were made (1953-1960)" (34). And Bernd Schaefer, in "Communist Vanguard Contest in East Asia during the 1960s and 1970s," addresses "how claims of ideological vanguardism shaped foreign policies of the ruling parties in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) between the late 1960s and the mid 1970s, as well as the role of the emerging Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) that came to power in 1975" (113).

Hoang's piece on anticommunism in the early years of South Vietnam's First Republic sheds light on that society's all-too-little understood political culture. He is careful to note that "this chapter illustrates only one aspect of Vietnamese anticommunism, namely, an ideological and intellectual critique of the Vietnamese Communist Party developed for the most part by northern émigrés during the first years of the divisional period" (31-32). He argues that what bound these émigré writers together "were similar experiences of the Viet

Minh, and not religious commonalities,” and that they “held a fierce opposition to Marxist-Leninism” (19). According to Hoang, many of these authors delineated between communism and nationalism, arguing that subscribing to the former precluded the latter (20). They claimed that communists sought to dupe poorly informed Vietnamese people into betraying their nation to international communism. This is fascinating, as it reveals that at least some Vietnamese indictments of communism and its relationship to Vietnam’s civil war bore great similarity to that which the U.S. government used to justify its alliance with South Vietnam, and later its war effort. Hoang’s essay, however, implies that these émigré anticommunists were motivated not by the Cold War considerations that drove American thinking but by their individual experiences of violence, persecution, and oppression at the hands of communists in the north. Perhaps he could explore further the implications of this lived experience upon ideological positioning. The three larger categories of the anticommunist critique he identifies—“revolutionary violence and repression, class struggle, and thought control”—seem to have less to do with opposition to Marxist-Leninist ideas and more to do with resentment, anger, and perhaps even vengeance stemming from personal Vietnamese experiences of communist abuses against themselves, their families, and perhaps even their social classes, political organizations, and religious groups (24). On final analysis, it is difficult to subscribe to his claim that the iteration of Vietnamese anticommunism he outlines is ideologically based, not least because he never makes clear how he intends to use the term “ideology.” Moreover, the critiques these northern émigrés issued seem to have been focused on what they perceived to be oppressive policies and practices, and deceptive propaganda strategies implemented by the communists, rather than representing substantive counterarguments to Marxist-Leninist ideas.

Hoang might also consider the relationship of these émigré writers to Ngo Dinh Diem’s government. He discusses their critiques of communist press censorship on the north, but fails to take up the fact that the southern government was cracking down on freedom of expression even as they wrote, and would assert a regime of nearly total press censorship by 1958 (29-31). This is not to imply that these writers were mere mouthpieces of the government, but given these conditions, it would strengthen Hoang’s analysis to examine how Diem’s government interacted with and reacted to them, and to think about how this may have shaped the commentary on communism that did appear in the South Vietnamese press.

Tuong Vu, in his essay on communist ideology in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), argues that DRV leaders between 1953 and 1960 demonstrated an ideological loyalty to communism and a firm commitment to a binary worldview that pitted world communist revolution, directed by the Soviet Union, against capitalist imperialism, embodied by the United States. He claims, “A modernizing socialism ideology rather than a mere desire for national unification was driving the Vietnamese civil war from the north” (35). In the lead up to the Geneva Conference, he argues that Party leaders’ “loyalty to the socialist cause and desire to coordinate policy with the Soviet camp led Vietnamese leaders at the time to accept uncritically Stalin’s policy of preserving peace” (38). It is no stretch to believe Vu’s claim that DRV leaders were committed to the Marxist-Leninist ideological foundations of socialism and aimed to replicate Soviet-style revolutionary processes and

institutions in Vietnam, and sought support from the Soviet Union and the broader communist bloc to achieve that result. He makes an important contribution to the literature on Vietnam's civil war by fleshing out the DRV's relationship with and attitudes towards the Soviet bloc during these years. However, it is more difficult to accept his assertion that they were driven primarily or exclusively by "ideological loyalty to world socialism" (47) and not also by a large dose of national interest within a geopolitical system that demanded that they align Vietnam squarely with one ideologically-based superpower or another, and by the need to market the revolution and their leadership of it to a war weary domestic audience. He makes some tenuous arguments to dispute the possibility that the rhetoric employed by Hanoi's leadership might have been more propagandistic and mercenary than it was heartfelt, which muddies his overall argument that "their international behavior often did not correspond with their narrow interests in 'liberating' South Vietnam; rather it was motivated by larger ideological principles that continued to underlie their two-camp worldview" (52). For instance, in discussing whether a series of articles penned by Ho from 1951-1956 lauding the Soviet Union and decrying the United States represented his "true worldview" or if he was "merely producing propaganda," Vu claims, "He was not writing these columns to make a career or a living. He had a full-time job as president of the DRV and of his party and he was at the top of his career" (40-41). Yet, as the leader of a revolutionary state embattled from within Vietnam and opposed by the strongest power on the global stage, one could argue that not only his job but also his life depended on the success of the revolution. Again, this is not to suggest that Ho and other DRV leaders did not hold deep ideological commitments to socialism and to the unity of the Soviet bloc. And Vu demonstrates well that "VWP leadership was not a monolithic group of one mind on ideological matters" (52). He could lend nuance to his conclusions, though, by considering how the general ideological orientation of Hanoi's leadership in this period interacted with other, more pragmatic goals and imperatives.

Schaefer's inquiry into the competition between Beijing, Pyongyang, Hanoi for the vanguard position among Asia's socialist revolutionary states, informed by East German archival evidence, is an important contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of Asia's Cold War in the shadow of the Sino-Soviet rift. He claims that competing ambitions and claims to the Marxist revolutionary vanguard "brought them necessarily into ideological competition and conflict with each other and fueled several regional and international developments" (114). Like Hoang and Vu, he could improve upon his discussion of ideology. In particular, he might better explain and document the ideological differences between the three states' ruling parties, and the relationship between those ideological positions and their intraregional and geopolitical ambitions. In this essay, it remains unclear exactly what drove the three governments to challenge each other for leadership of the revolutionary vanguard. While ideological commitment and revolutionary zeal is one possible explanation, the following may well have contributed to spurring the three governments to joust with each other: ongoing regional struggles for dominance that predated the Cold War, inspired by chauvinism or national pride; the desire for security, which would be enhanced by the existence of friendly governments in neighboring countries; or quests by certain leaders or parties to maintain, enhance, or totalize their power. Schaefer's essay itself suggests that these factors contributed to Asia's regional struggle for revolutionary leadership in the 1960s and 1970s. His analysis would be well

served by exploring how these and other considerations might affect how historians interpret the role ideological conviction played in this process.

The essays discussed here, and the volume of which they are a part, represent some of the most exciting work being done in international Cold War history. They also speak to the slippery nature of concepts like ideology and culture, and of the difficulty of integrating them into scholarly studies of topics traditionally relegated to the domain of political and diplomatic history. The authors should all be commended for doing so, and encouraged to continue with their studies. I hope that they will consider addressing some of the issues raised here as they continue their fascinating and valuable projects.

The increased availability of Cold War-era documentation, a more relaxed intellectual (and political) environment and, a newfound interest in the cultural side of the Cold War are amongst many factors put forward here as important in setting the context for a reexamination of the Cold War in Asia. In the introduction, Tuong Vu lays out a book that will focus on “ideology, identity, and the cultural networks that undergirded Cold War blocs in Asia” (p. 13). This volume thus falls within a group of recent collections of articles on the Cold War in Asia that seek, at least in part, to go beyond the traditional diplomatic and geopolitical focus of that history. These other collections include Christopher E. Goscha and Christian F. Ostermann (eds.), *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (2009), Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (eds.), *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (2010), Anthony Day and Maya H. T. Liem (eds.), *Cultures At War: The Cold War And Cultural Expression In Southeast Asia* (2010), and a special issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (vol. 40.3, 2009), introduced and edited by Karl Hack and Geoff Wade. The latter collection, like the current volume, includes papers that were originally presented at the “Asian Cold War Symposium” held in Singapore.

The editors lay out three concepts central to their reexamination, namely the geographical concept of Asia, the Cold War “as a historical event,” and culture “as a sphere of social activity” (p. 3). They call for a reorientation of the processes understood to have characterized the Cold War in Asia, suggesting several new paths. First, rather than viewing the Cold War as being born in Europe and being pushed into Asia by the superpowers, we should view a “synchronization of hostilities” in which Asians played an equal role in spreading the conflict. Second, rather than focus on how the Cold War impacted Asia, we should focus on how Asian political processes impacted the Cold War. Third, instead of viewing Cold War activity in Asia through the framework of the nation-state, we should accept that Asian visions and loyalties were often much broader, transcending the nation-state (p. 3). The introduction underlines the important role cultural spheres can play in rescuing studies of the Cold War from the nation-state framework. What is mainly meant here is that overseas Chinese, Muslims, Christians, Pan-Asianists, and other groups with transnational referents and their respective imaginaries are not easily confined to the boundaries of one or another nation-state (p. 12) and shaped different Cold Wars in Asia.

Chapters 2 and 3, by Tuan Hoang and Tuong Vu respectively, look separately at the communist ideology and ideologues in the North and the anticommunist ideologies and ideologues in the South. Rather than viewing the war and its partisans under the shadow of the Cold War, the ideologies and thus those who spun them are viewed by the authors as genuine and homegrown on both sides, and both equally dedicated to their values. While the communists in particular have sometimes been viewed as pragmatic nationalists to whom the United States (U.S.) turned a cold shoulder early on, Communist thinkers were quite consistent from the late 1940s in sticking to their guns regarding their socialist vision for Vietnam, unity achieved or not. Similarly, anticommunists in the South are viewed to have found their values on their own, rather than being artificially instilled with them by

the Americans or Diem. As many of the leading anticommunist thinkers in the south were northern émigrés, their values emerged instead in reaction to their real experiences in Vietnam under the Communists between 1945 and 1954. A third chapter on ideology, Chapter 5 by Leong Yew, similarly gives agency to Singaporean leaders in adjusting their concept of democratic socialism and membership in the Socialist international to reflect local values and realities. They were able to reinvent “Asia” and the “West” over and over again, allowing them to believe that the real antagonisms at work were between Asia and the West (pp. 85, 87). In all three chapters, the need to view and value local thinking on its own merits and not as a reflection of external influences is demonstrated.

There are also chapters that examine historical developments that occurred during the period of Cold War, but whose emergence does not seem to owe much to the latter. More consciously, chapter 4, by Setiadi Sopandi, looks at the place of architecture in a new Indonesian national identity that was framed by neither the colonial past, nor the Cold War. Sopandi’s discussion provides an important and fascinating context to understand how Asians saw their present as a move away from a colonial past, which for many was painful. Sukarno wanted a new capital on which a new future could be erected, one that could allow Indonesians to forget the colonial past. However, he had to settle, for technical economic reasons (which are not actually discussed), on merely developing his existing capital, Jakarta, with a new architecture, one that despite its mobilization as a new and modern Indonesian architectural style was derived from European modernist tradition (p. 57, p. 72). Less consciously, Wasana Wongsurawat’s chapter (10) on two race riots in Bangkok’s Chinatown (in 1945 and 1974) indicates that problems in some societies could be viewed, if one wishes, through a Cold War lens, but could also be seen in a broader historical framework that would transcend the influences of the Cold War.

Four additional chapters round off the collection. The focus in two chapters, chapter 6 by Nicolai Volland and chapter 8 by Rommel Curaming, on international prizes highly valued by communist and noncommunist Asia, the Stalin Prize (the socialist world’s version of a Nobel Prize, (p. 95)) and the Ramon Magsaysay Award respectively, makes for an interesting comparison. The pursuit of the Stalin Prize encouraged in a very direct way a crash effort by the Peoples Republic of China (P.R.C.) to develop proletarian literature for an agricultural society. In the case of the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the citations included messages that would, on the one hand, support the values of liberal capitalism, but were accompanied by other messages that made identification with the anticommunist bloc less clear. Chapters 7 (Bernd Schaefer) and 9 (Balazs Szalontai), both of which coincidentally include the only discussions of north Korea, provide discussions that emphasize the relationships between Communist states in the region and without. Schaefer looks at the competition between the major Asian communist states to become the “ideological vanguard of East Asia” (p. 15). The communist parties of North Korea, the P.R.C., Vietnam, and Kampuchea all competed to be the Marxist vanguard in Asia (and even for Africa as well in the case of the P.R.C. and North Korea), viewing their own ideological understandings as the best “suited to serve as international models” (p. 114). This discussion helps to put the better-known P.R.C. and Vietnamese competition into a broader and ideologically more complex context. Szalontai tackles the under-examined topics of cultural diplomacy between communist states and the post-1953 tactical approaches to

North Korea's domestic policies, to examine the relationship between North Korean domestic cultural policies and the state's manipulation of public opinion. As Szalontai finds, synchronicity was lacking in North Korean economic, cultural, diplomatic, and military policies; instead, dynamism and inconsistency appear to have been the rule (p. 164).

The various contributions to this volume make clear the diverse range of possible topics out there waiting to be examined on the Cold War period in Asia. The contributing authors also demonstrate the possibilities of evidence other than state memos and the other traditional fare of political history to present a different picture of this period. Expectedly, the contributions are somewhat uneven in their approach to source materials, reflecting perhaps the diversity of subtopics that have now developed. But across the board they deliver some very enlightening historical insights into what many will find to be most interesting dimensions of this period in Asia's history.

The volume's use of Asia as a reference point for examining the Cold War period highlights interesting issues. The editors explain that "without understanding the thoughts of Asian actors and their cultural networks, we risk underestimating Asia's role in the Cold War" (p. 16). Nevertheless, it is difficult to get a general sense from all of the contributions as to what Cold War "dynamics" were peculiar to Asia or, rather, if there is anything that really pervades the region, across both ethnic and national lines, that we could identify either as "Cold War" or as Asian. If, however, we accept that the Cold War was really a myriad of local events that gave birth to the Cold War globally, then the Cold War in Asia is not really so special. One could have just as easily and effectively introduced case studies such as Cuba, Angola, Egypt, or a host of other countries from Africa and Latin America alongside some of the Asian examples. Nevertheless, this may not matter. Like everyone else, scholars often succumb to the temptation of re-reading the past according to contemporary conditions, and the new condition of Asia is that it is (again—in long historical time) increasingly centred on a prosperous and powerful China. The 'new Asia' requires a history of the region that will be integrated, independent (that is, it must not be seen as primarily subject to a struggle dominated by two Euro-American superpowers), and influential.

If Asia was indeed special, however, then a richer and deeper historical framework is necessary to better contextualize this period by bringing the (pre-independence) history back into the equation or at least into the introduction. It may have been helpful to indicate how the expansion of the Japanese military regime over Southeast Asia and much of East Asia up to its greatest extent in mid-1942 and its collapse three years later helped to condition a rough temporal synchronicity for the events that led, in this book's view, to a shared Cold War. Perhaps we could look further back to the longer-term influence of China in the region-- the brief treatment in Wasana's chapter notwithstanding. More stress has to be placed in this and other studies of the Cold War in Asia on the important role played economically and politically through Southeast Asia by overseas Chinese communities. That crucial and ubiquitous role is a major reason why the emergence of the P.R.C. and the outbreak of the Cold War were immediately relevant and why key episodes of P.R.C. history, such as the Cultural Revolution, sparked concern (and overreaction) in Burma and elsewhere.

Like many of us, the contributors also accept at face value that there was a Cold War in Asia. Considering how the period has been treated in real time and in the historiography, accepting that there was a Cold War helps to provide us with a quick and easy way to lump together most of the postwar period. But when we move to give such framings meaning, we tread more complicated terrain. One of the advantages of the approach of the Goscha and Ostermann volume cited above, for example, was to consider connectivities between different national, cultural, and (regionally-relevant) historical trajectories including the overlap of the processes of decolonization and the emergence of the Cold War in only a portion of the continent (Southeast Asia) and for only half of the period covered in the present volume. By contrast, this volume seeks in part to demonstrate that Asians contributed equally to the emergence of a singular, global Cold War. A consistent view of what the Cold War means, or how it relates as a structuring concept for the collection, however, is difficult to discern. The editors describe the Cold War as an event. Nevertheless, the Cold War only relates to many of the chapters as a period and sometimes only a peripheral one. Certainly, some assertions, such as Wasana's that there is "no denying that Cold War politics contributed to the tensions behind" the Yaowaraj Incident (September, 1945) as well as the more understandable 1974 incident (p. 166) merit more detailed justification as well as greater insight into the author's conception of what constituted the Cold War so early on. There is indeed little questioning of the validity of the Cold War framework for considering the history of the region. Applying the test, 'would anything being discussed in this chapter have been substantially different if the Cold War had never happened', to some of the chapters, one often finds difficulty answering in the affirmative.

Perhaps it would be useful to abandon attempts to posit synchronicity in Asia-world historical periodization and consider Asian history from the end of World War II until the present on its own terms. Alternatively, it may be helpful to consider whether parts of the period from roughly the end of the 1940s to the end of the 1980s might be better periodized along lines other than the Cold War. For example, the Cold War touched on several Asian societies that did not undergo a colonial period, but for those that had a colonial era, was the Cold War less (or perhaps more) influential? Or, did the Cold War impact these societies in a way different than had the colonial period? Certainly, we know that at least for the early independence leaders, the colonial experience was central to their attempts to evade involvement in the Cold War proper and many viewed the Cold War through a colonial prism (neo-colonialism versus the fading old imperialism). In formerly colonized regions, such as Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and even areas of East Asia, it is thus potentially fruitful to consider where, when, and if the Cold War became more important than the shadow of colonialism in shaping how indigenous societies and political leaders viewed their place in the world. Some Southeast Asian thinkers, such as the anti-communist northern émigrés examined by Tuan Hoang were not Catholic (p. 19), and were not only enthralled with the ideals of the French Revolution(s), but also very knowledgeable about them (p. 27). Others, such as prime minister and writer U Nu, saw their newly independent countries as largely (if rather naively) outside of the Cold War and fought furiously to keep things that way, blaming much of their country's economic and political problems on their colonial heritage, not on the struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

The introduction and chapters are collectively and independently well-executed, well-researched, identify new sources (consider Curaming's utilization of East German archival material to gain insights into the activities of some prohibitively secretive Asian communist states like North Korea) from new angles, and are well worth reading. I will certainly assign them in my postgraduate course on the Cold War in Asia. In terms of our general understandings of the Cold War in Asia, as I have outlined above, there remain important questions about how we understand a crucial period in Asia's history, but there are many new insights to be found in the present volume that will aid the progress and contribute strongly to the trajectory of this evolving discussion.

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Review by Tony Day, Independent Scholar

This is a lively and fascinating collection of essays that bring Asia into focus as a place where the Cold War was waged not just in physical, but also in ideological, cultural, and diplomatic terms. The authors ask questions about what the war meant for Asians, who derived their own agendas from and attributed their own meanings to the political and cultural issues generated by the global struggle between the Cold War superpowers. Of the three key terms editor and contributor Tuong Vu singles out for consideration in his introduction, “Asia” and “Cold War” emerge from my reading of this book with expanded and nuanced meanings. Whether or not we learn a great deal more about the role of Asian “culture” in the Cold War is another question. Tuong Vu argues that “the study of culture can help rescue Cold War scholarship from the grips of the nation-state,” since Asian cultural values can be shown to extend beyond the boundaries of the nation-state (12). This last statement is true, but the essays suggest to me, sometimes explicitly, sometimes in spite of their own argumentation, that contrary to Vu’s first assertion, transnational values during the Cold War were strongly shaped and given localized meanings by the interconnected processes of nation building and state formation in the region after World War II.

I find both nationalism and state building at work in the formation of ideologies in Vietnam, for example, in my reading between the lines of the first two essays of the volume by Tuan Hoang and Tuong Vu on South and North Vietnam respectively. Hoang suggests in effect that “anticommunism” was an important component of South Vietnamese nationalism, even though he doesn’t address the question of South Vietnamese national identity as such. Yet issues such as imprisonment and escape, violence, family relations, and freedom of thought, which Hoang argues contributed to the creation of anticommunism in the South, also served as central themes in the distinctively South Vietnamese painting and sculpture that were produced in the 1950s and 1960s, suggesting the existence of a “national” culture in the South, of which anticommunism was one component. As Boitran Huynh-Beattie makes clear in an essay on Saigonese art,¹ the kinds of European, decidedly un-American modernist art that were influential in the South became fully South Vietnamese once they had been translated onto Saigonese canvasses and given Saigonese sculptural forms. The eclectic, anticommunist, non-violent cosmopolitanism of Saigon’s artists was a *national* trait, one that can be found expressed in the writings of Vo Phien and other writers in the South (19). Similarly, I am inclined to understand the internationalism of communists in the North as underlying, rather than undermining, their commitment to building a strong nation and/or a strong state in Vietnam. The Northern writer Tran Dan, who was one of the heroes of the *Nhan Van Giai Pham* Affair that stirred anticommunist emotions in the South (29-30), was as patriotically committed to socialism as VWP Secretary General Truong Chinh. Where they differed was in their thinking about the role of the state in communist

¹ See Boitran Huynh-Beattie, “Saigonese Art during the War: Modernity versus Ideology,” in Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem, eds., *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 2010), 81-102.

Vietnam.² Both men were patriotic, communist Vietnamese, yet Tran Dan was also as dedicated to artistic freedom as the anticommunist writer from the South, Vo Phien (19). Pure Cold War categories can't explain this kind of cultural and ideological hybridity, which we find on both sides of the 17th parallel.

The drive to build a strong centralized state played a major role in shaping the cultural Cold War and Cold War culture in other parts of Asia, not just North Vietnam.³ Statism fostered what Benedict Anderson has called "official" nationalisms that embraced traditionalism or modernism or a combination of the two. We can see one very clear example of the way in which authoritarian states, nationalism, and traditional culture interacted in Balázs Szalontai's discussion of how Kim Il Sung's extreme anxiety about his grip on the state produced hyper-nationalist and traditionalist cultural policies in North Korea. Less obvious is the desire for a strong, centralizing state expressed through the modernist architectural culture of the Guided Democracy period (1959-65) in Sukarno's Indonesia. Sukarno's admiration for the new capital city of Brazil, Brasília and his plan to apply the principles of modernist architects Niemeyer and Le Corbusier to remaking Jakarta as an exemplary capital city for the new Indonesian republic betray not simply a wish to erase the colonial past (57), but also the intention to symbolize publicly the power of a centralized state that would assert political control over a rebellious, multicultural archipelagic nation.⁴ Setiadi Sopandi's conclusion that "the application of modernist architecture in Indonesia" was not "associated with Cold War political identities, but rather seen as a 'neutral' pursuit of modernity and equality" misses the point that modernism in all its cultural forms lent itself to the building of strong states throughout the world, on both sides of the Cold War (72). Sukarno certainly played Cold War international politics with the Soviets, Americans, and Chinese, but his interest in modernist architecture and monuments had to do with what they symbolized about state authority. The same could be said about the "socialism" of Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP. However we choose to label it (Fabian, Asian, some combination of the two), "socialism" served the ideological purpose of underwriting Lee Kuan Yew's successful bid to stamp out political pluralism and Afro-Asian internationalism of the sort proposed at the Bandung Conference of 1955. Singapore-style

² See my "Still Stuck in the Mud: Imagining World Literature during the Cold War in Indonesia and Vietnam," in Day and Liem, 154-166.

³ The "cultural Cold War" and "Cold War culture" are two different concepts. See Day and Liem, 2, note 9 for discussion of this point and further reading on it.

⁴ For a good examination of the political meaning of urban renewal in Jakarta under Sukarno, see Abidin Kusno, *Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space, and Political Cultures in Indonesia* (London and New York, Routledge, 2000), 49-70, esp. 65. James Scott argues that modernist capital cities like Brasília and Chandigarh (which the Indonesian architect Friedrich Silaban visited in 1954) express the "vision" of authoritarian, centralizing states in his *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998), 103-146. The antidemocratic nature of modernist urban renewal is illustrated by the fact that 47,000 people were removed from central Jakarta to make way for the site of the 1962 Asian Games; see Kusno, 60.

“socialism” gave birth to an authoritarian, one-party state.⁵ How this state ended up aligning itself in Cold War terms, whether or not PAP “socialism” offers a critique of “unrestrained capitalism,”⁶ for example, seems of secondary importance next to the fact that the state in Singapore assumed an authoritarian, antidemocratic form still favored in many parts of Asia and the developing world.

None of the essays I have referred to so far offer much in the way of analysis involving a close reading of cultural forms. Political speeches or tracts are referred to but their language and keywords are not dissected; monuments and city layouts are described, but their political symbolism left to speak for itself. Wasana Wongsurawat offers a lively description and discussion of anti-Chinese riots in Thailand that reveal “the complicated nature of the Thai state’s perspective and policies toward the overseas Chinese community” during the Cold War (167), but the way in which the Chinese could be viewed by the state as both a Cold War “Red Peril” for the Thai nation and a long-standing “Yellow” threat to Thai identity, thus revealing the state-forming agency of “official” Thai nationalism, is not made clear.⁷ Nicolai Volland’s essay on the Stalin Prize and Cao Ming’s *The Moving Force* is the only chapter in the book in which an author examines cultural evidence in any detail as a basis for interpreting what culture means for an understanding of the Cold War as it was experienced in Asia. Because Volland quotes at length from Cao Ming’s novel it is possible for the reader to debate its meaning. Volland argues that to “set the workers apart as a class with a particular consciousness, as the core ally of the Communist Party and the leading force of the Chinese revolution, is a crucial aim of the novel” (101). The positive, if not Stalin-Prize-worthy response to Cao Ming’s attempt to write an industrial novel in a still predominantly rural nation that would appeal to the rest of the international socialist world “highlights the significance of transnational circulations for the creation of literary value in the socialist world,” Volland concludes (108). I think the novel also illustrates the way in which Chinese prose fiction and reportage in the 1950s served to create a powerful sense of collective national identity in modern China. Volland’s long quotations from the novel (102, 105) and sensitive interpretive discussions of these passages bring out the way in which Cao Ming connects the factory to the northern Chinese landscape, the sounds of the factory machinery to the singing of village girls, forest birds, and spring breezes, in order to evoke, in a highly emotive fashion, the collective subjectivity

⁵ Sunil S. Amrith, “Internationalism and Political Pluralism in Singapore, 1950-1963,” in Michael D. Barr and Carl A. Trocki, *Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore* (NUS Press, Singapore, 2008), 37-56.

⁶ Chua Beng-Huat, “‘Asian-Values’ Discourse and the Resurrection of the Social,” *positions* 7:2, 573-592.

⁷ See Rachel V. Harrison, “The Man with the Golden Gauntlets: Mit Chaibancha’s *Insi thong* and the hybridization of Red and Yellow Perils in Thai Cold War Action Cinema,” in Day and Liem, 195-226.

of the Chinese nation, an emotion of national belonging that “transcends the authority of any particular government.”⁸

The essays in this collection demonstrate, against the grain of the stated aims of the book, that during the Cold War, the state increased its grip on the populations of Asia. But they also provide ample evidence to suggest that nationalism, no less than internationalism, was a primary force that shaped the nature of cultural responses to the Cold War at both the state and popular levels. The editors and authors of *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia* share an assumption that national and international cultural influences and identities are antithetical to, or at least totally different from, one another. I don’t know where such an assumption comes from, unless it is from the Cold War itself, during which all possible polarities and antitheses were sharpened and made absolute, as states sought to identify their enemies on both the Left and the Right.⁹ In Singapore during the early 1960s, it was the PAP that labeled the cosmopolitan internationalism of the leftist, nationalist opposition to Lee Kuan Yew led by Lim Chin Siong as “anti-national” and thus threatening to the future of the emerging Singapore and Malaysian states.¹⁰ During the Cold War, throughout the world, cosmopolitans and internationalists on both the “Left” and the “Right” were imprisoned and silenced by authoritarian regimes whose interests were best served by narrowing the definition of the “nation” in cultural and ideological terms. Such parochializations of the nation allowed the state to “protect” its subject peoples against “perils” that were Red or Yellow, internal or external, all the better to keep them under control. In the last analysis, the state, rather than the Cold War, was the most important arbiter of meanings and events during the Cold War era in Asia, while “culture,” in all its various forms, expressed both acquiescence and resistance to the inexorable growth of state power.

⁸ Charles A. Laughlin, *Chinese Reportage: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2002), 111. My re-reading of Cao Ming’s novel is based on the interpretation of Chinese reportage as the representation of a collective, national Chinese subjectivity developed by Laughlin.

⁹ For a re-reading of “Leftist” theater in 1950s and early 1960s Indonesia that reveals its (nationalist) ideological similarity to so-called “Rightist” drama and performance, see Michael Bodden, “Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra: The Forgotten Theater of Indonesia’s Lekra, 1955-65,” in Day and Liem, 45-80.

¹⁰ Amrith, 47-51.

Most conventional studies of the Cold War in Asia emphasize geopolitics and focus on the relationships among the United States, the Soviet Union, and their client states in the region. Recently though, a body of scholarship has emerged that shifts the emphasis to cultural and intellectual issues and places Asian actors at the center of the story. Much of this literature also considers the Cold War within the context of the worldwide process of decolonization that occurred in the decades following World War II. The collection of essays that appear in *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* contributes significantly to this scholarship. These essays offer a nuanced view of how the Cold War influenced various cultural developments in East and Southeast Asia and, perhaps more importantly, how Asians affected global events in the second half of the twentieth century.

The collection of ten essays grew out of a two-day workshop on the cultural dimensions of the Cold War in Asia, which was held in Singapore in March 2008. Each of the chapters presents an interesting case study of some cultural or political dimension of the Cold War in Asia, such as the role of ideology in Vietnam's civil war or the propaganda contest between socialist and capitalist countries in the region. The book's primary objective is to move away from the interpretation of Asian states as simply puppets of the Western powers or the Soviet Union. Tuong Vu, a co-editor of the volume, suggests a need to "reconceptualize the geographical spread of the Cold War not as a Eurocentric pattern but as the intercontinental synchronization of hostilities" (12.) While the quality of the individual essays is fairly uneven, when read together, they certainly satisfy the stated goal of redirecting attention to the influence of "Third World" states and the role of culture and ideology in the post-1945 period. Most of the essays also deal explicitly or implicitly with the issue of modernization and the often-competing visions of the postcolonial state in Asia.

Several of the essays in the book fundamentally challenge standard narratives regarding Cold War hostilities in Asia. Most notable in this regard are the two chapters on Vietnam, which deal with anticommunist writers in the south and communist ideology in the north, respectively, and Wasana Wongsurawat's essay on the relationship between the Thai state and ethnic Chinese in Thailand. In his study of the South Vietnamese critique of communism during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Tuan Hoang argues that anticommunist writers—many of whom were northern émigrés who came south in the mid-1950s—intensified the polarization within Vietnam by creating an indigenous discourse of resistance to communist philosophy. According to Hoang, these writers produced an intellectually coherent body of literature based on their personal experiences with communist rule. Hoang contends that the writers engaged in a "battle to win the hearts and minds of other Vietnamese" (20) years before Americans began trying to do the same. Although this essay is not particularly well written, Hoang's consideration of the local roots of Vietnamese anticommunism offers a fresh perspective on the role of South Vietnamese elites, who have been treated by most scholars as mere puppets of the United States. However, his essay does not fully explore the alternate vision for Vietnam's future presented by anticommunist intellectuals, and Hoang's arguments would be more

convincing if he addressed the influence and impact of these writers by considering their readership and responses to their work.

Like Hoang, Tuong Vu seeks to add complexity to the standard account of the Vietnam War in his chapter on communist ideology in northern Vietnam. Vu's piece dispels the widely held assumption that Vietnamese communists were motivated first and foremost by nationalism. Instead, Vu contends that the leadership of the Lao Dong (the Vietnamese Workers Party) "never wavered in their ideological loyalty" and that "a modernizing socialist ideology rather than a mere desire for national unification was driving the Vietnamese civil war from the north" (34-35.) Vu's arguments are well supported by evidence from northern sources and contribute significantly to our understanding of the Lao Dong party's goals and policies. Ultimately, though, Vu's analysis only explains part of the conflict in Vietnam. Southern revolutionaries and opponents of the Saigon regime, who were not necessarily adherents to the Lao Dong party line, played a central role in the outcome of the civil war. And as Robert Brigham and other scholars have shown, members of the insurgent National Liberation Front operated with a fair degree of autonomy from the Lao Dong party.¹ Reading Vu's essay, one cannot help but wonder if ideological loyalty and adherence to socialist tenets drove opposition in the south as well. Were southerners less radical and more strongly motivated by anti-colonial or nationalist impulses than their northern counterparts? By leaving questions such as these unanswered, Vu's essay opens the door for further studies of communism in both North and South Vietnam.

While the essays by Hoang and Vu call into question conventional wisdom about the Vietnam War, Wasana Wongsurawat's chapter on Thailand challenges the view that the United States dominated Thai politics and foreign policy during the Cold War. On the contrary, Wongsurawat argues that the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.), the Nationalist Republic of China in Taiwan, and the overseas Chinese community significantly influenced Thai policies after World War II. Wongsurawat's essay examines public opinion and responses by the Bangkok government to two racial incidents involving the ethnic Chinese community that occurred in 1945 and 1974, respectively. Through this lens, she demonstrates how ongoing tensions between the Thai and ethnic Chinese populations influenced local politics as well as Thai foreign policy. She demonstrates the delicate balancing act the Thai government performed during the Cold War. Thai leaders tried to maintain good relations with the U.S. in order to preserve American military and financial support, even as they asserted their independence in the face of growing anti-Americanism among students and other political activists. Although her arguments are quite persuasive, a more detailed discussion of relations among Thailand, the P.R.C., and Taiwan would have further strengthened Wongsurawat's case. Wongsurawat's essay is both well-researched and well-written, and it demonstrates the benefits of multiarchival research and the rich avenues of inquiry open to scholars who can use multilingual sources.

¹ Robert Brigham, *Guerilla Diplomacy: The NLF's Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.)

Perhaps the most original essays in the collection are Nicolai Volland's chapter on the Stalin Prize and Rommel Curaming's study of the Ramon Magsaysay Award. When read together, these essays reveal striking similarities in how the socialist and capitalist camps attempted to use propaganda to advance their respective causes and celebrate the ideals of their respective models. These essays also demonstrate the centrality of cultural diplomacy on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Volland tells the fascinating story of the Chinese government's attempt to create a "proletarian fiction" in the late 1950s, so that Chinese writers would be more competitive for the prestigious Stalin Prize. According to Volland, the P.R.C. leaders hoped that by winning the prize, China would earn respect and elevated status within the socialist world. However, given the rural nature of Chinese society, few writers in the P.R.C. produced the type of industrial fiction acclaimed by other members of the socialist bloc, especially the Soviet Union. To remedy the situation, Chinese cultural bureaucrats elevated Cao Ming, a little known novelist, to international fame by translating and marketing her novel *The Moving Force* throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. When the Stalin Prize committee failed to recognize Cao Ming's accomplishments, the P.R.C. leadership abandoned its efforts to create a genre of industrial fiction in China and began to "search for alternatives to the developmental path prescribed by the Soviet Union" (110.) As Volland convincingly shows, the Stalin Prize thus served as both a unifying and dividing force, promoting the cultural and political values of the socialist bloc while simultaneously establishing hierarchies within that world.

While the Stalin Prize honored cultural and scientific achievements in the socialist world, the Ramon Magsaysay Award commemorated the accomplishments of a person or group in Asia that exhibited the "greatness of spirit" supposedly embodied by the award's namesake, the former president of the Philippines (127.) Curaming examines the citations accompanying the award to demonstrate how, despite claims of impartiality, the rhetoric used to describe the award's recipients contained a distinctly political bent and served as a subtle propaganda tool during the Cold War. He argues that the Magsaysay Award "promote[d] a culture or value system favorable to the economic and political interests of the global capitalist elites" (128.) As Curaming shows, the Magsaysay Award recognized the ideal society as decidedly capitalist and one that followed the western model of liberal democracy—that is, a society "welcoming of change and reforms, but within the limit set by the government and toward the direction of improving, not subverting, the existing system" (142.) Although Volland and Curaming's essays easily stand alone, their conclusions about the role of cultural diplomacy during the Cold War are even more persuasive when considered together.

Perhaps the most significant shortcoming of the volume is its somewhat narrow focus within Asia—all of the studies are limited to East and Southeast Asia. The inclusion of an essay or two on South Asia would have added significantly to the story of Asian actors' role in the Cold War. In particular, an essay on Indian nationalism or Nehru's involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement would have allowed the book's contributors to explore more fully how Asians challenged the bipolar world system established by the superpowers. An essay on India would also serve as an interesting counterpoint to Setiadi Sopandi's chapter on Indonesia, which explores Sukarno's use of architecture to consolidate national consciousness and advance neutrality with respect to the U.S. and Soviet Union.

Despite the omission of South (or Central) Asian studies, however, *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia* contains a number of excellent essays to complement more conventional histories that focus on superpower relations or the Cold War in Europe. This collection is a valuable source for students of modern Asian history as well as anyone interested in a deeper understanding of the global causes and effects of the Cold War.

Response by Tuan Hoang, University of Notre Dame

I would like to thank the reviewers, especially Jessica Chapman, Tony Day, and Jessica Elkind who comment specifically on my essay. I am pleased that each finds at least a small measure of merit in the essay. They also offer various points of criticism, and I would like to respond to several of them.

Jessica Elkind devotes one paragraph to my essay, which she finds to have offered “a fresh perspective on the role of South Vietnamese elites.” In the same sentence, however, she qualifies that the essay “is not especially well written.” This is a strong judgment, but her lack of specification leaves me in the dark at how she reached it. The only criticism I could spot is her statement that the essay “does not fully explore the alternate vision for Vietnam’s future presented by anticommunist intellectuals,” and that it should have “addressed the influence and impact of these writers by considering their readership and responses to their work.” Given the space allotted to the essay, I find her suggestion admirable but also impossible to have carried out. The original draft of the essay included a section on the background of Vietnamese communism and anticommunism, and perhaps it might have addressed the first part of her criticism. But it was cut due to page limitations: a reality all too familiar to contributors and editors of scholarly collections. In any event, Elkind focuses on what she thinks I should have done rather than what I actually did, and in my opinion therefore failing the basic reviewer’s task of addressing the content of the essay. The failure is puzzling because unlike print journals, there are no space constraints in H-Diplo reviews. I welcome Elkind’s swift judgment in the belief that frank criticism could spur and improve scholarship. I am less happy, however, that it is also unsubstantiated.

As evidenced by direct quotations throughout her review, Jessica Chapman offers a more careful, detailed, and fair-minded criticism. I welcome especially her call for clarification of the use of the term “ideology.” She correctly observes that the essay addresses the “individual experiences of violence, persecution, and oppression at the hands of communists in the north” by the émigré anticommunists. But she also thinks that the anticommunist critique as presented in the essay focused on “oppressive policies and practices, and deceptive propaganda strategies implemented by the communists, rather than representing substantive counterarguments to Marxist-Leninist ideas.”

I have two responses to this point. First, it is not quite clear to me what Chapman means by “substantive counterarguments to Marxist-Leninist ideas.” Perhaps she means organic ideologies along the lines of the hybrid personalist philosophy of Ngo Dinh Diem, the Social Darwinism-fused and fascist-friendly orientation of the Great Vietnamese Nationalist Party, or the free trade unionism of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor that was inspired by the European tradition of Christian Democracy, each of which was very much anticommunist in one way or another. Or perhaps she means theoretical refutations of particular ideas and doctrines within Marxist-Leninism. If the former, it is not my purpose to explore any ideological system in this essay. If the latter, there were a number of refutations in some of the publications cited in the essay. But I focus on experiences

because they appeared in the bulk of my sources, and because I wanted to show that South Vietnamese anticommunist ideology did not come out of a historical vacuum but was rooted deeply in the violence during the period of decolonization in 1945-1954.

Second, Chapman is perhaps too restrictive in her view about what constitutes ideology, and her comments suggest that she considers grievance to be distinct from it. Depending on the situation, however, the relationship between grievance and ideology might be more interdependent than allows. Ideology could be among the causes for a new grievance, but grievances could also be a source of new ideologies. Explaining “anticommunist” in his recent study of four prominent Western anticommunist books published in the 1940s and 1950s, the historian John Fleming writes that the term “denotes objection to, and rejection of, the principles, procedures, and ambitions of the organized Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Germany, France, and the United States, and of... the Comintern.”¹ In reference to three of the writers considered in the study, Fleming adds that the “books of Arthur Koestler, Jan Valtin, and Victor Kravchenko chiefly exposed the iniquities of the Soviet state in its inner workings and in its projection of international skullduggery through the Comintern.”² In other words, “substantive counterarguments” to Marxist-Leninism (as described in the first quotation) and grievances against communist injustices (as in the second) were closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The publications of many early South Vietnamese anticommunists aimed precisely at an exposition of the problems and iniquities committed by the Viet Minh and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Some of those anticommunists did not cooperate with the communists at all, but many had participated in the Viet Minh-led anticolonial movement and, similar to the writers in Fleming’s book, became disillusioned and left the movement. There had been anticommunism in ideas and practice before 1945, notably from Vietnamese Catholics. But it was grievances about the Viet Minh during 1945-1954 and the years immediately following the Geneva Conference that spurred, shaped, and solidified South Vietnamese anticommunist thought.

Chapman also thinks that my analysis could be strengthened by a consideration of the relationship between Ngo Dinh Diem and anticommunist writers. As suggested by two examples cited in Note 7 (pp. 192-193), I am fully aware of the complexity of this relationship and, again, will have to invoke page limit as the reason for not having said more about it.

According to Tony Day, my essay does not address national identity but nonetheless suggests that anticommunism was “an important component of nationalism.” I wish to confirm that he is right, and to add an explanation. “Nationalism” is for something while “anticommunism” is, by definition, against something. My focus is squarely on the

¹ John V. Fleming, *The Anti-Communist Manifestos: Four Books That Shaped the Cold War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 15.

² Fleming, 334. The fourth author is Whittaker Chambers, whose memoir *Witness* was based on direct experiences with the American Communist Party.

“against,” but the two should not be seen as independent of each other. Cultural productions provide an illustration. In addition to works in the fine arts that Day mentioned, elite noncommunist and anticommunist South Vietnamese produced a massive amount of publications on a variety of subjects related to nationalism. Those publications included, among others, popular political histories, academic literary histories and criticism, biographies of anticolonial heroes and men and women of letters, recollections of colonial imprisonment and anticolonial activities, historical fiction and poetry, studies of local traditions and regional customs, textbooks on citizenship, and “lessons” drawn from the experiences of other noncommunist postcolonial nations.³ South Vietnamese writers viewed themselves as being in continuity with the Vietnamese tradition as developed from antiquities to late colonialism. Conversely, they considered the communist revolutionaries to have disrupted this tradition violently. One may debate the merit of their views, but it is clear that Vietnamese nationalism was very much a contested affair.⁴ From this angle, it is impossible to consider South Vietnamese anticommunist thought apart from nationalism, and I am appreciative of Tony Day’s attention to this point.

³ On historical publications alone, the historian Patricia Pelley has noted that from “1954 to 1975, southern historians (a designation that probably includes northern immigrants to the South) were extremely prolific.” See Patricia M. Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam: New Histories of the National Past* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 6.

⁴ See, for example, Kim N. B. Ninh, *A World Transformed: The Politics of Culture in Revolutionary Vietnam, 1945-1965* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 6. Focusing on the Viet Minh and the DRV as did Patricia Pelley, Ninh has nonetheless confirmed the historical significance of the RVN perspective. The “emphasis,” she writes,

on the inevitability of the socialist character of the Vietnamese revolution and the state can lead to neglect the southern perspective. I am not interested here in the argument about the viability of South Vietnam as an independent nation; rather, I wish to emphasize that alternative views in Vietnam about nationalism and the state were in a sense kept alive during the existence of the Republic of Vietnam in the south and continue in Vietnam today.

Response by Tuong Vu, University of Oregon

As the chief editor of this book, I am grateful for the kind and positive comments from the four reviewers. Due to time constraints, Wasana Wongsurawat and I decided to respond individually to the criticisms which we found to be thoughtful and constructive.¹

Jessica Chapman is generous with her praise for our book, and her criticisms focus on the introductory chapter (chapter 1) and the three chapters that involve Vietnam (chapters 2, 3, and 7). Regarding the introductory chapter, she is not satisfied with how the concepts of culture and ideology are defined. On “culture,” she notes that my discussion is short and unsophisticated. While it is certainly possible to explore the concept of culture in greater depth than I do in the chapter, I see my task as juxtaposing this concept against two other concepts of “Asia” and “Cold War.” The book is aimed at bringing together not only those who study Asian history and culture but also international scholars of the Cold War. Thus I quote Max Weber and Clifford Geertz not only because these two giants offer some of the best definitions of culture, but also because their definitions are “the most commonly accepted ... among Cold War scholars” (9). I also quote Akira Iriye, Harold Isaacs, Steven Levine and Ted Hoft who have written about culture in the study of foreign relations. On “ideology,” Chapman apparently misreads my purpose as well. My main interest is in the broader term of culture, which encompasses both identity and ideology (9-10). I thus define ideology *in connection to culture and identity*, specifically as “cultural elements in the conscious realm of human minds [that] tend to be systematic ... [and that can be] subjective or intersubjective” (p. 10).

On the chapters that address the role of ideology in the Vietnam War, Chapman thinks that we fall short in proving whether ideological pronouncements by Asian leaders really reflected their genuine ideological commitments or were simply used to advance other goals. While we agree that it is impossible to know for sure whether politicians really believe in what they say concerning their ideological principles, there are well-known rules of thumb to determine which statements are more believable than others, i.e., which statements are more or less likely to reflect what their speakers may feel. In general, statements in private circles are more reliable than those made in public. Statements that follow consistent patterns over time are more likely to reflect what speakers believe. And finally, ideological pronouncements that seem to go against concrete practical interests are more likely to reflect genuine ideological commitments.

In my own analysis, I did not blindly trust what Vietnamese communist leaders said even in private, but used careful reasoning to evaluate their words based on

- 1) the contexts in which ideological statements were made (many sources that I use came from Central Plenums which only about three dozen Central Committee members attended);

¹ I thank Peter Zinoman who made many helpful suggestions to an earlier version of this response.

- 2) the level of efforts invested in ideological work (for example, I trace the development of the ideological formula “to be patriotic is to build socialism” over a two-year period through various sources, and similarly read the entire set of Ho Chi Minh’s articles under various pennames over 1951-1956);
- 3) the consistency of the leaders’ ideological beliefs over time (for example, I compare Ho Chi Minh’s writings in the 1920s to his writings in the 1950s);
- 4) the complexity and nuances of those beliefs (for example, I contrast Ho Chi Minh’s statements to those made by his comrades and note how they were different or similar);
- 5) the juxtaposition of ideological commitments and practical interests (for example, I contrast Vietnamese communists’ defense of Stalin after his death with their practical goal to court Khrushchev’s support for their revolution. I argue that their loyalty to the deceased Stalin contradicted their practical interests because it could damage their relations with Khrushchev who had earlier denounced Stalin).

I followed the above rules and made efforts to link ideology to specific policies throughout my chapter with respect to a wide range of North Vietnam’s policy, from its defense of communist orthodoxy at home and abroad, to its decision to send troops to South Vietnam, from its support for Soviet invasion of Hungary to its defense of Albanians in their dispute with the Soviet Union. In all these specific foreign policies, I suggested what ideological issues were at stake and how they were debated and followed despite potential risks. There was a clear pattern implying that Vietnamese communists were not only loyal to Marxism-Leninism but were also acting under its guidance despite and besides their concerns for other factors.

To make her point, Chapman suggests international pressure and propaganda needs as possible alternative motives of the Vietnamese communist leaders. For example, Chapman believes that the demands of the “geopolitical system” are just as important as the ideological commitments of VWP leaders in explaining Vietnam’s relationship with the Soviet bloc. But did the “geopolitical system” of the Cold War really demand that Vietnam “align squarely” with either superpower as Chapman assumes? Elsewhere I have discussed how ideologically loyal Vietnamese communists enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the Cold War and volunteered to fight on the Soviet side.² Pressure from the geopolitical system existed but Vietnamese leaders apparently interpreted that pressure through their ideological prisms which made them bind their fate to the Soviet Union without even thinking about other options such as neutrality. My collaborators in *Dynamics of the Cold War* also show that various Asian actors from Sukarno to Lee Kwan Yew facing the same geopolitical system did try to steer the middle course between the two superpowers—unlike Ho Chi Minh and his comrades. I disagree that we can identify Vietnam’s national interests by simply assuming certain elements of the geopolitical system without first reading internal Vietnamese documents to find out what Vietnamese leaders actually thought—as I did in my chapter.

² Tuong Vu, “From Cheering to Volunteering: Vietnamese Communists and the Arrival of the Cold War 1940-1951,” in Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, eds. *Connecting Histories: The Cold War and Decolonization in Asia (1945-1962)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 172-204.

I also believe that Chapman exaggerates the importance of international pressure on Vietnamese communism in her critique of my analysis of Ho Chi Minh's pro-Soviet and anti-American tracts written during 1951-1956. In discounting the authenticity of Ho's view in these sources, Chapman portrays Ho as a desperate leader of a revolutionary state "embattled from within Vietnam and opposed by the strongest power on the global stage," implying that something else besides ideological loyalty could have motivated him to write those tracts. Yet I would argue that before 1955, US intervention in Vietnam was quite limited (especially when compared to Chinese intervention), and after Geneva, the revolutionary state of North Vietnam was not "embattled" but could look forward to a period of relative peace. In fact, compared to all prior periods, 1951-1956 was the most secure time of the revolution as it had acquired full support from the still unified Soviet bloc and achieved full and internationally recognized control over half of Vietnam by 1954. It is thus difficult to understand what Chapman means by saying that "[Ho's] life depended on the success of the revolution" when he penned those articles. Does she mean that Ho, the professional revolutionary and former Comintern agent since the 1920s, was afraid of being killed if the revolution failed?

Another possible motive for Vietnamese ideological pronouncements, Chapman suggests, was the "need to market the revolution and their leadership of it to a war weary domestic audience." In response, I would simply ask Chapman, why did Vietnamese communist leaders want to wage a revolution in the first place? Wasn't their belief in socialism guiding their desire to launch a revolution as I suggest? Why would anybody (including the propagandists) think that the communist discourse was so marketable to the Vietnamese masses? Chapman is absolutely right that there could be many motives at work, and they did not need to be mutually exclusive, but my evidence suggests that ideological concerns were the primary force that shaped North Vietnam's policy during the period under study.

Jessica Elkind agrees more with my analysis on the importance of socialist ideology in North Vietnam than Chapman does, but wonders if "ideological loyalty and adherence to socialist tenets drove opposition in the south as well. Were southerners less radical and more strongly motivated by anti-colonial or nationalist impulses than their northern counterparts?" She asserts that "southern revolutionaries and opponents of the Saigon regime ... played a central role in the outcome of the civil war." My answer to Elkind's question is yes, opponents to the Saigon regime were a diverse bunch: even many generals of Ngo Dinh Diem opposed him, and students' protests against the Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu governments were common. After Geneva, most seasoned and well-known communist cadres naturally were regrouped to the north; those communists who remained (except a very small number of top leaders such as Le Duan, see below) were much less senior and had shorter experience in the Party than those who left. How can the sum of all these opponents be compared to the likes of Ho Chi Minh and Truong Chinh in terms of ideological training and commitment?

Yet I disagree with Elkind's comments about the role played by "southern revolutionaries." Even the scholarship cited by Elkind (e.g. Robert Brigham, on p. 2) accepts that Southern revolutionaries were not puppets of Hanoi but they were not autonomous either.

Southerners had differences with the northern VWP leadership and they certainly played some role, but to say their role was central to the outcome of the conflict is an exaggeration.

Furthermore, I believe that the distinction between “northern” and “southern” communists has been overdrawn in the literature. The criteria used to distinguish them are neither clear nor consistent: their birthplace, the geographical location of their operation, their position in the VWP or the National Liberation Front, or a combination of these factors? To use a few well known examples, it would be difficult to say whether Pham Hung, Le Duan, Vo Chi Cong, Nguyen Van Linh, Duong Bach Mai and Tran Van Giau were northerners or southerners. All spent substantial time operating in southern Vietnam. Hung, Mai and Giau were born in the South. Duan and Cong were born in the part of territory under the Republic of Vietnam. Linh was born in the North but spent almost all his career in the South. In my chapter (44-46), I argue that Duan was just as radical as Truong Chinh was, and his doctrinal analysis of the southern political system as a neocolony saved the northern leadership from embarrassment with the failure of their policy for peaceful struggle following Geneva. Duan wrote the analysis while living in the South and had been a leader of the Party Regional Committee for the South (Xu uy Nam ky) since the 1930s. Duong Bach Mai was purged in the 1960s after he opposed the VWP’s decision to support Mao in his dispute with Khrushchev. As Secretary General, Nguyen Van Linh traveled secretly to China in 1990 to propose a red alliance composed of China, Vietnam and Cambodia to save what remained of world socialism following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. These men may be “southerners” but were as ideologically radical and organizationally disciplined as any “northern” communists. The larger point I want to make is that the question of “southerners” versus “northerners” which was often asked during the Vietnam War to justify the call for U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam is not a fruitful one to ask today. Ideological differences within the VWP leadership were many and varied by issues, while at the same time being based on a few key doctrinal assumptions shared by all. Similarly, the VWP was organizationally flexible but under difficult circumstances generally managed to act together as a monolithic whole. “Southern” or “northern” identity was only one dimension and often not the decisive dimension in explaining the organization and function of the movement.

Unlike Chapman and Elkind, Michael Charney and Tony Day take us to task on broader issues. Charney notes that “it is difficult to get a general sense from all the contributors as to what Cold War dynamics were peculiar to Asia or, rather, if there is anything that really pervades the region ... that we could identify either as ‘Cold War’ or as Asian... the Cold War in Asia is not really so special.” He then mentions the tendency of scholars to “succumb to the temptation of re-reading the past according to contemporary conditions, and the new condition of Asia is that it is ... increasingly centered on a prosperous and powerful China. The ‘new Asia’ requires a history of the region that will be integrated, independent ... and influential.” Frankly, it took me a while to understand this criticism, because I never had or have any intention to argue that the Cold War in Asia was special (compared to the role of other continents). While I criticize Euro- and American-centricity in Cold War scholarship, I do not call for Asian-centricity. Our central concern is the mischaracterization of the roles played by Asian actors vis-à-vis those of the superpowers. To be sure, scholars of other continents can make the same arguments about those continents, and I in fact applaud the

recent trend in the Cold War literature to pay greater attention to the roles played by minor powers in Europe, Asia and elsewhere (3). There is also no relation between our book and the rise of China as Charney alludes. As I explain in the introductory chapter, the scholarly trend was initiated at the end of the Cold War and spurred by the availability of documents from former Soviet bloc countries. A reexamination of European role began in the 1980s as the thaw in the Cold War started early there. The thaw did not occur in East Asia until the early 1990s.

Charney also advises that “perhaps it would be useful to abandon attempts to posit synchronicity in Asia-world historical periodization and consider Asian history from the end of World War II until the present on its own terms. Alternatively, it may be helpful to consider whether parts of the period from roughly the end of the 1940s to the end of the 1980s might be better periodized along lines other than the Cold War.” This advice is based on his criticism that

[T]he contributors ... accept at face value that there was a Cold War in Asia...This volume seeks in part to demonstrate that Asians contributed equally to the emergence of a singular, global Cold War. A consistent view of what the Cold War means, or how it relates as a structuring concept for the collection, however, is difficult to discern. The editors describe the Cold War as an event. Nevertheless, the Cold War only relates to many of the chapters as a period and sometimes only a peripheral one.

But this is exactly what I point out on page 7:

It is true that for long periods of time many Asian countries experienced the Cold War. Tensions and hostilities marked the relationships between Asian members of the US camp and those of the Soviet camp, similar to the situation between Eastern and Western Europe. But there were many other events that Asian countries experienced besides the Cold War. These events may or may not relate to the conflict between the two superpowers. Events that related may form only small chapters in the histories of the relevant countries. Many Asian countries actively sought to prevent the superpowers' rivalry from spilling into their backyards.

While we do not exaggerate the importance of the Cold War to Asian history in our book, we wholly agree with and appreciate Charney's advice to think of Asian history on its own terms.

We also agree with Tony Day's comment that “[p]ure Cold War categories can't explain [the] cultural and ideological hybridity ... which we find on both sides of the 17th parallel.” In our enterprise we are driven by two concerns. One is the poor understanding of international Cold War scholars on the ideological beliefs of Asian actors like Ho Chi Minh, Sukarno and Kim Il-sung. The other concern has to do with Vietnam and Vietnam War scholars who consistently downplay the ideological loyalty of Vietnamese actors while emphasizing the power of traditional culture (e.g. anti-Chinese sentiments and desire for

national unity) on their behavior. These concerns motivate our emphasis on the loyalty to Cold War ideologies in the volume.

We are less inclined to accept Day's point that "transnational values during the Cold War were strongly shaped and given localized meanings by the interconnected processes of nation building and state formation in the region after World War II. I find both nationalism and state building at work in the formation of ideologies in Vietnam..." Let me again use my chapter on North Vietnam to show how this point is misleading. It is true that North Vietnamese leaders, inspired by internationalism, had to negotiate with powerful local cultures and practices. These included the lack of popular support for radical class struggle methods and strong patriotic sentiments that could be at odds with proletarian internationalist values. In fact, it took those leaders a long time and intense debates to decide on launching a rural class struggle (37-38) and to find a succinct formula that blended patriotism and socialism (48-51). While it appears on the surface that their decisions and discursive formulations were "given localized meanings," and that nationalism and state building imperatives were driving their ideological formation, if we look closely at the ideological justifications for those controversial decisions, it is clear that doctrinal principles trumped local values. Rural class struggle was launched in full intensity according to the Chinese model, but an effort was made to create an appearance of moderation. Patriotism was mixed with socialism in the formula "to be patriotic is to build socialism," but as I point out, "patriotism was made to serve socialism, not vice versa" (52). Scholars who do not follow closely Vietnamese ideological debates easily miss the subtle manipulation here, not to mention that the creation of a moderate appearance in fact confused many well-informed foreign observers about what really occurred.

While I appreciate Day's point about the importance of local values, he conflates ideological debates and ideological formation. Before they rose to power, Vietnamese communist leaders developed over decades loyalty to transnational values by studying in the Soviet Union and organizing revolution at home.³ To be sure, no ideologies, however systematic and far-sighted, have the answer to every real-world challenge, which is why ideological debates continued and were even more intense after Vietnamese communists acquired power. But debating how ideological principles applied to particular policy problems does not mean that these men were still in the stage of forming their ideological beliefs. Over the long term, the failure of the socialist economy and the Soviet collapse forced many to give up their loyalty to socialism by the 1990s, but for the period under study, it is misleading to say nationalism was driving the formation of their ideology.

To conclude, we have learned much from the valuable comments and criticisms of all four reviewers and appreciate the exchange of ideas through this forum.

³ See my "Dreams of Paradise: The Making of a Soviet Outpost in Vietnam," *Ab Imperio* 2 (August 2008), 255-285; and "From Cheering to Volunteering: Vietnamese Communists and the Arrival of the Cold War 1940-1951," in Goscha and Osermann, eds., *Connecting Histories*, pp. 172-204.

The making of *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* was an exciting task and quite a learning experience for all involved. It is important to take note of what a bold attempt this is. Tuong Vu should indeed be commended for his courage in coming up with the idea to deal with such slippery terms as *Ideology, Identity, and Culture* all in one little book. Not surprisingly, as many of the reviews have pointed out, a definite and mutual understanding of at least some of these terms is yet to be achieved even among the editors and contributors of this volume. Yet, this project has indeed proved to be worthy of our anxiety and efforts, and if it has fallen short of providing a perfect alternative to the mainstream statist/ superpower-centered interpretation of the Cold War in Asia, it has definitely succeeded in getting people interested in this matter again and perhaps even starting a new direction through which to study and understand this highly contested period of history.

The most difficult part of this project, at least from my point of view, has been highlighted very eloquently in Tony Day's review,

"Tuong Vu argues that "the study of culture can help rescue Cold War scholarship from the grips of the nation-state," since Asian cultural values can be shown to extend beyond the boundaries of the nation-state (12). This last statement is true, but the essays suggest to me, sometimes explicitly, sometimes in spite of their own argumentation, that contrary to Vu's first assertion, transnational values during the Cold War were strongly shaped and given localized meanings by the interconnected processes of nation building and state formation in the region after World War II."

The key question of this matter is whether or not it is at all possible to discuss the Cold War outside of the framework of the nation-state? While I am a devout student of Presenjit Duara and truly believe in *Rescuing History from the Nation*,¹ I am less certain about the possibility of rescuing the Cold War from the nation. This is because the Cold War, especially its manifestations in most parts of Asia, came into being as a crucial part of the decolonization and nation-building processes. If the nation-state was to be completely removed from the discussion of the Cold War in Asia, one would then get in trouble with Michael Charney's Cold-War-relevancy-test:

"There is indeed little questioning of the validity of the Cold War framework for considering the history of the region. Applying the test, 'would anything being discussed in this chapter have been substantially different if the Cold War had never happened', to some of the chapters, one often finds difficulty answering in the affirmative."

¹ Presenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Question Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

If it is not exclusively about the nation-state and it does not even focus on the ideological influence of the superpowers then could this book really be discussing the Cold War? It seems that, not only the *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia*, but the very definition of ‘the Cold War in Asia’ is what is really being challenged here.. Despite this seemingly impossible dilemma, I still believe that there is a genuine need to reinvestigate the historical period we refer to as ‘the Cold War’ outside of the exclusive statist framework. It is especially crucial in the case of Asia. Nearly the entire continent did not survive the colonial period simply to come to the conclusion that everything that happened post-independence was a product of directives from the superpowers. Taking a closer look at culture is one way of achieving this. For a historian of China like myself, it makes perfect sense to use the *New Historiography*² kind of perspective—studying history ‘of the people’ as opposed to the ruling classes, the great men, the empire, etc. In reality, we all know that there was much more going on outside of state policy and ideological alliances among governments. The struggle between capitalism and socialism was settled just as much by the proliferation of Hollywood films, household appliances, and all sorts of consumer products. The only drawback of this volume in this matter is that it tends to focus too much on ‘Culture’ and not enough on ‘culture.’ Perhaps this was intended as a way to have our cake and eat it too—to focus on culture and still keep the state in the picture—as we happened to be not quite bold enough yet to compile a book on the Cold War without the state in it. While more discussion and debate is needed to ascertain the possibility of rescuing the Cold War from the nation, I think *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia* succeeded beautifully in starting what could become a very fruitful area of investigation concerning the Cold War Era in Asia.

I totally agree with Charney that, “a richer and deeper historical framework is necessary to better contextualize this period by bringing the (pre-independence) history back into the equation or at least into the introduction.” This is probably, at least partly, due to the peculiar combination of the chief editor being a political scientist and the co-editor being a historian, and the attempt to make the book appeal to readers in both fields. Another part of the problem is probably intrinsic to Area Studies itself as a field of studies. Even within the same continent—and Asia is, in fact, the largest continent—cross-referencing sources and timelines between different regions still seems to be an awkward exercise for a lot of people. I personally cannot agree more with Charney that,

“It may have been helpful to indicate how the expansion of the Japanese military regime over Southeast Asia and much of East Asia up to its greatest extent in mid-1942 and its collapse three years later helped to condition a rough temporal synchronicity for the events that led, in this book’s view, to a shared Cold War. Perhaps we could look further back to the longer-term influence of China in the region-- the brief treatment in Wasana’s chapter notwithstanding. More stress has to be placed in this and other studies of the Cold War in Asia on the

² Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

important role played economically and politically through Southeast Asia by overseas Chinese communities.”

With more resources on China as well as the overseas Chinese communities throughout Asia becoming more available, it is important to re-evaluate both China’s role in the Far-Eastern front of the Second World War, its participation in the Cold War, as well as the contributions of the complex and extensive network of overseas Chinese communities throughout the Asian continent and beyond. The problem is that the history of the overseas Chinese is also just beginning the long and treacherous process of being rescued from the nation. Despite being transnational almost by nature, much of the scholarship concerning the overseas Chinese in Asia remains strangely statist where this Diaspora is treated either as an awkward extension of the Chinese state or the national other in various host countries. There also seems to be a curse for the in-between-scholarship, which is often considered too Chinese for Southeast Asian audiences and too Southeast Asian for Chinese audiences. Being a field of studies that came of age in the era of the nation-state, area studies rarely provides a welcome ground for trans-regional or even global studies. In this respect, I think *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia* actually makes a significant contribution by creating a forum for scholars studying such a large geographical area—from Japan to Indonesia—to join in discussion and compare notes in a way that has rarely happened before. In the end, we managed to have a couple of articles that cross national boundaries and focus on the interactions of the various states in question—namely, the chapters by Bernd Schaefer and Balazs Szalontai—and at least one—my own chapter—that draws upon China’s influence and the role of the overseas Chinese community in shaping the Cold War in Southeast Asia. I think this should already be considered as a bold attempt to promote the inter-regional perspective and break free from the rigid boundaries of national history. I only hope that, with the precedent set by this project, together with kind encouragement of our reviewers, more forums like this one will appear so that scholars in limbo like myself can contribute more to a broader and more profound understanding of this seemingly extremely statist period of modern history.

The issue of going beyond state and regional boundaries to gain a better understanding of the Cold War in Asia was also raised in Jessica Elkind’s review,

“Perhaps the most significant shortcoming of the volume is its somewhat narrow focus within Asia—all of the studies are limited to East and Southeast Asia. The inclusion of an essay or two on South Asia would have added significantly to the story of Asian actors’ role in the Cold War. In particular, an essay on Indian nationalism or Nehru’s involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement would have allowed the book’s contributors to explore more fully how Asians challenged the bipolar world system established by the superpowers.”

While I cannot deny that South Asia, especially India, played a very significant role in the development of the Cold War Era in Asia, neither can I admit that it was a complete mistake not to include one or two papers concerning the Cold War in South and/or Central Asia. As I

mentioned earlier, Asia is the world's largest continent, and including India and Taiwan in the same forum simply because they belong to the same continent, might not be the best way to establish a coherent narrative that could encourage future transnational/ trans-regional research and understanding of the Cold War in Asia. Of course, as Elkind mentions, India also played a very crucial role in the Non-Aligned Movement, together with Indonesia, which figures quite prominently in *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia*. However, including India would mean extending the scope of discussion to cover a much larger geographical area and extend the population involved by nearly a half of what is presented in the current volume. Doing so would, without a doubt, bring in many more complex issues both politically and culturally, which would definitely make this book not only much more interesting, but probably also much longer and perhaps far too confusing with the overwhelming extra information that would need to be included to accommodate all matters relating to the Subcontinent. I also think that, at least in terms of modern history, East and Southeast Asia form a more coherent whole than South and Southeast Asia or even South, Southeast and East Asia put together. This is not only due to the influence of Japanese Imperialism in the early twentieth century, but also, in large part, due to the dominance of overseas Chinese merchants in the Intra-Asian Maritime Trade. Hence, on the matter of our geographical scope of study, I think this project is quite justified in leaving out the Subcontinent and Central Asia.

Having devoted much time and effort to the production of this edited volume and having read these wonderful reviews, which are not only highly insightful, but clearly very thoughtful as well, the most delightful thing I have learned is that there remains so much more to investigate and understand about this period we call "the Cold War." Seeing that we have managed to attract the interest of quite a few and provoke much fruitful discussion by our attempts to understand the Cold War outside of the nation-state framework, I wonder if it would also be possible to study this period in history without being so obsessed with ideology? Or would it not also be quite interesting to investigate it through the gender perspective or from the point of view of business history? As dim and depressing this period may appear in history, it seems that the possibilities for academic research remain endless.

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