



IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN SOUTH-EAST-ASIA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE DRIVING FORCE FOR THE SINO-JAPANESE WARS

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ABSTRACT: *This paper seeks to highlight the two Sino- Japanese wars, the concept of imperialism in Japan and their implications on the two belligerent states. Using the secondary method of data collection, findings show that the Japanese success during the war was the result of the modernisation and industrialisation embarked upon two decades earlier. The war demonstrated the superiority of Japanese tactics and training from the adoption of a Western-style military and The China- Japanese relations has led to a division into two parties mimicking the cold war; China on the side of the Soviets and Japan on the side of America. The paper concludes that it is a fact of World Politics that some states view themselves as being higher in the hierarchy of power than others. This is exactly what the Japanese did to China and her neighbours. Imperialism stiffens democracy and does not allow for freedom of people and free rights to expression, suffrage of the citizen; this is because it oppresses the people and upholds the government or the imperial power or Empire. It creates a hegemonic State as the ruler over other States. It is important that imperialism should not be repeated in this modern age of development and globalization.*

KEYWORDS: Imperialism, Colonialism, Driving-Force, Sino-Japanese, War

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the American Commodore Matthew Perry forced open, ultra-traditional and secluded Tokugawa Japan. As an indirect result, the power of the shoguns ended, Japan went through the 1868 Meiji Restoration, and the island nation began to quickly modernize and militarize, (Coogan, 1994:282). Japan modernized at a much faster rate than China in the 19th and early 20th centuries. By the late 1800s, it was on its way to becoming a world class, industrial-military power while the Chinese were fighting among themselves and being exploited by foreigners. Japan resented China for being a "sleeping hog" that was pushed around by the West, (Perry, 1964: 243).

The Japanese hated European and American colonialism and were committed to avoiding what happened to China after the Opium Wars. They felt humiliated by the unequal treaties that were forced on them by the United States after the arrival of Perry's Black ships in the 1853. But in the end Japan became a colonial power itself, (Coogan 1994:282). The world was awakened to Japan's military strength when they defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. According to Coogan (1994: 284), the Japanese government justified its actions by claiming that it was seeking to unite East Asia under Japanese leadership in a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere that would free East Asians from domination and rule by clients of Western powers and particularly the United States.



LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted in this work is the theory of imperialism. According to Graham (2006:77), Imperialism concerns state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. In their modern form, arguments about the causes and value of imperialism can be classified into four main groups. The first group contains economic arguments and often turns around the question of whether or not imperialism pays. Those who argue that it does point at the human and material resources and the outlets for goods, investment capital and surplus population, provided by an empire, their opponents, among them Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and J.A. Hobson, often admit that imperialism may benefit a small, favoured group but never the nation as a whole (Graham, 2006:77).

A second group of arguments relates imperialism to the nature of human beings and human groups, such as the state. Such different personalities as Machiavelli, Sir Francis Bacon, Ludwig Gumplowicz, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, reasoning on different grounds, nevertheless arrived at similar conclusions. Imperialism to them is part of the natural struggle for survival. Those endowed with superior qualities are destined to rule all others (Graham, 2006). Imperialism results from a complex of causes in which in varying degrees economic pressures, human aggressiveness and greed, search for security, drive for power and prestige, nationalist emotions, humanitarianism, and many other factors are effective. This mixture of motivations makes it difficult to eliminate imperialism but also easy for states considering themselves potential victims to suspect it in policies not intended to be imperialistic.

Imperialism is an action that involves a country (usually an empire or kingdom) extending its power by the acquisition of territories. It may also include the exploitation of these territories, an action that is linked to colonialism. Colonialism is generally regarded as an expression of imperialism (Brendon, 2007:44).

With many similarities to the West, Japanese imperialism differed from Western imperialism in that it was the first non-Western imperial power, and that it rose to imperial status after facing colonization by the West. Japan desperately needed resources, and there were only two places to get them: Siberia and the South Pacific. The Imperial Japanese Army favoured going after Siberia but were forced to abandon that strategy after the disastrous 1939 Battle of KhalkhinGol. The Imperial Japanese Navy got its way, but it had to deal with the fact that the South Pacific had already been colonized. Hence the simultaneous attacks on Pearl Harbor, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Malaya. The Japanese did not want the Americans or the British to resist the Japanese scramble for rubber and oil. According to Zarrow (2005), "The West taught Japan poker, but after winning all the chips, declared the game immoral," and while it's true that the Western powers hadn't perpetrated anything along the lines of the Rape of Nanking, but had colonised several nations in Africa and Asia.

Before 1852, Japan was an isolationist entity. Contact with the West was limited to trade with the Dutch in the city of Nagasaki, Westerners otherwise weren't allowed in the country, and Western influences were strongly discouraged. In 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the United States Navy streamed into what we now call Tokyo Bay. The Japanese told him to leave and go to Nagasaki, but he ignored the directive and was surrounded by the Japanese fleet. He presented a counter demand to have a letter from U.S. President Millard Fillmore presented to the de facto ruler of Japan at the time, the shogun. When this demand was not



met, he shelled a few buildings in the harbour, the letter was presented. Perry returned a year later to sign the Convention of Kanagawa, a treaty that opened the Japanese ports of Shimoda (a city between Kyoto and what we now call Tokyo and was then called Edo) and Hakodate (located on the northern island of Hokkaido) to U.S. trade. The terms were dictated by the Americans, and the Japanese had little choice but to agree, seeing that they were seriously technologically outmatched (Zarrow, 2005).

The Japanese knew they had to catch up with the Western powers or else risk getting stomped flat by them, which is what had happened to China, so they did a lot of imitation. Western-style dress was widely adopted among the elites of the new society, the military was recreated along 'Clausewitzian' lines, and the parliament was something of a rip-off of the Prussian one, and so on.

To avoid being swallowed up by the imperial powers, Japan reformed its entire political system in the Meiji Restoration, modernized its armed forces and industry, and began to act like the European powers (Coogan, 1994). The Japanese Empire triumphed in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) marked its debut as a true world power. Like the other world powers of that era, Japan took both wars as opportunities to seize land. Just a few decades after the seismic shock of Commodore Perry's appearance in Tokyo Bay, Japan were on its way to building a true empire of its own. It epitomized the phrase "the best defense is a good offense" (Zarrow, 2005).

Meanwhile, the traditional heavy-weight champion of East Asia, Qing China, failed to update its own military and bureaucracy, losing two Opium Wars to the western powers. As the preeminent power in the region, China had for centuries enjoyed a measure of control over neighbouring tributary states, including Joseon Korea, Vietnam, and even sometimes Japan, (Wilson, 1982:23).

As a newly risen power, Japan turned its attention toward its neighbour, Korea. Japan wanted to block any other power from annexing or dominating Korea, resolving to end the centuries-old Chinese suzerainty. As Prussian advisor, Major Klemens Meckel put it to the Japanese, Korea was "a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan", (Wilson, 1982:25). The Japanese colonized Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria and islands in the Pacific. After defeating of China and Russia, Japan began conquering and colonizing East Asia to expand its power, (Wilson, 1982:30).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The First Sino-Japanese War was fought from August 1, 1894 – April 17, 1895 and was fought between Qing (Qing Chao 1642 - 1912) of China and Meiji (Meiji-jidai 1868 - 1912) of Japan, officially from Aug 1, 1894 to April 17, 1895 (fighting broke out on July 25, 1894), over control of Korea, which was a Chinese tribute state, (Larry and Stephen, 2001). Many foreign observers expected China to win, as its navy was stronger on paper with its ironclad battleships and the Chinese army was assumed to be massive. While China had modernized somewhat under the Self Strengthening Movement, it could not match the rapid progress made in Japan under the Meiji Restoration.



In 1884, during a clash with the French, the Chinese withdrew three of the six battalions. This encouraged a pro-Japanese revolt, helped by the Japanese minister at Seoul (Larry and Stephen, 2001: 210). The revolt was successful, and for a short spell King Kojong led a pro-Japanese, anti-Chinese government. The remaining Chinese battalions in Korea quickly overthrew this new government. A number of Japanese were killed and some of the leaders of the deposed government fled to Japan. In 1885, in the aftermath of this affair, Japan and China signed a new treaty in which they agreed to withdraw all troops from Korea and give the other government notice if they needed to send them back. The Japanese had effectively been given permission to send troops to Korea (Larry and Stephen, 2001).

The Convention of Tientsin effectively eliminated China's claim to exclusive influence over Korea, and made Korea a co-protectorate of both Japan and Qing, (Immanuel, 1999: 331). Despite negotiations, the Convention was no deterrent to either party, or the next serious confrontation over Korea, it quickly escalated into the First Sino-Japanese war.

The catalyst that began the war started in 1894. In March the pro-Japanese Korean leader Kim Ok-kyn was assassinated in Shanghai and his body taken to Korea for mutilation as a warning to those seen as traitors, (Hastings, 2009). The Japanese secret societies began to agitate for war and their efforts played a part in the outbreak of the Tonghak Insurrection. This led to the outbreak of a revolt led by members of the Cult of Eastern Learning, a religious organisation that had been banned in the 1860s and had then gone underground, (Larry and Stephen, 2001). The rebels wanted both the Chinese and Japanese to leave Korea, but their actions had the opposite effect. The Korean government asked China to send troops, and a 2,500 strong expeditionary force was sent to Asan, forty miles to the south-west of Seoul. The Japanese saw this as a breach of the Tientsin treaty and they sent 8,000 troops to the port of Inchon (then known as Chemulpo). These troops then moved to Seoul, where on 20 July they seized control of the Korean government. By this point the original revolt had been put down by Korean troops, but the damage was done and Japan and China both prepared for war, (Hastings, 2009).

The war started in the Seoul area of modern South Korea. Both China and Japan had the right to send troops to Korea under the Tientsin Convention of 1885. A rebellion broke out in Korea in 1894, known as the Tonghak Rebellion. The Korean government had previously called in Qing Chinese troops that June to help suppress the rebellion; Japan then sent "reinforcements" as well, over the protests of both the Koreans and Chinese. Even though the rebellion was quelled within two weeks, the Chinese and Japanese troops remained. Japan used this as a pretext to try to start a war with China in Korea, which China and Japan had been ruling as a co-protectorate, with China playing the leading role. Soon, both China and Japan had troops in Korea, and this explosive situation soon led to conflict. Japan felt it was strong enough at this point to challenge China in a war over Korea (Bayly and Harper, 2007:674).

Much of the First Sino-Japanese War was fought at sea, where the Japanese navy had an advantage over its antiquated Chinese counterpart. The Beiyang Army and Beiyang Fleet were the best equipped and most modernized Chinese military, but suffered from corruption. Military leaders and officials systematically embezzled funds, even during the war (Bayly and Harper, 2007:674). As a result, the Beiyang Fleet did not purchase any battleships after its establishment in 1888, (The Empress Dowager Cixi reportedly siphoned off some of the funds meant to update the Chinese navy, in order to rebuild the Summer Palace in Beijing.)



The Qing Empire's military morale was generally very low due to lack of pay, low prestige, use of opium, and the poor leadership which had contributed to defeats such as the abandonment of the very well-fortified and defensible Weihaiwei. They took the city of Pyongyang under the cover of darkness; the Japanese encircled the city early in the morning of September 15, 1894, and launched a simultaneous attack from all directions. After approximately 24 hours of stiff fighting, the Japanese took Pyongyang, leaving around 2,000 Chinese dead and 4,000 injured or missing. The Japanese Imperial Army lost only 102 men killed, and 466 injured or missing. The Battle of the Yalu River was the largest naval engagement of the war and was a major propaganda victory for Japan, (Perry, 1964: 243).

For the first time, regional dominance in East Asia shifted from China to Japan;[3] the prestige of the Qing Empire, along with the classical tradition in China, suffered a major blow. The humiliating loss of Korea as a tributary state sparked an unprecedented public outcry. Within China, the defeat was a catalyst for a series of political upheavals led by Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei, culminating in the 1911 Xinhai Revolution (Stevens, 2005: 66).

Certainly, Korea had been the staging ground for earlier invasions by both China and Japan against one another - for example, Kublai Khan's invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281, or Toyotomi Hideyoshi's attempts to invade Ming China via Korea in 1592 and 1597 (Stevens, 2005:74). With the loss of Pyongyang, plus a naval defeat in the Battle of Yalu River, China decided to withdraw from Korea and fortify its border. After receiving reinforcements by 10 October, the Japanese quickly pushed north toward Manchuria. On October 24, 1894, the Japanese built bridges across the Yalu River and marched into Manchuria. Meanwhile, Japan's navy landed troops on the strategic Liaodong Peninsula, which juts out into the Yellow Sea between North Korea and Beijing. Japan soon seized the Chinese cities of Mukden, Xiuyan, Talienwan and Lushunkou (Port Arthur). Beginning on November 21, Japanese troops rampaged through Lushunkou in the infamous Port Arthur Massacre, killing thousands of unarmed Chinese civilians (Bayly and Harper, 2007:674).

The outclassed Qing fleet retreated to supposed safety at the fortified harbor of Weihaiwei. However, the Japanese land and sea forces laid siege to the city on January 20, 1895. Weihaiwei held out until February 12, (Hastings, 2009). On 23 March 1895, Japanese forces attacked the Pescadores Islands, off the west coast of Taiwan. In a brief and almost bloodless campaign, the Japanese defeated the islands' Chinese garrison and occupied the main town of Magong. This operation effectively prevented Chinese forces in Taiwan from being reinforced, and allowed the Japanese to press their demand for the cession of Taiwan in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895. In March, China lost Yingkou, Manchuria, and the Pescadores Islands near Taiwan. By April, the Qing government realized that Japanese forces were approaching Beijing. The Chinese decided to sue for peace. On April 17, 1895, Qing China and Meiji Japan signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ended the First Sino-Japanese War. China relinquished all claims to influence over Korea, which became a Japanese protectorate until it was annexed outright in 1910. Japan also took control of Taiwan, the Penghu Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula, (Bayly and Harper, 2007:674).

In addition to the territorial gains, Japan received war reparations of 200 million taels of silver from China. After the war, according to the Chinese scholar Jin Xide, the Qing government paid a total of 340,000,000 taels (13,600 tons) of silver to Japan in both war reparations and trophies. This was equivalent to about 510,000,000 Japanese yen at the time,



about 6.4 times the Japanese government's revenue, (Perry, 1964: 243). The Qing government also had to grant Japan trade favours, including permission for Japanese ships to sail up the Yangtze River, manufacturing grants for Japanese companies to operate in Chinese treaty ports, and the opening of four additional treaty ports to Japanese trading vessels, (Martin and Ernest, 1943: 44).

Implications of the First Sino Japanese War

The Japanese success during the war was the result of the modernisation and industrialisation embarked upon two decades earlier. The war demonstrated the superiority of Japanese tactics and training from the adoption of a Western-style military. The Imperial Japanese Army and Imperial Japanese Navy were able to inflict a string of defeats on the Chinese through foresight, endurance, strategy and power of organisations. Japanese prestige rose in the eyes of the world. The victory established Japan as the dominant power in Asia, (Immanuel, 1999:331).

For China, the war revealed how ineffective and corrupt they were, its government and policies and the Qing administration. Traditionally, China viewed Japan as a subordinate part of the Chinese cultural sphere. Although China had been defeated by European powers in the 19th century, defeat at the hands of an Asian power and a former tributary state was a bitter psychological blow. (Martin and Ernest, 1943: 44).. Anti-foreign sentiment and agitation grew, which would later culminate in the form of the Boxer Rebellion five years later. The Manchu population was devastated by the fighting during the First Sino-Japanese War and the Boxer Rebellion, with massive casualties sustained during the wars and subsequently being driven into extreme suffering and hardship in Beijing and northeast China.

Although Japan had achieved what it had set out to accomplish and ended Chinese influence over Korea, Japan had been forced to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula, (Port Arthur), in exchange for an increased financial indemnity. Alarmed by the quick rise of Meiji Japan, three of the European powers intervened after the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed. Russia, Germany, and France particularly objected to Japan's seizure of the Liaodong Peninsula, which Russia also coveted. The three powers pressured Japan into relinquishing the peninsula to Russia, in exchange for an additional 30 million taels of silver. Japan's victorious military leaders saw this European intervention as a humiliating slight, which helped spark the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 (Perry, 1964: 243).

Japan succeeded in eliminating Chinese influence over Korea, but it was Russia who reaped the benefits. Korea proclaimed itself the Korean Empire and announced its independence from the Qing Empire. The Japanese sponsored Gabo reforms (Kabo reforms) of 1894–1896 transformed Korea: legal slavery was abolished in all forms; the yangban class lost all special privileges; outcastes were abolished; equality of law; equality of opportunity in the face of social background; child marriage was abolished, Hangul was to be used in government documents; Korean history was introduced in schools; the Chinese calendar was replaced with the Gregorian calendar (Common Era); education was expanded and new textbooks written.

The Second Sino-Japanese War

The Second Sino-Japanese War began in earnest in 1937 with a battle called the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. However, before this, there had been years of border clashes between the



Japanese and the Chinese, having started with the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Japan invaded Manchuria outright after the Mukden Incident in September 1931. Japan charged that their rights in Manchuria, established by the Russo-Japanese War, had been systematically violated and that there were "more than 120 cases of infringement of rights and interests, interference with business, boycott of Japanese goods, unreasonable taxation, detention of individuals, confiscation of properties, eviction, demand for cessation of business, assault and battery, and the oppression of Korean residents.

On the night of July 7, 1937, Chinese and Japanese troops exchanged fire in the vicinity of the Lugou (or Marco Polo) bridge, a crucial access-route to Beijing. What began as confused, sporadic skirmishing soon escalated into a full-scale battle in which Beijing and its port city of Tianjin fell to Japanese forces (July–August 1937). On July 29, some 5,000 troops of the 1st and 2nd Corps of the East Hopei Army mutinied, turning against the Japanese garrison. After five months of fighting, Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, and installed last emperor of China, Puyi, as its puppet ruler. Militarily too weak to challenge Japan directly, China appealed to the League of Nations for help. The League's investigation led to the publication of the Lytton Report, condemning Japan for its incursion into Manchuria, causing Japan to withdraw from the League of Nations. No country was willing to take action against Japan beyond tepid censure.

The Imperial General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo, content with the gains acquired in northern China following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, initially showed reluctance to escalate the conflict into full-scale war. The KMT, however, determined that the "breaking point" of Japanese aggression had been reached

To put it simply, the war pushed the Japanese economy and military to the limit. Japan's supplies of rubber, iron, and oil were pushed to the breaking point, and it didn't have any allies in the region. Increasingly, the view in the international community was that it was a rogue state, which did not help it procure the materials needed to keep prosecuting the war in China. An attack on a U.S. gunboat on the Yangtze River alienated the U.S., as did widespread Japanese atrocities against the Chinese civilian population. Eventually, this led to embargoes on trade with Japan.

On July 16, 1937, a few days after the beginning of Japan's undeclared war on China, Secretary Hull issued a statement of fundamental principles of international policy. The Secretary stated that any situation in which armed hostilities were in progress or were threatened was a situation wherein rights and interests of all nations either were, or might be seriously affected. Therefore, he felt it a duty to make a statement of his Government's position in regard to international problems and situations with respect to which his country felt deep concern. He said that the following principles were advocated by the United States (Graham, 2006):

- I. Maintenance of peace.
- II. National and international self-restraint;
- III. Abstinence from use of force in pursuit of policy;
- IV. Abstinence from interference in the internal affairs of other nations;



- V. Adjustment of problems in international relations by processes of peaceful negotiation and agreement;
- VI. Faithful observance of international agreements;
- VII. Modification of provisions of treaties, when need therefore arises, by orderly processes carried out in a spirit of mutual helpfulness and accommodation;
- VIII. Respect by all nations for the rights of others and performance by all nations of established obligations;
- IX. Revitalization and strengthening of international law;
- X. Promotion of economic security and stability the world over;
- XI. Lowering or removing of excessive barriers of international trade;
- XII. Effective equality of commercial opportunity and application of the principle of equality of treatment; and
- XIII. Limitation and reduction of armament.

The Secretary stated that the United States avoided entering into alliances or entangling commitments but believed in cooperative effort by peaceful and practical means in support of the above-stated principles.

The Japanese Government replied that it expressed concurrence with the principles contained in the statement by Secretary Hull; that it believed that the objectives of those principles would only be attained, in their application to the Far Eastern situation, by a full recognition and practical consideration of the actual particular circumstances of that region.

The United States opposed the Japanese war in China, and recognized Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Government as the legitimate government of China. As a result, the United States sought to bring the Japanese war effort to a halt by imposing an embargo on all trade between the United States and Japan. Japan was dependent on the United States for 80 percent of its petroleum, and as a consequence the embargo resulted in an economic and military crisis for Japan, as Japan could not continue its war effort against China without access to petroleum (Graham, 2006).

Japan identified the American Pacific fleet based in Pearl Harbor as the principal threat to its designs to invade and capture Southeast Asia. Thus Japan initiated the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 as a means to inhibit an American response to the invasion of Southeast Asia, and buy time to allow Japan to consolidate itself with these resources to engage in a total war against the United States, and force the United States to accept Japan's acquisitions. To rationalize their actions in China and Korea, Japanese officers invoked the concept of "double patriotism" which meant they could "disobey moderate policies of the Emperor in order to obey his true interests.

The Imperial Japanese armed forces seized oil fields in Indonesia and Malaya (now Malaysia). Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia also supplied iron ore, while Thailand, Malaya,



and Indonesia supplied rubber. In other conquered territories, the Japanese requisitioned rice and other food supplies - sometimes stripping local farmers of every last grain.

However, this vast expansion left Japan overextended. Military leaders also underestimated how quickly and fiercely the United States would react to the Pearl Harbour attack. In the end, Japan's fear of outside aggressors, its malignant nationalism, and the demand for natural resources with which to pursue the resulting wars of conquest led to its downfall in August of 1945.

The three major, interrelated factors contributed to Japan's aggression in the lead-up to World War II and during the conflict. The three factors were fear of outside aggression, growing Japanese nationalism, and the need for natural resources. Japan's fear of outside aggression stemmed in large part from its experience with the western imperial powers, beginning with the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and an American naval squadron in Tokyo Bay in 1853. Faced with overwhelming force and superior military technology, the Tokugawa shogun had no option but to capitulate and sign an unequal treaty with the United States. The Japanese government was also painfully aware that China, hitherto the Great Power in East Asia, had just been humiliated by Britain in the first Opium War. The shogun and his advisers were desperate to escape a similar fate.

When the Lytton Commission issued a report on the invasion, despite its statements that China had to a certain extent provoked Japan, and China's sovereignty over Manchuria was not absolute, Japan took it as an unacceptable rebuke and withdrew from the already declining League of Nations, which also helped create international isolation. Chinese authorities appealed to the League of Nations (a precursor to the United Nations) for assistance, but did not receive a response for more than a year. When the League of Nations did eventually challenge Japan over the invasion, the Japanese simply left the League and continued with its war effort in China.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States declared war against Japan, and within days China joined the Allies in formal declaration war of against Japan, Germany and Italy. As the Western Allies entered the war against Japan, the Sino-Japanese war would become part of a greater conflict, the Pacific theatre of World War II.

The United States and the Soviet Union put an end to the Sino-Japanese War (and World War II) by attacking the Japanese with a new weapon (on America's part) and an incursion into Manchuria (on the Soviet Union's part). On August 6, 1945, an American B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, dropped the first atomic bomb used in combat on Hiroshima, killing tens of thousands and levelling the city. On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union renounced its non-aggression pact with Japan and attacked the Japanese in Manchuria, fulfilling its Yalta Conference pledge to attack the Japanese within three months after the end of the war in Europe. The attack was made by three Soviet army groups. On that same day, a second equally destructive atomic bomb was dropped by the United States on Nagasaki. The ninth hour of the ninth day of the ninth month was chosen in echo of the Armistice of 11 November 1918 (on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month) and because "nine" is homophone of the word for "long lasting" in Chinese (to suggest that the peace won would last forever



Implications of the Second Sino- Japanese War

The Manchurian Crisis had a significant negative impact on the moral strength and influence of the League of Nations. As critics had predicted, the League was powerless if a strong nation decided to pursue an aggressive policy against other countries, allowing a country such as Japan to commit blatant aggression without serious consequences. Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were also aware of this, and within three years would both follow Japan's example in aggrandization against their neighbours: in the case of Italy, against Abyssinia; and Hitler, against Czechoslovakia and Poland. Gordon G. Chang wrote in the New York Times:

Between 14 million and 20 million Chinese died in the “war of resistance to the end” against Japan last century. Another 80 million to 100 million became refugees. The conflict destroyed China's great cities, devastated its countryside, ravaged the economy and ended all hopes for a modern, pluralistic society. ‘The narrative of the war is the story of a people in torment (Brendon 2007).

In some ways, the Japanese mimicked the Western colonial powers. They built grand government buildings and "developed high-minded schemes to help the natives." Later they even claimed they had the right to colonize. In 1928, Prince (and future Prime Minister) Konroe announced: “as a result of (Japan’s) one million annual increase in population, our national economic life is heavily burdened. “We cannot (afford to) wait for a rationalizing adjustment of the world system.” Today, the war is a major point of contention and resentment between China and Japan. The war remains a major roadblock for Sino-Japanese relations, and many people, particularly in China, still harbour grudges over the war and related issues.

Chinese sources list the total number of military and non-military casualties, both dead and wounded, at 35 million. The Japanese recorded around 1.1 to 1.9 million military casualties during all of World War II (which include killed, wounded and missing). The official death-toll of Japanese men killed in China, according to the Japan Defense Ministry, is 480,000. Based on the investigation of Japanese Yomiuri Shimbun, the military death toll of Japan in China is about 700,000 since 1937 (Graham, 2006) (excluding the death in Manchuria).

The China- Japanese relations has led to a division into two parties mimicking the cold war; China on the side of the Soviets and Japan on the side of America. After the beginning of Sino-American rapprochement in 1971, however, China's policy toward Japan immediately became more flexible. By 1972 Japan and China had established diplomatic relations and agreed to conclude a separate peace treaty. The negotiations for the peace treaty were protracted and, by the time it was concluded in 1978, China's preoccupation with the Soviet threat led to the inclusion of an "anti-hegemony" statement. In fewer than three decades, China had signed an explicitly anti-Japanese treaty with the Soviet Union and a treaty having an anti-Soviet component with Japan.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a fact of World Politics that some states view themselves as being higher in the hierarchy of power than others. This is exactly what the Japanese did to China and her neighbours. Imperialism stiffens democracy and does not allow for freedom of people and free rights to expression, suffrage of the citizen; this is because it oppresses the people and upholds the government or the imperial power or Empire. It creates a hegemonic State as the ruler over other States. It is important that imperialism should not be repeated in this modern age of development and globalization.

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