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## Letter from the Editors

The Spring 2023 edition of the *Undergraduate Journal of History* is now available, and our team is thrilled to share it with readers. We take pride in offering a platform for undergraduate students to showcase their historical research and encourage open discussions, intellectual debates, and curiosity. Our gratitude goes to the six authors who contributed to this volume and to the faculty and graduate student peer reviewers who made it possible. This latest issue covers various periods and diverse topics to illuminate lesser-known stories and provide fresh historical perspectives. Our undergraduate editors extend a warm welcome to both new and returning readers.

We start this issue with Olivia Bauer's article on Queen Elizabeth I and an examination of her diplomatic relationships with the leaders of the Sa'adian Sultanate of Morocco, the Ottoman Empire, and Safavid Persia, which allowed her to establish trading companies and expand Britain's empire. While the history of English foreign policy towards the Islamic world has often been associated with exploitative enterprises and violent warfare, the author argues that Elizabeth I's relationships with Muslim rulers were founded on diplomatic and peaceful means and explored the politics, gender, and religious factors that contributed to this diplomatic success.

Adrian Hammer's article, "Manufacturing Murder," provides a nuanced examination of the evolution of mass murder methods from 1933 to 1945, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of what happened, why it happened, and who it happened to, all to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future. Hammer discussed the significance of memorializing the severity of such atrocity. "The linear teaching of the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust," Hammer writes, "fails to fully capture the extent of the crimes committed and the deranged mindset of those responsible."

Victoria Korotchenko's essay explores the role of children during the French Revolution and how they actively participated in the events of the time, including joining mobs, petitioning legislators, and fighting in wars. Korotchenko writes that, while most scholarship focuses on the perspectives of grown men and women who participated in the French Revolution, "the sweeping changes, violence, and warfare impacted those who had no choice but to grow up during this tumultuous decade." This essay highlights children's curiosity and active nature during this unstable time.

Alyssa Medin's article deciphering Sor Juana as a "proto-feminist figure" in history. Medin examines three questions related to Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz's work: whether her work was published without her consent, was submissive or subversive, and if it can be considered "proto-feminist theology." Medin categorizes Sor Juana's contributions to theology into three areas: a promotion of intellectual pursuits

for women theologians, an aesthetic theological claim, and a pneumatological argument for deepening personal relationships with God through the Spirit.

O’Gorman’s work focuses on the Christian religion and military upheavals in late medieval Europe. He argues that losing Christian positions in the Middle East after the Fall of Acre in 1290 led military orders to reevaluate their identities. Many returned to their non-militaristic origins or expanded their crusading ideals into new regions. By comparing the founding stories and rules of military orders with their actions after 1290, Gorman demonstrated how the rules of military orders, including the Teutonic and Hospitaller Orders, also emphasized their hospital care in addition to their military actions.

Susan Samardjian retrospects upon how the post-war Vietnamese regime under communism in 1975 faced setbacks that disrupted both the nation’s stability and that of neighboring countries concludes our issue. Samardjian argued these setbacks contributed to an already deteriorating economy and formed the communist leaders to reevaluate their attitude toward their neighbors. In response, the communist government implemented domestic and foreign policy reforms to encourage bilateral trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and eventually normalized relations with the US, which had imposed sanctions on Vietnam, leading to economic investment opportunities.

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## A Separate War: The Quest for Identity in Military Orders After the Crusades

*Kevin O’Gorman*<sup>1</sup>

Thunderous applause greeted Teutonic Grand Master Burchard von Schwanden when he entered the city fortress of Acre in 1290. Townspeople and his brothers-in-arms lined alleyways covered with vibrant clothes and led the way with candles and church relics. The knight’s timing could not have been any better. When he arrived at Acre, it was the last major military post remaining in the Crusader states. Also serving as the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun was advancing on the city with a massive Muslim army. While Burchard and the city of Acre were saved from fighting by the sudden death of the Sultan in Cairo, the Grand Master’s journey and plans for the Holy Land did not have a similar finality. In his *Chronicle of Prussia*, written in 1341, forty years after the city fell, the Teutonic Order chaplain Nicholas von Jeroschin recounts with horror how— after only three days in the city— Burchard gathered the Teutonic knights present and resigned his role as Grand Master. The whiplash from his triumphant entrance into the city to his sudden departure was not lost on Jeroschin nor the people of Acre. Lords and vowed knights alike failed to change Burchard’s mind, and even the begging of grand masters of the Hospitaller and Templar orders on their knees was to no avail. Burchard did not leave religious life entirely and joined the Hospitallers soon after. The Teutonic Order still felt bitter forty years later, and Jeroschin emphasized that they refused Burchard’s later request to rejoin.<sup>2</sup> While Jeroschin does not give an explicit reason for Burchard’s abrupt exit, the timing alongside the permanent removal of Teutonic forces from the Middle East has led many historians to conclude that his decision coincided with a larger debate within the order over the theaters where they crusaded.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the order would move its headquarters from Acre to Venice in 1291 and then to Prussia in 1302, leaving the city that Burchard had so triumphantly entered only a few years earlier.

This episode highlights the complicated relationship that military orders had with the changing makeup of crusading and their original mission and identity. For Burchard and the Teutonic Order, that conflict took the form of debates about continuing their involvement in the Holy Land or moving their focus to Prussia and the Baltic Crusades. These discussions also took place in other military orders, as the fall of Acre forced them away from crusading in the Holy Land, and they took up crusades in continental Europe. The Hospitallers and Templars faced similar struggles after losing their positions in Acre and the dissolution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in general, becoming landholders in continental Europe as much as they were an active military force. Many of the military

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<sup>1</sup>Kevin O’Gorman graduated from the University of Dayton in 2023 with a B.A. in History and Religious Studies & Theology. He recently completed an undergraduate thesis on monastic identity during the Swiss Reformation and is currently working for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*, trans. Mary Fischer (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), pp. 206–7.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Forey, *Desertions and Transfers From Military Orders (Twelfth To Early-Fourteenth Centuries)* in *Traditio* 60 (2005): 176. A.J. Forey also uses Alan Forey in other works. The name he uses for each book will be the one used in the citation.

orders were founded with an explicit connection to the Holy Land, even going so far as to include it in their names. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders' official names referenced the German House of Saint Mary and the Hospital of St. John, both hospitals in Jerusalem. The Templars likewise include the Temple of Solomon, which the Templars believed the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was built on top of. These names were not exclusive to the largest military orders, as seen in the Leper Knights, whose name applies to the leper hospital in Jerusalem dedicated to St. Lazarus.<sup>45</sup>

The Holy Land not only loomed large as a physical destination for military orders, but it also had an intense spiritual importance. The names chosen by military orders for themselves had deep spiritual meanings and connections to their ministries. The Leper Knights are perhaps the strongest of these connections, with their hospital ministry with lepers directly connected with the spirituality and suffering of their patron, St. Lazarus.<sup>6</sup> Further, there are connections between the orders and their origins within hospitaller or canonical spiritual traditions. At their core, military orders were religious orders with professed brothers and priests, and their creation and evolution mirrored that of the other medieval religious orders around them. These functions also interacted with the orders' growing military mission and commitments, a religious charism utterly unique in the church. There has been extensive interest in the military orders' dual martial and hospital functions in the work of Anthony Luttrell and Malcolm Barber, with the former claiming every military order carried a hospitaller function in their actions.<sup>7</sup> This view has received some pushback among scholars like James Brodman, who have argued that military orders are better understood as either fully dedicated to military service or hospital orders that grew to include military elements, with the military and hospital roles never intended in their Rules.

The ultimate stress test of these spiritual and temporal ideas came from the fall of Acre and the ultimate failure of the Crusades in the Holy Land. The loss of Christian strongholds and Christendom's ability to wage holy war in the Middle East effectively directly threatened the understanding military orders had of their service in the Crusades and the Holy Land. Because of this, the fall of Acre acts as a clear break from the traditional mission of the military orders, forcing them to reevaluate their positions through the lens of their respective rules of life and spiritual traditions. The new European institutions emphasized their original purposes, focusing on hospital care or new military engagements, continuing to use crusading imagery and ideology from the Levant. I argue that the end of traditional crusading in the Holy Land challenged the orders' foundational spiritualities and military missions. Drawing on their hospitaller and canon-regular traditions, they repositioned their institutions and spirituality and developed an expanded view of crusading in their European missions.

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<sup>4</sup> The Teutonic Order's official name is Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, the Templars were the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, and the Leper Knights the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup> David Marcombe, *Leper Knights: The Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem in England, c.1150-1544* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K. ; Rochester, N.Y: Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 6–8.

<sup>6</sup> Marcombe, *Leper Knights*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291 -1530*, in *The Military Orders*, ed. Malcolm Barber, et. al. (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1994), p. 65.

### Lepers, Germans, and Hospitals: The Spiritual Foundation of Military Orders

Military orders were not created in a vacuum, nor did they only see themselves through the lens of warfare. The religious reforms of the twelfth century have long been connected to the development of a new monastic understanding of vocations that expanded them beyond canons serving in parishes or monks in their monasteries. Their creation also occurred alongside monastic movements to return to the roots of religious devotion, encountering Jesus and the church through intense asceticism and the “apostolic poverty” that was lived by, or at least connected with, the earliest Christians. Historians like Jonathan Riley-Smith and Katherine Allen Smith see these desires for authentic Christian living developing and expanding during the First Crusade. In their arguments, these authors highlight the parallels between Crusade preaching on martyrdom and pilgrimage and existing monastic language.<sup>8</sup> The brutal reality of crusading allowed crusaders to quickly draw parallels between their physical struggles and the spiritual combat that monastic communities were dedicated to. The physical violence of the first few crusades is almost unfathomable, and lords and peasants alike felt the suffering. This experience of widespread suffering also existed alongside an idea of crusading as tangibly helping the pilgrims and Christians of the Holy Land, a well-known goal of the First Crusade.<sup>9</sup>

Military orders viewed their vows as fundamentally connected to the people they served. Orders often describe their initial foundations through moments of service to the poor and the intense emotions generated. Jeroschin writes about the founding of the Teutonic Order in the same *Chronicle* that he uses to tell of their exploits in Prussia. His account uses visceral language to connect the suffering of others with the founding knights’ desire to serve. During the siege of Acre in 1190, several German merchant crusaders saw their fellow Germans in distress. They were overcome with “piety and devotion” and constructed a hospital for them in their tents. The story particularly emphasizes the personal and ascetic nature of this experience. The knights only have a ship’s sail to start their ministry, with everything else “generously donated from the possessions with which God had endowed them.”<sup>10</sup> The order’s origins are echoed in a later passage that justifies their crusading and violence, connecting the order to biblical warriors and their common call to destroy evil and sin. A “true knight” risks “death for the honour of God” and “in the abundance of their love...take pity on the sick, lying in all manner of distress in hospitals, whom they tend generously, humbly and ardently in the course of their duties.”<sup>11</sup> The language of this passage ties the knight’s identity as much to their ministry towards the sick and the hospital as their fighting the enemies of God. While the origin Jeroschin tells is contested in recent scholarship by Brodman, who points to the eight-year gap

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<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 150–51. For other interesting studies on this topic in Britain and France in the Early Medieval era, see Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013) and Conrad Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 34.

between the hospital's foundation in 1190 and the assumption of military orders in 1198,<sup>12</sup> it still highlights the knightly ideals that Teutonic brothers saw themselves as living out.

The merchants quickly integrated many German lords and knights into the growing brotherhood. Upon sending delegations to the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, the order was given a “split” rule. The medical members took up the Hospitaller rule, and the brother-knights the Templar rule.<sup>13</sup> Though separated by rules, the pseudo-monastic role of the knights and the hospitaller function of the hospital workers led to the institution of a new understanding of a military order that was both spiritually grounded in a singular place, the German House of Jerusalem yet flexible enough to adapt into a distinctly militaristic role. This development is what Brodman describes as the “military-hospitaller” order, firmly placing military orders as part of larger canonical and mendicant reform movements that intended to revitalize religious life.<sup>14</sup>

Other military orders have more veiled origins that are nonetheless profoundly connected to their hospital ministries. Perhaps the most famous military order, and certainly the largest one still functioning, is the Order of St. John. The order, known as the Hospitallers or simply the Hospital, innovated the “military-hospitaller” tradition through a broader understanding of service as a core of their identity. Formed in 1099, almost immediately after the capture of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, their exact founding is not described as vividly as other orders. However, their focus on acts of service is ingrained in their *Rule* and *Constitutions*. These foundational texts ordain brothers to “engaging with the poor.”<sup>15</sup> While the Hospitallers were directly connected to a tangible hospital in Jerusalem, like the Teutonic Order, their ministry also grew to include women and lay affiliates. Female branches were common in military orders, with the Teutonic Order and Order of Santiago accepting women in several forms. However, the Hospitallers’ widespread hospital system engrained women even more within the everyday operation of the order.<sup>16</sup> Both the male and female branches of the Hospitallers followed the same general rule that explicitly laid out the member’s responsibility to help the poor around them.

The Hospitaller rule contrasted overtly with monastic military orders like the Templars, whose *Rule* called Templars to emulate the poor in their interior spiritual lives rather than the exterior work associated with the Hospital.<sup>17</sup> St. Bernard of Clairvaux was instrumental in forming the Temple’s spirituality, and he wove rigid Cistercian spirituality into the brothers’ lives. Templar brothers were told to “shun every excess in clothing and on the rare occasions when they are not on duty spend their time repairing their worn armor and torn clothing.” Monastic poverty and the internal purity of the brothers fostered through an intense prayer life within the monastery, would expand into their help

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<sup>12</sup>James Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, (United States: Catholic University of America Press, 2009) p. 389.

<sup>13</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 394.

<sup>15</sup> Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 396.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Luttrell and Helen J. Nicholson, *Introduction: A Survey of Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, in *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, eds. Anthony Luttrell and Helen J. Nicholson (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2017), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 398.

with the poor.<sup>18</sup> The female branch of the Hospitallers also took a more intentionally prayerful expression of this service than the brothers. The brothers and priests followed and prayed the same liturgy of the hours and served at the hospitals. However, the female branch was notably cloistered, and many were expected to be literate and able to participate fully in liturgical functions. Likewise, a tradition of noble women entering into Hospitaller convents with the explicit goal of serving the poor or retiring as a widow into a monastic life of prayer also developed as the Hospitallers retreated from the Holy Land and opened more houses in mainland Europe.<sup>19</sup>

The same emphasis on hospitaller spirituality can be seen in the Lazarite order, also known as the Leper Knights. While their origins are unknown, like the Hospitallers, Lazarite historians were not stymied by the lack of information. Their chroniclers connected the order's beginnings to physical actions, such as constructing a leper hospital in Jerusalem in the fourth century and important spiritual figures like Judas Maccabeus and St. Basil.<sup>20</sup> Regardless of the mythological elements, the first signs of the order appeared in the 1140s through a donation of land for a church named after St. Lazarus and a convent of the sick nearly forty years after the capture of Jerusalem and the First Crusade. The order's spirituality was fundamentally rooted in their service to the lepers from whom they took their unofficial name. While the earliest Lazarite knights are anonymous, other stories about their knights mirror the Teutonic founders' personalization of their spirituality. A twelfth-century Leper Knight known as Alberic was said not just to have served the poor and needy but would submerge his face in the water he washed with as an act of penance and love. The washing and caretaking ground the order's ministry, but Alberic's actions are raised as exemplars of the order's charism by taking the suffering of those he serves upon himself. The chronicle states that he was "moved ... to nausea" by the dirty water, yet he immerses himself in it nonetheless. In doing this, Alberic placed himself at risk of catching the disease and symbolically took the place of the lepers.<sup>21</sup> The description of Alberic's dramatic, saintly actions demonstrates the order's desire to unite their spirituality with their physical ministry.

Alberic's desire to serve and take upon the bodily suffering of lepers is also repeated in other medieval mystics, especially women. Much like Alberic's immersion in the leftover water of the lepers, female medieval mystics like Catherine of Sienna would drink the pus from the lepers and sick that they served to recreate the suffering of Christ physically. Contemporaries even remarked on these incidents among Italian mystics as growing a eucharistic hunger and connection to Christ. In both cases, Alberic and the Italian mystics gained spiritual authority from their acts of bodily holiness. Catherine of Sienna especially attracted the attention of other mystics and church leaders through these actions and was able to spread her spiritual teachings even further.<sup>22</sup> This spiritual authority

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew Holt. "The New Knighthood: Bernard Of Clairvaux and the Templars." *Medieval Warfare* 6, no. 5 (2016): pp. 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Luttrell and Nicholson, *Introduction*, in *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> Marcombe, *Leper Knights*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Malcolm Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, in *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (July 1994): p. 446.

<sup>22</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 171-172.

would have been essential for a military order lacking the distinctive history of its larger neighbors, the position in which the Leper Knights found themselves. The person of Alberic and his extraordinary actions towards their namesake created a perfect opportunity to connect their distinctive way of life to mystical motifs of bodily holiness and the spiritual power that came from them.

The Lazarites did not limit themselves to spiritually taking upon the suffering of the people they served but incorporated lepers as full members. Many secular and religious knights who had contracted leprosy and were rejected from other military orders were welcomed in with open arms.<sup>23</sup> These knights were allowed to serve in military actions as long as they were healthy, transitioning to the order's medical arm once their condition worsened. Secular and religious legal codes codified these entrances, including the French *Livre au Roi* for secular knights and the Templar *Rule of the Temple*. Both mention allowances for knights who had become leprous to transfer or enter into the Lazarites. These transplants were so pivotal to the order's identity that it was a tradition until 1253 to have the Master of the order be a leper himself.<sup>24</sup>

The foundations of these orders show an interesting conception of religious life within military orders. Many military orders' foundations and early spiritualities were rooted in dramatic personal experiences and deep connections to non-militaristic institutions. The visceral descriptions of the first members of the Teutonic and Lazarite orders and the intentional mythologizing in their telling speak to the profound connection to a particular spirituality and expression of Christian love. The Teutonic Order saw their founders' actions and mission as so important in telling their story that they effectively combined the hospital's founding with the founding of the order itself, even though eight years passed between them. Similarly, the Hospitaller order experienced a deep sense of spirituality apart from the military role they would develop. Hospitaller spirituality was even more varied when approaching the role and importance that women played in its early establishment, with women doing the physical tasks of the hospital and expanding that into a ministry of cloistered prayer.

### **“The Wrath God Ordained”: Reactions Among the Military Orders to the Fall of Acre**

The origin stories and rules of military orders show an attachment to their non-military ministry and witness within a crusading context. Many of the military orders not only took their names from their hospitals in the Holy Land but administered themselves from various Crusader states. Their official names and rules often directly relate to their origins in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, expanding even further as they began militarizing in the twelfth century. While the Templars always had a clear military focus and were given control of military posts and castles<sup>29</sup>, the Hospitallers began as an exclusively medical order in 1099. They slowly gained military responsibilities until the Kingdom of Jerusalem

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<sup>23</sup> It is also worth noting that much like the inclusion of lepers among the Lazarites, chronic illnesses did not exclude people from working in hospitals in Europe. Their hospital service came from desires to physically mirror Christ as well as grow in personal holiness despite their age or health conditions. See John Henderson, *The Renaissance Hospital: Healing the Body and Healing the Soul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 215-218.

<sup>24</sup> Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, pp. 444–45.

officially assigned castles in 1136.<sup>25</sup> The Teutonic Order was similar. Following their establishment, they began to take up smaller military roles, such as defending sections of Acre's wall in 1193 and explicitly listing their military role in 1198.<sup>26</sup> The Leper Knights, despite being more medically focused and having a sizable contingent of members actively sick with leprosy, were also active in military engagements. However, details are sparse aside from a devastating loss in the Battle of La Forbie in 1244.<sup>27</sup> The battle, the biggest of the Crusades since the Battle of Hattin in 1187, was so disastrous that the Patriarch of Jerusalem wrote that all the Leper Knights present were killed during the fighting. The Leper Knight's fortunes did not improve over a decade later as a 1252 raid into Muslim territory resulted in the death of the Master of the order and left only four knights alive. This defeat also led Pope Innocent IV to issue a bull in 1223, permitting a non-leper to lead the order, ending a century-old tradition while acknowledging the necessity of military action for their mission.<sup>28</sup>

By the middle of the thirteenth century, these orders had concrete attachments to the Holy Land through military protection or direct holdings of castles and military posts. This commitment would be pushed to its extreme as the momentum of the Crusades faltered, and Crusader states fell. The Crusader states faced increasingly strong attacks from a rotating list of Muslim empires and powers, each chipping away at their power. Many of the strongholds given to the Hospitaller and Templar orders following the First and Second Crusades were lost in the aftermath of the Battle of Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem in 1187. After several years of incremental warfare and land purchases, the Crusader states regained several strongholds, only to have their progress stopped by the Mongol invasions in the 1240s.<sup>29</sup> These gains and losses also incurred a growing view that the Christian forces in the Holy Land lacked the authority and cohesion to deal effectively with Muslim forces. Leadership in the Holy Land was not limited to the monarchies and counts that comprised the Crusader states during the First and Second Crusades and also included military orders, independent barons, and Italian settlements. Significant disunity was also present in these states' treaties and actions. The famed Benedictine chronicler Matthew Paris accused the Hospitallers and Templars of betraying Frederick II by dealing with Muslim forces in the Sixth Crusade, although he later recanted.<sup>30</sup> The military orders were not immune from these changes, and the Order of St. Lazarus notably followed the Kingdom of Jerusalem to Acre sometime after the fall of the city of Jerusalem in 1187, re-establishing itself with a new leper hospital and having a gate within the newly fortified city named after their titular Saint and staffed by brothers.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, the remaining Crusader States and holdings of military orders were pushed back by Baibars and the Mamluks, who conquered the Templar fortress of Safad and massacred its Knightly inhabitants in 1266. The Mamluk force followed up by capturing Krak de

<sup>25</sup> Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 15–18.

<sup>26</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Marcombe, 14.; Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, pp. 449–50.

<sup>29</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> A. J. Forey, "The Military Orders in the Crusading Proposals of the Late-Thirteenth and Early-Fourteenth Centuries," *Traditio* 36 (1980): p. 318.

<sup>31</sup> Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, p. 448.

Chevalier, one of the largest Hospitaller strongholds, in 1271.<sup>32</sup> Members of military orders did not ignore these struggles, and there were early indications of their reluctance to continue sending men and resources into what seemed to be a losing struggle. The direct obligations that military orders had to their stations in the east were not always clear. The Hospitaller order only allotted one-third of its revenue in continental Europe to the Holy Land and only had about eighty knights and sergeants-at-arms stationed in Cyprus in the early fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> While Jeroschin's *Chronicle* does not lay out specific numbers of knights, there is a clear emphasis on the order's continued recruitment and diversion of troops to Prussia and the Baltics, even naming a citadel of theirs after their lost stronghold of Montfort in Palestine.<sup>34</sup>

All of the complicated political maneuverings that characterized the actions of military orders in the Holy Land came to a head in the Siege of Acre. Following the destruction of the city and Principality of Antioch in 1268 by Baibars, the only remaining Crusader state was the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Acre was their only remaining city of any strategic worth. When the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun, the heir to the terrifyingly successful Baibars, began to march on Acre in 1290, the fear and terror that gripped the town were palpable. The description of the Teutonic Grand Master Burchard von Schwanden's entrance and resignation in Acre that opened this paper shows the tensions felt within religious orders to preserve their presence within the Holy Land. The Grand Master rode into a parade in the streets for him and his men, greeted on all sides by the city's inhabitants, religious figures, and his fellow vowed knights. His resignation was not a case of cowardice or a desire to leave religious life, as he joined the Hospitallers and remained involved in their Holy Land actions. Instead, his leave corresponded to the appointments of Grand Masters, who would progressively push the Teutonic Order's headquarters and actions further toward Germany and the Baltics, leaving a clear lack of continued hierarchical support for the very city that Burchard was attempting to liberate.

The aftermath and reactions to the 1291 Siege of Acre fall represent a dramatic turning point with the physical relocation of the Teutonic and Hospitaller order to Prussia and Rhodes. While the specifics of the siege lie outside of the scope of this paper, its impacts on military orders can be felt both at the political and ideological levels. The Fall of Acre was devastating in a political sense, finalizing the destruction of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Crusader states in a general and personal sense. The Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic, and Lazarites all effectively had their Middle Eastern forces headquartered in Acre at the time. They had significant numbers of knights, even with the dwindling support from their continental houses. The intensity of the fighting took a brutal toll on the men present, resulting in the death of the Templar Grand Master, forty Hospitallers, and all twenty-five Lazarists defenders.<sup>35</sup> The defeat was so traumatic that Pope Nicholas IV initiated

<sup>32</sup> William J Hamblin, "Muslim Perspectives on the Military Orders during the Crusades," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001): pp. 110–11.; See Appendix Figure #1 for a picture of Krak de Chevalier.

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050–1310* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1967), pp. 328–47.

<sup>34</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 167. The castle and area around it were named "Starkenbergr" which is the German name for Montfort and is used by some historians. For sake of clarity, I use the anglicized name.

<sup>35</sup> Marcombe, *Leper Knights*, p. 15.



discussions on combining the Templar and Hospitaller orders to quell rivalries between members in the region and streamline the leadership questions that many blamed for the campaign failures. Talks even went as far as proposing designs for a unified habit and color scheme.<sup>36</sup> The actual members and Grand Masters dismissed the idea readily, and the proposal lost steam after Nicholas died in 1292. The dissolution of the Templars twenty years later in 1312 brought back this discussion, although it was limited to the acquisition of the Templar's property by the Hospitallers, and discussions advanced no further than before.<sup>37</sup>

There was also an emotional reaction within other orders. Nicholas von Jeroschin reacts with horror at both the loss of life from the siege and the loss of the Teutonic Order's physical connection to the Holy Land. The siege was so violent that "blood rushed like a torrent through all the alleyways" and went as deep as a person's ankles. Jeroschin follows up this visceral description with a personal account of what he thinks led to this moment. He noted three things: the feuding of local leadership, the lack of coordination among armies, and Christians' personal pride and sin. This section is also paired with a long lament for the Holy Land, where Jeroschin gives voice to the Holy Land itself, crying out that its "wondrous inheritance is overgrown and has been given to outsiders."<sup>38</sup> The Holy Land is still an essential part of his spirituality, and he decries the loss of life and his connection to the land, going so far as to take upon God's voice in lamenting the loss of his "inheritance." Jeroschin's focus on these events in the Holy Land and the Fall of Acre within the context of the Teutonic Order's Prussian campaigns shows their significance to their Germanic crusading. The importance of the Holy Land is stressed within the *Chronicle*. The order's biblical foundations and the deaths of the knights within Acre all take place within this powerful area, only to be betrayed by the sin and foolishness of the Christians. The Crusader states' suffering and personal failure turned away the Holy Land and left "the wrath of God ordained."<sup>39</sup> Even though the area has such a deep meaning, Jeroschin still stops short of calling for any return, nor does he mention any further actions of the order in the Holy Land after the Fall of Acre. The location of the order's headquarters mirrors this tension. Initially located in the iconic castle of Montfort in Palestine until 1265, the order retreated to Acre until its fall in 1291 and stopped in Venice for eighteen years until 1309. The order settled on Marienburg in Prussia in 1309, and their operations would be based in northern Germany for the next five hundred years, much like their gradual movement towards bases further and further away from the Middle East, the Holy Land remained a reminder of their spiritual and biblical past but one that was still in the past.

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<sup>36</sup> The Spanish philosopher Raymond Lull proposed a black habit with a red cross in the center, combining the black cloth of the Templar habit with the Red Cross of the Hospital. See citation below.

<sup>37</sup> Forey, *The Military Orders in the Crusading Proposals of the Late-Thirteenth and Early-Fourteenth Centuries*, pp. 320–24.; While the Templars are an essential part of the story of military orders after the Fall of Acre, their dissolution is a complex topic that is outside of the scope of this paper. There has been extensive literature on this aspect of their history, and I would recommend interested readers to Malcom Barber's *The Trial of the Templars*, Second Edition, for an academic overview of the topic and Anne Gilmour-Bryson's *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus* which contains very interesting translations of testimonies from the Templar dissolution trials.

<sup>38</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, pp. 238–42.

<sup>39</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 238.

### **Movements from the East: Ideologically Continuing the Crusade in Europe**

Shock and despair were not the only reactions military orders had to the Fall of Acre and their resettlement in Europe. As seen above, physical reactions and discussions followed and hit the heart of the military orders' role. The crusading instincts of these orders were not wholly abandoned but repositioned into their hospitaller functions and continental military operations. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders are the most obvious example of the physical shift towards the West through their relocation to the Baltic region and Mediterranean islands. However, they also used Crusader language and relics to promote themselves to new members and to continue their ministry. Likewise, these shifts were also accompanied by renewed stress on their hospitaller and canonical roles within their new environments. The Hospitallers made a point to provide care for the sick, and the Teutonic knights emphasized the protection of pilgrims and the poor in their battle tales.

Turning first to the Hospitallers, as seen in their origins and actions in the Holy Land, their order strongly emphasized care for the sick and establishing hospitals. This focus was not lost during their move away from the Holy Land and formed an integral part of new foundations in the Mediterranean. Upon their defeat at Acre, the Hospitallers moved to the town of Limassol on the southern coast of Cyprus in 1291 with a small force of only forty knights and ten men-at-arms. One of their first actions was to plan the construction of a new hospital to replace the one lost at Acre, beginning in 1297, only a few years after their landing. However, funding was hard to come by, and the Master of the Order sent out fundraising requests across Europe, complaining to the court of Aragon in 1306 that he could not even maintain their current level of care for the sick and pilgrims without committing the sin of usury. The Hospitallers would move their operations to Rhodes in 1310, and their plans for a grand hospital came with them. Although the plan for Cyprus failed, the order would finally succeed in Rhodes. Witnesses consistently remarked on the size and scale of their charitable operations on the island throughout the mid to late fourteenth century, noting the number of beds and high-quality medical staff on such a remote island.<sup>40</sup> The construction and maintenance of a physical hospital became a pillar that the Hospitallers could use to mark an area as theirs. Without it, their presence lacked a critical element, which had to be rectified. While the hospital only became a reality in Rhodes, the lengths that the Hospitallers went to secure resources for the hospital in both areas showed intense commitment, beginning plans soon after they landed, sending letters to kingdoms as far away as Spanish Aragon, and stretching their finances to the point of usury. Apart from the holdings and hospitals in the east, they similarly sought to rebuild and rededicate their new spaces.

Hospitaller areas outside the Middle East also demonstrated a connection between their mission and the continuation of crusading. When writing financial appeals to their lay auxiliary confraternities (groups of non-clerical men and women who supported the order's spirituality and mission and were given certain privileges) in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the English houses of the order made special note of their defense of Rhodes and the spiritual benefits of support. The knights were involved in a nearly biblical struggle, with their hold of Rhodes as the "key to all cristendom standyng in gret paruell betwene the cruell and myghty tirands the Turk and souldan

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<sup>40</sup> Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291-1530*, in *The Military Orders*, pp. 68-69.

enmyes to all cristendome.”<sup>41</sup> The descriptions of Rhodes as a defense for all of Christendom match the descriptions of Hospitaller roles during the 1291 Siege of Acre and their early actions in Cyprus. The hospital’s mission was restorative, in the sense that it rebuilt the lost hospitals of Jerusalem and Acre, and an act of sacrificial love for all Christians through the brothers’ work.<sup>42</sup> Even removed by time and space from the Fall of Acre, the late medieval Hospitallers’ work still viewed crusading as still relevant to their work. Even more remarkable is the shift from the medical application of their interaction with Christendom to militaristic action against the Turks as an act of defense. In the immediate aftermath of the Fall of Acre and their fundraising two centuries later, the Hospitallers connected the idea of crusading to their particular military service on the islands and their healthcare charity.

This similar determination and effort on behalf of their charism can be seen in the Teutonic Order and their care for pilgrims and the poor. While the Teutonic Order was charitable in origin, their actions during the Baltic Crusades were explicitly militaristic. Far from separating the spiritual from the physical, the language used to describe their new European campaigns is inundated with biblical undertones. Jeroschin’s *Chronicle* uses the word “heathen” to describe the numerous pagan tribes in the Baltics and Prussia and the Muslims in the Holy Land. Likewise, Jeroschin displays both struggles as extensions of Abraham’s battle against Lot, emphasizing the appearance and blessing of the priest Melchizedek afterward as a sign of God’s blessing of the combat.<sup>43</sup> This language and shared biblical foundation directly connect the “heathen” Muslims that the Teutonic knights fought in the Holy Land with their new enemies in the Baltic. The shared identity of the Baltic and Muslim forces as “heathens” is expanded into the Teutonic Order’s charism towards the poor and the pilgrim within military battles. The *Chronicle* describes many temporary crusaders that joined the Teutonic Order for short stints of fighting as “pilgrims.” The Teutonic Order paid particular attention to these crusaders, not just because they were some of their only reinforcements in an environment of near-constant fighting, but also because they were lauded for the sacrifices they had made to respond to the crusading call of God. While there is considerable doubt as to the motive and true ability of German “pilgrims” who would come annually for the exact time required for the papal indulgence,<sup>44</sup> Jeroschin still speaks very highly of such “noble heroes” who “put to one side anything which might hinder or delay their propitious journey and set off enthusiastically... to take revenge on the heathens for the injustice evilly and ferociously inflicted on the followers of the crucified Lord.”<sup>45</sup>

The new pilgrims also played a prominent role in the Teutonic Order’s battle plans, with the order making their safety a priority during non-combat situations like harsh weather. Campaigns with

<sup>41</sup> Rory MacLellan, *Hospitaller Confraternity Scripts, Crusading and the English Reformation, c.1440–1537*, in *Historical Research* 92, no. 256 (May 2019): pp. 449–50.

<sup>42</sup> Luttrell, *The Hospitallers’ Medical Tradition, 1291–1530*, p. 64.

<sup>43</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Sven Ekdahl’s chapter *The Treatment of Prisoners of War during the Fighting between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania* in *The Military Orders*, ed. Malcolm Barber, describes the merciless actions that both sides enacted upon each other and argues that these temporary crusaders served more as boosts for the economy than true fighters and their real value came in their capturing and impressment of local Lithuanian and Baltic peoples for the Teutonic Order.

<sup>45</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, pp. 74–75.

pilgrims were periodically postponed because of severely cold winters, a precaution Jeroschin points out the Teutonic Knights did not take.<sup>46</sup> This treatment is extended to the non-pilgrim Christians and the poor, who are saved by the divine vengeance of the Crusaders and their pilgrim allies.<sup>47</sup> These passages occur alongside descriptions of a knight's service and their goals in Prussia. While descriptions of the military and hospital commands have been discussed above, there is also an explicit mention of care for the poor and pilgrims. In addition to "taking pity on the sick," they are first called to "receive guests, pilgrims and the poor."<sup>48</sup> In a source unabashedly supportive of the Teutonic Order's actions and crusading in general, Jeroschin intentionally portrays the order as fulfilling a knight's virtuous behavior, specifically highlighting the ideal aid they would provide for the pilgrims and the poor Christians around them. The actions of their founders in Acre and other crusaders in the Holy Land are intentionally replicated and held up as signals of their identity. As the founders focused on those made poor or wounded by Islamic armies, the knights in Prussia ensured they could point to times when they liberated Christians captured by the same "heathens." The order replicated the Holy Land crusades in Prussia through the enemies they faced and the pilgrims they fought for and with.

The crusading continuity also extended to their use of relics and items the military orders brought back from the Holy Land. In making the literal bones and material of the Holy Land accessible to the people in Prussia or the Mediterranean, they, in effect, brought the Crusades with them. Relics are a unique phenomenon in Christianity, and each piece carries a story and presence exclusive to the original saint or item they came from. Relics varied from preserved remnants of saints, called "first-class relics," including their bones and blood, to "second-class relics," objects touched to or used by the saint. Just as each saint had connections to particular causes or places, their relics allow believers to feel close to and identify with the saint, even today.<sup>49</sup> The ability of relics to bring a built-in story and theological message with them gave them powerful standing in the first Crusades. The Lance of Longinus and the True Cross held particular importance and were even brought into battle, as seen before the Battle of Ascalon in 1099 when Raymond of Aguilers and Godfrey blessed soldiers and gave rousing speeches while brandishing the Lance and True Cross.<sup>50</sup> These relics were important to the Crusaders because of their explicit connection to the crucifixion of Christ, which they commemorated by sewing a cross into their clothes as a symbol of their oath.

Relics have long been a part of military orders and their crusading justification, even outside the Holy Land. The Teutonic Order included relics within their spiritual observance and battles as early as the 1248 Battle of Dzierzgoń in modern-day Poland, where the head of St. Barbara was found and presented to the church and assembled people. The sight of the relic, appearing after a "daring fight" by the Teutonic brothers, began an impromptu processional with "every last man and woman"

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<sup>46</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 277.

<sup>47</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 257.

<sup>48</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 34.

<sup>49</sup> Tomasz Borowski and Christopher Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages: Relics, Religiosity, and the Military Orders* in *Speculum* 92, no. 4 (October 2017): pp. 1058-1059.

<sup>50</sup> Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. 308.

in the city. The relic was so spiritually potent that no one who appeared before the Saint left without some blessing, and “miracles... [became] so common that they no longer count as such. It would be a miracle if anyone left there without receiving a pledge of blessing.” The appearance of the Saint and the supposedly limitless miracles that followed were a sign to Jeroschin and the Teutonic Order that their cause was just. St. Barbara’s Turkish origins also point to the explicit crossover and intersection of spirituality. St. Barbara was not only from areas by the Holy Land but lived in a time when the church was persecuted by non-Christians, a connection that the Teutonic knights could make to their own violent battles against pagans. The Middle East and the earliest Christians were present in the minds as much as the eyes of the Crusaders and brought blessings with them. Jeroschin even calls his brothers to “Rejoice, rejoice, Teutonic Order especially, that you have been so blessed.”<sup>51</sup>

Military orders began to explicitly incorporate relics from the Holy Land and the Crusades into their non-Holy Land operations following the Fall of Acre. Fragments of relics like the True Cross, a potent symbol of the first crusade and the Holy Land, became very prominent in the reliquary collections of military orders. The Hospitallers housed pieces of the True Cross in houses as far apart as their headquarters on Rhodes and Belvar in central Portugal. The Hospitaller headquarters also contained various other pieces related to Jesus’ life in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, including thorns from the Crown of Thorns and the thirty silver pieces paid to Judas. At the same time, Belvar had pieces from the Holy Shroud and drops of the Virgin Mary’s breast milk.<sup>52</sup> The Teutonic Order had similar connections to Holy Land relics, with a relic of the True Cross being of particular interest. In 1322, a brother used a relic of the True Cross to resurrect a four-year-old boy from the dead. The relic later jumped out of a fire after being thrown in, proving its authenticity in the eyes of Brother Gebhard von Mansfeld, the commander of the house in Brandenburg. Breaking this story down reveals even deeper connections to the order’s crusading past. Like the previous miracle in 1242, the piece of the cross has special spiritual powers. It is the conduit for several miracles, raising a dead child and surviving an additional test of its authenticity by jumping out of the flames. The raising from the dead can also be seen as an allusion to the raising of the dead by Jesus, whose own life and resurrection are associated with the relic. The relic was also intentionally brought to Prussia by a brother, not being found like the head of St. Barbara. While the knight’s exact reason for returning with the relic is not recorded and could be chalked up to personal piety, it still recognizes the powerful draw of relics of the True Cross and at least some desire to see that same power brought to the Prussian war front.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

When Burchard von Schwanden left Acre only days after riding into it at the head of a parade, he must have known that he was seeing the end of an era. The Grand Masters of the other two large military orders had begged him to stay and fight, only to be rebuffed. Acre would fall only a few months later, and of these two leaders, one would die defending the city while the other barely escaped. The orders would also abandon the Holy Land as their base of operations after. The Hospitallers were forced to the island of Rhodes in 1310, the Teutonic Order re-established itself in Prussia in 1309, and the

<sup>51</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 95.

<sup>52</sup> Borowski and Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages*, p. 1069.

<sup>53</sup> Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 275.

Templars were dissolved in 1312. The loss of the Holy Land forced military orders to reevaluate their place apart from the land and cities they had fought to control for almost two centuries. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders' solution was to continue their crusading initiatives in different forms away in their new designated theaters. Military orders had deep traditions that varied in the spirituality and ministries they interacted with. Hospital ministry formed the most prominent of these traditions. As indicated by their name, the Hospitallers were famous for their hospitals and work among the poor. However, the Teutonic Order also originated in hospital ministry, and smaller orders like the Lazarites took their ministry in unique directions, specifically serving lepers and incorporating lepers into their ranks.

These ministerial and spiritual pasts would be leaned on as military orders went through a period of turmoil following their defeat at Acre in 1291. The Hospitallers planned a new hospital upon their arrival in Cyprus in the 1290s, eventually building it alongside their headquarters in Rhodes.<sup>54</sup> The Teutonic Order likewise had very clear ideas for what made a knight virtuous and holy, especially relating to their 1190 origins during the Third Crusade and the care for pilgrims, the poor, and imitating Jesus' crucifixion. The Order's *Chronicle* of the Baltic Crusades consistently refers to these qualities during their campaigns, caring for the German "pilgrims" and the poor during their battles. Additionally, there was a concerted effort in the language and relics employed by both orders to connect their struggles with their Crusading past in the Holy Land. The Teutonic Order used "heathen" for their enemies in the Middle East and the Baltics, drawing a clear relationship between the conflicts. The Hospitallers use similar sacrificial language about their medical service during the Crusades and their new foundations in the Mediterranean. Relics also tangibly brought the Crusades into the new areas military orders occupied. Both the Hospitallers and Teutonic Orders had a special reverence for relics from the Holy Land and the life of Christ, even spreading them to houses across Europe.<sup>55</sup> Relics like the True Cross carried with them the stories and sentiments of the Holy Land and the spiritual power, performing miracles and justifying the Teutonic Order's fight in the eyes of God.

The Crusades did not end for military orders when Acre fell. Instead, as Burchard von Schwanden realized, it would just mean moving away from their traditional lands in the Middle East. Nevertheless, there was still continuity in their identities and ministries in this shift. Orders brought the hospitals, relics, and knightly qualities they had in the Holy Land to their new establishments. Even physically separated from their origins, they still saw their spirituality, ministry, and fighting as a continuation rather than a hard break that made their vows obsolete. This was a difficult realization for some brothers. The blood spilled at Acre, and Burchard von Schwanden's transfer to the Hospitallers speak to the tension within military orders and the desire to remain connected to the Holy Land. When the Hospitallers wrote an appeal for their Confraternity members in the fifteenth century, hundreds of years after they retreated to Rhodes, they still spoke of their fight in Crusading terms. The brothers were "redy to shede theyre blode and jeoparde theyre lyves ayenst the Turks and other

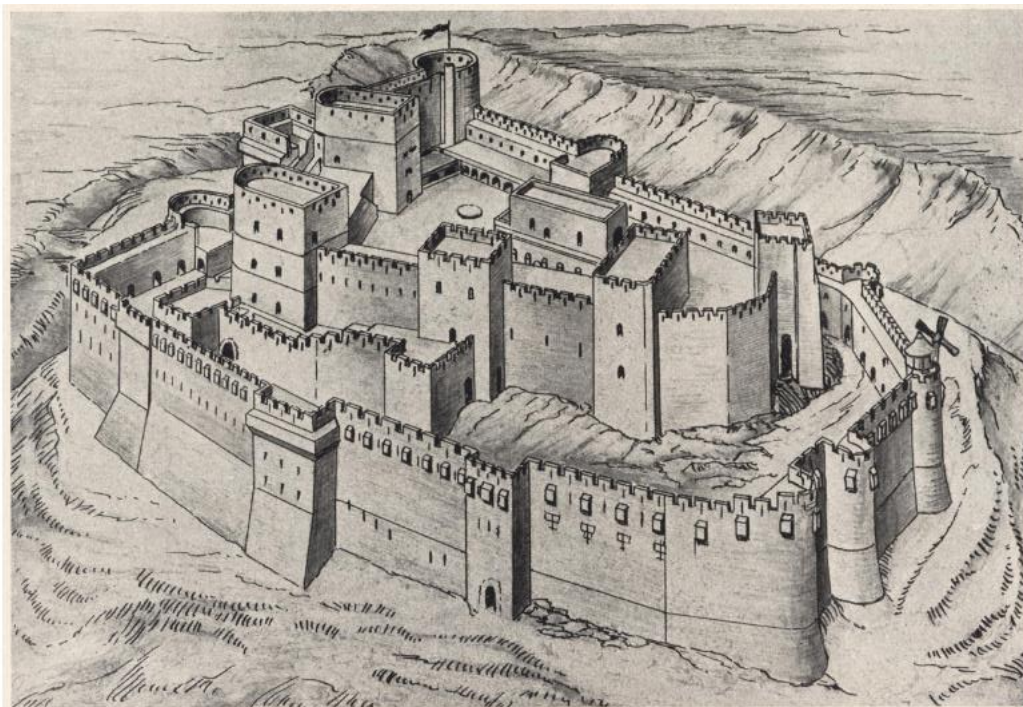
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<sup>54</sup> Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291 -1530*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>55</sup> Borowski and Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages*, p. 1069.

infydells for the defence and augmentation of Cristis faythe for the love of God and for the greate quyetnes comforth and tuytion of Crysten people.”<sup>56</sup>

## Appendix



**Image No. 1.** Illustration of Krak de Chevalier prior to its fall. **Credit:** Reprinted from R.E. Dupuy, “When Knights Were Bold this Fortress Flourished,” *The Military Engineer* 26, no. 149 (September-October 1934): 333-336.

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<sup>56</sup> MacLellan, *Hospitaller Confraternity Scripts, Crusading and the English Reformation*, p. 452.





## From Reunification to Normalization: Twenty Years of Vietnam, 1975-1995

*Susan Samardjian*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

As North and South Vietnam united under Communism in 1975, the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) faced continuous setbacks as their goals of a socialist transformation fell to ruin. The severe economic stagnation in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam following the Second Indochinese War sparked a series of events, from a refugee crisis to an invasion of Cambodia and a brief war with China, all of which left Vietnam isolated and ostracized. The domestic policy changes made under the VCP, such as the implementation of collectivization, caused thousands of Vietnamese civilians to flee to neighbouring countries.<sup>2</sup> Vietnam's weary neighbours depicted the refugee crisis as the VCP's attempt to expand its influence in Southeast Asia, as Thailand and Cambodia marked Vietnamese expansionism as a threat to national security. Frequent border disputes between the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and Vietnam, as well as the purging of the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia, led to the invasion of Cambodia in 1978.<sup>3</sup> The occupation of Cambodia by the Vietnamese provoked severe economic sanctions regionally and internationally as the US kept close ties with key Asian states like Thailand and China.

The fate of Hanoi's economy after reunification was the principal reason behind the reconstruction process leading up to the normalization of relations. Conceptualizing the refusal to establish trade relations with many nations that did not share Communist loyalties, Hanoi's leadership overlooked the importance of bilateral regional and international relations. The occupation of Cambodia and the Third Indochinese War further placed Vietnam in a position of isolation and ostracization that put the economy in a precarious position, forcing the Vietnamese government to re-evaluate its domestic and foreign policies. While previous scholarship attributes the *Doi Moi* – the name given to the economic reforms initiated in Vietnam in 1986 – and normalization efforts to the consequences of American economic sanctions, I propose that territorial contentions with the

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<sup>2</sup> Shimojo Hisashi, "Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia: Mobility in a Multiethnic Society in the Mekong Delta since 1975," *Southeast Asian Studies* 10:1, (2021): p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Ramses Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam: A Troubled Relationship," *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2010), p. 93.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) catalyzed reforms due to the immediate national security concerns surrounding its shared border with China and Cambodia. While considering the implications of American foreign policy in Vietnam, precarious relations with regional states greatly impacted Vietnamese foreign policy and economic decline. The economic consequences of the ostracization of Vietnam caused by regional disputes prompted a series of normalization efforts to improve regional and international relations in Vietnam. Economic stagnation since reunification sparked a dramatic re-evaluation of the VCP's domestic and foreign policies leading to *Doi Moi* and bilateral trade reforms.

### **A Short Victory: Domestic Affairs Following Reunification**

After a thirty-year war for independence, Vietnam became a unified state when the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) took Saigon on 30 April 1975, creating the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For the Vietnamese Communists, 1975 marked the triumph over Western capitalist exploitation. However, for many Vietnamese civilians, this year marked the beginning of a new form of misery. The PAVN quickly took over police services, schools, hospitals, and businesses while confiscating American-supplied war resources.<sup>4</sup> Given the brutality of the war in Vietnam, the Communists distrusted the South. They maintained a direct rule by increasing the presence of the PAVN, removing all South Vietnamese officials and sending them to re-education camps. By July 1976, Vietnam became a single-party dictatorship controlled by the VCP. The VCP then set out a program for a socialist reconstruction of the North and a transformation of the South.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist takeover came at a significant cost to the economy. In 1975, the United States issued a trade embargo on Vietnam, while China and ASEAN members distanced themselves as Vietnam grew closer to the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> The economic situation deteriorated further when one million civilians in the South became unemployed, many of whose careers were compromised by their collaborations with the anti-Communist movements. In 1976, the Politburo (a Soviet policy-making body) stressed the importance of economic reform and initiated a Five-Year Plan (FYP) from 1976 to 1980, with the primary goal being a socialist reconstruction of Southern Vietnam.<sup>7</sup> With the new FYP inspired by the Stalinist model, the VCP sought to repair the economy by collectivizing Southern Vietnam to produce enough resources to feed the nation and fund Vietnam's rapid industrialization. If

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Goscha, "The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam," in *Vietnam: A New History* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), p. 372.

<sup>5</sup> David W.P Elliot, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Goscha, "The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam," p. 385.

<sup>7</sup> Kosal Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), p. 64.

Stalin's FYP was not enough proof, Vietnam's FYP of collectivizing the South dramatically decreased the productivity of civilians as they were no longer incentivized. Collectivized civilians lost their property, and the VCP forced them to work on large government farms holding about 100,000 people in each collective.<sup>8</sup>

While the families loyal to the VCP enjoyed more job opportunities and higher education, southern families had their lands redistributed. The VCP placed discriminatory policies against those who worked with the capitalist regimes dating back to the 1940s.<sup>9</sup> Like Ngo Dinh Diem's dictatorship, the VCP's police force compiled a list of suspects and mandated identity cards with short biographies to categorize civilians by their previous loyalties. The VCP used identity cards to reward loyal families and discriminate against and punish capitalist sympathizers.<sup>10</sup> In 1975 alone, 6.5 million civilians' careers became "compromised" due to their families' connection to the French or the Americans. The VCP's mistrust of the South hindered their ability to industrialize and repair the country, as the collectivization of the South, along with discriminatory policies, caused a massive economic downturn.<sup>11</sup> The FYP showed that the VCP acted out of revenge rather than a desire to rehabilitate the nation. Hanoi's development model was an inadequate way of transforming the South.

Not only were the Southern Vietnamese targeted by the VCP, but the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam also faced discrimination as the scapegoats for the haphazard socialist transformation of the South. While Sino-Vietnamese tensions continued into the late 1970s, the VCP encouraged the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam to leave, including those loyal members of the PAVN and VCP.<sup>12</sup> Many of the bourgeoisie the VCP targeted during the socialist transformation of the South were ethnic Chinese who served the Diem regime. Hoang Van Hoan, a Chinese associate of Ho Chi Minh and a member of the Politburo, fled Vietnam in 1979, making him one of the most senior members of a Communist government to defect. Many ethnic Chinese who attempted to flee became political prisoners and died in the re-education camps.

### **The "Boat People": Vietnamese Mass Migration**

The economic stagnation and discriminatory policies made living conditions so unbearable in Vietnam that civilians, most of whom were Southern Vietnamese, began to flee to neighbouring countries. Civilians bribed border patrolmen to let them pass and went by boat to China, Hong Kong, and other

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<sup>8</sup> D.R. Sardesai, *Vietnam, Past and Present* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> Hisashi, "Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia," p. 381.

<sup>10</sup> Hisashi, p. 382.

<sup>11</sup> Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 128.

<sup>12</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 474.

ASEAN countries, where they were referred to as “boat people.”<sup>13</sup> Many also migrated to Thailand via Cambodia and became undocumented workers in places like cassava farms. Although the PAVN restricted cross-border migration, the passage to Cambodia and Thailand persisted despite all the political chaos in Vietnam.<sup>14</sup> The government could not control migration at the border, considering the civilians took informal routes.

Bangkok and Phnom Penh perceived Vietnamese “boat people” as the VCP’s plan for the “Vietnamization” of Southeast Asia – a ploy to increase the VCP’s influence in the region.<sup>15</sup> Thailand’s strategic location and ideological inclination made Bangkok alert to the disputes in Vietnam.<sup>16</sup> The glue keeping Vietnamese-Thai relations together was Hanoi’s relations with ASEAN countries and Hanoi’s treatment of its members. From Hanoi’s perspective, Thailand’s aid to the US during the Second Indochinese War was one of the most salient implications to Vietnamese-Thai relations. Thailand provided a military base for American fighter planes to remain close to Vietnam during the war. Notably, the fact that US military bases remained in Thailand was alarming, as Hanoi viewed this as Bangkok’s show of support for the US policy against Vietnam.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Hanoi and Bangkok frequently competed for political influence in Indochina, which made Thailand “sensitive” to Vietnam’s foreign policy in the region, particularly with Cambodia, where the two powers competed for influence. The VCP’s aims to influence Indochinese ideologies impacted Thailand and caused a tornado effect, leading China to react negatively. Although China and Vietnam had a mutually beneficial relationship as the major Communist powers in Asia, Vietnamese reunification caused tensions to rise between the two long-standing allies.

### **The Sino-Vietnamese Communist Connection**

Chinese and Vietnamese Communists had collaborated since the late nineteenth century, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) provided organizational models that the VCP followed.<sup>18</sup> When Vietnam became a unified Communist state, a Chinese representative spoke before the Economic and Social Council, praising North Vietnam’s victory and the “dumping of the puppet Saigon regime.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Goscha, “The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam,” p. 385.

<sup>14</sup> Hisashi, “Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia,” p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> Amer, “Cambodia and Vietnam,” p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> Nguyen Vu Tung, “Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War,” *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2010), p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> Vu Tung, “Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War,” p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> The Black Panther Party, “Intercommunal News: U.N. Appeals for Aid to Indochina,” *Black Panther Productions*, 13:13 (1975): p. 45.

However, Sino-Vietnamese relations became problematic once Beijing realized that Hanoi could rival its influence over Indochina. When Vietnam became a competitor, its “fraternal cooperation” quickly shifted to a power struggle between the two nations. By the end of the Second Indochinese War, the relationship turned into a rivalry between China and North Vietnam as it became evident that a unified Vietnam could be a pro-Soviet state.<sup>20</sup> Over the years, Moscow and Hanoi developed a close fraternal relationship over shared ideology, as the *Moscow News* compared Vietnam’s independence to the October Revolution.<sup>21</sup> When Vietnam joined the Soviet-controlled Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), a 25-year treaty of friendship, China responded by ending economic and military assistance to Vietnam. This, coupled with the fact that China saw the exodus of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam as a threat, caused tension between the Communist allies. Beijing understood the exodus as Hanoi’s way of breaking ties with it and removing any person of influence representing the CCP in Vietnam.<sup>22</sup>

China’s fear of the Soviet Union’s growing influence convinced Beijing to seek a normalized relationship with the US. When Jimmy Carter became the president in 1977, he approached Huang Chen, China’s liaison chief, with the thought of normalization as they both distrusted the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> Most notably, an improved relationship between Beijing and Washington would force the Soviet Union to divide its attention between two enemies. When Sino-American relations normalized in January 1979, their mutual goals to contain the Soviet Union made Hanoi a target as Moscow’s closest ally in Southeast Asia. Although ideological differences and Sino-American normalization contributed to Vietnam’s increasing reliance on the Soviet Union, it was not the only reason Hanoi moved away from Beijing. One of the most significant blows to Sino-Vietnamese relations was China’s support of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, or the DK, which signalled to Hanoi that the Chinese planned to encircle Vietnam with enemies.<sup>24</sup>

One view of the Sino-DK-Washington relationship was that it was a product of the Sino-Soviet split and Hanoi’s endorsement of Soviet ideology. When Vietnam grew closer to the Soviets, it became apparent that Beijing would be trapped in the north by the Soviets and in the south by the Vietnamese.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Norman G. Owen, “Vietnam After 1975: From Collectivism to Market Leninism,” *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), p. 473.

<sup>21</sup> *Moscow News*, “Soviet-Vietnamese Declaration,” *Moscow News*, 45 (1975): p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Owen, “Vietnam After 1975,” p. 474.

<sup>23</sup> Deborah Kalb and Marvin Kalb, “Clinton: The First Baby-Boomer President,” *Haunting Legacy: Vietnam and the American Presidency from Ford to Obama* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011), p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Mertha, *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (Ithaca: New York, Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 5.

The creation of the DK following a coup in 1975 opened a path to offset the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance seeing that the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) had increasing hostilities with the VCP. In 1977, Beijing provided the DK with food and resources and planned for Pol Pot to meet Mao Zedong on a secret visit to China to secure military aid. China sent one billion dollars worth of aid, the most significant commitment in the history of Communist China. The US, which shared the desire to contain the Soviets, ignored Pol Pot's human rights violations and secretly provided covert aid to the DK. Like China, the US hoped to precipitate the decline of the VCP and Vietnamese expansionism as it resented the nation after withdrawing from the Second Indochinese War. The human rights issues in Pol Pot's genocidal regime were not enough to sway the US administration against providing covert aid, despite President Jimmy Carter referring to the Khmer Rouge as the "worst violator of human rights in the world today."<sup>26</sup> When the American public began to draw attention to the administration's lack of interest in the Khmer atrocities, Carter stated that the US would continue to oppose nations that violated human rights. However, China and the US did nothing to stop the Khmer regime. Even after the VCP drove Pol Pot from the DK, the US provided covert aid to the Khmer Rouge so that they may one day return to power.

### **The Invasion of The DK And The Third Indochinese War**

The historically tumultuous relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese greatly influenced the turmoil between Vietnam and the DK. Through Chinese and American aid, Pol Pot's regime came to power with vehement anti-Vietnamese sentiments. Hanoi hoped that the Khmers would adopt a pro-Vietnamese doctrine, similar to the Laotian Communists, to maintain its sphere of influence in Indochina. However, this was not the case.<sup>27</sup> When Pol Pot established the DK, he immediately removed any Vietnamese Communist allies. He spread anti-Vietnamese sentiments by claiming land rights to the Mekong Delta, causing collisions with the PAVN located at the DK-Vietnamese border. Vietnam was partly to blame for the disputes, as Politburo reports stated that the status of the Mekong Delta was unclear. The border skirmishes continued until 1976, when attempts to settle these disputes broke down, and the DK government refused to negotiate. Consequently, Phnom Penh and Hanoi officially terminated diplomatic relations in December 1977.<sup>28</sup> Until 1978, the Khmer Rouge attacked the Vietnamese provinces of Tay Ninh, Kien Giang, and An Giang, killing thousands of civilians while purging any ethnic Vietnamese and Hanoi-trained Khmers in the DK.

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<sup>26</sup> Jimmy Carter, "Human Rights Violations in Cambodia Statement by the President," *The American Presidency Project*, April 21, 1978.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen J. Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 95.

<sup>28</sup> Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam," p. 92.

By mid-1978, the Vietnamese government concluded that a conflict similar to its previous 'People's War' would not be applicable in this situation. The VCP decided to launch a military expedition, mirroring the 1968 Prague Spring, to bring the DK under Vietnam's sphere of influence as it had desired for many decades.<sup>29</sup> The border disputes soon escalated to a full-scale war in December 1978 when 100,000 Vietnamese troops entered Eastern Cambodia, capturing Phnom Penh after two weeks of fighting.<sup>30</sup> Following the fall of the Pol Pot regime, Vietnamese officials created a People's Revolutionary Council to act as the provisional government until the acting council established the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) and remained in power until the PAVN withdrew from Cambodia.<sup>31</sup>

China had something to lose in the war with the Khmers since it supported the Pol Pot regime. In an attempt to retaliate and teach Vietnam a lesson, China invaded Northern Vietnam in February 1979.<sup>32</sup> Chinese leaders viewed their southern neighbours as ungrateful for all the CCP had aided them during their Peoples' War. Beijing's leadership agreed to a short attack on Northern Vietnam to limit the costs and other concerns that the senior members had. This way, Beijing would accomplish its goal of punishing Vietnam while keeping the cost of war to a minimum. Many viewed this operation as a military failure for the Chinese but a success in strategy and diplomacy. The war successfully blocked Hanoi's ambitions to attain a sphere of influence over Indochina, forcing Hanoi to keep a portion of the army on its shared border with China.

For the VCP to have facilitated a prosperous post-war reconstruction depended on a peaceful regional environment where military operations could be reduced in favour of foreign aid and trade. Vietnam's economic rehabilitation would have greatly benefitted from a continuous inflow of Chinese aid. However, this was impossible given the political and military relationship between the Chinese and the Khmer Rouge.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, military action against the Chinese-backed Khmers resulted in economic and military retaliation against the Vietnamese instead of support. The only nation to stand behind Hanoi's decision to invade the DK was the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union publicly defended Vietnam's foreign policy. It condemned Chinese aggression, calling it a violation of the United Nations

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<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam," p. 93.

<sup>31</sup> Amer, p. 95.

<sup>32</sup> Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 221.

<sup>33</sup> Bonny Lin, David Grompert, and Hans Binnendijk, "China's Punitive War Against Vietnam, 1979," *Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2014), p. 89.

Charter and international law and urging international organizations to stand in solidarity with Hanoi.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the pariah state known as Vietnam would not receive support from Western nations.

### **Vietnam's Pariah Era: Economic Ostracization**

Even though the invasion and occupation were regionally and internationally opposed, for the leaders in Hanoi to have sat idly while the Khmer Rouge purged ethnic Vietnamese civilians would have made them appear passive and weak. The Third Indochinese War and the occupation of Cambodia brought about a period of instability in Asia where no player left with a positive outcome. Cambodia had the most to lose that being its independence, military might, and integrity, which the Cambodian Civil War only worsened.<sup>35</sup> Hanoi's overthrow of the Chinese-backed Pol Pot regime was embarrassing for Beijing. Beijing labelled itself as the country that could check Hanoi's ambitions, but it failed to teach the Vietnamese a lesson by establishing military superiority over its smaller neighbour.

The Vietnamese domination of Cambodia came at a cost to Hanoi's national security, international reputation, and economic stability. Though it achieved the goal of defeating the Khmers, the Vietnamese did not expect the magnitude of international condemnation for its actions and thus endured ostracization for ten long years.<sup>36</sup> The FYP failed since it forced Hanoi to postpone reconstruction programs in favour of military defence to maintain "preparedness" at the border with China. With its international credibility dramatically reduced, Hanoi's chances of receiving assistance from other countries were slim. International isolation drastically impacted the Vietnamese economy, and the VCP became more dependent on Soviet assistance to maintain domination.<sup>37</sup> The boycott of Vietnam and Vietnamese-occupied Cambodia deprived Hanoi of developmental aid until 1991, with only a handful of Western countries that continued to send supplies, such as Sweden.<sup>38</sup> There was a lack of support even in developing countries where the Vietminh revolutionaries were once an inspiration.

Economic advisors in Hanoi regarded the period before the Cambodian invasion as a missed opportunity to establish economic relations with the West. Hanoi's economic planners noted that they had the chance to explore further development in the reconstruction process had they not limited themselves to allying with the Soviet Union. In 1985, Vo Van Kiet, a socialist politician and economic researcher, stated that Vietnam did not recognize the primacy of bilateral and multilateral economic relations. Since 1975, Hanoi made the mistake of primarily building relations with countries with shared interests, and policymakers did not stress the importance of exporting and increasing imports in a

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<sup>34</sup> Moscow News, "Hands off Vietnam! Appeal of the International Emergency Conference in Support of Vietnam," *Moscow News*, 12, (1979), p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 187.

<sup>36</sup> Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 187.

<sup>38</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, p. 220.



developing economy.<sup>39</sup> This missed opportunity hindered Hanoi's ability to build a thriving socialist state. Van Kiet further wrote:

Our psychology of reliance on outsiders was deep, widespread, and resistant to change. Because of that, we were not able to exploit our strength and potential in our country to widen our economic relations with other countries, particularly to increase our exports. We did not see as important investments in building infrastructure and material foundations in service of large-scale exports. We were too slow to determine the necessary policies and measures to strengthen our export sector.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Path To *Doi Moi***

From 1985 to 1986, Hanoi was increasingly receptive to economic reform. The shift to a more open-minded approach to economic reform was undoubtedly influenced by Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy of loosening economic constraints on civilians to incentivize them to work harder.<sup>41</sup> The Soviet economy, on the brink of collapse, could not afford to fund uprisings in Third World countries, causing Gorbachev to reduce economic and military aid to its allies, including Vietnam. Before this, Vietnam heavily relied on the Soviet Union for aid, especially during the war with Cambodia and the Third Indochinese War. This changed in 1985 when the economic planners in Hanoi paid more attention to the decline of the Soviet Union's economic might and the steady downfall of the COMECON countries, which owed an overwhelming amount of debt to the West. Hanoi had to begin considering partnerships with other nations to save the economy. In a report written in March 1985, decision-makers informed the VCP that many capitalist nations and economic organizations refused to enter a partnership with Vietnam because of political issues, such as the US economic sanctions and regional conflicts, meaning Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia.<sup>42</sup>

The occupation of Cambodia diminished any prospect of normalization with the US. The US participated in propaganda campaigns labelling Hanoi as the 'aggressive Cuba of the East,' encouraging other nations to distance themselves from the pariah state. The American administration's stance on Vietnam prompted European nations to cut off food aid, and the United Nations (UN) General Assembly refused to recognize the Vietnamese-backed government in Cambodia.<sup>43</sup> By 1986, hostilities with China during the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia drastically destabilized the region, which caused unfavourable economic circumstances. Distancing itself from the Cambodian conflict and

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<sup>39</sup> Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

<sup>41</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 221.

<sup>42</sup> Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

<sup>43</sup> Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 222.

normalizing relations with China was the only way to repair the nation. A negotiated peace agreement could have been established sooner if the US and China had stopped backing the Khmer Rouge, but the two powers were adamant about bleeding Vietnam dry. By 1989, Hanoi withdrew from Cambodia and accepted a Cambodian government under UN supervision.<sup>44</sup>

Hanoi's decision-makers discussed the withdrawal from Cambodia as early as 1988. Cases of famine and malnourishment spread nationwide, leaving seven-million Vietnamese civilians starving. The threat of another famine in 1989 caused turmoil within the government that urged Hanoi to redirect its focus from military expansion to economic stability.<sup>45</sup> The food crisis forced Hanoi to come to terms with the impact of regional and international isolation and revisit its relations with ASEAN countries and other international players. As 1989 ended, Communist regimes worldwide fell, which alarmed Hanoi and encouraged decision-makers to seek normalization with China as soon as possible to protect the regime.<sup>46</sup> By 1990, bilateral trade in Vietnam had dropped from eighty percent to fourteen percent. This dramatic decrease prompted Hanoi to redesign its foreign policy to meet the needs of the economy and national security.

Economic success would strengthen Vietnam's credibility and power, giving it a greater ability to protect its sovereignty and "promote international prestige."<sup>47</sup> Hanoi found that economic instability was the root of the Communist collapse, which led to political chaos. The VCP did not wish to join the ranks of the fallen COMECON parties in Eastern Europe. Soon after Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia, the Politburo established a resolution outlining the next steps toward protecting national security. The Politburo identified a strong economy capable of covering national defence and opening bilateral and multilateral trade and relations. For these goals to be met, Hanoi must pursue peace with its neighbours and the international community.<sup>48</sup> With these interests in mind, and with the fear of losing its regime amid the Communist collapse in Eastern Europe, Hanoi had to first create reforms in the regime before turning outward to signal a shift in attitude in Hanoi and to appear receptive to new alliances.

### ***Doi Moi* And Normalization With ASEAN**

The path to normalization for Vietnam in the 1980s began with domestic reform known as *Doi Moi*, or 'renovation,' where economic development was the principal focus. In April 1987, the VCP

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<sup>44</sup> Le Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus: Doi Moi, Foreign Policy Reform, and Sino-Vietnamese Normalization," *Asian Politics and Policy* 5:3 (2013), p. 388.

<sup>45</sup> Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 66.

<sup>46</sup> Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus," p. 397.

<sup>47</sup> David Denoon, *China, the United States, and the Future of Southeast Asia*, (New York: New York University Press, 2017), p. 155.

<sup>48</sup> Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus," p. 397.

incentivized citizens by establishing reforms to increase peasants' and workers' wages.<sup>49</sup> This meant rice farmers could earn an additional forty percent of profits from production, and the increased autonomy allowed people to operate businesses without state intervention. This dramatically decreased inflation as the rate went from seven hundred percent in 1985 to thirteen percent over the next decade.<sup>50</sup> The Sixth Party Congress also established a "soft reform" of socialism to liberalize the economy and open up to the capitalist world. The VCP worked to shift to a market-based economy, as opposed to a centrally controlled economy, which required their participation in global capitalist institutions.<sup>51</sup>

At the Seventh Party Congress, The VCP wanted to hold diversified trade agreements with several countries and economic organizations and build strong relationships with all countries. Rather than isolating itself from one nation as it did with the Soviet Union, Hanoi began to follow a multidirectional foreign policy going into the 1990s known as the "clumping bamboo" strategy.<sup>52</sup> Bamboo will fall when standing alone, but it stays strong when grouped. This strategy maximized Hanoi's economic inflow and prevented hyper-dependence on one nation. The clumping bamboo almost immediately precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which severely impacted Vietnam's economy and strategic policy implementation. Hanoi lost a significant source of economic assistance, such as trade agreements and financial aid. This left the nation scrambling to adapt, causing a drastic economic crisis in the early 1990s with hyperinflation, unemployment, and a decline in economic output. As Vietnam's largest trading partner during the Cold War, the collapse forced Hanoi's decision makers to seek new bilateral and multilateral partners.

The Politburo encouraged the foreign policy guideline of having more friends and fewer enemies by mending relationships to promote national interests.<sup>53</sup> Without the Soviet Union to protect it from its Chinese neighbours, it was paramount for Hanoi to normalize relations with China seeing that it could no longer afford to remain in defiance of it. As VCP leader Le Duan once stated regarding China, "Behind an enemy, sometimes we can find a friend... Behind a friend, sometimes an enemy."<sup>54</sup> The history of animosity between these two nations had been consistent, but China, as the most prominent Communist state since the fall of the Soviet Union, made normalization increasingly salient. However, by 1990, the fact remained that China and Vietnam had unresolved territorial disputes making Beijing the biggest security threat to Hanoi. From Beijing's perspective, the CCP was not

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<sup>49</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 136.

<sup>50</sup> Sardesai, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> Sardesai, p. 469.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Manyin, "Vietnam Among the Powers: Struggle and Cooperation," *International Relations and Asia's Southern Tier: ASEAN, Australia, and India*, (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2018), p. 210.

<sup>53</sup> Vu Tung, "Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War," p. 75.

<sup>54</sup> Lan Huong To, "Thai do cua TBT Le Duan voi lanh dao Trung Quoc" (General Secretary Le Duan's attitude toward Chinese leaders), *SOHA.vn.*, February 16, 1979.

entirely receptive to the idea of normalization with Hanoi. Even though China invaded Northern Vietnam, there was strong resentment and disdain for the VCP in Beijing for damaging its credibility as a military force.

China was reluctant to mend fences with Vietnam over recent border issues and did not share the same ideological outlook. As normalization progressed between the nations, it became clear that its relationship would not be mended over a shared ideology but rather a shared national interest and a desire to avoid political and economic chaos.<sup>55</sup> Beijing clearly stated to Hanoi that its relationship would be limited and did not constitute an ideological alliance. For Hanoi, the most important factor of its partnership was that it was no longer adversaries with its powerful neighbour. Post-Cold War Vietnam was relatively stable once China was brought into the fold, as it held a mutually beneficial trading relationship.<sup>56</sup> Once Hanoi stabilized its relationship with its biggest regional adversary, the VCP turned its focus to Thailand and the other ASEAN countries.

Hanoi viewed Bangkok as the most important ASEAN country to mend fences with, seeing that the two nations held opposing ideologies. If Hanoi could improve relations with the Thais, it could be used as a litmus test for the rest of ASEAN.<sup>57</sup> Even more so, Bangkok was the front-line opposer to reunified Vietnam, and Hanoi would require its approval for other ASEAN countries to consider building a relationship with it. Since the invasion and occupation of Cambodia was the biggest threat to Thai-Vietnamese relations, tensions between the two nations decreased once Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. Following the normalization of relations between Bangkok and Hanoi, Thailand was an avid supporter of Vietnam during its application for membership to ASEAN.<sup>58</sup> Hanoi continued its involvement with Thailand and similar ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, with which Vietnam had solid relations during its 1980s pariah era.<sup>59</sup> Increased diplomacy with nations which held opposing ideologies was Hanoi's strongest effort to normalize relations with ASEAN, not only to aid its economy but to facilitate the peaceful environment it initially needed to focus on the socialist transformation of Vietnam. In response, ASEAN countries agreed to a partnership with Vietnam because they shared a fear of the increasing power of China and believed Hanoi could help maintain a balance.<sup>60</sup>

The process of joining ASEAN began in 1991 after the Paris Agreement on Cambodia concluded. Even though the Vietnamese resented the ASEAN countries for their involvement with the US during the Second Indochinese War, Hanoi put this aside to focus on building solid regional relations. For the Vietnamese government, building relations with its neighbours was closely connected

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<sup>55</sup> Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 91.

<sup>56</sup> Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 273.

<sup>57</sup> Vu Tung, "Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War," p. 78.

<sup>58</sup> Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 145.

<sup>59</sup> Elliot, p. 145.

<sup>60</sup> Elliot, p. 144.

to the security and overall development of the nation. Exercising a solid relationship with its neighbours was a part of Hanoi's method of creating a "security belt" around it to establish long-term national security and strengthen its defence.<sup>61</sup> Regarding economic rehabilitation, Hanoi found that ASEAN would help contribute to the economy in the long run. Developing ties with the region by joining ASEAN would heighten Vietnam's international significance and make it look more attractive to investors. This gave Hanoi the ability to defend itself while gaining support from ASEAN.<sup>62</sup>

ASEAN countries also had something to gain from their relationship with Vietnam. While its association with ASEAN made Vietnam more relevant to foreign investors, joining the organization would give ASEAN increased power and influence. ASEAN could utilize Vietnam's strategic location as a relay station between the mainland and the islands in Southeast Asia, as well as between members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the relations between Asian and European nations.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, Vietnam, as a member of ASEAN, had the potential to play a vital role in repairing political and national security issues in Southeast Asia. Vietnam could use this opportunity to leverage its influence in the association, giving it more authority over regional politics.

### **American Reconciliation**

The fall of the Soviet Union catalyzed a change in global politics, resulting in the US becoming the dominant superpower. Consequently, with Hanoi's decision to expand relations with regional players, Vietnamese foreign policy in the 1990s worked to normalize relations with powerful Western nations. Addressing the trajectory of Vietnam's road to joining ASEAN comes simultaneously with Vietnam's normalization efforts with the US. In some respects, Vietnam's full membership in ASEAN was contingent on establishing normalization with the US.<sup>64</sup> Reconciling with the US was vital for Vietnam as it would end the economic embargo and give Hanoi access to greater aid funds from Western-dominated organizations like the World Bank and IMF. However, the Americans, like the Chinese, were not receptive to normalization with the Vietnamese. Even though the Cambodian occupation concluded, which the US government listed as its primary obstacle to normalization, other unresolved issues took its place.

Following the American war in Vietnam and again during the occupation of Cambodia, American civilians regarded Communist Vietnam as a nation filled with "cruel Orientals" whose only wish was to unite Indochina under the VCP's Communist model.<sup>65</sup> The US government and the

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<sup>61</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 105.

<sup>62</sup> Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 128.

<sup>63</sup> Elliot, p. 152.

<sup>64</sup> Elliot, p. 131.

<sup>65</sup> Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 208.

American public resented Hanoi's leadership as they still felt the sting of losing their first war. The Second Indochinese War haunted the American public. When incidents like the My Lai massacre surfaced, the US lost its reputation as a nation that protected and upheld human rights and freedoms. Many concluded that the legacy of the Second Indochinese War would remain for many years.

Americans in the 1980s, in particular, held strong anti-Vietnamese sentiments after the release of multiple prisoners of war (POW) films from 1983 to 1985. This highlighted the missing-in-action (MIA) issue that was prominent at the war's end. The release of the films during the Vietnamese pariah era caused the US population and many other nations to find Vietnam problematic and untrustworthy. This influenced the successive administrations to avoid seeking normalization with Vietnam for several years.<sup>66</sup> Hanoi and Washington went back and forth on the POW-MIA issue from February 1982, when Vietnam first attempted to improve relations with the US. The Vietnamese government returned MIA remains to a US delegation in Hanoi for the first time, led by the Deputy Secretary of Defence Richard Armitage.<sup>67</sup> It was not until June 1985 that Hanoi approached the US, stating it was willing to settle the issue of MIA soldiers in Vietnam. Shortly after, Hanoi returned the remains of 26 American soldiers who fought in the Second Indochinese War, the largest transfer of remains since 1982. In November 1985, Hanoi allowed a joint excavation of a B-52 crash site to find the remains of MIA soldiers and service people.<sup>68</sup> Near the end of 1990, the US government received 100 MIA remains from Hanoi, but Washington listed 1750 MIAs left in Vietnam after the war. By the time Hanoi withdrew from Cambodia, negotiations for a normalized relationship between Washington and Hanoi stalled because of the POW-MIA issue and Hanoi's domestic policies and internal structures.<sup>69</sup>

Washington gave Hanoi an outline of what it must do to achieve normalization with the US on the road to achieving full diplomatic relations and the removal of the economic embargo. To incentivize the VCP to cooperate, Washington announced a program to provide one million USD in prosthetics assistance for those wounded in the Second Indochinese War. By February 1994, Washington lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam and removed it from the official list of American enemies, allowing US trade and investment to flow through Hanoi.<sup>70</sup> Washington's decision to open trade with Vietnam influenced other Western European nations and Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN members to expand their trading relationships with Vietnam. Bilateral trade and investment between Washington and Hanoi helped build a strong economy for Vietnam, which ultimately aided its socio-political and economic recovery after three Indochinese Wars and an invasion of Cambodia. The United

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<sup>66</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 204.

<sup>67</sup> Sardesai, p. 201.

<sup>68</sup> Sardesai, p. 202.

<sup>69</sup> Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 143.

<sup>70</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 204.

States and China ranked among the top dollar-value bilateral trading partners. Washington also cleared Hanoi's debts and allowed Vietnam to take IMF and World Bank loans. By 1994, bilateral trade between Washington and Hanoi had risen to two hundred twenty million.<sup>71</sup>

When Bill Clinton came to office, he advocated for normalized relations with Vietnam as he opposed the Second Indochinese War in previous years.<sup>72</sup> Referred to as the first baby-boomer president, Clinton did not view the Second Indochinese War through the same lens as his predecessors, thus giving him no reason to oppose normalization. Clinton was known to be a draft dodger during the war and felt guilty when he started his political life as one of the few politicians with no direct ties to the war.<sup>73</sup> As president, he was adamant about coming to terms with his past and putting Vietnam behind him by focusing on reconciliation. The prospect of normalization with a country that had deeply scarred the American people was a difficult pill to swallow for the citizens who still believed that Vietnam was harbouring POWs. When Clinton announced in July 1995 that the administration had plans to normalize relations with Vietnam, he did not have the support of the people. President Clinton responded that normalized relations with Vietnam would bolster American interests in Asia and contribute to a stable environment.<sup>74</sup> An economic relationship with Vietnam promoted trade and investment for American businesses and allowed them to exploit an emerging Vietnamese market. Even though Clinton's administration denied it, advocates stressed the importance of relations with Hanoi as a countermeasure to the increase in China's military power.

### **The South China Sea: Hanoi and Washington Unite Against Beijing**

Normalization between Hanoi and the US was a mutually beneficial establishment, particularly for its interests in Southeast Asia, as China's economic might grew stronger. This was not a favourable prospect for either country as both feared that China would turn against it. The US was aligned with China when they both shared mutual interests in checking Vietnam's expansionist plans. However, unlike in the 1970s, China had become an economic competitor and not a strategic partner for the US. When Washington and Beijing first made an agreement in 1979, China's economy was relatively weak and unthreatening.<sup>75</sup> By 1995, the Chinese economy experienced dramatic gains, and its growing military strength threatened America's influence in the region and globally.

Hanoi also had something to lose from China's rise in power. By the mid-1990s, normalizing relations between China and Vietnam was simply a label and held no real weight. Hanoi struggled to

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<sup>71</sup> Frederick Brown, "Rapprochement Between Vietnam and the United States," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 32:3 (2010), p. 324.

<sup>72</sup> Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2004), p. 173.

<sup>73</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, p. 161.

<sup>74</sup> Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 205.

<sup>75</sup> Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 279.

preserve its sovereignty and political autonomy while maintaining a peaceful and mutually beneficial foreign policy with Beijing.<sup>76</sup> Although it abided by China's stance on political non-interference, Hanoi frequently butted heads with Beijing for power and influence.<sup>77</sup> The two neighbours still competed for influence over Laos and Cambodia to control the Communist movements - a historic rivalry between the two successful Asian Communist nations with diverging ideologies. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea have also been a cause for significant concern for Hanoi policymakers, who felt that Hanoi must protect its sovereignty by establishing strategic relations with other key players.

China's continuing aggression in the South China Sea is a fundamental foundation for Hanoi's strategic policies. Improved relations with the US have been the most promising outcome to emerge from the Sino-Vietnamese tensions in recent decades. Since 1995, Vietnamese-American trade relations and economic agreements have surprised many who believed the two nations could never work together after the Second Indochinese War. Although they do not share ideologies and views on governance, the relationship between Vietnam and the US has flourished through bilateral and regional strategic relationships with which it does share common interests.<sup>78</sup> In the face of historical animosity in the "largest and least successful war in US history," the US Department of Commerce listed Vietnam as one of its largest markets.<sup>79</sup> Serving its economic and security interests in Southeast Asia, Vietnam went from a fierce opponent to a close ally in a matter of decades. Normalization was the final straw of a terrible experience on both sides and brought both nations to a place of mutual respect and admiration. Its shared strategic interests in keeping China in check have united them and the ASEAN members. While Hanoi worked to solidify ties with regional states to protect itself against China and the tension in the South China Sea, the US was also working to strengthen ties with ASEAN members to block China's interests.<sup>80</sup>

China's increasing aggressiveness in the South China Sea essentially brought nations together. It led Hanoi to socioeconomic and political security and stability where chaos and famine once existed. Normalizing relations between Hanoi and the rest of the world solidified the importance of regional and international investment and aid. It showed that self-reliance can sometimes be counterproductive due to the lack of trade and investment in the nation. Vietnam's self-reliance during its ostracization turned a nation that had potential into a poverty-stricken country with yearly famines. Since normalization, Hanoi has averted the economic crisis, and the nation has healed dramatically by re-evaluating its foreign policy priorities and trade relations. The regional and global normalization of

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<sup>76</sup> Manyin, "Vietnam Among the Powers," p. 158.

<sup>77</sup> Manyin, p. 159.

<sup>78</sup> Brown, "Rapprochement Between Vietnam and the United States," p. 318.

<sup>79</sup> Allan E. Goodman, "The Political Consequences of Normalization of U.S.-Vietnam Relations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 17:4 (1996), p. 421.

<sup>80</sup> Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 283.



relations with Hanoi had transformative implications for Vietnam's socio-political and economic stability.

### **Conclusion**

The normalization of relations between Vietnam and the rest of the world drastically transformed the economic capability of the nation and played a crucial role in making Hanoi a significant regional power. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements between Vietnam and the rest of the world were integral to Hanoi's post-Cold War trajectory. After a thirty-year war for independence, an occupation of Cambodia and a brief war with its powerful neighbour, Vietnam finally settled the political and economic chaos. Regional and international trade and investment were the bread and butter of the new Vietnamese economy, which significantly transformed the quality of life for Vietnamese civilians and the global reputation of Hanoi, turning it into an attractive trade and investment partner. The political consequences of ostracization due to Vietnam's expansionist goals paved the way for political and economic reform like *Doi Moi*, which made it possible to readdress foreign policy relations with many key players like the US. Normalization with the US was integral to Hanoi's reformation as it facilitated trade relations with other Western nations and enhanced Vietnam's legitimacy. A long and bloody war between the two nations led to a normalized relationship and a robust trade and investment agreement that continues to protect Hanoi from being overpowered by its ever-growing Chinese neighbours.