

THE FORGOTTEN NATION IN THE ALLIES: CHINA IN WORLD WAR II

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Abstract

To what extent are small states negligible in international politics? Conventional theories of the post-World War II era, such as neorealism, focus on the power balance among great powers and conceptualize small states as minor players. This study questions this understanding and re-examines the role of what is considered to be “small states” in international politics. Specifically, I examine the cases of China and the United States during World War II.

China's involvement in WWII accelerated the decolonization process and helped contain fascism in Asia, both being contributions that proved consequential for post-war settlements. In detail, the study focuses on the Sino-Japanese conflicts, which lasted for centuries, to derive power from multiple schools of thought including how past interaction made collaboration fail and how the assessed cost of war prevents a nation from entangling in war. Because of the innovation of such subtly combined methodology and ideology proposed in the essay, scholars can better predict the future and estimate the past. Another crucial purpose of the piece is to call scholars to give enough credits to the developing country so that the results of future political studies would be applied to more extensive fields of societal and political studies. The implications of these findings are new methods for measuring a nation's strategical importance in war and weighing different countries' roles in wars of large scale, which not only supplement existing euro-centric history studies but also pave the way for making in-depth inference from turmoil and post-war settlements. The essence of war studies is learning the development and functioning of human society. From the study of World War II, a period of anarchy, I propose a new way of analysis, which includes both the abstract and the quantitative features through case studies and logical deduction.

Keywords: World War II, historical research, eastern perspective

1 INTRODUCTION

Historical analysis of World War II occupies a prominent position in the discipline of political science because it not only reminds people to reflect on global policies after World War I actively but also paves the foundation to a deepened understanding of the Cold War, as well as other historical events. Since the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the unbalanced post-war arrangement and unprecedented industrialization happening around the globe gave rise to racialism and imperialism. Because World War II involved countries around the Pacific Ocean, the costs of global war raised to an unprecedented level. Approximately 73,000,000[1] people died in the Second World War, in addition to the numerous negative consequences the war left on our global society. One of the most studied topics in World War II is the role of Europe. From the rise of Nazism to the implementation of various populist ideologies, scholars have paid a lot of attention to the role European countries have played in the war. However, Asian Pacific countries also played critical roles in the war. In this essay, I intend to focus on the socio-political impacts China exerted during World War II. Specifically, I focus on the Sino-Japanese War to investigate Chinese response to fascism. I argue that the Sino-Japanese War enabled China to significantly delay Japan's military plans and provided the Allies with the opportunity to rearm and later dismantle fascist military powers.

1.1 Background

In 1937, the Japanese invasion symbolized the beginning of the second Sino- Japanese War, or the beginning of the World War II in West Asia, and the trigger of the involvement of more Asian countries. Hence, because of the long duration and its strategic importance, Sino-Japanese conflict is a reliable and solid foundation of historical analysis. On the other hand, the United States also fiercely fought with the Japanese troops in World War II on the Pacific and destroyed most of the Japanese navy. Then, what are the aspects that we should consider when estimating a country's contribution to a war?

In the essay, I will answer this question by analyzing the role of Chinese troops played in defeating fascism in Asia.

Since it is generally accepted that the United States accelerated the end of World War II by resorting to its superior military forces, including nuclear weapons, and incomparable international influence, one would think the United States played the central role in Asia. Literature often promoted the United States, the most influential country in 20 centuries after the World war I, as the primary actor in Asia theatre, but Chinese sacrifices and devotions outweigh the US's euro-centric effectiveness in World War II. To elaborate on my argument, I will draw on the interpretations of realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism to analyze the United States' contributions and compare them with Chinese efforts ahead of establishing my core argument. Compelling counterarguments rely on understanding different schools of thought in international relations, so I divided my paper according to different practices so that the direct critiques can pinpoint defects of each fraud plausible interpretations.

Apart from counterarguments and refutations, convincing arguments cannot be drawn without the help of historical records. Chinese importance is mainly presented by analyzing its strategical importance and Chinese people's sacrifices. In the last part of the essay, I stress two historical events, the Burman war and the signing of the Declaration of the United Nations to further contend that the Chinese had essential influence among the Allies.

Another goal of this essay is to clarify the following prevalent misconceptions: 1) After attacking Pearl Harbor and waging war with the United States, the majority of the Japanese troops were still stationed in China; 2) In World War II, the casualty of the United States is 0.32% of the total population, while the percentage rises to 3.86% in China. Clarifying and correcting these misconceptions is essential because it facilitates people to form a well-rounded judgment. No one can ignore the significance of the US role in defeating fascism but give more credits should be given to developing countries when making an in-depth reflection of this past. Since the analysis is built on historical evidence from World War II, "China" and "ROC", refer to the Republic of China.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Realist Interpretation

According to classical realists, such as Thomas Hobbes and Hans Morgenthau, the United States would be more involved into the conflict compared to the Chinese government, because it is in human nature to pursue self-interest. In short, the motivation of American investments can be summarized as follows: ensuring the European states can pay off the loan that the United States lent to them in World War II and regain support from European nations.

On March 11, 1941, the United States Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act. With this Act, the United States set to provide weapons and food supply the Allies, which were vital for its national security [2]. These provisions were not completely free of charge. From 1941 to 1945, the United States exported goods worth of 50.1 billion in US dollar to the Allies worldwide. According to a rough calculation, the British government received aids worth 31,387.1 million US dollar and the ones that the French obtained amounted to 3223.9 million [3]. If the Allies lost in World War II, these European states would have to pay substantial war indemnities, which, in turn, would interfere with the payment of the loans they took from the United States. To secure its gains, the United States would actively engage in the war. Consequently, some scholars may argue that the government of the Republic of China would not need to be as engaged in the conflict as the United States since it had no direct investment in those European states.

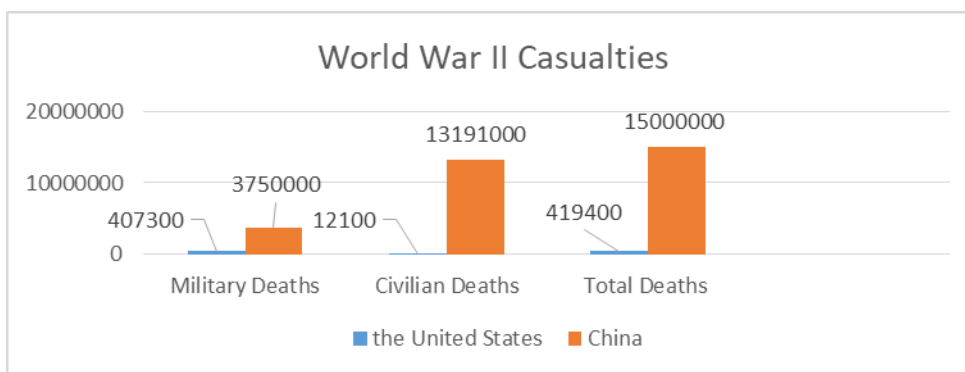
Furthermore, the United States had the incentive to rebuild its reputation in Europe by joining World War II. In World War I, the United States was the biggest winner, since not only did it make a considerable amount of money from trade during wartime, but it also benefited from the UK's decline. There were some strong criticisms of the United States' isolationism, which was best illustrated by John Joseph Pershing's, American

Commander-in-chief of the expeditionary force refusal to dispatch troops to help the French in 1919. While European armies were fighting fierce battles with the German, the United States' response irritated many French and British generals, especially Ferdinand Foch. The sentiment that persisted even after the war-damaged the United States' reputation [4]. That is why, from a realist perspective, it is reasonable to suggest that the US government would cherish the opportunity to regain its trust in European states. Besides, in Asia, the British colonists controlled vast and fertile land in South Asia. Seeking for trade profits and global influences, the United States adopt a friendly diplomatic strategy to establish its authority in Asia by cooperating with the British in World War II, fighting in both the western and eastern battlefields.

Third, in response to neorealists, let us mention Mitchell, B.R.'s study on economic production [5]. In World War II, the United States produced 80 million tons of steel, which surpassed the sum of steel production in Germany, Britain, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Italy in total. In 1945, the United States' steel production accounted for 63.92% of the world's total output. Furthermore, oil production in the United States constituted more than half of the global output. On the other hand, the Chinese missed the train of industrialization and was craved up by the strong industrializing powers since the First Opium War. Although China itself was a resourceful country with a mild climate and preferable geographic condition, it failed to benefits from the global trade due to technological limitations. China was a declining power, while the United States was a rising one. From a neorealist perspective, while the United States was powerful enough to determine the consequence of the war both on eastern and western fronts, the Republic of China (ROC)was not nearly as powerful enough as to support it during World War II.

However, the cost that the United States willing to pay for World War II was much less compared to ROC. Even though economic interests and reputation might lead people to go to war, these factors failed to predict the cost that the United States was willing to pay. In that, apart from the two, human beings are also stimulated by other needs as the pursuit of survival. In World War I, 9.7 million soldiers and 10 million unarmed civilians perished [6]. European countries and the United States entered an economic recession due to the shrinkage in the labour market. Hence, prior to World War II, citizens condemned and protested wars, whereby isolationism prevailed in the United States. US citizens required the government to carefully weigh costs and benefits of going to the battle to maintain domestic stability and productivity. As a result, the government refrained from going to war.

Neorealists often rely on statistically calculating quantitative variables and parameters of each state to drawn pervasive interpretations. However, overstressed the significance of objective data, neorealists overestimated the United States devotion by neglecting subjective factors that influence politicians' decision, including the traumatic aftermath of World War I in the national economy and soldiers' low morale after witnessing the sacrifices of global war. Even though Japan is small in size, its strengths in weapons and modern technology enable it to initiate a wide range of aggression. Chinese were facing an unprecedented threat to sovereignty. Unlike the United States, Chinese homeland was the main stage, so they had no alternatives but to effortful defence the country. In Asia, the Japanese encountered Chinese troops, ill-armed troops but fought until the last man, and delayed their invasion plan. In World War II, over 3 million Chinese soldiers died, while the sacrifice of the United States army in the same time period is 407,316 [7]. To better compared the total victims, I used a pie chart to demonstrate the enormous gap between the two countries. In terms of human resources involvement, Chinese people more intensely tangled in World War II and combated with Japanese military force, which weakened Japanese troops and consumes its limited food and weapon supplies. The United States declared the war to neither side until the Attack on Pearl Harbor, so economic analysis over-evaluated its preference and participation. By reexamining the Lend-Lease Act, the United States spent considerably more money in western battlefield rather than eastern one, which indicates that the United States government did not want to ruin the relationship with Japan by entangling in Asian affairs. Elaborately planned to gain international prestige and influence; the United States had improved its reputation by subsidizing the western Allies. Therefore, it did not need to participate in World War II until the attack on Pearl Harbor obliged it to do so. Roosevelt clearly showed his attitude and resolution to maintain isolationism in his letter to Harry Woodring on June 19, 1940 [8]. Compared to actively supporting either side or joining the war, the US government chose to avoid the war, especially military conflict.



The US government's arrangements constitute a strategic plan aiming to ensure its hegemonic position in the globe before the Pearl Harbor Attack. The United States gradually abolished the military necessities and arms embargoes which satisfies its domestic isolationists in 1938. This series of developments was in accordance with the global situation, specifically the Axis's march. The history of weapon embargo began in 1935 when the US government adopted the Neutrality Law, which prohibited the US companies from selling weapons as well as US ship to transport both weapons and military necessities to countries in war. In 1936, one year after the embargo implemented, the United States reduced its restrictions on countries in the eastern hemisphere, and in 1937 the Cash and Carry clause lifted the restriction on trade with belligerent countries except for arms and military necessities. In 1939, the embargo terminated. The duration and gradual changes in such foreign policy reveal Americans' attitude towards the war. Initially, the United States drew lessons from World War I and was reluctant to be entangled in the world in any forms by avoiding trading with sensitive regions in both the eastern and western hemisphere. What worth further attention is that the US exported weapons worth \$1.4 million dollars to Germany in 1947 alone. In fact, the neutrality act did not bind trade with Japan, Italy, China, Ethiopia and Germany, because Germany, Italy and Japan since they fought "undeclared" wars.

Take these countries' conflicts into consideration: Japan invaded China in 1931; Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935; Germany and Italy entangled in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. These countries, which had been in war for a long time, were bound to have an urgent need to import weapons. In order to ensure its interests of arms trafficking, the United States excludes these countries in the Neutrality Law to maximize its own benefits rather than limiting trade with them to regional peace. In short, the United States sold arms to both sides on the grounds of "neutrality". On the Asian battlefield, since 1937, the United States has sent supplies and weapons worth up to 500 million dollars which equivalent to more than half of the total value of the weapons used by the Japanese army in World War II[9]. Although the United States did not start the war directly, it made a lot of money through its global arms trade and became the most significant foreign weapon supplier of Japanese fascistic force. Successive Japanese weapon import directly caused the death of thousands of innocent people and soldiers. Because of the weapon trade, the United States failed to weaken the fascist forces in Asia, but further encouraged Japanese aggression. These gradual but crucial change in foreign policy suggests that, at least in the early days of the war, the United States did not explicitly support any camps, but wanted to mitigate the local economic recession and productivity decline after the World War I.

2.2 The Neoliberalist Analysis

Neoliberalists believe strong economic collaborations prevent wars. As long as international trades can create mutual gains, wars are unnecessary. Because of geographic proximity, Japan and China are more likely to cultivate a peaceful trade relation rather than experiencing hostility. While the United States is quite remote from Japan, the possibility of peaceful trade between these two nations was low, especially taking the inefficient naval transportation system across the Pacific into account. Therefore, the Japanese army, as the significant fascist power in eastern front, would rather fight the United States' or the Soviet Union than its neighbor and potential trade partner China.

Even though China and Japan are neighboring countries, their past interactions cut off the possibility of corporate. In the 1890s, the Japanese economy and global influence bloomed due to the industrial revolution, so it chose to invade China for cheaper resources like metals and coal to facilitate its domestic production. After the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the Chinese government paid 230 million tales of silver as war reparation to the Japanese government. According to Michio Fujimura [10], this war reparation enabled the Japanese government to transform from the oppressed to the oppressor. Because of the

success, the Japanese government used newspaper to promote ideas: the invasion was beneficial to the domestic economy, and Chinese was inferior, which accelerated the future combats. From the Japanese perspective, with advanced weapons and higher productivity, fascist Japan tended to consider Chinese more as a resource warehouse that was strategically crucial for their invasion in Asia than an equal trade partner. From the Chinese perspective, the Japanese took a lot of advantages to the situation and oppressed thousands of civilians in the First Sino-Japanese War. During the First Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese not only occupied spacious Chinese territory but also brutally abused the Chinese civilians. In the bloody factual record, the typical example was the Lushun Massacre. On November 21, 1894, the Japanese army captured Lunshun, in the southernmost area of Liaoning Peninsula, and carried out a massacre that lasted for four days and three nights. According to rough calculation, at least 2,000 unarmed civilians were killed in the brutal Japanese massacre, and only 36 of them were buried[11]. The indiscriminate massacre demonstrates Nazis' indifference and unveils their devil purpose- creating fear among those they conquered. The humiliations and tortures ruined the relation between Japan and China. Similar events and conflicts piling up make trading with the Japanese merchants were unattractive for both the Chinese government and citizens.

2.3 The Constructivist Theory

According to constructivist Alexander Wendt, past interactions influence countries' perceptions. Within this framework, in World War II, Japan, as a thriving industrializing country, aimed to gain reputation and international influence to gain greater economic and political power. Hence, attacking the United States, a country known for its advanced technology and robust economy, was better for gaining reputation. In contrast, conquering a weak agricultural nation, such as China, the Japanese would not bring much fame to the Japanese. Therefore, it can be suggested that World War II was simply a war between two strong nations, not one in which weaker ones also played a role.

Even though the invading the United States was the shortcut to gain prestige, the Japanese would not take a considerable risk to do so because they are rational decisionmakers. Considering neorealists' idea, rational people adverse to threats and risks. The United States began industrialization process and earned a considerable amount of wealth from global trade much earlier than Japanese, which means that the US troops had more advanced weapons and were large enough to sustain in long-duration combats. Japanese troops were small in population due to the size of Japan domestic territory, so waging war in the eastern Pacific was an irrationally aggressive and matured tactic. At the same time, China, mainly an agrarian economy, was an ideal target, because it lacks industrial production but contains rich natural resources. Comparing two possible goals, the Japanese government would seek more guaranteed gains, meaning, more comfortable to obtain, and whereby concentrated on encroaching China.

After refining representative ideas from different genres, the major defect in existing literature was that scholars separate objective and subjective factors that commonly used to estimate abstract values like significance and prominence. In the later part of the essay, I will present two aspects-sacrifice and strategical significance- that worth people's further attention to supplement previously mentioned analysis and propose a new way of reflecting the history of World War II.

3 NOVEL ARGUMENT

3.1 The Second Sino-Japanese War Delayed the Japanese War Plan, Which Enables Allies' Rearmament

Japanese initiated Manchurian Incident on September 18, 1931, in the Northeast part of China and occupied three provinces in 100 days. After a short period of peaceful interaction between the Japanese army and local militia, civilians in northeastern China began to oppose Japanese dominance by reuniting themselves to form voluntary opposition troops of thousands of people. Even though the untrained militias did not overthrow the oppressor, their existence drew the Japanese army to station in China.

In 1937, 2 years before World War I, the Japanese army attacked Marco Polo Bridge, occupied Wanping city and began further aggression against China. Such undeclared strike inflicted heavy losses in the Chinese and led Emperor Hirohito affirmed to sanction the troops to march towards Peking and Tianjin, which unfold his Second Sino-Japanese war plan. The Second Sino-Japanese War exposed Japanese aggression and fascism to the globe, so European countries and the US government took precautions against such potential threat by raising budgets for the military. The British political plan changed in 1937 was a typical example to show how the European nations reacted to fascists aggression in Asia. In detail, by the end of 1937,

Chamberlain had redefined his strategic priorities; the Great Britain government prioritize defending the British homeland and securing aboard trading ship route over any other national affairs[12]. Solely concerning Japanese aggression as the cause of British vigilance is not conclusive, but the special time period indicates the correlation between Chinese self-defending failure in Asia and European awareness of the worldwide threats cast by fascist power.

Besides, in 1937 autumn, Sugiyama Hajime, the war minister of the Japanese army, predicted the Japanese expeditionary force would resolve China turmoil in 3 months [13]. However, knowing China was populous country but facing industrial backwater, the Japanese still underestimated Chinese people's resistance. Chinese fierce resistance slowed down the Japanese aggression process. In 1937, Shanghai and Nanjing particularly, four months of bitter struggle not only caused thousands of casualties on both fronts but demoralized Japanese troops[14]. Japanese troops were dragged into bitter wars with Chinese troops for eight years. They were neither able to further march to the landlocked countries in East Asia nor initiate disturbances around the global trading route because they had to concentrate their force on resolving strong resistance that they encountered in China and keep up with their ambitious war plan. Chinese sacrifices bought valuable time for other countries, including both strong western powers and eastern nations to prepare for World War II. In the east, the Chinese army worked as a shield that prevented the Japanese from occupying land and plundering wealth from other eastern Asian countries, and an indispensable indicator of fascist aggression.

3.2 The Second-Japanese War Exhausted Japanese Main Army Force

In World War II, 27 out of 51 divisions of the Japanese army were dispatched to invade China[15]. Japanese government military deployment implicitly demonstrates that China, a large country with affluent natural resources, was the main target of fascists' Asian occupation. According to the official record, 480,000 Japanese soldiers, more than a quarter of the Japanese total armed forces were killed in China, while about 14 million to 20 million Chinese soldiers died and wounded in the resistance and 80 million to 100 million local civilians became refugees.

Long periods of engagement in the Second Sino-Japanese War caused a tremendous catastrophe in China and a drain on Japanese military strength, so the Japanese government gradually failed to sustain its domestic production and army supplies. Due to the imbalance between food supplies and demands in Japan, and a shortage of troops, the Japanese government had to abandon its offensive against the Soviet Union and other Asian countries. Furthermore, as Jeff Kingston wrote, "China was a quagmire" [16], even though Japanese government dispatched more than half of their total troops to China in 1931-1945, they still failed to carry out its navy strategic layout: Block out Indian Ocean oil supply and support German in European battlefield, which alleviate the Allies pressure.

Chinese sacrifices in defeating Japanese won praises worldwide. According to Roosevelt's state of the union message (January 16, 1945), he claimed that the US government should never neglect Chinese resistance and effective containment of Japanese militarism for more than seven years. On September 2, 1951, Stalin's telegrams to Mao Zedong also expressed his gratitude for the Chinese effort to fight against Japanese imperialism[17]. These primary sources potently indicate that Chinese participation in World War II assisted both countries' battle plans. After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the American military launched a large-scale naval battle with Japanese forces on the Pacific Ocean. Considering the geographical scope of the war and belligerent state's technological prowess, many people would mistakenly assume that Japanese strategic focus during 1941-42 was to fight against the United States. However, according to Japanese troops distribution records documented on December 1941, 33 out of 51 divisions of the Japanese troops were still fighting with the Chinese ones, and only 11 divisions devoted to the naval battle on the Pacific Ocean[18]. On January 1, 1942, 26 countries of the Allies decided to fasten their collaboration and signed the Declaration by United Nations. Because of the strengthened coordination, the Japanese had to pay closer attention to Chinese counterattack. During the Battle of Midway, Japanese military forces were distracted by unsettled conflicts in China, leaving the United States and Japan to struggle at a military parity. If the Japanese chose to fight against the American army exhaustively, they would face the strong resistance and potential trike back in China, which would cause the loss of wide range of occupied land and railways; If the Japanese withdrew from the war with the United States, it would be tainted to surrender to the United States, which would not only lose the islands captured in 1941 but also demoralize Japanese troops. Without Chinese participation in the eastern side of World War II, resolving with all-out attack initiated by Japan, a strong industrialized nation, the US forces might still end up with a victory, but they would cost even much more to defeat Japanese.

During World War II, Nazi Germany ambitiously waged war in Europe. To combat with the powerful threat, Nazi Germany, European countries established fortress and increased military expenses to prepare for the German attack. However, German blitzkrieg tactic, an unprecedented modern mode of operation, won Nazi Germany a massive advantage in the early phase of the war. Due to the continuation of the war, limited supplies and increasing deaths of German soldiers slowed down the Nazi' s invasion in Europe. After the Miracle of Dunkirk, British resolve and morale soared. Churchill led Royal Air Force to counterattack and abandoned the appeasement policy. On August 1940, although Hitler dispatched German major air force-the Luftwaffe- to bomb British naval and airbase, the British air force, with its advanced radar system, smashed Germans' s scheme.

Because of such failure, Hitler doubted that stubborn British resistance closely related to Soviet' s neutrality. On September 1940, he decided to draw Russian into World War II. On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany tore up the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact and launched fierce attacks on the border of Soviet Union. The Nazi-Soviet, one of the worst battles in Europe theatre, ended up with narrow victory for Soviet Russia. Chinese acted as a barrier to the south of the Soviet, preventing the Japanese from marching northward and attacking east Soviet, so the Soviet did not encounter a two-front battle in World War II. Because of the span of Russian territory, the march across the west and east not only demanded the soldiers to take a long time for transporting but also created unnecessary costs of food supplies. In World War II, food shortage in Russian was a big challenge, because high-latitude areas were not suitable for cultivating crops, while local fishing industry would face problems created by warfare. Besides, without worrying about the Nazi Japanese, Russian troops centred in the west to focus on defeating the Nazi German troops, so they did not travel from Europe to Asia and waste their energy, Therefore, in the Great Patriotic War, Unlike the German soldiers, who had travelled long distances, the Soviet army was physically more used to the cold and mentally better prepared for long, drawn-out battles. The Chinese contribution to World War II is not only limited to stubbornly resisted and delayed the Japanese invasion plan but also has strategic significance for defensive preparations.

3.3 The Second-Japanese War Exhausted Japanese Main Army Force

3.3.1 Burman War

On December 14, 1941, Japanese troops attacked southern Burma to seize the control of Burman Road to China, because they could reach Yunnan Province in China through it without encountering any barriers or resistance. Thomas Hutton, the British commander of Burman Army, led the 17th Indian Infantry Division and the 1st Burma Division to defend Japanese invasion. In World War II, the number of soldiers in British Indian Army soared twelve-fold, so in Hutton's troop, many soldiers are ill-equipped new recruits who were not capable of implementing an effective war plan. At the beginning of the Burman war, a small amount of RAF and American troops successfully defended against the Japanese air raid.

However, in 1942, the reinforcements of the 55th Division made Rangoon fall and a large number of refugees were forced to evacuate. After the fall of Rangoon, Archibald Wavell, commander-in-chief, requested the Australian and Chinese government for military aids, but the Australian government refused to send troops to assist because of the supply problems faced by the British army and the chaos caused by a large number of refugees. On the other hand, Chiang Kai-shek, the president in China, sent Luo Zhuoying to lead the Fifth, Sixth Army to Burman to support the evacuation of refugees and the troops. Since Japanese captured advanced tanks and vehicles from the previous victory in Rangoon, although the Chinese expeditionary force encountered many obstacles, the troops eventually managed to arrive at its destination to collaborate with the British[19]. On April 17 -19, 1942, Liu Fangwu, commander of the 113th regiment, led the Chinese expeditionary force and successfully conducted his war plan in Yenangyaung. In Yenangyaung, soldiers in the regiment of 800 men defeated the Japanese 33rd division. In this battle, the Chinese expeditionary force killed hundreds of Japanese soldiers, captured three Japanese soldiers and rescued more than 7,000 British soldiers, British and 500 American journalists, missionaries and civilians who were besieged by Japanese troops[20].

After World War II lieutenant general William Joseph Slim, a British general who participated in the Burman War praised for the novelty of the Chinese tactics in his books [21]. In April 1992, former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher met with general Liu Fangwu in Los Angeles, USA. From the historical evidence, the Chinese expeditionary force in Burma theatre played a decisive role in saving lives in the Burma campaign.

However, 40,000 Chinese soldiers perished in the combats against the Axis; their sacrifices paved the way for the successful transfer of the British and local citizens to India. At the same time, many of the wounded

arrived in Yunnan Province under the help of the Chinese army, which cushioned the pressure of relieving the refugees. Even though the Allies troops were defeated, in the course of the Burma Campaign, Chinese provided necessary military support to the Allies, demonstrating its sense of responsibility and ability to act as the core force against fascist on the Asian theatre.

3.3.2 Chinese Leading Position When Signing the Declaration of the United Nations

On January 1, 1942, the “Big Four” of the Allies signed the declaration by United Nations in Washington, DC. The document not only firmly presents the United States’ position in world war II, but also further unites the resistance forces of other countries in Asia and Europe. Among “Big Four”, China fought against the fascistic force for the longest time and represented the interests of Asian countries at the meeting. What is should be highlighted is that except China, none of the 21 countries that went to Washington to sign the declaration was an independent Asian country. Such phenomenon is an indication not only of China’s leadership but also of the intensity of the war in Asia; Many countries fell within two years of the start of world war II.

4 CONCLUSION

This paper examined the case of World War II and argued that scholars should consider both the western and eastern perspectives equally for a full understanding of that period. The paper challenged the traditional euro-centric opinion upon closely examining Chinese achievements in World War II and comparing it with the US’s contributions.

In this study, I laid out three dominant schools of thought in international relations, which emphasize the US’s significance and indispensableness, and outlined their shortcomings. What was disclosed in this analysis was that the US plans and actions were more of a strategic arrangement designed to sustain its global hegemony than a genuinely humanistic assistance provided in wartime. Even though the United States was undeniably a leading industrialized country that applied a defensive strategy in both World Wars, its military spending was relatively modest and the government refrained from engaging in war due to strong public support for isolationism.

Furthermore, this paper proposed an approach to judge a country’s contribution- that is, strategic importance and casualties. The dominant schools of thought remain too theoretical and do not fully capture the Chinese case. The approach proposed in this paper is more accessible to laymen.

What should be restressed is that this paper answered the question of why the Chinese troops were the most essential players in the Asian theatre. Not only did it presented the number of casualties but it also highlighted how China assisted the Allies and foiled the Japanese plans of invading Southeast Asia and the eastern part of the Soviet Union. This paper provided evidence for how western states recognized contributions to the World War II.

Overall, this article made a historical international relation analysis of World War II with a focus on East Asia, and suggested a general approach to analyze World War II. The aim of the paper was to advocate scholars to give more credit to the developing states such as China when evaluating historical events.

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