



Deng Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991 (The New Cold War History)

By Xiaoming Zhang

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The surprise Chinese invasion of Vietnam in 1979 shocked the international community. The two communist nations had seemed firm political and cultural allies, but the twenty-nine-day border war imposed heavy casualties, ruined urban and agricultural infrastructure, leveled three Vietnamese cities, and catalyzed a decadelong conflict. In this groundbreaking book, Xiaoming Zhang traces the roots of the conflict to the historic relationship between the peoples of China and Vietnam, the ongoing Sino-Soviet dispute, and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's desire to modernize his country. Deng's perceptions of the Soviet Union, combined with his plans for economic and military reform, shaped China's strategic vision. Drawing on newly declassified Chinese documents and memoirs by senior military and civilian figures, Zhang takes readers into the heart of Beijing's decision-making process and illustrates the war's importance for understanding the modern Chinese military, as well as China's role in the Asian-Pacific world today.

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Editorial Review

Review

The definitive work on the subject...Well-researched and clearly-written study fills a gap in our knowledge about China's preparation and execution of the Third Indochina War.---*H-Diplo*

[A] superb example of history writing at its best . . . [and] one of the best explanations of China's current strategic approach to military action. Essential.--*Choice*

[A] skillful study. . . . Reminds readers of the reasons why fundamental distrust persists on both sides.--*Foreign Affairs*

A useful synthesis . . . of the current state of knowledge on this subject.--*Journal of Chinese Military History*

Valuable not only for its detailed description and assessment of the 1979 conflict, but importantly also because of its account of actions after the main hostilities.--*Asian Affairs*

Review

This is the most comprehensive and well-researched study yet published of Chinese decision making--both diplomatic and on the battlefield--during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War and the ensuing ten-year conflict. Offering new insights culled from a wide range of never-before-utilized Chinese-language primary documents, Zhang's argument is unique and valuable, and it deserves wide circulation within the scholarly community.--Robert Ross, Boston College

The little-studied Chinese invasion of Vietnam in 1979 and the decade of hostility that followed constitute a critical watershed in Asian history, with a close and outwardly convincing alliance between the two countries against the Americans before the conflict and growing distrust and enmity afterward. Zhang's comprehensive and accessible study is notable in particular for the skill with which it analyzes both halves of the situation: locating the tensions already present during the alliance and then demonstrating how post-Vietnam War Chinese hostility issued as much from global concerns--about the Soviet Union, for example--as from immediate military causes.--Arthur Waldron, University of Pennsylvania

About the Author

Xiaoming Zhang is professor of strategy and history at the Air War College.

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