

Third World goals of industrialization and urbanization challenged

civil wars of others, on opposite sides and with an intensity that frequently belies their declared interest in avoiding general world war.

A final general observation concerning the Third World: Although the governments of most countries have pursued the twin goals of industrialization and urbanization, this policy has not gone unchallenged. In the spring of 1979, for example, the extremely repressive regime of one of the Third World's most devoted "Westernizers," the shah of oil-rich Iran, was overthrown by the revolutionary forces of an equally repressive religious fanatic, the Ayatollah Khomeini, whose explicit policy was to turn his country's back not only on the West but on "progress" as the West had defined that term for the past two hundred years.

Liquidation of empires

The most radical change affecting both the Third World and established power relationships was the Chinese Revolution, described in Chapter 39. Of comparable importance was the emergence of independent states in the Indian subcontinent, revolutionary upheavals in the Middle East, and the rise of black Africa (discussed in Chapters 37 and 38, respectively). Great Britain, having surrendered India and Burma, was further constrained to give up most of the remaining portions of its empire. Over a period of years Britain liberated Ceylon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Fiji, Singapore, and Nauru, among others, together with the Caribbean colonies of Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Antigua, and significant territories in sub-Saharan Africa as well. The years following the Second World War also witnessed the liquidation of Dutch and French colonial empires in Southeast Asia.

Indonesian independence

Indonesia, known for more than two centuries as the Netherlands Indies, was the most valuable jewel of the Dutch imperial crown. Indeed, it was one of the richest countries in the world in natural resources. When Japan extended its aggressions to Southeast Asia in 1941, the empire of the Dutch was a prize conquest. But toward the end of the war, nationalists, under the leadership of Achmed Sukarno, a one-time architect and flamboyant politician, rebelled and proclaimed an independent republic. Although the Dutch attempted for four years to regain their sovereignty, the opposition of the indigenous population proved too strong. In 1949 the kingdom of the Netherlands recognized the independence of its former colony.

Developments in Indonesia

Under the colorful but erratic President Sukarno, the Republic of Indonesia assumed an aggressive role in Asian politics, but his reckless policies brought both economic disaster and internal discord. With encouragement from China, and to some extent from Sukarno, communist influence increased, and the Indonesian Communist party for a few years was the third largest in the world. An abortive coup in September 1965, attributed to the Communists, led to the imposition of a military regime which stripped Sukarno of his power. The Indonesian Communist party was shattered but at the price of a reign of terror lasting several months and a bloodbath that took the lives of at

least half a million people. General T. N. J. Suharto, who replaced Sukarno as president, has maintained a tight dictatorship. Calling his regime a "guided democracy," he allowed a People's House of Representatives to meet, but directly appointed 60 percent of the members. Although the Indonesians had won their independence, they did not grant the same privilege to the inhabitants of the eastern half of the island of Timor, which had been a Portuguese colony. When East Timor repudiated Portuguese rule in 1975, it was overrun by Suharto's army and annexed to the Republic of Indonesia. A savage war and consequent epidemics of disease have not entirely broken resistance in East Timor. General Suharto, while ruthlessly stifling internal dissent and incarcerating thousands of political prisoners, projected an ambitious program of industrial development. The nation of 150 million, fifth largest in the world, comprises some 300 ethnic groups and as many languages. It is also one of the world's poorest nations, with a per capita income of about \$130 a year. But the sprawling island republic has the potential to become prosperous, owing to the strong demand for its exports—petroleum and natural gas, coal, rubber, palm oil, tin, and coffee.

France after the Second World War faced almost simultaneous revolts in two of its richest colonies, Algeria and Indochina. Indochina had been a casualty of Japanese conquests, and after the defeat of Japan in 1945 France sought to recover its lost empire in the Far East. These efforts ended in failure, however. The French were immediately confronted by a rebellion of Vietnamese nationalists under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969). The rebels resorted to guerrilla warfare and inflicted such costly defeats upon the French that the latter decided to abandon the struggle. An agreement was signed at Geneva in 1954 providing for the division of Vietnam into two zones, pending elections to determine the future government of the entire country. Ho Chi Minh became president of North Vietnam and established his capital at Hanoi. His followers, who came to be called Viet Cong, were numerous in both halves of the country. Had elections been held as provided by the Geneva Agreement, Ho Chi Minh would probably have been elected president of all of Vietnam. But the government of South Vietnam, backed by the United States, refused to permit elections to be held.

From this point on, involvement by the United States in the Vietnamese civil war steadily increased. President Kennedy was convinced that the Chinese Communist juggernaut would soon roll over all of Southeast Asia. The first victims would be Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Then would come Thailand, Burma, and India. How far Kennedy would have gone in his crusade against communism had he escaped assassination in 1963 is impossible to say with certainty. Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973), hoped that a relatively small force of perhaps 100,000 men would be

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