As essential components of the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War have played significant roles in global policy among the Western forces under the leadership of the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union in the 20th century. Communist China, founded in 1949, was also part of the countries behind the Iron Curtain and provided substantial support to North Korea and North Vietnam in their fight against their ideological enemies. Despite the extensive research by scholars on the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as well as China's role in both of these wars, it is interesting to know whether China's role and attitude had changed from one war to the other. This thesis examines and compares China's military interference in the Korean War in the beginning of the 1950s with its involvement more than ten years later in the Vietnam War through the investigation of China's motives to enter the wars and their ways of support in connection with the development of foreign relations. While contrasting China's role and involvement in Korea and Vietnam, similarities, but also major differences become distinguishable. This thesis argues that these major differences indicate a Chinese rethinking about a possible involvement in Vietnam because of China's domestic problems and its foreign policy developments at that time.

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Although the Cold War ended by 1991, commentators, experts, and others repeatedly invoke this metaphor at any sign of great power tension. 1 Since the United States and China are the two strongest global and Asian powers, mounting bilateral tensions stimulate many to postulate a new Cold War between them. Others argue that US-Russian relations merely continue the Cold War, or a cold peace, or what Richard Sakwa calls a "mimetic Cold War." 2 Many also often invoke the Cold War for partisan political gains, e.g. labeling political opponents as "Cold War warriors." However, such analysis misrepresents the complex nature of Asian and global international relations, and devalues the true experience of the Cold War.