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The Domino Logic of the Darkest Moment

The Fall of Singapore, the Atlantic Echo Chamber, and 'Chinese Penetration' in U.S. Cold War Policy toward Southeast Asia



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This essay argues that Anglo-American memories of Japan's victory in Singapore in 1942, which British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described as Britain's "darkest moment" in World War II, soon would underpin the domino logic within U.S. Cold War strategy. For U.S. policymakers, Japan's war machine had fused together in interconnected insecurity the bastions of Euro-American Asia, it had imposed the condition that one state's vulnerabilities impinged upon the stability of its neighbor. This

interconnected insecurity was central to the domino logic within u.s. Cold War policy. u.s. policymakers' preoccupations in Vietnam arose significantly from how Japan had torn into Southeast Asia from Indochina. After World War II, u.s. policymakers perceived Southeast Asian insecurity through both the prism of Japanese imperialism and their fears of an older "China" in Southeast Asia's Chinese diaspora. Indeed, u.s. and British officials anticipated, as well as echoed and confirmed, that the diaspora and its diaspora would collaborate to reprise Japan's campaign.

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