

**Legacy of the Greater East Asia War that Supports Postwar Japan**  
**by EZAKI Michio**  
**(Summary)**

Mr. EZAKI Michio, political analyst, writes that turmoil and conflict in Asia did not end with the Greater East Asia War in August 1945. Japan forcibly ended foreign colonialism in Asia and Asians declared independence, yet Europeans and Americans rush in to fill the void at the end of the War. As an ironic twist, Mr. Ezaki points out that while Europe and America were reasserting their supremacy over their former colonies, with countless Asian lives being lost in the process, Japan was accused of being an “aggressor” and tried for “crimes against peace” at the Tokyo Trials.

For those who have forgotten, Mr. Ezaki reiterates how the indigenous Asian peoples rejoiced upon the arrival of the Japanese and the departure of the Americans and Europeans. For example, leaders of post-war India and Indonesia have expressed their appreciation of the Japanese in training and arming their people. Furthermore, Mr. Ezaki describes how, after the end of the Greater East Asia War, the Allies waged their own “aggressive war” against Asia and how their acts led to partitioning and guerrilla war, one result being the monumental communist victory in mainland China, the most populous nation on earth. The murderous attempts by the Dutch to reclaim Indonesia as its colony, what they called “police actions,” were merely a different shade of “aggressive war”. The Dutch assumed that the Indonesians would happily throw themselves at their feet, but the Indonesians, who tasted freedom from Dutch rule thanks to Japan, thought otherwise. After three and a half years of conflict, between an ill-equipped Indonesia militia against modern European military machines (of the British as well as the Dutch), hundreds of thousands of Indonesian lives were lost. As if the lives lost and property destroyed were not enough, the Dutch audaciously sued the Indonesians for damages as the price for independence. It was not until 2005 that the Dutch finally recognized Indonesia’s 1945 Declaration of Independence.

Modern history books erroneously claim that Asian countries were “liberated” at the end of the Greater East Asia War. The fact is that Asian countries declared independence following the ouster of their European and American overlords. This oversight, most clearly demonstrated in Japanese public school history texts, is the lingering legacy of the Allies concerted effort in not only destroying Japan’s military capacity but also Japan’s “national dignity and pride”. Indeed, while President Franklin Roosevelt demanded Japan’s “philosophical” destruction and a “Weak Japan” to ensure peace in Asia, more level-headed Americans saw that such a policy would lead instead to more conflict in Asia, with the distinct possibility of all of Asia turning Red. Thus the “course reversal,” the US abandonment of the “Weak Japan” policy to one that saw Japan as an indispensable “breakwater against communism,” during the American Occupation period. At the same time, those who advocated the course reversal also viewed the Tokyo Trials, as part of the plan to weaken Japan’s dignity and pride, with grave misgiving.

Asians greatly appreciated Japan's efforts in overturning the American and European status quo and such appreciation was expressed as denouncing any demand for heavy reparations. Also, Asian countries fully welcomed the Japanese and their expertise, which boosted their national economies. Thus, the reality greatly contrasts with what is claimed by China, Korea and their Japanese sympathizers.