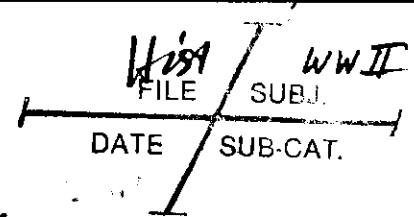


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Excerpt from a Press Conference of
President Roosevelt on the U. S. S. Quincy
February 23, 1945

Q. De Gaulle has announced that French Indo-China is to be soon liberated. By whom, Mr. President?

The President: For two whole years I have been terribly worried about Indo-China. I talked to Chiang Kai-shek in Cairo, Stalin in Teheran. They both agreed with me. The French have been in there some hundred years. The Indo-Chinese are not like the Chinese.

The first thing I asked Chiang was, "Do you want Indo-China?"

He said, "It's no help to us. We don't want it. They are not Chinese. They would not assimilate into the Chinese people."

I said, "What are you going to advocate? It will take a long time to educate them for self-government."

He said they should not go back to the French, that they have been there over a hundred years and have done nothing about educating them, that for every dollar they have put in, they have taken out ten, and that the situation there is a good deal like the Philippines were in 1898.

With the Indo-Chinese, there is a feeling they ought to be independent but are not ready for it. I suggested at the time, to Chiang, that Indo-China be set up under a trusteeship -- have a Frenchman, one or two Indo-Chinese, and a Chinese and a Russian because they are on the coast, and maybe a Filipino and an American -- to educate them for self-government. It took fifty years for us to do it in the Philippines.

Stalin liked the idea. China liked the idea. The British don't like it. It might bust up their empire, because if the Indo-Chinese were to work together and eventually get their independence, the Burmese might do the same thing to England. The French have talked about how they expect to recapture Indo-China, but they haven't got any shipping to do it with. It would only get the British mad. Chiang would go along. Stalin would go along. As for the British, it would only make the British mad. Better to keep quiet just now.

Q. Is that Churchill's idea on all territory out there, he wants them all back just the way they were?

The President: Yes, he is mid-Victorian on all things like that.

Source: The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Victory and the Threshold of Peace. Compiled by Samuel I. Rosenman. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1950, pp. 562-563.