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Sommario/riassunto

Approaching its demise, the Ming imperial administration enlisted members of the Cheng family as mercenaries to help in the defense of the coastal waters of Fukien. Under the leadership of Cheng Chih-lung, also known as Nicolas Iquan, and with the help of the local gentry, these mercenaries became the backbone of the empire's maritime defense and the protectors of Chinese commercial interests in the East and South China Seas. The fall of the Ming allowed Cheng Ch'eng-kung—alias Coxinga—and his sons to create a short-lived but independent seaborne regime in China's southeastern coastal provinces that competed fiercely, if only briefly, with Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English merchants during the early stages of globalization.
