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Scientific instructor: 1. Associate Professor. PhD Thanh Van Ngoc
2. Ph. D. Hai Do Son

1st Examiner: Associate Professor. PhD Hoang Khac Nam
Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities

2nd Examiner: Associate Professor. PhD Nguyen Thu My
Institute for Southeast Asian Studies

3rd Examiner: Associate Professor. PhD Vo Kim Cuong
Institute of History

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the topic

The ending of Cold War opened a new chapter to international relations. The world with bipolar order during the Cold War has been replaced by a new order developing towards multi-polars and multi-centers. One of highlighted points of post-Cold War era is the global "race" in economics in stead of arms race. All countries in the world are struggling, working together and existing peacefully. Both large and small nations must adjust its foreign and home affairs to suit new situation. Therefore, requirements of building stable international relationships in terms of political, security, economic, social affairs, searching for partners and expanding the market is becoming more and more urgent as the economic race is going on fiercely under the impact of globalization.

A bilateral relationship between the US and Thailand is a strong, flexible one and has a history of nearly 200 years. Before challenges of globalization trends, new progress in the bilateral relation between the two countries will not be outside the above rules. Both the US and Thailand have made dramatic changes in foreign policy to adapt to reality and focus deeply on national interests. Moreover, as a great nation with its interests spreading across the Asia - Pacific region, the US needs adjustment of strategies and policies with other countries, especially its allies, including Thailand to ensure long-term interests in the region.

The US – Thailand relationship is one of a typical one in the Asia - Pacific region in many complicated respects. During the Cold War, with the aim of preventing the "spread" of communism in Southeast Asia, the US considers Thailand as its ally because of great importance. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has revised its global strategy in general and policies toward Asia, including Southeast Asia and Thailand in particular. In the US's foreign affairs, Thailand's position became less important. However, in the 21st century, two emerging issues challenging the US include terrorism and the rise of China. Located in a region of fight against terrorism, the role of the Thailand became more and more important to the US again and the US granted the status of "the key ally outside NATO" to Thailand. Despite this, the country has always pursued a foreign policy "To swim with the tide" such as Thailand, the rise of China has made this country more balanced in relationship between the US and China. These factors have changed many aspects of the US – Thailand relationship. In other words, the relationship between the US and Thailand for over two decades (1991-2012) has reflected trends of world order and international relations in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as changes in the process of movement of this relationship.

The consideration of the US - Thailand relationship in the context of the post-Cold War with a multi-dimensional approach and also to clarify the characteristics of the

relationship, as well as the impact of the two countries' historical progress on regional relations and international relations is necessary and significant both in terms of science and practice.

In Vietnam, the US – Thailand relationship in general has attracted the attention of many scholars. However, the concern of researchers mainly focus on the Cold War period because both the US and Thailand are countries that have a mixed, complicated relationship with Vietnam in the past. In the post-Cold War period, the study of the US – Thailand relationship did not pay much attention. In new context, the US government constantly adjust its global strategy and in particular the "axis-rotated policy", promoting "rebalancing" policy in Southeast Asia, the study of the US – Thailand relationship and the approach of the US's foreign policy will contribute to the richness of materials and scientific arguments for researchs and teaching in international relations.

Currently, the US and Thailand are two important partners of Vietnam in terms of politics, security and economy. It is said that the US – Thailand relationship has created both opportunities and challenges for ASEAN, including Vietnam. Despite many differences of characteristics compared with Thailand both politically and economically, as well as the relation with the US, Vietnam has established and increasingly strengthened its position and role in ASEAN. The study of the US and Thailand relationship between 1991 and 2012 showed that experience can be found in the construction and implementation of foreign policy of Vietnam to other countries in general and the US and Thailand in particular.

Derived from the scientific and practice meanings mentioned above, we choose the topic "The US and Thailand relationship on politics, security and economics from 1991 and 2012" as a doctoral thesis.

2. Objects and research scope

2.1. Research object

The research subject of this thesis is the US – Thailand relation in term of politics, security and economics from 1991 to 2012, mainly focus on bilateral relation. Besides that, the thesis also mentions U.S –Thai relation in multilateral relations context. The subject of the thesis is American. We will approach from America's foreign policy to Thailand, thereby clarifying the evolution of the US - Thailand in the post-Cold war period.

2.2. Research scope

Regarding space: The relation between the US and Thailand in the field of politics, security and economics has been influenced by many factors, both in the world and in the region, and there are many factors that are related to North East Asia, South East Asia, especially in the relation with China. So, in addition to the US and Thailand, we will refer to other relations in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia at the relevant time in this thesis.

Regarding time: from 1991 to 2012. In global scene, 1991 is the year which Cold war ended, the world started to turn into a new era, with new trends and it was going to establish a new world order. America and Thailand planners have made particular changes in economic and social cooperation to bring the benefit to their countries. 2012 is chosen to be the final year for the research because this is an important year for the cooperation between America and Thailand. The strategy of "Rebalancing" the power of America in Asia Pacific has been announced officially in Shangri-La. In 2012, America and Thailand have signed the "Declaration of Defense between America and Thailand". This was the first declaration in 50 years, this confirmed the strong relation between two countries. Besides that, both countries also signed the agreement that Thailand will take part in the negotiation of Trans Pacific partnership, agreement of economic liberalization, agreement of Free trade area. However, this two years was not chosen theoretically. To make it clear, this thesis has broadened to the previous and following period to have a clear and logic point of view.

Regarding content: the thesis researches the relation of America and Thailand in the period 1991 – 2012 in terms of: politics, security, and economics.

3. Aims and research tasks

3.1. Research aims

The thesis focuses on the evolution of the US – Thailand in terms of politics, security and economics after the Cold war until 2012. After that we can figure out the nature of the treaty relation between the US and Thailand in the change of the world and region. From the result of the research, we can clarify the impact of this relation to America, Thailand and other Asian countries.

3.2. Research tasks

This thesis focuses on dealing with main problems as following:

- The factors that affect America – Thailand politics, security and economics relation including: history factors, international factors, regional factors (China factor and ASEAN factor), America factor and Thailand factor.

- The evolution of America – Thailand relation in terms of politics, security and economics.

- Analysing the features of America – Thailand relation and clarify the impact of this relation in American foreign policy to China, ASEAN and impact to Vietnam.

4. Source of materials

The reference of this thesis includes:

- Source materials: the treaties, decrees, exchange notes, reports submitted to both nations' Minister of Foreign Affair Department, reports submitted to the Parliament,

letters of both nations' Prime Ministers… from American Foreign Affair Department, Thailand Foreign Affair Department or source materials in other selected thesis.

- Reference materials includes:

+ The monographs which is mainly about American history, Thailand history, South East Asia history and history of America – Thailand relation.

+ The thesis which have the same topic with this thesis.

+ The scienctific papers with related topics published in international and domestic journals.

+The national website of America, Thailand, ASEAN and China.

5. Research methodology

The thesis is based on the materialist view of history, with the view to this relation in particular history contexts and close reciprocal relationship.

The main method used during research process is historical and logical methods. The above methods are used to consider the US and Thailand relationship in the order of time, before and after the end of the Cold War, the movement of the new context; draw the nature of this relationship from the perspectives of the US and Thailand separately.

The US – Thailand relationship between 1991 and 2012 is an interbranch research project and issues of modern world history and History of International Relations. Therefore, to do study of the topic, the author combines the use of synthetic, analysis, comparison methods, system method and international research methods to solve the supposed problems.

The approach of this thesis is from two points of view: (i) American foreign policy to Thailand, (ii) the reaction of Thailand to American changes.

6. The contribution of thesis

This thesis has contributed the following:

- Rebuild the America – Thailand relation in terms of politics, security and economics systematically from 1991 to 2012 with particular features and factors.

- By researching the evolution of this relation between two countries, we can clarify the change in relationship nature, that is ally relation or stragic partner relation. Compare to the pre – cold war period, how does the ally feature in this relationship change?

- The thesis points out the impact of America – Thailand relationship to America and Thailand, to South East Asia and to Vietnam.

- Contribute, update the materials for educating and researching international relation in geneal as well as America – Thailand relation in particular.

7. The layout of the thesis

Beside the introduction, conclusion, reference and appendix, this thesis is designed in 4 chapters:

Chapter 1: Overview of research on the US – Thailand relation

Chapter 2: Factors affecting the relationship between the United States and Thailand period of 1991-2012

Chapter 3: The evolution of the US – Thailand relations on politics, securities and economics from 1991 to 2012

Chapter 4: Special Features and the impact of the US – Thailand relation from 1991 to 2012

CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON THE US – THAILAND RELATION

This chapter includes 17 pages, in this chapter the researcher has resystemed the list of related researches and devided them into 2 groups:

The first group: research on America, Thailand and American foreign policy, Thailand foreign policy.

The second group: research directly the America – Thailand relation in history.

1.1.The present works researched the US – Thailand relations

1.1.1.Present research situation for the US – Thailand relation in Vietnam

In Vietnam, there is no research in monographic works on the US – Thailand since post – cold war until 2012. Most of the researches mention the relationship during Cold war.

There is the thesis by Nguyen Khanh Van "*The relationship between America and Thailand in contact with Indochina events since 1975 up to present*". The thesis "*The relationship between America and Thailand in 1960s*" by Bui Van Ban, mentioned this relationship in the period 1833 – 1959. These are first researches in Vietnam which research directly the relationship between America and Thailand in the period of the Vietnamwar. Thailand was a close ally of America with other bilateral relationship. Those thesses have provided precious materials to continue researching the relationship after Cold war. Besides that, there are some other scientific works published on scientific journals: "*America and the changing step of Capitalism in Thailand in 1960s*" by Vu Ngoc Oanh and Bui Van Ban (South East Asia research journal, no2, 1994); "*Security relationship between Thailand and America during Cold war – a look through it*" by Nguyen Ngoc Dung, Science and Technology journal (episode 13/2010).

1.1.2. Present works about the US – Thailand relation by international authors

Firstly we have to mention researches on the ally relationship between America and Thailand before 1991. Most of the researches consider the relationship in Cold war was the ally military relationship. So, security – politics cooperation is the key relation. In 1965, FC Darling published the book "*Thailand and the United States*". "*A century and a half of Thai – American relations*" by WiwatMungkandi and William Warren. The works mentions the relationship between two countries since 1833 until 1980s. However, those articles gave us the systematic vision of the relationship between two countries. "*Thailand and the United States: development, security and foreign aid"* byJobert. J. Muscat, 1990 mentioned the role of America in giving aids to Thailand in order to develop their economy. This is a special relationship between a major nation and an ally nation in the third world. Researchers have the same opinion on that relationship, which is the sponsor relationship and alliance strategy. The great point of this relationship is about security – military.

Next are the researches directly on America – Thailand relationship after the cold war. The relationship is mentioned in terms of politics, economics and society. Popular works are: *The United States and Thailand: Helping a Friend in Need* by Fisher, Richard D. and O'Quinn, Robert P.(1998), *Thai – US Relations: Forging a New Partnership in the 21st Century* by Pranee Thiparat và Nongnuth Phetcharatana. Pro, *Thai – US Relations: 175 Years and Beyond* by Nongnuth Phetcharatana, *Refreshing Thai – U.S Relations*by Institute for Security and International Relations (ISIS) in Chulalongkorn University published in 2009. The Thailand ambassador in Washington has updated major events in this relationship and published "*The Eagle and the Elephant - Thai – American relations since 1833".* This is considered to be a great achievement in public diplomatic between America and Thailand. In research on this relationship, the reports by Congress Research Service (CRS) have been updated regularly from 2005 to 2012: *Thailand: Background and US Relations.* In addition, we have to mention other Seminar, Projects related to the relationship: *United States – Thailand relations in the 21stcentury* held in Washington in 2002.

1.2. Comments

When reviewed the literature related to the thesis topic, the author has some comments, as follows:

Firstly: There are many works on the foreign policy and economics of American, Thailand after the Cold War until 2012. The changes in strategies and policies of American and Thailand are important factors affected the relationship between the two countries in the new world and South East Asia contexts.

Secondly: the works on American − Thailand bilateral relationship has mostly done in the Cold War period. The common perception of these works was the American −

Thailand relationship was based on the security threat and the common interest between the two. Therefore, the pillars in this relation between the two countries are politic and security. However, after the Vietnam War, along with the adjustment in America's strategy and the geographic strategy of South East Asia, ASEAN has been seen as a factor to stabilize the area. These results are both an object and motivation in American − Thailand relationship.

Thirdly: These works has discussed on the history of America − Thailand relations on: politic, security, military, economic, and culture and society. These are essential materials and important conditions for the author to investigate, analyze, and evaluate the relation between the two countries in the scope of the thesis. However, in the period of 1991 to 2012, there is no comprehensive, system, deep work on American – Thailand relation, as well as directly focus on the characteristic and the impact of this relation on the Pacific region. The works on this issue mostly for the Congress Reports, and seminars, etc. Moreover, most opinions were base on the views of American, America Government and for the American interest.

1.3. These issues needed to focus

Inheriting selective study results before, adding and researching, the thesis has reforming events, analyzing the data for *The United Stated of America – Thailand relationship on politics, security and economics from 1991 to 2012.* Since then, we give the comments on the nature and characteristics of the bilateral relations, the impact to both nations as well as other countries in Asia Pacific. Here they are:

- Indicate the factors affecting the relationship between the US and Thailand including: historical factors, international factors, regional factors (China and ASEAN...), the US factor, Thailand factors.

- Contribute to systemize the relationship between the US and Thailand in terms of politics, security – military and economy. Regarding politics and military, this thesis will clarify the process of relationship with both achievements and disagreements between the two countries such as: high level of meetings between the nations leaders; Thailand became key ally outside NATO; security support and military training; military exercises; intelligence cooperation; anti narcotics; human security; maritime security cooperation… The relationship between the US and Thailand in terms of economic concentrates on the bilateral relationship on trade and investment, the negotiation on establishing Free trade are between the US and Thailand, and figure out the drawbacks in this relationship.

- Analysing the features and nature of the relationship between the US and Thailand: the relation in period 1991 – 2012 is an alliance relation or stragic partners relation? Comparing to the pre – cold war period, this relation was not as close and dependent, and why? In addition, we clarified the impacts of this relation to Thailand's foreign policy to China and ASEAN, the impact to Vietnam…

CHAPTER 2
FACTORS AFFECTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATE AND THAILAND IN THE PERIOD OF 1991 – 2012

This chapter includes 25 pages, mentions the factors that affects the US – Thailand relationship in the period 1991 – 2012. The global situation affects the most, because America is the biggest economy of the world, Thailand is the nation which has greatest influence in South East Asia. Moreover, the changes in the global and regional situation, the policy of America and Thailand have the most impact on this relationship.

2.1. Historical factor

The relationship between the America and Thailand officially began with the Friendship treaty in King Rama III era (1824- 1851). The 200 year - history of this relationship can be described in 2 words: common benefit and friendship. After so many years, the relationship has been developing more deeply and comprehensively, not only between two governments but also between two societies. Initially, Thailand really appreciated this relationship. In the period 1833 – 1945, Thailand did not see America as a threat; they called American propaganda as modernists who bring new technology such as vaccine and printed papers. When the Second World War ended, this relationship turned to a new period with the trend of establishing and confirming anti – communism and developing the economy based on capitalism model. And since then, the Thailand policy totally converted to “close to America”. This allowed Thailand to develop all fields such as politics, society, education and economy, specially establishing military alliance with America during Cold war. Looking at the history, we can see the nature of the relationship between two nations as well as the changes of theirs after Cold war 1991.

2.2. International factor and Asia – Pacific factor

2.2.1. Economical globalization and regionalization

Globalization, regionalization, and the dependence between nations forced them to cooperate and compete with each other but avoid war. Economy became the decisive factor for each country and the main motivation of globalization and regionalization. To the relationship between America and Thailand, two objective factors that have influenced this trend were economical globalization and challenges from them.

The rise of South East Asia with the trend of economic integration has motivated America to adjust their foreign policy with competitors as well as allies and strategic partners of theirs. The regionalism explosion did affect the relationship between the America and Thailand. Economical regionalization of ASEAN has contributed to the important position of South East Asia and Thailand. For America, this is not only the chance to escape from stagnation of multilateral trade negotiations. Moreover, Thailand is

a close ally of the America, so the understanding of economic and politics policy will help them closer to the Agreement on a bilateral free trade Thai - America.

2.2.2. Relationship between major nations afetr the Cold war

The relationship between big countries often intersects and forms relationships, “polygon” multiple edge, curb and interworking. The impact of relationship between major countries for the US - Thailand is clearly reflected in the foreign policy of both countries. Starting from the basic strategic interests, the United States and Thailand have made adjustments, additional external strategy to gain an advantageous position in politics and in the global economy. The foreign policy of Thailand is maintaining relationships with all forces, not excluded or isolated and other countries. Apart from the US, Thailand also interested in close relationship with China, Japan, EU, India. Similarly, America's role in Southeast Asia is also not limited to alliances with Thailand and the Philippines, but also as a strategic partner and ally of many other countries in the region.

2.2.3. The terrorism event to the US in 11/9/2001

For the US - Thailand, the 11/9 event led to a different shift. The relationship is somewhat strained following the currency crisis in 1997 was a period of consolidation and strengthening cooperation, especially in term of security. Both nations have the same concern. Thailand itself also has to deal with extremist forces in southern Thailand, where the majority is Muslim. The US bilateral relations - Thailand reached a new level: it is the relationship between a senior partner and a subordinate partner.

2.2.4. Financial crisis and global economic depression in 2008 - 2009

The global financial crisis of 2008–2009 has slowed economic growth in the medium term in both the US and Thailand. Due to the impact of the crisis on economic, the relations between the US and Thailand was certainly affected. Thailand had to face a dilemma situation: domestic political crisis and the decline of foreign investments due to the global financial crisis in 2008. However, some scholars thought that the Thai financial sector was not affected much, it was not related to transactions of the US subprime, thus the direct impact to Thailand seemed to be unnoticeable. However, its indirect impact would be relatively large and because Thailand's exports to the US will decrease, the number of the US tourists to Thailand also fell.

2.2.5. ASEAN fator

After the Cold war, the US’s policy in South East Asia had to face challenges and new trends. The important goal of the US was to win a “special treatment” in South East Asia. After 11/9/2001, South East Asia became the second battlefield in the global anti terrorism. Thus, Washington had to take positive actions to confirm the relation with other countries in this area. One of the challenges that the US had to face in South East Asia was the idea to help ASEAN reaching their long term integration goals.

The relation between the US and Thailand is called a "precious assets" for the US policy makers when making and reaching relationship with ASEAN. However, whether the United States and Thailand could take advantage of this opportunity to promote the US - ASEAN or not will depend on several factors, including the outcome of the political challenges that every country and economy had to face.

2.2.6. The strong emerge of China

The rise of China is one of the popular features of the globe after the Cold war. China factor did affect the US's foreign policy for South East Asia and the alliance relation between the US and Thailand. The strategic objective and constancy of China is becoming rich and powerful superpower in the world, realizing the dream of China centennial. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, China has made it clear not to be bound by the framework of the "rules" of the contemporary international system of capital due to the established Western countries for decades. China fought strongly for the reform of economic institutions, international finance as IMF, WB, WTO, interpretation of international conventions such as the Convention in favor of China. Thus, US relations with allies and strategic partners in Asia will be affected by competition from China. Thailand is a strategic ally as well asstragic partner of the US and China. This requires the US's policy makers to be careful whenever they adjust the strategy and policy of the US toward the South East Asia in general and toward Thailand in particular.

2.3. American factor

2.3.1. The adjustment of the US's global strategy in the new situation

The global strategy adjustment of the US after 1991 until 2012 has shown that the first goal is to maintain the only superpower nation by expanding interventions and Western – style democracy in the world. Thus, when researching the relation between the US and Thailand in this new situation, we must see the goal and interests of the US when continuing strengthening their close relationship with other allies.

2.3.2. The American strategy on "Rebalancing" Asia - Pacificregion

Since the Cold war, in the global strategy of the US, the Asia – South East Asia played an important role just behind Europe. When the Cold war ended, the US government started the "intervention and expansion" campaign, which considered Europe and Asia center and the Pacific and Atlantic left and right wings, and continuously adjusted the Asia – Pacific strategy.

Then the president B. Obama took the chair in 2009, the US started major adjustment in their foreign policy to show their axis trend, which focused on the Asia – Pacific. The "rebalancing" strategy of the US in order to: strengthen the alliance system of the US in this area, maintain the relationship with China, strengthen the relation with ASEAN nations; participate in building the area constructions; strengthen its military

presence to increase the influence and leadership position in the regional security... Following that, Thailand became more careful in their relation with the US, especially in term of military. In this situation, the US – Thailand relation needed to change flexibly in order to attain their goal of a suitable foreign policy for both the US and Thailand.

2.3.3. The US Policy on Thailand

In 1991 – 2012, the basic goal in the US foreign policy to Thailand was to maintain alliance relation. The impact of international and area factors changed the priority order of Thailand in their foreign policy. Thailand still got the priority of the US. After the popular statement of President G. Bush "you either support or against us", Thailand may use this relationship to balance their power in the bilateral relation. However, globally and in comparison with the cold war period, Thailand had to face the changes in the US foreign policy, because the US government focused on the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. Moreover, the US had to face the rise of China and it became the biggest challenge to the US in Asia, so the priority of the US's foreign policy turned to China.

2.4. Thailand Factor

2.4.1. Thailand export-oriented industrialization and the demand for cooperation with the US

With the ambition to turn Thailand to a model of economic development following capitalism, the US directly took part in planning the Thailand's economic development stragy. The implementation of export-oriented industrialization has helped Thailand achieve high GDP growth continuously over the years and become one of the economic development model of the region. During the period 1985 – 1995, the GDP growth reached more than 9% per year. Thailand became the competitive nation in investment and trade. So, in order to increase the process of export – oriented industrialization, Thailand needed to strengthen the cooperation with the US – their traditional trading partner.

2.4.2. Financial – currency crisis in South Asia in 1997

Financial crisis - currency in 1997 caused the Thai economy emerging briefly went down. Americans evade responsibility in helping Thailand. The attitude of the US has contributed to more severance Thailand's crisis. The bitterness of Thailand after the 1997 crisis has seriously affected the relationship toward Bangkok - Washington.

2.4.3. Political instability in Thailand

The chaos of Thailand and the crisis of the US are main factors that influenced the bilateral relation between these two nations. While the American were facing the serious financial crisis, the Thai people had to face lasting and hard to control political difficulties. Then both nations had to face the changes in their foreign policy, as that aslo affected the political andeconomical relation between the US and Thailand.

2.4.4. Thailand's policy towards the US

When mentioning about the US - Thai relation, we all know that this is a long term relationship between the two nations. Since the cold war in South East Asia in 1950, these two nations had that relationship for more than half of the century. Thailand used to follow the US in every policy, actions and was the reliable ally of the US in their way to against communism in South East Asia. Turning to the 21st century, the global political situation forced Thailand to make some changes in their policy. Thai people decided to stand by themselves. However, for Thailand and for the US, in this globalization of the economics, the US – Thailand relationship is still the important relation. Thailand wanted to become a powerful country in South East Asia, while having suitable policies for major nations such as the US, China, Japan, in order to reach their best interests.

CHAPTER 3
THE EVOLUTION OF THE US – THAILAND RELATIONS ON POLITICS, SECURITIES AND ECONOMICSFROM 1991 TO 2012

Chapter 3 includes 62 pages, focusing on analyzing the evolution of the US – Thailand relation in term of politics, security and economics. The approach of the US foreign policy was based on the policy as well as the reaction of Thailand. Aspects of politics, security and economics will be approached as achieved and limited cooperation.

3.1. The US – Thailand relation in term of politics

3.1.1. The US – Thailand relation in term of politics

Firstly, the US – Thai political relation has been strengthened in the first decade after the Cold War when there was no security risk that threatens. Through high – level meetings between the heads of the US government and Thailand government, the two nations have signed important agreements on economical, cultural and social developments.

Secondly, bilateral political relations between the US and Thailand since 2001 has been raised to a new level. Thailand was considered an ally outside NATO by the US Congress. One of the main motivations for maintaining close relationships of Washington government with Bangkok is a competition for influence in Southeast Asia on-going with Beijing. Thailand, known as a nation with flexible foreign policy, good relations with all parties, enjoyed the favorable business relationships, politics and culture strongly with both China and the US. The US is trying to balance the strategic needs with its imperative to maintain the position of “champions” of democracy in the region. In general, the long term relationship between the US and Thailand was maintained in high level conference. So, after retaking the chair, President B. Obama returned to Bangkok in November of

2012. Declaration of general defense Thai - US 2012 was signed. Following that, the two nations defined the close alliance military relationship while Washington was turning to Asia – Pacific.

3.1.2. The disagreements in bilateral relations

Besides the process of cooperation for the common benefit of the two countries' relations, there are already visible disagreements in perspective and how to solve problems, including: the issue of financial support during the crisis in 1997, the issue of Myanmar, and Cambodia issues. Thailand policy and actions sometimes runs counter to the interests of Washington. That shows a relatively independent voice of Thailand with US. However, for the United States, resolving the dispute with Thailand would increase their influence and position in the region.

3.2. The US – Thailand relation in term of security

3.2.1. The US – Thailand relation in term of security

The security issue is a core element to promote the commitment of Washington to Bangkok. In the new context of the post - Cold War period, security matters between the United States and Thailand include the matters relating to the security of traditional and non-traditional security: security support and military training, military exercises, intelligence cooperation, law enforcement, counter-narcotics. In the US Congress, the bilateral cooperation under the leadership of the armed services committee. Security – bilateral military US – Thailand relation still maintained and is one of the strong base relationships. Although the US relationship with Asia will continue to grow in ways that no one can predict, but Asia's importance to US strategic interests, especially in Thailand will not stop increasing.

3.2.2. The limitations in security

The US – Thailand security relation turned to transition period since 1990. Factual basis for the interoperability of military and strategic thinking core of the relationship has changed. Thailand began to feel that they can contribute to this relationship much more than what the US offers. In the middle of the first Gulf War in late 1991, the benefit of Thailand on defense and security has evolved enough to the relationship with the United States is only one variable in the calculation of the benefits of this country. The serious problem of security in the relationship were: the support of the US security declining has caused further erosion in bilateral relations, arms trading issue, the US use of military bases in Thailand.

3.3. The US – Thailand relation in term of economics

For the US, this was the longest bilateral economical relation that America ever had with an Asia nation. In new context, the US continued to maintain and develop economical relation with Thailand through commercial and investment cooperation. For

Thailand, their leaders realized that their development depended on the integration to the global financial, investment and trading markets. And the US was the traditional and important economical partner of Thailand, who can help them success in integrating. Therefore, for Thailand, the US was aslo the irreplaceable partner. The next part of this thesis will look at the economical relation between the US and Thailand from 1991 to 2012 in terms of: bilateral trade relations and investment relations.

3.3.1. Bilateral trade relationship

3.3.1.1.America's trade turnover from Thailand

Trade between the US and Thailand plays an important role for both countries and is growing significantly. Trade is seen as the spotlight in the economic relationship between the US and Thailand. In reality, the US stays as one of ten biggest import–export markets of Thailand. However, the import-export turnover of Thailand to the United States fell more in the end of the study period due to many factors including the competition of large countries such as China, Japan and ASEAN.

3.3.1.2. Thailand's trade turnover from the US

The US is one of the most important trading partners of Thailand during the study period. In the period 1990-2001, the value of Thai exports to the US are up about 20% of total export value of Thailand, and is the biggest export market of Thailand. This position fell for Japan in 2008, then for China in 2010. The US stayed behind Japan and China, became the third export market of Thailand.

3.3.1.3. Structure of commercial products

The trading between the US and Thailand has the clear difference between exports and imports. In recent years, semiconductor materials have always been the highest proportion in the structure of Thai imports from the US, although it declined favorably (from 17% in 2010 to 12% in 2012). The share of Thai imports from the US were civil aircraft, engines and other equipment and components used in the aviation industry also rose 6% in 2012, ranking second among the top products Thai imported from US exporter. In the past, computer accessories and jewelry also had large proportion, but fell sharply in 2012.

3.3.1.4. Negotiations on the establishment of a free trade area (FTA),the US-Thailand

The negotiations to reach FTA agreements between the US and Thailand have created the opportunity for both countries in trade relations of import and export. Thailand and the US can work together to build and strengthen the economic partnership through third countries, which could bring enormous economic prosperity for the region. Favorable geographical position of Thailand made it the center of many key markets.Thailand has signed FTA agreements with neighboring countries, the countries of

South Asia and China.Therefore, Thailand is considered as the gate through which the US could participate more in regional issues.

3.3.2. Investment relationship

Thailand has sustained economy-driven open markets and encourage foreign direct investment as a mean of promoting economic development, employment, and technology transfer. Thailand is considered to be attractive for American investors because Thailand has the advantages such as: pretty low cost of labor and land hiring with tax incentives, combined with the communication network linking the north to the port area near Bangkok Lamchabang as well as countries in the region. Since 1991 to 2012, there were average 40 investment projects from American investors. Most of the projects were electrical projects and electrical products, following were chemical products, paper, and service. In addition, US investorsaslo invest in other sectors such as machinery and metal products, light industries including textiles and clothing, and agricultural products. In recent years, most of the investment projects were placed in the regions such as Bangkok, Chon Buri, KhonKaen, Rayong, SamutPrakan, Chiang Mai, Saraburi and Phuket.

3.3.2.1. Thailand's FDI to the US

The US is an economical power, a potential market with plenty of development opportunities. Therefore, annually, the US received the highest foreign direct investment, the total number in 2000, 2008 raised up to more than 300 billion USD. After the event of 11/9/2001, the amount of FDI flowing to America decreased but then increased again in 2006. However, most of the investment of the US belonged to OECD nations. The percentage was over 80%. Thai direct investment in the US is quite modest, ranging only a few dozen million dollars. And in the years 1997-2001, Thailand also withdrew much invested in the US.Expression of consecutive negative net worth over the years, especially after the global financial crisis in 2008, Thailand withdrew US investment -147 million. Until 2012, when the bilateral relations are strengthened back after strategic rebalancing of America, the amount of Thai direct investment to the US increased by 51 million dollars.

3.3.2.2. The US's FDI to Thailand

The US is also one of the countries which have the highest amount of FDI in the world. From 2007 to 2012, on average, the American invested about 300 billion dollars annually. The countries which received most investment from the US were OECD nations. The US investment on Thailand was approximately 1%.

3.3.2.3.Thailand's FDI from the US

Japan has always been the biggest and most important investor of Thailand. The Japanese investment share in Thailand was more than 20%. There were years that the Japan FDI to Thailand contributed to 60% of the total. Regarding this, the US always behinds Japan. The proportion of US FDI in Thai only ranged between 10% and relatively

fluctuated strongly over the years. The economic crisis of 2008 in the United States noted by US net FDI in Thailand was negative (-2.8%), in 2009 it was -7.55%. However, after that, direct investment FDI from the US to Thailand tends to increase gradually, in 2010 was 516.95 million, 2012 is 991 million, and second only behind Japan.

3.3.2.4. Thailand' FDI to the US

Since the early 1990s, the US was an attractive country for Thai investors. The share of net direct investment abroad in the US accounting for 59% of total net FDI of Thailand abroad. Although the US remained a preferred market, but it was clear that many Thai people were looking for investment opportunities in the ASEAN countries and particularly Myanmar market. In 2009, 2010, total net FDI of Thailand in Myanmar were more than $ 1 billion, accounting for 89% of total net FDI capital of Thailand abroad.

3.3.3 The limitations in economic relations between the two nations

3.3.3.1.The US trade deficit from Thailand

For Thailand, US trade deficit ranged from 4.2% (1992) to the lowest of 1.6% (2005) and maintained at a stable level is 1.8-2% annually. The US trade deficit with Thailand has decreased over the years. However, the general view on the status of the US trade deficit said that this was not a serious problem and urgent. The trade deficit was not a sign of recession, itwas a sign of rising domestic demand and domestic investment.

3.3.3.2. The negotiation of free trade agreements the US - Thailand has disrupted after military coup

For Thai people, the US – Thailand free trade area even caused more controversial issues. Some Thai policy makers have doubted about the transparency of the negotiations. The protest led the negotiations on trade liberalization progresses slowly. Moreover, the atmosphere of political instability have hampered joint seminars on Free Trade Agreements. However, many Americans fear that free trade would cause wages decrease and would make many people lose their jobs. Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) said that the countries joining the FTA partners become very special and bilateral relations would bring enormous benefits. USTR refused to negotiate with Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt and Mongolia. In the FTA negotiations, the Thai may feel reasonable when making request as a small developing country could receive from countries such as the US. However, the USTR put doubts to this request because they thought that Thailand actually had received many privileges then.

In conclusion, international trade agreements would be successful if they are based on the common benefits of all parties involving in. There should be appropriate procedures covering all stakeholders, manufacturers, service providers, consumers, workers, civil society, the media and researchers in the country together.

3.3.3.3. Regarding tax

Regarding trade, Thailand has always been in sight of the US parliament. In 2005 Thailand was the fourth biggest nation to get tax incentives from the US. In the past, the US emerged some problems with Thailand relating to trade (including trade barriers closely for agricultural commodities, automobiles, alcohol and alcoholic beverages, electronic devices); customs rules and procedures are not transparent especially the inadequate protection of the American Intellectual Property Law (Morrison 2003, CSR-5-6). The Congress may consider legislation to re-authorize work program before it expires. But there is concern that some items of the Thailand had been imported duty free into the US market will not be receiving any more deals. Naturally, the GSP is a preferential system, only benefits for only one party with a few conditions and requirements in order to be selected; such as the level of economic development, trade policy, intellectual property law, the observance of labor rights (Cooper 2006, the CRS-2).

CHAPTER 4
SPECIAL FEATURES AND THE IMPACT OF THE US – THAILAND RELATIONFROM 1991 TO 2012

This chapter includes 26 pages, focusing on assessment of the features and impact of the US – Thailand relation to both nations themselves, to South East Asia and Vietnam. There were arguments on this relationship: ally or strategic partner? What type of relationship is more accurate and important? The view from the United States and Thailand had mixed opinions about the alliance, about strategic partner and from ally to strategic partners. So the mainstream method used in this chapter is the method of historical comparison, to indicate the change in US – Thailand relation before and after the Cold War, while appreciating the nature of US - Thailand relation in new context of the region and globe.

4.1. Thecharacteristics of US – Thailand relations

4.1.1. US - Thailand relation was strongly influenced by international factors and the region, especially China factor

The new factors of the Cold War had a strong impact on the relationship between the US – Thailand. This impact includes both positive and reverse. Among them, the China factor has acted as push factors as well as barrier factors in the US-Thailand relations.

Cohesion between China and Thai gave chances to improve their position to Washington and made relationships Thai - US go down. Thailand did not allow the relations with the US control its policies. Basically we can see that Thailand was implementing a policy of "balance" in the context of the larger countries were increasing competition for influence to regional strategy, especially in the relationship of China - US. Thailand seeks to

entice China into the relationship in the future to bargain with the US. For the US, Thailand was recognized as an "arena" of soft power competition between the two major powers the United States and China since the Cold War, especially after the US axis. Facing the rise of Chinese influence, Thailand was an important factor in the strategy of "rebalancing" of the US. Thailand was also an important channel for China to reach and increase its influence on ASEAN, help China to have better cooperation with GMS region.

4.1.2. The America – Thailand relations are both ally and strategic partner

As can be easily seen, in the new world and regional context of post Cold War, the America – Thailand relations has changed form "tight" to "loose", from "narrow" to "wide", and were both ally and strategic partner.

For the US, the biggest concern was the role of Thailand as a treaty ally in the global strategy and regional policies of Washington, but this relationship has been "normalized" and brought common interest for both countries. Thailand has confirmed the US – Thai relation was broader and more diverse, beyond the scope of security, and this relationship has crossed the cooperation styled donor - recipient country. Thus, the strategic partner would be the type of appropriate and sustainable relationship in a multidimensional world of globalization.

4.1.3. In America – Thailand relationship, the "dependency" of Thailand has declined significantly comparing to the Cold War period, and Thailand has been more actively.

During Cold War: The leaders of the United States and Thailand have established bilateral relations very closely since the 1940s. By the time the 60s of the 20th century, relations between the two countries closely tied with the anti-communist strategies. The two countries were not only members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, but they also drafted Thanat Statements – Rusk. Bilateral relation between the two countries has grown from a very loose level at the time of the Second World War to extremely close and depending in the Cold War.

After the Cold War: In the early 1990s, when the Cold War ended, the security threats directly to the United States and Thailand have fallen dramatically. This has a direct influence on the relationship between the US and Thai allies, making this relationship no longer achieve intimate level and dependent like in the first 30 years of the Cold War.

On other hand, Thailand based on the American strategis to act actively in order to gain the country's interests, and has independtly speak, affirmed the country's position in the region and the world.

4.1.4. Development trend of the relationship between the US and Thailand: from bilateral towards multilateral cooperation

In the 21st century, due to new global political conditions, the US - Thai relation continued to be resumed and was still one of the most important bilateral relationships between Thailand and the United States in Southeast ASEAN. For the US, they needed Thailand as an ally to support their global policy. Furthermore, to enhance the control of multilateral mechanisms in Southeast Asia, especially the ARF, EAS, the US realized the role of Thailand in the ASEAN countries in gathering to response to the challenges in the region. In particular, Thailand as anally would help legitimize policies of the US anti-terrorism and justify the US invasion of Iraq Afghanistan. Therefore, in relation to Thailand, the United States was going toward multilateral cooperation mechanisms. For Thailand, Thailand needed to assert its role in Southeast Asia - a country with a leading position in the community of ASEAN 10. For the United States, Thailand also needed to rethink a lot because of the change of international environment, the adjustment of the US's global strategy and US policies in the region of Southeast Asia. Policy "Turning Indochina from the battlefield to market" of Thailand has shown the great potential of the market in particular Indochina and ASEAN in general. However, for Thailand, the Indochina ASEAN market was still very new, so in order to restore their economies, Thailand still needed to continue their relations with the US. Therefore, Thailand continued their relations with the US in overall external multilateral, diversification, prioritize regional cooperation.

The process of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the US and Thailand was stepping up in terms of economic and security – military. They were common concerns about the economic and security that has long been creating platforms for the cooperation between the US and Thailand.

4.2. The impact of the US – Thai relation

4.2.1. The impact on the US and Thailand

4.2.1.1. Positive impact

For the US: from the perspective of geopolitics in relation to Thailand, the United States has always put national interests to be their top priority. The positive impacts of this relation can be described as following:

Firstly, For the US, alliance relationship with Thailand is considered as the base and core for promoting and executing the Southeast Asia policy, taking part in multilateral institutions in the region, and restraining imperial ambition of China.

Secondly, the importance of Thailand in terms of security and the economy constantly increasing. Regarding security: geostrategic position of Thailand helped the US control in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. In the fight against terrorism and a series of nontraditional security problems, Thailand was one of the countries to work closely with the US. Also, regarding economy, although the share of

trade and investment in Thailand for the United States was not important and did not affect the growth of the US economy, but Thailand has maintained a role push for relations and economic initiatives between the US and ASEAN as: framework Agreement trade and American investment - ASEAN.

Thirdly, viewed from the American soft power, we can see that the US has expanded and strongly popularized "American values" to Thailand as well as many other countries in the region.

For Thailand: maintaining the bilateral relationship with the US gave Thailand many "interests".

Firstly, being an ally of the US helped strengthen the position of Bangkok and its voice in the ASEAN region.

Secondly, US maintained the activities of the the support programs, exchanges, training abroad ... through which Thailand is a primary beneficiary. Many Thai individuals had been in close contact and prolonged contact with the government agencies, the ideology and institutions of American higher education.

Thirdly, the basis of the relationship of traditional security and nontraditional extended between the US and Thailand helped Thai enhance efficiency as well as in a range of security issues, especially terrorism prevention, transnational crime, improve law enforcement in Thailand…

Fourthly, regarding economy, the US played an important role in Thailand economy.

4.2.1.2. Negative impact

For the US: when this relation went down, the US missed many opportunities to strengthen their position. The decline in the confidence of the Thais for the US commitment in the field of security, made the US only one variable in the benefit of Thailand.

For Thailand: although Thai was maintained the alliance relation with the US, and became "US's key ally outside NATO", in reality this nation was considered to be the key to help the US attain their goals in Asia – Pacific. Thailand was a pawn on the chessboard of American strategy in the Asia - Pacific. Therefore, Thailand should have policies to reconcile the interest relationships with other partners such as China, ASEAN… Bad resolving this benefits relation would affect the political situation and the Thai economy.

4.2.4. The impact on ASEAN and Vietam

4.2.4.1. Positive impact

US - Thailand has contributed to boosting relations between the two countries cooperation with ASEAN. America, through a tie relation with Thailand, has strengthened their involvement in the ASEAN affairs, regarding it as a mean to increase its influence in

the region, while limiting the power of China. The US – Thailand relation can be positive impact on Thailand relations with other ASEAN countries in coordinating solving regional issues like counter-terrorism and combating drug trafficking, strengthening hospital assistance and support of humanitarian assistance operations in the region.

Vietnam is an ASEAN country, so it should also benefitfrom the US investment in ASEAN. In the process of the US – Thai political cooperation and security, economy relation, Thailand has promised to help the US open in the ASEAN market. On the US side, by representatives of ASEAN - Thailand, the United States also agreed to negotiate a number of fundamental issues, such as the expansion of investment, trade and control of intellectual property rights, customs procedures, WTO accession process of several ASEAN members, including Vietnam, the ASEAN strategy for countries outside the region including China, Japan, South Korea ...

4.2.4.2. Negative impact

This aspect is seen primarily from the perspective of competition between the US and China in Southeast Asia. The main motivation to promote strategic rebalancing of the US in Southeast Asia is the Chinese factor. Moreover, many Southeast Asian countries were pursuing self-protective strategies for both China and the US, because it feared that at some point they may be forced to choose one side or the requirement provide the basis for a power and thus incite to left side.This was especially true for a country like Thailand, which advocated exploiting strong relationship with both countries.

The US – Thailand alliance relation and policies to strengthen US engagement in Southeast Asia made US geopolitical competition - China took place fierce, leading to the risk of instability and division in the region as: South China Sea issue, GMS cooperation problem… The main consequences of this increased risk of arms races. Vietnam is a member of ASEAN, so we will be facing the challenges of relations among major countries in the region.

CONCLUSION

After researching this thesis, we can show basic conclusions:

1. The featured prominent era after the Cold War was a race of economic globalization, in the context that all countries cooperate and struggle for peaceful coexistence; but still potentially destabilizing factors, such as ethnic conflicts, religious, territorial disputes, terrorism…Therefore, all countries whether big or small have to adjust their domestic policy and its external relations. For the US, although it is a superpower, it has to face domestic and foreign complicated problems. Therefore, in its global strategy,

the US has launched a new strategy with three main pillars: security for the US and its allies, economic expansion and deployment of global democracy. Maintaining and strengthening the US - Thailand relation, a longstanding ally is the content of the global strategy of the US presidentssince the Cold War.

2. The process of this relation (1991 – 2012) was influenced by many factors. The factor from the US and Thailand played an decisive role, because the nation power will influence their action in global environment and in bilateral relation. This was clear after the adjustment of the US presidents's global stragy. In this relationship, the US needs supports from a long – lasting ally to establish a world order and soared to the top pole in a multipolar order in the region. The events 11/9/2001 has a direct impact to US strategic thinking and the strengthening power with allies in the fight against terrorism has prompted the US-Thailand relations to a higher level. In relations with the US, Thailand, on the one hand, maintained the alliance with the US to seek benefits, on the other hand continued to diversify foreign relations, security, economic and showed relatively independent voice with US. In addition, the China factor has been considered as factors that strengthen the US – Thailand relation, as well as an obstacle to this relationship. Besides, other regional and international factors has direct impact on US relations - both positively and negatively. This has made the US - Thai turn to obvious changes and no longer identifiable "special military ally" as during the Cold War.

3. The change in the US – Thai relation in term of: politics, security and economy while the world and region has particular changes showed their moves in this relationship. The nature of this relation has different development, turning from support relationship to sponsor partners relationship. This was clear in the following period:

The period 1991 – 1996, without any big threats, the relationship developed along with the regionalization and multilateralism. Economic cooperation was the key content.

The period 1997 – 2001: the bitterness of Thailand after the economic crisis 1997 – 1998 had strong impact to Bangkok – Washington. This was the first time the US was considered to avoid its responsibility to support Thailand. The US missed its chance to get the approvals from allies for their credentials. The Thai people seemed to feel this difference. The relationship gradually turned a bit strange.

The period 2001 – 2006: in this era the relation fluctuated regularly. The 11/9 event put Bangkok to unstable position. Thailand announced their neutral attitude in dealing with the support request of Washington in Afghanistan. The relationship went down.

Right after that, Thailand sent their troops to support the US in their fight against global terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. US – Thai relation was consolidated and strengthened when the US was officially designated state outside NATO ally of Thailand in Bangkok during the APEC Summit (2003). Alliance the US- Thailand had found a platform for post - Cold War era. This was the highlight of bilateral ties in the process of mobilization.

The period 2006 – 2012: the bilateral relations continued to strengthen comprehensively. Despite the fact that the global financial crisis in 2008 - 2009 has slowed economic growth of both the US and Thailand, fell down the US investment in Thailand and Thai exports to the US, this relationship has overcome the crisis.

Indeed US relations - Thailand could be defined best in the period 1991- 2012 as an "inherited relationship" from the past. So, despite the crisis in the US or in Thailand and the impact of other factors, the relationship continued to maintain and develop.

4. Study on US - Thailand relation in the period 1991 - 2012 shows that, if in the Cold War era this was the close "military alliance" relation, when the Cold War ended, "copper military intelligence" is not the only factor to define this relationship. The relation between the US and Thai was influenced by the alliance relationship, but the centre, demand and process of the cooperation all had differences from the previous era. The alliance relationship was stablized and beneficial for both parties in the long run. Even if compared with the pre - Cold War period, the cooperation between the two countries were deploying more multidimensional, but this relationship was not "close, intimate, dependent" as in Cold War period. Thailand seemed not to dependent on the US, because Thai was also a fighter in global environment. The US needed to maintain this alliance relation with Thai to achieve their goals in the South East Asia. The US met competition from various rivals: China, Japan, India, EU… so it needed support from its long-lasting allies.

5. The political, security and economical relation between the US and Thailand (1991 - 2012) had influenced both nations both positively and negatively, as well as affected the South East Asia situation. For the US, alliance relationship with Thailand is considered as the base and core for promoting and executing the Southeast Asia policy, taking part in multilateral institutions in the region, and restraining imperial ambition of China. Although Thailand is a battlefield of power between the US and China, US value is still considered as popular and influencial for Thai. For Thai people, the US is chosen to be a irreplaceable guardian security. The relationship with the US helped Thai strengthen its position and voice in ASEAN and Mekong area. Economiaclly, investment and

commcercial cooperations with the US helped develop the Thai's economy. This confirmed the role of the US - the most important partner of Thailand during 1991 – 2012. Although this relation was affected by China and ASEAN nations, the basic economic foundation between the two nations kept strengthening after the cold war. However, the flip side of the problem is the nature of asymmetric in Thai – America relation led Thailand into pieces on the chessboard of American strategy in the Asia - Pacific. Moreover, Thailand factors also became a factor that increased the competition between the US and China.

6. From understanding the US - Thailand relation (1991-2012), compared with the practical operation of Vietnam's foreign policy today, we learned many valuable lessons:

Firstly, there is the lesson of the exploitation, balancing the relationship between a developing country with major powers, creating a certain level of independence with external forces that can benefit from the relationship. Secondly, there is the comparison of the US - Thailand relation and the US - Vietnam to see the development direction for US – Vietnam relation and Vietnam - Thailand. While the United States and Thailand have the basic political similarities, the US and Vietnam provide two opposite political models. Thailand can rely on relationships security alliance - with the US military as a starting point and is the permanent foundation, while Vietnam can only build relations with the US based on mutual economic relations mutually beneficial in order to promote the cooperation with America on politic, culture and society. Thus, promoting the strategic parter between Vietnam, America and Thailand is appropriate to general trend in the world and regional context of post Cold War.

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