

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM WAR  
(1954-1975)

PHAN ANH DO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies  
(Interdisciplinary Program)  
Graduate School  
Chulalongkorn University  
Academic Year 2012  
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

การเข้าร่วมของไทยในสงครามเวียดนาม (1954-1975)

ฟาน อัน ค้อ

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต  
สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)  
บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
ปีการศึกษา 2555  
ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title THE INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM  
WAR (1954-1975)  
By Mr. Phan Anh Do  
Field of Study Southeast Asia Studies  
Thesis Advisor Assistant Professor Theera Nuchpuam, Ph.D

---

Accepted by the Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree.

Graduate School ..... Dean of the  
(Associate Professor Amorn Petsom, Ph.D)

THESIS COMMITTEE

..... Chairman  
(Associate Professor Montira Rato, Ph.D)

..... Thesis Advisor  
(Assistant Professor Theera Nuchpuam, Ph.D)

..... External Examiner  
(Professor Thanet Apornsuwan, Ph.D)

พานอันต่อ : การเข้าร่วมของไทยในสงครามเวียดนาม (1954-1975) (THE INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM WAR [1954-1975]) อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก:  
 ผศ.ดร.ธีระ นุชเปี่ยม, 95 หน้า.

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ มุ่งศึกษาการมีส่วนร่วมในสงครามเวียดนาม (สงครามอินโดจีนครั้งที่2) ( พ.ศ. 1954-1975) ของประเทศไทย ซึ่งเป็นที่ทราบกันว่าประเทศไทยได้ส่งทหารเข้าร่วมรบในสมรภูมิกครั้งนี้ อีกทั้งยังอนุญาตให้กองทัพสหรัฐใช้พื้นที่เป็นฐานที่มั่นในการโจมตีเวียดนามเหนือเพื่อปกป้องเวียดนามใต้จากการคุกคามของเวียดนามเหนือและเวียดนามใต้ วิทยานิพนธ์นี้ได้อธิบายการเข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในสงครามเวียดนามของประเทศไทยอย่างเป็นขั้นเป็นตอน เริ่มตั้งแต่การก่อตั้งประเทศสาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนจีน ภายหลังจากชัยชนะของพรรคคอมมิวนิสต์จีน ที่มีต่อจีนคณะชาติ ในปี พ.ศ. 1949 นับจากนั้นเป็นต้นมา ลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ก็ได้แผ่ขยายเข้ามายังภูมิภาคอินโดจีน เป็นเหตุให้รัฐบาลไทย ในสมัยนั้นมีความกังวล และรู้สึกหวาดกลัว ต่อการแผ่ขยายอย่างรวดเร็วที่ว่าอาจจะเป็นภัยคุกคาม ต่อความมั่นคงของประเทศ รัฐบาลไทยภายใต้การนำของนายกรัฐมนตรีนายอินทรี ในขณะนั้น คือ จอมพล ป. พิบูลย์สงคราม จึงได้ตัดสินใจที่จะเข้าร่วมเป็นพันธมิตรกับสหรัฐอเมริกา ในการต่อต้านระบอบคอมมิวนิสต์ซึ่งได้รับการหนุนหลังจากสหภาพโซเวียต จีน และ เวียดนามใต้การเข้าเป็นพันธมิตรต่อต้านคอมมิวนิสต์ไทย ถือได้ว่าเป็นจุดเริ่มต้น ในการเข้าสู่สงครามเวียดนาม โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่ง ภายหลังจากการเข้าแทรกแซงทางการทหารของสหรัฐอเมริกาในช่วงต้นของทศวรรษ 1960

นอกจากนี้วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ยังศึกษาถึงผลที่ตามมาของนโยบายต่างประเทศของประเทศไทยที่มีต่อประเทศเวียดนามภายหลังสงครามสิ้นสุดลงรวมทั้งบทเรียนที่ประเทศไทยได้รับ โดยเฉพาะการรักษาผลประโยชน์ของประเทศชาติควบคู่กับการรักษาผลประโยชน์ของประเทศเพื่อนบ้านและผลประโยชน์โดยรวมของภูมิภาคในช่วงเวลาที่การรวมตัวกันเป็นประชาคมอาเซียนของประเทศต่างๆ ในภูมิภาคนี้กำลังเป็นที่กล่าวถึง

สาขาวิชา: เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา ..... ลายมือชื่อนิติดี.....  
 ปีการศึกษา 2555 ..... ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก.....

## : MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIA STUDIES

KEYWORDS : COMMUNISM / VIETNAM WAR / SECOND INDOCHINA WAR / CHINA / UNITED STATES / THAILAND / THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

PHAN ANH DO : THE INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM WAR (1954-1975). Advisor : ASST.PROF.THEERA NUCHPHIAM, Ph.D, 95 pp.

This study aims to study the involvement of Thailand in the Vietnam War (Second Indochina War) (1954 – 1975). There was the fact that through Vietnam War, Thailand sent its troops to fight in Vietnam front, permit United States to use Thai territory to strike North Vietnam, support the U.S in the defense of South Vietnam from North Vietnam and Viet Cong attacks.

This study examines how Thailand step by step involved in Vietnam War. Entering the early Cold War period, the Communist Wave after the victory of Communist China in 1949 with the establishment of People's Republic of China spread out to Indochina states, Thailand considered Communist as a threat to Thai security in particular and to the whole region in general. To protect country to the threat of Communist, Thailand had a turning point in its foreign policy when Thai Prime Minister Luang Phibun Songkhram decided to firmly align the country with United States against the Soviet Union, China and the Viet Minh, as well against with the Communist. From this initial involvement Thailand, step by step, became fully involved in the Second Indochina War, in particular after the U.S. military intervention from the beginning of the 1960s. This study also aims to infer the consequences in the Thai foreign policy after the Vietnam War as well as the lessons for Thailand in maintaining good relations with its neighbors, in particular the lesson about the combination harmoniously of nation's benefit and neighboring countries' benefit as well as the region's benefit, especially at this time of ASEAN's effort to build up regional solidarity as a firm basis for "ASEAN Community" that is coming into being

Field of Study : Southeast Asia Studies ..... Student's Signature .....

Academic Year : 2012 ..... Advisor's Signature .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my grateful to “Chulalongkorn University Scholarship for Neighboring Countries” Fellowship and Mr Collin Mac Andrews which gave me the opportunity to undertake the Master of Southeast Asian Studies program from Chulalongkorn University.

I am very grateful to Assistant Professor Dr. Theera Nuchpam who is my thesis advisor. Without his valuable guidance and advice throughout the process of producing this work, my thesis would not have been brought to its completion. Thanks for his patience to me. Additionally, it is an honor for me to thank my thesis committee members, including Assistant Professor Dr. Montira Rato, committee chairman and Professor Dr. Thanet Apornsuwan, external committee, for their helpful remarks and comments.

It is also my pleasure to thank those who have contributed to my thesis’s completion. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr Thawi Swangpanyangkoon. He gave me the good comments, supplied me very valuable document. Thanks Ajarn for the very happy and warm moments that I enjoyed with you.

I wish to thank the SEAS Program’s coordinators for their kind and enthusiasm. In particularly, thanks Khun Nanitcha for her patience and leniency.

Finally, I am especially grateful to my family, my beloved wife, my little son for their love, understanding, support, and encouragement, which particularly contributed to my thesis’s success.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract in Thai.....	iv
Abstract in English.....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Contents .....	vii
List of Tables .....	x
List of Figures .....	xi
List of Abbreviations .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Rationale.....	1
1.2 Literature review.....	4
1.3 Conceptual framework.....	8
1.4 Objectives .....	10
1.5 Hypotheses.....	10
1.6 Research methodology.....	11
1.7 Contribution of the study .....	11
1.8 The limitation of thesis .....	11
1.9 Structure of the study.....	12
<b>CHAPTER II PERCEPTION OF THAILAND OF THE RISE OF COMMUNIST CHINA AND INDOCHINA.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 The seeds of Communism in Thailand .....	14
2.2 The Communist threat to Thailand after World War II.....	16

	Page
2.2.1 The Domino Theory – An overview .....	16
2.2.2 The Communist threats to Thailand.....	18
2.3 Thailand’s anti communist policy.....	21
2.3.1 Anti-Communist act.....	21
2.3.2 The change of Thailand’s foreign policy to external Communist powers .....	23
2.3.2.1 Soviet Union (USSR) .....	23
2.3.2.2 China.....	25
2.3.2.3 Vietnam .....	26
2.3.3 The turning points in Thailand foreign policy in 1950 .....	27
2.4 The factors influencing to Phibun’s decisions.....	29
2.5 Concluding remarks .....	34
<b>CHAPTER III THE UNITED STATES – THAILAND ALLIANCE: THE FIRST STEP OF THAILAND’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAMWAR.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 The International scene of early Cold War period and the beginning of an alignment .....	36
3.2 The perspective of United States on the rise of Communism in mainland China and Indochina .....	38
3.3 United States and Thailand: the indispensable allies.....	40
3.3.1 Thailand needed to depend on United States.....	41
3.3.2 The United States interests Thailand .....	44
3.4 Thailand and SEATO.....	46
3.5 Concluding remarks .....	48



	Page
<b>CHAPTER IV THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM WAR</b> .....	49
4.1 The Thailand – Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) relations .....	50
4.2 Sarit Thanarat and the inheritance to Phibun’s support toward the United States .....	51
4.3 Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn in relations with the United States .....	57
4.4 The Thailand’s first contributions.....	60
4.5 The activity of Royal Thai Army Volunteers Force (RTAVF) .....	62
4.6 Thai air base for United States.....	66
4.7 Time for withdrawal .....	69
4.8 Concluding remarks .....	71
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION</b> .....	73
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	79
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	85
Appendix A .....	86
Appendix B .....	89
Appendix C .....	93
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b> .....	95

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 United States Assistance to Thailand 1951 – 1957.....	42
3.2 Amount and Types of United States assistance to Thailand ( 1951-1957).....	43
4.1 Total Economic Aid of United States to Thailand.....	55
4.2 Total U.S Military Assistance to Thailand (1965-1970).....	59
4.3 Total Economic Aid of United States to Thailand (1964 - 1970).....	60

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 The Royal Thai Embassy in Saigon (Republic of Vietnam).....	49
2 Map of Bien Hoa province highlighting Bearcat Camp and the area of operations of the RTAVF.....	64
3 Concept of Ben Cam operation, RTAVF, 24 November - 4 December 1969.....	65
4 Southeast Asia, showing the major cities and air bases throughout the region.....	67

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
CCPT	Chinese Communist Party of Thailand
CPS	Communist Party of Siam
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
CYS	Communist Youth of Siam
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Council of United States
PRC	People's Republic of China
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
RTAVF	Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force
RTMAG	Royal Thai Military Assistance Group
RTVR	Royal Thai Volunteer Regiment
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
U.S	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

*“We might conclude that the basic foreign policy of the country is to watch the ‘direction of the wind’ and bend accordingly in order to survive...The present writer would like to term this Thai national style as bamboo diplomacy”*

Likhit Dhiravegin<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1.Rationale

In the context of early Cold War period, the Communist Wave after the victory of Communist China in 1949 with the establishment of People’s Republic of China spread out to the Indochinese states. China’s ambitions in early Cold War period: “to spread Communism and support wars of liberation in the Southeast Asian region in particular, and the world in general.”<sup>2</sup> These ambitions of Chinese alarmed Thailand as the threat for Thai security. To against Chinese ambitions, Thailand had to change her internal as well as external policies. Internally, in 1952, Thailand expressed strongly the anti-communist opinion by introducing the Anti – Communist Act. The opening sentence of this document showed clearly “The Anti-Communist Act is necessary for the security of the country and the people and with the approval of the legislature, it hereby is issued as Royal Decree”<sup>3</sup>. This anti-Communist Act really increased the powers to Phibun Songkhram Government to arrest anyone “who was suspected of having connections with a Communist organization, or of being Communist oriented, or who tries to propagandize for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Likhit Dhiravegin, “Thailand’s Foreign Policy Determination”, The Journal of Social Sciences. (Bangkok), Vol.XI, No.4, (October 1974). Cited in Anuson Chinvanho, “Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand’s relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975”( Master’s Thesis, University of Oxford, 1958), Page 5

<sup>2</sup> Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, (Master’s Thesis, Department of Political Science, California State University, Long Beach, 1980) ,Page 5

<sup>3</sup> National Security Command, Communist Suppression Documents, Thailand, 1952-1969, (Bangkok : National Security Command , 1969), Page 1.

Communist causes”<sup>1</sup>. Under this provision, a person found guilty is subjected to a term of imprisonment of 5 to 10 years (Article 4 – 10)<sup>2</sup>. As a direct consequence of this law, more than 250 Chinese Communist oriented persons were arrested, over 150 firms were raided, and several Chinese associations and schools closed.<sup>3</sup> This action by the Thai authorities was a prevention of Communist activities within the Chinese Community in Thailand.

In early 1953, Viet Minh came to Laos, supported Laos to establish Laos Issara Government (Free Laos). In the same year, in cooperation with Viet Minh, the Pathet Laos troops attacked French in Sam Nua provinces and Xieng Khouang provinces captured Takhaek town, Khammuane Province, where is opposite Nakhon Pathom Province of Thailand. By April 1954, the Viet Minh moved its military forces into Cambodian territory with the aim of overthrowing the Cambodian government. In particular, the victory of Viet Minh in the Dien Bien Phu battle in May 1954 made a turning point in the Indochina War: ending the French domination of Indochina, and marking the rise of Communist in Indochina. In those situations, Thailand clearly saw itself as the next domino in the wave of Communist expansion. Prime Minister Field Marshall Phibum Songkhram told Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that “the Vietnamese communists in the two northern Laotian provinces of Sam Nua and Phongsaly were a spearhead aimed at the rest of mainland Southeast Asia”.<sup>4</sup> The Thai government was clearly alarmed at Communist threats to its security.

It can be said that there was a turning point in foreign policy of Thailand in the early period of Cold War when Thai Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram decided to firmly align the country with United States against the Soviet Union, China and the Viet Minh, as well as against the Communist. It’s true, because for most of the previous seventy-five years, Thailand had protected its independence and interests by maintaining proper

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, Page 1

<sup>4</sup>Ang Cheng Guan, “Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory” in Connecting histories: Decolonization and the cold war in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962, Christopher E. Goscha and Christian Ostermann , editor, (Washington, DC : Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009), Page 322

relations with all great powers, and aligning itself closely with none. However, the threat of Communist, as well as the domestic issues such as difficult economic conditions, corruption, etc, caused many Thais to welcome the change in government policy. This led Thailand to decide to align itself with the United States.

In the other hand, sharing the same opinions with Thailand, the United States also expressed its anxieties about the development of Communism in the region. In the U.S policy maker's mind, Communism namely Communist China was really a threat to the U.S, was a counterbalance of the U.S to maintain its influence in Southeast Asia as well as in whole Asia region. This opinion was presented very clearly via one report from the United States National Security Council (NSC):

“It is important to United States security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is a key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat.

The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina were controlled by Communist dominated governments. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1952, in more detail, President Truman, in a message to Congress, showed the core reason of the U.S – Thailand relations:

“The basic objective of the United States in Thailand is to support a friendly government which has unreservedly committed itself to the cause of the free world in maintaining stability in this country situated not far from China's Red Army, and bordering on unsettled areas in Indochina and Burma. It is one of the world's greatest rice producers and exporters, on whose supply many countries of the free world depend, and it is also a source of a number of critical materials”<sup>6</sup>

From this basis as described above, Thailand and the United States developed their relations to the level becoming allies. From 1950 – 1975, along the Vietnam War

---

<sup>5</sup>Surachart Bumrungsuk, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, (Master's Thesis, Cornell University,1985), Page 33.

<sup>6</sup>Vimol Bhongbhibhat, The Eagle and the Elephant : 150 Years of Thai American Relations, (United Production, 1982), Page 96

(Second Indochina War), the United States gave series of economic aids and personnel training to Thailand. Conversely, “Thailand permitted the U.S to set up its military bases in the northeast part of Thailand and stationed there about 48.000 U.S military personnel, mostly Air Force personnel, in order to face any possible military development in the area.”<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, by the mid-1960’s, under Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn regime, Thailand permitted United States Air Force to use seven air bases in Thai territory such as Don Muang, Korat, Udon, Nakhon Phanom, Ubon, Takhli, U-Tapao to strike directly at targets inside North Vietnam and Laos.<sup>8</sup>

As a comprehensive support, Thailand did not only permit the U.S to use Thai territory to strike North Vietnam, but also Thailand joined directly in the Vietnam War by sending Thai troops to Vietnam to fight against North Vietnam beside the U.S and its allies. There was a fact that: “from 1965 to 1972 Thailand sent 37,644 military personnel to South Vietnam as part of the Free World Military Assistance Forces fighting there. Thailand sent two special units of the Royal Thai Army, and one each from the Royal Thai Air Force and Royal Thai Navy. The Queen’s Cobra Regiment, Thailand’s initial army offering in 1967, consisted of a 2.200-man force of combat and combat support units.”<sup>9</sup> The mission of Thai soldiers was to support United States in South Vietnam front, train the South Vietnam troops, and fight against Viet Minh attacks.

## **1.2.Literature Review**

### **Thailand’s involvement in Vietnam War in terms of military issues**

In 2011, Richard A Ruth published a book with the title “*In Buddha’s Company Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War*”. This book really contributes a good understanding about the fact of Thailand’s involvement in Vietnam War in terms of military issues. Ruth’s book explores a previously neglected aspect of the Vietnam War: the experiences

---

<sup>7</sup> Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, Page 13

<sup>8</sup> See: Glasser, Jeffrey D., The secret Vietnam War: the United States Air Force in Thailand 1961-1975, (U.S.A: McFarland&Company, Inc., Publisher, 1995)

<sup>9</sup>Ruth, Richard A, In Buddha's company: Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War, (Chiang Mai : Silkworm Books,2012), Page 1



of the Thai troops who directly attended the war and their attitudes, beliefs that motivated them to volunteer. Blending the methodologies of cultural history and ethnography, Richard Ruth shows how the Thais were transformed by living amongst the modern goods and war machinery of the Americans and by traversing the jungle haunted by indigenous spirits.

Ruth showed in detail that “From 1965 to 1972, Thailand sent 37,644 military personnel to South Vietnam as part of the Free World Military Assistance Forces fighting there... Thailand sent two special units of the Royal Thai Army, and one each from the Royal Thai Air Force and Royal Thai Navy”<sup>10</sup>, and as Ruth described about Thai soldiers’ activities in South Vietnam: “they [Thai soldiers] killed many Vietnamese communist guerrillas, captured large caches of enemy supplies, and endured repeated assaults against their camp and field bases”<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, it seems the first time, the image of Thai volunteer soldiers is showed in detail when Ruth introduces two contrasting images of Thai volunteer soldiers: “merciful heroes and greedy mercenaries”<sup>12</sup> as well as shows these soldiers “were products of the age of rural transformation”<sup>13</sup>, and they saw themselves as Buddhist warriors. On the other hand, Ruth had opportunities to interview some Thai veterans, official American as well collected some Thai sources, archival documents, and contemporary press reports, therefore Ruth “presents an account of Thai participation that looks beyond the ‘mercenaries’ label to determine what the war meant to the soldiers who experienced it”<sup>14</sup> and “to examine and critique what could be called a Thai view of the Vietnam War”<sup>15</sup>.

Ruth also showed the reasons that Thailand’s military rulers sent the troops to Vietnam War, to (1) “satisfy one aspect of recent negotiations between Thailand and

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Page 4

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Page 6

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

United States concerning participation in the Vietnam War”<sup>16</sup> and the troops was to serve as (2) “a symbol around which Thailand’s ruling institutions could rally the public as the government intensified and elevated its involvement in the anti-communist struggle both in the region and at home.”<sup>17</sup>. It means that Thailand would earn much more aids and assistance from the United States when Thailand continued to support the U.S in Vietnam War, and the involvement of Thailand in Vietnam war also was resulted from this core reason.

If the researchers want to have a detailed document about the U.S Air Force in Thailand as well as how Thailand supported the U.S Air Force to attack North Vietnam While, the book of Jeffrey D. Glasser named “*The secret Vietnam War: The United States Air Force in Thailand, 1961-1975*” is a very valuable data. The book presents the hardware, targets, campaigns, methodologies, history, politics, plus many maps, photos, tables and diagrams related to the Vietnam War when the U.S Air Force was permitted to use seven air bases in Thailand to bombing Vietnam. This book provides clearly one fact that “almost the entire U.S Air Force effort to bomb North Vietnam was launched from Thailand”<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, the book also focuses on the vocations, contributions and adversities of individual participants.

### **The United States – Thailand relations**

It can be said that the key reason which led Thailand involved in the Vietnam War is her close relationship with the U.S. There are so many studies which focus on this special relationship.

The book “*The United States and Thailand: Alliance Dynamics, 1950 – 1985*” of R. Sean Randolph deals with the political and military relationship between the two countries. While examining the entire post World War II period, it focus in particular on the years 1965 through 1976 – what is being termed here the “Vietnam era” – and the

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Page 26

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Glasser, Jeffrey D., *The secret Vietnam War: the United States Air Force in Thailand 1961-1975.* Page xvii.

years immediately before and after. That era saw both Thailand and the United States intensively engaged as allies in all phases of the Indochina War. Randolph also examines the underlying bases of this relationship to explore the core reasons leading Thailand to identify itself and its interest so closely with the U.S, and against, leading the U.S to align with Thailand. Randolph urges that “During this period, as today, security considerations dominated Thai – American relationship. This convergence and divergence of Thai and American security interests, resulting from changes in the international as well as domestic political environments in both nations, will be traced through the politico-military history of the period”<sup>19</sup>. It means that Randolph emphasizes the role of security as well as balance power in the establishment the special relationship between The U.S and Thailand in post World War II period.

The book of Frank C. Darling *“Thailand and the United States”* introduces the history of the United States – Thailand relations to their beginnings in the early nineteenth century until the early Cold War period. Darling’s book is based on extensive research in pertinent literature, firsthand interviews, and his personal experience because he lived in Thailand 3 years and was the lecturer in Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. Darling emphasized on the role of military aid of United States to Thailand, which not only increased the power of Thai military, but also helped the military leaders (Phibun, Phao, Sarit triumvirate) enhance their status as the dominant political group, and the Communism in the view of Thai leaders in the early Cold War was a really a threat, thus, Darling concluded that “as long as Communism is a threat to Southeast Asia, the Thai government and people will need the military and diplomatic support of the United States.”<sup>20</sup>

Another contribution for understanding about the American-Thai relations, the Master’s thesis of Surachart Bamrungsuk with the title *“United States foreign policy and Thai military rule, 1947-1977”* studies the development and impact of U.S foreign policy

---

<sup>19</sup>Randolph, R. Sean, The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986, (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), Page 1

<sup>20</sup> Darling, Frank C. Thailand and the United States. (D.C: Public Affair Press, 1965), Page 228

on the military rule in Thailand between the years 1947-1977, the period ranging from the reemergence of Field Marshal Plaek Phibun Songkram in 1947 to the arrival of General Kriengsak Chamanan on the political scene in 1977. Bamrungsuk's thesis reaches the conclusion that the U.S foreign policy had a significant impact on the development of Thai politics. Thai government usually considered the U.S as an external factor that could provide military and political assistance. Thailand was therefore integrated easily into the U.S sphere of influence. However, Bamrungsuk also emphasizes the role of Thailand in the U.S foreign policy that the U.S also needed Thailand to provide political and military bases for its involvement in Southeast Asia. It means that both Thailand and the U.S shared the mutual concerns, or in other word, the Thai-American relation was "two- way relation". While Thailand considered the U.S as a guard or protector for her security and stability, the United States also needed Thailand for its ambitions in Southeast Asia in particular, in Asia-Pacific in general, in particular, to prevent the fall of whole region to the Communist.

### **1.3. Conceptual Framework**

"Balance of power" theory is applied on this thesis to examine and explain the reasons to establish the close relationship between Thailand and United States in the context of early Cold War, as well as the involvement of Thailand in Vietnam War.

The term "balance of power" is placed in quotation marks because, interpreted literally, any state of international equilibrium represents a balance of power.

According to Charles W Kegney's definition about the main point of balance power "is the idea that national security is enhanced when military capabilities are distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others. If one state gains inordinate power, the theory predicts that it will take advantage of its strength and attack weaker neighbors thereby providing an incentive for those threatened to unite in a defensive coalition. Some realists maintain that this would be more stable as aggression

would appear unattractive and would be averted if there was equilibrium of power between the rival coalitions”.<sup>21</sup>

Wu The Tao contributed a very clear definition which quite easy to understand when he shows “[balance of power] is a natural manifestation of the primitive instinct of self-defense and survival projected onto the arena of international power politics. If A makes enemy in the person of B, it is quite natural for A to cultivate and enlist the friendship of C or even D and perhaps others in order to cope or restrain the power and influence of B. In turn B may employ the same methods and tactics to contain and minimize the power and influence of A. Since nations are made up of individuals and statesmen and leaders are from their ranks, it is obvious that the necessity of cultivating and enlisting the friendship or alliance of C and D can be transplanted to become nation X, Y, or Z.”<sup>22</sup>

In detail, Morton A. Kaplan shows the rules of the balance power:

- All states act to increase capabilities but negotiate rather than fight.
- All states fight rather than pass up an opportunity to increase their capabilities.
- All states stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential state.
- All states act to oppose any coalition or single state which tends to assume a position of predominance within the system.
- All states act to constrain states who subscribe to supranational organizing principles.
- All states permit defeated or constrained essential national states to re-enter the system as acceptable role partners or to pact to bring some previously inessential state within the essential state classification. Treat all essential states as acceptable role partners.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Kegley, Charles W and Wittkopf, Eugene R., World Politics: Trends and Transformation, (Singapore : Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), Page 503

<sup>22</sup> Wu The Yao, The present and future balance of power in World geopolitics, (Singapore : Nanyang University, 1979), Page 2

<sup>23</sup>Kaplan, Morton A, System and process in international politics, (New York : Wiley, 1964), Page 35

Kaplan also argues that the number of essential rules cannot be reduced because “the failure of any rule to operate will result in the failure of at least one other rule. Moreover, at this level of abstraction, there does not seem to be any other rule that is interrelated, with the specified set in this fashion”.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, Kaplan concluded that “the ‘balance of power’ system in its ideal form is a system in which any combination of actors within alliances is possible so long as no alliance gains a marked preponderance in capabilities. The system tends to be maintained by the fact that even should any nation desire to become predominant itself, it must, to protect its own interest, act to prevent any other nation from accomplishing such an objective.”<sup>25</sup>

To the practitioner of power politics, “balance of power” means two states or an aggregation of states equally balanced against each other and that the other powers provide the balance and the home state, the balancer, holds the scales, not an equilibrium but with a generous margin to its favor.

In sum, the balance of power theory assumes that states exist in anarchy and suffer from the security threat from other countries, particularly major powers. When a state becomes a potential hegemony or a threat to the survival of others, a countervailing initiative is formed to constrain the rising state and assure the preservation and stability of the states system. While the traditional hard balancing relies on military capability, soft balancing involves tacit balancing short of formal alliances. Thus, this theory can apply for this study when analyzing the core reasons in the alignment between Thailand and United States

#### **1.4.Objective**

The aims of this study are as follows:

- To examine Thailand’s perception of the prospect of communist expansion in Asia following the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in China in 1949 and of the Viet-Minh in Vietnam in 1954

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, Page 36.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

- To study the change in Thai policy towards Indochina especially after 1954 and how this change was influenced by internal as well as external factors
- To find out how step by step Thailand was directly involved in the Vietnam War.

### **1.5.Hypotheses**

The Cold War came to Asia with the victory of the Chinese Communist Party and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This event had a great impact all over Asia, especially on the struggle for independence of the communist-led Viet Minh in the First Indochina War. In the eye of non-communist countries in this region and the United States that was the leader of the "Free World" during those days, there was a great prospect of further communist expansion in the region.

The military success of the Viet-Minh in 1954 confirmed this prospect, and it was particularly during this time that the "domino theory" fully came into play; that is, the decision of the United States to prevent the rest of Asia from falling, like "dominos", under communism. Thailand, an anti-communist country, had also been greatly influenced by the turn of events since the end of the 1940s, and in 1954 became involved in the U.S. policy to "contain" communism in Asia by entering into a military alliance with the United States in that year.

From this initial involvement Thailand, step by step, became fully involved in the Second Indochina War (or "Vietnam War", especially after the U.S. military intervention from the beginning of the 1960s). This "full" involvement can be seen particularly in Thailand providing bases for U.S. military operations and sending troops to fight in South Vietnam.

On the other hand, this involvement of Thailand, as well as the U.S – Thailand relations also describes how a small nation managed to struggle and maintain its independence role in the rising of the Cold War.

### **1.6.Research Methodology**

A qualitative approach was applied while conducting this study. The study mainly relies on documentary research. This study also studies the documents of both Thai and

non-Thai authors, as well as some documents from Vietnamese authors as primary documents.

### **1.7. Contributions of the study**

From the historical point of view Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War is a major part of the contemporary history of its relations with the neighboring countries. However, we still do not know much about this, particularly how, step by step, the country became fully involved in this war. This part of history seems now to have been forgotten. This study is certainly not aimed to re-open the wound, but for Thailand in particular it is a "lesson" that Thailand needs to learn in maintaining good relations with its neighbors, especially at this time of ASEAN's effort to build up regional solidarity as a firm basis for "ASEAN Community" that is coming into being

### **1.8. The limitation of thesis**

It's regrettable although trying our best, that we could not meet and interview the former Thai volunteer soldiers who directly fought in South Vietnam in the Vietnam War. Thus, this study will not have the personal and useful data. Furthermore, the author could not read the documents in Thai, thus this study will be without the good documents in Thai, particularly without some perspective from Thai people.

### **1.9. Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into five chapters whose details are as follows:

#### **Chapter I: Introduction**

The first chapter includes general information of the thesis: rationale, literature review, conceptual framework, objectives, major arguments, research methodology, contribution of the study, and structure of the thesis.



## **Chapter II: Perception of Thailand of the rise of Communism in China and Indochina**

This chapter examines Thailand's perception of the prospect of communist expansion in Asia following the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in China in 1949 and of the Viet-Minh in Vietnam in 1954. These situations changed Thailand's foreign policy toward Indochina and how this change was influenced by internal as well as external factors of Thailand.

## **Chapter III: The United States – Thailand alliance: the first step of Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War.**

This chapter studies the turning point in Thailand's foreign policy in the early period of Cold War, also toward Communism: leading to its alignment with the United States. By examining both internal and external factors of Thailand, this chapter will try to identify the core reasons which led Thailand to stand beside the United States as an ally against the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia.

## **Chapter IV: The direct involvement of Thailand in Vietnam War (1954-1975)**

This chapter will show the evidence of the support by Thailand to United States in Vietnam War. Thailand did not only permit the U.S to use Thai territory to strike North Vietnam, but also Thailand joined directly in Vietnam War by sending troops to Vietnam to fight Viet Cong. In other words, Thailand at that period became a full ally of United States, as well South Vietnam directly involved in Vietnam War.

## **Chapter V: Conclusion.**

The final chapter concludes the main points of thesis. Besides, it also aims to show the consequences for Thailand's relationships with the neighboring countries after the Vietnam War and provide the "lessons" for Thailand in maintaining good relations with its neighbors, especially at this time of ASEAN's effort to build up regional solidarity as a firm basis for "ASEAN Community" that is coming into being.

## **Chapter II**

# **PERCEPTION OF THAILAND OF THE RISE OF COMMUNIST CHINA AND INDOCHINA**

*“The government would neither left or right, but i am personally anti-communist”*

**Phibun Songkram**<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines Thailand’s perception of the prospect of communist expansion in Asia following the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in China in 1949 and of the Viet-Minh in Vietnam in 1954. These situations changed Thailand’s foreign policy toward Indochina and how this change was influenced by internal as well as external factors of Thailand. This chapter also examines the reasons which let Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram to decide making a pro West/anti-communist policy.

### **2.1. The seeds of Communism in Thailand**

In fact, the seeds of communist revolution had been sown in Thailand long before the beginning of constitutional monarchy in 1932. It began with many rumors and reports in the clandestine intelligence system. Later, the insurgency situation developed and disclosed gradually, step by step.<sup>2</sup> According to Sanchai Bungtrigswat “after the Russian Revolution, in the early 1920’s, communist activity in Thailand began”.<sup>3</sup> And “the Thai communists organized among the intellectuals and workers, and possessed about 300 members in 1935”.<sup>4</sup> This was the result of the Lenin thesis, which was adopted by the

---

<sup>1</sup>Standard Weekly Newspaper, Bangkok, January 14,1950. Cited in Wiwat Mungkandi and Warren William, A century and a half of Thai-America relations, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1992), Page 85.

<sup>2</sup>Sanchai Bungtrigswat, “Thailand: the dual threats to stability in a study of communist insurgency and problems of political development”, (Master’s Thesis. University of Kansas, 1979), Page 81.

<sup>3</sup>Tanham, George K, Trial in Thailand, (New York:Crane, Russak and Company, Inc, 1970), Page 4. Cited in Sanchai Bungtrigswat, “Thailand: the dual threats to stability in a study of communist insurgency and problems of political development”, Page 81.

<sup>4</sup>Sanchai Bungtrigswat. “Thailand: the dual threats to stability in a study of communist insurgency and problems of political development”, Page 84

Second Comintern in 1920, to give active support to revolutionary movements in underdeveloped countries. In detail for Communist

On the other hand, the Chinese community in Thailand under the influence from the Chinese Revolutions 1911 and 1927 also played an important role for increasing of Communism in Thailand. The communist movement first established itself among Chinese traders and workers, with the primary exception to this trend in the poor and densely populated region of the northeast, where Vietnamese communists played a significant role from the late 1920s.<sup>1</sup> In 1923, a small staff of half a dozen people was sent to the kingdom by the Chinese Communist Party. In 1927, hundreds of young Chinese founded the Communist Youth of Siam (CYS), linked to the Communist Party of Siam (CPS), a precursor of Communist Party of Thailand (CPT)<sup>2</sup>. A second organization, the Thai branch of the Chinese Communist Party or Chinese Communist Party of Thailand (CCPT) may have existed, though the relationship between CPS, CCPT and CPT is not clear

At that time, some non Thai leaders of nationalist movements choose Thailand for the Communist propaganda. For example, Nguyen Ai Quoc, alias Ho Chi Minh, spent several months in Thailand in 1928 to organizing a Vietnamese Communist Youth Organization.

In April 1933, the Royal Thai government repealed “Anti-Communist Act” which gave to the police powers to arrest the Communist people. According to the Act “the propagation of communist doctrine became a crime against the state”<sup>3</sup>. But in fact, this Act could not stop the development of Communism in Thailand.

Before the Second World War, communist activity in Siam had been confined to Chinese groups (mainly in Bangkok) and Vietnamese groups (mainly in the northeast) acting as emigrate bases promoting revolution in their home countries. A party branch was founded in the early 1930s, but only a handful of Thais were recruited. The

---

<sup>1</sup>Rousset, Pierre [The rise and fall of Communist Party of Thailand](http://links.org.au/node/1247) [Online], 2009. Source: <http://links.org.au/node/1247>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

government was relatively successful at rounding up and deporting the activists, and considered them unthreatening.<sup>4</sup>

Over the 1940s, the communist movement was transformed into something much more powerful. Many more second-generation *lukjin* Chinese<sup>5</sup> were recruited through teachers in the Chinese schools, especially Xinmin school. They became more involved in radicalizing Thailand, rather than supporting a revolution in China. The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was founded in December 1942, and committed to a policy to drive out the “Japanese bandits” and promote democracy.

On the development of World War II, under the regime of General Phibun Songkram, Thailand allied herself with Japan, joined the Axis and declared war on the Allies. There were two resistance movements organized against the Japanese occupation: the Volunteer Organization for Armed Opposition to Japan created by the newly established CPT and the underground Seri Thai (Free Thai) network, represented in exile by Pridi Banomyong and Seni Pramoj.<sup>6</sup> Besides, during the war, communists organized “welfare associations” in shipping, railways, docks, timber, and rice mills. Some groups carried out disruption and sabotage<sup>7</sup>. By the war’s end, Thailand had a communist movement dedicated to overthrowing the local political order.

However, the coup of Field Marshal Phibun Songkram in 1947 ended the freedom of the Communist Party, it was followed by widespread arrests of communist suspect.

## **2.2. The Communist threat to Thailand after World War II**

### **2.2.1. The Domino Theory – An overview**

The domino theory was one of the important theory as well as opinion of the U.S during the Cold War years, in particular with regard to Southeast Asia. It was called as

---

<sup>4</sup> Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit ,A history of Thailand, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Page 180.

<sup>5</sup> Early Chinese immigration consisted almost entirely of Chinese men who married Thai women. Children of such intermarriages were known as *Luk-jin* (ลูกจีน) in Thai

<sup>6</sup> Rousset, Pierre The rise and fall of Communist Party of Thailand [Online]

<sup>7</sup> Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit A history of Thailand, Page 181

“the central organizing concept behind American containment strategy”<sup>8</sup>, “the heart of American policy in the Third World and sole premise on which American decision about Southeast Asia were based in the years following World War II”<sup>9</sup>

During the press conference on April 7, 1954, the U.S President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave the best known explanation of the domino with regard to Southeast Asia– in the midst of fierce fighting between the French and Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu battle and a week after Secretary of State John Foster Dulles declared that the U.S would not allow the communists to control Indochina and called for “united action” on a part of the Western countries to forestall that eventuality. Eisenhower stated:

“You have, of course, both the specific and the general when you talk about such things. First of all, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs. Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world. Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the 'falling domino' principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences. Now, with respect to the first one, two of the items from this particular area that the world uses are tin and tungsten. They are very important. There are others, of course, the rubber plantations and so on. Then with respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply could not afford greater losses. But when we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the

---

<sup>8</sup>Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, eds *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Page 3. Cited in Ang Cheng Guan “Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory” , Page 315

<sup>9</sup>Gustainis J. Justin *American rhetoric and Vietnam war*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), Page 4. Cited in Ang Cheng Guan “Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory”, Page 315

disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking really about millions and millions of people. Finally, the geographical position achieved thereby does many things. It turns the so-called island defensive chain of Japan, Formosa, of the Philippines and to the southward; it moves in to threaten Australia and New Zealand. It takes away, in its economic aspects, that region that Japan must have as a trading area or Japan, in turn, will have only one place in the world to go- that is, toward the Communist areas in order to live. So, the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world”<sup>10</sup>

In other words, in this regard, the success of the Communist in Indochina would encourage Chinese and Soviet expansionism into Southeast Asia to expand their domination and influence over the other non-Communist nations in the regions.

As for the Thais, the domino theory was not needed to explain the gravity of the situation as the communist advance was already moving closer to its doorstep. Any further communist encroachments would be detrimental to the security of Thailand. The next section will provide some Communist threat to Thailand as the evidences for the application of this theory in Thailand.

### **2.2.2. The Communist threats to Thailand**

After World War II, the series of events in region changed to the perspective of Thailand in foreign policy as well as internal politics, in particular in so far as this involved the rise of Communism in Asia.

Following the Communist’s capture of mainland China and establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China declared its policy: to spread Communism and support wars of liberation in the Southeast Asia region in particular, and

---

<sup>10</sup> President Eisenhower's News Conference, April 7, 1954, Public Papers of the Presidents, 1954 [Online] Page 382. Source: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pentagon/ps11.htm>

the world in general.<sup>11</sup> Phibun's government considered this Chinese declaration as a threat to Thailand security in particular and to the whole region in general.

In order to implement the Communist spread policy, China backed the Thai Communist Party. On 31 January 1953, the People's Republic of China announced the establishment of a Thai Autonomous People's Government in Yunan districts of Cheli, Nanchao, Fuhai, and Chenyeh and in parts of Liushun, Szumao, Ningkiang and Chiang Cheng. These areas, which the Tai called Sibsong Panna, were about 20,000 square kilometers in extent and had predominantly Thai population of about 20,000. These activities of CPT were made known primarily through broadcast by the "voice" of the people of Thailand", a clandestine radio station located in China and by the "New China News Agency" in which Peking gave the insurgents strong propaganda support. China also provided funds and training.<sup>12</sup> It also started a guerilla war against the military regime of Phibun Songkram. "The ultimate goal of CPT was to replace the system of Thai administration by Communist system. In other words, CPT wants to overthrow the Thai government in power and replace it by a Communist government"<sup>13</sup>.

Not only the threat from Chinese communist, but the Communist-led Viet Minh were another possible external threat to Thailand. Phibun noted Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that the Vietnamese communists in the two northern Laotian provinces of Sam Nua and Phongsaly were "a spearhead aimed at the rest of mainland Southeast Asia"<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, in two years 1953 - 1954, due to the failure of Navarre Plan, France called for a peace settlement at the Geneva Conference which took place between May and July of 1954. Just one day before the start of the conference, Dien Bien Phu fell to Viet Minh, sealing the fate of France in Vietnam as well as Indochina. The Geneva accords meant the loss of half of Vietnam (north 17<sup>th</sup> parallel) to the Communist. According to the domino theory, Vietnam would become the next domino whose falls might to lead the eventual loss of mainland Southeast Asia and possibly of regions

---

<sup>11</sup> Ma Makata, "Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy", Page 5

<sup>12</sup> Ralph N. Clough, East Asia and U.S security. (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1975), Page 192. Cited in Ma Makata, "Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy", Page 5

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ang Cheng Guan, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory", Page 322

beyond. Certainly, Thailand clearly saw itself as the next domino. This is because Thailand found itself facing new Communist neighbors on its borders in the east and northeast, along the borders of 10,000 miles with Cambodia and Laos. In other words, in this regard, the success of the Communists in Indochina encouraged Chinese and Soviet Expansionism into Southeast Asia to expand their domination and influence over the non-Communist nations in the region.

In the south, Thailand also had to cope with secessionist threat in the provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat and Yela which had a majority of Muslims. An organization called the Pattani Liberation Front actively fostered disaffection against the Central Government with a view to securing the secession of the southernmost provinces. The Communist Party of Malaya actively sympathized with the secessionist and helped them in organizing a guerrilla war.<sup>15</sup>

The U.S embassy in Thailand in a 1955 dispatch noted that it was difficult to ascertain the extent of communist subversive activity in Thailand. A large scale subversion, which was expected to occur after the Vietnamese communist success against the French, did not take place. The report, however, highlighted five principal sources of potential danger: “(1) the Chinese minority throughout Thailand, (2) the Vietnamese Communists in Northeast Thailand, (3) Infiltration from China, including the Thai Nationality Autonomous area in Yunnan, (4) Communist elements in the southern border of Thailand supported by communists in Malaya, and (5) disaffected Thai elements both in Thailand and abroad”.<sup>16</sup> The dispatch also added that “the Thai leadership was aware of the potential communist threat. While it had the will to take preventive action, it very much needed American support and guidance”<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>15</sup> Lau Teik Soon, “Security Situation on Malaysia-Thai Border”, Asia Research Bulletin (Singapore), (vol 1, no.2, July 1972), Page 4-5. Cited in Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand, (India: Granth Bharati, Shadara, 1979), Page 41

<sup>16</sup> U.S Department State, Dispatch from the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State, (Bangkok, April 22, 1955) [Online]. Source: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frUS1955-57v22/d471>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid



### **2.3. Thailand's anti communist policy**

As late as July 1949, Phibun's foreign and domestic policies toward communism were remained unchanged. He still proclaimed his commitment to fighting communism, but when the subject turned to actions, he equivocated. For example in July 1948, Phibun confidently told parliament that "there is now no communist unrest in Thailand"<sup>18</sup>. And in June, he told a British newsman that "Thailand supported a western-led security pact in Southeast Asia but dismissed the need for the government to take defensive measures"<sup>19</sup>. He explained in the interview that, "for our country, there is not much to be feared from communism"<sup>20</sup>. But a month later, he blatantly announced to the West that communist pressure on Thailand had become "alarming" and internal communist activity had "vigorously increased"<sup>21</sup>

However, since 1949, following the Communist's capture of mainland China and the establishment of the PRC as well as the declarations of China to spread Communist and support wars of liberation in Southeast Asia in particular and the world in general, the attitude of Thailand toward Communist became clear, Thailand considered China in particular and Communism in general as the threats to Thai security. The fear of communism was now foremost in Phibun government's mind. As no choice, Phibun had to consider a strong policy to against Communism.

#### **2.3.1. Anti-Communist act**

Actually, for Thailand, an anti – communist policy had been of long standing. While communism had never flourished in Thailand, the Thai government found it necessary to use pre-cautionary measures partly as an instrument to deal with liberal-progressive elements in Thai politics. The first anti-communist law was passed in 1933 to suppress those liberal elements which were perceived as flirting with socialism. The communist movement, which had been associated with the overseas Chinese since the

---

<sup>18</sup>Fineman, Daniel Mark, The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947 1-1958, vol 1. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 1993),Page 158.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Darling, Frank C., "American Influence on the Evolution of Constitutional Government in Thailand", (Doctoral dissertation, The American University), Page 214.

mid-1920s, gained some momentum during World War II when they allied themselves with the Thai nationalists against the Japanese. After the World War II, the anti communist act was abolished in an effort by Thailand to gain Soviet support for its admission to the United Nations.<sup>22</sup> However, in 1947, the military assumed power, repressive measures against the communist were once again introduced, and in 1952 an anti-communist act was instituted.

Just right at the introductory section, the anti-communist act emphasizes clearly the importance of anti – communist act: “the anti- communist Act is necessary for the security of the country and the people and with the approval of the legislature, it hereby is issued as a Royal Decree”<sup>23</sup>. The Act also defines the Communist activity as “(A) the act of seeking the destruction of the Constitutional Monarchy, (B) the act of seeking those economic changes which lead to Government acquisition of private property without just payment, (C) the use of sabotage, fear of trickery to incite hatred among the people and achieve those purposes cited in (A) or (B) above (Article 3)”<sup>24</sup>.

This anti-Communist Act gave the government a wide range of powers to arrest anyone who was suspected of having connections with a Communist organization, or of being Communist oriented, or who tries to propagandize for the Communist cause (Article 5 –7). Under this provision, a person found guilty is subjected to a term of imprisonment of 5 – 10 years. In particular, “Anyone convicted of Communist activity will be imprisoned from ten years to life (Article 4)”<sup>25</sup>

As a direct consequence of this law, more than 250 Chinese Communist oriented persons were arrested, over 150 firms were raided, and several Chinese associations and schools were closed.<sup>26</sup> This action by the Thai authorities was a prevention of Communist activities within the Chinese Community in Thailand. On the other hand, to follow an

---

<sup>22</sup>Wiwat Mungkandi and Warren William, A century and a half of Thai-American relations, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1982), Page 84

<sup>23</sup> National Security Command, Communist Suppression Documents, Thailand, 1952-1969, Page 11

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Page 2

<sup>25</sup> Ibid,

<sup>26</sup>Nuechterlin, Donald E, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), Page 65. Cited in Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, Page 6.

order of the Chief of Thailand's Police General Phao Sriyanond, the local police took into custody any person suspected of aiding the Communists, a move which aroused widespread fear and suspicion of anyone who voiced opposition to the government.<sup>27</sup> In this connection, the government arrested 104 persons, including politicians, writers, students, government officials, military personnel, and relatives of former liberal leaders. Forty-nine of these persons were subsequently sentenced to twenty years in prison, and one of the persons who received this heavy penalty was Pridi's son.<sup>28</sup>

### **2.3.2. The change of Thailand's foreign policy to external Communist powers**

#### **2.3.2.1. Soviet Union (USSR)**

After World War II, under the regime of Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong, the relations between Thailand and Soviet Union experienced a good time. Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong opened the question of re-establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. He said

“Politics and diplomatic are two entirely different things. Whether we agree with another's beliefs has nothing to do with diplomatic relations. I wish to insist that Siam can never be a Communist country, because our customs, conventions, and history differ greatly from that of Russia. I have studied enough economics to be in a position to say that Communism can never happen in this country and that we have nothing to fear about that. I wish to make this point clear because I was once branded a communist”<sup>29</sup>

Pridi was by no means allergic to communism. Indeed, he openly sympathized with the Leftist Laotian leader<sup>30</sup>, Prince Souphanouvong, and as described above, when the French tried to reassert their position in Indo-China through military means, Pridi

---

<sup>27</sup> Darling, Frank C, Thailand and the United States, (D.C: Public Affair Press, 1965), Page 116

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Page 121-122

<sup>29</sup> Thompson Virginia and Adloff Richard, Left Wing in Southeast Asia, (New York: William Sloan Associates, 1950), Page 54. Cited in Shirk, Paul R, “Thai-Soviet Relations”, [Online] University of California Press: Asian Survey, vol 9 No.9 (September 1969), Page 686. Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642300>

<sup>30</sup> Shirk, Paul R, “Thai-Soviet Relations” [Online], University of California Press: Asian Survey, vol 9, No.9 (September 1969), Page 686. Source: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642300>

helped thousands of Vietnamese refugees: allowing them to come and stay in Thailand, giving them food and help.

On 11 October 1946, Thailand repealed the Anti-Communist Law 1933. This paved the way for Thai-USSR diplomatic relations. On December 26<sup>th</sup> 1946, the Thai Minister to Sweden made a formal approach to the Soviet Government for exchange of diplomatic representatives. On 5 January 1947, the USSR government conveyed its willingness to establish diplomatic relations.<sup>31</sup> To concretize this relationship, in March 1949, the USSR made an effort to expand trade by offering to supply Thailand with variety of goods ranging from drugs to musical instruments.<sup>32</sup>

Under the regime of Field Marshal Phibun Songkram since April 1948, Thailand aligned itself with the western powers. This naturally affected Thai-USSR relations. By the end of 1949, the military regime no longer cared for Soviet interests in the region. Indeed, in November 1949, Phibun even thought of asking Moscow to close its mission in Bangkok.<sup>33</sup> On 17<sup>th</sup>, October 1950, Phibun signed a Military Assistance Agreement with the United States and began to cooperate with U.S in military matters. USSR, understandably, expressed its regret over this Agreement. *Pravda* declared on 24 November 1950 that Thailand was allowing itself to be transformed into a base for American aggression in Southeast Asia by signing such a treaty.<sup>34</sup>

Following the actions which made USSR be upset, Thailand began to keep a close watch on the movements of the staff of the Soviet Embassy in Bangkok. On 2<sup>th</sup> April 1952, Phibun took exception to a Soviet publication called *Tass Bulletin* which contained information about USSR and its ideology. Phibun thought that it was prejudicial to the national security of Thailand. He, therefore, banned all types of Soviet publications.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.688.

<sup>33</sup> Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand, (India: Granth Bharati, Shahdara, 1979), Page 71.

<sup>34</sup> Max Belloff, Soviet Policy in the Far East, 1944-1951, (London, 1956), Page 240. Cited in Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand, Page 72

<sup>35</sup> Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand, Page 72

### 2.3.2.2. China

China and Thailand had trade relations long time ago. Sino-Thai political relations too were good till China became Communist in 1949. Thailand did not recognize the new Communist regime in China. Clearly, Thailand saw in communism a real threat to itself, in particular when China declared its policy to spread Communism in region, support the nationalist movements in Indochina states.

Following the anti-communist policy, Phibun launched an anti-Communist campaign. His government put up numerous posters all over the country, characterizing communism as a giant with a torch in his hands setting fire to Buddhist temples, and suggesting that under communism all Buddhist temples would be destroyed.<sup>36</sup>

Toward immigration of Chinese, Thailand reduced the quota of Chinese immigrants from 20,000 to 200 a year. In November 1952, it undertook a major round-up of people alleged or suspected to be engaged in a Communist subversive plot. On the external front, it imposed an embargo on all trade with Communist China.<sup>37</sup>

After the Anti Communist Act had come into force, as said above, more than 250 Chinese Communist oriented persons were arrested, over 150 firms were raided, and several Chinese associations and school closed. These actions of Thai authorities were a prevention of Communist activities within the Chinese Community in Thailand.

Furthermore, under the regime of General Sarit Thanarat, The Thai government “banned all trade with Communist China and took strong measures to stop travel of Thais to Peking”<sup>38</sup>. This policy was directed against Communist infiltration, subversive and sabotage activities from both outside and inside territory. Moreover, Chinese schools in Thailand were restricted in number and teaching systems and were compelled to teach the Thai language beside their Chinese language. This measure was in line with the Thai anti-communist policy, and served to neutralize the Chinese oriented toward mainland China within the Thai-Chinese community in Thailand.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, Page 80.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, Page 8

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

### 2.3.2.3. Vietnam

In fact, after World War II, Thailand had a good relationship with Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of Vietnam, established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Thailand, under the regime of Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong extended de facto recognition to DRV, “gave full permission” DRV to establish a diplomatic office to work in Bangkok in 1946 known as the Representational Office of Democratic Republic of Vietnam.<sup>40</sup> Later, this DRV office was also referred to as the Vietnam Delegation for South East Asia. At the outset, DRV office in Bangkok shared the premises of the Vietnam News Service on No 543 Silom road.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Pridi Banomyong government supported and helped Vietnamese patriotic movements in Thailand.

“After the war ended, some Vietnamese patriots negotiated with me to ask the weapons. I supported weapons to DRV government. I also supported the patriotic movements of Vietnamese evacuees to immigrate to Thailand”<sup>42</sup> (Pridi Banomyong)

The Thai government permitted Vietnamese evacuees to immigrate to Thailand with the supporting:

1. To allow Vietnamese evacuees to immigrate with no immigration fee
2. To allow Vietnamese evacuees to extend foreigner registration
3. Vietnamese evacuees were helped with accommodation and food
4. To allow Vietnamese evacuees to borrow money.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> See: Thananan Boonwanna, “On the relation between Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Pridi Phanomyong government of Thailand (through some Thailand documents)” [*Về quan hệ giữa Việt Nam dân chủ cộng hoà với chính phủ Thái Lan thời Pridi Phanomyong (qua một số tư liệu Thái Lan)*], Hanoi: Journal of Southeast Asia Studies, no.1 (2008), Page 64-67

<sup>41</sup> Thawi Swangpanyangkoon, “The first Vietnam News Service in Bangkok 64 years ago” [*Sở thông tin Việt Nam đầu tiên ở Bangkok cách đây 64 năm*], Bangkok: Journal of Vietnamese Studies, no.19 (Mahidol University, October 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Pridi Banomyong, To commemorate Luang Xangvongyutthakit, (Bangkok: Chuānpim Publishing, 1973), Page 14. Cited in Thananan Boonwanna (2008 : 65)

<sup>43</sup> Thananan Boonwanna “On the relation between Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Pridi Phanomyong government of Thailand (through some Thailand documents)”, Page 66

In 1950, Phibun Songkram as Thai Prime Minister recognized the Bao Dai government, suspended all activities of the Vietnam New Services

With regard to the Vietnamese community in Thailand (Viet Kieu), it can be said that the Phibun Songkram period was “the start of prejudices against Viet Kieu in Thailand in general and in the northeast in particular in several decades later”.<sup>44</sup> The prejudices were expressed in both the official and the local levels. At the official level, Viet Kieu was banned to have business with the Thai and was also beaten in case they bought goods from Viet Kieu. Moreover, Thai police also destroyed the Vietnamese national altar and propagated badly about Viet Kieu. The authorities also banned jobs from Viet Kieu in order to caused troubles economically<sup>45</sup>, banned education conducted in Vietnamese, observed all education activities and the teachers who were arrested were either put in prison permanently or repatriated to Vietnam.<sup>46</sup>

### **2.3.3. The turning points in Thailand foreign policy in 1950**

The new points in foreign policy of Phibun’s government really marked one of the defining movements in the country’s modern history. For most of previous time, Thailand had protected its independence and interests by maintaining proper relations with all the great powers, and aligning itself closely with none. However, Phibun decided to firmly align his country with the United States against the Soviet Union, China, Viet Minh, or in other words, against Communist expansion

The turning points of Phibun in 1950 turned on two decisions – the recognition of the French-installed government of Emperor Bao Dai of Vietnam, and the dispatch of troops to Korea in support of the United States. These, internationally, helped Thailand obtain the U.S sympathy, made Thailand becoming one of Washington’s closets, and one of the most important Asian allies of the U.S.

---

<sup>44</sup> Nguyen Anh Tai, “Thai-Vietnamese relations during the first Indochina War (1946-1954)”, (Master’s Thesis, Southeast Asia Studies, Faculty of Art, Chulalongkorn University, 2009), Page 89.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Page 82

On 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1950, Phibun decided to recognize the Government of Bao Dai in State of Vietnam as a signal of Thailand's solidarity with the Western Powers. He also supported the French-sponsored Governments in Laos and Cambodia and ordered closure of Viet Minh headquarters in Bangkok.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the United States greeted Phibun's Bao Dai decision as a major triumph.<sup>48</sup> Thai recognition was crucial to the Western effort to portray Bao Dai as a genuine nationalist accepted by independent governments in the region. In response a Bangkok representative of the communist backed Ho Chi Minh issued statement: "I think the government of Thailand is not very well informed about the situation in Vietnam. But nevertheless, it [the recognition of Bao Dai] is to be regretted. The Vietnamese community in Thailand, as always, remains united behind the resistance government"<sup>49</sup>

Phibun's declaration made Thailand the first, along with South Korea, only one of the two Asian countries to recognize Bao Dai<sup>50</sup>. After aligning itself with United States, this decision really was the first evidence of Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War. Moreover, this decision also placed Thailand to the antagonistic front against Communist powers. But it also took Thailand coming closely to the U.S as well as western powers. This policy also gained the momentum that would carry it to completion soon afterwards when Washington finally approved aid for Thailand. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, after receiving recommendation of the Bangkok ambassador's conference for a Southeast Asian aid program, U.S Secretary of State Dean Acheson delivered a letter to Truman urging that the president authorize \$15 million of military assistance for Indochina and \$10 million for Thailand.<sup>51</sup> He emphasized that "unless Thailand is given

---

<sup>47</sup>Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand , Page 37

<sup>48</sup>Fineman, Daniel, "Phibun, the Cold War and Thailand's foreign policy revolution of 1950", Page 286, in Connecting histories: Decolonization and the cold war in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962, Christopher E. Goscha and Christian Ostermann, editor, Page 275-300

<sup>49</sup> Grossman, Nicholas, Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, (Bangkok: Bangkok Post, 2009), Page 47.

<sup>50</sup>Fineman, Daniel Mark, "Phibun, the Cold War and Thailand's foreign policy revolution of 1950, Page 286

<sup>51</sup>Fineman, Daniel Mark, The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947 1-1958, vol 1, Page 207



military assistance it cannot hold out against communist pressure”<sup>52</sup>. Later in the year, agreements between Thailand and the United States for educational exchange, economic and technical cooperation, and military assistance were signed.

The next turning point in Phibun’s foreign policy was involvement in North Korea and South Korea conflict in June 1950. Phibun declared that Thailand would send troops to join the United Nations forces fighting in Korea.<sup>53</sup> The Thai troops would fight beside United States and other allied forces under the United Nation while North Korea was aided by Chinese forces. This mission marked the first time Thai soldiers went overseas since World War I, when troops had been sent to France.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Thailand contributed 40,000 metric tons of rice, valued at \$4,368,000 for Korean relief.<sup>55</sup> To regard to this contribution of Thailand, U.S Ambassador to Thailand, Edwin F. Staton said: “In addition to this fifteen thousand men volunteered to fight in Korea, including Buddhist priests. Thai units in Korea made a splendid record. Their stamina and their fortitude earned them the nickname of the “Little Tigers”<sup>56</sup>. While, Frank C. Darling made his comments that “Thai cooperation in Korea virtually erased all doubts in the minds of the Americans regarding the pro-Western sympathies of Phibun, and thereafter the former dictator was treated with great respect by the United States in the heightened tension of the cold war”<sup>57</sup>

#### **2.4. The factors influencing to Phibun’s decisions**

After reviewing the situation of Thai political in early Cold War period, it is necessary to consider the main factors influenced to Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram’s decision when he transformed Thailand to become the pro West/anti Communist state, and join to the “Free World” led by the United States.

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, Page 52

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Darling, Frank C Thailand and the United States , Page 78

<sup>56</sup> Staton, Edwin F., Brief Authority, New York, 1956, Page 256. Cited in Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand , Page 37

<sup>57</sup> Darling, Frank C Thailand and the United States, Page 78

Internally, after the World War II, the political position of Phibun was very weak. Because of actions in the time of World War II, he was brought to the trial as a war criminal by Seni Pramot – the new Thai Prime Minister in the post war period. Phibun was accused of willful collaboration with the Japanese and of crimes against humanity.<sup>58</sup> Although, Phibun was released from the jail in March 1946 after the court decided to drop the charges, Phibun seemed quite shaken and events since his fall from power appeared to have had a sobering effect to him. He even wanted to retire for good to private life. But, the time of late 1946 marked Phibun's returning to the political scene when he accepted once again the office of commander-in-chief of army. His returning as he described as “to clear his name of charges of treason and war crimes”<sup>59</sup> and “to solve the country's economic problems and form a new political party, the Thammathipat party (Righteous is Mine).”<sup>60</sup> In the relation with the Monarchy, Phibun also was considered as “ultimate the monarchy”<sup>61</sup>. Even by 1939, a noted Thai historian remarks, Phibun “had emerged as uncrowned monarch in Thailand”<sup>62</sup>. Thus, the Thammathipat Party - with its main policies “were the preservation of the Chakri dynasty and the fight against communism”<sup>63</sup> – would help Phibun to conciliate the sympathy and support of Royal Family. This support would be very important to strengthen Phibun's position as well as his government.

Besides, in fact, both the British and Americans also became suspicious of Phibun's return. It is certain because in World War II, Phibun entered an alliance with the Japanese, declared war on the Allies, and attacked British possessions. Phibun, thus, in British and Americans concerning, remained the militaristic dictator who had sought out

---

<sup>58</sup> Terwiel, B.J, Field Marshal Pleak Phibun Songkhram, (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1980), Page 23.

<sup>59</sup> Fineman, Daniel Mark, The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947 1-1958, vol 1, Page 37

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, Thailand and the Japanese Presence: 1941-1945 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), Page 19. Cited in: Thanet Aphornsuvan, “The U.S and the coming of the Coup of 1947 in Siam”, Journal of the Siam Society (January 1987), Page 191.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> The American Embassy in Bangkok, Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period March 16-March 31,1947. (NADD, Washington DC). Cited in: Thanet Aphornsuvan “The U.S and the coming of the Coup of 1947 in Siam”, Page 191

Japanese support to strengthen himself politically and to aid invasions of neighboring territories. His return to power in 1947, the Americans and British certainly believed, could only bring more of the same. Thus, Phibun was well aware that he had to earn back the confidence and respect of the U.S as well as other Western powers. Because, although a big Western Power, short of directly involving itself in Thai internal affairs, could hardly effect to the Phibun's position, it also could damage the economy and the political stability of the country through various tactics. For example: The Allied powers withheld the release of the gold and assets in their custody to Thailand as a sort of warning to the Coup Group and Phibun to act responsibly in the international arena.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, at the post World War II, the leftist movements in Thailand developed strongly, evidenced by Pridi's involvement in the South-East Asia League in September 1947, the League was not a Communist organization but was regarded as a way of going Communist. This, together with the repeal of the 1933 Act of Communism by the National Assembly which resulted in the legalization of CPT, the impending setting up of the Soviet Embassy in 1947, and the apparent freedom enjoyed by the Chinese, led naturally to some exaggerated fears concerning the influence and spread of communism in Thailand. Phibun and his coup was the fear that Siam was going to become communist. In 1947, the coup halted the leftist trend promoted by Seri Thai supporters. In detail, Phibun took a series of measures against the communist movement, unions and Sino Thai schools, ending the CPT's period of legality after less than two years. Phibun also established the Thai Labor Union (renamed the Thai National Trade Union Confederation – TNTUC – in 1951), reserved only for Thai nationals and serving as a mass base for the regime.<sup>65</sup>

Toward overseas Chinese in Thailand, they also could be viewed as a reason for Phibun's decision, because the Thai government's policies towards the overseas Chinese remained the dominant bilateral issue in Sino – Thai relations. The importance of million

---

<sup>64</sup> Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, Thailand's durable Premier: Phibun through three decades 1932-1957, (Kuala Lumpur Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), Page 279.

<sup>65</sup> Rousset, Pierre, The rise and the fall of the Communist Party of Thailand [Online]. 9 September 2009. Source: <http://links.org.au/node/1247>

Chinese in Thailand had been recognized largely because of the following factors: China had increasingly been active in international politics and overseas Chinese had played significant roles which affected both the political and economic stability of Thailand. The linkage between China and overseas Chinese was assumed to be essential and hence affected foreign relations between China and Thailand. In contrast with Pridi, Phibun “was encouraged into thinking that an anti – communist policy would give him the support of the United States, at the time when it began re-evaluate its policy in the Far East following the Communist victory in China.<sup>66</sup> So, as a Premier Minister, Phibun took a series of actions to control overseas Chinese in Thailand: raiding and investigating Chinese schools and organizations, closing down Chinese schools on the ground that they contravened Thai Laws because they had refused to register with the Ministry of Education and to teach Thai language, censoring Chinese language text books used in Chinese school.<sup>67</sup> In January 1949, the immigration quota was drastically cut from 10,000 which have been set in 1947, to a mere 200 per annum.<sup>68</sup> Soon after the victory of Chinese Communists in mainland China in October 1949, Phibun also warned the Chinese community in Thailand not to engage in political activities on behalf of either side. He reminded the Chinese that his government “had not yet recognized the new regime and therefore they should wait before celebrating or flying the New China’s flag”<sup>69</sup>. Thus, controlling overseas Chinese in Thai territory as well as non-recognition Communist Chinese Government are the ways to let Phibun to close the U.S and get the support from this power. Through a press interview, Phibun informed the world that in the event of actual fighting on Thai soil, his government would allow American and

---

<sup>66</sup> Nuechterlin, Donand E, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), Page 102.

<sup>67</sup> Phuwadol Songprasert, “The Thai goverment’s policies towards the Chinese in Thailand (1932-57)”, (Master ‘s Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1976), Page 163.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, Page 178

<sup>69</sup> Siam Nikorn, October 3, 1949. Cited in: Anuson Chinvanho “Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand’s relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975”, Page 36

British troops into the country.<sup>70</sup> The Premier Minister made it clear that Thailand would be on the side of the Free World to against communism.

Thus, the attempts of Field Marshall Phibun to get the support of the Western powers to the government under his leadership would not only strengthen his government and help mask the activities of the military junta, but also substantially weaken the domestic opponents against them.

Economically, a pro-West policy also would help to rescue Thai economy post World War II period. After the war, Thailand really needed a substantial financial boost for her economy to carry out the reconstruction of her country. As the “sweet” result for the attempts of Phibun to get back the Western power’s support, Thailand received the economic aid from Western powers. In 1949, Washington announced its decision to return to Thailand the gold earmarked in Japan for Bangkok<sup>71</sup>. The U.S also yielded the control of the enemy’s assets of \$10 million in Thailand to the Thai government. This provided Bangkok with an immediate fund for the rehabilitation of the nation.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, the two decisions of Phibun - recognition of Bao Dai regime and sending troops to fight in Korean beside the U.S and its allies – not only expressed strongly Thailand’s support to United States but also brought to Thailand the big economic aids. For example: the Griffin Mission of the U.S visited Thailand from April 4 to 12, 1950. The eight day tour produced a recommendation that Thailand receive \$11,420,000 in technical and economic aid.<sup>73</sup> The Griffin Mission’s proposal for economic and technical assistance were implemented with the signing on September 19, 1950, of an “Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement” between the United States and Thailand. Then, American economic and technical assistance funded with \$8,000,000 provided by the Economic Cooperation Administration.<sup>74</sup> In addition, in October 1950, Thailand was awarded a loan of \$25,400,000 from the World Bank to

---

<sup>70</sup> Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, Thailand’s durable Premier: Phibun through three decades 1932-1957, Page 275

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, Page 278

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Randolph, R. Sean, The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986, page 14.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

assist in the rehabilitation of the country's transportation and irrigation network; this was the first World Bank loan to any nation in Southeast Asia.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, the aid of United States also helped Thailand to strengthen and modernize her military power. This figure will be showed in detail in next chapter.

## **2.5. Concluding remarks.**

In sum, the establishment of People Republic of China in 1949 changed internal as well as external policy of Thailand. China's ambition was to spread Communist to mainland Southeast Asia in particular and in whole region in general and support the nationalist movements of Indochinese states. This was perceived by the Thai government as a threat to the Thai security. Thailand itself clearly saw it as the next domino in the "Communist wave". Before 1949, the relations between Thailand and China, and the Soviet Union were quite good. Under the regime of Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong, he opened the relationship with China, Russia as the strategic partners. He actively helped Vietnamese refugees, allowed them to come and stay in Thailand, supported the nationalist movements of Viet Minh, allowed Ho Chi Minh government to establish a diplomatic office in Bangkok, etc.

However, since the regime of Phibun Songkram as next Thai Prime Minister, the situation changed. Under the Communist threat to Thai security, Phibun realized the necessity to align with Western Power, in particular the United States, to restore his influence in the political stage, to fight against his opposite rivals in Royal Family, in opposite parties, and to maintain the stability of Thailand's security. From that time, the relationships between Thailand and major Communist powers, China and Soviet Union, were not good as previous. In particular, in 1952, after the passage by Thailand's Parliament of the Anti-Communist Law, Phibun's government stepped up the anti-communist policy through series of actions, such as: arresting Chinese communist oriented persons, raiding firms, closing Chinese associations and schools, closed the Representational Office of Vietnam, mistreated Vietnamese refugees in Thailand, banned

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, Page 15

all trade with Communist China, asked Moscow to close USSR's mission in Bangkok, etc. In particular, when Phibun made the turning points in Thailand's foreign policy by recognizing the puppet Bao Dai regime in Vietnam and dispatching Thai troops to fight in Korea beside United States and its allies, Thailand really was placed in an antagonistic front against Communist powers. However, in regard to Thailand's profit, Phibun had a victory. As he declared "We will join Great Britain and the U.S to help attain everlasting world peace"<sup>76</sup>. He took Thailand closely to United States and Western powers. According to his decision, Thailand received the multiple aids from United States such as: education, technical, economical, etc. When Thailand signed a Military Assistance Agreement with the United States and began to cooperate with U.S in military matters in 1950, Thailand really separated itself from the relationships with China and USSR, becoming the United States' ally against Communist powers. Next chapter will examine the turning point in Thailand's foreign policy when Thailand aligns itself to United States to contain Communism. It's also the primary step in Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War.

---

<sup>76</sup>Grossman, Nicholas, Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 46

## **Chapter III**

# **THE UNITED STATES – THAILAND ALLIANCE: THE FIRST STEP OF THAILAND’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR**

This chapter studies the turning point in Thailand’s foreign policy in the early period of Cold War, also toward Communism: aligning itself with the United States. By examining both internal and external factors of Thailand, this chapter will discover the core reasons which led Thailand to stand beside the United States as an ally to against Communist wave in Southeast Asia.

### **3.1. The international scene of early Cold War period and the beginning of an alignment**

Traditional Thai diplomacy had long been known with a policy that was at once pragmatic (for a small power) and opportunistic, Thailand yielded before the pressures of the dominant power of the region, surrendering diplomatic ground and territory to the extent necessary to retain the essential attributes of Thai independence. Above all, Thailand had never been caught in the position of forcibly resisting a greater power, particularly if a graceful bow or side stepping an armed confrontation offered a more practical alternative. In this manner, Thailand steered its way through the shoals of nineteenth century European imperialism and avoided the yoke of colonial rule.

As Sir Josiah Crosby, former British Minister to Thailand (1934-1942), thought: “For a small country in her position, the only hope of maintaining independence lay in preserving good relations with those among the great Powers who were most interested in her affairs and in keeping a nice balance between them Britain and France, and Siamese statesmen had proved themselves to be past-masters in the art of playing off those two countries against one another whenever it suited them to do so”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sir Josiah Crosby, *Siam: The crossroads*, (London: Hallis Carter, 1945), Page112. Cited in: Anuson Chinvanho “Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand’s relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975”, Page 4



Edwin F. Stanton, former U.S Ambassador to Thailand (1946-1953) had this to say about Thai diplomacy: “As a Thai statesman explained it to me: ‘We Thai bend like the bamboo but we do not break’”<sup>1</sup>

According to Arun Panupong, there were 4 reasons to let Thailand maintain her “flexible” foreign policy, they were:

- “To preserve the integrity and independence of the nation
- To achieve the highest possible economic and social development
- To uphold the value of human freedom
- To help creating a peaceful and harmonious world”.<sup>2</sup>

After Thailand declared war on the United States, there emerged a “Free Thai Movement”, or “Seree Thai” organization, which aimed at liberating the country from foreign occupation. The Free Thai Movement was formed by a group of Thai nationals mostly residing in the U.S under the leadership of Thai Minister in Washington D.C, M.R. Seni Pramoj, who “refused to recognize the declaration of war.”<sup>3</sup> He claimed “it did not represent the will of the Thai people in general”<sup>4</sup>. So M.R. Seni Pramoj “declared on his own not to inform the American government officially of Thailand’s declaration of the war against the United States”<sup>5</sup>. The Free Thai Movement also proposed the United States not to recognize Thailand’s declaration of war. This Free Thai Movement, for its cause, conducted resistance and espionage activities against Japanese both inside and outside Thai territory. In a brief time, this movement obtained great support from the Thai people in Thailand and abroad. On other hand, the “Free Thai Movement had successfully infiltrated the country and established contracts with Pridi’s underground headquarters in Bangkok”<sup>6</sup> Finally, the United States government decided not to

---

<sup>1</sup> Edwin F. Stanton, Brief Authority, (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1957) , Page171. Cited in Anuson Chinverno “Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand’s relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975”, Page 4

<sup>2</sup> Arun Panupong , A profile of Thailand’s foreign policy, (Ohio: Columbus, 1948), Page 295.

<sup>3</sup> Ma, Makata , “Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy”, Page 10

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 11

recognize Thailand's declaration of war announced by the government of Prime Minister Phibun Songkram in Bangkok. Furthermore, the U.S supported the Free Thai Movement that infiltrated the occupied country for military and intelligence operations.<sup>7</sup>

After the war, the United States refused to consider Thailand that had aligned itself with Japan as an enemy.<sup>8</sup> This refusal was based on the United States' recognition of the Free Thai Movement to liberate their homeland from Japanese occupation. On August 21<sup>th</sup> 1945, Mr. James Byrnes, the United States Secretary of State, made an announcement accepting Thailand's Peace Proclamation: "The American government has always believed that the declaration [Phibun Songkram's declaration against the U.S and British] did not represent the will of Thai people...During the past four years, we have regarded Thailand not as an enemy but a country to be liberated from the enemy. With that liberation now accomplished we look to resumption by Thailand of its former place in the community of nations as a free, sovereign, and independent country"<sup>9</sup>. In this respect, the U.S openly recognized the Free Thai Movement as the true and sole representative of the Thai people. Clearly, after World War II, Thailand and the United States developed their relations to the level of an alliance.

### **3.2. The perspective of United States on the rise of Communism in mainland China and Indochina.**

The collapse of Chinese Nationalist Government (Koumintang) in 1949 and the establishment of People's Republic China (PRC) with the leading of Chinese Communist Party had the effect of sharpening U.S policy in the Far East, and hastening the U.S measure to counter the Chinese Communists. The U.S. began to be more deeply concerned about Communist expansion in Asia. The political situation in China in 1949 brought the U.S to a new perception of politics in Asia. In 1949, the staff of the National Security Council (NSC), at the request of the Secretary of Defense, reexamined U.S policy toward Asia. The Secretary of Defense noted that he was:

---

<sup>7</sup>See more in: James V. Martin, Jr, Thai-American Relations in World War II, Association for Asian Studies :The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Aug., 1963), Page 451- 467.

<sup>8</sup> Ma, Makata , "Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy", Page 12

<sup>9</sup>Vimol Bhongbhibhat, The Eagle and the Elephant : 150 Years of Thai American Relations, Page 85

“...increasing concerned at the advance of Communist in large areas of the world and particularly the success of Communist in China

A major objective of the United States policy, as I understand it, is to contain Communist in order to reduce its threat to our security. Our actions in Asia should be part of a carefully considered and comprehensive plan to further that objective.”<sup>10</sup>

On December 30, 1949, NSC submitted another study to President Truman, and approved the following conclusions: “(1) U.S should make known its sympathy with the efforts of Asia leaders to form regional associations of non-Communist states in Asia; (2) U.S should develop and strengthen the security of the area from Communist external aggression or internal subversion; (3) U.S should encourage the creation of an atmosphere favorable to economic recovery and development in non-Communist Asia, (4) U.S should exploit every opportunity to increase the present Western orientation of the areas.”<sup>11</sup>

Politically, in February 1950, the U.S and Britain responded by extending recognition to the Bao Dai regime in Vietnam, while one month before, China and Soviet recognized the Ho Government, of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. And in December 1950, the U.S signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with France, Vietnam (Bao Dai regime), Cambodia and Laos providing for indirect U.S military aid to the three countries of French Indochina.

Toward French Indochina, the U.S in September 1948 encouraged France to cooperate with the non-Communists in Vietnam, and if France could make progress, the U.S promised to give financial support for Indochina. In October 1951, the U.S announced that U.S military assistance to NATO would reach five billion dollars, and that the major share would go to France. Another five hundred million dollars of military assistance in the same year would be used for equipment for Indochina. Furthermore, in December, representatives of the U.S, France and the French-organized

---

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of Defense, Pentagon Papers, Page 37.

<sup>11</sup> Surachart Bumrungsuk, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 42

Indochinese governments signed an agreement providing that all equipment and financial support for the establishment of Vietnamese national army under the French command would be supplied by the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, U.S policy was exemplified by NCS 64, which concluded as follows:

“10. It is important to United States security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is a key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat.

11. The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina were controlled by Communist dominated governments. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard.”<sup>13</sup>

### **3.3. United States and Thailand: the indispensable allies**

After World War II, the fall of mainland China to the communists and the possibility of a similar fall of Indochina compelled United States and Thailand to forge an alliance against communism in the region, as well as to maintain Thailand’s security and U.S influence in region. In other words, Thailand and the U.S both shared the common perspectives and concerns about the rising of Communism in Southeast Asia which would threaten the security of Thailand and the presence of United States in Southeast Asia.

#### **3.3.1. Thailand needed to depend on United States.**

After World War II, the United States played a highly constructive role in Thailand. On January 1, 1946, the U.S reestablished diplomatic relations with Thailand and supported its application for membership of the United Nation. A loan of \$10,000,000 was provided for the purchase of railroad equipment and for the rehabilitation of the nation’s transport system.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Ganganath Jha, *Foreign policy of Thailand* , Page 44

<sup>13</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Pentagon Papers*, Page 361-362.Cited in Surachart Bumrungsuk, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 43

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

Under the situation of Southeast Asia in this period, Thailand really needed the U.S because of the reasons below:

First of all, the fall of China and Indochina to Communist really alarmed Thailand strongly as the threat to her security. Thus, it was no doubtful that Field Marshall Phibun really needed the strong allies to against the Communist powers in the region, to avoid Thailand like a next domino in the Communist expansion.

Secondly, the United States was the only nation powerful enough to grant Thailand's security and the U.S had assumed the leadership of the Free World and had been prepared to take concrete action against further Communist expansion. Thailand saw that the failure of American policy to prevent a Communist takeover of Indochina would be a major setback of the U.S policy in this area. In other words, if the U.S was unable to preserve the independence of her allies, the U.S commitment to the defense of Thailand and preservation of Thai territorial integrity would be in doubt. Thus, aligning herself with the U.S at least offered some hope for the protection of Thailand security.

Thirdly, the United States was really a "super-power" in terms of its economic and technological capabilities. It would thus be in a position to supply Thailand with economic, technical and military aid it needed to stabilize its economy and modernize its armed forces. In September 19, 1950, Thailand and the United States signed Thai-U.S Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement. This set up an official American mission in Bangkok to provide technical assistance. In the same year, the U.S set up the United States Operation Mission (USOM) in Bangkok, to administer the American economic aid program to Thailand. The figures showed that American non-military aid to Thailand increased from less than \$10,000,000 per year prior to 1953 to approximately \$25,000,000 per year during the second half of decade.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, military cooperation with the United States would help Thailand to strengthen and modernize its military power. In 1950, President Truman approved a grant of \$10,000,000 in military aid to Thailand. The Erskine Mission led to the signing on October 17, 1950, of a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between Thailand and the

---

<sup>15</sup>Vimol Bhongbhibhat, The Eagle and the Elephant : 150 Years of Thai American Relations, Page 96

United States, which provided that the U.S would furnish Thailand with military equipment and “services, or other military assistance” as might be appropriate.<sup>16</sup> Soon after the signing of the Agreement, arms shipments began arriving, the first in January 1951, followed by twenty-seven more in the next twelve months. The shipments included sufficient arms to equip ten army battalions as well as fighter planes and modern naval vessels. To facilitate and supervise the training of the Thai armed forces and distribution of the military assistance, the United States established a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Bangkok. The U.S military assistance for the ensuing three years totaled \$4.5 million in 1951, \$12 million in 1952 and \$56 million in 1953.<sup>17</sup> On other hand, since the outbreak of the Communist insurgency in the northeast part of Thailand, the United States Special Forces had provided guerilla warfare training to the Thai Armed Forces.

**Table 3.1: United States Assistance to Thailand (1951 – 1957)**

[In thousands Dollars]

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Obligations</b>	<b>Expernditures</b>
1951	8,876	679
1952	7,179	6,335
1953	6,462	6,421
1954	8,767	4,542
1955	46,106	6,864
1956	33,508	24.841
1957	34,206	42,456
1958	5,137	12,741
Total	150,241	104,799

Source: International Cooperation Administration (ICA), Operation Report: Data as of December 31, 1957, page 47

<sup>16</sup>Randolph, R. Sean, The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986, Page 15

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

**Table 3.2: Amount and Types of United States assistance to Thailand (1951 – 1957)**  
**[In million Dollars]**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Technical Cooperation</b>	<b>Defense Support</b>
1951	8.9	
1952	7.2	
1953	6.5	
1954	8.8	
1955	4.6	41.9
1956	4.8	29.5
1957	4.5	30.0
Total	45.3	101.4

Source: Ellender Report, Page 396; ICA, Operation Report: Data as of December 31, 1957, page 47; and ICA, Operation Report: Data as of June 30, 1957, page 22<sup>18</sup>

These tables above showed more detail about the assistance of United States to Thailand. In the Table 1, we can see that military assistance program, the economic and technical assistance program, through December 31 1957, had totaled \$150,000,000 authorized of which \$104,779,000 had been expended. Primarily a technical assistance program from fiscal 1951 through 1954, the economic aid totaled \$31,400,000 of which two-thirds was spent for Point IV projects and the rest on the beginning of capital investment projects, small rural electric power facilities, highway improvement and railway extension.<sup>19</sup> In 1954, after the fall of Vietnam to Communist, in particular after Thailand signed Manila Pact, attended to SEATO, the U.S assistance to Thailand was increased. In 1954, the aid had totaled 8,767,000; in 1955 the economic aid had been increased to the sum of \$34,300,000 plus approximately \$12,200,000 direct forces support for a total \$46,106,000. For fiscal 1956, as showed in Table 2, the amount was 34,206,000, and through December 1957, \$5,137,000 had been authorized for fiscal

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, Page 140.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, Page 138.

1958. By June 30, 1956, the U.S had obligated \$92,000,000 and spent an additional \$46,000,000 for a total of 138,000,000.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.3.2. The United States interests Thailand**

As discussed above, after 1949, the situation in Asia dramatically changed with the communist victory in mainland China. In Indochina, the communist-led Viet Minh was fighting a war of liberation against the French. The domino theory now was existed as a real danger and threat to the non-communist states, to the security as well as the stability of the Southeast Asia. This theory also reduced the domination of Western powers in their colony, certainly, the influence of the U.S in the region also was reduced. Thus, to maintain its influence in Southeast Asia, as well as to launch an anti-communist movement in region and prevent the fall of whole region to Communism, the U.S had to find allies. And Thailand was an indispensable choice. The relations between Thailand and United States had a long history going back to 1833. With the new era after World War II, with the change in political and security situation in Southeast Asia, the United States viewed Thailand as a strategic ally in its policy toward in Asia in general, and Southeast Asian in particular.

The geography of Thailand was of much interest to the U.S. Thailand was in a strategic geographic location. Thailand is located at the center of mainland Southeast Asia. The country was seen as a gateway to Indochina, Burma and southern China. Thailand's capital, Bangkok, in the view of Leonard Seidman Unger, Former U.S Ambassador in Thailand as "a major hub of – particularly of air communication goes"<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, in the view of the U.S, "Thailand appeared as an oasis of stability in the region of turmoil, any reluctance by the U.S to cooperate closely with an authoritarian military regime was overcome by the need to protect Southeast Asia from falling under Communist rule."<sup>22</sup> With a military base in Thailand, the U.S would mobilize easily and

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, Page 139.

<sup>21</sup> Committee on foreign relations, United States Senate, United States security agreements and commitments abroad, Part 3, Kingdom of Thailand, (Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1970), Page 644

<sup>22</sup> Darling, Frank C, "America and Thailand", Asian Survey, Vol.7, No.4 (April, 1967), Page 213-225



quickly its forces to attack the targets around Thailand. For instance, the U.S Air Force used eight Thai bases to bomb North Vietnam in the Vietnam War.

Secondly, the United States also received active support of Thailand during the Vietnam War. The Thai government permitted the U.S to set up its military bases in the northeastern part of Thailand and stationed there about 48,000 U.S. troops,<sup>23</sup> mostly Air Force personnel, in order to face any possible military development in the area. The U.S used these military facilities to strike military targets in North Vietnam, bombing North Vietnamese military in Laos, as well as attacking Viet Cong in South Vietnamese territories.

Above all, the United States and Thailand shared together the mutual concern about the “domino theory”, about the development of Communism, not only in mainland China, but also the concerning about the spearing of Communist in whole region. It can be said that, this mutual concern played a key role to let United States and Thailand set up an alliance relations. This also was explained in detail by the U.S President Truman via a message to Congress in 1952:

“The basic objective of the United States in Thailand is to support a friendly government which has unreservedly committed itself to the cause of the free world in maintaining stability in this country situated not far from China’s Red Army, and bordering on unsettled areas in Indochina and Burma. It is one of the world’s greatest rice producers and exporters, on whose supply many countries of the free world depend, and it is also a source of a number of critical materials”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it can be said that Thailand is a key country in the security policy of the United States in Southeast Asia in particular, and in Asia in general. It would help the U.S to maintain and increase its presence and influence in the region with a view to resisting any Communist aggression.

---

<sup>23</sup> Jessup, John E, “Thailand”, An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Conflict and Conflict Resolution, 1945 – 1996, (1998): 728.

<sup>24</sup>Vimol Bhongbhibhat The Eagle and the Elephant : 150 Years of Thai American Relations, Page 96.

### 3.4. Thailand and SEATO

After the defeat of the French in Dien Bien Phu battle on 7th ,May 1954, the situation changed dramatically. Vietnamese communists won in the First Indochina War, and the wave of Communism after the victory of Vietnam went to Laos, the French collapsed in Indochina. These events also marked a significant new development in U.S-Thai military relations. Thailand now sought a firmer American commitment. Thus, when the United States started exploring the possibilities of a treaty for collective defense in Southeast Asia, Thailand responded eagerly.

On September 8, 1954, the Manila Pact – which formed the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) – was signed. Thailand and the Philippines were the only two members that were Southeast Asia nations. The purpose of SEATO was “to uphold the principles of individual liberty and the rules of law; to provide mutual defense against armed attack and internal subversion; and to promote the well-being of the people of the Treaty Area, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter”<sup>25</sup>. The confidence instilled by the collective protection of SEATO enabled its members to make substantial political, social and economic progress.

It can be said that this treaty was designed to defend Thailand and contain Communism from expanding into Southeast Asia. For this objective, in February, SEATO decided to establish its headquarters and the SEATO Military Command in Bangkok.<sup>26</sup> This decision of SEATO could be considered as a commitment of the U.S and its allies to guard and support Thailand under the SEATO treaty.

The main purpose of joining SEATO of Thailand was the problem of security and progress of country. Thailand realized that she could not live alone to the world of conflict, in detail, live right beside the Communist states. Thailand needed to adopt all means for retaining her independence and security of the country. For this reason, Thailand decided to join SEATO. Because SEATO was a defensive alliance which based

---

<sup>25</sup> Fenton, Daniel. To cage the Red Dragon: SEATO and the Defence of Southeast Asia 1955-1965. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), Page 236

<sup>26</sup>Nuechterlin, Donald E, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, Page 114

on Article 51 of the United Nation Charter which “recognizes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense”.<sup>27</sup>

As the main beneficiary among SEATO members was Thailand, which gained a special U.S commitment: The U.S made a pledge to defend Thailand in case of Communist aggression in the area. For this special U.S commitment, in the communiqué between the Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and the U.S Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1962, the U.S firmly declared that, they would: “act in the defense of Thailand even without the unanimous agreement of SEATO members”<sup>28</sup>. In this joint communiqué, the U.S also stated repeatedly that: “it regards the preservation of the independence and integrity of Thailand as vital to the national interest of the United States and world peace”<sup>29</sup>. Next, the U.S also affirmed that the “obligation of the U.S does not depend upon the prior agreement of all other parties to the treaty, since this obligation is individual as well as collective”<sup>30</sup>. This firm declaration of the U.S served as a strong reminder to the Communism who planned to conduct a guerilla warfare or invasion of Thai territory.

The U.S policy began to respond to the military situation in South Vietnam, moving beyond partnership to primacy. SEATO extended its protection to Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam by a protocol annexed to the Manila Pact. Thus, it can be said that U.S used SEATO as a tool to block further expansion of the Communism, and transformed South Vietnam into a key position in the line of containment. However, SEATO failed to prevent the fall of the Indochinese states to Communism. For Thailand, what had happened in Laos and Cambodia threatened for Thailand’s security and position in Southeast Asia.

---

<sup>27</sup> Southeast Asia Treaty Organization Collective Security shield of Freedom, A SEATO publication, (Bangkok, 1959) , Page 60. Cited in Phadit Machima, “Thailand’s relations with the Southeast Asia countries”, (Master’s Thesis, Pakistan: Punjab University, 1961), Page35.

<sup>28</sup> Clough, Ralph N., East Asia and U.S Security, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1975), Page192. Cited in Ma Makata ,“Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy” Page 16

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

For Thailand, SEATO seemed to be an effective deterrent, with collective defense by SEATO members in case of Communist direct aggression on Thai territory. The establishment SEATO headquarters in Bangkok was a strong indication of SEATO's intentions, particularly the U.S determination to defend Thailand. When the U.S and other members of SEATO decided to use military forces to halt the Communist advance in Indochina, Thailand as a member of SEATO was obliged to become involved in the Vietnam War beside other SEATO members. This Thai policy was in line with SEATO treaty, containing Communist expansion into Southeast Asia. Thus, understandably, the principle of Thailand's involvement in Vietnam War was Thailand's anti-communist policy and its alignment with the United States under the SEATO treaty.

### **3.5. Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, the change in the Asian political and security situation after World War II led the United States and Thailand to become allies. Both Thailand and the United States also needed each other. Thailand needed the United States to guarantee Thailand's security against the threat of communism from neighboring countries, to help Thailand stabilize its economy, and modernize its armed forces. A strong anti- communist policy and alignment with United States under the SEATO treaty are the core reasons for Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War. Conversely, the United States considered Thailand as its front in Southeast Asia in particular and in Asia in general to prevent further expansion of communism. This strategic thinking was reflected in the "domino theory". The U.S really needed Thailand's support for a hard and long battle. With an ally as Thailand, the U.S continued maintaining its presence and influence in the region. The next chapter will show the evidences in detail about the "close cooperation" between the U.S and Thailand in the Vietnam War.

# Chapter IV

## THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF THAILAND IN THE VIETNAM WAR

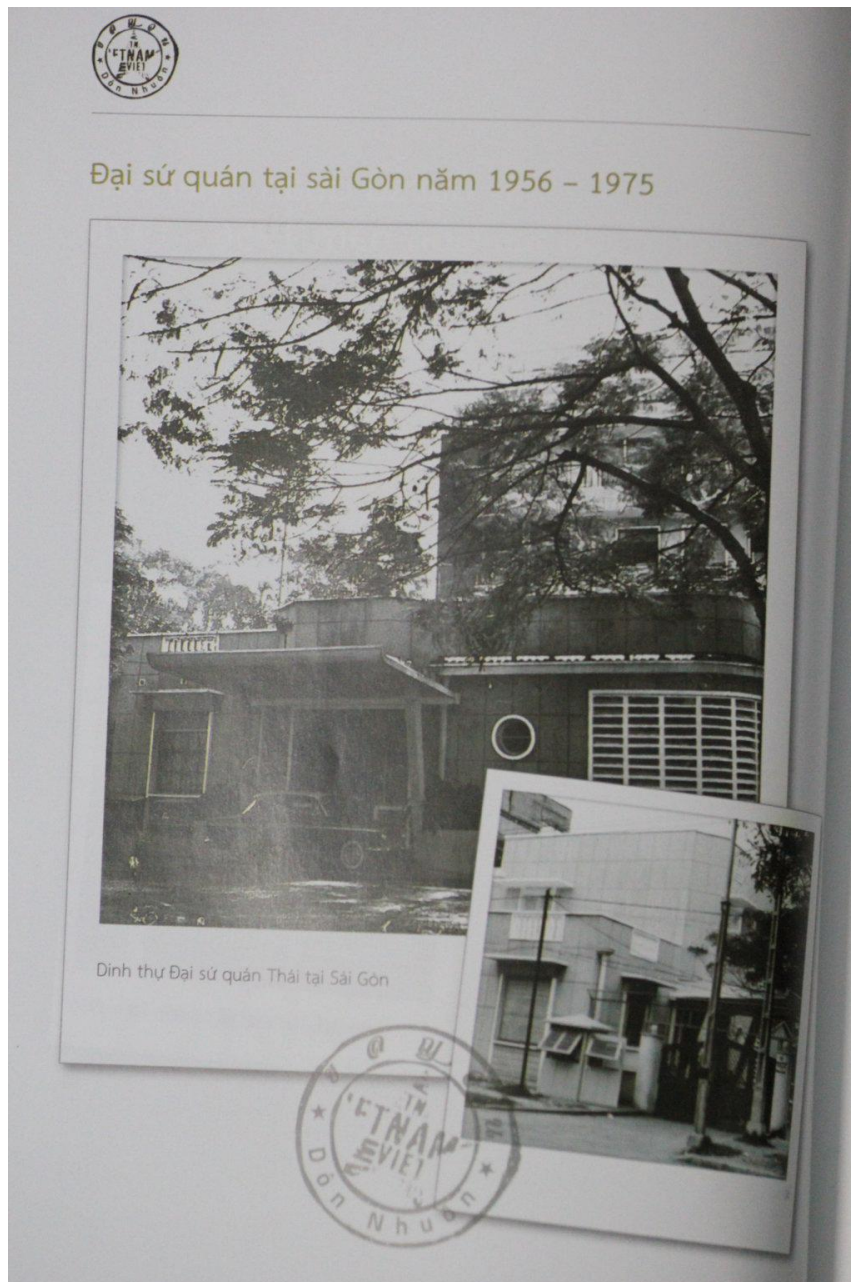


Figure 1: The Royal Thai Embassy in Saigon (Republic of Vietnam) 1956 – 1975

[Source: Pisanu Chanvitan, *Don Nhuom - Diary of Thai Ambassador in Ha Noi (Ký sự của Đại sứ Thái Lan tại Hà Nội)*, Hanoi: Labour Publishment, 2011, p76]

This chapter will show the evidence of the support by Thailand to United States in the Vietnam War. Thailand did not only permit the U.S to use Thai territory to strike North Vietnam, but also Thailand joined directly in the Vietnam War by sending troops to Vietnam to fight the Viet Cong

#### **4.1.The Thailand – Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) relations**

As mentioned above, the first action of Thailand to involve in the Vietnam War is her recognition of the Bao Dai regime in 1950. Since that time until the Geneva conference, Vietnam experienced the series of turning points, changed the war situation in the Vietnam front. The French couldn't restore its power and domination in the front as before World War II, and step by step, after the defeat in Dien Bien Phu battle, France was defeat completely in the Indochina front. The Geneva Agreement in July 1954 divided Vietnam into two parts along the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel: North Vietnam and South Vietnam. North Vietnam aligned itself with China and Russia and followed the Communist ideology, while South Vietnam with the support from the United States pursued the anti-communist policy. According to the Geneva Accord, both areas had to hold the joint elections in 1956, in which voters in both areas would vote to choose a single government under which two areas would be merged in one. However, in 1956, the South Vietnamese government with the support of the United States refused to participate in the joint elections.

Certainly, because of its alignment with United States, Thailand also recognized the government of South Vietnam. The best evidence of this recognition was the establishment of the Thai Embassy in Saigon – South Vietnam.

Actually, according to the Diary of Former Thai Ambassador in Vietnam Pisanu Chanvitan, in the past, Thailand established its consulate general in Vietnam since King Rama V until King Rama VII, called Siam Consulate General, and it was placed in Hai

Phong city. Until the period of King Rama 7, in January 1934, Siam accredited General Prayool Phamornmontree as the first Consul of Siam in Saigon<sup>1</sup>

In 1956, as an engagement to support the South Vietnam government as well as a result of anti-communist policy, The Thai government decided to upgrade The Royal Thai Consulate in Saigon to Royal Thai Embassy. This embassy was placed at No.77 Truong Minh Giang Road, Saigon (see Figure 3). The Consul General, General Pramroj Chongcharoen became the first Thai Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam. The Royal Thai Embassy operated until 1975 when the South Vietnamese government collapsed, the embassy had to close.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of the Royal Thai Embassy in Saigon in 1956 marked the strong engagement and support of Thailand to South Vietnam as well as engagement with United States in terms of anti-communist policy.

Particularly, on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1959, King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit arrived in South Vietnam on a royal visit. The trip was described as “history-making” by an editorial in Vietnam’s *Saigon Moi* (New Saigon).<sup>3</sup>The trip was a significant event to promote friendly relations between Thailand and South Vietnam as well as strengthen the support of Thailand to South Vietnam.

#### **4.2.Sarit Thanarat and the inheritance to Phibun’s support toward the United States**

*“The coup d’etat of September 1957 marked the beginning of a new phase in Thai political history. It brought to political leadership a group of military leaders who were mainly trained and educated within Thailand. The new leadership represented by Sarit tried to implement a political system which was different from the previous one inherited from the 1932 Revolution. In essence, the new political system was considered to be ‘pattiwat’ (‘loosely translated as “revolution”)’”* **Thak Chaloemtiarana**<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Pisanu Chanvitan, Don Nhuom - Diary of Thai Ambassador in Ha Noi, Page 60

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Grossman, Nicholas Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 107

<sup>4</sup> Thak Chaloemtiarana, Thailand: the politics of Despotism, (Bangkok: Thammasat University Printing Press, 1979) , page 121.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1957, the military commander of Bangkok, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat led a coup, toppling Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram's government. Phibun and the director-general of police, General Phao Sriyanond, fled Thailand. On 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1957, the elections were held and the leader of September's bloodless military coup, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, led his newly created Chart Sangkhom, or National Socialist, party to majority in the National Assembly. Sarit said his goals were to "maintain Thailand's independence, to promote Buddhism, to respect other religions and to uphold the monarchy, which he considered sacred"<sup>5</sup>

But Sarit did not immediately assume direct control of government. Instead he installed Pote Sarasin - the former Thai Foreign Minister from 1949-1951, former Thai ambassador in United States as well as the first Secretary General of SEATO – as interim Premier. But after the election on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1957, General Thanom Kittikachorn was appointed Prime Minister, with some semblance of legality.<sup>6</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> October 1958, after the resignation of Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat took control the government. Field Marshal's new Revolutionary Party said it seized power "because of the increasingly serious nature of the communist threat to Thailand"<sup>7</sup>

In contrast with Phibun, Sarit earned the support from the King. In the other words, the King's influence in Thai politics was rising.<sup>8</sup> During the Phibun regime, the King's Power had been limited, for Phibun was after all a member of the 1932 coup. Phibun really wished to limit the expansion of royalism. He even banned the king from touring outside the capital.<sup>9</sup> Whereas, it seems that relationship between Sarit and the King became stronger after Sarit launched his second coup in October 1958. The Announcement No.2 of the Revolutionary Party stated that the coup of the 1958 was

---

<sup>5</sup> Grossman, Nicholas, Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 95

<sup>6</sup> Darling, Frank C, Thailand and the United States , Page 182

<sup>7</sup> Grossman, Nicholas Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 101

<sup>8</sup> Surachart Bumrungsuk, "United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977", Page 78

<sup>9</sup> Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit, A history of Thailand, Page 147



staged in order to protect the monarchy.<sup>10</sup>The Revolutionary Party also issues Announcement No.9 explaining to the King the reasons for the coup, and confirming its loyalty to the Throne.<sup>11</sup>Later, the King replied to this announcement by encouraging the Revolutionary Party to pursue its objective firmly.<sup>12</sup>

When Sarit overthrew Phibun government, the internal situation of Thailand was not stable. Thus, “*Phatthana*” (prosperity) and “*khwaam*” (development) became Sarit’s favorite expressions in his socio-economic development policy. In particular was development as his watchword that “Our important task in this revolution era is development which includes economic development, educational development, administrative development, and everything else”<sup>13</sup>. Sarit popularized slogans such as “Work is money. Money is work. This brings happiness”<sup>14</sup>. In 1961, Sarit government launched Thailand’s first five years development plan with its keynote was “encouragement of economic growth in the private sector”<sup>15</sup>. Thus, it’s no doubt that the first reason to Sarit’s support United States was to transform and develop Thai economy by the U.S aid and capital. After assuming the power in 1947, Sarit actively sought the Thai-U.S relations. The first element was Sarit installed Pote Sarashin as interim Premier Minister. Pote Sarashin was General Secretary of SEATO, the former Thai ambassador to the U.S, as well as was U.S educated. The selection of Pote really was an implicative signal from Thailand that she still wanted to continue the close Thai – U.S relations. As Thai Premier Minister, Pote immediately announced that “Thailand would not change and that she would continue to support SEATO and seek America aid”<sup>16</sup>. Right after this declaration, suspected communist sympathizers were arrested and leftist newspapers were

---

<sup>10</sup> Royal Thai Government, Biography and Works of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. A cremation book (Bangkok: The Cabinet, 1964). Cited in Bumrungsuk,Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 79

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Page 74

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, Page 76-77

<sup>13</sup> Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit, A history of Thailand, Page 150

<sup>14</sup> Bumrungsuk,Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 114

<sup>15</sup> Thak Chaloeontiarana Thailand: the politics of Despotic Paternalism., Page 229.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Page 240

banned to publish. In return, as usual, the aids from the U.S were come to Thailand. In 1958, the U.S approved a Development Loan Fund to Thailand which raised the total economic aid program for 1958-1959 to \$58.9 million which more than doubled the amount given the previous year.<sup>17</sup>

The idea of Sarit about economic development was encouraged by the U.S administrations. President Eisenhower and President Kennedy both sent letters to Sarit indicating U.S willingness to explorer measures for advancing Thai economic development and mobilizing Thai resources. The U.S also sent a study team to Thailand to analyze in detail the development problem.<sup>18</sup> It can be said that economic development was one the main issues in U.S – Thai relations during the Sarit regime as the statement of the U.S government in 1961 that:

*“Future lending prospect (of Thailand) will depend upon a serious Thai effort to prepare a comprehensive development plan. It is purposed to offer U.S assistance in developing a Thai capability for such planning”*<sup>19</sup>

The economic aids that the U.S provided to Thailand during the Sarit regime, was showed as the table below:

---

<sup>17</sup> Statistic and Reports Division, Office of Program and Policy Co-ordination Agency for International Development, United States Overseas Loans and Grams and Assistance from International Organizations, Obligations and Loan Authorization , July 1, 1945 – June 30, 1967 (March 29. 1968). Cited in: Thak Chaloehtiarana , Thailand: the politics of Despotic Paternalism, Page 240

<sup>18</sup> Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 107

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, page 108.

**Table 4.1: Total Economic Aid of United States to Thailand****(Millions of Dollars)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1958	26,0
1959	59,0
1960	25,6
1961	25,4
1962	47,6
1963	21,9

Source: Statistic from AID Annual Report, United States Overseas Loans and Grant (USOLAG)<sup>20</sup>

The second reason that sought Sarit to support to the close relationship with United States was to suppress Communist insurgents. In 1961 and 1962, the CPT took steps to lay the groundwork for an open insurgency. The Third Congress of the CPT, held in 1961, passed a formal resolution declaring that “armed struggle was the proper strategy for a revolution in Thailand”<sup>21</sup>. In March 1962, a clandestine radio station calling itself the “Voice of People of Thailand” (VPT) began broadcasting. This radio based in Pathet Lao, it attacked both Royal Thai Government and its close relations with United States. Furthermore, the Chinese influence to Thai communist parties was still heavy, thus, certainly, Sarit government viewed communist insurgency as a threat to topple the existing Thai government and substitute in its place a communist regime. Sarit stated that “the Communist movement was the major threat to Thailand”<sup>22</sup> He also added “Thailand needed a stable anti-Communist government to convince the U.S that the Thai regime

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 111

<sup>21</sup> Randolph, R. Sean, The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986, Page 84.

<sup>22</sup> Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 114

deserved more aid”<sup>23</sup>. In March 1962, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman visited the U.S. On 6<sup>th</sup>, March, 1962, the U.S and Thailand stated a joint statement, known since as the Rusk-Thanat Communiqué (or Rusk-Thanat agreement). In this agreement, Secretary of State Dean Rusk “expressed the firm intention of the U.S to aid Thailand, its ally and historic friend, in resisting Communist aggression and subversion”<sup>24</sup>, and both Thailand and United States “reviewed the close association of Thailand and the U.S in the South-East Asia Collective Defense Treaty and agreed that such association is an effective deterrent to direct Communist aggression against Thailand. They agreed that the treaty provides the basis for the signatories collectively to assist Thailand in case of Communist armed attack against that country”<sup>25</sup>. The U.S expressed that it would protect Thailand from Communist by giving full support under “its constitutional processes”<sup>26</sup> Thus, clearly, Sarit viewed the U.S commitment as a protective tool to against Communist aggression, maintain the stability of Thai security, as well as earn more the aids from United States.

In conclusion, it can be said that Sarit’s support to United States based on the instability conditions in domestic factors of Thailand. By increasing the close relationship with the U.S, Sarit earned the aids from the U.S to seek the development plans, develop Thai economy and military. In parallel, this relation also helped Sarit to against the Communist insurgency, maintain the stability of Thai security.

#### **4.3. Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn in the relations with the United States.**

On 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1963, Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat passed away. The death of Field Marshal Sarit occurred at a particularly unfortunate time for Thailand and its Western allies because of the increasing dangerous political situation prevailing in

---

<sup>23</sup> Darling, Frank C, Thailand and the United States, Page 184.

<sup>24</sup> Rusk-Thanat Communiqué 1962. Cited in: Committee on foreign relations, United States Senate, United States security agreements and commitments abroad, Part 3, Kingdom of Thailand, Page 676.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

Southeast Asia. In Vietnam, the Ngo Dinh Diem regime had been overthrown by the generals in Saigon army, and North Vietnam were taking full advantage of the resulting confusion to press in the Mekong delta. While, Cambodia appeared to be moving toward an accommodation with China, and in Laos, the civil war threatened to erupt again at anytime.<sup>27</sup> Regard to domestic issues, Sarit passed away when he had not finished the first five year development plan that he promulgated in 1961 yet and when Thailand surrounded by domestic issues and in great need of internal stability. Moreover, in 1965, The Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, announced that a war of “national liberation” was being launched in Thailand.<sup>28</sup> Once again, Communism threatened to Thai security and stability.

In the context of external and internal factors toward Thailand after Sarit’s death, understandably, the new Prime Minister Thanom Kittkachorn cooperated more closely with the United States, which at this juncture began to increase Thailand’s involvement in Vietnam War.

Clearly, after the death of Sarit, Thanom understood that his position in the domestic political stage was not strong, thus, Thanom really needed the support from both domestic and international. Domestically, Thanom needed to cooperate with Praphat Charusathien, Commander – in Chief of the Army, to get Praphat support. Internationally, Thanom, not surprise, continued to earn the support from the U.S.

In late 1964, U.S President Johnson sent a message to Thanom and to Thai Ambassador Sukich Nimmanheming in the U.S to express the “U.S government would continue its support and friendship”<sup>29</sup>. Thanom also confirmed to the U.S Embassy in Bangkok that “there would be no change in Thai foreign policy”<sup>30</sup>

In the same year, Thanom made the first steps of him to move closely to the U.S. In detail, he allowed the U.S to deploy its troops to Thailand on the condition that the U.S

---

<sup>27</sup> Nuechterlin, Donald E, Thailand after Sarit, University of California Press: Asia Survey, vol.4, no.5 (May 1964), Page 842

<sup>28</sup> Muscat, Robert J, Thailand and the United States: development, security and foreign aid (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), Page 154.

<sup>29</sup> Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 117

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

troops would move forward into Laos if the situation in Laos threatened to Thai security<sup>31</sup>. Next, Thanom signed a secret military agreement with the U.S, the Contingency Plan, which was intended to assure Thailand security.<sup>32</sup>. This agreement, in a combination with the Rusk – Thanat agreement which was signed under the Sarit regime, was a very strong commitment of the United States to the Thai security.

In February, 1964, Thanom agreed the deployment of United States Air Force (USAF) to train Laotian pilots in Thailand in counterinsurgency and technique.<sup>33</sup>. In May, 1964, Thanom continued to agree to allow the U.S use Thai bases for U.S photo reconnaissance flights and for search and rescue operations over Laos.<sup>34</sup>

In 1966, the Thanom government approved a proposal that the U.S 606<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron train Thai pilots in counterinsurgency techniques. This unit also provided temporary helicopter support for Thai counterinsurgency operations.<sup>35</sup>

Particularly, in 1967, the Thanom government entered into an agreement with the U.S to allow the stationing of B-52's at U-Tapao. These B-52s were used to bomb North Vietnam.

In mid September 1967, there was a document named “Memorandum from President’s Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson” in subjected title “Possible government shuffle in Thailand”. This document stated that “General Praphat, Thailand’s Deputy Prime Minister, is planning to push Prime Minister Thanom out of office and place himself at the head of the Thai government. The current rumor is that Praphat will move against Thanom shortly after the Thai constitution is promulgated in December 5”<sup>36</sup>. After criticizing the roles and thought of Praphat as “boodle boy of Thai politics” toward the problems of being corrupted and the delay on constitutional development in Thailand, the U.S concluded that: “Praphat is an able administrator and would certainly continue

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Page 118

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, Page 119

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, page 121

<sup>36</sup> U.S Department State. U.S Department State. Foreign relations of the United States 1964-1968, volume XXVII, Mainland Southeast Asia, Regional Affairs Document 353, Bangkok, April 22, 1955. Office of the Historian [Online]. Source: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v27/d353>

Thailand's military cooperation with us, albeit on a more hard-eyed, tit-for-tat, basis. Praphat's assumption of power would be unpopular with the international press and we would undoubtedly be criticized for supporting another corrupt military dictator”<sup>37</sup> and showed that the U.S “should operate discreetly to discourage Praphat's efforts”<sup>38</sup>. This document provided clearly that the U.S would continue support the Thanom government and would take action to maintain Thanom power. It also helped the U.S continue to perform the agreements which signed with Thanom before.

Certainly, one thing always was available in almost Thailand – U.S relations: the aid and assistance from the U.S to Thailand. Under the Thanom Regime, the U.S military aid continued to increase, as “awards” of the U.S to Thailand to regard the permission of Thanom for the U.S troop deployment in Thailand. These two tables blow will show in detail about that:

**Table 4.2: Total U.S Military Assistance (1965-1970)**

(Millions of Dollars)

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1965	36,4
1966	53,2
1967	69,6
1968	89,8
1969	96,5
1970	110,2

Source: Source: Statistic from AID Annual Report, United States Overseas Loans and Grant (USOLAG)<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 137

**Table 4.3: Total U.S Economic Aid to Thailand (1964-1970)****(Millions of Dollars)**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1964	15,1
1965	41,4
1966	60,4
1967	55,9
1968	49,3
1969	37,4
1970	29,0

Source: Source: Statistic from AID Annual Report, United States Overseas Loans and Grant (USOLAG)<sup>40</sup>

In sum, it can be concluded that with the closely cooperation with the U.S like the previous Thai Premier Minister, Field Marshal Thanom could maintain and increase his political position in the government, in particular, after the death of Field Marshal Sarit as well as the Praphat's ambitions to stage a coup d'état, prevent the Communism wave in domestic, earn more aids for military and economy of Thailand. Internally, Thailand, with decision to permit the U.S troops to deploy in Thailand, involved directly to Vietnam War as well as Indochina War in terms of military issues.

#### **4.4.The Thailand's first contributions**

The year 1964 marked the first contribution of Thailand in terms of troops to South Vietnam as an ally of Republic of Vietnam, as well as the U.S in Vietnam War.

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 1964, five days after the Gulf of Tonkin event in which U.S Maddox and Turner Joy destroyers were attacked by North Vietnamese P-4 torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin, Bangkok showed its support for U.S action. Prime Minister

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, Page 150



Thanom announced that Thailand had taken appropriate measures “to meet internal and external dangers and could now respond to any and all military threats at any moment”<sup>41</sup>. The days before Thanom’s announcement, two U.S tactical fighter squadrons arrived in Thailand as “precautionary measures” following U.S consultations with the Thai government. Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman said the U.S action in North Vietnam “serves as clear notice to the other side that if they [North Vietnam] continue to commit aggression against this country or that country they may suffer great misfortune”<sup>42</sup>

The first contribution to the Vietnam War effort by Thailand was made on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1964, when a sixteen-man Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) contingent arrived in Vietnam to assist in flying and maintaining some of the cargo aircraft operated by the South Vietnamese Air Force. As an adjunct to this program, the RTAF also provided jet aircraft transition training to Vietnamese pilot<sup>43</sup>

The status of this early mission changed little until Royal Thai Military Assistance Group (RTMAG) in Vietnam was activated on 17 February 1966 and a Thai Air Force lieutenant colonel was designated as commander. The Royal Thai Air Force contingent then became a subordinate element of RTMAG, Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1966, Thailand officially joined the Vietnam conflict by sending air and naval transport units to assist the South Vietnamese government in its fight against communist North Vietnam.<sup>45</sup> With its decision to commit troops, Thailand became the fifth outside nation to participate in the war, joining the U.S, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. The Government explained its decision in a special broadcast on Radio Thailand “the government saw that the situation in the Republic of Vietnam would have

---

<sup>41</sup>Grossman, Nicholas, Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 137.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr, Allied Participation in Vietnam, [Online] (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1985), Page 26. Source: <http://www.history.army.mil/books/Vietnam/allied/ch02.htm#b1>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Grossman, Nicholas, Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996, Page 148.

repercussions in this region, particularly Thailand. If the free countries were unable to stop the communist aggression there, the consequences will become more serious”<sup>46</sup>

With this decision, Thailand initially sent two air-transport contingents and a coastal shipping patrol unit consisting of 180 men. The 27 men- Victory Squadron 11 of the RTAF became the first troops to actually touch down on Vietnamese soil when they arrived in Saigon on 23 July. In September 1967, the first elements of the Royal Thai Volunteer Regiment, the “Queen’s Cobra” arrived in Vietnam and were stationed in Bearcat (near Bien Hoa, north Saigon).<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.5.The activity of Royal Thai Army Volunteers Force (RTAVF)**

*“The Thai troops participating in the conflict with the communist forces in South Vietnam had joined the fight to protect the freedom and security of this part of the world. We must realize that the enemy’s aggression is aimed at destroying what we have including the Thai nation itself”*

**King Bhumibol<sup>48</sup>**

On the night of 20 December 1967, the Queen’s Cobras troops had to face to the first attack from Viet Cong at its base at the village of Phuoc Tho, Nhon Trach district, Dong Nai. The Thais had won their first battle. Governments in Bangkok, United States, and Saigon immediately hailed it as a major victory. President Johnson used the words “valor and determination”<sup>49</sup> to praise the Thai soldiers. General Westmoreland also flew to Bearcat to congratulate the Thai forces. Furthermore, the Thai news media were ecstatic. *Siam Rath* carried the front page headline “Queen’s Cobras make a name for themselves in Vietnam” while Bangkok Post declared “Thailand salutes the great heroes of the Queen’s Cobras whose spectacular performance in South Vietnam on Wednesday has earned new honor for this country.”<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48,48</sup> Grossman, Nicholas, *Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996*, Page 132.

<sup>49</sup> Ruth, Richard A, *In Buddha’s company: Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War*, Page 59.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, Page 61

The deployment of the Queen's Cobras to South Vietnam was divided into four phases: the engineer company, the advance party, the main body of the Queen's Cobras Regiment, and the last unit to reach Vietnam was the armored personal carriers (APC) platoon.<sup>51</sup>

In October 1967, one month after the first elements of Queen's Cobras arrived in South Vietnam, it launched an operation named NARASUAN as a "search and destroy" operation in Bien Hoa province. Thai troops killed 145 of the enemy<sup>52</sup>. Particularly, the image of Thai troops in South Vietnam at that time were quite impressive. Thai units not only fight, they also contributed actively in civic action projects around their area of responsibility, for instance, during the Operation NARASUAN, the Thais built a hospital, constructed 48 kilometers of new roads, and treated nearly 49,000 civilian patients through their medical units.<sup>53</sup>

In 1969, the conflict intensified further after the successful Tet offensive by North Vietnam at the end of January. On 11 April, 1968, Thai forces formed part of the U.S-led, five-nation "Operation Complete Victory" against communist Viet Cong forces around Saigon. It maintained the month-long "resolved to win" campaign, which the Pentagon claimed had killed 2,685 communists. But, on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 19 soldiers in the Queen Cobras Regiment died in a helicopter collision during a strike near Saigon.<sup>54</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> July, the Black Panther division left Bangkok, the first of over 12,000 Thai troops sent to surround Saigon, so U.S forces could make attacks in Mekong delta.

By mid-1967 the Thai government considered the ability adding more forces to Vietnam. On 8 September the Thai government submitted a request for extensive military assistance to the American Embassy at Bangkok. Specific items in the request were related directly to the provision of an additional army force for South Vietnam. The Thai Prime Minister proposed a one-brigade group at the strength of 10,800 men composed of

---

<sup>51</sup> Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr, Allied Participation in Vietnam, [Online], Page 31

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, Page 33

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, Page 31

three infantry battalions: artillery battalion, engineer battalion, and other supporting units as required.<sup>55</sup>

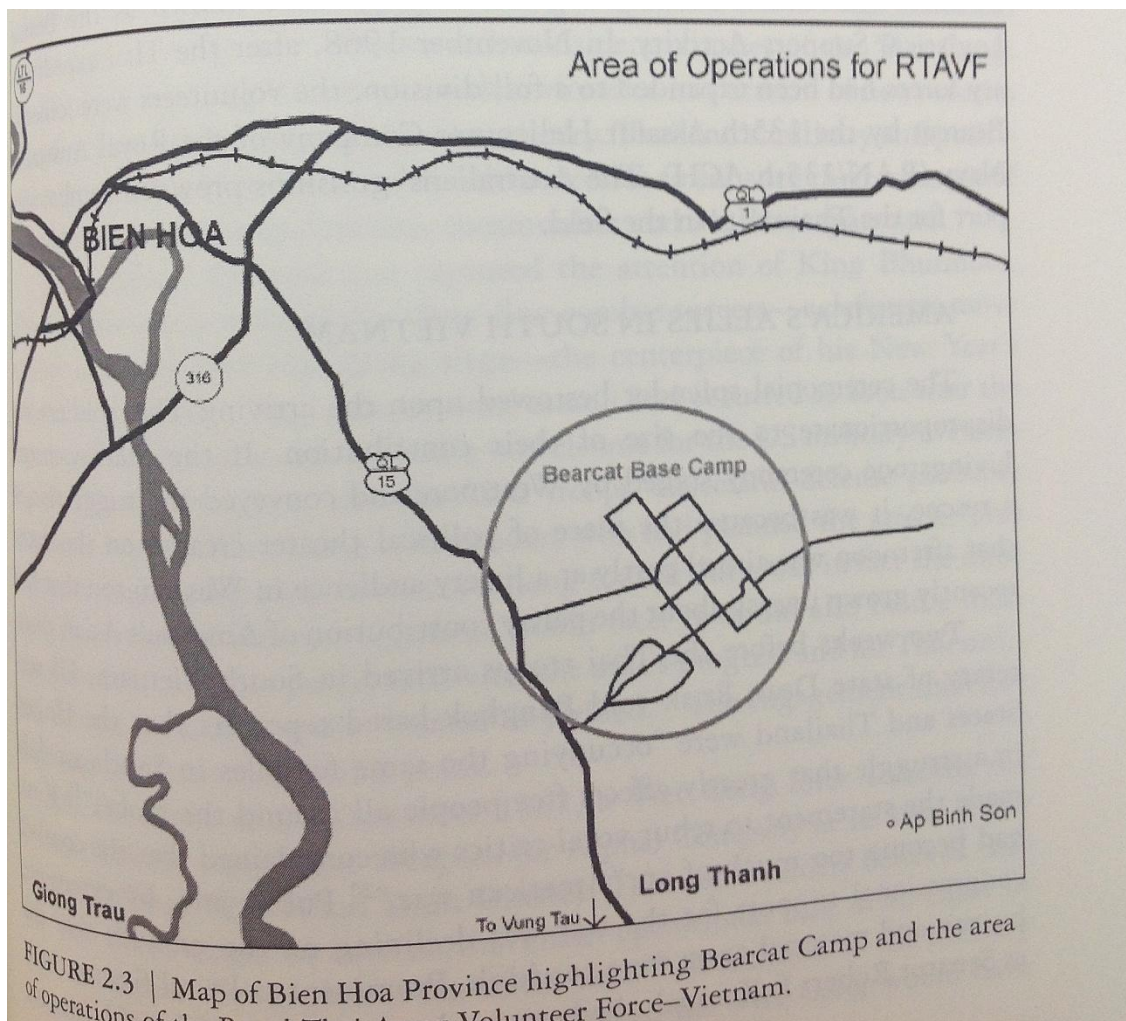


Figure 2: Map of Bien Hoa province highlighting Bearcat Camp and the area of operations of the RTAVF [Source: Ruth, Richard A (2012, pp.57)]

The figure 2 shows the area of operations assigned to the Thais. The area was characterized by a low level of enemy action because the land was used by the Viet Cong primarily as a source of food and clothing.<sup>56</sup> The Thais' mission was to interdict the Viet

<sup>55</sup>Ibid, Page 33.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, Page 44

Cong units operating in the area and destroy their operation bases, weapons caches, and logistic network.<sup>57</sup>

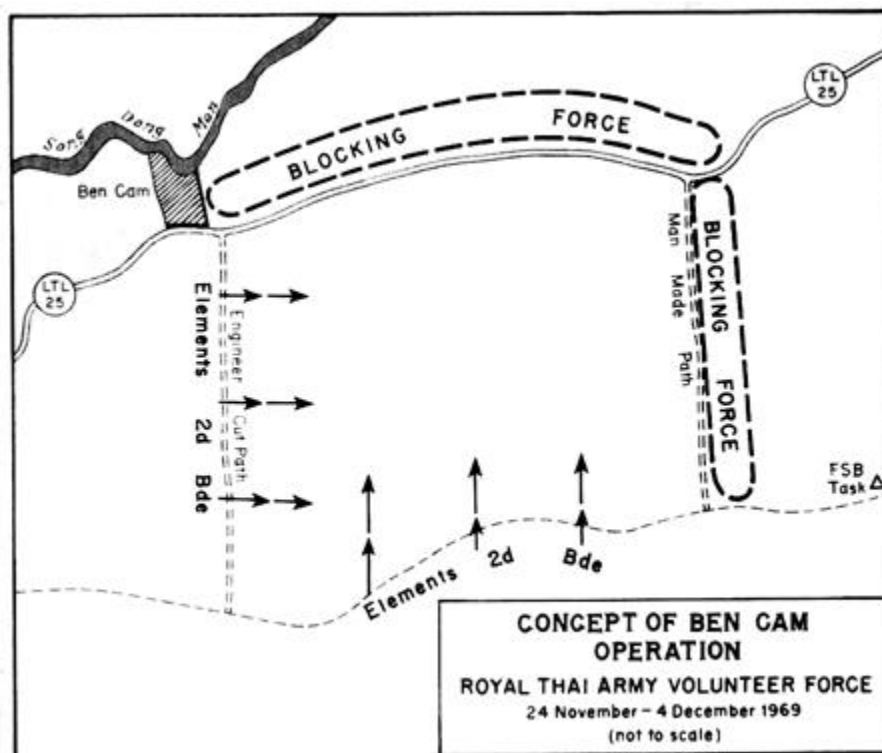


Figure 3: Concept of Ben Cam operation, RTAVF, 24 November - 4 December 1969

[Source: Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr (1985, pp46)]

During the period 24 November 1969-4 December 1969, Thai troops set up the “search and clear mission” which took place in Ben Cam village, Nhon Trach district (see Figure 3). The mission required that an enemy area to the south of Ben Cam village be sealed and then swept free of local guerrillas. Using six rifle companies, the Thais sealed an area bounded on the north by Highway 25, on the west by an engineer-cut path in the vicinity of Ben Cam village, and to the east by another manmade path some forty meters in width. The southern boundary consisted of a trail running from Fire Support Base Task westward.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Ruth, Richard A, *In Buddha's company: Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War*, Page 58

<sup>58</sup> Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr, *Allied Participation in Vietnam*. [Online], Page 46.

On the other hand, RTAVF also cooperated with the U.S troops conducted psychological operations. Details of these operations were: all returnees under the *Chieu Hoi* (open arms) amnesty program were fully interviewed and in 60 percent of the cassette tapes of these interviews were made. These tapes were normally played back to the Viet Cong within four hours. The themes were basically a plea to the Viet Cong to return to the fold of the government while it was still possible, to eliminate their leaders and rally, to receive medical care, and to bring their weapons. When Viet Cong rallied without their weapons, a weapons leaflet was dropped and the next returnees brought in weapons.<sup>59</sup>

#### **4.6.Thai air base for United States.**

As a total support to the U.S in terms of military, Thailand did not only send troops to South Vietnam, but also permitted United States to use her territory as air bases to attack North Vietnam.

During the Viet Nam War, Thailand permitted U.S to use seven air bases to bombing North Vietnam such as: Don Muang, Korat, Nakhon Phanom, Takhli, Ubon, Udorn, U Ta Pao.

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, Page 46



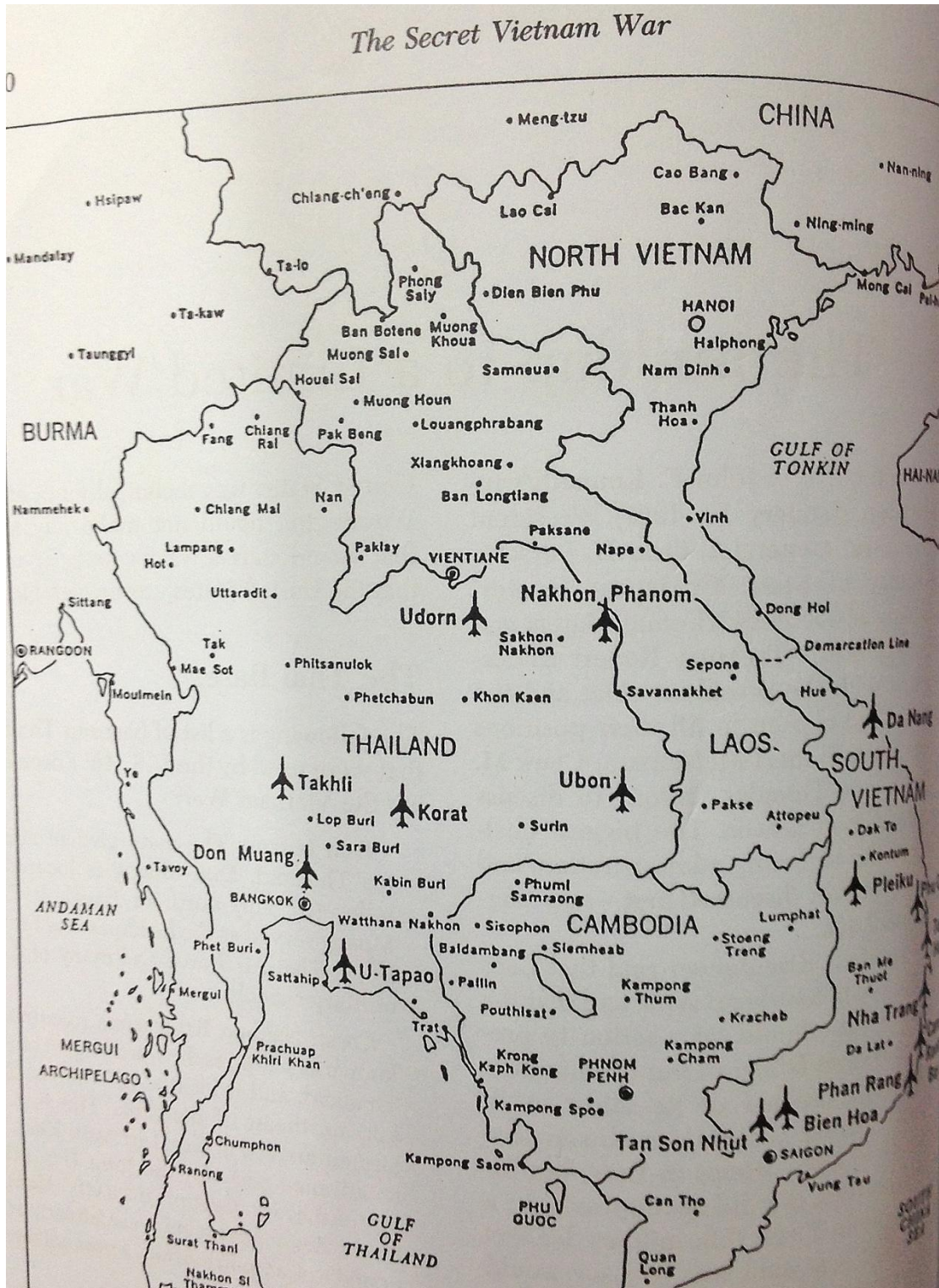


Figure 4: Southeast Asia, showing the major cites and air bases throughout the region.

[Source: Glasser, Jeffrey D, The secret Vietnam War: the United States Air Force in Thailand 1961-1975, Page 10]

From this map, it can be said that the American air war over North Vietnam and Laos was waged mostly from Air Force bases in Thailand and Navy carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin. Where Thailand's Korat plateau bulged north of Cambodia to the Mekong River and the Laotian panhandle, as little as seventy miles separated Thailand and Vietnam. The Air Force used three bases in eastern Thailand near the Mekong, and four nearer the capital at Bangkok, about three hundred miles west on the Gulf of Thailand. Five hundred miles lay between the western Thailand bases and the North Vietnamese capital at Hanoi. Depending on the location of bases and targets, bombing missions from Thailand to North Vietnam could last from one to three hours.<sup>60</sup>

The year 1966 witnessed the highest expansion of air power in Thailand. During that year, Thailand approved of the U.S proposal to the stationing of the 606<sup>th</sup> Air Command Squadron in Thailand and to train the RTAF in the techniques. To increase Thailand's strike capability in the event of a war with North Vietnam, the U.S deployed three squadrons of F-4s and F-105s on Thai territory.<sup>61</sup> By December 1966, the Thai Air Force had about 25000 aircraft. As the war in Vietnam escalated there was a corresponding increase in the use of Thai bases by the U.S Air Force. The U.S also established the U.S Army Support Command, Thailand (SUPTHAI) to support the Air Force by ensuring supplies, especially rations and ammunition.<sup>62</sup>

In January 1967, Thailand agreed to the stationing of B-52s at U Ta Pao. On 22 March 1967, Thailand admitted publicly for the first time that the U.S had been allowed

---

<sup>60</sup> Thompson, Wayne, To Hanoi and Back: The United States Air Force and North Vietnam 1966-1973, (Washington DC: United States Air Force, 2000), page 6

<sup>61</sup> Ganganath Jha, Foreign policy of Thailand, Page 59

<sup>62</sup> Ibid



to use Thai bases for air strikes against North Vietnam.<sup>63</sup> In all, approximately 80% of all U.S bombing North Vietnam during Vietnam War originated in Thailand.<sup>64</sup>

#### **4.7. Time for withdrawal**

The first signal for the withdrawal of Thai troops from South Vietnam was on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1969 when the U.S President Nixon and Thai Premier Minister Thanom announced that the U.S Government and the Royal Thai Government had completed bilateral talks in connection to arrange for an orderly reduction of U.S forces in Thailand, which are there connection with the Vietnam War.<sup>65</sup> As the result of this announcement, one June 30, 1970, 6,000 troops of the U.S left Thailand, drawing the total U.S troop presence in Thailand down to 42,000 from the previous September's high slightly over 48,000.<sup>66</sup> Until 31<sup>th</sup>, May, 1971, after the agreements of Thanat and Unger, approximately 32,100 U.S military personnel left Thailand.

The following years, under the regime of Premier Minister, Sanya Thammasak, the withdrawal of the U.S from Thailand was continued. In 1973, the U.S withdrew two bases at Takhli and Nam Phong, from Ubon Ratchathani in 1974, Nakhon Phanom in 1975, and from Udorn, Korat, Ramasun and Kho Kha in early 1976. In July 1976, the final two bases of the U.S at Samaesen and U-Tapao were closed.<sup>67</sup>

In regard to Thai troops in South Vietnam, on 19 December 1969, the Bangkok press reported that “some twenty government party members of the Thai parliament had signed a letter to the prime minister urging the withdrawal of Thai troops from South

---

<sup>63</sup> Committee on foreign relations, United States Senate, United States security agreements and commitments abroad, Part 3, Kingdom of Thailand, Page 627.

<sup>64</sup> Randolph, R.Sean, “Diplomacy and National Interest: Thai – American Security Cooperation in the Vietnam Era”, (Doctoral dissertation, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1978), Page 126. Cited in: Bumrungsuk, Surachart, “United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977”, Page 124.

<sup>65</sup> Committee on foreign relations, United States Senate, United States security agreements and commitments abroad, Part 3, Kingdom of Thailand, Page 619

<sup>66</sup> Randolph, R.Sean, The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986, Page 141.

<sup>67</sup> Haseman, Major John B, “Thailand and the Realities of Southeast Asia”, Military Review, vol 57, no 1 (May 1977), Page 82

Vietnam.”<sup>68</sup> The reasons were give that “the situation in South Vietnam had improved as a result of the US Vietnamization program and other aid, as evidenced by U.S cutbacks, and that difficult domestic economy and security problems existed in Thailand.”<sup>69</sup>

On 21<sup>th</sup> December Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman told newsmen that Thai government considered the withdrawal plan for Thai troops "because the United States recently issued another announcement regarding further withdrawals."<sup>70</sup> Thanat also had a discussion with South Vietnam Foreign Tran Chan Thanh about the plan of Thai government.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1971, Thailand called on the U.S to rethink plans for a full withdrawal of military forces from Indochina. Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn urged the U.S “to pull all American troops from Vietnam before the end of the year would be risky for the U.S and its allies in Southeast Asia”.<sup>71</sup>

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1971, The Royal Thai Government adopted the withdrawal plans and right after that, an announcement was sent to the United States and South Vietnam. According to the withdrawal plan, The Thais troops in South Vietnam would be withdraw step by step in chronologically order: in July 1971, one-half of the Panther Division, and the remaining half in February 1972, the three LST's (landing ships, tank) of the Sea Horse unit in April 1972 and Victory Flight would be withdrawn during April-December 1971. After these withdrawals, the amount of Thai troops in South Vietnam would be reduced to 204 men. These soldiers still stayed in South Vietnam until their withdrawal in April 1972. These soldiers were considered as only a token force would remain in South Vietnam.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr, Allied Participation in Vietnam, [Online], Page 47

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Page 48

Regard to the casualty of Thai Army in Vietnam War, the period since 1965 until 1972, there were 351 Thai soldiers to be killed or died of wounds in Vietnam War, and, there were 1358 soldiers wounded.<sup>73</sup>

#### **4.8. Conclusion remarks**

If the last chapters discuss about the close relationship between Thailand and United States, the keynote for the involvement of Thailand into Vietnam War in terms of political involvements, this chapter shows the direct involvement of Thailand in terms of military issues. In Sarit regime, Thailand supported United States because she needed aid from the U.S for the “development plan” of Field Marshal Sarit. Sarit was successful. During five years of Sarit regime, the U.S spent for Thailand a series of aid and assistance to help Thailand to develop economy, transportation, as well as military with the total aid up to hundred million dollars. On the other hand, under the threat from communist in domestic as well as from the neighboring countries, Thailand also needed to strengthen its relations with the U.S to against communist insurgency, against the leftist to maintain the stability of Thai security.

After the death of Sarit, under Thanom regime, the cooperation between Thailand and the U.S was more closely. Because Thanom’s position in government was not strong after the death of Sarit, as well as the threat from the increasing Communist in Thailand, Thanom, thus, continued the allied foreign policy toward the United States as Thai previous Thai Premier Ministers. After the agreements, Thanom permitted the U.S troops to deploy in Thailand. Conversely, the U.S continued supply the aids and assistances to Thailand to modernize Thai military forces as well as develop domestic economy.

In 1964, Thailand began to involve in Vietnam War in terms of military issues. From the beginning of the first sixteenth men group of Royal Thai Air Force to train Vietnamese pilot, to the thousands Thai soldiers which Thai sent to South Vietnam to

---

<sup>73</sup> Tucker, Spencer C, “Casualties”, Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social and Military History (1998) : 175.

fight directly against Viet Cong. On the other hand, Thailand government permitted the U.S to use six airbases in Thai territory to bomb targets in Vietnam and Laos, permitted about 40,000 U.S soldiers were stationed in Thailand.<sup>74</sup> Thus, it can be said that, the involvement of Thailand in Vietnam War became deeper than ever in Thanom regime.

---

<sup>74</sup> Anuson Chinvanno, "Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand's relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975", Page 67.

## Chapter V

### CONCLUSION

*“Thailand has been an ally for over 30 years and today remains the front-line state resisting Vietnamese aggression in Cambodia. In turn, America has supported Thailand diplomatically, militarily, and politically against security threats. The presence, even as I speak, of U.S. ground, naval, and air units on bilateral exercises in Thailand demonstrates that our [U.S.] commitment to Thailand's security remains firm.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Secretary of State, George Shultz**

In conclusion, it can be said that the close relationship between Thailand and United States was the key reason for the involvement of Thailand in the Vietnam War. This involvement can be viewed as an exchange for the aid as well as the security commitment of United States to Thailand. During the periods of three Thai Premier Ministers: Field Marshal Phibun Songkram, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Thailand, step by step, involved in Vietnam War in terms of political and military.

The foreign policy of Thailand under Phibun regime in the context of early Cold War, once again, represented her traditional foreign policy, a flexible policy, or as this image of a bamboo which “bend with the wind”. In the World War II, because of rising power of Japan, as well as the Thai security, Phibun entered an alignment with Japanese, declared war on the U.S and Allies. After the World War II, in the early period of Cold War, Phibun made the turning point in Thai foreign policy. Thailand, in the first time, aligned herself with a major power, the United States. This Phibun’s decision was based in the rising of Communism in mainland China and the spread of Communism to Indochina. Thailand feared that it would be “the next domino” fall to Communist. Thus, Phibun realized that it was necessary to align with United States and be on the side of the Free World to against Communist. This decision also can be viewed as a good “shield” to help Phibun to against his domestic political rivals and increase his position in Thai political stage, which weakened after the World War II. As an ally of the U.S, certainly,

---

<sup>1</sup> Shultz, George, U.S. Policy in East Asia and the Pacific [Online], 1988, Page 49, Source: [www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2011-2/shultz.pdf](http://www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2011-2/shultz.pdf)

Thailand supported the U.S and its allies in their Asia-Pacific policies. In 1950, Phibun made a turning point in Thai foreign policy when he decided to recognize the French installed Bao Dai government in Vietnam and send the troops to Korea to fight against Communist China and Soviet Union on the side of United States and Allies. The recognition of Thailand to Bao Dai regime marked the first involvement of Thailand in Vietnam War (the first Indochina War) in terms of political. Two decisions of Phibun expressed Thailand's support to United States and Western Power, let Thailand stand closely United States. Together with the Anti-Communist Act 1952, Thailand clearly showed its perception toward Communism and this Act also can be viewed as a signal of Thailand to United States. In return, the U.S sympathized with Phibun's decision, as an indispensable result, Thailand received the aids and assistances from the U.S. These helped Thailand rescue its weak economic situation after the World War II, and strengthen, modernize Thai military power. Thus, although Phibun's policy might be received the criticism from Thai politicians as well as neighboring countries' government, but at least, in terms of profit of Thailand at that time, it can be said that he was successful in his policy. He did not only increase his power in domestic political, but also, more important, he kept the stability for Thai security in the context of Communist threat in the early Cold War period. Moreover, aligning with United States, Phibun earned hundred million dollar aids and assistance from the U.S to rehabilitate Thai economy and modernize Thai military power.

In 1957, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat toppled Phibun regime. As Thai Premier Minister, Sarit continued support actively United States. Sarit needed the U.S support for his "development plan" and to against the rising Communist in domestic. In five years of Sarit regime, Thailand earned around more than 200 million dollars (as described in Table 3) via the U.S aids and assistance. These helped Sarit transform and develop Thai economy. The Thanat-Rusk Agreement in 1962 made the U.S – Thailand relations more profound when it resolved the weakness in SEATO that action could only by unanimous vote. Now, the U.S and Thailand could decide to act on their own in the cases of the external threats.

The involvement of Thailand in Vietnam War really entered to a higher step under the regime of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn who succeeded Sarit after his death. While Phibun and Sarit involved in terms of political via the foreign policies, Thanom decided to involve in terms of military. From 1964, Thailand started sending troops to South Vietnam to help South Vietnam against Communist North Vietnam. In certain, this involvement also followed the deeper involvement of the United States in Vietnam War as well as the agreements between Thailand and United States. As an exchange with the U.S. aids and assistances, Thailand agreed the U.S. request to send the troops to directly fight in South Vietnam. On the other hand, Thailand permitted the U.S. soldiers stationed in Thailand, permitted the U.S. to use six air bases in Thai territory to bomb North Vietnam.

Thus, it can be concluded that the involvement of Thailand in the Vietnam War was characterized in both political and military issues. And all above, the key factor which led to this involvement was the close relationship between United States and Thailand.

As a limitation in this thesis, we did not have a chance to meet and interview the Thai former soldier who fought directly in Vietnam War, thus, as a suggestion for further studies, it is very interesting and reality if we can know the real details of Thai volunteer soldiers in Vietnam War, understand more clearly their attitudes toward the decision of Thai government at that time as well as the Vietnam War in general. Or another suggestion, a study about the relationship between Thailand and South Vietnam during the Vietnam War, this issue that we did not know much, because almost studies only focused on the Thailand involvement under the close alignment with United States, but in fact, Thailand and South Vietnam maintained the close relationship during the existing time of South Vietnam government.

### **The lesson for Thailand after Vietnam War**

*“Great powers come and go, but neighbors stay forever”<sup>1</sup>*

**(Prime Minister of Thailand, General Chatichai Choonhavan)**

There is very famous statement of Former English Premier Minister Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) that: “We have no permanent allies, we have no permanent enemies, we only have permanent interests”. This statement is applied completely for Thailand in her relations with neighboring countries in particular and with all countries in general. At least, in regard to Thailand as a personal country, Thailand was successful to maintain the independence through her modern history when the Western Powers entered their dominations in Southeast Asia. It can be said that, by reviewing the Thai modern history, Thailand always applied the flexible foreign policy, even as opportunism, to protect the kingdom and maintain the stability in security. The Thai leaders always found the best strategies for themselves to maintain the independence for Thailand. Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram, for instance, in World War II became ally with Japan, declared war on the U.S, but after the War, in the early Cold War, he decided to align with United States. And his successors also inherited this policy. All was for Thailand’s profits.

However, as Prime Minister of Thailand, General Chatichai Choonhavan stated that “Great powers come and go, but neighbors stay forever”, in relations with neighboring countries, Thailand should learn some lessons after the Vietnam War:

Firstly, Thailand should learn how to live peaceful with neighboring countries. In despite of confrontation with its communist neighbors apparently is not in Thailand’s national interest. Thailand can have a strong alliance as United States, but related to geography, China as well as the Indochinese states is very close to Thailand. Thailand needs to co-exist peacefully with them, thereby eliminating external threats to its security and severing outside support to its insurgents. Moreover, Thailand should understand one thing that a friendly relationship with Vietnam, China or any neighbors is going to serve its interest better than its treaty alignment with the Western powers. As Prime Minister

---

<sup>1</sup> Chatichan Choonhavan, Thailand in a changing Southeast Asia (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1989), page 7



Kurkit Pramoj stated that: “All of Indochina are next door to us. Thailand has to be friendly with all leaders of the three Indochina states. That’s the only way we can live with these countries”<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, Thailand should learn how to combine harmoniously her interests with other countries interests, in particular, interests from neighbors. It means that Thailand should be balance her profit and neighboring countries’ profits, should be careful with her foreign policy, to not influence the other countries. For example, Phibun Songkhram with his strong anti-Communist policy, treated unfair with Vietnamese community in Thailand.

Thirdly, Thailand should learn the lesson about alignment with a major Power. It’s only a temporary policy, because “Great powers come and go”. Liang Chi Sad showed that the alignment with United States not be in the interests of Thailand because “(1) They [Thai leaders] have learned from the lessons of the Indochinese states that the U.S could not safeguard their country’s security; (2) after suffering in Vietnam, the deepest and most painful trauma in its national history since the civil war, the U.S may not have the will to play further role in this part of the world; (3) American commitments are not reliable due to political system; (4) the presence forces in Thailand may result in the loss of will to fight on the part of people, cause social and moral problems, compromise the sovereignty and independence of the country, make diplomacy less flexible and constitute an obstacle in improving relations with the Communist states in Indochina”<sup>3</sup> Moreover the Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, also known as the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972 also help Thailand learn a lesson that: even the major powers also can change their policies. The U.S normalized relationship with China after the long time as rival, this brought the dangers to Thai security when Thailand still continued anti-communist and anti-China

---

<sup>2</sup> Liang Chi Sad, Thailand ‘s foreign policy: an analysis of its evolution since World War II. (Singapore : Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Graduate Studies, Nanyang University, 1977), Page 15

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 13.

policy. Thus, clearly, Thailand should learn how to create the balance in relations with the major Powers as Former Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman emphasized:

“It means Thailand should try to keep on the best possible terms with major powers – the U.S, Soviet Union, China, Japan, Western and Eastern Europe. If we allow one power to station troops here, we may get into trouble with another large power, or one of the smaller powers. I don’t want U.S forces to leave and Soviets to come in place of them. I don’t think we should have any at all. Whether you like it or not, they will be around, especially the four – the U.S, Soviet Union, Japan and China. It is not possible for any small powers to push them out. But we should not allow any of them to involve themselves too deeply”<sup>4</sup>

Finally, in contemporary context, when ASEAN is heading to the ASEAN Community in 2015, a community aims to “consolidate and strengthen ASEAN’s solidarity, cohesiveness and harmony, and contribute to the building of a peaceful, democratic, tolerant, participatory and transparent community in Southeast Asia”<sup>5</sup>. As one of the founding members, Thailand plays an important role in ASEAN for the development of the region. Thus, Thailand should strengthen regional co-operation not only with the neighboring countries but also will all ASEAN members, and contribute to make Southeast Asia as a peace, independence, and neutrality zone

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 12

<sup>5</sup> Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), “ASEAN political - security Community Blueprint” [Online], 2009, page 2-3, Source: [www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf](http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf)

## REFERENCES

- Ang Cheng Guan. Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory in Christopher E. Goscha and Christian Ostermann (ed.), Connecting histories: Decolonization and the cold war in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962, pp.300-327. Washington, DC : Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009 .
- Anuson Chinvanno. Avoidance, hostility and friendship: the history of Thailand's relations with the People Republic of China, 1949-1975, Master's Thesis, University of Oxford, 1958.
- Arun Panupong. A profile of Thailand's foreign policy, Association for World Affairs, Ohio: Columbus, 1968.
- Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN political – security Community Blueprint. [Online]. 2009. Available from: [www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf](http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf) [2013, *March*]
- Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit. A history of Thailand,. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Boonkong Hunchangsith, Economic impact of the U.S Military Presence in Thailand, 1969-1972, Doctoral dissertation, Claremont University, 1974.
- Surachart Bumrungsuk. United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977. Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 1985.
- Chatichan Choonhavan. Thailand in a changing Southeast Asia. Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1989.
- Christopher E. Goscha and Christian Ostermann (ed). Connecting histories: Decolonization and the cold war in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009.
- Darling, Frank C. Thailand and the United States. D.C: Public Affair Press, 1965.
- Darling, Frank C. American Influence on the Evolution of Constitutional Government in Thailand. Doctoral dissertation, The American University, 1961.

- Fenton, Daniel. To cage the Red Dragon: SEATO and the Defence of Southeast Asia 1955-1965. Singapore: NUS Press, 2012.
- Fineman, Daniel Mark. Phibun, the Cold War and Thailand's foreign policy revolution of 1950, in Christopher E. Goscha and Christian Ostermann. Connecting histories: Decolonization and the cold war in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962. pp.275-300. Washington, DC : Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009 .
- Fineman, Daniel Mark. The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947 1-1958. vol 1. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 1993.
- Ganganath Jha. Foreign policy of Thailand. India: GranthBharati,Shahdara, 1979.
- Grossman, Nicholas. Chronicle of Thailand: headline news since 1996. Bangkok: Bangkok Post, 2009.
- Glasser, Jeffrey D. The secret Vietnam War: the United States Air Force in Thailand 1961-1975. U.S.A: McFarland&Company, Inc., Publisher, 1995.
- Gustainis J. Justin. American rhetoric and Vietnam War. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993.
- Haseman, Major John B, Thailand and the Realities of Southeast Asia, Military Review, vol 57, no 1 (May 1977), Page 82 - 93
- Hosack, Ted Arren. United States relations with Thailand since 1945. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Graduate School, University of Texas, 1959.
- James V. Martin, Jr. Thai-American Relations in World War II. Association for Asian Studies :The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 22, No. 4 (August 1963) : 451-467.
- Jessup, John E. Thailand. An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Conflict and Conflict Resolution, 1945 – 1996. (1998): 728.
- Kaplan, Morton A. System and process in international politics. New York : Wiley, 1964
- Kegley, Charles W and Wittkopf, Eugene R. World Politics: Trends and Transformation. Singapore : Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.

- Kislenko Arne. A not so silent partner: Thailand's role in covert operations, Counter – Insurgency, and the Wars in Indochina. Journal of Conflict Studies [Online], 2004. Available from:  
<http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/jcs/article/view/292/465> [2013, March]
- Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian. Thailand's durable Premier: Phibun through three decades 1932-1957. Kuala Lumpur Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Larsen, Stanley Robert and Collins, James Lawton Jr. Allied Participation in Vietnam. Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1985 [Online]. Available from:  
<http://www.history.army.mil/books/Vietnam/allied/ch02.htm#b1> [2013, March]
- Lau Teik Soon. Security Situation on Malaysia - Thai Border. Asia Research Bullentin (Singapore), vol 1, no.2, July 1972. Cited in Ganganath Jha. Foreign policy of Thailand. India: GranthBharati,Shahdara, 1979.
- Liang Chi Sad, Thailand 's foreign policy: an analysis of its evolution since World War II .Singapore : Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Graduate Studies, Nanyang University, 1977
- Ma Makata .Consequence of the Vietnam War on Thai foreign policy. Master's Thesis.Department of Political Science, California State University, Long Beach, 1980.
- Max Belloff, Soviet Policy in the Far East, 1944-1951, London, 1956. Cited in Ganganath Jha. Foreign policy of Thailand. India: GranthBharati,Shahdara, 1979
- National Security Command. Communist Suppression Documents, Thailand, 1952-1969. Bangkok : National Security Command , 1969.
- Nguyen Anh Tai. Thai-Vietnamese relations during the first Indochina War (1946-1954). Master's Thesis. ChulalongkornUniversiy. 2009.
- Nuechterlin. Donand E. Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia. New York: Cornell University Press, 1965.

- Nuechterlin, Donald E. Thailand after Sarit. University of California Press: Asia Survey, vol.4, no.5 (May 1964), page 842-850.
- Phadit Machima. Thailand's relations with the Southeast Asia countries. Master's Thesis, Pakistan: Punjab University, 1961.
- President Eisenhower's News Conference. April 7, 1954, Public Papers of the Presidents, 1954, Available from: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pentagon/ps11.htm> [2013, March]
- Pridi Banomyong. To commemorate Luang Xangvonyutthakit. Bangkok: Chuânpim Publishing, 1973. Cited in Thawi Swangpanyangkoon. The first Vietnam News Service in Bangkok 64 years ago [*Sở thông tin Việt Nam đầu tiên ở Bangkok cách đây 64 năm*]. Bangkok: Journal of Vietnamese Studies, Mahidol University, no.19, (October 2003)
- Ralph N.Clough. East Asia and U.S security. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1975.
- Randolph, R. Sean. The United States and Thailand: alliance dynamics, 1950-1986. Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986
- Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, eds .Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.Cited in Ang Cheng Guan. Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory.
- Rousset, Pierre. The rise and fall of Communist Party of Thailand, Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal's vision [Online]. 2009. Available from: <http://links.org.au/node/1247> [2013, March]
- Ruth, Richard A. In Buddha's company: Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War. Chiang Mai : Silkworm Books,2012.
- Sanchai Bungtrigswat .Thailand: the dual threats to stability in a study of communist insurgency and problems of political development. Master's Thesis. University of Kansas, 1979

- Shirk, Paul R. Thai-Soviet Relations, University of California Press: Asian Survey, vol 9, No.9 (September 1969). Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642300> [March, 2013]
- Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. Collective Security shield of Freedom. A SEATO publication, Bangkok, 1959.
- Standard Weekly Newspaper, Bangkok, January 14, 1950. Cited in Wiwat Mungkandi and Warren William, A century and a half of Thai-America relations, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1992.
- Shultz, George. U.S. Policy in East Asia and the Pacific. DISAM Journal. [Online]. 1988, Available from : [www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2011-2/shultz.pdf](http://www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2011-2/shultz.pdf) [March, 2013]
- Surachart Bumrungsuk. United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-1977. Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 1985
- Tanham, George K. Trial in Thailand. New York: Crane, Russak and Company, Inc, 1970. Cited in Sanchai Bungtrigswat .Thailand: the dual threats to stability in a study of communist insurgency and problems of political development. Master's Thesis. University of Kansas, 1979.
- Thananan Boonwana. On the relation between Demoratic Republic of Vietnam and PridiPhanomyonggovernment of Thailand (through some Thailand documents) [*Về quan hệ giữa Việt Nam dân chủ cộng hoà với chính phủ Thái Lan thời Pridi Phanomyông (qua một số tư liệu Thái Lan)*]. Hanoi: Journal of Southeast Asia Studies, no.1 (2008), pp.64-67.
- Thanet Aphornsuvan. "The U.S and the coming of the Coup of 1947 in Siam". Journal of the Siam Society (January 1987): pp.187-214.
- Thawi Swangpanyangkoon . The first Vietnam News Service in Bangkok 64 years ago [*Sở thông tin Việt Nam đầu tiên ở Bangkok cách đây 64 năm*]. Bangkok: Journal of Vietnamese Studies, Mahidol University, no.19, October 2003.
- Thompson, Wayne. To Hanoi and Back: The United States Air Force and North Vietnam 1966-1973. Washington DC: United States Air Force, 2000.

- Thompson Virginia and Adloff Richard. Left Wing in Southeast Asia. New York: William Sloan Associates, 1950. Cited in Shirk, Paul R. Thai-Soviet Relations, University of California Press: Asian Survey, vol 9, No.9 (September 1969). Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642300> [March, 2013]
- Tucker, Spencer C, "Casualties", Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social and Military History (1998) : 175
- United States, Department State. Dispatch from the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State, Bangkok, April 22, 1955. Office of the Historian [Online]. Available from: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frU.S1955-57v22/d471> [March, 2013]
- United States, Department State. Foreign relations of the United States 1964-1968, volume XXVII, Mainland Southeast Asia, Regional Affairs Document 353, Bangkok, April 22, 1955. Office of the Historian [Online]. Available from: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v27/d353> [March, 2013]
- United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. United States security agreements and commitments abroad, Part 3, Kingdom of Thailand. Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1970.
- Vimol Bhongbhibhat .The Eagle and the Elephant : 150 Years of Thai American Relations. United Production, 1982.
- Wiwat Mungkandi and Warren William. A century and a half of Thai-American relations. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press. 1982.
- Wu The Yao. The present and future balance of power in World geopolitics. Singapore: Nanyang University, 1979



## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Anti – Communist Act of 1952**

**Bhumibol Adulyadej P.R**

**Presented on January 13, 1952**

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Year of the Present Reign**

Phrabat Somdej Phra Paramindra Maha Bhumibol Adulyadej graciously announces:

The Anti – Communist Act is necessary for the security of the country and the people with the approval of the legislature, it hereby is issues as a Royal Decree.

#### **Article 1**

This Act is to be call the Anti – Communist Act of 1952

#### **Article 2**

This Act becomes effective the day following its publication in the Government Gazette

#### **Article 3**

“Communist Organization” means any group of people or party of people who engage in Communist activity whether directly or in directly

Communist Activity is defined as:

- (A) The act of seeking the destruction of Constitutional Monarchy
- (B) The act of seeking those economic changes which lead to Government acquisition of private property without just payment.
- (C) The use of sabotage, fear or trickery to incite hatred among the people and achieve those purpose cited in (A) or (B) above

#### **Article 4**

Anyone convicted of Communist activity will be imprisoned from ten years to life.

#### **Article 5**

Anyone convicted of inciting, suggesting, teaching, or propagandizing Communism or congregating, joining or agreeing with those who engage in Communist activity, or fail to report Communist activity will be sentenced to imprisonment from five to ten years

Printing presses and other items associated with activity cited in the above paragraph will be confiscated

#### **Article 6**

Anyone who is convicted of being a member of the Communist organization will be sentenced to imprisonment from five to ten years.

Anyone convicted of serving as the leader, manager or officer of a Communist organization will be sentenced to imprisonment from ten to fifteen years.

#### **Article 7**

Any Thai citizen convicted of Communist activity as cited in Article 5 while in a foreign country, or who is convicted of being a member of a Communist organization cited in Article 6 while in a foreign country will be sentenced accordingly.

#### **Article 8**

Anyone attending a Communist meeting will be presumed a member of that organization unless he can prove he was unaware of the nature of the meeting

#### **Article 9**

Anyone who supports a Communist organization in any of the following way will be sentenced to imprisonment from five to ten years:

- (1) Providing shelter or a meeting place
- (2) Encouraging others to become members
- (3) Donating money or helping in any other way

#### **Article 10**

If a member of a Communist organization is found guilty of an Anti-Communist Act violation, the leader, director, or officer of that organization or any members of that organization who were members when the Communist activity was planned will be subject to the same punishment.

**Article 11**

Anyone convicted of doing bodily harm (or threatening to do bodily harm), damage to property of reputation, detaining or threatening to detain, or frightening in any way to encourage Communist activity will be sentenced from five to ten years.

**Counter signer of the Royal Command,  
Field Marshal P.Phibun Songkhram  
Prime Minister**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact) September 8, 1954**

The Parties to this Treaty,

Recognizing the sovereign equality of all the Parties,

Reiterating their faith in the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments,

Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, they uphold the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and declaring that they will earnestly strive by every peaceful means to promote self-government and to secure the independence of all countries whose people desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities,

Desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace and freedom and to uphold the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, and to promote the economic well-being and development of all peoples in the treaty area,

Intending to declare publicly and formally their sense of unity, so that any potential aggressor will appreciate that the Parties stand together in the area, and

Desiring further to coordinate their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security,

Therefore agree as follows:

#### **ARTICLE I**

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

#### **ARTICLE II**

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack and to prevent and counter subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.

### **ARTICLE III**

The Parties undertake to strengthen their free institutions and to cooperate with one another in the further development of economic measures, including technical assistance, designed both to promote economic progress and social well-being and to further the individual and collective efforts of governments toward these ends.

### **ARTICLE IV**

1. Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Measures taken under this paragraph shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations.

2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the treaty area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense.

3. It is understood that no action on the territory of any State designated by unanimous agreement under paragraph 1 of this Article or on any territory so designated shall be taken except at the invitation or with the consent of the government concerned.

### **ARTICLE V**

The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall provide for consultation with regard to military and any other planning as the situation obtaining in the treaty area may from time to time require. The Council shall be so organized as to be able to meet at any time.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of any of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations or the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any third party is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty, and undertakes not to enter into any international engagement in conflict with this Treaty.

#### **ARTICLE VII**

Any other State in a position to further the objectives of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the area may, by unanimous agreement of the Parties, be invited to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines shall inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.

#### **ARTICLE VIII**

As used in this Treaty, the "treaty area" is the general area of Southeast Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general area of the Southwest Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude. The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, amend this Article to include within the treaty area the territory of any State acceding to this Treaty in accordance with Article VII or otherwise to change the treaty area.

#### **ARTICLE IX**

1. This Treaty shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. Duly certified copies thereof shall be transmitted by that government to the other signatories.
2. The Treaty shall be ratified and its provisions carried out by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, which shall notify all of the other signatories of such deposit.
3. The Treaty shall enter into force between the States which have ratified it as soon as the instruments of ratification of a majority of the signatories shall have been deposited, and shall come into effect with respect to each other State on the date of the deposit of its instrument of ratification.

#### **ARTICLE X**

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely, but any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, which shall inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

#### **ARTICLE XI**

The English text of this Treaty is binding on the Parties, but when the Parties have agreed to the French text thereof and have so notified the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, the French text shall be equally authentic and binding on the Parties.

#### **UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The United States of America in executing the present Treaty does so with the understanding that its recognition of the effect of aggression and armed attack and its agreement with reference thereto in Article IV, paragraph 1, apply only to communist aggression but affirms that in the event of other aggression or armed attack it will consult under the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2

In witness thereof, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty.

Done at Manila, this eighth day of September, 1954.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **TEXT OF RUSK-THANAT COMMUNIQUE, 6 MARCH 1962**

#### **U.S. Department of State Press Release 145 dated March 6, 1962**

The Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, and the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, met on several occasions during the past few days for discussions on the current situation in Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and the Security of Thailand.

The Secretary of State reaffirmed that the United States regards the preservation of the independence and integrity of Thailand as vital to the national interest of the United States and to world peace. He expressed the firm intention of the United States to aid Thailand, its ally and historic friend, in resisting Communist aggression and subversion.

The Foreign Minister and Secretary of State reviewed the close association of Thailand and the United States in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and agreed that such association is an effective deterrent to direct Communist aggression against Thailand. They agreed that the Treaty provides the basis for the signatories collectively to assist Thailand in case of Communist armed attack against that country. The Secretary of State assured the Foreign Minister that in the event of such aggression, the United States intends to give full effect to its obligations under the Treaty to act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. The Secretary of State reaffirmed that this obligation of the United States does not depend upon the prior agreement of all other parties to the Treaty, since this Treaty obligation is individual as well as collective.

In reviewing measures to meet indirect aggression, the Secretary of State stated that the United States regards its commitments to Thailand under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and under its bilateral economic and military assistance agreements with Thailand as providing an important basis for United States actions to

help Thailand meet indirect aggression. In this connection the Secretary reviewed with the Foreign Minister the actions being taken by the United States to assist the Republic of Vietnam to meet the threat of indirect aggression.

The Foreign Minister assured the Secretary of State of the determination of the Government of Thailand to meet the threat of indirect aggression by pursuing vigorously measures for the economic and social welfare and the safety of its people.

The situation in Laos was reviewed in detail and full agreement was reached on the necessity for the stability of Southeast Asia, of achieving a free independent and truly neutral Laos.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State reviewed the mutual efforts of their governments to increase the capabilities and readiness of the Thai armed forces to defend the Kingdom. They noted also that the United States is making a significant contribution to this effort and that the United States intends to accelerate future deliveries to the greatest extent possible. The Secretary and the Foreign Minister also took note of the work of the Joint Thai-United States Committee which has been established in Bangkok to assure effective cooperation in social, economic, and military measures to increase Thailand's national capabilities. They agreed that this Joint Committee and its subcommittees should continue to work toward the most effective utilization of Thailand's resources and those provided by the United States to promote Thailand's development and security.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary were in full agreement that continued economic and social progress is essential to the stability of Thailand. They reviewed Thailand's impressive economic and social progress and the Thai Government's plans to accelerate development, particularly Thailand's continuing determination fully to utilize its own resources in moving toward its development goals.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State also discussed the desirability of an early conclusion of a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation between the two countries which would bring into accord with current conditions the existing treaty of 1937.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Mr. Do Phan Anh was born and raised in Hai Duong Province on July, 8<sup>th</sup>, 1984. He acquired Bachelor's degree in Vietnamese Studies in Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Dalat (DLU) in Da Lat city, Lam Dong province in June 2006. After his graduation from DLU, Phan Anh has worked as a lecturer in Faculty of Oriental Studies since October 2006. He has been a teaching Vietnam Travelling, Vietnamese Culture in Southeast Asia context, Oriental Civilization... In May 2011, he obtained a grant from the "Chulalongkorn University Scholarship for Neighboring Countries 2010", Phan Anh has currently enrolled in the International Master's Degree Program in Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University (Thailand).

