CONCLUSION

After 1954, the United States decided to support the South Vietnamese government led by Ngo Dinh Dien. The United States also helped to block the elections, which were to be held in 1956, believing that such elections would be rigged in the North to achieve the communist success under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. Again the United States decision was based on the nature of World Communism and on a desire to contain the expansionist tendencies of China in Southeast Asia. In 1957, North Vietnamese were furious over their failure to unite North and South Vietnam and to overthrow the Dien government.

The Eisenhower Administration asserted that the United States objectives in Vietnam would be helpful and capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means or an independent North Vietnam endowed with a strong government, which would be so
responsive to the nationalist aspirations of its people, so enlightened in purpose and effective in performance.¹

President John F. Kennedy in his short term of presidency greatly broadened the commitment of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in South Vietnam. His policy towards the crisis in Laos affected his attitude towards commitments in both Thailand and South Vietnam as well as his relationship with Cambodia. It became much more clear under John F. Kennedy than Eisenhower that American involvement in mainland Southeast Asia - the two Vietnams, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand - was pronounced and heading towards a major crisis.

President John F. Kennedy’s policy in Laos led to deeper United States involvement in Thailand. Actually, Thailand had long been greatly concerned over developments in its Mekhong Neighbours. The steps towards a neutralization of Laos against a background of

the weakness of South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) caused Thailand to seek stronger assurances from the United States. At the end of February 1962, the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, was invited to Washington to discuss the ways to assure the security of Thailand under the framework of SEATO. President John F. Kennedy then, assured Thailand of full United States support for its independent and territorial integrity.

However, the crisis in Indo-China provided the occasion for the United States to take additional precautionary measures in Southeast Asia, particularly measured of pre-position which strengthened American capacity in the event of any eventuality.

John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson believed that the world would be less dangerous if communism did not succeed in Indo-China. The basic American objective under President John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, therefore, remained constant in South Vietnam denying communism to control the area. Although South Vietnam
remained in existence due to American policy after the Geneva settlement of 1954, the United States often found itself at the mercy of weak and inefficient Saigon regimes.

Both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson Administrations constantly pre-occupied with the domino theory or a variation of it. The theory persisted despite the emergence of the rift between Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and despite the subsequent failure of the communist coup in the Southeast Asian country like Indonesia. Indeed, when Vietnam was viewed from United States in term of global strategic considerations, there was a certain aspect in outlook, a carry-over from an earlier period. After China fell to Mao Tse Tung and the United States policy towards communism became hardened and the importance of Indo-China in the United States security perception viewed seriously by the United States authorities to combat any eventuallities of communists, particularly in Southeast Asian region.
During 1964 United States policy towards Southeast Asia entered a new phase. In summer, the North Vietnamese attacked American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, then a Congressional resolution permitted the President to respond strongly to incident. In additional, when the North Vietnamese imposed additional pressure on South Vietnamese government, President Lyndon B. Johnson approved American bombing in the North in an attempt to force the Vietnamese to the bargaining table. After 1965 the war became increasingly Americanized, with the introduction of hundreds of thousands of American troops. Such action certainly prevented North Vietnam's unification of the country. But, however, led to a crucial, bloody, prolonged and indecisive conflict.

When President Richard M. Nixon came to power, he continued to bring the parties of the Indo-China war to the Paris talks and when the prospect of getting settlement did not materialize, he offered a new plan that the United States was going to begin a process of Vietnamization of
war that was the withdrawal of American forces and military preparation of the South Vietnamese themselves to take over the fighting. Still hoping for a negotiated settlement but without other significant bargaining power, the President then suggested that would use the Vietnamization process as his holecard, if the North Vietnamese would negotiate the war would come to an end promptly and he would speed up the process of American withdrawal, otherwise he would simply proceed on his own schedule.

What became known as Vietnamization under Nixon Administration was really a reaffirmation of what President John F. Kennedy had come to recognize just before his death. While Vietnmization was fine as far as the remaining North Vietnam forces was concerned, it did not provide the framework within which American or South Vietnamese attacks on an extended time basis.

To fight a war with no hope of decisive victory reinforced the frustration of the American soldiers and
citizen alike. Then Americans were instructed to fight a holding action and to minimize casualties. Beginning in early 1970s no major offensive operations were to be initiated. While conserving American lives, the effect of this policy was perceived as abandoning any hope of victory. The war was made even more difficult because, unlike battle lines of previous wars, there was no simple way to measure progress.

The Paris Agreements of 1973 between the United States and North Vietnam formally ended American participation in the war. It committed the United States to stop all military involvement in South Vietnam, and to withdraw all its remaining troops, technicians and advisors. The United States, in contrast, withdrew completely and unequivocally in 1973 and thereupon reduced its aid levels to South Vietnam.²

Early 1970s, the only Thailand had remained in geopolitical terms, potentially to focal point of United States involvement on continental Asia. The United States, therefore, attempted to redefine the role of America forward line of defence in the region. The security planners thought that there could be an arbitrary limit to set off the rimland of continental Asia which would represent the extent of new American defence and security. But in time, such a concept gave way under the weight of reality and practicality, and the United States was to compelled once again to regard the entire Asia/Pacific expanse as an integral part of its global strategy—the strategy of meeting the growing of Soviet Union Challenges.³

The Thai government still permits United States planes to fly over Indo-China, although in July 1974, it

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asked the United States to stop flying over the Indian Ocean from Thai bases. The Thai Foreign Minister, Charoonpan Israngkul na Ayuthya, told the United States Ambassador to Thailand, William Kinter, that such flights contravened Thailand’s support for the United Nations resolution declaring the Indian Ocean a Peace Zone and ASEAN agreement on the neutrality of the region. Since then, the trend in Thailand was definitely towards regional. The Thai authorities also sought co-operation from China regardless of differences in political, ideology, economic and social system. Dr. Thanat Khoman, the then Thai Foreign Minister, once pointed out the wisdom behind regional cooperation that even if China were interfering in Thailand, Thailand should take the initiative to try and normalize relations with China. A nation of 35 million was no match for 300 million. So Thai’s have no choice but to circumvent by diplomatic means the hostility China shows to government which choose to rely for security on American planes and guns. Thailand can not even make a
plane of its own, so, how ridiculous it was for Thailand to refuse to talk with China.

The withdrawal of United States troops from Thailand in 1975 provided a useful bargaining tool for diplomatic negotiations with its neighbours. Many Thai's feared repercussions from North Vietnam for the Thai role in allowing United States forces within Thailand to bomb Indo-China. As Hanoi had long maintained that it would not open negotiations with Thailand as long as American troops were present. Hence, Thai insistence on United States withdrawal would be a useful gesture of good will.

As the competitive demands of the global economy propel the states of mainland Southeast Asia towards greater economic interconnection, therefore, pressures upon Thailand to form a new and constructive relationship with government of neighbouring countries have multiplied and intensified. Thailand's border area can no longer serve merely as buffer zones, instead, in the new politic and economic context of regional relations, they serve as
gateways for trade and investment. Peaceful and open borders were one major precondition for sustained economic development.

Thai-American relations, however, have their own features, sometime if there were conflicts they mostly derived from problems of co-operation. During the Second Indo-China war the United States asserted itself too strongly, antagonizing its allies especially Thailand. Indo-China war ended with an American withdrawal. Allies which were parties to the war readjusted themselves accordingly. By comparison, the Thai-American adaptation process had been remarkably satisfied. The clearest example in the new era of Thai-United States relation was the intellectual property rights (IPR) controversy. For the Thai, the issue weas defined in terms of long-term ally, nationalism and economic development. While in United

States consideration, the issue concerned the lack of Thai protection of the United States products as well as fairness in trade relations. The intellectual property rights has, therefore, symbolized the new importance of economic concerns and the decline of security considerations in relations between the two countries.

Economic relations since then, have replaced security ties as the Kingdom's major foreign policy concern. Thailand economy is now integrated into the world capitalist system. The new tone of Thai-United States relation reflected Thailand's growing importance in the world economy. Major aspects include financial aid, cooperation to wage war on narcotics and support for Peace Crops. In the relationship of the two countries, therefore, some essential points should be taken into considerations.

(i) Thailand as well as the other member states of Southeast Asian nations must live alongside its neighbours, therefore, the United States should not be in a position to dictate the relationship of their own.
(ii)  Indeed, the United States have an important interests in
Thailand with regard to external security. Thailand holds a strategic
position in regard to the security of ASEAN, where the United States
has vital interests. Hence, Thailand should be given a high priority in
the United States foreign policy considerations.

(iii) The United States should consider Thailand’s security
from a wider perspective, not purely from military aspect. Political and
economic development are also closely associated with national
security. Therefore, both political and economic should be emphasized.

(iv) As Thailand’s foreign policy became more collective
reflection of ASEAN, the United States finds it at time difficult to assist
Thailand in some specific and concrete instances. The reason was
possibly that because a policy line requires a joint effort by several
partners it may not always be clear to the United States. Thailand has
to listen to the views of the other ASEAN members, to China as well as
to United States, and various factors of its domestic needs.