PREFACE

Aims and Objectives

The U.S. involvement in Vietnam has generated immense scholarly attention as well as public debate throughout the world. The present thesis seeks to offer a comprehensive and analytical study of U.S. involvement in Vietnam since 1945 till date. It critically examines U.S. intervention, engagement and disengagement in Vietnam from historical, political, diplomatic, strategic, legal and theoretical perspectives.

Not only thousands but millions of books, articles, memoirs, transcripts and stories in various newspapers and journals have been written on this topic. Besides the events are more than 30 years old. Therefore in writing this thesis, there were both disadvantages as well as advantages which one had to face while analysing each step of the massive gamut of U.S. withdrawal. Disadvantages were many. First of all, there are two versions of the same incident throughout the process of disengagement – one American and the other Communist. Attempts have been made to study both the versions, thus separating the wheat from the chaff as far as possible and then assimilating them to analyse the factors behind U.S. withdrawal. Advantages were also many. It was easy to find out the essence of what happened and why it happened in Vietnam. Voluminous writings helped the process of research in a big way.

Research Questions

The thesis had to run parallel to the events in the battlefield as well as to the events during the negotiating stage. Therefore, a mix-max of jumbled up ideas has made the thesis a bit lengthy and at times repetitive but nevertheless it is felt to be essential and unavoidable. This is because too many tactical steps from both the belligerents had been adopted again and again in the full eight years of historical journey of withdrawal.
The thesis was decided not to be made only heavily policy-oriented without providing the historic journey of Vietnamese patriots. This was because no policy would have its relevance without knowing as to what issues behind them are referred to. Nobody could ever understand policies behind withdrawal at various stages of disengagement without knowing historically and chronologically what those stages were. Therefore after a very long elaborated debate, it was decided to give the thesis a shape of chronologically analytical study of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.

Moreover, a great new "Nation" was being born out of the long-drawn struggle for independence for so many years. Therefore each step of their glorious victories, losses, sorrows, pains, courage as well as compromises were necessarily required to be brought out because out of these pangs of joys and pains, the "Nation" was born out of the wombs by the great leaders of a tiny "Nation" called VIETNAM.

Americans were equally embroiled in a thoroughly thought-out involvement in Vietnam and a systematically planned disengagement for more than 30 years. Therefore it was not advisable to black out the long 30 years of historical events in America for the sake of an elaborate study of only policies, strategies and diplomacy behind such an event, which, of course, did not remain static for long 30 years but recorded many dynamic changes from phase to phase. Thus the American board room remained busy for full 31 years (1945-76).

Chapterization

The Chapterization scheme follows chronological order delineating several stages of U.S. engagement in Vietnam. While the first chapter deals with the process of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the next six chapters deal with the process of gradual disengagement. The historical necessity of peace through negotiations and stage wise developments as well as bottlenecks in the process of negotiations are elaborated in the second chapter. The third chapter contains gradual stages of
negotiations between U.S. and Vietnam. The next chapter deals with Paris peace talks and violations of ceasefire for two long years. The final surrender and nation-building problems following it are elaborated in the next chapter. The reunification of the country along with obstacles are essentially the highlight of the sixth chapter. In the last, a legal appraisal of both U.S. intervention as well as of war crimes, damages, compensations is available.

Though the doctrine of "Domino" prevailed over the entire period of involvement, various policies, strategies and doctrines were involved during the disengagement period. Important among of them were the Nixon doctrine, policy of introduction of both public and private talks in the negotiations, the policy of separation of military from the political solution of Vietnam, Vietnamization policy, the policy of alienation of Thieu, US-USSR détente, Sino-US relations, the reinterpretation of domino theory by U.S., the carrot and stick policy, Schlesinger theory and lastly new pacific doctrine. Each one of them had its own role to play. The U.S. Congress, American public opinion, two Presidential elections in 1968 and 1972, the public clamour from all parts of the world, U.S. economic upheavals and the various facets of both American and Vietnamese negotiators' personal characters played their role in U.S. withdrawal. Last but not the least was the contribution of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho who brought out a miracle in secret talks which gave Vietnam a complete rebirth.

**Research Methodology and Sources**

The present study adopts analytical and descriptive approach in examining crucial aspects of the issue area. It requires scrutiny of a number of primary sources in the form of government documents as well as secondary sources in the form of books and articles in journals. During research work, much of the data has been collected from official records and reports released by the governments of U.S. and Vietnam.
Hypotheses and Conclusion

The U.S. withdrawal was not only a historical necessity but was an extremely diplomatic and strategically tactful move. Both U.S. intervention as well as withdrawal had their own historical and diplomatic compulsions. The Vietnamese had their own historical necessities and need for national freedom and independence. There was a great resurgence of nationalist spirit among Asian nations during that time as well. The world opinion was changing gradually. Thus with such an atmosphere U.S. withdrawal had to be strategically arranged as a face-saving device.

Economic reconstruction activities after the devastation of war also contributed in U.S. withdrawal. In fact, most surprisingly, Vietnam subsequently showed interest in U.S. involvement again to help it in economic reconstruction work and thus U.S. found a readymade market for its finished goods and a friend in Southeast Asia from the strategic point as well. Thus a full circle was complete in U.S. – Vietnamese relations.

Dated: 2.2.2009
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