



THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM RELATIONS: 1975 – 2011

BY

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From 1975 to 2011, the relationship between the United States and Vietnam changed from that of being foes to friends. At the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the United States closed its Embassy and evacuated its personnel. Twenty-five years later, in 2010, U.S. carrier visited Vietnamese waters - an act of military cooperation, that demonstrated their relationship has changed. The question is how did their relations come to this? This thesis will study the relationship between the United States and Vietnam from 1975 to 2011. It will examine this relevant thirty-five year period, and analyze each American leader in order to define the United States foreign policy towards Vietnam and analyze the factors that affected shifts in policies. This study will examine two time periods: the Post-Vietnam War period (from 1975 to 1989) and the Post-Cold War period (from 1989 to 2011), since the political regime dramatically changed from bipolar to unipolar, radically different from than during the cold war. This thesis will also assess the future of the U.S.-Vietnam relations, highlighting the major factors. .

In the period between 1975 to 2011, the President was empowered by National Constitution to initiate foreign policy decisions as per their interest. However, after the tragedy of the Vietnam War, presidential power was constrained by American public opinion. In the Post-Vietnam War, the constraint for the U.S.-Vietnam relation was not only the congress and public opinion that opposed the Vietnam War, but it was also the U.S. détente policy and the Political regime of the period.

In the Post-Cold War period, the focus of the bilateral relations shifted. Although the POW/MIA was a major issue for the U.S., starting from 1975, it was eventually surpassed by economic interests and security concerns. According to this, the future of U.S.-Vietnam relations and U.S. foreign policy was inspired by U.S. economic interests in Vietnam and containing the influence of China.

Student's Signature



Thesis Advisor's Signature




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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADMM	ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BTA	Bilateral Trade Agreement
EAS	East Asia Summit
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
IMET	International Military Education Training
ITAR	International Traffic in Arms Regulations
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MIA	Missing in Action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTR	Normal Trade Relations
PNTR	Permanent Normal Trade Relations
POW	Prisoner of War
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VCP	Vietnamese Communist Party
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Historical Background

In September 2010, Cold War enemies, United States and Vietnam, demonstrated a good relationship in military cooperation, as a U.S. nuclear super carrier, the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, visited and cruised in the Vietnam water. This occasion changed the status of their relationship from that of old enemies to good friends.

The visit comes 35 years after the Vietnam War, which ended on April 30, 1975, when northern communist forces seized control of the U.S.-backed capital of South Vietnam, reuniting the country. The Communist victory concluded three decades of the United States intervention in Vietnam. The war generated considerable social and political conflicts in the United States, massive disruption in Vietnam, and was enormously costly to both sides. The United States suffered a loss of 58,000 Americans and approximately \$150 billion in direct expenses to sustain the war. For the opponent, Vietnam, an estimated 3 million Vietnamese were killed during the war and the country suffered from major destruction of the land, from ravaged battle sites, to leveled factories and cities.

For the Vietnamese Communists of North Vietnam, the war against the United States was an extension of their desire for independence from the French. For Hanoi of South Vietnam, when the United States displaced the French in Indochina, it assumed the French role as a major power obstacle in Vietnam's eventual reunification. For the United States, intervention was primarily derived from the politically deviant ideology --Communism and Liberalism-- that largely transcended Vietnam.

By the end of war, the United States closed its Embassy and evacuated all Embassy personnel just prior to South Vietnam's surrender to North Vietnamese forces. Vietnam was reunified under communist rule.

Twenty years after the war on July 11, 1995, United States President Bill Clinton formally announced that diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were again normal. Subsequent to President Clinton's normalization announcement, in August 1995, both countries upgraded their Liaison Offices, which opened in January 1995, to embassy status. This meant that diplomatic status changed from enemy to friend. As diplomatic ties between the nations grew, the United States opened a consulate general in Ho Chi Minh City, and Vietnam opened a consulate in San Francisco, California.

After the former foes shook hands in 1995, the two countries paved a course for the development of a relationship that would come to benefit both their futures. The United States became Vietnam's top export market and the country's number one foreign investor. Two-way trade reached \$15.4 billion in 2009. Since the first U.S. warship ship visited Ho Chi Minh City in 2003, military ties experienced tremendous growth and training, which included high-level defense talks. The Bilateral Trade Agreement between the two that went into effect in December 2001 and took a two-year hiatus was reactivated in 2006. In 2003, the two countries signed a Counternarcotic Letter of Agreement (amended in 2006), a Civil Aviation Agreement, and a textile agreement. In January 2007, Congress approved Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) for Vietnam. The various foreign policies, political leaders, and all other social, economic, political, military, and environmental factors all played a role in taking this relationship from where it was after the Cold War to the collegial relationship it is today.

1.2 Statement of problems

After the war, the relationship between the United States and Vietnam were changing from a bad relationship, closing U.S. Embassy and evacuation of all U.S. Embassy personnel in 1975, to good friendly military cooperation, such as the visiting of U.S. carrier in Vietnamese waters in 2010. Questions arise in view of these changes; How did their relations lead up to his unlikely cooperation? Why did their relations come to be this way? What factors drove the relationship in this direction? Finally, what will happen in the future?

1.3 Objectives of the research study

- 1) To study the relationship between the United States and Vietnam during 1975 -2011.
- 2) To analyze factors that influenced the relationship between the United States and Vietnam during 1975 - 2011.
- 3) To predict the future of the U.S. - Vietnam Relationship.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the study

This thesis will study the relationship between Vietnam and the United States from 1975 to 2011 with an emphasis on how each American President during this period influenced U.S. foreign policy toward Vietnam. The study also covers the public opinion and the Congress structure in brief. This will cover the economic, political and security dimension, including any disputes and all other important affairs that affected their relations.

1.5 Research Methodology

- 1) Research Type: Qualitative
- 2) Data Collection Method: from documentations - news, journal, publication, etc.
- 3) Research Analysis: Qualitative analysis

1.6 Analytical Framework

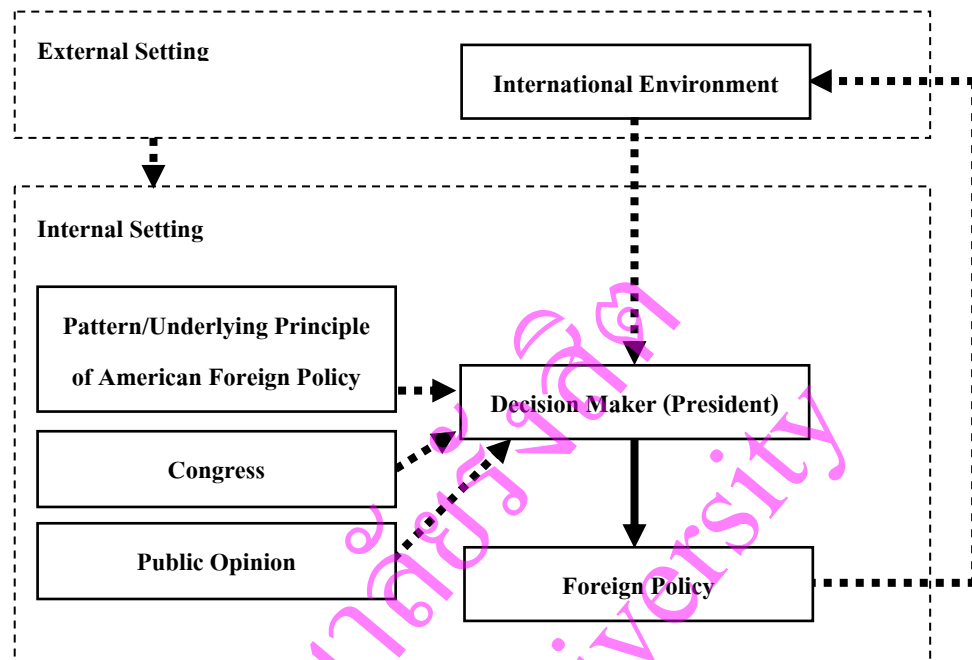


Figure 1.1 Analytical Framework

1.7 Significance of the study

Studying the relationship between the United States and Vietnam will provide useful learning criteria for analysis that can be utilized by all school levels. The objective of the study (1.3) will not only help every country learn about the way U.S. foreign policy was utilized in Vietnam, but also help them to know the factors that influenced the U.S.-Vietnam relationship, as well as factors that are likely to influence their future relationship. Moreover, the result will be valuable data for any public and private sector in Vietnam and others, such as Thailand, to analyze and better predict the outcomes of situations by using the past as a tool for the overall improvement of foreign relations with the United States and all other countries.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

2.1 Relevant Theories and concepts

2.1.1 Foreign Policy

Hastedt and Knickrehm (2003 : 136) state that Policies are lines of action that are the means by which states interact with each other in pursuit of goals and interests. According to this, Foreign policy is government strategy used to guide their actions towards a different state. It dictates how a country will act with respect to other countries' political, social, economic, and militarily dimensions. Foreign policy can also be known as international relations policy or simply diplomacy, and consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to preserve its national interests and to achieve its goals within international relations. It is handled by foreign ministers, ambassadors, and/or the Secretary of the State (in the United States).

2.1.2 Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is a branch of political science dealing with theory development and empirical study regarding the processes and outcomes of foreign policy. It involves the study of how a state makes foreign policy. As it analyzes the decision making process, FPA involves the study of both international and domestic politics. FPA can also be considered a sub-field of the study of international relations, which aims to understand the processes behind foreign policy decision making.

There are two approaches designed for foreign policy analysis. The first one is the ideological approach, according to which the policy of states vis-a-vis the rest of the world are merely

expressions of prevailing political, social and religious belief. In this approach, foreign policies are classified as democratic or totalitarian, libertarian or socialist, and peace loving or aggressive. The second approach to foreign policy is analytical. At the heart of this viewpoint is the proposition that policy rests on multiple determinants, including the state's historic tradition, geographical location, national interest, and purposes and security needs. (Thompson and Macridis, 1976)

Thompson and Macridis stated that Significant Factors in the foreign policy are as follow:

The elements of Foreign Policy, consisted of :

- (1) the relatively permanent material element, Geography, Natural resources, Energy and Power.
- (2) Less permanent material elements; Industrial establishment, Military establishment, and changes in industrial and military capacity.
- (3) The human elements (quantitative and qualitative); population, policy makers and leaders, the role of ideology and the role of information.

2.1.3 The Foreign Policy Making Process

The foreign policy process is a process of decision making. States take actions because people in governments—decision makers—choose those actions (Stein, 2002 : 292 -308). Decision making is a steering process in which adjustments are made as a result of feedback from the outside world. Decisions are carried out by actions taken to change the world, and then information from the world is monitored to evaluate the effects of these actions. These evaluations—along with information about other, independent changes in the environment—go into the next round of decisions

The Foreign Policy Making Process is comprised of the governmental agencies—executive or legislature—and non-governmental agencies—political parties, interest groups, media and characteristic of public opinion. Trends and issues are relative to National purpose, from achieving peace, security, and power, as well as prosperity and economic development.

2.1.4 Rational Actor Model

There are various models of foreign policy decision making to approach; however, three models take precedence over the others and are easier to understand: (1) Rational Actor model, (2) Organizational Process Model and (3) Governmental Politics model.

The Rational Actor Model of decision making is based on rational choice theory. Officials choose the actions where the result(s) best help meet the established goals. The model adopts the state as the primary unit of analysis, and inter-state relations (or international relations) as the context for analysis (Figure 2.1).

Decisions made by using the Organizational Process Model are the result of routine administrative procedures or standard operating procedures. These procedures are made in order to allow day to day operations to be carried out.

Governmental Politics model (or Bureaucratic Politics Model) is this model in which the state is not seen as a monolithic unitary actor and decisions are made through negotiations among governmental agencies with different interests in the outcome.



Figure 2.1 Rational Model of Decision Making

Source: Mintz, Alex & De Rouen Jr., Karl., 2010.

A common starting point for studying the decision-making process is the rational model, which approaches foreign policy from a national level perspective, viewing it as a calculated response

to the action of other states and international actors. Decision-making is the product of informed choice, whereby all alternatives are weighed and the option chosen that holds the best chance of actualizing one's goals at a reasonable cost (Hastedt and Knickrehm, 2003 : 141). In this model, decision makers set goals, evaluate their relative importance, and calculate the costs and benefits of each possible course of action, then choose the one with the highest benefits and the lowest costs (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2011 : 127).

Greg Cashman provides a useful set of steps in the rational model, much different from Goldstein and Pevehouse, as follows (1993:77–78):

1. Identify problem
2. Identify and rank goals
3. Gather information (this can be ongoing)
4. Identify alternatives for reaching goals
5. Analyze alternatives by considering consequences and effectiveness (costs and benefits) of each alternative and probabilities associated with success
6. Select the alternative that maximizes chances of selecting the best alternative as determined in step five
7. Implement decision
8. Monitor and evaluate

2.1.5 Individual-Level Analysis

According to Thompson and Macridis (1967), the significant factors in foreign policy consist of geography, natural resources, energy and power, industrial establishment, military establishment, changes in industrial and military capacity, population, policy makers and leaders, the role of ideology and the role of information, all of which make the foreign policy process very complex. Analysts untangle the complexities by studying foreign policy-making by using three perspectives, or "levels of analysis": (1) individual-level analysis—the impact of people as individuals or as a species on policy; (2) state-level analysis—how the organization and operation of a government affect policy; and (3) system-level analysis—the external realities and pressures that influence a country's policy (Rourke, 2008 : 65).

Individual-level analysis begins with the view that at the root of making policy is the people. Therefore, individual-level analysis involves understanding how the human decision-making process—people making decisions (as a species, in groups, and idiosyncratically)—leads to policy making (Rourke, 2008: 65). Rourke also states that Foreign policy making is much more likely than domestic policy making to be centered on a country's top leadership (2008: 73). Therefore, a useful approach to individual-level analysis focuses on idiosyncratic analysis. Focusing on leaders and their individual traits is the study of humans as individuals and how each leader's personal (idiosyncratic) characteristics help shape his or her decisions (Renshon and Larson, 2002). As one study puts it, "The goals, abilities, and foibles of individuals are crucial to the intentions, capabilities, and strategies of a state" (Byman and Pollack, 2001:111). Rourke notes that five of the many possible factors to consider are personality, physical and mental health, ego and ambition, political history and personal experiences, and perceptions and operational reality (2008: 74).

David Winter defines personality as the "individually patterned integration of processes of perception, memory, judgment, goal-seeking, and emotional expression and regulation" (2003, 110). Studying the personality of leaders can help us understand why some leaders make certain decisions, whereas other leaders facing a similar situation make completely different decisions. In terms of how it affects decision making, Winter (2003) writes that personality influences the weighting of preferences and how decision makers react to symbols and cues. He also notes that personality shapes how a person deals with emotion. Individual decision makers not only have differing values and beliefs, but also have unique personalities—their personal experiences, intellectual capabilities, and personal styles of making decisions (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2011 : 129). Winter breaks down personality into four elements: temperament, cognitions, motives, and the social context (2003, 115–117). Temperament refers to the observable components of behavior such as energy level and neuroses. The social context is observable and involves factors such as gender, class, race, culture, ethnicity, and generation. Cognitions are factors such as beliefs, values, and attitudes. Motives include goals and defense mechanisms. Cognitions and motives are less observable (Mintz and De Rouen Jr., 2010 : 115). The fundamental question idiosyncratic analysis asks is how the personal traits of leaders affect their decisions. Why, for example, are older leaders more likely than younger ones to initiate and escalate military confrontations? (Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam, 2005).

2.1.6 The President of the United States and the Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of the United States is the way in which it interacts with foreign nations and sets standards of interaction for its organizations, corporations and individual citizens. Brian Schmidt states that it is impossible to explain the direction of American policy without highlighting the personality traits and belief of the current president (2000: 10). Since American foreign policy behavior follows from decisions made by elites, and often from decisions made by the president of the United States, the characteristics of leaders influence American foreign policy behaviors.

When the United States makes treaties with other nations, or when it sends ambassadors abroad, it is practicing foreign policy. The first priority of the United States' foreign policy is to preserve and strengthen the position of the United States as an independent and sovereign nation. In the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. staked its claim "to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them." In the United States, the institutions the Constitution created must serve this central purpose, to which all other purposes are subordinate. Given this fact, who is responsible for making foreign policy in the United States? (Baker) Within the federal government, the Constitution divides foreign policy-making power between the President and the Senate, giving them shared authority over the making of treaties and the extension of diplomatic recognition to other nations. Specifically, the Constitution gives the Senate the power of "Advice and Consent" on treaties, which the President is responsible for negotiating. The Senate also has the power of "Advice and Consent" in the appointment of ambassadors nominated by the President (The United States Constitution, Article II, Section 2). Moreover, Baker Spring says that the President makes foreign policy but he does not make it by himself. The President lead on foreign policy, but the American system gives the Senate, and through it the American people, a powerful role in controlling and shaping foreign policy.

Subject to the advice and agreement role of the U.S. Senate, the President of the United States negotiates treaties with foreign nations, but treaties enter into force only if ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. The President is also Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, which gives him broad authority over the armed forces; however only Congress has authority to declare war, and the civilian and military budget is written by the Congress. The United States Secretary of State is the foreign minister of the United States and is the primary conductor of state-to-state diplomacy. Both the Secretary of State and ambassadors are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Congress also has power to regulate commerce with foreign nations (McCormick, 2009).

“The Politics of United States Foreign Policy” (Fifth Edition) written by Jerel A. Rosati and James M. Scott (2011) explains the president’s role in foreign policy since World War II with three patterns. First, during the Cold War years from Harry Truman to Lyndon Johnson, the president and the executive branch dominated U.S. foreign policymaking. Second, in the post-Vietnam War years, the president’s power declined within government and in society, making it more difficult for the president to manage and govern foreign policy effectively. In other words, after the Vietnam War, presidents no longer had as much power as they once had in leading the country in foreign policy. Third, with the collapse of the Cold War, this post-Vietnam pattern continued, however, presidents now had greater opportunities to lead but also faced considerable political risks in attempting to govern foreign policy, as experienced by presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama (Rosati and Scott, 2011)

2.1.7 Patterns of American Foreign policy

Hook and Spanier (2013) stated that prior to the World Wars, the United States did not maintain a global military or diplomatic presence. The nation was secure in the western hemisphere, which during the century after the American Revolution had witnessed the dismantling of European colonial control. During that time, the great powers of Europe engaged in unending spasms of political violence. President Washington said in his Farewell Address in 1796, "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she

must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns...our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course." Hook and Spanier (2013) justified that Washington's successors followed his advice, expanding westward without assistance and avoiding peacetime military alliances for more than 150 years. By 1900, the United States maintained its security apart from the disputes of the other great powers. According to this, the rise of Germany in Europe and Japan threatened America's "splendid isolation" in the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, the times in which the U.S. entered the World Wars were determined by events overseas. Berlin's decision in 1917 to launch submarine warfare forced the United States into military action, and Tokyo's decision in 1941 to attack the U.S. Pearl Harbor in Hawaii led to the American declaration of war against Japan.

"American Foreign Policy since World War II (19th Edition)" written by Steven Hook and John Spanier states that the way Americans perceive their nation as exceptional, or qualitatively different from others, is based not on a common ethnic identity, language, or religion, but on widely shared beliefs about individual liberties, limited government, and a vigorous civil society. Such principles form a "civil religion" in the United States that defines the relationship between state and society and provides the basis for American nationalism. Because Americans have commonly viewed themselves as part of an exceptional society, their attitude toward government is driven by a sense of moral mission (Hook and Spanier, 2013). For example, Thomas Jefferson stated that Americans were "the chosen people of God." In the midst of the Spanish-American war, President William McKinley claimed that he received divine guidance to "educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them" (Hook and Spanier, 2013) Ronald Reagan observed late in the Cold War, "There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might" (Hook and Spanier, 2013) These religious attitudes have long influenced American foreign policy, and their impact has been vital, especially on the use of its military forces. Hook and Spanier (2013) explained that the immoral enemy of the United States, who threatens American integrity, if not the existence, of the nation's democratic principles has to be destroyed. It became a running theme that American power had to be "righteous" power, and only by exercising it fully can Americans ensure salvation and prosperity. (Hook and Spanier, 2013)

2.2 Relevant Study and Research

2.2.1 The Pattern of United States Foreign Policy during 1975 - 2011

During the Cold War, American national security policy was devoted to contain the threat of Soviet communism throughout the globe and was supported by a foreign economic policy based on American leadership of the international political economy. Rosati and Scott (2011) explained that the failure in Vietnam generated a chain of international and domestic changes, which resulted in three new patterns in U.S. foreign policy during the post-Vietnam War era—after the Vietnam War until the late 1980s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. First, with each new administration, there was a modification in the direction of U.S. national security policy. Second, with the growth of economic problems at home and abroad, foreign economic policy became “high” policy again, a priority on all the presidents’ major agendas. Third, unlike the Cold War years, after the Vietnam War it became very difficult for any president or administration to devise a foreign policy that responded successfully to changes in the global environment and obtained substantial domestic support over time. This forced every president to change or modify his foreign policy during his term, usually toward the political center. In contrast, with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States may have entered a new era in foreign policy—a post-Cold War era beginning in the 1990s. With the declining threat of communism and its collapse in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well as changes in the American and global economy, the uncertainty of domestic support intensified. In this respect, the end of the Cold War provided current and future administrations with new opportunities and constraints in their conduct of foreign policy. This was especially relevant during the presidential terms of President George H.W. Bush, President Clinton, and President George W. Bush. In addition to the above conditions pre-determined for the U.S. presidents in this study, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 had a profound impact on the foreign policies that stemmed from President George W. Bush. This catastrophe, as well as the global economic decline that he faced during his term, transcended into Obama’s administration.

2.2.2 The Importance of Presidential Leadership

Overall presidential leadership is affected by the president's power and success and ability to overcome or minimize crises and govern foreign policy. Strong leaders are able to maximize their strengths and capabilities, minimize the constraints they face, and force the uncertain elements to work better and longer in their favor. Strong presidents are more able to exercise power and govern. Weak leaders have great difficulty exercising power and governing, for they operate in a world dominated by insurmountable obstacles and constraints. Although this is particularly the case in domestic policy, presidential leadership is also an important factor that determines just how much power and governance he has over foreign policy (Rosati and Scott 2011).

The classic statement on presidential leadership is *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* by Richard Neustadt. Neustadt's basic argument is that the key to presidential power is the power to persuade, which is a function of political leadership. Presidents who enter office and expect to "command" are quickly disappointed and frustrated. Barking orders may get results for military leaders, but it does not work within the government. In fact, as Neustadt points out, efforts at exerting presidential power through command are an indication of presidential weakness, for presidents should rely on their legal and formal authority only as a last resort. Neustadt identified three crucial elements of political leadership and presidential power: (1) Professional reputation, (2) Public prestige, and (3) Presidential choices.

Rosati and Scott (2011) clarify that professional reputation refers to how other political actors inside and outside Washington, D.C. judge the president's ability to get things accomplished. Presidents with a reputation for being very skillful in exercising power and having to be reckoned with when opposed are most persuasive. Public prestige refers to how other political actors—whether in the bureaucracy, Congress, interest groups, or the media—perceive the level of public support for the president. Presidents with a positive public image are more powerful because high credibility and popular support throughout the country enable a president to use professional reputation and public prestige as a tool in persuasion. The presidential choices include a president's ability to lead and advocate for the choices he makes for which only he is

responsible. The choices a president makes affect his professional reputation and public prestige. Ultimately, this requires that the president and his staff need to be skillful in managing the executive branch and the decision-making process, building coalitions and politically interacting with other players in and out of Washington, D.C., and symbolically communicating his priorities and preferences to American society and the world.

2.2.3 Presidential Power in Foreign Policy

“The Politics of United States Foreign Policy” (Fifth Edition) written by Jerel A. Rosati and James M. Scott (2011) explain that presidential power in foreign policy since World War II has gone through four general stages:

(1) During the Great Depression and especially World War II, the modern and the “model” presidency occurred under President Franklin Roosevelt;

(2) After World War II and during the Cold War, presidential power in the making of foreign policy became supreme;

(3) Since the Vietnam War, the president’s ability to govern and lead foreign policy declined and became much more complex; and

(4) With the end of the Cold War, the paradox of presidential power, the presidential life cycle, and the crisis of leadership power have further intensified.

Rosati and Scott (2011) explained that recent presidents that strong and durable political leadership are not common. They argued that Johnson, Nixon, Ford, or Carter lacked strong overall leadership skills. Gerald Ford was a relatively passive president who had low levels of professional reputation and public prestige. He was a likable person but never would have become president on his own. Jimmy Carter entered office as an activist president with relatively high public prestige and very low professional reputation. Rosati and Scott (2011) claimed that only President Reagan was able to fault the trend, yet even he was politically damaged at the close of his term. President Reagan seemed to have maintained high levels of professional reputation and

public prestige, which may explain why he has been the most successful of contemporary presidents, even while suffering from the Iran-Contra affair.

It was very difficult for post-Cold War presidents to govern foreign policy, lead the country, and manage the executive branch to produce a consistent and coherent foreign policy in both national security and economic affairs. In short, lack of consensus on foreign policy, more diffusing international security risks, and an interdependent world economy altogether increased the constraints and challenges faced by post-Cold War presidents. Crises still occurred and allowed presidents to exert their political power, but these were only temporary displays of power over a limited foreign policy scope. This was certainly what President George H.W. Bush experienced with the Persian Gulf War. He was rated highest by public approval in 1991, only to be defeated for reelection in 1992 (Rosati, 2004). Similarly, the terrorist attacks of September 11 created a new period of crisis and national emergency which made President George W. Bush supreme in the making of foreign policy like former Cold War presidents. The collapse of the Cold War produced an interesting paradox for the future of presidential leadership and U.S. foreign policy. It gave the president great opportunities but also created great risks. Unlike those of the Cold War era, contemporary presidents were no longer driven to pursue only an anticommunist containment policy. They now had more flexibility to pursue a wider range of foreign policy options abroad.

Rosati (2004) stated that George H. W. Bush used his considerable governmental experience to continue most of the policies of his predecessor, President Reagan, but with a “kinder and gentler” style. Bush’s leadership style was quite different from Reagan’s. He was more informal and low-key, more active and hands-on, less ideological, and more politically sensitive. His presidency was too reactive and cautious, and he was too sensitive to public relations and politics. His public approval ratings into his third year were over 70 percent, an all-time high for post-World War II presidents. Although his public approval was high, Bush, unlike Reagan and many of his predecessors, lacked truly strong political support. Also, he was not a particularly good public speaker and, moreover, he did not develop an active domestic agenda and faced an economic recession. President Bill Clinton appears to be a very complex man who seemed to have contradictory leadership styles. On one hand, he had a

strong interest and concern for both policy and politics. In the words of Jack Watson, a former White House chief of staff, Clinton was “exuberant, informal, interactive, nonhierarchical, and indefatigable.” On the other hand, Clinton often got himself into trouble by lacking self-discipline and not focusing on a set of specific goals. President Clinton did manage to initiate several significant foreign policy actions such as the military interventions in Haiti and Kosovo as well as the bailouts of the Mexican peso and Asian financial crisis, in which he exercised a certain amount of prerogative government. In each case the administration was faced with considerable public and congressional opposition to each initiative yet proceeded nonetheless. In each case there were many in Congress who argued that Clinton did not have the authority to act alone, and yet he did so. He left office with greater public approval than when he entered. George W. Bush had a very inauspicious beginning as president. He was elected in 2000 with a smaller popular vote than Al Gore, the opposing Democratic candidate. Although Bush was previously governor of Texas and ran for president as a “compassionate conservative,” he was not widely respected or admired for his political focus, background, or knowledge, especially in the area of foreign policy. The conventional wisdom was that he picked a seasoned foreign policy team that would make up for what he lacked in knowledge about U.S. foreign policy and world politics (Rosati 2004). However, after September 11, 2001, Bush quickly reacted to the disaster and ensuing crisis, which ultimately made him a new man and a new president over the few weeks following the incident. The immediate response was that the country (and much of the world) rallied around the flag and the president. For the next few months, public approval of presidential behavior surged to around 90 percent. Overnight, George W. Bush had become the war president whose principal focus would be to fight the global war on terrorism. For President Obama, Rosati and Scott expressed that his leadership style resonated with much of the American people (and much of the world for that matter). From the start, he appeared active, calm and patient, bright and articulate, thoughtful, politically astute, tireless and friendly, with sense of self-deprecation and humility, and a strong ability to communicate—a potentially impressive package of characteristics that helped maximize his presidential leadership and power of persuasion. In the language of James MacGregor Burns (1978), Obama displayed what he calls “transformational” leadership (more strategic and long-term oriented that may profoundly affect future policies and the future of the country), as opposed to the “transactional” leadership (more short-term and politically motivated—oriented) that one commonly tends to see (Rosati and Scott, 2011)

2.2.4 The Doctrine of the United States President during 1975 - 2011

Nixon Doctrine - Hastedt (2004) explained that the Nixon Doctrine involved part of an attempt by President Richard Nixon to formulate a policy that would allow the United States to remain the dominant power in the International System after Vietnam but not require that it send troops abroad to contain the spread of Communism. First announced in 1969 and then elaborated upon in Nixon's 1971 foreign-policy report to Congress, the Nixon Doctrine stated that while the United States would help free countries to defend themselves, they must provide for their own military defense with the U.S. providing military and economic assistance. In short, there would be no more Vietnam Wars. Along with the Nixon Doctrine, the Nixon administration pursued two other initiatives as part of its strategy to redirect American foreign policy. The most narrowly constructed was 'Vietnamization', which sought to turn over responsibility for defending South Vietnam to the South Vietnamese. This policy was fully in accord with the Nixon Doctrine, and Southeast Asia was the original region targeted by Nixon in 1969. The second and more broadly conceived policy initiative was Détente. One of the major consequences of the Nixon Doctrine was a massive increase in the level of Arms Transfers to regional powers that Nixon hoped would serve as surrogate powers to contain the spread of communism.

Détente is the term used to describe American foreign policy roughly from the end of the Vietnam War until the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Hastedt (2004) clarified that détente was based on the need to reach an accommodation with the other major powers rather than dominate or isolate them. Disagreement exists as to whether détente is best seen as a successor foreign-policy strategy to containment or merely a means of implementing containment under changed circumstances. The principal changes were a reduction in American military power after Vietnam and the absence of a societal consensus on the proper direction of American foreign policy.

Ford Doctrine - Toward Pacific region, in December 1975, President Ford traveled to Hawaii to issue a Pacific Doctrine and assert that "Despite the tragedies of Vietnam ... the United States remained a Pacific power." Stoufer (1991) justified his declaration that "Ford focused on the growing 'commercial involvement' in Asia," and acknowledged that "U.S. economic interests in Asia were becoming larger than those in Europe."

Carter Doctrine - The Carter Doctrine is the name given to the policy announced by President Jimmy Carter in response to the Soviet Union's December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. He stated that the United States would treat an "attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region ... as an assault on the vital interests of the United States and such force will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." It represented a virtual about-face for Carter's foreign policy toward the Soviet Union. Carter had campaigned on a platform that rejected power politics and promised to replace it with an emphasis on Human Rights and morality. The inevitable consequence of his foreign policy was to deemphasize the importance of the Soviet Union to U.S. foreign policy and to draw attention to how it treated its citizens. Both moves offended Soviet leaders who continued to view world politics through a prism that emphasized the importance of power politics and traditional security concerns (Hastedt, 2004).

Reagan Doctrine - The Reagan Doctrine was the policy position adopted by the Reagan administration in 1985 that the purpose of U.S. foreign policy was to nourish and defend freedom and democracy and that to accomplish this goal the United States would "defy Soviet sponsored aggression and secure rights which have been ours since birth." The Reagan Doctrine is significant because it went beyond previous statements of Containment, such as the Nixon, or Carter Doctrines, by adding an offensive component. It was a major change in policy moving from containment to more direct assistance to those fighting against communist government. Hastedt (2004) expressed that the United States traditionally had pledged itself to defend free states from communist aggression. Under the Reagan Doctrine the United States would also actively work to remove communist regimes from power.

Clinton Doctrine - The Clinton Doctrine as clear of a statement as many other United States Presidential doctrines were. In a February 26, 1999 speech, President Bill Clinton said the following, which was considered the Clinton Doctrine, "It's easy ... to say that we really have no interests in who lives in this or that valley in Bosnia, or who owns a strip of brushland in the Horn of Africa, or some piece of parched earth by the Jordan River. But the true measure of our interests lies not in how small or distant these places are, or in whether we have trouble pronouncing their names. The question we must ask is: what are the consequences to our security of letting conflicts fester and spread. We cannot, indeed, we should not, do everything or be everywhere. But where our values and our interests are at stake, and where we can make a difference, we must be prepared to do so." To clarify, this statement means it was U.S. national interest to stop the fighting and repression in Kosovo before it spread elsewhere.

Bush Doctrine - In an address, by president George W. Bush, to the United States Congress after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush declared that the U.S. would "make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them," a statement that was followed by the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Subsequently, the Bush Doctrine has come to be identified with a policy that permits preventive action against potential U.S. aggressors before they are capable of mounting attacks against the U.S., a view that has been used in part as a rationale for the 2003 Iraq War. His doctrine based on the belief that those who harbor terrorists should be treated the same as those who are terrorists themselves. Different analysts would point different meanings to "the Bush Doctrine", as it came to describe other elements, including the controversial policy of preventive war, which held that the United States should depose foreign regimes that represented a potential or perceived threat to the security of the United States, even if that threat was not immediate; a policy of spreading democracy around the world, especially in the Middle East, as a strategy for combating terrorism; and a willingness to unilaterally pursue U.S. military interests.

Obama's "Pivot to East Asia" strategy - The American military and diplomatic 'pivot,' or 'rebalance' toward Asia became a popular slogan after Hillary Clinton authored America's Pacific Century, in Foreign Policy. Clinton's article emphasizes the importance of the Asia-Pacific, noting

that nearly half of the world's population resides there, making its development vital to American economic and strategic interests. She states that "open markets in Asia provide the United States with unprecedented opportunities for investment, trade, and access to cutting-edge technology. Our economic recovery at home will depend on exports and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia. Strategically, maintaining peace and security across the Asia-Pacific is increasingly crucial to global progress, whether through defending freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, countering the proliferation efforts of North Korea, or ensuring transparency in the military activities of the region's key players" (Clinton, 2013). According to her paper, the 'pivot' strategy will progress along six courses of action as follows: strengthening bilateral security alliances, deepening America's relationships with rising powers, including China, engaging with regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and investment, forging a broad-based military presence, and advancing democracy and human rights.

2.2.5 The Changing Pattern of the United States and Vietnam Relations during 1975 - 2011

Lan (2001) expressed the relations of the United States and Vietnam during 1975 to 2011, from the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945 until the late 80s, Vietnam-U.S. relations were best characterized by confrontation and hostility. After that, at the end of the Cold War, a new pattern of interaction between Vietnam and the United States replaced confrontation as the dominant pattern of relations. This fundamental shift between the two nations was well in accordance with the main trend of peace and cooperation among nations after the Cold War. A new and cooperative relationship between Vietnam and the US is not only in the interests of the two nations but also contributes to regional peace, security and development.

With the long-standing tradition of humanitarianism, Vietnam began seeking reconciliation with the United States under the Carter administration, which attempted to normalize relations. However, negotiations failed partly because mutual hostility and distrust between the two countries that still endured in the aftermath of the American defeat in the war and partly because of the division within the United States administration on the issue of normalizing

relations with Vietnam. At the time, Carter's Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was very enthusiastic about normalizing relations with Vietnam. According to Vance, this would increase American influence in Vietnam and prevent the Soviet Union and China from having too much weight on Vietnam. On the other hand, the President's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski was not supportive of normalizing relations with Vietnam as he called the latter: "such peripheral issues as Vietnam" (Lan, 2001). Brzezinski opposition on the subject subsequently shifted the priorities of American foreign policymakers on to matters other than normalization. Vietnam soon realized that the Carter administration was not capable of delivering the aid promised by the discredited president Nixon. The window of opportunity for the two countries was already closed when the U.S. chose to normalize relations with China. The strategy of "playing the China card" against the Soviet Union and also against Vietnam together with the troubled state of Sino-Vietnamese relations at the time virtually left Vietnam with very few foreign policy choices (Lan, 2001). The U.S. antagonistic policy towards Vietnam was later reinforced by the outbreak of the Cambodian conflict. Despite the fact that the U.S. harshly criticized the Khmer Rouge brutal massacre in Cambodia, the U.S. still took sides with China in opposing Vietnam's involvement in Cambodia and turned the issue into the principal obstacle for U.S.-Vietnam normalization.

Lan (2001) explained that relaxation of tensions at the global level acted as catalysts for a major change in Vietnam's view of the world. Vietnam's imperative for economic reform became clear as the country's economy was in dismal condition after years of war and conflict. Thus, a fundamental shift took place in 1986 when Vietnam's Sixth Party Congress adopted the Doi Moi policy, which had far reaching ramifications for Vietnam's relations with the outside world. The new foreign policy line "more friends, less enemies" was thereby adopted by the country as a result of this shift (Documents of the Sixth National Congress of the CPV, 1986). Moreover, the Seventh Party Congress reaffirmed Vietnam's commitment to the Doi Moi process, thus taking another step forward in Vietnam's new foreign policy outlook. The Seventh Party Congress (1991) stated "Vietnam wants to be a friend of all countries in the international community, striving for peace, independence and development" (Documents of the Sixth National Congress of the CPV, 1991)

Lan (2001) described that the very first step taken by the United States for normalization was the visit to Vietnam. In 1987, General John Vessey of President's Reagan Special envoy was sent on a mission in Vietnam to seek cooperation with the Vietnamese government to resolve the MIA/POW issues since the Cambodian conflict was no longer hindering the ongoing improvement of relations between the two countries. Former President Bill Clinton later affirmed "Vietnam's willingness to help us return the remains of our fallen servicemen to their families has been the biggest boost to improve ties" (Clinton, 2000). President Clinton also said, "America is coming to see Vietnam as your people have asked for years—as a country, not a war. A country with the highest literacy rate in Southeast Asia; a country whose young people just won three Gold Medals at the International Math Olympiad in Seoul; a country of gifted, hard-working entrepreneurs emerging from years of conflict and uncertainty to shape a bright future"

Lan (2001) also clarified that the two countries shared common humanitarian interests in healing the wounds of the war. For the U.S., the Vietnam War resulted in the highest number of unaccounted for servicemen who went missing during the war. This was a primary issue for U.S. policy towards Vietnam not only because of its pure humanitarian nature but also because of domestic vulnerability that the country suffered from the calamity. For Vietnam, overcoming the still heavy consequences of the war was even more imperative. Millions of people are still suffering from the enduring effects of the Agent Orange that the U.S. used extensively during the war in Vietnam -- Agent Orange or Herbicide Orange is one of the herbicides defoliant used by the U.S. military as part of its herbicidal warfare program during the Vietnam War. The head of Vietnam's National Committee in charge of investigating the consequences of the chemicals used during the war estimated that Vietnam would need at least a century to overcome the consequences of Agent Orange.

Burghardt (2006) stated that the good relations between Washington and Hanoi can be attributed to two factors: (1) a pragmatic approach by both countries since normalization in 1995, focusing on present and future mutual benefits rather than obsessing about the past, and; (2) more recently, the realization by both parties that there was no strategic conflict and, in fact, there were important areas of strategic convergence. For these relations, Vietnam remained wary of the

United States. While Hanoi valued America's role in maintaining a regional balance of power, it was suspicious the proselytizing for democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. More importantly, Vietnam never wanted to be part of a containment policy against China. The U.S. continued to value Vietnam's dynamic economy, its increasingly sophisticated leadership and its quietly growing leadership role in Southeast Asia.

Others argue that improvements in bilateral relations should be credited to Vietnam's authoritarian government for improving its record on human rights. The population of over 1 million Vietnamese Americans, as well as legacies of the Vietnam War, also drove continued U.S. interest (Manyin, 2009). Vietnamese leaders sought to upgrade relations with the U.S. due in part to worries about China's expanding influence in Southeast Asia and the desire for continued U.S. support for their economic reforms. Manyin (2009) claimed that there is little evidence that Hanoi sought to balance Beijing's rising power. Also, some Vietnamese remain suspicious that the United States' long-term goal is to end the Vietnamese Communist party's monopoly on power through a "peaceful evolution" strategy.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Type of Research

Qualitative Research - since this thesis will study the relationship of two units, and the objectives are to describe and define the factors of their relationship, it is necessary to approach the matter with an ideological and analytical approach. Statistics from the data collected surrounding the subject will be only used for analysis and estimation as well as to describe the relationships and analyze the factors concerning the issues as listed throughout this study.

3.2 Data Collection

The data used in this thesis will be both Thai and English documentations, comprising of text book, news, articles in academic journals, as well as official publication. The documents will be collected in the form of hard copies from the library and soft copies from the internet. The data collected will be the history from 1975 to 2011 involving the United States and Vietnam. This history will focus on significant situations comprising of the Vietnam War, the Cold War, Post-Cold War, Sino-Vietnam War, Economic Crisis in their location, the rising of China as well as Maritime disputes in South China Sea.

3.3 Data Analysis

Collected data will be analyzed based on Qualitative Analysis. To begin, the study will examine the relationship between the United States and Vietnam from 1975 to 2011, concentrating on major issues and other relative data that will be collected and analyzed based on the Rational

Actor Model at the individual level. Because the duration of history being studied (1975 - 2011) calls for a substantial amount of data, the study will concentrate on one side. By comparing the U.S. with Vietnam, the U.S. presents heavier military, political, and economic power. The U.S. perspective will focus on each American leader and the influences that drove not only the presidents' power, but also the economic, political, and safety aspects of the country. The thesis will define United States foreign policy toward Vietnam and analyze the factors that affected the relationship over time. Since the political regime dramatically change from bipolar to unipolar during the period and the U.S. and Vietnam were different during the Cold War, the study will separate the period into two periods: the post-Vietnam War period, and the post-Cold War period. Finally, the study will assess the future of the U.S.-Vietnam relation by utilizing past information and historical data to predict how the relationship will endure upcoming stress.

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Chapter 4

The U.S.-Vietnam Relations and the U.S. Presidents

4.1 The Foreign Policy of the United States

The foreign policy of the United States has continuities and changes over time. After World War I, United States foreign policy reflected a strong isolationist sentiment against involvement in the international political economy. With World War II and the rise of the Cold War, the U.S. became the global leader during the 1950s and 1960s, shaping its foreign policy around the containment of Soviet and communist expansion throughout the world. Over the last forty years, numerous developments have occurred that affected the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The Vietnam War, Watergate, and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system challenged the power of the presidency while intensifying a relative economic decline. More recently, the end of the Cold War, brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, and the recent global economic crisis have opened up new opportunities and challenges for U.S. foreign policy in the two critical areas of national security and economics. (Rosati and Scott: 2011)

4.1.1 Public Opinion and the Foreign Policy of the United States

In the United States, public opinion refers to the general attitudes held by Americans toward specific issues and topics, which are expressed primarily through polls and periodic voting. Public opinion includes views held by the elite public as well, but it represents no more than a small minority of Americans. Events of the Vietnam War had the most traumatic impact on Americans, leading to the collapse of the ideological and foreign policy consensus that prevailed throughout the Cold War. The “failure” in Vietnam undermined many of these beliefs. Americans seemed to be dying for a lost cause. These tragic losses led people to raise questions about U.S.

foreign policy. Members of the mass public, on the one hand, came to critique the Vietnam War and U.S. foreign policy predominantly from a pragmatic perspective. Members of the elite public, on the other hand, were more likely to debate the goals and virtue of U.S. foreign policy. By the late 1960s, a substantial number of average Americans had also turned against the government and its policies in Vietnam; some wanted out through victory and military escalation, but most wanted out via withdrawal from the war. For a while, the polarization between the antiwar movement and supporters of the war, between critics and supporters of mainstream society, appeared to verge on civil war. All post-Vietnam War presidents discovered that most Americans expected presidential promises to be fulfilled, but it became increasingly difficult for presidents to deliver. Differences in the ideological and foreign policy beliefs among the elite public, coupled with a pragmatic but volatile mass public, provided a new set of domestic limitations, expectations, and possibilities for the making of U.S. foreign policy since U.S. involvement in Vietnam (Rosati and Scott: 2011).

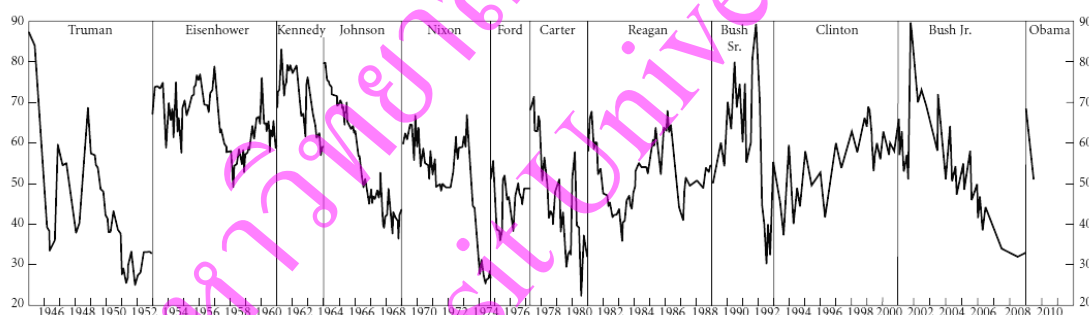


Figure 4.1 Presidential job approval ratings from Truman to Obama

Source: Rosati, Jerel A. & Scott, James M., 2011.

Rosati and Scott (2004) stated that the rise of a strong sense of American optimism and nationalism, of a foreign policy and ideological consensus, and a responsive public opinion during the Cold War actually led to the increase of presidential power in managing foreign policy. In this environment, the president and the executive branch dominated the making of U.S. foreign policy, while the demands of national security took precedence over the demands of democracy. They claimed that changes in political culture, political ideology, and public opinion since the height of the Cold War meant that the era of extraordinary presidential power in foreign policy passed and tensions between national security and democracy increased. Since the Vietnam War, diversity of

ideological and foreign policy beliefs shows that this pattern in varying opinions is also likely to continue in the future.

4.1.2 Congress and the Foreign Policy of the United States

Rosati and Scott (2004) explained that inter-branch politics in foreign policy have been fluid and dynamic, with neither Congress nor the president always predominant, especially since the collapse of the Cold War consensus --During the Cold War, both political parties of the United States agreed to work together to triumph over the global threat of communism, doing everything in their power to defeat communism. Four patterns or models are likely: a competitive Congress, a disengaged Congress, a supportive Congress, and a strategic Congress. While Congress was more supportive during the Cold War years, all four models are likely to operate in the post-Vietnam and post-Cold War era, especially a more strategic Congress. Which model prevails is dependent on four important factors: The type of issue involved, Congress' tendency to be a reactive body, Congress' nature as the ultimate political institution, and divided government becoming the norm. For the type of issue, the more an issue involves questions of war, the more likely it is that the president will continue to enjoy in the making of policy, while the more an issue becomes detached from the use of force, the more likely it is that Congress will play an active and influential role in the policymaking process. Second, Congress tends to be a reactive body.

Divided government means the Congress and presidency are controlled by different political parties, which increases the likelihood for inter-branch disagreement and conflict. For instance, President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, dealt with a Congress that was dominated by Republicans. And President George W. Bush had to deal with divided government in the first two and last two years of his presidency (See Figure 4.1). Unlike the 1950s and 1960s, which were times of bipartisanship and a Cold War consensus—minimizing the impact of divided government in the making of foreign policy—the divided government since Vietnam was much more prone to promote conflict with the collapse of bipartisanship and the anticommunist consensus (Rosati and Scott: 2011).

Table 4.1 Party Controls of the Presidency and Congress, 1973-2010

Year	President	Party of President	Congress	HR			Senate			Government is
				D	R	O	D	R	O	
1973 - 1974	Nixon/Ford	R	93rd	243	192	0	57	43	0	divided
1975 - 1976	Ford	R	94th	291	144	0	61	38	1	divided
1977 - 1978	Carter	D	95th	292	143	0	62	38	0	unified
1979 - 1980	Carter	D	96th	277	158	0	59	41	0	unified
1981 - 1982	Reagan	R	97th	243	192	0	47	53	0	divided (HR)
1983 - 1984	Reagan	R	98th	269	166	0	46	54	0	divided (HR)
1985 - 1986	Reagan	R	99th	253	182	0	47	53	0	divided (HR)
1987 - 1988	Reagan	R	100th	258	177	0	55	45	0	divided
1989 - 1990	Bush, GHW	R	101st	260	175	0	55	45	0	divided
1991 - 1992	Bush, GHW	R	102nd	267	167	1	56	44	0	divided
1993 - 1994	Clinton	D	103rd	258	176	1	57	43	0	unified
1995 - 1996	Clinton	D	104th	202	232	1	46	54	0	divided
1997 - 1998	Clinton	D	105th	206	228	1	45	55	0	divided
1999 - 2000	Clinton	D	106th	211	223	1	45	55	0	divided
2001 - 2002	Bush, GW	R	107th	212	221	2	50	49	1	divided
2003 - 2004	Bush, GW	R	108th	204	228	3	48	51	1	unified
2005 - 2006	Bush, GW	R	109th	200	234	1	45	55	0	unified
2007 - 2008	Bush, GW	R	110th	231	204	0	51	49	0	divided
2009 - 2010	Obama	D	111th	257	178	0	60	40	0	unified

HR = House of Representatives D = Democrats R = Republicans O = Other

Source: <http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/renka/> (by Russell D. Renka), 10 April 2013

4.2 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations Summary

The United States established diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1950, following its limited independence from the French Union; France continued to oversee Vietnam's defense and foreign policy. In 1954, Vietnamese nationalists fighting for full independence defeated France, and the now-divided Vietnam entered into two decades of civil war. The United States did not recognize North Vietnam's government, maintaining the U.S. Embassy in South Vietnam, supporting the South against the North, and entering the war on the South's side.

After communist North Vietnam's victory over U.S.-backed South Vietnam in 1975, the United States closed its Embassy and evacuated all Embassy personnel. As a result, U.S.-Vietnam relations remained essentially frozen until the mid-1990s. Since then, bilateral ties expanded remarkably, to the point where the relationship became virtually normalized. In 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia following border clashes. U.S. policy held that normalization of its relations with Vietnam be kept on the condition that they withdraw the Vietnamese military from Cambodia due in part to a comprehensive political settlement and on continued cooperation on prisoner of war/missing in action (POW/MIA) issues and other humanitarian concerns.

In 1995, the United States announced the formal normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Since then, U.S. relations with Vietnam have become increasingly cooperative and broad. After 2002, overlapping strategic and economic interests compelled the United States and Vietnam to improve relations across a wide spectrum of issues. Congress played a significant role in the normalization process and continues to influence the state of bilateral relations. Voices favoring improved relations included those reflecting U.S. business interests in Vietnam's reforming economy and U.S. strategic interests in expanding cooperation with a populous country—Vietnam has over 85 million people—that has an ambivalent relationship with China.

Since normalization, economic ties are the most mature aspect of the bilateral relationship. The United States is Vietnam's largest export market. The final step toward full economic normalization was accomplished in December 2006. For years, the United States

supported Vietnam's market-oriented economic reforms, which many credit to Vietnam's extraordinary economic performance; from 1987 to 2007, annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged over 7%. Since the early 1990s, poverty levels have been halved to less than 30%. In 2008, the two countries launched bilateral investment treaty (BIT) talks and the Bush Administration announced that it would explore whether to add Vietnam to the Generalized System of Payments (GSP) program, which extends duty-free treatment to certain products that are imported from designated developing countries.

Since 2002, the United States and Vietnam expanded political and security ties, symbolized by reciprocal summits that have been held annually since 2005. Vietnam is one of the largest recipients of U.S. assistance in East Asia; estimated U.S. aid in fiscal year 2008 surpassed \$100 million, much of it for health-related activities. In September 2007, the House passed the Vietnam Human Rights Act, H.R. 3096, which would freeze some non-humanitarian U.S. assistance programs at existing levels if Vietnam did not improve its human rights situation. Since 2006, arrests of dissidents and other such developments in Vietnam increased concerns about human rights. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding during the Defense Policy Dialogue that will further advance bilateral defense cooperation.

4.3 Major Issues in U.S.-Vietnam Relations

Since the end of the Vietnam War, key issues in U.S.-Vietnam relations can be separated as follows: Vietnam War “legacy” issues, diplomatic ties, economic ties, military-to-military ties, the U.S. foreign assistance to Vietnam, and human rights issues. In 2011, U.S. goals with respect to Vietnam included opening markets for U.S. trade and investment, furthering human rights and democracy within the country, countering China’s increasing regional influence, cooperating to ensure freedom of navigation in and around the South China Sea, and maintaining if not expanding U.S. influence in Southeast Asia (Manyin, 2009). For Vietnam’s part, since the mid-1980s, Hanoi essentially pursued a four-pronged national strategy: (1) prioritize economic development through market-oriented reforms; (2) pursue good relations with Southeast Asian neighbors that provide Vietnam with economic partners and diplomatic friends; and (3) repair and deepen its relationship with China, while (4) simultaneously buttressing this by improving relations with the United States as a counterweight to Chinese ambition (Ott, 2003).

According to Congressional report (2012), there are a number of strategic and tactical reasons behind Vietnam’s efforts to upgrade its relationship with the United States. Many Vietnamese policymakers seek to counter Chinese ambitions in Southeast Asia, and preserve its territorial and other interest in the South China Sea, by encouraging a sustained U.S. presence in the region. Vietnam also needs a favorable international economic environment—for which it sees U.S. support as critical—to enable the country’s economy to continue to expand so it can achieve its goal of becoming industrialized by 2020. Securing greater access to the U.S. market, which already is the largest destination for Vietnam’s export, would enhance Vietnam’s economy and is a major reason why Vietnam is participating in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations.

4.3.1 Vietnam War “legacy” issues

Agent Orange - The damage of Agent Orange, and its accompanying dioxin was one major legacy of the Vietnam War that is still unresolved. It strongly affected to the people and the environment of Vietnam. Since the Vietnam War, both Vietnam and the U.S. generally pushed

this issue to the background of bilateral discussions by other, more pressing issues. As the relationship between the two countries improved and matured, and with most other wartime “legacy” issues presently resolved, the issue of Agent Orange/dioxin eventually emerged as a regular topic in bilateral discussions. Congressional Report, prepared for members and committees of Congress in 2009, notified that “the U.S. military sprayed approximately 11 million-12 million gallons of Agent Orange over nearly 10% of then-South Vietnam between 1961 and 1971. Between 2.1 million and 4.8 million Vietnamese were directly exposed to Agent Orange.” Since 2007, Congress appropriated \$63.4 million for dioxin removal and health care facilities in DaNang (Manyin, 2012). In June 2010, the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin (Dialogue Group), a bi-national committee of individuals and organizations involved in this issue, released a proposed 10-year, \$300 million “action plan” designed to provide “a significant part of the long-term solution to the Agent Orange/dioxin legacy in Vietnam” (U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin, 2010).

Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Issues – For the United States, one of the major issues from the aftermath of the war and other operations in Southeast Asia were the U.S. servicemen who were reported as missing in action (MIA). The term also referred to issues related to the treatment of affected family members by the governments involved in these conflicts. Officially, more than 1,000 Americans who served in Indochina during the Vietnam War era are still unaccounted for. From 1975 through the late 1990s, obtaining a full accounting of the U.S. POW/MIA cases was one of the dominant issues in bilateral relations.

4.3.2 Diplomatic ties

In the early 1990s, following Vietnam’s withdrawal from Cambodia and improvements in Hanoi’s cooperation on the issue of POW/MIA, the United States and Vietnam gradually began to normalize relations. In the mid-2000s, leaders in both countries pursued new ways to upgrade the bilateral relationship. Two manifestations of this goal were the U.S. extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status to Vietnam in 2007 and four annual summits from 2005-2008. In 2010, the two countries took a variety of steps indicating that they may be graceful to

enter a new level of cooperation, particularly on strategic issues. The intensity of high level U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic interaction peaked in 2010. That year, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Vietnam in July and October, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited in October. The trips were partly due to Vietnam's one year stint as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), during which time the country served as the host for a number of multilateral gatherings. The Obama Administration also used them as occasions to signal its determination to increase the U.S.'s overall presence in Southeast Asia and upgrade its strategic relationship with Vietnam in particular. In October 2010, Vietnam then assembled and secured U.S. attendance in the first ever ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting + 8 (ADMM Plus, a triennial gathering of the ministers of defense from the 10 ASEAN countries accompanied by their counterparts from Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Russia), in which Secretary Gates participated and reiterated U.S. concerns about China's actions in the South China Sea (Manyin, 2012). Later that same month, Secretary Clinton traveled back to Hanoi to join in the East Asia Summit (EAS), the first time the United States officially participated in the five-year old gathering. During one of her visits, Secretary Clinton summed up the new emphasis on Vietnam when she stated that "the Obama Administration is prepared to take the U.S.-Vietnam relationship to the next level... We see this relationship not only as important on its own merits, but as part of a strategy aimed at enhancing American engagement in the Asia Pacific and in particular Southeast Asia." Since then, the U.S. and Vietnam have deepened their cooperation across a range of issues.

4.3.3 Economic ties

For over 20 years, economic and trade relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Vietnam) remained virtually frozen as a result of the extended military conflict of the 1960s and 1970s. On May 2, 1975, after North Vietnam defeated U.S. ally South Vietnam, President Gerald R. Ford extended President Richard M. Nixon's 1964 trade embargo on North Vietnam to cover the reunified nation. Under the Ford embargo, bilateral trade and financial transactions were prohibited. The shift in U.S. policy also was spurred by Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia. President Bill Clinton ordered an end to the U.S. trade embargo on

Vietnam on February 3, 1994. Since the resumption of trade relations in the 1990s, Vietnam rapidly rose to become a significant trading partner for the United States. Bilateral trade grew from about \$220 million in 1994 to \$18.6 billion in 2010. Vietnam is the second-largest source of U.S. clothing imports, and a major source for footwear, furniture, and electrical machinery (Martin, 2011). Specialist in Asian Affairs Michael F. Martin (2009) justified that bilateral relations also improved, in part, due to Vietnam's 1986 decision to shift from a Soviet style central planned economy to a form of market socialism. The new economic policy, known as Doi Moi ("change and newness"), ushered in a period of over 20 years of rapid growth in Vietnam.

The United States and Vietnam signed a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) on July 13, 2000, which went into force on December 10, 2001. As part of the BTA, the United States extended the most favored nation (MFN) trade status to Vietnam, now known as Normal Trade Relations (NTR). Economic and trade relations further improved when the United States granted Vietnam permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status on December 29, 2006, as part of Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Congressional Report *U.S.-Vietnam Economic and Trade Relations: Issues for the 112th Congress* explained that official U.S. and Vietnamese trade data are comparatively close and reflect a similar pattern in the growth of bilateral trade. For the first few years following the end of the U.S. embargo, trade between the two nations grew slowly, principally because of Vietnam's lack of NTR. However, following the granting of conditional NTR in December 2001, trade flows between the United States and Vietnam grew quickly. Merchandise trade nearly doubled between 2001 and 2002, regardless of which nation's figures one uses. Bilateral trade jumped again in 2007, following the United States granting PNTR status to Vietnam. Total trade declined slightly in 2009 as U.S. imports from Vietnam slid 4.7% because of the economic recession, but rebounded in 2010.

Table 4.2 Growth in Bilateral Merchandise Trade between United States and Vietnam

(in millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	U.S. Trade Data		Vietnamese Data	
	Exports to Vietnam	Imports from Vietnam	Exports to United States	Imports from United States
1994	173	50	N.A.	N.A.
1995	253	199	170	130
1996	616	319	204	246
1997	278	388	287	252
1998	274	553	469	325
1999	291	609	504	323
2000	368	822	733	363
2001	461	1,053	1,065	411
2002	580	2,395	2,453	458
2003	1,324	4,555	3,939	1,143
2004	1,163	5,276	5,025	1,134
2005	1,192	6,630	5,924	863
2006	1,100	8,566	7,845	987
2007	1,903	10,633	10,105	1,701
2008	2,790	12,901	11,869	2,635
2009	3,108	12,290	11,356	3,009
2010	3,710	14,868	12,800	N.A.

Source: U.S.-Vietnam Economic and Trade Relations: Issues for the 112th Congress, Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress, April 5, 2011. (U.S. data from International Trade Commission; Vietnamese data from General Statistics Office of Vietnam.)

4.3.4 military-to-military ties

In the late 2000s, the United States and Vietnam began significantly upgrading their military-to-military relationship. In August 2010, the United States and Vietnam held their inaugural Defense Policy Dialogue, a high-level channel for direct military-to-military

discussions. The United States and Vietnam have had an IMET agreement in place since 2005, allowing Vietnamese officers to receive English language training in the United States. In 2007, the United States modified International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) regarding Vietnam by allowing licenses for trade in certain non-lethal defense items and services to Vietnam. Such transactions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In fiscal year 2009, the United States provided foreign military financing (FMF) for Vietnam for the first time. According to annual State Department reports covering fiscal years 2007-2010, the Department licensed the export of approximately \$98.5 million of defense articles and \$3.7 million of defense services to Vietnam during that time. Regarding foreign military sales (FMS), according to the State Department, Vietnam has submitted letters of request for helicopter spare parts and English language labs. In fiscal year 2009, the United States extended foreign military financing (FMF) for the Vietnamese government for the first time (Manyin, 2012). The signs of a deepening military-military relationship include: the first U.S.-Vietnam joint naval engagement, involving noncombat training on board the USS John S. McCain in August 2010 and July 2011, Vietnamese shipyards repaired two U.S. Military Sealift Command ships in 2010, and Vietnam's Ministry of Defense for the first time sent Vietnamese officers to U.S. staff colleges and other military institutions in 2011.

4.3.5 U.S. foreign assistance to Vietnam

After the victory of communist North Vietnam over South Vietnam in April 1975, the United States ended virtually all bilateral economic interchange, including foreign assistance, with unified Vietnam. The restrictions included a halt to bilateral humanitarian aid, opposition to financial aid from international financial institutions (such as the World Bank), a ban on U.S. travel to Vietnam, and an embargo on bilateral trade. In the fiscal year 1977, the foreign aid appropriations bill prohibited the use of any funds to provide assistance to Vietnam, a provision that was repeated annually until its removal in 1994 (Manyin, 2005). The Congressional Report, prepared for members and committees of Congress in 2009, notified that U.S. assistance increased markedly from the approximately \$1 million that was provided when assistance was resumed in 1991. Annual aid levels increased steadily during the 1990s, rising to the \$20 million level by 2000. The George W. Bush Administration raised bilateral assistance by an order of magnitude—

aid surpassed \$100 million by the late 2000s—and made Vietnam one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid in East Asia (Manyin, 2012). U.S. assistance to Vietnam in fiscal year 2011 was over \$140 million. The U.S. bilateral aid program was dominated by health-related assistance; spending on HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention in Vietnam rose significantly since President Bush designated Vietnam as a “focus country.” The governments of the United States and Vietnam also ran a number of educational exchange programs. These generally totaled around \$10 million a year (Manyin, 2012).

4.3.6 Human Rights issues

Human rights are the biggest thorn in the side of the relationship. Although disagreements over Vietnam’s human rights record have not prevented the two sides from improving relations, they do appear to create a ceiling for the speed and extent of these improvements (Martin, 2011). Vietnam is a one-party, authoritarian state ruled by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), which appears to permit most forms of personal and religious expression while selectively repressing individuals and organizations that it deems a threat to the party’s monopoly on power. Despite continued suppression of freedom of expression, Vietnam made significant progress on expanding religious freedom. In 2005, Vietnam passed comprehensive religious freedom legislation, outlawing forced renunciations and permitting the official recognition of new denominations. As a result, in November 2006, the U.S. Department of State lifted the designation of Vietnam as a “Country of Particular Concern,” noting that the country was no longer a serious violator of religious freedoms, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. This decision was reaffirmed by the Department of State in November 2007, after Vietnam’s government launched a crackdown on political dissidents, and in November the same year arrested a group of pro-democracy activists, including two Americans. Most observers contend that the government, which had already tightened restrictions on dissent and criticism since 2007, further intensified its suppression since early 2011. Vietnam is one of the largest recipients of U.S. assistance in East Asia; since the late 2000s, annual U.S. aid typically surpasses \$100 million, much of it for health-related activities. A number of measures entitled “The Vietnam Human Rights Act” was introduced, which many proposed to cap existing non-

humanitarian U.S. assistance programs to the Vietnamese government at existing levels if the President does not certify that Vietnam is making “substantial progress” in human rights. The most recent version of the Vietnam Human Rights Act (H.R. 1410 in the 112th Congress) would prohibit increases in many forms of U.S. non-humanitarian assistance to Vietnam unless: (1) such increases are matched by additional funding for human rights programming; and (2) Vietnam’s human rights conditions are certified as improving. The bill would grant the President Waiver authority to allow him to exempt any programs that aim to promote the goals of the act and/or to be in the national interests of the United States. In the 112th Congress, H.R. 156 (Royce), the Vietnam Human Rights Sanctions Act was introduced, which would impose financial and immigration/entry sanctions on listed Vietnamese who are deemed to be complicit in human rights abuse (Manyin, 2012).

4.3.7 The Rising of China and the South China Sea Dispute

The People's Republic of China has been identified as a rising or emerging economic and military superpower by academics and other experts. Regarding economic power, the Director of the China Center for Economic Reform at Peking University Yao Yang stated that "Assuming that the Chinese and U.S. economies grow, respectively, by 8% and 3% in real terms, that China's inflation rate is 3.6% and America's is 2% (the averages of the last decade), and that the renminbi appreciates against the dollar by 3% per year (the average of the last six years), China will become the world's largest economy by 2021. By that time, both countries' GDP will be about \$24 trillion. (Thepchatree, 2009) Another study noted that China’s GDP in 2000 was around US\$5 trillion while the U.S. GDP was twice that size in the same year. If all things were to be equal, and the Chinese economy were to grow continuously at the rate of 7.5 percent, and if the American rate of growth remains at 2.5 percent (see figure 4.3), China would catch up and match the size of the U.S. economy by 2015. (Thepchatree, 2009)



Figure 4.2 Real GDP in the U.S. and China, 1980 - 2030

Source: <http://www.chinadaily.com>, 12 April 2013

Lawrence Saez at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, argued in 2011 that the United States will be surpassed by China as military superpower within twenty years. The Military Balance 2011 indicated in Global Top Ten Defence Budgets that the Defence budget of U.K., the second largest in the world behind the US, has been surpassed by China since 2009 (see table 4.3.2) Moreover, The Chinese government's published 2012 military budget is about US\$106.4 billion (see figure 4.3.2)

Table 4.3 Global Top Ten Defense Budgets 2008 - 2010

2008				2009				2010						
	DB	GDP	%		DB	GDP	%		DB	GDP	%			
1	US	696.3	14,264	4.9	1	US	693.3	14,119	4.9	1	US	692.8	14,624	4.7
2	UK	71.4	2,670	2.7	2	China	70.4	4,984	1.4	2	China	76.4	5,733	1.3
3	China	60.1	4,422	1.4	3	UK	60.5	2,179	2.8	3	UK	56.5	2,255	2.5
4	Japan	46	4,926	0.9	4	Japan	50.3	5,075	1	4	Japan	52.8	5,387	1
5	France	44.6	2,863	1.6	5	France	46	2,656	1.7	5	Saudi	45.2	434	10.4
6	Germany	43.3	3,659	1.2	6	Germany	43.5	3,339	1.3	6	France	42.6	2,587	1.6
7	Russia	40.5	1,680	2.4	7	Saudi	41.3	376	11	7	Russia	41.4	1,488	2.8
8	Saudi	38.2	469	8.1	8	Russia	38.3	1,236	3.1	8	Germany	41.2	3,346	1.2
9	India	28.4	1,223	2.3	9	India	34.4	1,231	2.8	9	India	38.4	1,545	2.5
10	Italy	24.1	2,307	1	10	Brazil	28	1,592	1.8	10	Brazil	34.7	2,039	1.7

Source: Military Balance 2011



Figure 4.2 China Published Military Budget

Source: <http://www.globalsecurity.org>, 11 April 2013

Chinese economic and military power rise came with more intensive dispute with Vietnam in the South China Sea. In 2007, there was an increase in the number of Vietnamese fishing boats seized by China. The incident reportedly warned Western energy companies to cease exploratory drill work in the disputed waters with Vietnam and announced plans to develop the disputed islands into tourist destinations. Vietnam used its chairmanship of ASEAN in 2010 to “internationalize” the disputes by forming a multi-country negotiation forum, which would force China to come in multilateral negotiation. In fact, a primary target of the Vietnamese campaign was the United States. Throughout 2009 and early 2010, some Vietnamese said that while they do not expect the United States to take sides in the dispute, it would be helpful if the United States did more to emphasize, through language or actions, that all parties to the dispute should adhere to common principles, such as promoting transparency, adhering to the rule of law, refraining from undertaking unilateral actions, and committing to the freedom of the seas and navigation (Manyin, 2012). During the July 2010 ARF Foreign Ministerial meeting in Hanoi, Secretary of State Clinton, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Kiem and counterparts from 10 other nations, including several ASEAN members, raised the issue of the South China Sea. At the meeting, Secretary Clinton said that freedom of navigation on the sea is a U.S. “national interest” and that the United States opposes the use or threat of force by any claimant. In a departure from the heretofore policy of the United States standing on the sidelines of the dispute, she offered to “facilitate initiatives and confidence building measures” consistent with the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. Finally, Clinton stated that “legitimate claims to maritime space in the South China Sea should be derived solely from legitimate claims to land features.” Many interpreted this as an attack on the basis for China’s claims to the entire sea (U.S. Department of State, 2010). Secretary Gates and other defense ministers also raised this issue during the ADMM Plus meeting in Hanoi in October 2010, as did President Obama and several of his counterparts—over Chinese objections—during the November 2011 East Asia Summit in Bali. However, since early 2011, the United States officials adopted a less confrontational tone toward China when addressing the South China Sea dispute than they did in 2010. This may be due to a number of factors, including an improvement in overall U.S.-China relations, China’s willingness to participate in multilateral Code of Conduct talks, and a feeling in the Administration and in other Southeast Asian governments that a heavy U.S. intervention in the dispute could provoke China

(Manyin, 2012). In contrast, in 2011 they were reiterating and reinforcing positions they had enunciated the previous year: that freedom of navigation in South China sea is a U.S. “national interest,” that the United States opposes the use or threat of force by any claimant, and that claims in the South China Sea should be derived from “legitimate claims to land features,” (Press Statement by Hillary Rodham Clinton, “The South China Sea,” July 22, 2011) which many interpreted as an attack on the basis for China’s claims to the entire sea.

4.4 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations and the U.S. Administrations in the Post-Vietnam War Period

4.4.1 President Gerald R. Ford (1974 - 1977)

4.4.1.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

During Ford’s administration, the US Congress reduced and subsequently ended military and economic assistance to South Vietnam in the first months of 1975. According to this, Ford confronted this difficult situation when he assumed his presidency. In late 1974, he reiterated Nixon’s request for a fresh infusion of aid; Congress responded by granting South Vietnam \$700 million in military and humanitarian assistance, an amount that was far less than Nixon’s original request. A renewed assault by Communist forces in the first months of 1975, however, brought South Vietnam to the brink of defeat. Ford made the case for more military aid, but Congress offered only humanitarian assistance. The end came in late April as Vietnamese forces took over the southern part of Vietnam. Expecting the fall of Saigon, President Ford spoke in New Orleans and announced that as far as the U.S. is concerned, the Vietnam War was “finished.” Since then, 1,373 U.S. citizens and 5,595 Vietnamese and third country nationals were evacuated from the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon. Many of the Vietnamese evacuees were allowed to enter the United States under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975. The act appropriated \$455 million toward the costs of assisting the settlement of Indochinese refugees (Jones, 2004). In all, 130,000 Vietnamese refugees came to the United States in 1975. Thousands more escaped in the years that followed (Robinson, 1998). Beyond the

military, economic, and trade relations, the United States extends an embargo to all of Vietnam and breaks diplomatic relations.

4.4.1.2 The President and Administrations

Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr. was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on July 14, 1913. He was a high-school football star in Grand Rapids and attended the University of Michigan on an athletic scholarship. After earning a degree in economics in 1935, he went on to study law at Yale University. He graduated from law school in 1941. Shortly after that, America entered World War II and he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served aboard an aircraft carrier. Ford launched his political career in 1948 when he was elected into to the U.S. House of Representatives. He served in the House for 25 years, earning a reputation as a friendly, honest, loyal and hardworking Republican. From 1965 to 1973, he was House Minority Leader. In 1964, he served on the Warren Commission that investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963). Ford took office on August 9, 1974, following the resignation of President Richard Nixon, who left the White House in disgrace over the Watergate scandal. According to this, he became the first unelected president in the nation's history. When he took the oath of office on August 9, 1974, he declared, "I assume the Presidency under extraordinary circumstances...This is an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts" (The Whitehouse Official Website). According to a Gallup poll commissioned by the New York Times, Ford's level of popular approval dropped from 71 percent to 50 percent after his announcement of an unconditional pardon for Nixon on Sunday morning, 8 September 1974. (See figure 4.4.1)

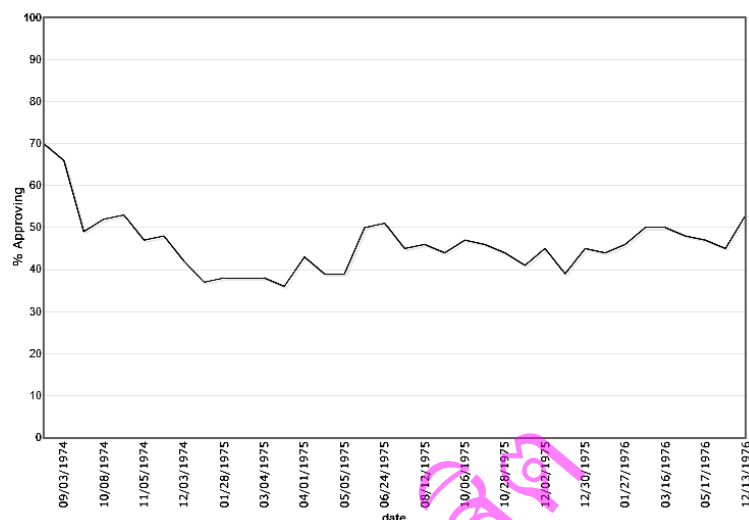


Figure 4.4 Presidential Job Approval - Gerald R. Ford

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 12 April 2013

In foreign affairs, the main issues during his presidency were the North Vietnamese victory over South Vietnam and the Mayaguez Incident, Detente and human rights policy, Middle East crisis, Arab oil power, and the first international economic summits. In South East Asia, Ford acted strongly to maintain U.S. power and prestige after the collapse of Cambodia and South Vietnam. On May 12, 1975, the American Merchant Marine ship, S.S. Mayaguez, with 39 crewmen aboard, was captured in international waters by Cambodian gunboats. The ship was retrieved and all crewmen were saved, but at the cost of 41 American servicemen's lives. Despite reports that the Mayaguez crew had already been released before the U.S. military assault began, the media and leaders of both parties praised Ford for his decisive action. The failure of Congress to enforce the recently passed War Powers Act severely weakened subsequent efforts to challenge unilateral presidential war-making authority (Zunes, 2006). His actions showed that "the U.S. would not allow itself to be intimidated" after its defeat in Vietnam. However, in an interview with CFR.org's Bernard Gwertzman, prominent historian Robert Dallek says Ford's handling of the incident "was hardly something one can point to as an accomplishment" and that "he'll be remembered as a distinctly minor figure" in American history (Zissis, 2007). For the Middle East crisis, he prevented a new war after the Ford Administration helped persuade Israel and Egypt to accept an interim truce agreement.

During his presidency, he continued the détente policy (see 2.2.4 The Doctrine of the United States President during 1975 - 2011 “détente policy”) with both the Soviet Union and China, easing the tensions of the Cold War. President Ford and Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev set new limitations upon nuclear weapons. Still in place from the Nixon Administration was the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) (Mieczkowski, 2005 : 284). The thawing relationship brought about by Nixon's visit to China was reinforced by Ford's visit to the communist country in December 1975. Ford supported international solutions to issues. In one of his speeches from 1974, he said, “We live in an interdependent world and, therefore, must work together to resolve common economic problems” (Canadian Broadcasting on December 27, 2006).

4.4.1.3 Analysis

After the events of President Nixon's scandal and the end of the Vietnam War, President Ford was confronted with a difficult public opinion. In addition, the Democrats were in control of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. Therefore, he had substantially constrained power involving foreign policy with Vietnam. Even so, Ford continued to try and solve the consequences of the Vietnam War. By allowing Vietnamese evacuees entrance the United States, Ford was shown as being merciful. But even so, with President Ford focusing on the growth of “commercial involvement” in the Asia Pacific region, Vietnam was not contacted due to the tragedy of the war.

4.4.2 President Jimmy Carter (1977 - 1981)

4.4.2.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

President Carter took several steps to improve relations with Vietnam. To begin with, in 1977, the United States dropped its veto of Vietnam's application for admission into the United Nations and proposed that diplomatic relations quickly be established between the United States and Vietnam, after which the United States would lift export and asset controls in Vietnam. The Vietnamese responded that they would neither agree to establish relations nor

furnish information on U.S. POW/MIAs until the United States pledged to provide several billion dollars in postwar reconstruction aid, which they claimed had been promised by the Nixon Administration (Manyin, October 2008). Since then, they modified this position and provided some limited information on MIAs, even though the United States provided no aid. In 1977, both houses of Congress went on record as strongly opposing U.S. aid to Vietnam. Vietnamese actions in 1978 in particular had a long-term negative effect on their relationship. Vietnam aligned itself economically and militarily with the USSR and invaded Cambodia, deposing the pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge regime and imposing a puppet Cambodian government backed by 200,000 Vietnamese troops. The Sino-Vietnam War occurred; China conducted a one month military incursion along Vietnam's northern border in 1979 and kept strong military pressure on the North until 1990. It was at this point that Carter halted consideration of improved relations with Vietnam. The United States worked closely with the members of the ASEAN—then made up of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand to condemn and contain the Vietnamese expansion and cope with the influx of refugees from Indochina.

4.4.2.2 The President and Administrations

President Jimmy Carter has rarely used his full name, James Earl Carter, Jr. He was born October 1, 1924, in Plains, Georgia. Peanut farming, talk of politics, and devotion to the Baptist faith were mainstays of his upbringing. He graduated in 1946 from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Carter returned to Plains after seven years of service as a naval officer. He entered state politics in 1962, and eight years later he was elected Governor of Georgia. Among the new young southern governors, he attracted attention by emphasizing ecology, efficiency in government, and the removal of racial barriers. Carter announced his candidacy for President in December 1974 and began a two-year campaign that gradually gained momentum. At the Democratic Convention, he was nominated on the first ballot. He chose Senator Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota as his running mate. Carter campaigned hard against President Gerald R. Ford, debating with him three times. Carter won by 297 electoral votes to 241 for Ford (The Whitehouse Official Website). In 1979, Carter's job approval rating was low until the Iran hostage crisis that helped Carter's ratings rose over 50 percent. (See figure 4.4.2) However, his failure to

win the release of captured Americans, together with a bad economy, led to his defeat by Ronald Reagan in 1980.

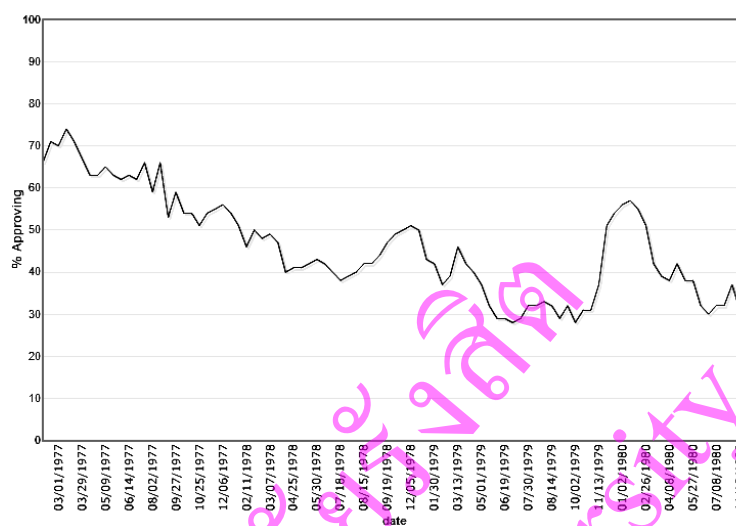


Figure 4.5 Presidential Job Approval - Jimmy Carter

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 11 April 2013

In foreign affairs, Democratic Jimmy Carter's personal ideology on foreign policy brought a new prominence when he was elected President in 1976. Carter believed that the nation's foreign policy should reflect its highest moral principles—a definite break with the policy and practices of the Nixon Administration. Office of the Historian website express that Carter clearly defined the foundation of his foreign policy: “Our policy is based on an historical vision of America's role. Our policy is derived from a larger view of global change. Our policy is rooted in our moral values, which never change. Our policy is reinforced by our material wealth and by our military power. Our policy is designed to serve mankind.” In 1977, Carter said, “For too many years, we've been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs. We've fought fire with fire, never thinking that fire is sometimes best quenched with water. This approach failed, with Vietnam the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty. But through failure we have now found our way back to our own principles and values, and we have regained our lost confidence.”

Carter's new emphasis on human rights led to a Congressional requirement for the annual submission by the Department of State of "a full and complete report" on human rights practices around the world. In 1979, Carter expressed in *"Keeping Faith, Memoirs of a President"* that "Our country paid a price for its emphasis on human rights. There were leaders of oppressive regimes who deeply resented any comment about their policies, because they had reason to fear the reaction of their own people against them when their oppression was acknowledged by the outside world. A few of these could have been spared both embarrassment and the danger of being overthrown, if they had strengthened themselves by eliminating the abuses. Had America argued for these principles sooner, such foreign leaders might not have allowed themselves to become too isolated to correct the abuses without violence." Unfortunately, his supporting of human rights was coldly received by the Soviet Union and some other nations. He also mentioned in *"Keeping Faith, Memoirs of a President"* that "Even if our human-rights policy had been a much more serious point of contention in Soviet-American relations, I would not have been inclined to accommodate Soviet objections. We have a fundamental difference in philosophy concerning human freedoms, and it does not benefit us to cover it up. The respect for human rights is one of the most significant advantages of a free and democratic nation in the peaceful struggle for influence, and we should use this good weapon as effectively as possible."

In the Middle East, through the Camp David agreement of 1978, Carter helped bring amity between Egypt and Israel. It paved the way for new progress in the Middle East and an end to the long-running hostilities between the two sides. Building upon the work of his predecessor, Carter established full diplomatic relations to normalized relations with the People's Republic of China in 1978 and completed negotiation of the SALT II nuclear limitation treaty with the Soviet Union. He stated on the deal with Taiwan that China "Acknowledging that there was only one China, the Shanghai Communique [was negotiated by Richard Nixon in 1972]. At that time I looked forward to a burgeoning relationship with the Chinese mainland. However, progress toward full relations was put on hold. The Taiwan influence was very strong in the US, particularly in Congress" (Carter, 1979: 187 - 188). This meant he had to improve the current relationship with China without renegeing on his commitments to the well-being of Taiwan.

The seizure of hostages of the U.S. embassy staff in Iran dominated the news during the last 14 months of Carter's administration. The consequences of Iran's holding Americans captive, together with continuing inflation at home, contributed to Carter's defeat in 1980. Even then, he continued the difficult negotiations over the hostages. Iran finally released the 52 Americans the same day Carter left office.

4.4.2.3 Analysis

From his background, Carter was strongly dedicated to serving mankind. He rejected power politics and swore to replace it with an emphasis on Human Rights and morality. Despite opposition from the Congress, he tried to normalize relations with Vietnam by focusing on the human right issues that still ensued after the war. One of his main objectives involved continued efforts to resolve the POW/MIA issues. With strong Democratic control in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Carter was able to normalize bilateral relations with Vietnam. Unfortunately, this victory was short-lived and overcome after Vietnam sided with the Soviet Union and aligned itself economically and militarily with the USSR and invaded Cambodia. Once again, the president was forced to halt all efforts to improve relations with Vietnam. All in all, the main goal of the U.S. remained the same. The U.S. wanted to contain the expansion of the communist regime, and despite all efforts to aid Vietnam in their own struggles during the aftermath of the war, Carter did what he had to do to keep whatever promises he could keep. Once again, the threat of the communist regime remained the most difficult constraint for the U.S.-Vietnam relation as it was during Ford's presidency.

4.4.3 President Ronald Reagan (1981 - 1989)

4.4.3.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

President Reagan opposed normal relations with Hanoi until there was a verified withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, a position amended in 1985 to include a verified withdrawal in the context of a comprehensive settlement. Administration officials also

noted that progress toward normal relations depended on Vietnam fully cooperating in obtaining the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel listed as POW/MIAs. Regarding the issue of the POW/MIAs, following General John Vessey's visit to Hanoi in 1987, President Reagan's Special Emissary for POW-MIA Issues, Vietnam returned hundreds of sets of remains said to be those of U.S. MIAs. Some, but not most, were confirmed as American.

4.4.3.2 The President and Administrations

Ronald Wilson Reagan was born On February 6, 1911 in Tampico, Illinois. He attended high school in nearby Dixon and then worked his way through Eureka College. He studied economics and sociology, played on the football team, and acted in school plays. A screen test in 1937 won him a contract in Hollywood. During the next two decades he appeared in 53 films. As president of the Screen Actors Guild, Reagan became involved in disputes over the issue of Communism in the film industry; his political views shifted from liberal to conservative. In 1966 he was elected Governor of California by a margin of a million votes and was re-elected in 1970. Ronald Reagan won the Republican Presidential nomination in 1980 and chose former Texas Congressman and United Nations Ambassador George Bush as his running mate. Reagan took office on January 20, 1981, and 69 days later he was shot by a would-be assassin. His grace and wit during the dangerous incident caused his popularity to soar. Reagan obtained legislation to stimulate economic growth, curb inflation, increase employment, and strengthen national defense. He embarked upon a course of cutting taxes and government expenditures, refusing to deviate from it when the strengthening of defense forces led to a large deficit. A renewed sense of national self-confidence in 1984 helped Reagan and Bush win a second term with an unprecedented number of electoral votes. At the end of his two terms in office, Ronald Reagan viewed with satisfaction the achievements of his innovative program known as the Reagan Revolution, which aimed to reinvigorate the American people and reduce their reliance upon government. He felt he had fulfilled his campaign pledge of 1980 to restore "the great, confident roar of American progress and growth and optimism" (The Whitehouse Official Website). Ronald Reagan's presidency ended at a high level of public approval, 68 percent of Americans approved, matched only by that of Bill Clinton and Franklin Roosevelt among modern presidents. (See figure 4.4.3)

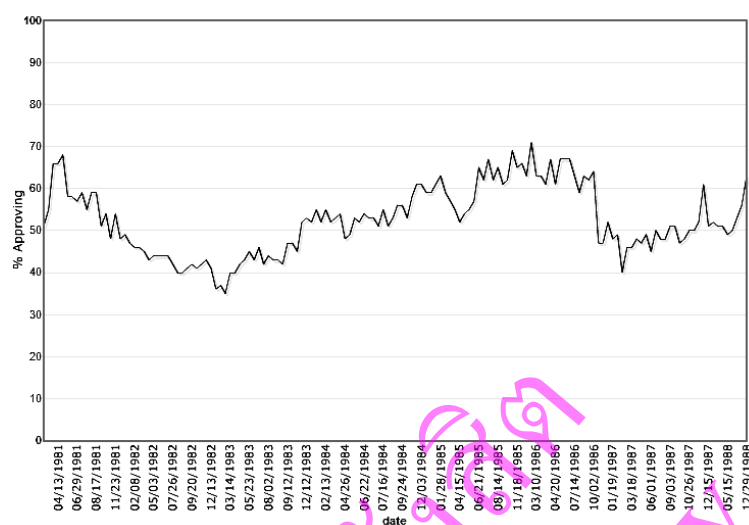


Figure 4.6 Presidential Job Approval - Ronald Reagan

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 12 April 2013

In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve “peace through strength,” which fueled his progress in warming relations with the Soviet Union, and resulted in an end to the Cold War when Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power. As part of the policies that became known as the “Reagan Doctrine,” the United States offered financial and logistical support to the anti-communist opposition in central Europe and took an increasingly hard line against socialist and communist governments in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua. During his two terms he increased defense spending 35%, and also sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles. He declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub. Reagan maintained the free flow of oil during the Iran-Iraq war by ordering naval escorts in the Persian Gulf. In keeping with the Reagan Doctrine, he gave support to anti-Communist insurgencies in Central America, Asia, and Africa.

Reagan strongly believed in the greatness of America and knew that American strength was central to world peace. One of his first actions as President was taking a demoralized and underfunded U.S. military and giving it the support and resources it needed to keep America

safe and be a force for peace around the globe. Nothing made him prouder than to be Commander in Chief. He felt a special bond with the men and women in uniform, especially the young people from the small towns across America. That they were willing to risk their lives for their country never ceased to amaze and humble President Reagan. He took no responsibility more seriously than to keep them out of harm's way. But he made a commitment to them that if it ever became necessary to send them into battle, he would make sure they had what they needed to get the job done. By the time President Reagan left office, the U.S. military budget increased 43% over the total expenditure during the height of the Vietnam War. Troop numbers increased, there were significantly more weapons and equipment and the country's intelligence program was vastly improved. Ronald Reagan strengthened the military because he was a realist. He understood the world, and had a clear sense of what America's role should be: the champion of freedom for peoples everywhere (Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library). According to his famous "Reagan Doctrine", he supported anti-communist groups around the world and his administration funded "freedom fighters" such as the Contras in Nicaragua, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, RENAMO in Mozambique, and UNITA in Angola. During the Soviet war in Afghanistan, Reagan deployed CIA Special Activities Division Paramilitary Officers to train, equip and lead the Mujihadeen forces against the Red Army (Crile, 2003 : 330 and 348).

According to his Address to the British Parliament on June 8, 1982, Reagan predicted that Communism would collapse: "I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written." He argued that the Soviet Union was in deep economic crisis and stated that the Soviet Union "runs against the tide of history by denying human freedom and human dignity to its citizens." On March 8, 1983, Reagan made a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, record his first use of the phrase "evil empire." Reagan said:

"They preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth. They are the focus of evil in the modern world.... So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride, the temptation of blithely

declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil. “

In the "evil empire" speech, Reagan made the case for deploying NATO nuclear armed missiles in Western Europe as a response to the Soviets installing new nuclear armed missiles in Eastern Europe. Eventually, the NATO missiles were set up and used as bargaining chips in arms talks with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who took office in 1985. In 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to go further than a nuclear freeze. In an atomic age first, they agreed to reduce nuclear arsenals. Intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles were eliminated.

4.4.3.3 Analysis

Because of Reagan's aggressive character, his presidency prompted a major change in the tone for foreign policy against the communist regime. On the one hand, he made warming relation --made substantial efforts to improve the relations-- with the Soviet Union, but on the other hand, he made more direct efforts to contain the communist spread by providing additional military assistance to those fighting against communist governments. However, it did not exist in Vietnam. It did not happen because public opinion and the Congress feared tragedy of the Vietnam War. Moreover, Reagan tried normalization with Hanoi. One other reason is that the POW/MIA did not become resolved and is still an important issues for Americans. This meant public opinion still affected his decision making for foreign policy. Because of his aggressive character again, his proposal for normalization was different from others in that he played the issues with negative proposal by opposing the normal relation way until Vietnam accepted to help the U.S. in POW/MIA issues. In the end of his period, the U.S.-Vietnam relation was still unsettled. This meant the external factors still had influence in their relations.

4.4.4 Summary

In the years following the Vietnam War, presidential power was at an obvious decline. Although the president was able to initiate foreign policy in areas that he found interesting or concerning, the policies still needed approval from Congress; however, most were opposed, making the president anything but an authority on foreign policy. The constraints on the U.S.-Vietnam relation were not only that congress and public opinion were afraid of the Vietnam War, but also the U.S. détente policy and the political regime in that period because during the Cold War, the political regime was a serious problem for world peace. For example, Carter's administration tried to normalize relations with Vietnam but Vietnam aligned itself with the USSR and invaded Cambodia. After the invasion of Cambodia, Carter halted all U.S. efforts to improve relations with Vietnam until the end of the Cold War.

The pattern of the U.S. foreign policy toward Vietnam during the terms of Ford, Carter and Reagan were the same. They all continued to try and neutralize the United States' relationship with Vietnam by offering humanitarian, economic, and military aid to them in exchange for investigative efforts on U.S. POW/MIA. For example, during the Carter administration, the U.S. proposed that diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam could be established, and the U.S. would lift export and asset controls on Vietnam. The Vietnamese responded that they would neither agree to establish relations nor furnish information on U.S. POW/MIAs until the United States pledged to provide several billion dollars in postwar reconstruction aid. Under Reagan's administration, the U.S. clarified that progress toward normal relations depended on Vietnam's full cooperation in obtaining the fullest possible account for U.S. personnel listed as POW/MIAs.

4.5 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations and the U.S. Administrations in the Post-Cold War Period

4.5.1 President George H. W. Bush (1989 -1993)

4.5.1.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

After Vietnam withdrew forces from Cambodia in 1989 and sought a compromise peace settlement there, the Bush Administration decided in 1990 to seek contacts with Hanoi in order to assist international efforts to reach a peace agreement in Cambodia. In April 1991, the United States laid out a detailed “road map” for normalization with Vietnam, welcomed Vietnam’s willingness to host a U.S. office in Hanoi to handle POW/MIA matters, and assured \$1 million for humanitarian aid. That same year, the United States eased travel restrictions on Vietnamese diplomats stationed at the United Nations in New York and on U.S. organized travel to Vietnam. During his period in 1992, Vietnamese cooperation on POW/MIA matters improved, especially in the area of allowing U.S. investigators access to pursue “live sightings” reports. The United States provided \$3 million of humanitarian aid for Vietnam, restored direct telecommunications, allowed U.S. commercial sales to meet basic human needs in Vietnam, and lifted restrictions on projects carried out in Vietnam by U.S. nongovernmental organizations. The United States provided aid to Vietnamese flood victims and provided additional aid for combating malaria problems.

Apart from Cambodia and the POW/MIA matter, Manyin (2008) argued that the Reagan and Bush Administrations concerned themselves with a third problem—humanitarian issues. Major progress in negotiations with Vietnam resulted in plans to: (1) facilitate emigration from Vietnam of relatives of Vietnamese-Americans or permanent Vietnamese residents of the United States; (2) regulate the flow of Vietnamese immigrants to the United States and other countries under the so-called Orderly Departure Program (ODP) managed by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; (3) resolve the issue of the estimated several thousand Amer-Asians (whose fathers are Americans and whose mothers are Vietnamese) who reportedly wished to

immigrate from Vietnam to the United States; and (4) obtain release from Vietnamese prison camps and the opportunity to immigrate to the United States of thousands of Vietnamese who worked for the United States in South Vietnam or were otherwise associated with the U.S. war effort to the U.S.

4.5.1.2 The President and Administrations

George Herbert Walker Bush was born in Milton, Massachusetts, on June 12, 1924. He became a student leader at Phillips Academy in Andover. On his eighteenth birthday he enlisted in the armed forces. He was the youngest pilot in the Navy when he got his wings and flew 58 combat missions during World War II. On one mission over the Pacific when Bush was serving as a torpedo bomber pilot, he was shot down by Japanese antiaircraft fire and was rescued from the water by a U.S. submarine. According to his bravery in action, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He attended Yale University where he excelled both in sports and in his studies; he was captain of the baseball team. After graduation Bush embarked on a career in the oil industry of West Texas. Young George became interested in public service and politics like his father, Prescott Bush, who was elected Senator of Connecticut in 1952. George served two terms as a Representative to Congress from Texas (January 3, 1967 - January 3, 1971). He also came to office with an excellent pedigree in foreign affairs. After he ran unsuccessfully for the Senate twice, he was appointed to a series of high-level positions: Ambassador to the United Nations, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in the People's Republic of China, and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1980, Bush campaigned for the Republican nomination for President but he lost to Ronald Reagan. However, he was chosen as a running mate by Ronald Reagan, and then, assigned as Vice President. In 1988 Bush won the Republican nomination for President and, with Senator Dan Quayle of Indiana as his running mate, he defeated Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis in the general election (The Whitehouse Official Website). From the Liberation of Kuwait with the ground war in Iraq in less than a week, Bush senior got the highest level of public approval since President Truman at 90 percent (see figure 4.5.1)



Figure 4.7 Presidential Job Approval - George H. W. Bush

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 12 April 2013

In foreign affairs, Bush faced a dramatically changing world. The Cold War ended after 40 years, the Communist empire broke up, and the Berlin Wall made its long awaited fall. During the Bush era, the Soviet Union ceased to exist; and reformist Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, whom Bush had supported, resigned. While Bush hailed the march of democracy, he insisted on restraining in U.S. policy toward the group of new nations. In other areas of foreign policy, Bush sent American troops into Panama to overthrow the corrupt regime of General Manuel Noriega, who was threatening the security of the canal and the Americans living there. Soon after that, Noriega was brought to the United States for trial as a drug trafficker.

The president approached foreign affairs with his characteristic conservatism and pragmatism. He did not rush into new actions or policy changes but gave himself time to consider the administration's policies. When he acted, he did so with firm conviction and determination. His past experiences gave him significant experience in foreign affairs, and he relied on the many contacts within the international community he formed as ambassador to the United Nations, U.S. envoy to China, director of Central Intelligence, and Vice President (Miller Center). One of the problems Bush faced was a reduced budget to buttress his foreign policy efforts, which was largely a result of the massive arms expenditure during the Reagan years

(1981–90), seeing the U.S. being moved from a creditor nation to being the largest debtor nation in the world (Cameron, 2005).

One example of Bush's conservative and pragmatic approach to foreign affairs occurred early in his administration. In June 1989, the Chinese military suppressed a pro-democracy movement demonstrating in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Using tanks and armored cars, the Chinese military crushed the demonstrations and fired into the crowd, killing hundreds of protestors. Although Bush abhorred the Chinese government's violent crackdown in Tiananmen Square, he did not want to jettison improved U.S.-Sino relations by overreacting to events. Many in Congress cried out for a harsh, punitive response to the Chinese government's killing of peaceful protestors, but the Bush administration imposed only limited sanctions. Later in his administration, Bush sent Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger, deputy secretary of state, to China to try to repair the damaged, but not destroyed, relationship. In the end, U.S.-Sino relations, while always somewhat fragile, generally thrived, particularly in the economic realm, where both nations benefitted from a robust trading partnership (Miller Center).

During his presidency, President Bush devoted much of his time to foreign affairs, an area over which Presidents generally have more latitude than they do with domestic affairs. In his first inaugural address, Bush spoke of unity between the executive and legislative branches in foreign affairs, presenting a united front to the rest of the world and referring to a time when "our differences ended at the water's edge" (Miller Center website, University of Virginia). He also put together a team of advisers, including National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, Secretary of State James Baker, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, who generally worked well together (Miller Center website, University of Virginia).

In foreign policy, Bush was more of a day-to-day operator than any president in recent memory, taking only two longtime associates into his confidence on all sensitive matters: Secretary of State James Baker and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft (wafflesatnoon.com, 2008). Because he drew fewer people into his inner circle than Reagan did,

Bush was able to operate and carry out foreign policy with greater secrecy (wafflesatnoon.com, 2008) For example, he kept both the talks with China and the Malta summit secret for months. He set a record for travel in the first year of a President's term.

In the summer and fall of 1989, George Bush was handed the end of the Cold War with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratization of Eastern Europe. His policy toward those reforms was simply to let it all happen, and try to reward those countries which opened their doors to the west. Most of his encouragement was only moral support. There was a coup attempt in the Philippines to overthrow President Corizon Aquino. The Bush policy was to support the Aquino government by having US military aircraft exercises as a show of support. He also said he would stop all economic aid to the country if the coup succeeded. President Aquino said this was a big factor in holding off the coup, and called President Bush to thank him for it.

Bush's greatest test came when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and then threatened to move into Saudi Arabia. Vowing to free Kuwait, Bush rallied the United Nations, the U.S. people, and Congress and sent 425,000 American troops. They were joined by 118,000 troops from allied nations--consists of the countries that were officially opposed to the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, led by the US, UK and France. After weeks of air and missile bombardment, the 100-hour land battle dubbed Desert Storm routed Iraq's million-man army. He was delighted at the military success in the Gulf and believed that the Vietnam syndrome had been buried in the desert sands with approval ratings topping 90 percent (Cameron, 2005). He considered that the world was on the verge of a new era. In his State of the Union address in January 1991, the President proclaimed

“...there was the very real prospect of a new world order in which the principles of justice and fair play protect the weak against the strong . . . a world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations . . . a world in which the United Nations – freed from Cold War stalemate – is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders.”

Cameron (2005) justified that the speech that Bush gave rejected the idea that the U.S. should become the world's policeman but in the wake of the Cold War, "as the only remaining superpower, it is our responsibility – it is our opportunity – to lead."

4.5.1.3 Analysis

When Bush Sr. ran for president in 1988, it seemed only natural that George Bush further his diplomatic career and run for president as well. The experiences he had as ambassador to the United Nations, ambassador to China, CIA director, and vice-president prepared him for a career in foreign policy. It helped him face many complicated problems that arose after the end of the Cold War. Even though he was a Republican and Congress was comprised of strongly oppositional Democratic representation, Bush got high average approval ratings comparable to Truman's presidency during the Gulf War. Bush managed to reduce massive military spending for arms race during his term. His major contribution to the improvement of the U.S.-Vietnam relation was the fall of the Soviet Union and reducing communist regime. In this regard, it gave the Bush administration leeway to reaffirm its contact and negotiations with Vietnam. The POW/MIA remained a vital goal in the U.S. policy to Vietnam; however, the economic issues that arose eventually surpassed it now that there was no longer a threat from the communist regime.

4.5.2 President Bill Clinton (1993 - 2001)

4.5.2.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

In the first year of Clinton's first term as president on July 2, 1993, he announced that the United States would no longer oppose arrangements supported by France, Japan, and others that would allow for resumed international financial institution aid to Vietnam; however, he said the U.S. economic embargo on Vietnam would remain in effect. That same year, a high-level U.S. delegation visited Hanoi in mid-July to press for progress on POW/MIA. President Clinton's September 13, 1993 renewal of his authority to maintain trade embargoes

included a less restrictive version of the one on Vietnam that allowed U.S. companies to bid on development projects funded by international financial institutions in Vietnam. In September 1993, the Administration approved \$3.5 million in U.S. aid to extend two humanitarian programs in Vietnam. Manyin (2009) stated that members of Congress played an important behind-the-scenes role in encouraging the Clinton Administration to take many of these, and subsequent, steps. After many months of high-level U.S. interaction with Vietnam on resolving POW/MIA cases, on January 27, 1994, a vote occurred where the Senate urged that the embargo be lifted and language was attached to broaden authorizing legislation. Then, on February 3, 1994, President Clinton announced that the trade embargo on Vietnam would be lifted, citing progress on the Vietnam War POW/MIA issue regarding the search for American soldiers listed as missing in action and the remains of those killed in action, as well as the market reforms that Vietnam implemented from 1986.

On January 25, 1995, the United States and Vietnam settled bilateral diplomatic and property claims and opened liaison offices in Washington and Hanoi. On July 10, 1995, Clinton announced that his administration was restoring full diplomatic relations with Vietnam, citing the continued progress in determining the whereabouts of MIA's and locating the remains of soldiers killed in the Vietnam War. Clinton nonetheless stressed that the search for Americans would continue, especially for the soldiers listed as "discrepancies;" namely 55 American soldiers believed to still be alive when they went missing. In early August 1995, the two countries opened embassies in Washington and Hanoi. The following month, an attempt in the Senate to restrict trade ties with Vietnam failed (Manyin, 2008). President Clinton issued Presidential Determination 96-28 on May 30, 1996, saying that Vietnam was cooperating in full faith with the United States on POW/MIA issues. On April 10, 1997, the Senate approved former Vietnam War POW and Member of Congress Pete Peterson as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam. Since then, economic relations steadily improved over the next several years, culminating in the signing of the landmark U.S.-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement (BTA) in 2000.

Clinton's visit to Vietnam was the first by a U.S. President since the end of the Vietnam War. On November 16, 2000, Clinton arrived in Hanoi with his wife, Senator-elect

Hillary Rodham Clinton and daughter Chelsea shortly before his second term in office ended (King and Wallace, 2000).

4.5.2.2 The President and Administrations

President Clinton was born as William Jefferson Blythe III on August 19, 1946, in Hope, Arkansas, three months after his father died in a traffic accident. He took the family name when he was four years old, by his mother wed Roger Clinton, of Hot Springs, Arkansas. He excelled as a student and as a saxophone player and once considered becoming a professional musician. As a delegate to Boys Nation while in high school, he met President John Kennedy in the White House Rose Garden. The encounter led him to enter a life of public service. Clinton graduated from Georgetown University and in 1968 won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University. He received a law degree from Yale University in 1973, and entered politics in Arkansas. Clinton was defeated in his campaign for Congress in Arkansas's Third District in 1974. After that, he was elected Arkansas Attorney General in 1976, and won the governorship in 1978. After losing a bid for a second term, he regained the office four years later, and served until he defeated incumbent George Bush and third party candidate Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential race. Clinton and his running mate, Tennessee's Senator Albert Gore Jr., then 44, represented a new generation in American political leadership. For the first time in 12 years both the White House and Congress were held by the same party. But that political edge was brief; the Republicans won both houses of Congress in 1994. In 1998, as a result of issues surrounding personal indiscretions with a young, female White House intern, Clinton was the second U.S. president to be impeached by the House of Representatives. He was tried in the Senate and found not guilty of the charges brought against him. He apologized to the nation for his actions and continued to have unprecedented popular approval ratings for his job as president (The Whitehouse Official Website). After his impeachment proceedings in 1998 and 1999, Clinton's rating reached its highest point at 73% approval. (See figure 4.5.2) He finished with a Gallup poll approval rating of 68%, higher than that of every other departing president measured since Harry Truman.

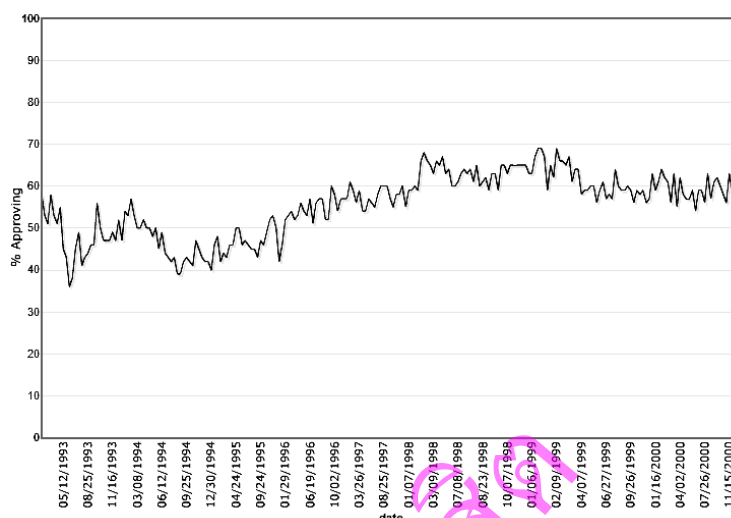


Figure 4.8 Presidential Job Approval - Bill Clinton

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 12 April 2013

President Clinton assumed office shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, but nevertheless was forced to confront numerous international conflicts. Shortly after taking office, Clinton had to decide whether the United States, as a world superpower, should have a say in the conflicts and violence occurring in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Haiti. Clinton also spent much of his foreign policy on the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, East Timor, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East, with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. Beginning soon after the end of the Cold War, his administration's foreign policy goals included the expansion of democracy and trade, humanitarian relief and suppression of genocide.

As a former governor (like Carter, Reagan and George W. Bush), Clinton had no foreign policy experience when he took office in January 1993. He made clear that domestic issues would have priority and appointed a foreign policy team (Anthony Lake as his national security adviser, Warren Christopher as Secretary of State) with clear instructions to keep foreign policy problems away from his desk. One public relations adviser, who served both Republican and Democrat Presidents, estimated that Clinton spent less than 25 percent of his time on foreign affairs, unlike Bush who had spent 75 percent of his time on foreign policy (Gergen 2002). Cameron (2005) summarized his speaking at the American University on 26 February, that his

priorities would be to restore the American economy to good health, “an essential prerequisite for foreign policy,” to increase the importance attached to trade and open markets for American business, to demonstrate U.S. leadership in the global economy, to help the developing countries grow faster, to promote democracy in Russia and elsewhere. Clinton appeared actively pursuing an expansive foreign policy agenda on the trade front. He wanted to increase the economic dimension of America’s foreign policy and gave top priority to the negotiation of new trade deals, opening new markets for American business and encouraging Americans to take advantage of globalization. In Clinton’s view, the U.S. was like a large corporation competing in the global market place. Besides, to the west’s assessment, Clinton seemed obsessed with correcting trade imbalances and opening markets in Asia.

During President Clinton's two terms in office, he had many foreign policy successes (McCracken). His administration helped negotiate peace deals in the Middle East in 1993, Bosnia in 1995, and Northern Ireland in 1998. In 1994, he signed a treaty with Russia that reduced the threat of nuclear arms and in 1996 he signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. President Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq in 1998 and 1999 after it violated a no-fly zone established by the United Nations. In response to the bombing of U.S. embassies in 1998, he ordered attacks on terrorists in Sudan and Afghanistan. Free trade increased during President Clinton's tenure as president. He signed the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1994, which led to the creation of the World Trade Organization.

4.5.2.3 Analysis

Although Clinton had little experience in foreign policy, he had several successes in foreign affairs by handing that division of his presidential duty to his hand selected foreign policy team. Moreover, in a speech he made at American University on February 26, 1999, Clinton emphasized that the priority of U.S. foreign policy would be to expand trade and open markets for American business. Throughout his term, Clinton actively pursued an expansive foreign policy agenda on the trade front. While improvements were made on the trade front, there

was a cost for this deviation from former policies. This new foreign policy objective had evident effects on the country's relationship with Vietnam. Though there was a unified government situation in the first year of his first term, Clinton's administration did not have an obvious consensus on what to do regarding the Vietnam relation. The next year, the votes were clearer, encouraging the improvement of relations with Vietnam relation, even in a divided government situation (See Appendix). During Clinton's period, he oversaw the U.S. lift the trade embargo for Vietnam and beginning the process of normalization with Vietnam in 1995. Unfortunately, much like the previous administration, the POW/MIA was still an unresolved problem.

4.5.3 President George W. Bush (2001 - 2009)

4.5.3.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

During Bush Jr.'s Administration, after the U.S.-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement (BTA) in 2000, leaders of the United States and Vietnam made a decision to seek ways to upgrade the bilateral relationship. Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's trip to the United States in June 2005 was viewed as a landmark in the improvement of relations between the two countries. Moreover, President Bush's visit to Vietnam in November 2006 gave focus to the leaders in Washington and Hanoi for improving the overall relationship. While Khai was in Washington, he and President Bush issued a joint statement expressing their "intention to bring bilateral relations to a higher plane" (Manyin, 2008). President Bush expressed "strong support" for Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and pledged to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Hanoi in November 2006, and welcomed Vietnam's efforts on human rights and religious freedom issues, about which the two leaders agreed to continue "an open and candid dialogue"

The two countries signed an agreement on implementing a bilateral International Military Education Training (IMET) program to send two Vietnamese officers to the United States for training, under which the Vietnamese officers would attend English classes at the U.S. Air Force's Defense Language Institute at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

On June 22, 2007, Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet met with President Bush in Washington. It was the first visit by a Vietnamese head of state since the end of the Vietnam War. The two countries also signed a trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA) to expand trade and resolve outstanding disputes.

4.5.3.2 The President and Administrations

George Walker Bush was born in New Haven, Connecticut while his father was attending Yale University after service in World War II. The family moved to Midland, Texas, where the Bush Sr. entered the oil exploration business. He spent formative years there, attended Midland public schools, and formed friendships that stayed with him into the White House. Bush graduated from Yale, received a business degree from Harvard, and then returned to Midland where he, too, got into the oil business like his father. When he was 54, became the 43rd president of the United States. It was only the second time in American history that a president's son went on to the White House. John Quincy Adams, elected the sixth president in 1824, was the son of John Adams, the second president. While John Adams had groomed his son to be president, George Bush, the 41st president, insisted he was surprised when the eldest of his six children became interested in politics, became governor of Texas, and then went on to the White House. His new administration was focused on "compassionate conservatism," which embraced excellence in education, tax relief and volunteerism among faith-based and community organizations. On the inaugural stand, George W. Bush set the theme for his second term: "At this second gathering, our duties are defined not by the words I use, but by the history we have seen together. For half a century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant borders. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet and then there came a day of fire. There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom – tested but not weary...we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom" (The Whitehouse Official Website). The approval ratings of George W. Bush have ranged from a record high to a record low. In the time of national crisis following the September 11 attacks, polls showed approval ratings of greater than 85%, and a steady 80–90%

approval for about four months after the attacks. (See figure 4.5.3) Afterward, his ratings steadily declined as the economy suffered and the Iraq War initiated by his administration continued. In July 2008, a poll indicated a low of 22%. (See figure 4.5.3)



Figure 4.9 Presidential Job Approval - George W. Bush

Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>, 12 April 2013

Like Clinton, Bush had little experience in foreign policy when he first moved into office. He appointed Condoleezza Rice, a staffer in the NSC during the first Bush administration, as his national security adviser. She became a personal friend of the Bush family, spending considerable time at their Texas ranch tutoring George W. Bush in foreign policy. The President was widely praised for naming former general Colin Powell as Secretary of State. Powell had an illustrious military career, serving as national security adviser under President Reagan, and ending up as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bush chose Donald Rumsfeld to be Secretary of Defense, a post he held more than twenty years previously. Another former Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, became his Vice President, with an enhanced role in foreign and security policy.

In foreign policy, during his campaign for election as President of the United States, George W. Bush's foreign policy platform included support for a stronger economic and political relationship with Latin America, especially Mexico, and a reduction of involvement in

"nation building" and other small-scale military engagements (Bush, 2001). The administration pursued a national missile defense. *"First, to defend the U.S., deployed forces, allies, and friends. Second, to employ a Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS,) that layers defenses to intercept missiles in all phases of their flight (i.e., boost, midcourse, and terminal) against all ranges of threats. Third, to enable the Services to field elements of the overall BMDS as soon as practicable"* (described by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in January, 2002) Bush was an advocate of China's entry into the World Trade Organization (Baker, 2007). In his 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush referred to an axis of evil including Iraq, Iran and North Korea (State of the Union Address, 2002).

9/11—the airborne terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the thwarted flight against the White House or Capitol on September 11, 2001, in which nearly 3,000 Americans were killed—transformed George W. Bush into a wartime president. Bush's father, George Bush, the 41st president, declared that his son "faced the greatest challenge of any president since Abraham Lincoln" (The Whitehouse Official Website). In response, Bush formed a new cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security, sent American forces into Afghanistan to break up the Taliban, a movement under Osama bin Laden that trained, financed, and exported terrorist teams. Following the attacks, the president also recast the nation's intelligence gathering and analysis services, and ordered reform of the military forces to meet the new enemy.

His most controversial act was the invasion of Iraq on the belief that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein posed a grave threat to the United States. In 2002, the Bush administration tried to establish a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda and alleged that Iraq possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that might be used by terrorists to attack the U.S. He launched the invasion of Iraq, searching for WMD, which he described as being part of the War. Saddam was captured, but the disruption of Iraq and the killing of American servicemen and friendly Iraqis by insurgents became the challenge of Bush's government during his second term. The 2004 Presidential election, Bush sought to portray himself as a wartime commander-in-chief best suited to defend America from terrorist threats and to stay the course in Iraq. President

Bush pledged during his 2005 State of the Union Address that the United States would help the Iraqi people establish a fully democratic government because the victory of freedom in Iraq would strengthen a new ally in the war on terror, bring hope to a troubled region, and lift a threat from the lives of future generations.

In the second presidential debate of the 2000 campaign, moderator Jim Lehrer asked Al Gore to explain the justification for American military interventions in a host of places, including Kosovo to Haiti. Lehrer then turned to Bush and asked him specifically about Somalia. "Started off as a humanitarian mission and it changed into a nation-building mission, and that's where the mission went wrong," Bush replied. "The mission was changed. And as a result, our nation paid a price. And so I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building. I think our troops ought to be used to fight and win war. I think our troops ought to be used to help overthrow the dictator when it's in our best interests. But in this case it was a nation-building exercise, and same with Haiti. I wouldn't have supported either."

For Vietnam, his foreign policy was targeted more towards improving trade than imposing sanctions over human rights. For example; the media asked him on October 18, 2000 that "An agreement has been signed with Vietnam that, if approved by Congress next year, will require that country to protect U.S. intellectual property and open its markets. It makes no demands on human rights. Do you support this deal?" Then he answered that "I support the trade agreement with Vietnam. I believe expanded trade with Vietnam will help the forces of economic and political reform take root and grow. At the same time, we must make clear to the Vietnamese government that we expect them to cooperate fully with our efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting of missing servicemen in Vietnam. Like all Americans, I want to see improved human rights, and living and working conditions worldwide. The best way to address these issues is not through unilateral trade sanctions, but through multilateral agreements. The primary goal of our trade policy should be to open markets abroad because the better way to raise living and working standards is to increase trade" (ontheissues.org).

4.5.3.3 Analysis

Much like Clinton, Bush had little experience in foreign policy when he moved into office. He, too, devised an expert team to help him manage foreign policy. However, to compare with Clinton, his first priority on foreign policy concerned national security rather than economy. He appointed former general Colin Powell, whose military career serving as national security adviser under President Reagan made him Bush's top choice for Secretary of State. Unlike the former president, Bush's presidential power became the highest because of the 9/11 incident. The U.S. attacked Iraq on the link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda and the belief that Iraq possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). In foreign affairs, he concentrated on the national interest rather than other issues like human rights. This was made evident when he told the media that trade takes precedence over human rights. In addition to his emphasis on trade and national security, Bush continued to improve relations with Vietnam due to its high value and interest for the U.S. economy.

4.5.4 President Barack Obama (2009 - present (2013))

4.5.4.1 The U.S.-Vietnam Relations

For the Obama administration in 2010, the United States and Vietnam took a variety of steps indicating that they were entering a new level of cooperation, particularly on strategic issues. The intensity of high level U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic interaction peaked in 2010. That year, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Vietnam in July and October, and then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited in October. The trips were partly due to Vietnam's one year stint as chair of the ASEAN, during which time the country served as host for a number of multilateral gatherings. The Obama Administration also used them as occasions to signal its determination to increase its presence in Southeast Asia generally, and upgrade its strategic relationship with Vietnam in particular. On a particular note, during the July, 2010, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting, Vietnamese and U.S. officials arranged a multilateral diplomatic push-back against perceived Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea. In October, Vietnam

then convened and secured U.S. attendance in the first ever ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting + 8, in which Secretary Gates participated and reiterated U.S. concerns about China's actions in the South China Sea. Later that same month, Secretary Clinton traveled back to Hanoi to join in the East Asia Summit (EAS), the first time the United States officially participated in the five-year old gathering. During one of her visits, Secretary Clinton summed up the new emphasis on Vietnam when she stated that "the Obama Administration is prepared to take the U.S.-Vietnam relationship to the next level.... We see this relationship not only as important on its own merits, but as part of a strategy aimed at enhancing American engagement in the Asia Pacific and in particular Southeast Asia" (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

4.5.4.2 The President and Administrations

With a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas, President Obama was born in Hawaii on August 4, 1961. After working his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans, President Obama moved to Chicago, where he worked with a group of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants. He went on to attend law school, where he became the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review. Upon graduation, he returned to Chicago to help lead a voter registration drive, teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago, and remain active in his community. President Obama's years of public service are based around his unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around a politics of purpose. In the Illinois State Senate, he passed the first major ethics reform in 25 years, cut taxes for working families, and expanded health care for children and their parents. As a United States Senator, he reached across the aisle to pass groundbreaking lobbying reform, lock up the world's most dangerous weapons, and bring transparency to government by putting federal spending online. He was elected the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008, and sworn in on January 20, 2009 (The Whitehouse Official Website). President Barack Obama averaged 49.1% job approval during his first term in office, among the lowest for post-World War II presidents. Only Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford had lower job approval averages. Obama's approval rating has also shown improvement, with a 48.1% average in his fourth year in office after a 44.4% average in his third year. (See figure 4.5.4)

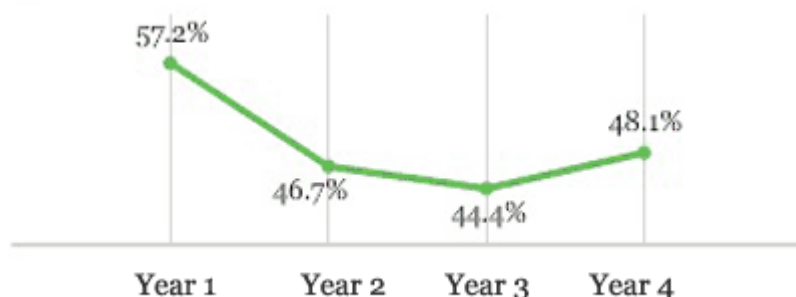


Figure 4.10 First Term Averages Presidential Job Approval - Barack Obama

Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/159965/obama-averages-approval-first-term.aspx>, 12 April 2013

In Foreign Policy, his first major speech on foreign policy was delivered on April 23, 2007 to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs when he was a member of the United States Senate. He identified the problems that he believes the current foreign policy has caused, and the five ways the United States can lead again, focused on "common security", "common humanity", and remaining "the beacon of freedom and justice for the world" (1) "Bringing a responsible end" to the war in Iraq and refocusing on the broader region. (2) "Building the first truly 21st century military and showing wisdom in how we deploy it." (3) "Marshalling a global effort" to secure, destroy, and stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction. (4) "Rebuild and construct the alliances and partnerships necessary to meet common challenges and confront common threats," including global warming. (5) "Invest in our common humanity" through foreign aid and support the "pillars of a sustainable democracy – a strong legislature, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, a vibrant civil society, a free press, and an honest police force."

Obama also made his New Strategy for a New World in his speech in a Washington D.C. on July 15, 2008, stated five main foreign policy goals:

- (1) ending the war in Iraq responsibly;
- (2) finishing the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban;
- (3) securing all nuclear weapons and materials from terrorists and rogue states;
- (4) achieving true energy security; and,
- (5) rebuilding our alliances to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

4.5.4.3 Analysis

Obama reiterated multiple times in multiple speeches that rebuilding American alliances to meet the challenges of the 21st century, including the visible rise of China, Obama ensured that his goal was to achieve a deepened relationship with Vietnam. He added more cooperation with Vietnam on the military ties. This focused on the Regional security of the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean. The importance of the POW/MIA issue declined as the issues of countering China's increasing regional influence became the most important problem to target at the time.

4.5.5 Summary

The Post-Cold War period is very different from recent years because the Communist Regime finally ceased to be a threat that needed protection by the United States. Foreign economy became more important than security policy. According to this study, American presidents were able to focus on economic dimensions or relevant issues rather than national security. Since then, economic interests of the U.S. became the most necessary agenda for the U.S.-Vietnam relation in the Post-Cold War period.

The pattern of the U.S. foreign policy during Bush Senior, Clinton, and Bush Junior period involved continuous efforts to try and normalize the country's relationship with Vietnam. In the hopes of accessing information regarding the whereabouts of the POW/MIA servicemen from the Vietnam War, earlier post-war presidents offered various humanitarian, economic, and military aids to Vietnam. However, unlike the Post-Vietnam War period, the U.S. goal in bilateral relations changed as the priorities shifted into that of economic interest. Although the POW/MIA was the main U.S. problem at the beginning of period, it was surpassed by economic interest and security. From the presidential terms of Bush senior to Bush junior, economic interest became the most important factor influencing the direction of foreign policy.

During the Obama administration, national security has been the most important goal. According to this, the rise of China and the South China Sea dispute became the most influential factors that forced the U.S. military presence into the region, especially in Vietnam. In 2011, the U.S. had two main interests in Vietnam: economic interest on bilateral trade with Vietnam who is the highest capability in ASEAN and large U.S. investment in Vietnam, and containment for China maritime power to maintain U.S. interest in the South China Sea. In fact, the two main U.S. interests relate to the projection of Chinese power during the South China Sea maritime dispute. For instance, if China exceeded power in the region and the dispute became serious, it would not only damage the U.S. investment in Vietnam but also decline U.S. interest in the South China Sea.

4.6 The Future of U.S. Vietnam relations

The United States' goals with respect to Vietnam included opening markets for U.S. trade and investment, furthering human rights and democracy within the country, countering China's increasing regional influence, cooperating to ensure freedom of navigation in and around the South China Sea, and maintaining if not expanding U.S. influence in Southeast Asia. Main factors that inspired the relation were the stability it provided for the U.S. economy in Vietnam and the military power of China. The U.S. economic interests caused a shift in the U.S. goal for opening markets for U.S. trade and investment in Vietnam. In addition, economic interests also accelerated the U.S. foreign policy to rebuild the relationship after the end of the Cold War. The second major factor was the power of the Chinese military caused the U.S. to counter China's increasing regional influence that Vietnam located and cooperated to ensure U.S. freedom of navigation in and around the South China Sea, and maintaining if not expanding U.S. influence in Southeast Asia. The threat that China posed also provided a boost to the military relations between the U.S. and Vietnam to the highest levels.

Based on the two major factors above, the U.S. economic interests were affected most by the projection of China's power. According to this, the future of U.S.-Vietnam relations based on the U.S. foreign policy goal could be seen in three different ways:

Firstly, in the case that China was threatened by a serious problem that would hinder its military power—such as political problem and economic problem—the South China Sea dispute and China influence in the region would be declined. The U.S. would then likely ease the pressure on the South China Sea and the Power of China. In this regard, the threat from China would no longer exist; furthermore, the U.S. would no longer need to expend costs towards the containment of Chinese power in those regions. Ultimately, the U.S. would reduce military cooperation with Vietnam because the U.S. might reduce military assistance and allocate funds elsewhere where new economic interests exist.

Secondly, in this scenario, the power of China is still ongoing and the South China Sea dispute was not resolved. Both the U.S. and Vietnam, in an effort to prevent China's dominance, strengthen their military cooperation. The U.S. might use the Vietnamese naval base—for example; Kamran Bay—for the military deployment. As long as China's power was balanced and the South China Sea dispute still existed, the two countries and even China could benefit their own interests.

Thirdly, the most dangerous of the three, China continues to extend its military power in the region and the South China Sea dispute become serious. Vietnam might confront China with U.S. support. Worst case scenario, it possibly leads to war. According the history in this study, the U.S. would be very likely to intervene because the U.S. goal strives to ensure that the U.S. maintains the freedom to navigate in and around the South China Sea. Moreover, the U.S. would secure the economic and investment ties that exist in Vietnam.

Though the way of relations relies on economic interest and China's Power, some factors could affect the future of relations: Sino-American relations, Sino-Vietnam relation, influences of Vietnamese-American citizens; Vietnamese workers in U.S. overseas companies in Vietnam; and the Strength of the ASEAN community.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This study shows that from 1975 to 2011, the Schmidt statement that foreign policy follows the President because he has the power to pursue it by himself, by his leading character, and by the power from National Constitution remains true. The President can initiate foreign policy; however, since the tragedy of the Vietnam War, the power of president can be constrained by American public opinion and the congress. In the case of an enormous threat, such as 9/11, the presidential power becomes superior based on his requirement to make good reactions at the right time, in the right place.

In the Post-Vietnam War, president power was at an obvious decline. Although the president can initiate foreign policy that he is interested in and concerned with, chances are high that it would be opposed by Congress. The constraint for the U.S.-Vietnam relation was not only that congress and public opinion preached fear from the Vietnam War, but also the U.S. détente policy and the political regime in that period because during the Cold War, the political regime was a serious problem for world peace. For example, the Carter administration tried to normalize relations with Vietnam but Vietnam sided with the USSR and invaded Cambodia. According to this, Carter halted consideration of improved relations with Vietnam. Since then, the U.S.-Vietnam relation was totally frozen until the end of Cold War. The Post-Cold War period is very different from recent years because the Communist Regime finally ceased to be a threat that needed protection from by the United States. Foreign economy became more important than security policy. According to this study, American presidents were able to focus on economic dimensions or relevant issues rather than national security. Since then, economic interests of the U.S. have become the most necessary agenda for the U.S.-Vietnam relation in the Post-Cold War period.

The pattern of the U.S. foreign policy toward Vietnam during the terms of Ford, Carter and Reagan were the same. They all continued to try and neutralize the United States' relationship with Vietnam by offering humanitarian, economic, and military aid to them in exchange for investigative efforts on U.S. POW/MIA. For example, during the Carter administration, the U.S. proposed that diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam could be established, and the U.S. would lift export and asset controls on Vietnam. The Vietnamese responded that they would neither agree to establish relations nor furnish information on U.S. POW/MIAs until the United States pledged to provide several billion dollars in postwar reconstruction aid. Under Reagan's administration, the U.S. clarified that progress toward normal relations depended on Vietnam's full cooperation in obtaining the fullest possible account for U.S. personnel listed as POW/MIAs.

The pattern of the U.S. foreign policy during Bush Senior, Clinton, and Bush Junior period involved continuous efforts to try and normalize the country's relationship with Vietnam. In the hopes of accessing information regarding the whereabouts of the POW/MIA servicemen from the Vietnam War, earlier post-war presidents offered various humanitarian, economic, and military aids to Vietnam. However, unlike the Post-Vietnam War period, the U.S. goal in bilateral relations changed as the priorities shifted into that of economic interest. Although the POW/MIA was the main U.S. problem at the beginning of period, it was surpassed by economic interest and security. From the presidential terms of Bush senior to Bush junior, economic interest became the most important factor influencing the direction of foreign policy.

During the Obama administration, national security has been the most important goal. According to this, the rise of China and the South China Sea dispute became the most influential factors that forced the U.S. military presence into the region, especially in Vietnam. In 2011, the U.S. had two main interests in Vietnam: economic interest on bilateral trade with Vietnam who is the highest capability in ASEAN and large U.S. investment in Vietnam, and containment for China maritime power to maintain U.S. interest in the South China Sea. In fact, the two main U.S. interests relate to the projection of Chinese power during the South China Sea maritime dispute. For instance, if China exceeded power in the region and the dispute became serious, it would not only damage the U.S. investment in Vietnam but also decline U.S. interest in the South China Sea.

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Appendix

The U.S. President and Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations

During 1975 -2010

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Rangsit University

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
Gerald R. Ford	lawyer	Republican	August 9, 1974	January 20, 1977	1975	April 30 North Vietnamese forces take over the southern part of Vietnam, ending the war. Washington extends an embargo to all of Vietnam and breaks diplomatic relations.
Jimmy Carter	farmer	Democratic	January 20, 1977	January 20, 1981	1977	Initial attempts to normalize bilateral relations between the United States and the reunified Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) took place under President Jimmy Carter.
					1978	After three formal sessions, negotiations failed in October 1978. Reunified Vietnam signed a security pact with the Soviet Union, expelled the "Hoa people" (ethnic Chinese) and prepared to invade Cambodia. The United States moved to normalize relations with China and joined ASEAN in isolating Vietnam.
					1979	Sino-Vietnam War occurred from February, 17 to March, 16.
Ronald Reagan	actor	Republican	January 20, 1981	January 20, 1989	1988	Under the Reagan Administration, US and Vietnam begin process to resolve the fate of American servicemen missing in action (MIA). General John Vessey leads the mission.

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
George H. W. Bush	businessman	Republican	January 20, 1989	January 20, 1993	1989	<p>May Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach hosts Ambassador William Sullivan and delegation in Hanoi to discuss possibilities for normalization and founding of the US-Vietnam Trade Council</p> <p>September Vietnam completes its withdrawal from Cambodia.</p>
					1991	<p>April Under the Bush Administration, Washington presents Hanoi with a “roadmap” plan for phased normalization of ties. The two sides agree to open a U.S. government office in Hanoi to help settle MIA issues.</p> <p>April U.S. begins humanitarian aid projects for war victims to be administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).</p> <p>August 2 U.S. Senate approves a resolution for the creation of a Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs. Hearings began on November 5, 1991 and a Final Report issued on January 13, 1993.</p> <p>October - The Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs established with Senator John Kerry as Chair and Senator Bob Smith Vice Chair.</p> <p>- Vietnam supports U.S. peace plan for Cambodia. Secretary of State James Baker announces Washington is ready to take steps toward normalizing relations with Hanoi.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						December Washington lifts the ban on organized U.S. travel to Vietnam. U.S. Congress authorizes the United States Information Agency (USIA) to begin exchange programs with Vietnam.
					1992	February The Joint Task Force – Full Accounting was established with the goal of achieving the fullest possible account of Americans missing from the Vietnam War, including Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. At the time the Joint Task Force was formed, the number stood at 2,267.
					1993	January 13 Submission of a Final Report by the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs.
Bill Clinton	lawyer, teacher	Democratic	January 20, 1993	January 20, 2001	1993	February The work of the Senate Select Committee concludes. July 2 The Clinton Administration clears the way for resumption of international lending including IMF and World Bank to Vietnam.
					1994	January 26 Senate amendment (S.AMDT.1266) re: the lifting of sanctions being contingent upon a resolution of all cases or reports of unaccounted for U.S. personnel lost or captures during the war in Vietnam fails by a vote of 42-58. February 3 President Clinton lifts the trade embargo.

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					1995	<p>January Vietnam submits a formal written request for WTO Accession and the WTO General Council establishes a Working Party for Vietnam.</p> <p>January 28 United States and Vietnam sign agreements settling property claims and establishing liaison offices in each other's capitals.</p> <p>May 15 Vietnam gives U.S. presidential delegation batch of documents on missing Americans, later hailed by Pentagon as most detailed and informative of their kind.</p> <p>June Veterans of Foreign Wars announces support of U.S. normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam.</p> <p>July 11 President Clinton announces "normalization of relations" with Vietnam.</p> <p>August 6 Secretary of State Warren Christopher visits Hanoi and officially opens U.S. embassy. Vietnam opens embassy in Washington.</p> <p>September 20 Senate amendment (S.AMDT.2723) re: prohibiting financial assistance to Vietnam unless certain conditions relating to Americans unaccounted for from the Vietnam War are met fails by a vote of 39-58 (3 NV).</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					1996	<p>May U.S. presents Vietnam with trade agreement blueprint.</p> <p>July 25 Senate amendment (S.AMDT.5027) re: striking funds made available for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for technical assistance fails by a vote of 43-56 (1 NV).</p>
					1997	<p>April 7 U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Finance Minister Nguyen Sinh Hung sign accord in Hanoi for Vietnam to repay debts of \$145 million, from the former government of South Vietnam.</p> <p>April 10 Senate confirms Douglas “Pete” Peterson, Vietnam War veteran and former prisoner of war (POW), as Ambassador.</p> <p>April 16 United States and Vietnam reach agreement on providing legal protection for copyright owners.</p> <p>May 9 Douglas “Pete” Peterson, Vietnam War veteran and former prisoner of war, takes up post as U.S. Ambassador in Hanoi, Le Van Bang becomes Vietnam Ambassador in Washington, DC.</p> <p>August U.S. government, under the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), begins a commercial law program.</p> <p>October Vietnam institutes new processing procedure in ROVR program.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					1998	<p>March 11 President Clinton issues waiver of Jackson-Vanik Amendment for Vietnam, paving the way for OPIC, Ex-Im, TDA, USDA and MARAD. The U.S. House of Representatives renews the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam by a 260-163 vote.</p> <p>March 26 Minister of Planning & Investment Tran Xuan Gia and Ambassador Pete Peterson finalize signing of the OPIC bilateral for Vietnam.</p> <p>July 23 The U.S. Senate votes 66-34 to continue funding for the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam based on ongoing cooperation on the POW/MIA issue.</p> <p>July 30 The U.S. House of Representatives renews the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam by a 260-163 vote.</p> <p>October U.S. and Vietnam agree to negotiate Science & Technology Agreement.</p>
					1999	<p>June to August President Clinton re-extends the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam. The Jackson –Vanik waiver passes the House by a vote of 297-130.</p> <p>July 25 USTR Ambassador Richard Fisher and Vietnam Trade Minister Tuyen agree to a bilateral trade agreement in principle in Hanoi, Vietnam.</p> <p>August 3 The Jackson-Vanik waiver passes the House by a vote of 297-130.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						December 9 Ex-Im and the State Bank of Vietnam complete the framework agreements, which allow Ex-Im to begin operations in Vietnam.
					2000	<p>March 13 Secretary of Defense William Cohen becomes the first U.S. Defense Secretary to visit Vietnam since the end of the War.</p> <p>May 3 U.S. passes House Concurrent Resolution 295, which urges Hanoi to repeal all laws restricting freedom of expression. It is referred to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.</p> <p>July 13 Vietnam Trade Minister Vu Khoan and USTR Ambassador Barshefsky sign an agreement on trade relations at USTR. President Clinton announces the conclusion of a bilateral trade agreement with a White House Rose Garden ceremony.</p> <p>July 26 The U.S. House of Representatives renews the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam by a 332-91 vote.</p> <p>November 16-20 President Clinton makes historic visit to Vietnam accompanied by high level delegation representing the Executive Office, Congress, Veterans of Foreign Wars and U.S. business.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						November 17 The U.S. Department of Labor and Vietnam's Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Labor cooperation.
					2001	<p>January The Vietnam Education Foundation Act of 2000 established by an Act of Congress, which will provide annual funding of \$5 million until 2019 for Vietnamese students to study in the United States.</p> <p>January 15-18 House Minority leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO) and Congressman Ray LaHood (R-IL) lead a Congressional delegation to Vietnam.</p>
George W. Bush	businessman	Republican	January 20, 2001	January 20, 2009	2001	<p>June 1 President Bush renews the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam.</p> <p>June 8 President Bush transmits the request for NTR for Vietnam and implementation of the trade agreement to Congress.</p> <p>July 17 Senate Finance Committee consideration and mark-up session held. BTA ordered to be reported by voice vote.</p> <p>July 26 House Committee on Ways and Means consideration and mark-up session held. BTA ordered to be reported by voice vote. The U.S. House of Representatives renews the waiver for Vietnam by a 324-91 vote.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>September 6 H.J. Res. 51 NTR passes without amendment by 88-12 vote in the U.S. Senate.</p> <p>October 10 Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien presents Letter of Credence to President George W. Bush at the White House.</p> <p>October 16 President George W. Bush signs BTA into Public Law No: 107-52.</p> <p>November 28 BTA Ratified by Vietnam National Assembly, 278-85.</p> <p>December 3 Ambassador Raymond Burghardt sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam.</p> <p>December 7 BTA signed into law by Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong.</p> <p>December 9 to 14 Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung heads a high level delegation to Washington, DC, New York and San Francisco, accompanied by Vu Khoan – Minister of Trade, Tran Xuan Gia – Minister of Planning and Investment, Nguyen Manh Kiem – Minister of Construction, and other government officials and over 60 members from the Vietnamese private sector.</p> <p>December 10 U.S - Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement signed into force at a Blair House ceremony with Deputy Prime Minister Dung, Trade Minister Vu Khoan and USTR Ambassador Robert Zoellick. Conference and dinner banquet hosted by US-VTC</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					2002	<p>March The first Vietnamese-U.S. scientific conference on Agent Orange opens in Hanoi, with the participation of hundreds of U.S and Vietnamese researchers.</p> <p>April 8 Ministry of Justice reports that after an initial review of all laws issued by ministries and central bodies, approximately 150 laws were found to have inconsistencies in relation to the provisions of the BTA.</p> <p>May 6 to 7 Deputy USTR Ambassador Jonathan Huntsman in Hanoi to open BTA Joint Committee.</p> <p>May 10 Vice President Nguyen Thi Binh visit to Washington, DC.</p> <p>May 13 Farm bill including catfish provision requiring Vietnam to rename its catfish product signed by President Bush.</p> <p>May 18 Vice Minister Luong Van Tu of Ministry of Trade Delegation to the U.S.</p> <p>June 1 to 8 Minister of Justice Nguyen Dinh Loc visit to the U.S. on BTA implementation.</p> <p>June 12 to 22 Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Manh Cam visits to Texas, New York, Massachusetts and Washington, DC.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>June 28 The Catfish Farmers of America filed an anti-dumping petition against Vietnam.</p> <p>June to July Jackson-Vanik waiver signed by the President Bush. The Jackson-Vanik waiver passes the House by a vote of 338-91.</p> <p>August 8 U.S. Department of Commerce issues its final determination in the catfish investigation, concluding that Vietnamese producers have sold frozen catfish fillets at less than fair value, with margins ranging from 36.84 to 63.88 percent.</p> <p>November 8 Department of Commerce determines that Vietnam is a non-market economy for the purposes of anti-dumping and countervailing duty proceedings.</p>
					2003	<p>April 3 Congressman Chris Smith reintroduces the Vietnam Human Rights Act (H.R.1587) into the U.S. House of Representatives.</p> <p>June 17 U.S. Department of Commerce issues its final determination in the catfish investigation, concluding that Vietnamese producers have sold frozen catfish at less than fair value, with margins ranging from 36.84 to 63.88 percent.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>July 15 Vietnam Human Rights Act is added as an amendment to the House Foreign Relations Authorization Act (HR 1950). The authorization bill passes in the House on July 15 and is sent to the Senate.</p> <p>July 17 Vietnam-U.S. Garment and Textile Agreement signed in Hanoi by Vietnamese Minister of Trade Truong Dinh Tuyen and U.S. Ambassador Raymond Burghardt.</p> <p>July 23 U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) issues its final determination concluding that catfish imports from Vietnam have materially injured the U.S. catfish industry. The ITC's affirmative determination enables the Department of Commerce to issue an antidumping order imposing duties in the range of 6.84 to 63.88 percent.</p> <p>September 16 Vietnam's Minister of Trade Truong Dinh Tuyen visits the U.S.</p> <p>October 1 The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), a merger of the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory and the Joint Task Force - Full Accounting, was established to reorganize and continue efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of our nation's previous conflicts.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>October 5 Vietnam's Minister of Planning & Investment Vo Hong Phuc visits the U.S. to promote bilateral investment.</p> <p>November 10 Landmark meeting at the Pentagon between Vietnamese Defense Minister Pham Van Tra and U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to discuss cooperation in regional security promotion.</p> <p>November For the first time in nearly 30 years, a U.S. warship, the USS Vandergrift, docked in the port of Saigon in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City.</p> <p>December 4 Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Vu Khoan visits the U.S. including Washington, DC, during which the U.S. & Vietnam sign a bilateral aviation agreement.</p> <p>December 12 Vietnam WTO negotiators participate in a Working Party Meeting in Geneva. Bilateral discussions are held with the U.S.</p> <p>December 31 Southern Shrimp Alliance files anti-dumping petition against shrimp producers from Thailand, China, Brazil, India, Ecuador, and Vietnam.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					2004	<p>January 21 The U.S. International Trade Commission holds the preliminary phase of anti-dumping investigations on “certain frozen and canned warm water shrimp and prawns” filed against Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam.</p> <p>February 17 Description: In the preliminary ruling, all six commissioners of the U.S. International Trade Commission votes in favor of continuing to investigate the alleged “shrimp” dumping case.</p> <p>March 4 Description: Senator Brownback introduces Senate Resolution 311 calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly. The Resolution condemns the detention of Father Ly and violations of freedom of speech, religious freedom, movement, association and lack of due process in Vietnam, while urging the Government of Vietnam to consider its actions in the context of its broader relationship and its bilateral trade agreement with the U.S.</p> <p>April 2 Formation of the U.S. Vietnam Caucus in the U.S. Congress, which seeks to monitor and support normalized relations between the U.S. & Vietnam.</p> <p>May 6 Senate confirms Michael W. Marine, career Senior Foreign Service Officer, as the 3rd U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam in the post war period.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>May 17 - 21 The 3rd BTA Joint Committee Meeting is held in Washington, DC. Vice Minister of Trade Luong Van Tu leads the delegation from Vietnam.</p> <p>June 3 President Bush signed and sent to Congress the annual extension of authorization for the Jackson-Vanik waiver, including Vietnam.</p> <p>June 7 to 12 Truong Dinh Tuyen, Vietnam's Minister of Trade, meetings in Washington with key US government officials to discuss Vietnam's accession to the WTO, the US-Vietnam Textile Agreement, the ITC investigation on shrimp imports, and implementation of the US-Vietnam BTA.</p> <p>June 16 Vietnam holds the 8th Working Party round of WTO accession negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland. Bi-lateral negotiations are held with various member countries including Australia, the EU, and the U.S.</p> <p>June 23 U.S. President George W. Bush designated Vietnam as a new recipient for the \$15 billion plan to combat HIV/AIDS globally.</p> <p>July 6 The U.S. Department of Commerce announces its preliminary determination on antidumping duties for shrimp imports from Vietnam and China in the dumping investigation filed against imports from Vietnam, China, Brazil, Ecuador, India and Thailand.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>July 19 Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2003 (H.R. 1587), sponsored by Rep. Smith (R-NJ), passes House of Representatives by vote of 323-45.</p> <p>July 22 to 23 Deputy USTR Josette Shiner visits Hanoi to discuss BTA Implementation and Vietnam's WTO Accession.</p> <p>July 28 USS Curtis Wilbur DDG-54 docks in Danang, the 2nd U.S. Navy ship to drop anchor in Vietnam since 1975.</p> <p>September 15 Vietnam is designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the U.S. Religious Freedom Act.</p> <p>September 19 to 26 Washington State Governor Gary Locke leads a 25-member traded legation through Vietnam to explore business opportunities for the state.</p> <p>September 20 to 24 Minister of Justice visits the US</p> <p>October 5 Vice Minister of Finance Le Thi Bang Tam visits the US.</p> <p>October 25 to 28 Members of the US Working Party and Vietnam's WTO negotiating team meet in Washington, DC for another round of bilateral negotiations and discussions on multilateral commitments for Vietnam's WTO accession.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>November 22 The 1st Draft Working Party Report on Vietnam's WTO accession is circulated among Members.</p> <p>November 30 The US Department of Commerce decides to uphold penalty tariffs slapped on shrimp imports from Vietnam in July, saying the country sold shrimp to the US at below-market prices, but it lowered the anti-dumping tariff from 4.13 to 25.76%. Unless the decision is appealed, Vietnamese shrimp exports will be subject to the new duties as of February 2005. The US will not impose anti-dumping duties on dusted and battered shrimp from Vietnam. Tariff rates go into effect 1-week from the date of publication in the Federal Register.</p> <p>November 30 to December 18 National Assemblywoman Madam Ton Nu Thi Ninh visits the US on a three-week tour.</p> <p>December 10 BTA renewed by President Bush</p> <p>December 11 United Airlines' inaugural flight from San Francisco to Ho Chi Minh City, the first U.S. carrier to provide direct service between the U.S. and Vietnam.</p> <p>December 12 Vietnam's 9th WTO Working Party Meeting in Geneva.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					2005	<p>January 6 The U.S. International Trade Commission upholds last February's preliminary finding that imports have injured, or are likely to injure, U.S. shrimp processors and fisherman. The panel reaffirms with a 6-0 vote that frozen shrimp have hurt the U.S. industry, but the group votes 4-2 to scrap tariffs on canned imports, which make up about 0.4% of imports.</p> <p>January 18 Former USTR, Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky, speaks to an audience of government officials and business representatives on "U.S.-Vietnam Relations: Challenges and Opportunities" during her visit to Vietnam.</p> <p>January 28 to February 1 Elena Bryan, Deputy Assistant USTR for Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Jennie Ness, Attorney Advisor for USPTO visit Vietnam for ongoing negotiations and discussions on BTA implementation and Vietnam's pending accession to the WTO.</p> <p>February 4 New Government Decree to permit "house churches" in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.</p> <p>March 14 to 16 The next round of US-Vietnam bilateral talks on Vietnam's accession to the WTO is held in Washington.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>May 6 The U.S. & Vietnam sign the CPC Agreement, a new accord on religious freedom. Prime Minister Khai announces he will visit the U.S. at the end of June.</p> <p>June 19 to 24 With a delegation of more than 100 public and private sector representatives, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai visited four U.S. cities, the first visit by a Prime Minister in the post-war period. During his visit, the two countries signed agreements on international adoptions, intelligence and military cooperation and a number of key business contracts.</p> <p>July 10th Anniversary of restored relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.</p>
					2006	<p>February 20 U.S. and Vietnam resumed bilateral talks in Hanoi on human rights after a three-year break.</p> <p>February 21 The 2nd Draft Working Party Report for Vietnam's WTO accession is circulated</p> <p>April 27 Vietnam and Mexico successfully conclude bilateral negotiations on WTO accession. Mexico was Vietnam's 27th of a total of 28 partners with which Vietnam must negotiate for entry to the WTO, the U.S. remaining to conclude bilateral negotiations.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>May 14 The U.S. & Vietnam reach a bilateral agreement-in-principle on accession package.</p> <p>May 31 The U.S. & Vietnam officially sign the bilateral agreement on Vietnam's WTO accession to the WTO in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with USTR Susan Schwab and Minister of Trade Truong Dinh Tuyen.</p> <p>June 4 to 6 Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visits Vietnam to discuss ways to broaden defense cooperation.</p> <p>June 13 Bills to grant PNTR for Vietnam were submitted in both houses of Congress (H.R. 5602 and S.3495)</p> <p>June 26 The U.S. Trade and Development Agency granted more than US \$600,000 for the improvement of customs clearance transactions during the November 2006 APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in Vietnam.</p> <p>June 26 to 30 The National Assembly of Vietnam confirmed new leadership, including Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, State President Nguyen Minh Triet, and National Assembly Chairman Nguyen Phu Trong.</p> <p>July 10 to 15 Six Members of the National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, led by Chairman Vu Mao, visited Washington, DC; Houston, Texas; and Los Angeles, California, focusing on PNTR and issues affecting US-Vietnam relations.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>July 11 to 13 Chairman Nguyen Duc Kien of the National Assembly's Committee on Economic and Budgetary Affairs, led a delegation to the US to support PNTR.</p> <p>July 11 Vietnam became an official member of the Madrid Protocol Concerning the International Registration of Marks.</p> <p>July 12 U.S. Senate Finance Committee Public Hearing on PNTR for Vietnam (S.3495)</p> <p>July 20 H.E. Tran Thi Trung Chien, Vietnam's Minister of Health, was in Washington working with the US Department of Health and Human Services to discuss Vietnam's health sector priorities and new health reforms and policies.</p> <p>July 31 The U.S. Senate Finance Committee voted to approve PNTR for Vietnam (S.3495) – the vote was approved with 18 yeas, 0 nays and 2 present.</p> <p>August 16 to 19 During a visit to Vietnam, U.S. Ambassador-at-large for international religious liberty John V. Hanford confirmed the free development of religions in the country.</p> <p>August 23 Vietnam's National Assembly accepted the 11th draft Law on Rights of Association to ensure citizens the right of association, which was written into Vietnam's 1992 Constitution (Article 69). The draft law is expected to be approved end 2006.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>September 7 to 8 U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulsen was in Hanoi to attend the APEC Finance Ministers meeting and expand on the US dialogue with the major economies in the Asia-Pacific region. During his visit, he met with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and Vietnamese officials leading the country's economic reform program.</p> <p>September 12 A memorandum (non-compulsory) on standards and quality was signed by the Vietnam STAMEQ and the American National Standards Institute committing to use international quality standards and exchange specialists & information on standardization.</p> <p>September 19 The Vietnam WTO negotiating team, led by Deputy Trade Minister Luong Van Tu, participated in the 12th Round of WTO Multilateral Negotiations in Geneva.</p> <p>September 21 The U.S. House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas R-CA) introduced legislation (H.R. 6142) to renew the GSP duty-free program for two years.</p> <p>October 5 to 7 - Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NB) visited Hanoi and HCMC.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>October 7 to 9 13th Round of WTO Multilateral Negotiations on Vietnam's accession were held in Geneva Switzerland in an effort to finalize negotiations on accession. Vietnam's WTO negotiating team was led by Trade Minister Truong Dinh Tuyen.</p> <p>October 9 to 17 The Vice Minister of Planning & Investment Nguyen Bich Dat led a delegation to the U.S., including Washington, DC.</p> <p>October 25 to 26 Vietnam's 14th (and final) WTO Working Party Meeting in Geneva. Vietnam's WTO Working Party Members accepted the documents spelling out Vietnam's commitments and rights as a WTO Member, including draft commitments on goods (560 pp), services (60 pp) and the Working Party's draft report (260 pp). The documents will go to the full membership in the General Council, which will meet on 7 November, to decide on accepting Vietnam's WTO membership.</p> <p>November 7 The WTO General Council held a special meeting to approve Vietnam's WTO Accession Package.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
						<p>November 18 to 19 Vietnam hosted the 2006 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit and APEC CEO Summit. U.S. President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice attended and participated in an official State visit in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.</p> <p>November 28 Vietnam's National Assembly ratified its WTO accession package. Vietnam's membership will take effect 30 days after informing the WTO of its ratification.</p> <p>December 8 The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 6406 granting PNTR to Vietnam (212-184).</p> <p>December 9 The U.S. Senate passed H.R. 6111, granting PNTR to Vietnam (79-9).</p> <p>December 11 Vietnam notified the WTO of its ratification.</p> <p>December 29 President George W. Bush issued a proclamation to extend nondiscriminatory treatment (Normal Trade Relations Treatment) to Vietnam.</p>

President	Profession	Party	Took office	Left office	Year	Key Events in the U.S. - Vietnam Relations
					2007	<p>Vietnam becomes the 150th Member of the World Trade Organization after 12 years of negotiations</p> <p>January 22 Admiral Gary Roughead, the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, pays a two-day visit to Vietnam, meeting with Vice Admiral Nguyen Van Hien, the Commander of the Vietnamese Navy.</p> <p>January 22-26 U.S. State Department Senior Agriculture Biotech Advisor Sharon Wiener visits Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to discuss the economic and environmental benefits of biotechnology with senior Vietnamese officials.</p> <p>March 11-16 Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem visits the United States.</p> <p>March 15 The U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Maritime Agreement is signed in Washington D.C.</p> <p>April 8 During a three day visit, Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates and wife Melinda meet with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to discuss ways to improve children's health.</p>

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						<p>June 18 to 23 Vietnam State President Nguyen Minh Triet pays a six-day visit to the United States. He visits New York, Washington DC and Los Angeles. In New York, President Triet visits the New York Stock Exchange. In DC he meets with President George W. Bush and House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and attends the 40th anniversary celebration of ASEAN. President Triet also visits Los Angeles in the western state of California, where many of the 1.1 million Vietnamese Americans live.</p> <p>June 21 The United States and Vietnam sign a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) that will create a platform on which to further expand and deepen bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries.</p> <p>July 19-31 The first session of 12th National Assembly reappoints Nguyen Tan Dung as Prime Minister, Nguyen Minh Triet as State President, and Nguyen Phu Trong as National Assembly Chairman. The National Assembly also adopts the government's new structure with five deputy prime ministers, and 22 new ministries and ministerial level agencies. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung promises to push further economic reforms.</p>

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						<p>August 10 Ambassador Michael Michalak, a career Foreign Service Officer with extensive knowledge and experience in Asia, is sworn in as the United States Ambassador to Vietnam.</p> <p>September 18 The U.S. House of Representatives passes Smith Bill to promote human rights reform in Vietnam.</p> <p>September 24-29 Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung pays a five-day visit to New York to attend the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly. PM Dung delivers an important speech at the UNGA and had meetings with world leaders to garner support for Vietnam's bid for a UN Security Council non-permanent seat. He also meets with many U.S. companies and press and visits the New York Stock Exchange.</p> <p>October 16 Vietnam is elected as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2008-2009 term.</p> <p>November Ambassador Le Cong Phung is appointed as Vietnam Ambassador to the U.S.</p>

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					2008	<p>January 22 Vietnamese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Le Cong Phung presents Letter of Credence to U.S. President George W. Bush.</p> <p>March 20-21 Daniel Price, U.S. Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Economic Affairs, visits Vietnam.</p> <p>May Vietnam submits formal request for G.S.P. to the United States</p> <p>September The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the MOSTE Directorate for Standards and Quality in Vietnam (STAMEQ) sign declaration on product safety cooperation.</p>
Barack Obama	lawyer	Democratic	January 20, 2009	Incumbent	2009	<p>February Vietnam officially joins the Trans-Pacific Partnership as an associate member</p> <p>June 22-25 Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visits Washington</p> <p>August 31 U.S. Department of Commerce finds Vietnamese plastic bag manufacturers guilty of dumping, levies import tariff of between 1.69% and 2.97%.</p> <p>November 15-16 “Meet Vietnam 2009” Expo in San Francisco, organized by Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the San Francisco authorities.</p> <p>November 14 President Obama announces U.S. will engage on TPP, announcement from Toyko on eve of arrival in Singapore for APEC Summit</p>

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					2010	<p>January 11 U.S. Senator Christopher S. Bond visits Hanoi. National Assembly Vice Chairman Tong Thi Phong and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem received the visiting Senator.</p> <p>January 14-15 U.S. Embassy Hanoi holds third annual Education Conference: Building Partnerships in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the U.S. and Vietnam, drawing more than 600 educators from the U.S. and Vietnam for talks on how to reach a variety of educational goals.</p> <p>February 4-8 Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs Scot Marciel visits Hanoi. DAS Marciel met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Finance, Office of the Government, Diplomatic Academy, National Assembly, American Chamber of Commerce and the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha.</p> <p>February 24-25 Treasury Deputy Assistant Secretary for Asia, Robert Dohner, Treasury's highest-ranking official with responsibility for Asia, visits Hanoi and meets with the Deputy Governor of the State Bank, Vice Minister of Finance, Chairman of the National Assembly Economic Committee, Vice Chairman of the Office of Government and the Vice Chairman of the National Financial Supervisory Committee.</p>

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						<p>March 3 U.S. Consul General Ken Fairfax and Agricultural Attaché Michael Riedel visits Phu My Port in Ba-Ria Vung Tau province to welcome the largest single shipment of U.S. soybean meal to Vietnam. The ship carried approximately 48,000 tons of U.S. soybean meal, which was loaded in Washington State.</p> <p>March 15 -16 Secretary Clinton's Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, Mr. David Goldwyn, visits Hanoi to explore ways to share U.S. expertise and help Vietnam secure its energy resources for the future, through the Energy Governance and Capacity Initiative (EGCI). He spoke with officials from the Ministries of Finance, Industry & Trade, PetroVietnam and Vietnam Electricity (EVN).</p> <p>March 16-19 Nineteen American artists from the Southwest Chamber Music Society visits Hanoi for a cultural exchange program with the Vietnam National Academy of Music titled "Emerging Cultural Leaders: Ascending Dragon Cultural Exchange Program". Activities included residencies, master classes, a cultural leadership forum and a joint public performance at the Hanoi Opera House. (15th Anniversary Event.)</p> <p>March 25 Vietnam opens a Consulate General in Houston, TX. Attending the ceremony were Deputy Foreign Minister Ho Xuan Son, Vietnamese Ambassador to the U.S. Le Cong Phung, Vietnamese Consul General in Houston Le Dung, and Betty H. McCutchan, U.S. Department of State.</p>

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						<p>March 27, April 3, April 10 & April 17 USAID-sponsored MTV EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking) concerts held in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City. The free, ticketed events were designed to raise awareness and increase prevention of human trafficking.</p> <p>March 30 Ambassador Michael Michalak and Vice-Minister of Science and Technology, Le Dinh Tien signs a Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Government and the Government of Vietnam concerning cooperation in the field of civilian nuclear energy.</p> <p>March 31-April 1 The United States-Vietnam Climate Change Working Group conducts its first formal meeting in Hanoi. The two nations formed the working group during Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's 2008 visit to Washington D.C.</p> <p>April Vietnam files first complaint at the WTO: against the U.S. challenging the use of "zeroing" in the shrimp anti-dumping case</p> <p>June 5 Ministers of the eight Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries met in Sapporo on the margins of the APEC Trade Ministers meeting in Japan</p> <p>June 7- 10 Deputy USTR Demetrios Marantis visits Hanoi for TIFA talks, TPP and other bilateral issue discussions</p>

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						<p>June 14-17 8 party TPP talks in San Francisco</p> <p>July 22-23 U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is attends ASEAN Regional Forum meetings in Hanoi and holds bi-lateral talks.</p> <p>July 22 U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem keynote celebration event on 15th anniversary of U.S. Vietnam normalization</p> <p>August TPP market access discussions, expected in Lima Peru</p> <p>October TPP talks expected to be held in Brunei</p> <p>October 10 Celebration for 1000 year birthday, Hanoi</p> <p>November APEC Summit expected in Japan</p>

Source: Embassy of the United States, Hanoi, Vietnam, "U.S. - Vietnam Relations" (<http://vietnam.usembassy.gov>)

The U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council (USVTC) (<http://www.usvtc.or>)

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