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บทบาทของอเมริกาและรัฐไทยในการพัฒนาประเทศกับการเปลี่ยนแปลงของเศรษฐกิจสังคมของภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือในช่วงสงครามเวียดนาม (1955 – 1975)*

The Roles of America and Thai State in National Development and the Socioeconomic Changes in the Eastern Thailand During the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975)

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นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอก มหาวิทยาลัยสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์ในมหาวิทยาลัยแห่งชาติ
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บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาบทบาทและผลที่เกิดขึ้นของบทบาทของอเมริกาและรัฐไทยในการพัฒนาประเทศในช่วงหลังสงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2 จนถึงการสิ้นสุดของสงครามเวียดนามปี 1975 ในช่วงเวลาดังกล่าวอเมริกาถือเป็นประเทศที่มีบทบาทในการพัฒนาประเทศไทยในภาพรวมโดยเฉพาะในมิติทางเศรษฐกิจรวมถึงความมั่นคง ความสัมพันธ์ดังกล่าวนอกจากจะส่งผลต่อการพัฒนาในระดับประเทศในภาพรวมแล้วยังส่งผลให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางด้านเศรษฐกิจและสังคมของภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนืออีกด้วย ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือกลายเป็นฐานทรัพยากรในการผลิตเพื่อตอบสนองการขยายตัวของทุนนิยม นอกจากนี้การที่ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือกลายเป็นพื้นที่ยุทธศาสตร์ในสงครามเวียดนามยังผลให้มีการเร่งรัดการพัฒนาในพื้นที่ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ โดยบทความชิ้นนี้มุ่งเชื่อมโยงปัจจัยภายนอก อย่างบริบทโลก บริบทภายในภูมิภาค ประกอบกับปัจจัยภายในเพื่ออธิบายการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคมในพื้นที่ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ

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Abstract

This article aims to study the roles and effects of America and Thai state in performing Thailand development during the post WW2 era until 1975 when the Vietnam War was ended. By that specific period, the United States took the important role in many perspectives of Thai national development especially economics and security. The role of the United States not only affected Thailand nationwide but the specific region namely the Eastern part of Thailand where its socioeconomic was changed. The Eastern coast became the centered resource area of national production to serve the enlargement of capitalism. Since the Eastern region was the strategic area of the battle in Vietnam War, this area was intensively developed. This article also aims to present the linkage between the external factors (such as the global contexts, regional contexts) and the internal factors so that the socioeconomic changes in the Eastern Thailand would be explained clearly.

Keywords : Relationship Between USA and Thailand, Thai State and Economic Development, Socioeconomic Changes in The Eastern Region of Thailand, Vietnam War

INTRODUCTION

During the Vietnam War (1955 - 1975), the United States of America was the powerful country which played the role in advocating a new order for countries in Asia, especially after the democratic national revolution of China in 1949. America's intervention in Japan can be seen to restore the economy with a desire to use Japan as its ally in Asia in order to prevent the expansion of socialism (Havens, 1987).

In Southeast Asia, Thailand was a key economic and military country of the United States of America with the aim of preventing the expansion of socialism in accordance with the Domino theory. Preventing the expansion of socialism was not only related to the military security but also the capitalist economy in Southeast Asia. The United States of America played an important role in developing the capitalist economy in Thailand which led to the change of socio-economic

system in the regions of Thailand. With the role of state-level cooperation, the United States of America assisted Thailand in the field of security such as weapons supply and military training. In terms of economy, the United States of America provided financial supports, provided economic development plan and supported infrastructure construction. The aforementioned situation had an impact on the regions of Thailand, especially the Eastern Thailand. Starting in 1947, the promotion of the capitalist economy at the state level accelerated the transition of the Eastern Thailand in investing in the development of infrastructure in this region and gradually adding the model of commodity economy along with the model of subsistence economy. After 1965, the establishment of the US military base at U-Tapao also had influence on the economic situation in the region (Surachart Bamrungsuk, 1988; Wiwat Mungkandi, 1986, pp. 14-19).

This article aims to study the roles and effects of America and Thai state in performing Thailand development during the Post-World War 2 era until 1975 when the Vietnam war was ended and its impacts on the Eastern Thailand. The author has collected the topic-related documents and information, and analyzed them from the perspective of political economy. To complete the aforementioned purpose, in addition to the introduction and conclusion, the author divide this paper into the following contents: 1) The global and regional context after the end of World War II in 1945 2) The roles of America and Thai state in national development during the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975) and 3) The impacts on the Eastern Thailand during the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975).

THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT AFTER THE END OF WORLD WAR II IN 1945

After the end of World War II, the United States of America became a globally powerful country with an important role in the world economic system, and advocated the new order system in international relations, especially in terms of the global security and economy. American Peace (Pax Americana) is a political term commonly used in the fields of politics and international relations to present the above situation.

In terms of economy, the economic liberal was enforced by the Declaration of Point Four Program by Mr. Harry S. Truman, the President of the United States of America, on January 20, 1949. In that speech, there was a passage demonstrating the role of the US in the

underdeveloped countries, and its foreign policy, which was:

"We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve suffering of these people. The United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. The material resources which we can afford to use for assistance of other peoples are limited. But our imponderable resources in technical knowledge are constantly growing and are inexhaustible" (Truman, 1950 as cited in Sachs, 2000, p.4)

In short, he classified and defined the new group of countries as "Underdeveloped Countries", which were the least developed countries. The term "Underdeveloped Countries" was used for the countries which had a modest standard of living, an underdeveloped industrial foundation and manufacturing sector. This was the definition of the socio-economically underdeveloped countries. According to the definition mentioned above, the United States of America and developed countries were forced to play a role in supporting the underdeveloped countries to develop and improve the standard of living for their people by providing technologies in industrial production and economic development. Such situation compelled the underdeveloped countries as defined above to find ways to develop their economy and society (Sachs, 2001).

Thus, this development project became the main project in the world due to the promotion from two sides: one side was promoted by the developed countries and the other side was the developing countries' participation in the development project. Moreover, a lot of countries around the world believed that this linkage among countries in socio-economic development would create world peace.

In the global context, in Western Europe, the United States of America played itself as the hero who recovered the Western European countries by adopting the recovery plan called Marshall Plan. On the other hand, in Asia, the Cold War became tense, especially after China's democratic national revolution in 1949. This event caused the United States of America to intervene in Japan to restore the economy of Japan as well as the capitalist economy after the

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World War II in Asia. Furthermore, the United States of America desired to use Japan as its ally in order to prevent the expansion of socialism in Asia in general and in Southeast Asia in particular.

In Southeast Asia, we could see the role of America in the organization of regionalism in Southeast Asia, especially the Mekong region. In terms of Mekong regionalism, the United States of America led the establishment of the Bureau of Flood Control in 1951. This Bureau was directly under the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). In addition, the United States of America led the establishment of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). This organization had 8 members including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan. Then, the countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines cooperated and jointly organized the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) on 8 August 1967 (Chetta Puanghut, 2012).

THE ROLES OF AMERICA AND THAI STATE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE VIETNAM WAR (1955 – 1975)

After the end of World War II, Thailand changed its foreign policy from keeping a neutral attitude to attaching importance to a collective security system. The collective security system was a security commitment accepted by the member countries, that was, if a member country had security instability caused by a country other than the member countries, the member countries must provide support and assistance. This collective international group usually led by the superpowers. After the end of World War II, the diplomatic relations between Thailand and the US became even closer and Thailand had the foreign policy following the same trend as the US. It could be seen that Thailand sent its military forces to participate in the Korean War in 1950 and the turning point was that Thailand took part in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); when joining this organization, Thailand had to give military support to the US during the Vietnam War from 1955 to 1975, and led to the establishment of military bases in Thailand (Panitee Chatakanonda, 2002; Prathoomporn Vajarasthira, 1976, pp. 26-42).

During the Vietnam War, Thailand was the country which the United States of America was interested in because Thailand was a key economic and military country of the United States of America in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the United States of America had to intervene in Thailand

to ensure that Thai leaders would have the viewpoints and foreign policies consistent with the ones of the United States of America (Kullada Ketboonchu Mead, 2007; Puangthong Phakawaphan, 2009; Jirayoot Seemung, 2014; Jitiya Purksametanan, 2010).

In terms of internal politics, in the period of 1945 - 1973, the Thai government was led by the military. The government in this period started after the coup of Field Marshal Phin Choonhavan in 1947. This coup created an opportunity for the military to intervene in the state politics that lasted until 1973. At the same time, the Cold War in the world also facilitated the military to direct the government on the grounds that the national defense and security became an important issue of this country. The military leaders became the governmental leaders* and had a role in determining the policy-adopting process for the country, especially internal security issues and foreign policies. In addition, in the economic development of Thailand, Technocrats also played an important role in orienting the country's economic development through making economic development plans.

In the above situation, Thailand took advantage of diplomatic relations with the United States of America, especially the Marshall Plan. In 1950, Thailand and the United States of America signed a bilateral Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement in which the United States of America provided Thailand with both financial and technical supports in a lot of field such as agriculture, transportation, energy, industry, mining, education and state administration. At the same time, Thailand received assistance under the Point Four Program of the President Truman, in which Thailand received a total support budget of 22.4 million USD from the United States of America from 1951 to 1953, and benefited from the export of goods such as rice, rubber and tin.

At the same time, with the above conditions, the US Government began to force the Thai government to apply the economic institutions of domestic Free Market by limiting the role of the state in investing in commodity production and changing the role of the state into promoting

* in the period of 1945 - 1973, Thailand had the prime ministers such as Major Khuang Aphaiwong (November 12, 1947 - April 8, 1948) (3rd time; acting), Field Marshal Luang Phibunsongkhram (April 8, 1948 - September 16, 1957) (2nd time), Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata (September 16 - September 21, 1957) (1st time), Pote Sarasin (September 21 - December 24, 1957), Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn (January 1 - October 20, 1958) (1st time), Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata (October 20, 1958 - December 8, 1963) (acting until February 10, 1959) (2nd time), Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn (December 9, 1963 - October 14, 1973) (2nd time)

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private investment in the production of industrial goods. Especially, the United States of America desired to promote the domestic free market by asking Thailand to sign a memorandum of understanding to guarantee America's direct investment in September 1, 1954. To meet the above objectives, the Thai government passed these following laws: The Industrial Promotion Act 1954 and the Factory Act 1939, together with the regulations and rules of the Department of Industrial Promotion (Department of Industrial Promotion, 1977). These laws demonstrated the government's desire to promote foreign direct investment, including the one of the US. However, foreign direct investment in Thailand was still low because Thailand's infrastructure did not meet the requirements of foreign investment.

During the period of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram as the Prime Minister, he applied a nationalist policy, so the role of the United States of America was limited. However, the United States of America tried to promote the free market mechanism in Thailand by the fact that the United States of America and World Bank supported Thailand to establish an agency to research and advocate economic development plans for the country, called the "National Economic Council" which was established in February 15 1950, but this agency was not in a role under the government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1948-1957) because he implemented a policy of state monopoly capitalism. According to this policy, the state played a monopoly role in the production of industrial goods both in heavy and light industries (Suthy Prasartset, 1984, pp. 67-107; Sangsit Piriyaarangsarn 1983; Surachart Bamrungsuk, 1988).

After the coup of Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata on September 16, 1957, the Thai government began to depend more on the United States of America, especially for economic development and national security. In terms of economy, the United States of America and World Bank played a role in Thailand's economic development by lending money to Thailand from 1950, and especially advocating the establishment of economic development plan of Thailand. In this work, the World Bank sent the experts to Thailand to conduct economic research and survey in Thailand between 1957-1958 and then published the report and proposed the economic development policy for the Thai state (World Bank, 1959).

In 1959, after Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata (Term: February 9, 1959 - December 8, 1963) came into power, the relations between Thailand and the US were tightened in both economic and security aspects. In terms of security relations, the US began to make tougher

decisions in foreign policy towards Vietnam and led to the War between the US and Vietnam in the period of 1955 – 1975. During this time, Thailand implemented a modernization policy under the Marshall plan, at the same time, due to the leadership of the military, the Thai government has close ties with the US in terms of military security. The Thai government participated in the Vietnam War (Vietnam called it the Resistance War against America). Until 1962, Thailand and the US issued the Thanat - Rusk Joint Communiqué saying the US could provide military assistance for Thailand. If Thailand was invaded, the US could provide direct assistance without SEATO's approval and the US could establish military bases in Thailand.

Based on the Thai-US relations mentioned above, the event of the US Military Bases started with the fact that the first US military unit from the Philippines arrived at Don Mueang airport in April 1958 followed by transporting machines to U-tapao for construction of air force base and infrastructure in Thailand. Then the US used 7 military bases in Thailand: Don Mueang (Bangkok), Nakornrachasima, Nakhon Phanom, Takli (Nakhonsawan), U-Tapao (Chonburi), Ubon Ratchathani and Udon Thani (as shown in the Figure 1).



Figure 1: 7 US military bases in Thai

Source: Chisholm, C & Kilpatrick L. T. D., n.d.

It could be said that the establishment of the US military bases in Thailand showed the close relationship between the Thai government and the US in the context of the Cold War. From the viewpoint of the Thai military government, it was found that the establishment of the US military bases was to force the US to protect Thailand from becoming a socialist country according to the

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Domino Theory (Surachart Bamrungsuk, 2017; The Vietnam War Team, 2015; History.com, 2009).

In terms of economic relations, under the guidance of the World Bank, Thailand reformed the role of the National Economic Council to become more important and renamed it the “Office of the National Economic Development Council” with the main purpose as the socio-economic development planning agency for the country (Chatchai Mooksong, n.d.). Until 1961, Thailand implemented the first national economic development plan in the period of 1961-1966. This development plan was based on the contents of the report and proposal of the experts of the World Bank in 1958. The special point was that in this plan, Thailand started to implement the industrial development plan (or could be called Industrialization) in the first national economic development plan. This plan advocated for Thailand to focus on the development of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and the Thai government desired to develop many new industries, most of which were the industries of essential consumer goods. However, the industrial production establishments established from this period were only concentrated in Bangkok and metropolitan region* such as Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakan, Chachoengsao and Pathum Thani because of their close distance to Bangkok as the economic center of the country, and their better infrastructure comparing to other regions.

The main contents of this first development plan included 2 major purposes as follow; (Office of the National Economic Development Council, 1960)

1. Promote the development of infrastructure for economy, education and public health. Regarding economy, this plan advocated the infrastructure development for economic development such as construction of roads, improvement of water transportations such as rivers and canals for transferring goods, construction and improvement of railway, improvement of information and communications technology such as post, telegraph, radio and telephone, and doubling efficiency for domestic electric power generation.

2. Increase both industrial and agricultural productivity to create economic growth and produce goods to meet domestic demands. In this plan, the government encouraged the use of new science and technology to increase industrial and agricultural productivity. In terms of industry, the government aimed to increase the GDP of the private industry from 10% per year to 12% per year, and increase the productivity of important manufacturing industries such as

* These provinces in Thai language are often called Parimonthon (Pa-ri-mon-thon: ปริมณฑล).

cement, fabric, sugar, paper, tobacco, and minerals. In terms of agriculture, the government increased the productivity of important agricultural sectors such as rice, rubber, corn, cassava, cattle and fishery by 3% per year.

This was the period when Thai state promoted a free market economy which the state only supported manufacturing industries by inviting private investments without any state investment sanctions but creating supportive environments such as promoting private investment and building infrastructure to meet the demands for economic growth.

After the implementation of the first national economic development plan, although Thailand's economic growth was quite high due to the increasing foreign import and export value, Thailand had to face two major socio-economic problems. The first problem was the Income Redistribution presented in the income gap between the rich and the poor. The second problem was the development gap between urban area and rural area presented in the disparity between big cities, such as Bangkok and neighboring provinces, and other regions such as the Northeastern and the Northern Thailand (Pornchanok Thepkham, 2019).

Until 1967, Thailand started to implement the second socio-economic development plan (1967-1971) with the same objectives as the first plan, including investment in building economic infrastructure of the country, attraction of foreign investment as well as development of agricultural and industrial sectors. As a result, after implementing the second plan, Thailand succeeded in developing infrastructure in the regions within the target of macroeconomic development and growth across the country. However, Thailand still faced the problem of economic inequality like the first development plan.

Until the third socio-economic development (1972 - 1976), the development objectives still focused on 2 main objectives including; 1) economic growth and development and 2) infrastructure development. In this plan, the Thai government turned to the policy of Export Substitution Industrialization (ESI). Especially, the government had a policy to move industrial zones from Bangkok and neighboring provinces to other regions through the adoption of a law on investment support in special cases.

The Thai government still provided a lot of support for private investment, especially new sectors in the export-trending industries and labor-intensive industries. At the same time, at the end of this development plan, the government concentrated on solving the problems arising from the first and second development plans such as attraction of foreign investment, tax system,

etc.

The US had an important role in building the 1st-3rd development plans and it could be seen that the World Bank lent money to Thailand from 1950 to 1975 up to USD 440 million to build infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems, electrical systems and dams.

In the infrastructure development policy, the Thai government focused on infrastructure investment in the first economic development plan, accounting for 31.4% of the state budget, and in the second socio-economic development plan, accounting for 26.0% of the state budget. However, in the third socio-economic development plan, it was decreased to 19.4% of the state budget (Umpika Sawatwong, 2002, pp. 31-33).

During the late period of the Vietnam War, Thailand reduced diplomatic relations with the US, especially after the internal political circumstance called the Student Movement Against Dictator and the governmental support for the US, especially the establishment of military bases in Thailand. This political uprising took place in October 14, 1973 (Wan Maha Wippayok, "Day of Great Sorrow") and led to the event in March 21, 1976, in which thousands of students demonstrated from Thammasat University to the US Embassy, and a bombing which made 4 people dead immediately and dozens of people injured. Until 1976, the US withdrew its military bases from Thailand. Because of the domestic changes, the foreign policy also changed. In 1975, the government led by Major General Mom Rajawongse (M.R.) Kukrit Pramoj established diplomatic relations with China in July 1, 1975 with the desire to create economic and social benefits, at the same time reduced diplomatic relations with the US (Julaporn Euarukskul, n.d.; Surachart Bamrungsuk, 2016).

THE SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE EASTERN THAILAND DURING THE VIETNAM WAR (1955 – 1975)

The turning point of the Eastern Thailand was the start of Sukhumvit Road. Sukhumvit Road was the first route connecting the Eastern Thailand with Bangkok and it can be said that this road was the gate of the capitalist economic integration process of the Eastern Thailand in the global and national economy. Before having Sukhumvit Road, the transportations in the Eastern Thailand were rivers and coastal navigation. Bangpakong River was the main water transportation in the Eastern Thailand. The river flow from Nakhon Nayok, Prachinburi, Chachoengsao and exist to the Gulf of Thailand. The coastal transportation started from

Chanthaburi, Rayong to Trat. The water transports were mainly used for travelling and transferring goods from inner areas to coastal ports and connecting with Bangkok.

Sukhumvit road was built in 1947 by the Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram. This route was a coastal route from Bangkok to Khlong Yai district, in Trat Province (bordering with Cambodia). Sukhumvit Road connected Bangkok with the provinces such as Samut Prakan, Chonburi, Rayong and Trat to the border of Thailand and Cambodia. It was originally called “Bangkok - Trat Road” (Figure 2).

In the initial stage, there was no bridge over Bangpakong River, and ferry was used for travelling across the river. In preparation for building Sukumvit road project, the Government built a bridge over Bangpakong River in 1941 and named it “Thephasadin Bridge”. The bridge is reinforced with concrete. The construction plan of this bridge follows the standard of USA so, it is secured enough for the heavy vehicles like the lorries. This bridge, with its 3.760 km. length, is located on Sukhumvit road, between Bangpakong district in Chachoengsao province and Chonburi province. (Figure 3).

In December 10, 1950, Bangkok - Trat Road was renamed to Sukhumvit Road in honor of Phra Phisarn Sukhumvit, the director of the Directorate for Roads at that time. After 1951, Thephasadin Bridge was completed and put into operation, so the form of transport was gradually changed from water transportation and railway to road (Olan Thinbangtieo, 2014; Silpa Wattanatham, 2020a; Rome Bunnag, 2013; Umpika Sawatwong, 2002, pp. 76-77).



Figure 2 : Road Bangkok - Trat
(Sukhumvit Road)



Figure 3 : Thephasadin Bridge
Source : Tha Kham Municipality (n.d.)

Source: wikipedia, 2020

However, until 1958, the construction of Sukhumvit Road was not completed because of the strict annual distributed budget, and some sections were still red gravel roads which made it difficult to travel, and it was still unable to use this road at all times of the year because some road sections were inundated, especially in the section from Sattahip to Trat province.

After implementing the first economic development plan in 1961, the government focused on developing the transport system for economic development. To improve the construction of Sukhumvit road this time, the government borrowed money from the World Bank, and used quite high construction investment capital and foreign modern technology in the improvement process.

The construction improvement of the road began from the Bangkok-Sriracha (Chonburi province) section, the construction plan was divided into three phases. The first phase was Phrakhanong - Bangna Bridge (this construction started in December 1965 and completed in January 1968). The second phase was Bangna - Bangpakong (this construction started in January 1967). The third phase was Bangpakong - Sriracha (this construction started in February 1967). Bangkok - Sriracha route was completed in 1969. The transportation of goods on this route reduced time and shortened the distance by about 12 km compared to the previous route. This route was widened to 4 lanes. Next, the government built two large bridges including the bridge over Bangpakong River and the overpass on the Bangpakong - Chachoengsao route. In addition, Sukhumvit road on the Rayong - Chanthaburi - Trat section was also constructed with asphalt surface and was completed in 1967 (Umpika Sawatwong, 2002, pp. 80-82).

Then, the government additionally built 5 highways in the Eastern Thailand to expand the transport system connecting the coastal Sukhumvit road and the inner areas bordering with the Northeastern Thailand as follow: (Sujitra Samakhitham, 2016, p. 124)

1) The route 304 was built in 1967. This was a route connecting Bangkok - Chachoengsao - Kabin Buri - Pak Thong Chai - Nakhon Ratchasima (Northeastern Thailand).

2) The route 311 was built in 1967 in the Vietnam War for transportation of weapons, equipment and troops from U-Tapao Airport to Khao Hin Son, and connected with the Road 304 towards Kabinburi, Korat, Ubon Ratchathani provinces.

3) The route 317 was a route connecting Sa Kaeo province with Chanthaburi province,

built from 1968 - 1969. This was a route dividing the forest areas of Thailand and Cambodia.

4) The route 3245 was built in 1969, connecting the districts of Phanom Sarakham - Sanam Chai Khet - Bo Thong - Koh Chan - Nong Yai - Pluak Daeng.

5) The route 3259 was built lastly in which the section I connected Sanam Chai Khet - Ban Nong Khok (210) and the section II connected Nong Khok - Wang Nam Yen; this road was built in 1984. This road passed through the north of Khao Ang Ruenai Wildlife Sanctuary (229)

All of these roads was built and operated under the Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn's administration. The route no. 304 and no. 311 were recognized as the strategic route to support military tasks during the Vietnam War in transporting weapons from Chuk Samet Pier or Sattahip Port and U-Tapao airport to the US military base in Nakhon Ratchasima province. The construction of these routes was assisted under United States Operation Mission (USOM) and Office In Charge of Construction (OICC) of the Department Of The Air Force, United States Of America. Even the proposed objective of this road construction was for the security issue only but, as a result, all 5 aforementioned roads also facilitated the travelling of people as well as the transportation of goods in the economy.

Sukhumvit road opened the Eastern area to be a new economic area where the model of commodity economy was inserted into the traditional economy model, known as the Subsistence Economy model. This road also made the Eastern Thailand integrating deeper into the national and international capitalist economy. Especially, there were the impacts on the economy and society in the region such as expansion of the forestry, the settling down of the immigrants, and expansion of economic crops plantations.

Timbers and loggings had been the important export goods of Thailand before the Siamese Revolution in 1932^{*}. After implementing the first economic development plan until 1968, the government decided to continue making money from logging and extending forestry concessions for more than 500 areas nationwide. The logging-export income was lasted until 1989 before the state's cancellation of all forest harvesting concessions (Wiboon Khemchalerm

^{*} The Siamese Revolution, on June 24, 1932, transformed the absolute monarchy into the constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. And Siam changed its name in the period of Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram in power, he implemented the nationalist policy and created a tendency to gather the Thai tribes into the "Thai" country. Finally, the names of the country, people and nationality were changed to "Thai" according to the first edition of the notice on governmentalism on June 24, 1939.

After the World War 2, Thai government launched a policy supporting the forestry industry in the Eastern region so, the industries had been enlarged since 1947. The supportive evidence was a company named Sriracha Thun (or Srimaharaja Co.Ltd. presently) established by Field Marshal Chaophraya Surasakmontri. He founded Sri Maharaja sawmill in Sriracha District, Chonburi province. It was a huge sawmill that had capacity in tracking its own railway for hauling the logs in Ban Bueng district. The company had run its productions since the Siamese revolution in 1932 but the processes were occasionally paused during the World War 2 before expanding its working area to Chachoengsao and Rayong province after the war's termination.

The logging business of Srimaharaja Co.Ltd. was continuously upsized after the company decided to track its own railway to transport its timbers in the concession lands. The rail was trailed from Sriracha district in Chonburi province (at the East side along Sukhumvit route) to Pluakdang district in Rayong province. The total length of this railroad was 51.775 kilometers with its personal 7 stations namely: Sriracha, Jerm, Jermjompol, Jaopraya, Surasak, Montri, and Chalermmlap.

The company adjusted its logging productions during 1953-1954 by using updated machines to increase production speed such as the 320 kilowatt electric mill sawing machines and the mechanic logging cranes. As the result, the company produced 900 – 1000 tons of lumber monthly in 1954, 1500 tons in 1956, and 2000 tons in 1957. To highlight its great capacity of logging productions, Srimaharaja Co.Ltd established its sub-company named Sriracha Plywood Co. Ltd. In 1958 for producing the shaving board plywood, finishing line woods. Also, Srimaharaja Co. Ltd formed up a number of lumber companies (Olarn Thinbangtieo & Jittra Sombatrattananun, 2014).

In Phanom Sarakham district, Chachoengsao province, Eua Wittaya Panich Co. Ltd got its first state logging concession in 1957 which only allowed it to process the huge logs. Then, in 1958, it got the 2nd state concession which allowed this company to process more types of logging, compared to the previous concession, and to use updated logging technologies such as the giant sawing machines, logging trucks, and ships for transporting the woods to Bangkok and also, foreign countries.

Moreover, several sawmills were established in Rayong and Chanthaburi province

including:

1) Ban Khai sawmill: This sawmill was located in Ban Khai district, Rayong province. It got the state concession in logging at the Northern part of Ban Khai district where several parts of Chanthaburi ridge's jungle, namely Pluak Daeng district, and a small part of Wang Chan district, were located.

2) Klaeng sawmill: This sawmill was located between Klaeng district and Mueng district in Rayong province. The sawmill shared the logging area (started from Yaida ridge to the forest in Krachet sub-district, to Sumnakthong sub-district until Wang Chan District) with 4 sawmills namely; Bankai sawmill, Samyan sawmill, Pattanakarn sawmill, and Kongdin sawmill.

After the implementation of the first economic development plan in 1961, the boost of the capitalist economy made the Eastern Thailand become an important resource, especially logging. Wood products produced in the region were divided into 2 parts: the bigger shared part was exported while the left was used as firewood for steam locomotives, and railroad ties. In addition to legal forestry concession, hiring villagers for illegal logging also began (Wiboon Khemchalerm et al., 2005, p. 169; Chaiyon Praditsil & Olarn Thinbangtieo, 2006; Sriracha Lovers Club, 2015; Museum Phanom, n.d.).

The policy on forest exploitation in the Eastern Thailand during 1947-1967 attracted a large number of migrants from other regions (mostly from the Northeastern provinces) to explore a new land since their assets in the Northeastern region were facing drought crisis. Due to the convenience of transport on Sukhumvit Road and the beginning of bus operation, the people from other regions sought to buy rights of land usage at a low price. These led to the emerging of communities in the Eastern region where people from nationwide came and settled down. They started to do farming, fruit gardens, and rice fields after purchasing or, sometime, invading the land. This was the reason why the inner part of the Eastern coast of Thailand was occupied with many plantations and district-administrative cities were also created including:

- Chanthaburi: Soi Dao district, Khitchakut district, Na Yai Am district, Kaeng Hang Maeo district.
- Rayong: Khao Chamao district, Tha Wang Chan district, Pluak Daeng district.
- Chonburi: Nong Yai district, Bo Thong district,
- Chachoengsao: Tha Takiab district

Besides, that Sukumvit road and Thephasadi bridge came into operation led to the fact

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that Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation was headquartered in this region, the gardening area in the coastal areas was expanded, and the people in the region switched to grow economic crops such as cassava, sugarcane, etc... (Olarn Thinbangtiao, 2014; Chaiyon Praditsil & Olarn Thinbangtiao, 2006, p. 7; Olarn Thinbangtiao & Jitra Sombatrattananun, 2014)

After implementing the first economic development plan in 1961, the economic situation in the Eastern Thailand had a lot of changes, especially, along Sukhumvit Road. The area for agriculture and industry was expanded. In terms of agriculture, the Eastern Thailand began to become a region for growing economic crops such as sugarcane, cassava and rice. In terms of industry, the Eastern Thailand had agricultural product processing industries such as wood processing factories, rice mills and sugar mills.

The government under the reign of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat endeavored to increase the capitalist economy intensively. The supportive economic policies were launched aiming to settling down the industrial infrastructures in the Eastern area such as supporting privatization in petroleum business (resulted in the establishment of Thai Oil Public Co. Ltd. at Sriracha District in Chonburi province in 1963), and developing and upsizing the key-economic cities in the Eastern region with versatile facilities (resulted in building a new city in Chonburi province – with its size covered the provincial administrative headquarter and Ang Sila sub-District- in 1966)

In addition to the economic sector, the Thai government implemented a national security policy in the eastern forest area. According to the viewpoint of the Thai government, the forests were the site of communist movements and anti-government activities. This led the Thai government used military forces to manage the Eastern forests instead of the General Department of Forestry. In the case of the Eastern forest area, the security development projects were shown clearly in building the military-related road systems (Chaiyon Praditsil & Olarn Thinbangtiao, 2006; Olarn Thinbangtiao & Jitra Sombatrattananun, 2014).

In 1965, the government led by Field Marshal Thanom Kittikajorn allowed the US to use the U-Tapao airport as a military base. This event led to the adoption of a resolution approving the US Army to renovate U-Tapao airport as a service center for the transport of troops to strategic locations in the country. The US provided the budget reform and regulated construction of U-Tapao airport to be completed within a year. At the same time, the US sent engineers and technicians to Thailand to improve other airports for military usage such as Ubon Ratchathani

Airport, Takli Airport (Nakhon Sawan Province), and Udon Thani Airport etc... (Silpa Wattanatham, 2020b). The military base at U-Tapao had the unit's operating during the Vietnam War from 1965 - 1975 as follows:

- U - Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield operated in the period of 1965-1976.
- US army unit: 4258th Strategic Wing operated in the period of 1966-1970.
- US army unit: 307th Strategic Wing operated in the period of 1970-1975.

The US used the military bases such as Korat, Nakhon Phanom, Takli, Nakhon Sawan, Udon Thani, U-Tapao (Chonburi Province and Rayong Province) and Nam Phong of Khon Kaen Province for the B52, a heavy strategic bomber. During the Vietnam War, air force operations of bombers from these military bases accounted for 80%. In 1973, the number of the US troops was the highest with about 48,000 US soldiers operating in Thailand (Randolph, 1986, pp. 49 – 81; Ruth, 2017; Hopkins, 1986).

That the US army completely took in charge of U-Tapao Airport had impact on the lives of the surrounding people with significant changes. Shops, hotels, entertainment venues sprang into existence around the region to cater for the US army. At the same time, this condition led to the migration of people from other regions to this region.

In addition, Pattaya became a resort for the US army because this beach was only about 50 km from the U-Tapao military base. The first place used as a resort for the US army was the villa of Phraya Yot Sunthorn (located in the south of Pattaya beach). Each vacation had about four to five hundred American soldiers here. Since then, Pattaya gradually became a resort for Rest and Relaxation (R&R) for the US army (Paradee Mahakan, 2012, pp. 295 - 297).

Under the Rest and Relaxation concept, the huge amount of money came from the spending of US militaries which led to many huge investments on tourism. The grand opening of Nipa Lodge Hotel in 1964 was the great example representing the image of ideal vocational destination of Pattaya (ranked in the same level as Hawaii) with its high standard and modernity. Many high standard hotels opened their business following Nipa Lodge Hotel leading to the expansion of routes and transportation approaches to support tourism. Also, in 1964, the government promoted Pattaya city (originated as a small fishery community) to be a municipality under Naklua district. Since then, Pattaya has become a tourist destination where investors were interested to place their money on tourism businesses and, also, the livelihood of local people was shifted from fishery and agricultural based lifestyle to the tourism service-based living. Local

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people adapted and changed their jobs from agriculture to labor and service. The U-Tapao Airport renovation process created high income for local people. At the same time, American soldiers taught and imparted specialized skills of many jobs to local people such as welders, electricians, masons, and plumbers to serve the airport renovation process (Sujira Kaljuk, Chaiyon Praditsil & Ekkawit Maneethorn, 2014; Pattaya City, n.d.).

In addition to Pattaya, after the government of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn issued a decree on moving entertainment venues out of the navy security area on April 9, 1968, which led to the establishment of a new American town called Golden Land or Freeland in Ban Chang district, Rayong province. This town had service business activities and newly-established enterprises to serve the US army and their families. In general, Golden Land or Freeland was a place similar to Pattaya with nightclubs, bars, restaurants, prostitutes, rentals, etc. The local people here were all influenced by the culture, style and fashion of the US army (Kiatisak Tiptimaphan, 2017; Paradee Mahakan, 2012, pp. 295-297). It can be said that establishing the US military base brought positive impacts such as development of infrastructure and economy, but at the same time also had negative impacts on the society as prostitution, rapid increase in the number of migrants from other regions, etc. Following the operation of U-tapao airport, the US dollar was spread throughout this area leading to the emerging of outlaw-authority groups who dealt their power with drugs, guns, human trafficking, and smuggling duty-free goods to service the US militaries via Sattahip port. This was a crucial condition of the illegal capital accumulation among the local elites (Olarn Thinbangtieo & Jitra Sombatrattananun, 2014, p. 81).

At the late period of the Vietnam War in 1973, the resorts and military bases began to be stagnant due to the withdrawal of American troops. At the same time, the forestry sector was in a sluggish state due to the shortage of wood supplies on the grounds that the purchase and sale of forest land use rights became serious because of the problem of forest encroachment that took place since late 1967. These factors had an impact on the Eastern Thailand, this region started to grow economic crops in order to meet the policy of Export Substitution Industrialization according to the third socio-economic development plan.

CONCLUSION

For the external factors, in the context of the cold war, the US implemented the Pax Americana policy to recover and boost the capitalist economy in the world, and at the same time this policy was also aimed at preventing the expansion of socialism. These factors affected the situation in Southeast Asia and oriented the relationship between the US and Thailand.

For the internal factors, the Thai leaders and government, the military-led government in the period of 1945 - 1973, played a role in and had impact on determining the domestic and foreign policy trend of Thailand, especially the security policy. In terms of the economic factor, the Thai government developed under a new order trend, Pax Americana of the US. The purpose of economic growth was the reason which made the state give priority to creating the 1st - 3rd socio-economic development plans and led to the construction of infrastructure in the Eastern Thailand.

The external and internal factors affected economic and social changes in the Eastern Thailand, especially the infrastructure-building process to link, exploit and expand the economic zones for production. At the same time, the forestry concession policy for forest exploitation in the Eastern Thailand helped this region become a resource for export to meet the economic growth of this country. The result was the migration of people to settle down and the development of growing industrial drop in the Eastern Thailand. After 1965, the establishment of the US military base at U-Tapao affected and changed the economic situation in the Eastern Thailand such as the establishment of the commercial areas and coastal resorts, Pattaya for example. Until the late period of the Vietnam War in 1973, the withdrawal of American troops decreased the economic growth in the region.

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