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Abstract

Deriving momentum from Đổi mới-an economic reform launched since 1986, Vietnam has to adjust its general foreign policy, especially its policy behaviors toward the great powers. This thesis aims to examine determinant factors leading to significant changes of the in Vietnamese foreign policy since 1986, and strategic approaches which Hanoi has been pursuing in dealing with the present-day great powers (the United States, China, the European Union, Russia, Japan and India). I argue that Vietnamese foreign relations toward the great powers since Đổi mới can be configured by a mixture of two theoretical paradigms: *realism* and *liberalism*. Hanoi's pragmatic approaches are aims to serve for the cause of national modernization and industrialization. This case study about Vietnam attempts to give an example of understanding how small and medium sized states in South East Asia respond to the present-day great powers in the post-Cold War era. And how mainstream approaches in Western theory of international relations make sense in identifying foreign relation pattern of a South East Asia country-Vietnam.

Ausgehend von der Đổi mới Politik - einer Wirtschaftsreform die 1986 begann - hatte Vietnam seine grundsätzliche außenpolitische Linie, im speziellen sein politisches Verhalten gegenüber den Großmächten, anzupassen. Diese Arbeit möchte die entscheidenden Faktoren, die zu großen Veränderungen in der vietnamesischen Außenpolitik seit 1986 führten und die strategischen Ziele die Hanoi in den Beziehungen zu den Großmächten verfolgt (USA, China, Europäische Union, Russland, Japan und Indien), analysieren. Ich behaupte, dass die vietnamesische Außenpolitik gegenüber den Großmächten seit Đổi mới sich aus einer Mischung von zwei theoretischen Paradigmen zusammensetzt: Realismus und Liberalismus. Die pragmatischen Ansätze Hanois sind Mittel zum Zweck um der Modernisierung und der Industrialisierung des Landes zu dienen. Diese Fallstudie über Vietnam versucht ein Beispiel dafür zu geben wie klein und mittelgroße Staaten Südostasiens auf die heutigen Großmächte, in der Zeit seit Ende des Kalten Krieges, reagieren. Ebenso wie die bekanntesten Zugänge westlicher Theorien im Bereich der internationalen Beziehungen dazu dienen, die Außenpolitik eines südostasiatischen Landes, in diesem Fall Vietnam, zu erforschen.

Kể từ khi tiến hành công cuộc Đổi mới-Chương trình cải cách kinh tế từ năm 1986, Việt Nam đã phải thực hiện việc điều chỉnh chính sách đối ngoại của mình, đặc biệt là chính sách đối với các nước lớn. Luận án này nhằm mục đích tìm hiểu những nhân tố quyết định dẫn đến thay đổi quan trọng trong chính sách đối ngoại Việt Nam từ năm 1986, đồng thời tập trung phân tích những chiến lược đối ngoại quan trọng mà Hà Nội theo đuổi trong quan hệ ngoại giao với các cường quốc (Mỹ, Trung Quốc, Liên minh châu Âu, Nga, Nhật Bản và Ấn Độ). Luận điểm của tôi cho rằng việc đánh giá quan hệ đối ngoại của Việt Nam với các cường quốc từ năm 1986 đến nay có thể được tiến hành dựa trên phương pháp áp dụng mẫu lý thuyết của hai trường phái, đó là: chủ nghĩa hiện thực chính trị và chủ nghĩa tự do. Hà Nội hoạch định một phương châm ngoại giao thực dụng với mục đích phục vụ sự nghiệp công nghiệp hóa và hiện đại đất nước. Qua việc nghiên cứu cụ thể về trường hợp Việt Nam, luận án nhằm đóng góp một phần nhỏ trong việc giải đáp hai câu hỏi: Trong thời kỳ hậu Chiến tranh lạnh, các quốc gia vừa và nhỏ ở Đông Nam Á phải có phương sách ứng phó ra sao với các nước lớn hiện nay?. Liệu các quan điểm thuộc các trường phái phương tây về quan hệ quốc tế có thể được áp dụng trong việc phân tích và xác định mô hình quan hệ đối ngoại của một quốc gia Đông Nam Á như Việt Nam?

Abdreviation

CPV	The Communist Party of Vietnam
CCP	The Chinese Communist Party
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
VPF	Vietnamese Foreign Policy
IR	International Relations
WTO	World Trade Organization
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
U.S	The United States of America
EU	The European Union
UN	The United Nations
USSR	The Soviet Union
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
GDR	The German Democratic Republic
S.R.	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
P.R China	People Republic of China

Chapter 1: Introduction

“After war, the people you meet differ so from former times”

Nguyen Trai (1380-1442)¹

Looking like an “S” shaped letter with over 2000km coastline along the East Sea enriched by fishery, small peaceful villages behind the ranges of green bamboos and flat golden ripe rice fields. A fierce ranging of B52 Bombs all over, Agent Orange covering all Truong Son jungles unstill they had no leaves, children and women cried in smokes and flames. Houses and streets were left with ruins. Long waiting refugee lines waiting for helicopters roaring... Those who are interested in history of a country in Indochina would absolutely not forget these familiar scenes. It must be no doubt that it had happened in Vietnam. Sorrowfully, the image of this country is often worldwide known with the name “Vietnam War” rather the country itself. “Good morning Vietnam!”² or Good night?, the answer for the questions remains open.

Nguyen Trai wrote “after war, the people you meet differ from former times”. And nowadays everyone should know that Vietnam is a country with new images, not a war. And, alike, after the war the foreign policy behaviour of a country also looks different from former times. The year 1986 remarked a turning point in evolution of the country, when the Communist Party of Vietnam announced a decisive policy “Đổi mới” (economic reform policy)³. Vietnam inclined to choose *gradualist approaches* but not *shock-therapist approaches*⁴ like the countries in the Eastern Europe after the collapse

¹ Nguyen Trai was a prominent Vietnamese politician, poet and Confucian scholar. He wrote “Bình Ngô Đại Cáo”, an independence declaration of Vietnam after hundreds year of persistent struggling against Chinese occupation.

² “Good Morning, Vietnam!” was a comedy- drama film produced in 1987 during the Vietnam War.

³ About Đổi mới, please see detailed writing in Chapter 5

⁴ See Guo (2006). Table 1.2 Comparison of Gradualist approaches and Shock-therapist approaches, in: *The Political economies of Asian Transition from Communism*. p.2. Guo’s assessment concentrates main characteristics of **Gradualist approaches** included: concentration on agriculture reform, and gradual opening of the previously closed economy. Reform was partial, incremental, and often experimental. Caused no initial downturn and avoided declining incomes and high unemployment. Making no use of large scale privatization, gradually reformed prices and trade control; maintaining exchange controls; and adopted active state industrial policy while keeping the party-state control. The result of these approaches is that these Asian countries continue to remain Leninist one-party states, embrace an eventual goal of communism and move towards market socialism. **For the Shock-therapist approaches** are endeavors to replace the traditional central planning economy with a market economy in a single burst of reforms, a rapid, all-out programs, including as many reforms as possible in a shortest possible time; caused initial economic downturn, declining incomes and high employments: made use of mass privatization of SOEs through voucher or sale-out programs; rapidly lifting state control over the major factors of production and exchange while maintaining minimal

of the Soviet Union in 1989. This decision opened a new pathway from *isolation* to *integration*, achieving success but also facing with full of challenges.

After different war images, Vietnam is known through enormous amounts of publications about *Đổi mới*. However, writing about economic reform is just like mentioning one side of a country story. Great powers often play important role, if not as dominant roles in different aspects of international politics, especially in the issues of War and Peace. History of Vietnam, through out its more than four thousand years, has witnessed the intrigue influence of the great powers', most notable was politics in the Cold War. Nonetheless, not much about Vietnamese Foreign policy is published in **foreign** languages, except the two comprehensive researches, one is an edition by Carlyle A. Thayer and Ramses Amer (1999), and the other is by Alexander L. Vuving (2005). A comprehensive study with overview about foreign policy and foreign relations of Vietnam toward the great powers from transition to present day becomes my motivation. Therefore, my thesis about "***Vietnam and the Great Powers: Vietnamese Foreign Policy since Đổi mới***" came into being.

There is one old Vietnamese saying "*when buffalos are fighting, mosquitoes are dying*". In bipolarity world order, this old saying depicts somewhat the influence of the superpowers in the international politics. Like Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher said "*Panta rhei- everything is in a state of flux*". The doctrine of change is still regarded as core essence of universe. As it construes, **Globalization** becomes "today's most fashionable catchword"⁵ which effects us in every aspects of life and leads to almost radical social, political, economical, military changes, even human psychological change. Consequently, in today international relations, nation-states (big, medium or small) and even non-state actors have to step up efforts in changing their strategies. Examining about policy behaviour of a nation is, therefore, a necessity in the post cold war time. Who ever read about history of Vietnam, can not deny external influences of great powers and their interactions on the country. And shaping of Vietnamese foreign policy, like the case in other states, is obviously determined by both internal and

macro-economic control. Consequently, Leninist one-party states and central planned economies collapsed in Russia and Eastern European countries. And these countries moved towards market capitalism.

⁵ Kirt, R (2005) "Foreign Policy in the Age of Globalization: Does Globalization Constrain Nation States' Sovereignty in Conceiving and Maintaining their Foreign Policy?", in: Günter Bischof / Anton Pelinka / Michael Gehler (Hrsg.), *Austrian Foreign Policy in Historical Context*. New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers. pp. 246-263

external environments. Yet, other factors like leadership, personality and ideology etc. should not be set aside.

1. Aims of the thesis

My thesis paper is not only limited in the topic about Đổi mới, it also seeks to examine determinants which make a **shift** of the Vietnamese foreign policy toward the present-day great powers. What challenges does a third world country like Vietnam has to face in its transitional foreign policy towards the great powers? Time framework for analysis of foreign policy of Vietnam would be since 1986 to present. *Temporally, the process will be divided into different periods: 1986-1996; 1996-2006; 2006 to present.* When analyzing Vietnamese foreign relations toward great powers.

Being a Vietnamese student studying in Austria, I have largely convenient access to different sources of theories of international politics which has been viewed in the eyes of Western scholars. My thesis, furthermore, aims to test some certain assumptions of the two Western theories: 1. Theory of foreign policy analysis. 2. Theory of international relations in examining the foreign policy and foreign relations of a Southeast Asian country-Vietnam.

This thesis is also an attempt to provide understanding contemporary challenges of the Vietnamese foreign policy; different factors which shape Vietnamese foreign relations with the great powers. The case study of Vietnam hopes to give an example of how a small and medium country coped with greater powers and how shift in *international balance of power* are translated into changes in its foreign policy. Last but not least, writing this thesis is regarded as an academic project which helps me to improve my knowledge on a specific subject, analysis methodology and comprehend my academic writing skills.

2. Research questions and methodology

Research questions: There are two main questions posed for my thesis to deal with:

1. **What are determinant leading to essential changes in the Vietnamese foreign policy since Đổi mới (1986)?**
2. **What are main implications of S.R. Vietnam toward the present-day great powers and how are Vietnamese foreign relations with these great powers characterized?**

In order to response these two core research enquiries, each part of my thesis endeavours to answer the following questions. At the end, some remarks on perspectives of Vietnamese foreign policy will be summarized in the Conclusion.

1. Who are the great powers in the post-Cold War era?
2. What are the main contents of two Western theories of foreign policy analysis and international relations which will be utilized to explain Vietnamese foreign policy?
3. What is Đổi mới and how was the economic reform policy realized?
4. What are determinants leading to changes of Vietnamese foreign policy in the new context of Đổi mới?
5. How was Vietnamese Foreign Policy changed to serve Đổi mới and the modernization and industrialization process?
6. What type of international relations theory which conforms to identify the patterns of Vietnamese international relations since 1986?
7. What are the strategic approaches which Vietnam applies toward the present-day great powers?
8. To what extend does Vietnam have to compromise its political ideologies in its relations with the great powers?

Methodology:

My thesis is not only a humble contribution to the general theory but rather an empirical test of several hypotheses by applying certain contents of two Western theories: Foreign Policy Analysis and International relations in analyzing Vietnamese foreign policy and its foreign relations toward the present-day great powers since 1986. Qualitative method applied for my thesis is, therefore, more salient than quantitative approach.

Basically, both historical and political approaches will be utilized as I have a great chance to access and understand different sources of secondary literature in German, English and Vietnamese. Furthermore, number of both printed and electronic scholarly works, articles, papers from Vietnamese and foreign languages will be scrutinized. Together with finding-outs by Western scholars, I also choose to look closely on the documents, papers and books published by the Communist Party of Vietnam, research

institutes and other official Vietnamese sources in order to achieve both subjective and objective assessments.

Investigating foreign relations of a country for some decades is an ambitious project, therefore, I would constrain relevant historical events to analyze. In addition, comparative politics method will be certainly not excluded.

3. Hypothesis

By examining the past evolution and current strategic orientation of the Vietnamese Foreign Policy since 1986, my paper attempts to demonstrate the following hypothesis:

Vietnamese foreign policy toward the great powers since 1986 has achieved significant structure changes and has been applying different pragmatic approaches which derive momentum from Đổi mới policy and practically serve for the present cause of national modernization and industrialization. The changes in Vietnamese foreign policy after 1986 does not affect the state's behaviour of maintaining statue-quo power the Vietnamese Communist Party.

4. Thesis design

The thesis will be divided into seven chapters and a Conclusion:

Chapter 1: introduces the main aims of the thesis; the research questions and methodology; proposed hypothesis and thesis design.

Chapter 2: presents theoretical background of the thesis in which comprises general perception of the great powers in the Post-Cold era, and assumptions of the Western scholars on theory of foreign policy analysis and theory of international relations which I consider relative to the analysis of foreign policy and foreign relations of Vietnam.

Chapter 3: provides a comprehensive background of Vietnamese history in brief and political system of today Vietnam.

Chapter 4: covers a brief overview about Vietnamese foreign policy in the Cold War and some main features of Vietnam's great power relations

Chapter 5: gives an overlook on Đổi mới policy (since 1986). This chapter is a response to questions: what is Đổi mới and how has it been done? This economic reform is regarded as a decisive domestic factor which leads to radical changes in Vietnamese foreign policy later on.

Chapter 6: concentrates on the “great shift” in Vietnamese foreign policy since 1986. It investigates the determinants for changes and main contents of adjustments presented in Vietnamese foreign policy strategy.

Chapter 7: empirically describe Vietnam’s strategic approaches towards the great powers: the U.S, China, Russia, the European Union, Japan and China from 1986 to present. In each part, main implications in Vietnamese foreign policy will be summed up. At the same time, some selected diplomatic activities of Vietnam toward each great power will be analyzed in order to point out the certain theory assumptions which are mentioned in the Chapter of the theoretical background.

Conclusion: this session concludes with finding-outs and remarks on perspectives for the Vietnamese Foreign Policy

Chapter 2: Theoretical background

In today globalization of international politics, increasing interactions between nations, international organisations and non-state actors make interdependence of nations more intensive. Studying about foreign policy (FP) plays an important role than ever because foreign policy of a country affects indirectly and directly almost every aspect of our daily lives. The development of a country is much impacted by how a country interacts to the rest of the world.

Keep this in mind, when studying about the Vietnamese foreign policy towards the great powers since 1986. It is crucial for my thesis, to clarify the three theoretical questions: *Who are “great powers” in the post-cold war? What are the fundamental theories of international relations relevant to study of the Vietnamese foreign policy? What are essential approaches of foreign policy analysis?*

2.1. Who are the “great powers” in the post-Cold War era?

I do not have ambition to have a long theoretical explanation about polarity theory in this part. I rather tight up the definition of “great powers” which considered by western authors and Vietnamese international relation specialists. Addressing this question would help my thesis constrain the topic on analysis of Vietnamese foreign relations toward identified great powers.

The term “great powers” has been actually not a stable one. During the first and second World Wars, this term shifted with the time and has been used in scholarly discourses since the post- Napoleonic war congress of Vienna in 1815⁶. History has shown that for five centuries, the world most powerful states - the Portugese, Spanish, and Italian in the 16th century, the Swedes and the Danes in the 17th century, the French, Germans and the British in the 18th century. (Griffiths, O’c Callaghan and Roach, 2002:134).

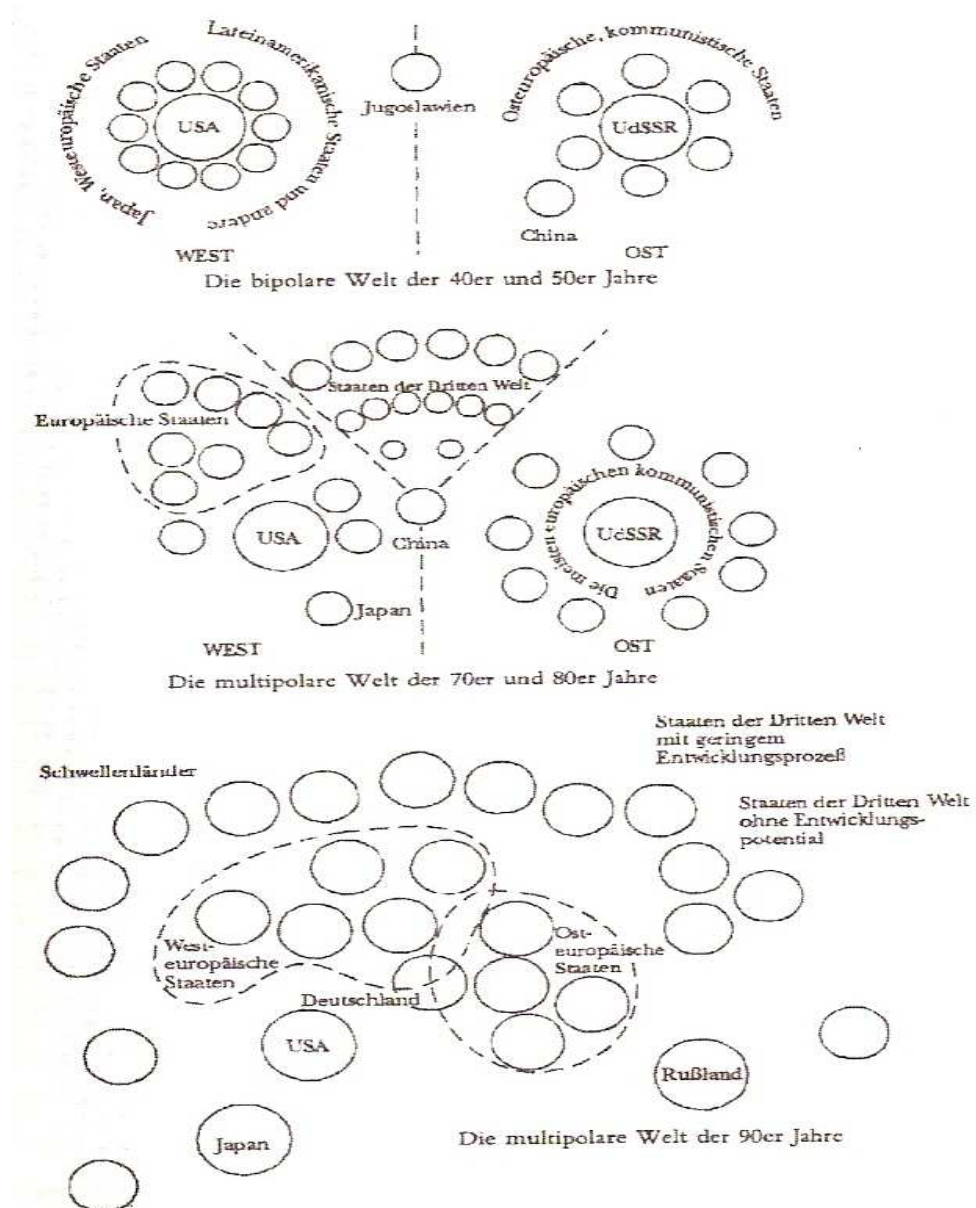
In the Cold War, the international relations are mostly influenced by the two super powers. The term “great powers” nearly replaced by the term “superpowers” with the highlight of the United States and the Soviet Union because their material capacities

⁶ Danilovic, V. (2007). "When the Stakes Are High—Deterrence and Conflict among Major Powers", University of Michigan Press , p. 27

(nuclear weapons) are much more stronger than those of next ranking “great powers”- initially Britain, later, Japan, Germany, France, China (Morgenthau, 1978:349). “The concept of polarity could be applied: bipolarity meant superpowers and multi-polarity meant great powers” (Buzan, 2004:58).

To have better understanding about the polarity, let’s have a look at overview of the international system which is viewed by (Pfetsch, 1994:38)⁷ from the 1940s to the years of 1990s:

Abb. I: Polare Weltordnungen



Quelle: Pfetsch 1994, 38.

⁷ This citation is also found in Filzmaier, Gewessler, Höll and Mangott (2006). *International Politik*. Vienna: Facultas Verlags-und Buchhandel AG. p.23.

Studying more about “classical” writing about “great powers”, there have been many attempts to formulate the criteria to distinguish the great powers with other states in international system. Mearsheimer writes about “great powers”:

Great powers are determined largely on the basis of their relative military assets to put up a serious fight in an all-out conventional war against the most powerful state in the world.

(Mearsheimer, 2001:5)

This statement by Mearsheimer, however, faces troublesome, since in today world globalization, the great powers are not only identified by their military powers and “put up a serious fight”⁸ but also their influence capacity of soft power.

One of the most representative realist tradition definitions is from Waltz (1979). Waltz (1979:131) emphasizes that “the economic, military and other capacities of nations can not be sectored and separately weighed. States are not placed on the top rank because they excel on one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score *all* of the following terms: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capacity, military strength, political stability and competence...Ranking states, however, does not require predicting their success in war or in other endeavours. We need to rank them roughly by their capacity.”

Waltz’s definition mentions a comprehensive requirement of criteria for being a great power. But one should not forget the role of great powers in determining issues affecting security of international system as a whole. They accept the duty and, are thought by others to have duty, of modifying their policies in the light of the managerial responsibilities they bear (Bull,1977: 200)⁹.

Toynbee has distinguished a great power with a regional power when underlying possession of actual influence throughout the scope of the prevailing international system. He writes:

⁸ Lemke, D. (2004). Great powers in the Post-cold war world: A Power transition perspective. In Paul, T.V., Wirtz, J.J. and Fotman. M. (ed.). *Balance of Power: Theory and Praticce in the 21st Century*. California: Standford University Press. p. 55

⁹ Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politic*. This book was with forewords by Hoffmann, S. and Hurrell, A. (2002).New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Great power may be defined as a political force exerting an effect co- extensive with the widest range of the society in which it operates. The Great powers of 1914 were 'world-powers' because Western society had recently become 'world-wide'.

(Toynbee, 1925: 4)

As the 21st century unfolds, it appears unlikely that the United States will be able to sustain its present lofty status. Other great power will emerge and it the question is if they co-exist in way that promote or undermine international order. Besides, concerning criteria of great powers, one can not ignore the standard great-power designation is offered by the Correlates of War Project list¹⁰. According to this list, the great powers after the Cold War are: *Britain, China, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States*.

In foreign relations with other nations, each state has its own priority and strategy in its foreign policies. For the Vietnamese international relations specialists, Nguyen Xuan Son and Nguyen Van Du (2006:15) like Buzan (2004:86) remark the today world order is that: **one super power and several great powers**. Since the end of the Cold War, **the United States** has been the dominant power in the world politics. The others great powers like the **European Union, Russia, Japan, China** and **India** are attempting to maintain the multi-polarity (Nguyen Xuan Son, and Nguyen Van Du, 2006:23).

Nguyen Hoang Giap (2007: 328) also emphasizes that Vietnam needs to enhance diversified relationships with the great powers like the EU, Japan, Russia. Never forget to foster the traditional relationship with China. Flexibly dealing with the US, and promoting a new stage in the relation with India. Vietnamese foreign relations with those countries affect directly on Vietnamese economic development and national security.

In foreign relations, one can be its strategic partner today but can be its cooperative partner tomorrow. It is also very complex to give out a set of defined characteristics of a great power. I agree with Waltz when remarks about great powers that “an empirical one, and common sense can answer it”¹¹. Based on the above description, my thesis concentrates on analyzing the Vietnamese foreign relations with the **US, China,**

¹⁰ This list is available at <http://pss.la.psu.edu/intsys.html>

¹¹ Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*, McGraw-Hill, p. 131

Russia, the EU, Japan and India. Other than that, an insight into Vietnam’s relations with some international organizations will be partly scrutinized.

2.2. Theory of foreign policy and foreign policy analysis

2.2.1. What is foreign policy?

Making a definition of a political concept can not be avoided with ambiguity and it is often interpreted in different ways, a concrete concept of *foreign policy* is difficult to define and consist of various meanings. In order to have a comprehensive understanding about the *foreign policy* concept, it is necessary to look at more than one definitions from different realist and liberal-pluralist scholars summarized by McGovan, Cornelissen and Nel (2006) in the following table¹²:

Realist (state-centric) definitions	Liberal-pluralist (multi-centric) definitions
<p>These definitions are liked to “world of states” and reflecting the key assumptions of realism which view FP as official interest-driven response of the supposedly rational and unitary state actor (and its government) to its external or inter-state (for inter-government) environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP is ‘the system of activities evolved by communities for changing behaviours of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment’ (Modelski, 1962:3). • FP ‘consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others’ (Frankel, 1963:1). • FP is ‘those official actions (reactions) which sovereign states initiate (or receive and subsequently react to) for the purpose of altering or creating a condition (or problem) outside their territorial-sovereign boundaries’ (Wilkenfeld et al., 1980:22). 	<p>The liberal-pluralist definitions challenge the notion that the state is principle, unitary and rational actor. This is done by extending foreign policy making to include non-state actors in the mix-actors environment and by making greater allowance for the domestic sources and non-rationality of foreign policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP “consist of those ‘actions’ which expresses in the form of explicitly stated directly and performed by government representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are manifestly directed towards objectives, conditions and actors, both governmental and non-governmental-which clearly lie beyond their sphere of territorial legitimacy’ (Carlsnaes, 1986:70). • Foreign policy analysis consists ‘on intentions, statements and actions of an actor- often but not always, a state-directed towards the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements and

¹² See Box 6.1 in Mc Govan, P.J., Cornelissen, S., & Nel, P. (eds.)(2006). *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa*. Cape Town: UCT Press

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP is 'that area of governmental activity which is concerned with relationships between the state and other actors, particular other states, in international system' (White, 1989:1). • FP is 'general principles by which a state governs its relationship with international political environment'. 'from the perspectives of individual state, the essence of its foreign policy is to pursue, and, hopefully, fulfil to composite its needs and aspirations, what we have called its value sythesis' (Said et al., 1995:30,26). • FP is 'compose of goals sought, values set, decisions made and actions taken by states and national governments acting on their behalf, in the context of external relations of national societies. It constitutes an attempt to design, manage and control the foreign relations of national societies' (Webber & Smith, 2002:9-10). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions' (Gerner, 1995:18). • FP is 'the sum of total of all activities by which international actors act, react, interact with the environment beyond their national borders' (Vale & Mphaisha, 1999:89). • FP is 'the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations (Hill,2003:3).
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Nevertheless, a very simple explanation about FP's concept has been viewed by a conservative American think tank of the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) should be taken into account. It says that "a country's **foreign policy**, also called the *international relations policy*, is a set of goals outlining how the country will interact with other countries economically, politically, socially and militarily, and to a lesser extent, how the country will interact with non-state actors. The aforementioned interaction is evaluated and monitored in attempts to maximize benefits of multilateral international cooperation"¹³. Foreign policies are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity. This can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or through exploitation. In International affairs no one is permanent friend and permanent enemy. What permanent is National Interests of a country"¹⁴.

According to Meyers Lexikon, foreign policy is defined as follows. I would keep the original German version of the definition:

¹³ See <http://sciencestage.com/g/955279/foreign-policy-research-institute.html>

¹⁴ Foreign Policy (n.d.). Retrieved from Wikipedia. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_policy

Die Gestaltung der Beziehungen eines Staates zu anderen Staaten und zu internationalen Organisationen, besonders die Herstellung zweiseitiger (bilateraler) oder mehrseitiger (multilateraler) politischer, militärischer, wirtschaftlicher, rechtlicher oder kultureller Beziehungen. Die Außenpolitik wird durch geografische Lage, Größe und strategische Position eines Staates im internationalen Kräfteverhältnis, v. a. aber durch seine innenpolitische Verfassung und Organisation bestimmt. Zu den Mitteln der Außenpolitik gehören Diplomatie, Verträge, Bündnisse, Außenwirtschaftspolitik, aber auch die Androhung oder Einsatz militärischer Gewalt. Träger der Außenpolitik sind die mit der Wahrnehmung der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten betrauten Staatsorgane, internationale und supranationale Organisationen sowie Nichtregierungsorganisationen.¹⁵

Based of all above assumptions, some characteristics about the concept of FP are summarized as follows:

Firstly, in the new international politics, FP is not anymore privileged and targeted at states and governments like some realist definitions mentioned but it goes beyond 'the world of states' to the mix-actors environment of the 'multi-centric world'. It is also formulated and implemented by other international actors.

Secondly, FP is not only "external" but also lies "at the hinge of domestic politics and international relations" (Hill, 2003:22). Other than that, foreign policy embeds the internal (domestic) domain. Domestic sources reflect how and what foreign policy is striving for.

Thirdly, in foreign policy making, ***national interest*** is always considered a highest priority: security, economy, ideology, culture protection etc. These national interests are culminated and vary differently in different historical period of time.

2.2.2. What is foreign policy analysis (FPA)?

Foreign policy analysis is a branch of political science and a subfield of International Relations (IR) and it is also usually taught within the discipline of political studies. The difference between the international relation theory and FPA is the subject of study: international relation theory concentrates on actor-general but PFA focuses more on actor specific (Breuning, 2007). FPA deals with theory development and empirical study regarding the processes and outcomes of foreign policy. Neustadt and May (1986)¹⁶ emphasize the aims of the FPA as follows:

¹⁵ <http://lexikon.meyers.de/meyers/Au%C3%9Fenpolitik>

¹⁶ Also cited in Breuning, M. (2007). *Foreign policy analysis: A comparative introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This is what foreign policy aims to do: to systematically contrast and compare. Although decision makers derive knowledge from their experiences, they often interpret the lessons narrowly, fail to reexamine their gut reactions, and they compare previous and current crises only superficially. In doing the latter, leaders make analogies on the basis of superficial commonalities while ignoring significant differences between situations.

(Neustadt and May, 1986)

In another simple expression: FPA is a subject focusing on how to analyze and evaluate foreign policy of one actor or many international actors. Snyder, Bruck and Sapin (1969) point out that the goal of FPA is to gain generally applicable knowledge about how foreign policy decisions are made; why leaders make the decisions they make, why states engage in specific kinds of foreign policy behaviors, as well as to assess the opportunities and constraints presented by international system. FPA also assumes that foreign policies are usually determined by the complex *interplay of multiple factors* (Breuning, 2007:21).

Before moving to different approaches on how to analyze and evaluate foreign policy, let me start with the importance of studying foreign policy and a short brief history of FPA.

To answer the question why to study FPA, **the importance of FPA** can be noted with following essentials: **1.** FPA of other countries and international actors serves as approach for decision makers to map out appropriate national policies both internal and external. **2.** FP is not identical to international relations. And FPA is an important process which contributes to comprehensive analysis of international relations. Eventually, contents and changes in international relations are consequence of foreign policy implementations. **3.** FPA contributes to study domestic policies of other states and international actors: understanding their demand of cooperation and challenges, hence, enable policy makers to design their own appropriate internal policies. **4.** FPA helps clarify how foreign policy of each actor affects the international environment, and global politics, from which one might choose properly “for” and “against” behaviour.

Those theoretical assumptions will be proved in practice the case of foreign policy analysis of Vietnam in further parts of the thesis.

History of the FPA started with its first appearance in 1950s when the preoccupation of classical realists like Hans Morgenthau who attempts to explain external state

behavior from a scientific perspective; the Cold War with its crises posed quest of necessity to make sense of state behavior before states (and the superpowers in particular) destroyed the international system. However, it was then oriented to sharpen its scientific pretensions but more importantly - by orientating the study towards human behavior, decision-making and consequent action - it provided a lasting perspective from which to attack the simplicities of state-centric, rational actor analysis and the straightjacket of realist theory (White, 2003)¹⁷.

In the 1970s, the notion of complex interdependence was developed by neo-liberals like Keohane and Jo Nye. This brought an introduction of new non-state actors. Together with interdependence and transnationalism processes, they have made challenges to a state-centered FPA. The years of 1980s have seen the new development of FPA in the context of a neo-realism which concentrates on *the system* rather than its *constituent units* as the determining dynamic of IR. By the 1990s, there appeared crisis for FPA. White (2003) describes those challenges as: **1.** At the end of cold war: a new period in which the traditional foreign policies of states appearing less pressing and less less urgent as a focus of study, particularly in the context of a host of new actors and issues that crowded onto the post cold war agenda. **2.** 'One pillar of the neo-neo consensus may have been the common recognition that states are the most important actors in IR, but this did not mean that the 'neos' were prepared to privilege the state or the state as actor. Whether structure meant the international system or other institutional arrangements, neoliberals and neorealists offered variants of a highly influential structuralist approach to IR that did further damage to the perceived importance of an FPA approach'. **3.** 'The broadly based attack on the neo-neo consensus that gathered pace in the 1990s together with the more philosophical turn in IR theory appeared ironically to leave FPA adrift in the mainstream orthodoxy with nothing to contribute to the so-called positivist/post-positivist debate'.

2.2.3. What are key approaches of FPA?

Foreign policy analysis is an important component of the academic discipline of International Relations. In nearly all states and non-state actors, the practice of

¹⁷ White, B. (2003). "Foreign policy analysis and European foreign policy". Available at http://www.fornet.info/documents/White_presentation%20November%202003.pdf

foreign policy is a very important political activity. The structure of world politics is often reflected by foreign policy actions and discourses. The main character of FPA is its actor-specific focus. It is the intensive study of process, effects and outputs of foreign policy decision-making in either a comparative or case-specific manner. In order to have an insight in to FPA, this part will look at *the different stages in the making of foreign policy; Key approaches which needed for a foreign policy analyst.*

First let's have a look at the general concept of **decision-making approach** in international politics. According to statement made by Snyder, Bruck and Sapin (1969), the formulation of **actions-reactions-interactions** is important. They emphasize an assumption of "the state as Actor in a situation" which will be illustrated by the hereunder diagram. The importance of defining situations is pointed out by Snyder, Bruck and Sapin as follows:

Basically, actions exist (analytically) when the following components can be ascertained: actors (actors), goals, means, and situation. The situation is defined by actor (or actors) in terms of the way the actor (or actors) relates himself to other actors, to possible goals, possible means, and in terms of the way means and ends are formed into strategies of action subject to relevant factors in the situation.

(Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, 1969:202)

Analyzing this hereunder diagram shows us that the three authors do not avoid the existence of non-governmental factors. International politics is considered as processes of state interaction at the governmental level. However, there are non-governmental factors and relationships which must be taken into account by any system of analysis, and there are obviously non-governmental effects of state action. Domestic politics, the non-human environment, cross culture and social relationships are in this connection. Actors (decision-makers) act upon *external and internal settings* (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, 1969:203).

Diagram 1: State "X" as an actor

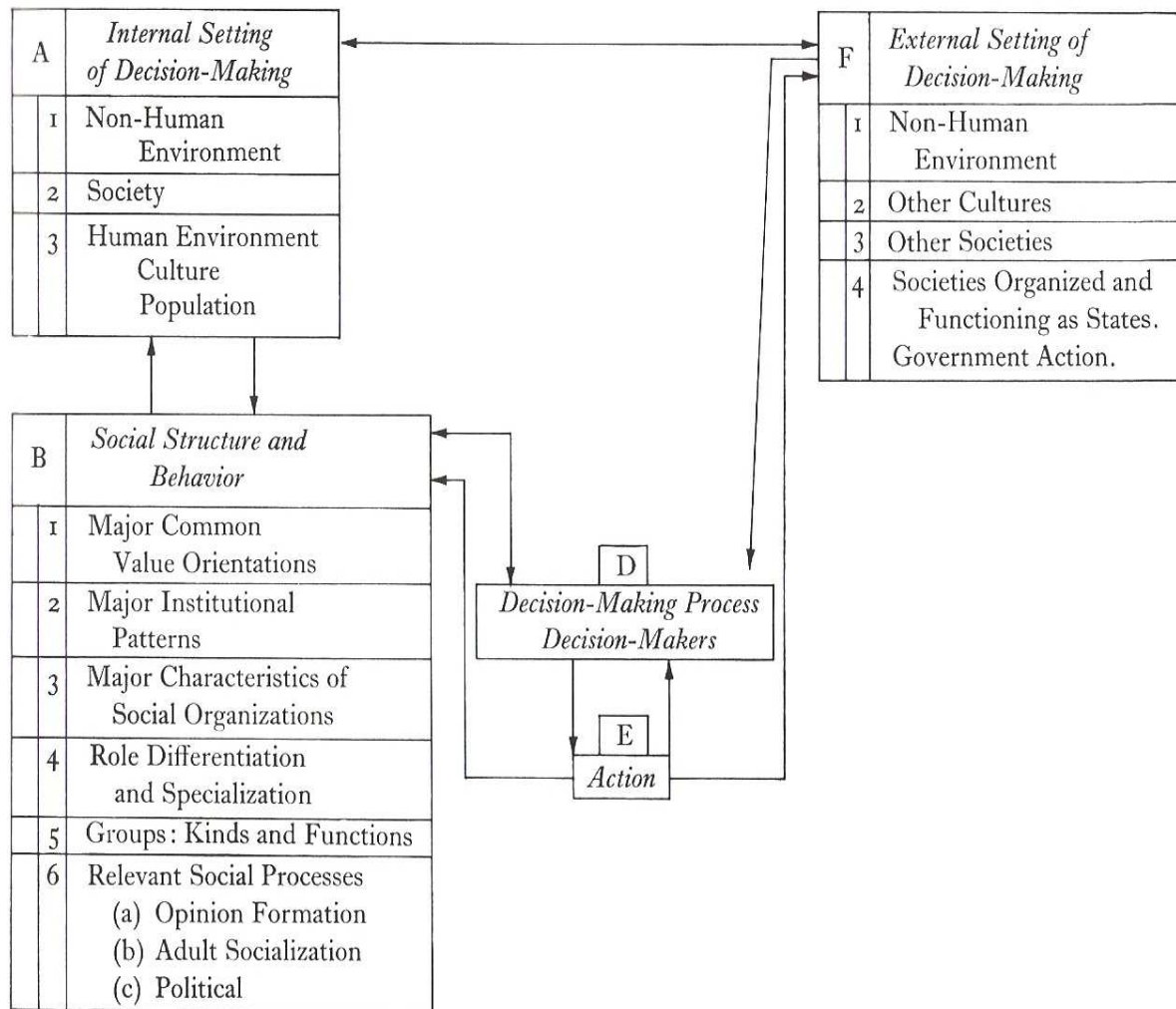


Figure 1. State "X" as Actor in a Situation*

(Situation is comprised of a combination of selectively relevant factors in the external and internal setting as interpreted by the decision-makers.)

* This diagram is designed only to be crudely suggestive. Detailed explanation must be deferred. The term non-human environment is construed to mean all physical factors (including those which result from human behavior) but not relationships between human beings or relationships between human beings and these physical factors. The latter relationships belong under society and culture.

The diagram also demonstrates the central decision making focus, the integration of numbers of actors which might explain state action, reaction and interaction. It indicates the relationship among empirical factors and empirical processes: in both governmental and non-governmental level. At the same time, the diagram is designed to recommend analytic and theoretical relationships. The boxes suggest way of specifying relevant factors in state behaviors which help to handle with different empirical phenomenon and their inter-relationships: decision-making, action, setting, situation, society, culture etc. It is regarded at the same time as a basis for linking groups of theories in international politics and at the same time in the approach of foreign policy decision-making.

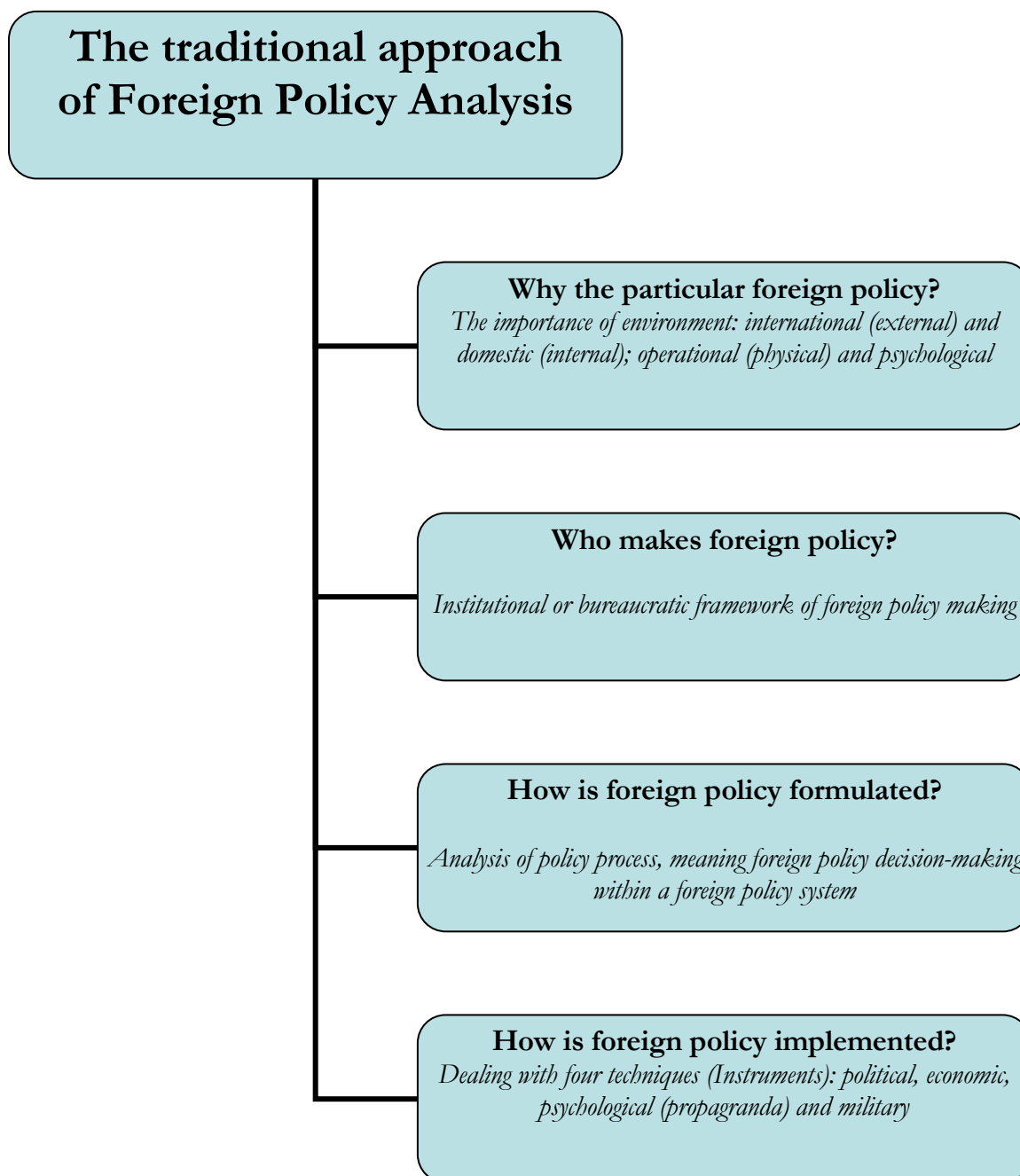
Which are applicable methods used to analyze a foreign policy? How to evaluate a foreign policy? These are often questions posed by any foreign policy analyst. It is folly to believe that there is a single key to or one particular or preferred method of foreign policy analysis (Jones, 1970:153). There have been various framework developed. There are two distinct approaches: *traditional approach* and *alternative approach*. The alternative approach evolved through at least two distinct generations of ideas and scholarship: *comparative* and *critical* foreign policy (Neack *et al.*, 1995:02).

Based on the work by McGovan, Cornelissen and Nel (2006), this part attempts to identify some current foreign policy analysis models. The traditional approach will be specifically scrutinized, since it which would be a basis for case study of Vietnamese foreign policy latter on.

The traditional approach (Rational actor model)

The rational actor model is based on **rational choice theory**. Traditional foreign policy analysis focuses on fundamentals of *state-centric realism*. The model adopts the state as a rational, unitary actor. State is also primary unit of analysis, and inter-state relations (or international relations) as the context for analysis. States have coherent foreign policies, governments have predetermined goals and objectives which guide their policies, and governments calculates particular courses of actions and the consequences of those actions in a rational manner. In effect, foreign policy is seen as the product of rational behavior (White, 1989:10-12). According to the rational actor model, a rational decision-making process is used by a state. A rudimentary analytical framework by McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, (2006:127) mentions the four questions. I will try to demonstrate it in the following diagram:

Diagram 2: *The analytical framework of foreign policy*



The analytical framework of foreign policy includes four basic techniques. To answer the question: **why the particular foreign policy?** It is necessary to make assessment of the international and domestic political environment, as well as operational (physical) and psychological sources. International and domestic political contexts are the essential factors to determine which foreign policy should be chosen. These assessments help to explain why a state chooses this specific foreign policy but not others in certain period of time.

Who makes foreign policy? This refers to bureaucratic framework of foreign policy making. Besides, other questions need to be taken into account: Do leaders shape foreign policy? Are they alone making foreign policy? Institutional framework includes head of state or/and government, the ministry of foreign affairs, the diplomatic service, government departments, subsidiary support and advisory services such as intelligence service, communication (propaganda) services, the research and academic community and economic agencies the legislature, interest and pressure groups, and public opinion (McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, 2006:127).

How is foreign policy formulated? This question requires an explanation of how decision makers translate foreign policy inputs (support, demand) into output (actions and resource allocation) (McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, 2006:128). Rudimentarily, it is necessary to identify the decision-makers' determination of policy options.

How is foreign policy implemented? When answering this question, the foreign policy analyst must look into the practice of diplomacy. It will give a comprehensive analysis on the implementation of chosen policy option.

In sum, the rational actor model provides basic instruments for analysis of foreign policy which concentrate more on single state, It answers mostly basic questions: Why? Who? How? What? The representative scholars of the rational actor model are Hocking & Smith (1990), Said *et a.* (1995), Holsti (1995), Webber & Smith (2002), Hill (2002). However, this model has been subject to criticism. It tends to neglect a range of political variables like Michael Clark (1989:27-59) points out in his work: non-political decisions, bureaucratic procedures, continuations of previous policy, and sheer accident. Since the traditional approach lacks comparative advantages, it is more suited to single state analyses (McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, 2006:129).

Other than that, I might add two questions in requirement of FPA. *What goals are set by the foreign policy?* And *what are consequences of foreign policy actions?* **Goals setting** – there can be a grand goal and multiple foreign policy goals. A state or a non-state actor must determine which goals. They might have multiple foreign policy goals. Which goal is reserved a priority. **Assessment of consequences** is often seen under the form of reports, special reports, evaluation meetings etc. in governmental level which will be served for the next foreign policy making process.

The comparative approach:

The comparative foreign policy is one branch of the alternative approach. It started in the 1950s when the decision-making approach was introduced to foreign policy. Snyder *et al.* (1962) then suggested three components: decision, decision maker and the decision-making process. This model based more on 'empirical generalisations'¹⁸. This was carried out by using social science techniques and comparative analyses, in the process, concentrating on models of foreign policy behaviors, quantitative methods, positivist methodologies and the use of event data to link foreign policy behaviour and ideal type of states. (McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, 2006:129).

White (1989:1-2) remarks about this approach as follows:

....this approach views foreign policy as a series of decisions made by a group of decision-makers within the structured environment of the state, and not as a response to external stimuli. The emphasis shifted from objective reality of the external environment to domestic sources of foreign policy and to the subjective perceptions decision-makers had of their environment¹⁹.

Main contribution to this analytical framework are the scholars such as Snyder *et al.* (1962, Rosenau (1966), Brecher (1969, Wilkinson (1969), East *et al.* (1978) Wilkenfeld *et al.* (1980) and Carlnaes (1986). Generally, this generation attempted to show a framework, in which the system analysis of foreign policy (decision-making) is the basis of the framework. This also includes multi-varied and multi-level explanations of foreign policy behavior, action and events²⁰. Nevertheless, this approach might not be a suitable one for the developing countries who have their own foreign policy issues and dynamics of foreign policy making. The small countries, in international politics, can not avoid the effects of superpower's interactions. The Vietnam War (1956-1975), the Korean war (1953-1954) are the obvious evidences.

The critical approach

The scholarship of the critical approach is more aware of the new trend in the international relations where such phenomenon should not be ignored: class and class conflict, the play of market and economic forces, the politics of dominance and

¹⁸ Also explained in Mc Govan, P.J., Cornelissen, S., & Nel, P. (2006), eds. *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa*. Cape Town: UCT Press, p.129

¹⁹ This statement has also been cited in Mc Govan, P.J., Cornelissen, S., & Nel, P. (2006). *Ibid.*

²⁰ See Mc Govan, P.J., Cornelissen, S., & Nel, P. (2006), p.131. *Ibid.*

exploitation produced by dependency relationship, feminism and its impacts. Therefore the following alternative accounts are recommended: alliance behaviors, security dilemmas, deterrence, bargaining, integration, hegemony and challengers, dependency, imperialism, and core, semi-periphery and periphery relationships (McGovan, Cornelissen & Nel, 2006:131). According to Gerner (1995:70) “this approach represents a movement away from earlier attempts to build a grand theory that explain all aspects of foreign policy for all countries at all in time, towards more limited theories that are empirically grounded, culturally sensitive, and issue specific. The critical approach, however, still in its consolidation. In the new time of globalization, it is noteworthy to take into account that the decision making body is steadily effected by many non-governmental actors, civil societies or the media.

Examining grand strategy and its implications for foreign policy

Alexander L. Vuving (2005) identifies other paradigms in foreign policy analysis when he suggested a close look at concept of “**grand strategy**” because “foreign policy is derived from grand strategy, which refers to the full package of a state’s domestic and foreign policies”.²¹

Vuving lists up the conventional explanation of foreign policy-making follows:

1. source of international level: based on balance of power
2. source on domestic level (regime and societal level): foreign policy is designed because of regime security and economic development
3. Individual level: the role of leader’s personality (ruling elite)

But he argues that these explanations of foreign policy-making are “mostly inadequate” and “mostly incoherent”²². He highlights it is necessary to see that grand strategy needs to answer four concrete questions:

- Worldview: What is the nature of the world?
- Self-perception: Who are we?
- Ambitions: What do we want?
- Strategic orientations: How to achieve our goals?

It is obviously that Vuving concentrates much more on elite’s grand strategy rather than a state’s grand strategy. Vuving proves that the grand strategy of Vietnam is determined by interplay between two grand strategies which are based on different vision of the world. The foreign policy makers of Vietnam are therefore divided into

²¹ Alexander L. Vuving (2005). Shaping of foreign policy: Vietnamese foreign policy after the cold war. Available at

²² Vuving (2005)

two camps (those who are for the Anti-imperialist Grand Strategy and the others stand on the side of Grand Strategy of Modernization). A very interesting metaphor brought by Vuving that:

Let us imagine foreign policy as a journey and the state as a ship. The Vietnamese ship has two captains with two different maps and two different destinations. These destinations are in themselves not incompatible. But in a situation when the key external resources necessary to domestic modernization are centered in the hands of the biggest capitalist powers, the goals of anti-imperialism conflict with those of modernization. As a result, the captains have to renegotiate their destinations. In fact, neither relinquishes his destination, but they agree on a compromised direction. The ship thus approaches neither of the shores the captains want it to land on. The captains' dilemma is that if they want to reach their respective destination, they have to split their team (supposed that to split the ship is not an option), but if their team is divided up, a third party may take over the lead."

(Vuving, 2005:193)

For my observation, Vuving captures very essential character of Vietnamese political situation. This due to the fact the Vietnam is a totalitarian state, where the leading role of the Communist party is considered as central. The policy decision-making of Vietnam depends much on the ruling elites rather than others factors. But how should it be explained when the changes of Vietnamese foreign policy when Hanoi decided to joined ASEAN (1995) and joined WTO in (2006)? Is it only because of the will of the ruling elites of Vietnam or also influence of the external environment?

It is always hard for foreign policy analysts to figure out which approach among these multiple choices should be selected. Because analysts often face difficulties in clarify their roles and responsibility. They often move back and forth between scholar community, policy-making community and think-thank community (Stewart, 2008:578). My thesis is rather in an advocate of scholarly community. For the case of Vietnam, based on the above mentioned approaches, and considering this guidance "decision, behaviors, outcome" as a "red-thread", the following questions should be taken into account by a foreign policy analyst when analyzing the Vietnamese grand strategy²³:

1. Why the particular grand strategy? (These include: Influence of International environment; Influence Domestic environment: economic status, ruling elites, think-thank, internet ect)
2. Who makes the grand strategy? (ruling elites, State, Non-state actor?)
3. What goals of the grand strategy?

²³ These questions will be responded in details at the Chapter 6 of the thesis

2.3. The theories of International Relations (IR)

IR as a field of study also has a ground - the “ground” means conceptualization of fundamental or foundational level at which phenomena of the field of study occur. In IR, all that occurs between nations or across nations is grounded in human decision-makers, acting singly or a group (Hudson, 2007:3). It is necessary to grasp the main themes of the most influent IR theories which I hope to test these western perceptions in explaining the Vietnamese international relations towards other states. My question is what type of international relations theories which will conform to explain patterns of Vietnamese international relations since 1986?

The main theories I choose to consider are: ***Realism and Neo-realism; Liberalism and Neo-liberalism***, since they will shed much light on my latter analysis of Vietnam-great powers relations. This summary bases mainly on the work on IR by Carlnaes Risse and Simmons (2001), Baylis and Smith (2005), Filzmaier, Gewessler, Höll and Mangott (2006). Thayer (2008) and Vuving (2006).

2.3.1. Realism and Neo-realism

Dunne and Schmidt (2005:161) remark that Realism is the dominant theory of international relations. Hans J. Morgenthau and E.H Carr are the earlier famous realists. In his work, Morgenthau (1948:25) argues that international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power, he goes to great lengths to demonstrate the qualitatively different result this struggle has on international politics as compared to domestic politics. Morgenthau also highlighted the importance of “national interest” which can be seen as cornerstone in examining foreign policy of a state.

Latter on, in any realist’s argument states overwhelm other actors in international politics. They are the principle actors in world politics, unitary and rational, regardless of its domestic political forms. But realists go even further when they claim that states are self-interested and how to pursue national interest always tops their national agenda. Security is the top concern and priority of states (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993:46).

Realism stresses the role of international system in determining states’ behaviours. In the condition of anarchy, (ie. The lack of a world government to maintain order and

settle disputes), no one can rely on others to protect their own security and sovereignty. Therefore, states must rely on power, seeking to maintain or even increase their power position to other states (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993: 51).

Offensive realists, most notably Mearsheimer (2001), even go further regarding the role of an anarchical international system and aggressive nature of states as determining and conditioning states' behaviours. That system in his viewpoint, is characterized by five assumptions: 1) states are the key actors in world politics and they operate in an anarchic system. 2) great powers invariably have some offensive military capability. 3) states can never be certain whether other states have hostile attentions towards them. 4) great power place high premium on survival. 5, states are rational actors who are reasonably effective at designing strategies that maximize their chances of survival (Mearsheimer, 2001: 363).

It is hard to say that Realism is perceived as a single coherent theory. Since in different period of time, the concepts of Realism varied differently. Dunne and Schmidt (2005) pose a question of "one Realism, or many?" They make a significant taxonomy of Realism as follows²⁴:

²⁴ Cited from Dunne, T. & Schmidt, B.C. (2005). Realism. In Baylis, J., Smith, S. (eds.) (2005). *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 165

Table 7.1 A taxonomy of Realisms

Type of Realism	Key thinkers	Key texts	'Big idea'
Classical realism (Human nature)	Thucydides (c.460–406 BC)	<i>The Peloponnesian War</i>	International politics is driven by an endless struggle for power which has its roots in human nature. Justice, law, and society either have no place or are circumscribed.
	Machiavelli (1532)	<i>The Prince</i>	Political realism recognizes that principles are subordinated to policies; the ultimate skill of the state leader is to accept, and adapt to, the changing power-political configurations in world politics.
	Morgenthau (1948)	<i>Politics Among Nations</i>	Politics is governed by laws that are created by human nature. The mechanism we use to understand international politics is through the concept of interests, defined in terms of power.
Structural realism (International system)	Rousseau (c.1750)	<i>The State of War</i>	It is not human nature, but the anarchical system which fosters fear, jealousy, suspicion, and insecurity
	Waltz (1979)	<i>Theory of International Politics</i>	Anarchy leads to a logic of self-help in which states seek to maximize their security . The most stable distribution of power in the system is bipolarity .
	Mearsheimer (2001)	<i>Tragedy of Great Power Politics</i>	The anarchical, self-help system compels states to maximize their relative power position.
Contemporary responses to structural realism	Key thinkers		'Big idea'
Neoclassical realism	Schweller (1997), Zakaria (1998)		The systemic account of world politics provided by structural realism is incomplete. It needs to be supplemented with better accounts of unit-level variables such as how power is perceived, and how leadership is exercised.
Rational choice realism	Grieco (1993a), Krasner (1999)		Advocates of this position claim that institutions matter although the problem of relative gains means that they exert less of causal force than neo-liberals contend. Rational choice realists use advanced social science methodologies such as game theory in order to test realist hypotheses.

Different types of Realism basically are divided to *classical* Realism and *structural* Realism. Structural Realism divides into two camps: *defensive* and *offensive* Realism. We have recently seen the appearance of *Neoclassical realists* who attempt to bring individual and unit variation back to theory and *Rational choice realists*, who recognize the importance of international institutions (Dunne & Schmidt, 2005). For most

academics, neo-realist refers to Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International politics* (1979). He claims that the structure of the international system is the key factor in shaping the behavior of states. The fundamental assumptions of *Neo-realism* can be summarized as follows²⁵:

- States and other actors interact in an anarchic environment. This means that there is no central authority to enforce rules and norms or protect the interests of the larger global community.
- States see all other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security. This distrust and fear creates a security dilemma, and motivates the policies of most states.
- The structure of the system is a major determinant of actor behavior.
- States are rational actors, selecting strategies to maximize benefit and minimize losses
- States are self-interest oriented, and an anarchic and competitive system pushes them to favour self-help over cooperative behavior.
- The most critical problem presented by anarchy is survival.

To sum up, each independent sovereign state seeks to maximize their security and chances of survival which are compacted in the “national interest”. A former British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston said: “We have no permanent allies, we have no permanent enemies, we only have permanent interests.” Cooperation between states should be explained as functional to maximize their security. States, according to most realists, are **power-seeking rational actors and self-interested**. To explain in another way, Dunne and Schmidt (2005) point out the essential Realism by describing the “three Ss”: **Statism, Survival and Self-help**²⁶. Vu Duong Huan (2007) points out that it is noteworthy to use the assumptions of “realism” in examining Vietnamese foreign policy and foreign relations, whereby the concept of “national interest” plays an important role as a tool of analysis and essential factor in foreign policy making.

There are certain critics on Realism and Neo-realism. These critics emphasize that in the time of globalization, there are prevalent types of international relations that are cooperative in nature. Both states and non-state actors are important and there exist the bi-directional influences of domestic and international politics in modern IR. States

²⁵ See Lamy, Steve L. (2005). “Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism” in: Baylis, J., Smith, S. (2004). *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.210.

²⁶ The „three Ss“emphasized by Dunne &Schmidt (2005:178). Ibid.

are neither universally rational actors or unitary. There are many complex concerns which states have to deal with and many of which do not concern power.

2.3.2. Liberalism and Neo-liberalism

Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham were two of the leading Liberals of the Enlightenment. Liberals pay much attention to **organizational and institutional entities** rather than states as main actors in international politics. While realists place high premium on violent change in world politics, liberals stress on the possibilities of peaceful change in international system. Their argument is grouped into three followings camps: 1) the democratic theory or the democratic liberalism, 2) the commercial liberalism based on the theory of economic interdependence. 3) the neo-liberalism or the neo-liberal institutionalism (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993: 231-232).

First, the democratic peace theory argues that democratic states never fight with each other. This argument is sharp contrast with realists, who claim that states will go to war regardless of its own regime type. Democratic liberals argue that peace is the longing of all mankind and in democratic societies; popular wills must be reflected in the states' policies, so the public opinions may play a role of a break on any move toward international confrontation and outbreak of hostilities.²⁷

Second, commercial liberals argue that the increase in economic changes will help enhance the possibility of peace in countries' relationships for two main reasons: 1) as trade volume between countries grows, it will increase proportion of foreign factors in domestic national economy. Therefore, if these countries go to war against each other, it is likely that each economy will suffer more seriously. 2) the expansion of international economy makes it more costly for states to go to war. As economic interdependence increase there will be a disinclination to cut profitable economic ties²⁸

Third, neo-liberal institutionalists stress the importance of international institutions in affecting states' behaviours. They claim that state's actions depends, to a considerable degree, on existing institutional arrangements which affect 1) the flow of information

²⁷ For a thorough analysis of democratic peace theory, see Brown, Michael E/ Lynn-Jones, Sean M./ Miller, Steven E. (1996), "Debating the democratic peace: An International security Reader" (Eds). Cambridge: The MIT Press

²⁸ See analysis in Viotti and Kauppi (1993: 231), *ibid.*

and opportunities to negotiate; 2) the ability of government to monitor others' compliance and to implement their own commitments-hence their ability to make credible commitment in the first place; and 3) prevailing expectations about the solidity of international agreement (Keohane, 1989: 2).

Basically, the core assumptions of neo-liberalism (neo-liberal Institutionalists) include²⁹:

- States are key actors in international relations, but not the only significant actors. States are rational or instrumental actors, always seeking to maximize their interests in all issue-areas
- In this competitive environment, states seek to maximize absolute gains through cooperation. Rational behavior leads states to see value in cooperative behaviors. States are less concerned with gains and advantages achieved by other states in cooperative arrangements.
- The greatest obstacle to successful cooperation is non-compliance or cheating by states.
- Cooperation is never without problem, but states will shift loyalty and resources to institutions if these are seen as mutually beneficial and they provide states with increasing opportunities to secure their international interests.

In conclusion, the debate about realism and liberalism has been dominating mainstream in western international relations. They share many assumptions about actors, values, issues and power arrangements in the international system. Meanwhile, Neo-realists and neo-liberals study different worlds. Neo-realists study security issues and are concerned with issues of power and survival. Neo-liberals study political economy and focus in cooperation and institutions.

2.3.3. Foreign policy strategic approaches

In examining foreign policy of states, there has been long-lasting debate among scholars about how states in Asia Pacific region are responding to superpower (the United States), great power (European Union) and especially rising power like China and India. Which are strategic approaches a state might choose in dealing with them? Taking a reference on papers by Brawley (2004), Vuving (2006) and Thayer (2008), I would like to identify the foreign policy strategic approaches in the following summarized table:

²⁹ See Lamy, Steve L. (2005). p.214

Theory of IR	Choice of strategy	Opponents of reactions
Realism	External balancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find allies or join weaker alliance against a potential adversary; • Strengthen oneself and one's allies through trade, exclude enemies
	Internal balancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen oneself through economic development (self-reliance, national cohesion) • Arm race
	Bandwagoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ties with potential adversary (or dominant power) in order to ward off possible coercive measures • Involve in seeking economic gain by being on the 'winning side'.
	Buck-passing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free ride -increase one's wealth, not power in short run • Neutrality
	Appeasement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make concessions meanwhile building oneself up for the long run
Liberalism	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening up multifaceted relations with other states • state uses inclusion and rewards to attempt to socialize a dissatisfied power into accepting the rules and institutions of the pre-existing international order (Roy, 2005)
	Hedging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping more than one option open
	Interdependence Omni-enmeshment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the process of engaging with a state so as to draw it into deep involvement in international or regional society upon economic interdependence and the interlocking of political interest • enveloping it in a web of sustained exchanges and relationships, with the long-term aim of integration: international institutions, supranational cooperation (Goh, 2007,2008) • regarding economic issues are classic security issues

Asymmetry	Deference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaker state pursues its interests in a manner that corresponds to the stronger side's superior status • Avoiding tensions, make concessions
Socialist-internationalism	Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on Marxism-Leninism ideology • Struggle between "socialism" and "imperialism" • Question of "who defeats whom?" • Who are friends and who are foes?

Which strategic approaches in foreign policy Vietnam would choose in responding to the great powers: the U.S, China, the European Union, Russia, Japan and India? This above summary is a fundamental basis for identifying applicable approaches for the case of Vietnam. The responses will be in clarified details in the Chapter 7 of my thesis.

Chapter 3: Vietnam - a country profile

3.1. A historical overview

Looking at the map, Vietnam (in full name, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) is a country shaped like an enormous letter “S” total area of 331,688 km². It is almost the size of Germany. The country extends from the border of China in the north to the Cà Mau peninsula in the south with a distance of 1,650 km. Laos and Cambodia border it to the west. The coastline is 3,260 km long and the inland border is 4,510 km. Vietnam is also a transport junction from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. The population of Vietnam today is 86 millions. Vietnam is relatively homogenous, since 90% of the whole population are Kinh (Viet people) and the rest is enriched with diversity of 54 ethnic groups. Because of historical reasons, Vietnamese population is exceptionally young, half of Vietnamese are under 30 years old³⁰.

Administratively, Vietnam is divided into 58 provinces “*Tỉnh*” and 5 *centrally controlled municipalities* (Thành phố trực thuộc trung ương): Hà Nội, Hồ Chí Minh, Hải Phòng, Đà Nẵng, Cần Thơ. Those cities have the same level as provinces. Provinces are subdivided into provincial municipalities (Thành phố trực thuộc tỉnh), Townships (Thị xã), counties (Huyện) and then further subdivided on to towns (Thị trấn) or communes (Xã). The *centrally controlled municipalities* are divided into districts (Quận) and then subdivided into wards (Phường).

This following brief overview would not be enough for studying about important topic of a country’s history. However, it attempts to convey some sense of historical momentum which strongly related to the Vietnam’s present. It will look at the early history until the country’s unification in 1975.

3.1.1. Early history and the Chinese conquest

Vietnam’s history is a long and fascinating one, with the oldest archaeological findings showing that civilization there existed as far back as the Bronze Age³¹. The early Vietnamese people of the Red delta area may have been among the first East Asians

³⁰ Datas can be found in the website of General Statistic Office of Vietnam: http://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=494&itemid=2030

³¹ See also confirmed information by Duiker (1995). Vietnam: Revolution in Transition. Boulder/San Francisco/Oxford: Westview Press. p. 15

to practice agriculture. According to *Đại Việt Sử ký toàn thư* (Dai Viet's great History)³², among the southernmost of the Viet peoples who were called Lac Viet who lived in the area of Red River delta. The Lac Viet united other Viet peoples in order to establish small state called Au Lac with its capital in Co Loa, belongs to the city of Hanoi. The state Au Lac was derived from a semimythical Hồng Bàng dynasty, which has ruled over an ancient kingdom of Van Lang for more than two thousand years, beginning in 2878 B.C.

Vietnam's early history is characterized by a nearly continuous struggle for autonomy. Its history runs with rampant with numbers of dynasties, these included Văn Lang, Âu Lạc nation, Champa Nation, Ngô Dynasty, Đinh Dynesty, Pre-Lê Dynasty, Lý Dynasty, Trần Dynesty, Hồ Dynesty, Later Trần Dynesty, Lê Sơ Dynesty, Tây Sơn Dynesty, Nguyễn Dynesty. For entire millennium (111 B.C.- 938 A.D. The country had been struggling with different periods of Chinese dominations. Nevertheless, the Chinese rule had not been able to discard the will of the Vietnamese. Revolts constantly took place to strive for independence, and to pull out the foreign invaders.

The Chinese conquest had lasting consequences for Vietnam. Duiker (1995:18) remarks the Chinese assimilation efforts as follows:

...Vietnam exposed to a concentrated policy of political and cultural assimilation. The Chinese written language was introduced and became the official language of assimilation and literary expression. Chinese rituals and customs replaced the relatively informal social mores practiced by the local Vietnamese. The Confucian classics became the foundation of the educational system in Vietnam. Chinese art, architecture, and music were imported and served as models for Vietnamese creative workers.

3.1.2. From French colonialists to Vietnam War

External control was imposed once again in the 19th century, when Vietnam was occupied by the French. France stopped Vietnam in its tracks and replaced the distant order of the Chinese empire with the intrusive presence of colonists, missionaries, and solders. French occupation made Vietnam as being fully exploited.

³² *Đại Việt Sử ký toàn thư* (Dai Viet's great History) (2003). Hanoi: Nhà xuất bản văn hóa-thông tin (Culture and Information Publishing House). Band 1.

Anti-colonial sentiment began to emerge. After a tradition of centuries of tough resistance to the invasion of the north, the Vietnamese did not accept the new rule of the West. At the same time Vietnam faced the serious internal problem: the internal division and tensions within the ruling elites, the peasant unrest because of official corruption and concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy.

In 1930 the revolutionary Ho Chi Minh formed an Indochinese Communist party. The party was at a significant juncture in the colonial era. In 1940, however, Japan demanded and received the right to place Vietnam under military occupation, restricting the local French administration to figurehead authority. Under Japanese occupation, Vietnamese farmers had to work hard to produce rice and grain stores to serve the Japanese army. The result was the Tonkin famine of 1943-1945 which made more than one million people die of hunger in the north. The Vietminh (short for *Việt Nam Độc lập Đồng minh Hội*, or League for the Independence of Vietnam) emphasized moderate reform and national independence. Viet Minh's efforts were to control famine in late 1945. They led the August Revolution with strong support of the Vietnamese people and when the Japanese surrendered to the Allies in August 1945, Vietminh forces arose throughout Vietnam and declared the country's independence in Hanoi in 2nd September 1945.³³

The French, however, were unwilling to concede independence and in October drove the Vietminh and other nationalist groups out of the south. The first Indochina War broke out in December 1946. The United States feared of the spread of communism following by the Truman's doctrine and had backed up the French in this war. France was then decisively defeated in Dien Bien Phu (1954) and the Geneva Accords left Vietnam a division at the 17th Parallel into North and South. By this time, the US replaced France to strongly support any anti-communist government. In Saigon, Ngo Dinh Diem, a catholic, anti-communist politician replaced Bao Dai, the last King of Vietnam. With constant financial aids and military support by the US, Diem refused to hold general election and committed to destroy Communist influence in the South. Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic Vietnam under leadership of Ho Chi Minh attempted to build up the North under the Model of Soviet Union and with continuous support of China.

³³ See Thai Khac Vien. Vietnam. p. 242

Diem's regime was run under nepotism, corrupted and suppressed religious groups, faced with the failure of social and economic programs. At this time, Communists decided it was time to resume their revolutionary war to unify the country. In the fall of 1963, Diem was overthrown and killed in a coup launched by his own generals.

Motivated by Eisenhower's Domino theory, US president Lyndon Johnson chose to prevent the collapse of the Saigon regime. In 4th August 1964, after Tonkin Gulf's event, the U.S. President Lyndon Johnson approved regular intensive bombing of North Vietnam and sent officially the U.S. combat troops into the South of Vietnam.

The northern Vietnamese army under direction of General Vo Nguyen Giap sent regular units through Ho Chi Minh's trails to support the revolutionary Viet Cong (the southern Communists). The Tet-offensive was a shock to the new Saigon regime and led Johnson administration to a negotiated settlement since they faced sharp critics and distrust inside and anti-war movements in many countries in the world. New U.S. president Richard Nixon gradually withdrew U.S. troops from Vietnam and start "Vietnamization of the war". In January 1973 the war temporarily came to an end with the signing of a peace agreement in Paris. The settlement provided for the total removal of remaining U.S. troops, while Hanoi tacitly agreed to accept the Nguyen Van Thieu regime in preparation for new national elections. The agreement, however, soon fell apart. In early 1975 the Communists continued to launch a military offensive. In six weeks, the resistance of the Thieu regime collapsed, and in 30th April 1975 the capital of the south, Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese.

In 1976, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was born with unification of the North and the South. In the region, border tension with the Communist government in Cambodia escalated. Vietnam's insistence on the "unshakeable militant solidarity" of Indochina was taken as a threat by Cambodia. And clearly Vietnam had to choose between the Soviet Union and China now that the necessity of military co-sponsorship was passed³⁴. In 1979, Vietnam was itself attacked by its Communist neighbor and former benefactor, China. China experienced the last war in 1949, but forgot that Vietnam had just fresh stepped out a long struggle with the U.S. Chinese military attack in the north of Vietnam aimed to "teach Hanoi a lesson" but China itself learnt this time for his own a lesson. Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia last from 1979 to 1989

³⁴ Womack, Brantly (2006). *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry*. Cambridge University Press. p.75

and may have been necessary but was not regarded as a heroic act.³⁵ For the Vietnamese side, “illusion of victory” was dominant. The Political Report of the Central Committee remarked with “striking characteristics: collective mastery. Labor zeal, socialist patriotism, and proletarian internationalism”³⁶. This “victory illusion” was later considered as partly reasons of severe economic and social problems in the postwar time. Explaining this situation, Ashwill and Thai (2005) write: “A two-thousand-year history of foreign invasion, occupation, and wars have deeply influenced the Vietnamese character. The Chinese, French, and U.S. Americans have all left their cultural thumbprints behind, but at the same time the struggle against those who would impose their will on Vietnam has infused in the Vietnamese people a fierce spirit of nationalism, ready to defend themselves if necessary and caution in their dealings with foreigners.”

No country in South East Asia has a long history of suffering from different hard-fought wars like Vietnam. The country went through different foreign interventions (China, Japan, France, the USA etc), but the Vietnamese people have never given up resisting and struggling for their national liberation and independence. The smoke of bombing and gunfire ceased almost more than thirty years ago, Vietnam nowadays still struggle with its scars in the past and faces with new challenges of “soft attacks”³⁷ in the process of national building and development in the era of globalization.

3.2. Political system of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

“Vietnam is one of few surviving communist party-states...Other important forces, the government, the army and the bureaucracy, are all subordinate to it”. (Ford and Goldstone, 1995:99). Kerkvliet (2001: 268) reviews that political system of Vietnam by using the term “dominating state” with the core role of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Thayer (1995) calls Vietnamese political system as “a mono-organizational socialism” where the party exercises hegemonic control over state institutions, the armed forces and other organizations in society through the penetration of these institutions by

³⁵ Womack (2006). Ibid.

³⁶ Documents of the 4th National Congress of Communist Party of Vietnam (1977). Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing Hous. P. 56

³⁷ „soft attacks“ can be understanding in Vietnamese perception such as „peaceful evolution“, the negative effects of market economy, degradation in culture and national identity

party cells and committees³⁸. Although Vietnam remains a single-party state, for most Vietnamese leaders and people, economic development is more important than ideological orthodoxy. The foreign policy after the long war-torn time is rather for the motive of “first food and then democracy”³⁹.

The current political system of Vietnam composes of such institutions as the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the State comprises of political organizations: the National Assembly, the Government, the State president, the People’s army of Vietnam and mass associations. I try to sum up this system in the diagram 3⁴⁰ and attempt to explain briefly about each of them:

3.2.1. The Communist Party of Vietnam (Đảng cộng sản Việt Nam)

In fact, until 1988, there was more than one party existing in Vietnam, beside the Communist Party of Vietnam, there were the Socialist Party (SPV) and the Democratic Party (DPV) but in October 1988, these two Parties became part of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV).

The CPV was established on 3 February 1930 and has been the only leading force in the country since the unification of North and South of Vietnam. With more than 4 millions members⁴¹, the CPV holds Party Congress every five years to outline the country's overall direction and future course as well as to formalize policies and direct government policy on a day-to-day basis. **Democratic centralism** is the principle governing the organization and activity of the CPV. The **Politburo** includes **14 members** is elected by the **Central Committee** (150 members), generally at the Party Congress. The present General Secretary was elected at the 10th Party Congress in 2006 is Mr. Nông Đức Mạnh.

³⁸ Thayer (2008). “One-Party rule and challenge of Civil society in Vietnam”, available at http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/CivilSociety_Thayer.pdf

³⁹ See Tam Pham (2007) at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/IH17Ae02.html

⁴⁰ This diagram is designed based on the information in the official website of the Vietnam Government available at http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁴¹ See http://dangcongsan.vn/cpv/index_e.html#BTR269szN0ch

The organizational structure of the CPV is established in line with the State administrative apparatus from Central level to provincial, city, district, and communal levels as well as in administrative bodies, schools, enterprises, political/social/professional organizations, army units and police forces. The Party cells are the Party's grassroots foundations⁴².

Oskar Weggel (2007)⁴³ writes about the CPV as:

Politik des dreifachen Nein“ (kein Meinungspluralismus, keine Oppositionspartei, keine formelle Opposition).

Since its foundation, the CPV has held 10 National congresses. Looking back at Vietnam's history, one can not deny its leading role in national liberation and national defense: It was the CPV who successfully led the Vietnamese people in the August Revolution to defeat the Japanese to declare national independence in 2 September 1945; the defeat of French in Điện Biên Phủ to terminate completely brutal colonialism lasted over 100 years in Vietnam. And it was also the CPV who mobilized people of different forces to strive for unification of the North and South in the fight over 20 years against the USA and the US-backed South Vietnamese regime. Due to this historical achievement, the CPV gains its legitimacy. Fforde and Goldstone remarks:

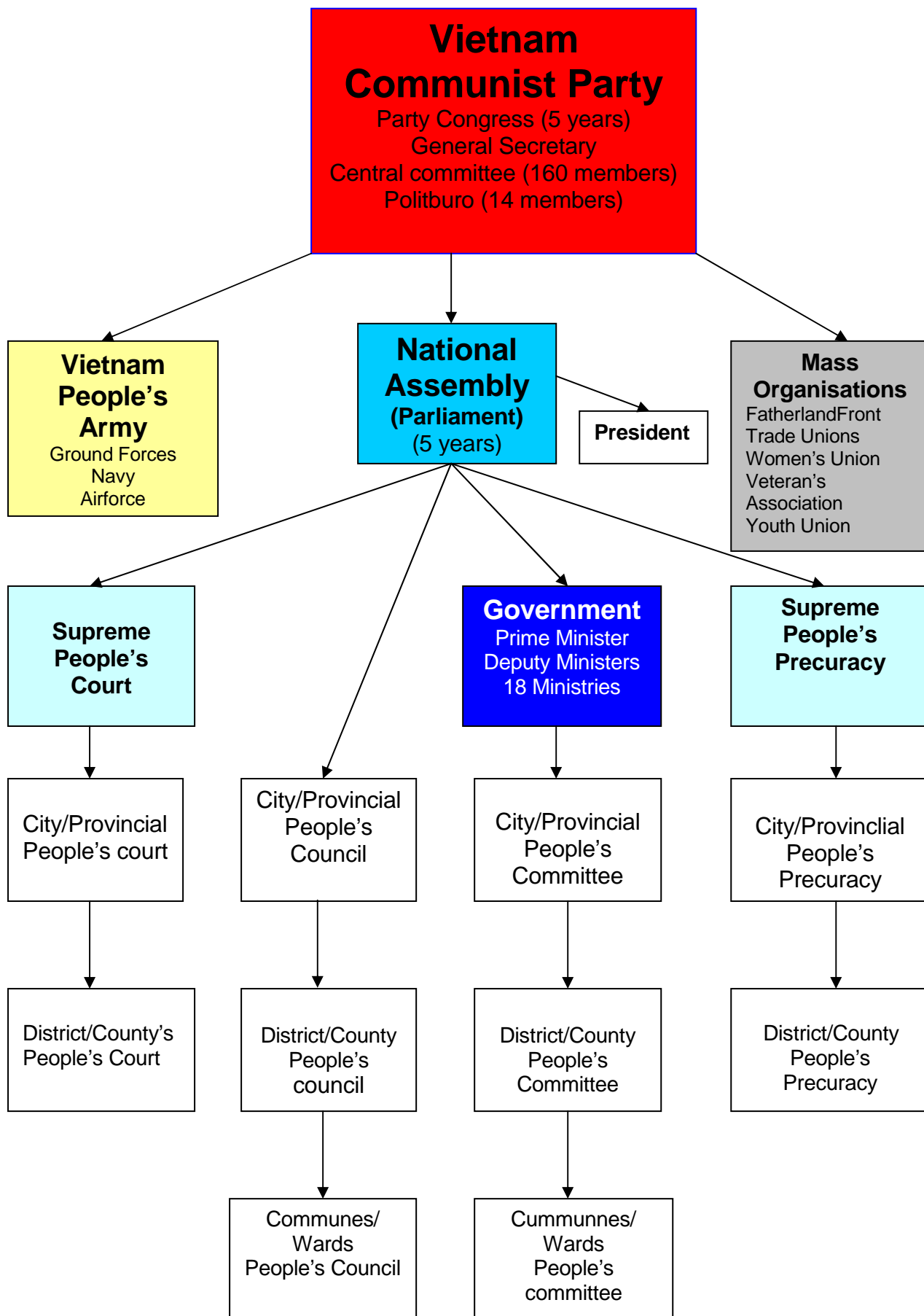
In many ways, Vietnam is a special case among the surviving communist regimes. Unlike the personality-based regimes of Cuba and North Korea, it has a long commitment to the system of collective leadership which has survived intact through years of war and often unpopular social experiment. Unlike its Chinese counterpart it has not been discredited by turning on itself or turning the army on the people. Like China and Cuba, among the other survivors, the party has its indigenous roots. It achieved power not under the auspices of the Red army but through a war of national liberation. At present it has no rival for power.

(Fforde and Goldstone, 1995:100)

⁴² http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁴³ See Weggel's paper at http://www.giga-hamburg.de/ifa/premium_content/soa/0604/20060701.soa-Fokus-Weggel.pdf

Diagram 3: *The political system of Vietnam*



The collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern block, additionally the interior economic crisis have been very important factors in “waking” up the country from long sleeping with victory. Changes have been seen in different directives and policies since the 5th National Congress of the CPV, the 6th congress was considered as a turning point when *Đổi mới* (economic reform) has been introduced⁴⁴. What about political reform? This question has been since then posed. The evidence has shown that the Vietnamese state has been turned from “hard authoritarian to “soft-authoritarian” (Thayer, 2009)⁴⁵. This means the “rule of law” is put in the discussion and slowly in practice: see article 4 of Constitution 1992 and different administration reform in Vietnam⁴⁶.

Vietnam has had four constitutions, adopted in 1946, 1960, 1980 and 1992. In Article 4, Chapter I of the 1980 Constitution state that “The Communist Party of Vietnam, the vanguard of the Vietnamese working class, the faithful representative of the rights and interests of the working class, the toiling people, and the whole nation, acting upon the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and Ho Chi Minh's thought, is the force leading the State and society”. What is new in the 1992 constitution was redefining the relationship between party and state, in which state institutions have greater autonomy and the party is to be subject to the law. “The CPV is now “the leading force of the state and society. All Party organizations operate within the framework of the Constitution and the law.”⁴⁷.

3.2.2. The state system

Vietnam is a single-party state, where Party subscribes to Marxist-Leninist and Ho Chi Minh Thought - a communist state. Not like “the personality-based communist regimes of North Korea and Cuba, the Vietnamese regime is characterized by a long

⁴⁴ See “75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam (1930-2005): A Selection of documents from nine Party Congress” (2005), Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, pp. 535-643

⁴⁵ For more information see “Vietnam: Challenges to political legitimacy
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/17805934/Thayer-Vietnam-Challenges-to-Political-Legitimacy>

⁴⁶ Vasavakul (2009), Dao Minh Chau (1997), Truong, Trong Nghia (1988), Painter, M. (2003)

⁴⁷ See Article 4 of the 1992 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at
http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
(in Vietnamese)

http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1090502&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
(in English)

commitment to collective leadership⁴⁸. It means that highest guideline-makers are in the Politburo comprised of 14 members who are elected from the Central Committee of the Communist Party (160 members). Though there is certain overlap between Party and Government, there have been substantial changes in Politburo, the Central committee and the Secretariat since the Party has renovated its organization and elements of the governing structure such as the National Assembly (Parliament) is now more open for comments and contestation. (Dixon, 2004:20). This positive change is also remarked in the “Evaluation of European Commission’s cooperation with Vietnam (2009):

While decisions made by the politburo still have the power of law to a great extent, a more assertive National Assembly is emerging, and the pressure on the party and ministers to be more accountable is growing.⁴⁹

The state system of Vietnam is divided into **central level** (The National Assembly (Quốc hội), the State president (Chủ tịch nước), the Government (Chính phủ), the Supreme people’s court (Tòa án nhân dân tối cao), the Supreme people’ Procuracy (Viện kiểm sát nhân dân tối cao) and the **local level**: municipalities/provinces, district /county and communes/wards.

3.2.2.1. The National Assembly (Quốc Hội)

The National Assembly (**Parliament**), as “highest organ of state power”⁵⁰ which includes 493 members (elected to the 12th Congress of National Assembly in 2007), meets twice a year. The National Assembly (NA) elects the President (head of state), the Prime Minister (head of government), the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam, the Head of the Supreme People's Procuracy of Vietnam (or 'Supreme People's Office of Supervision and Inspection'), and the 21-member Cabinet (the executive). However, the CPV has great influence over the executive and exercises control. 90 percent of the National Assembly members are party members.

⁴⁸ Evaluation of European Commission’s Cooperation with Vietnam (2009)-Volume 2, available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/2009/1269_vol2_en.pdf

⁴⁹ Evaluation of European Commission’s Cooperation with Vietnam (2009)-Volume 2, available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/2009/1269_vol2_en.pdf

⁵⁰ Confirmed in Article 5 of the Constitution of S.R.Vietnam, available at website of the National Assembly of Vietnam <http://www.na.gov.vn/htx/English/C1479/default.asp?Newid=24766#R8luJNsp1NDm>

Members of the party hold all senior government positions. The recent survey also shows that 473 members of National Assembly have graduated higher education⁵¹. In the Mid-1980s, 90% of army officers and about one-third of the rank and file are estimated to be party members (Fford and Goldstone, 1995:99).

Basically, the NA has the following functions⁵²:

- **The Legislative function:** draw up, adopt and amend the constitution and to make and amend laws; define the functions of the People's Councils and People's Committees (the local government entities), the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Organs of Control.
- **The function of deciding the important issues of the Nation:** the NA makes decision on the socio-economic development plans of the country; on the national financial and monetary policies and on the estimates of the national revenue and expenditure plans. It also decides the State budget, approves the national revenue and expenditure balance of account, and levies, amends and abolishes taxes.
- **The supervision function:** The National Assembly exercises the supreme power of supervision over all activities of the State.

There has been significant change in the 10th National Congress in 2006 when the first time in history, the CPV accepted 10% of non-party members. Among those are businessmen and businesswomen. The principle of the NA is that the composition the National Assembly based on the structure which reflects of gender, ethnic affiliation, occupation or regional origin. Since 2002, 26% of her seats for women and 17% of the seats reserved for to the representatives of ethnical minorities. Remarks about the NA of Vietnam, Dr. Willibold Frehner⁵³ remarks that:

In Vietnam gibt es noch keine echte Gewaltenteilung und damit noch keine Demokratie nach westlichem Verständnis. Lange war die vietnamesische Nationalversammlung lediglich ein weiteres Organ, das getroffene Entscheidungen der KPV formell absegnete.“

⁵¹ These datas were translation from 2 articles available at <http://tuanvietnam.net/2009-10-20-cach-do-chat-luong-hoat-dong-cua-quoc-hoi> and <http://vietnamnet.vn/chinhtri/200910/Muon-het-nghi-gat-Dang-phai-doi-moi-phuong-thuc-lanh-dao-872800/>

⁵² This summary based of Website by the National Assembly of Vietnam available at <http://www.na.gov.vn/htx/English/C1330/#0c5iAxHLZ44N>

⁵³ Dr. Frehner is a Country representative to Vietnam, working for Conrad Adenauer Stiftung. He wrote an article about "Die Nationalversammlung in Vietnam: auf dem langen Weg zu einer demokratischen Institution", see http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_10678-544-1-30.pdf

....

„Obwohl die KPV noch immer der dominierende Akteur im politischen System Vietnams ist, hat die Nationalversammlung eine zunehmend wichtigere Rolle im politischen Entscheidungsprozess eingenommen. Gerade was ihre legislative Funktion angeht, hat sie an Bedeutung gewonnen. Sie hat in jüngster Vergangenheit aber auch ihre Kontrollfunktion über die Ministerien aktiver wahrgenommen. Trotzdem braucht Vietnam weitere Veränderungen im politischen Bereich und dringend eine weitere und fundierte Unterstützung bei der Professionalisierung der Nationalversammlung.

(Frehner, 2007)

3.2.2.2. The State President (Chủ tịch nước)

The State President is the Head of State but the functions of the President often ceremonial. The President is elected by the National Assembly from among its deputies to represent the Socialist Republic of Vietnam internally and externally.

According to Article 103 of the 1992 Constitution, the President has major executive and legislative power⁵⁴: Has overall command of the armed forces and holds the office of Chairman of the National Defense and Security Council; Appoints or proposes the appointment of, releases from duty, dismisses the Vice-Presidents, Prime Minister, Chief Judge of the Supreme People's Court, Head of the Supreme People's Procuracy. In many discussion of the NA, a question has been posed that should the General Secretary of the CPV, in the future, also holds the task of the State President like in China? This question will be carefully discussed in the next National Congress of the CPV in the year 2011. Since Vietnam learns much from China from its political system, this is possibly feasible.

3.2.2.3. The Government (Chính Phủ)

The Government is the executive organ of the National Assembly, and the supreme state administrative agency of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The Government is in charge of tasks assigned by the State in the fields of politics, socio-economy, national defense, security and external relations; maintains effective

⁵⁴ Detailed functions of the President are defined in the Constitution 1992 of S.R.Vietnam. This also can be found at the Government's website:
http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

operation of the State apparatus from the central to grassroots levels; ensures the respect for, and implementation of the Constitution and laws; promotes the people's sense of mastery in national defense and construction; ensures stability and improves the people's material and spiritual life⁵⁵.

Components of the Government are: Prime Minister who is elected by the National Assembly at the State President's request. Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng was elected since 2006. There are 5 Deputy Prime Ministers, and 22 Ministers and Heads of ministerial-level agencies.

Under the central level, there are local authorities. They are divided 64 provincial and cities operated under provincial People's councils and People's committee, Chairman of People's Committee. The local authorities also include district and communes/wards level.

3.2.2.4. Vietnam People's Army (Quân đội Nhân Dân Việt Nam)

There is rarely an army force in the region who plays very significant role in history of national liberation and development like Vietnam People's Army (VPA). About the VPA, the Communist Party of Vietnam remarks in its resolutions as follows:

Time will pass but the victory of our people in the anti-US war of resistance for national salvation will forever be recorded as one of the most brilliant chapters in our national history and as a shining symbol of the total triumph of revolutionary heroism and human intellect. It will go down in world history as a great exploit of the 20th century and an event of enormous international importance marked by a profound epochal character.

(Resolution of the Fourth National Congress of the CPV, 1976)

The VPA was found in December 1944. It was first called as the People's Liberation Armed Forces. During the First Indochina War (1946-1954) it was often referred as **Việt Minh**. Later, in the Vietnam War against USA (1956-1975), the army was referred to North Vietnamese Army. The main forces of the VPA include ground forces (including VPA Strategic Rear Forces and Border Defense Forces), navy, air force, and the Vietnamese People's Coast Guard. The regional or local force comprised infantry companies, and the militia/defense force which is organized along with administrative lines or economic lines (commune, factory, work site). As in other socialist countries,

⁵⁵http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439.1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

the VPA structure is fully integrated into system of control: the state and the communist party. At the head of the state are the Ministry of Defense, the National Defense Council, the Office of Commander in Chief and five military directorates.

The constitution 1992 recognizes the VPA as the backbone “to defend the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the homeland, national security and social order and safety, to defend the socialist regime and the gains of the revolution, and to join the entire people in building the country”⁵⁶.

Historically, the VPA did not meet many criteria of a “professional” army, but it was absolutely world famous for its guerilla tactics and its profound triumphs in national defense. These have been illustrated by the wars against France (1946-1954), subsequent wars against the United States and Ngo Dinh Diem regime (1956-1975), and the military conflicts with Cambodia and China (1977-1989). General Võ Nguyên Giáp was the first Commander and commander-in-chief of VPA and the fourth Minister of National Defence. He was principle commander in one of historically significant battle in Điện Biên Phủ (1954). Điện Biên Phủ victory make complete end to 100 years of French colonialism in Vietnam.

The VPA has so far remained one of the few armies in Southeast Asia that has not engaged in bloody suppression of domestic political forces to buttress incumbent governments like the case in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar. Its record is far better than its Chinese counterpart (Vasavakul, 2001).

Vasavakul (2001:338) argues that since Vietnam adopted the policy of *Đổi mới* (reform) since 1986, the VPA’s contribution to state building has shifted from national reunification and defense to maintaining domestic stability and promoting “socialist oriented” market economic development. Nevertheless, I am still convinced that the VPA plays an influence political role in the system, especially, when sustained disputes between China and Vietnam in the East Sea and border issues, the fear of sovereign lost would make Vietnam increase their military strength more than ever. This would be further analyzed in the part Vietnam-China relation. In the time of knowledge economy, the VPA, like many other armies must seek way to up-grade its quality but not quantity. It attempts to pursue the principles of “*Khôn Khéo*” (skillfull) and “*Mềm dẻo*” (supple or

⁵⁶ Article 45 of Constitution 1992 of S.R. Vietnam

flexible). Force should be avoided, and if it had to be used it should be limited in scale (Tran Minh Thiet, 1997 & Nguyen Kim Ton 1997).

3.2.3. Mass organisations (Các tổ chức quần chúng)

Civil society was not a familiar concept to Vietnamese context but mass organizations. Because of different historical background, the name mass organizations became significant in political system.

Thayer (2009)⁵⁷ emphasizes the functions of the political civil society:

Political civil society refers to non-violent political, advocacy labour and religious organizations and movements that seek to promote human rights, democratization and religious freedom in authoritarian states. The term “political” has been included to capture the activist nature of civil society in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s when citizens became active in creating organizations outside of state control in order to influence the conditions in which they lived, including political pressure on the state.

(Thayer, 2009:1-2)

Yet, the perceptions of civil society by foreign scholars are different with those about civil society in Vietnam. Mass organizations in Vietnam would not be understood as a purely independent civil society. They have traditional role of “mobilizing mass” in doing certain activities. These organizations played an important role in the struggle for national salvation. In the new cause of renovation, industrialization and modernization, they have continued to contribute to the implementation of the Party’s guidelines and the Government’s policies⁵⁸. Obviously, the CPV still have strong influence in these mass organizations. But since introduction of reform (Đổi mới), they have been given an opportunity to effectively achieve poverty reduction (Sakata, 2004).

The mass organizations Vietnam are divided into two types:

- Social-political organizations: The Vietnam Fatherland Front (Mặt trận tổ quốc Việt Nam)-is an umbrella organization; Labor Confederation (Liên đoàn Lao động Việt Nam); Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (Đoàn Thanh niên Cộng sản Hồ Chí Minh), Vietnam Students Association (Hội Sinh viên Việt Nam), Women’s Association (Hội Liên hiệp Phụ nữ Việt Nam); Veteran’s Association (Hội Cựu

⁵⁷ Thayer, C.A. (2009). “Vietnam and the challenge of Political civil society”, in: Contemporary Southeast Asia Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 1–27

⁵⁸ http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=439,1093454&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Chiến binh); Farmer's Association (Hội Nông dân Việt Nam); Vietnam Writer's Association (Hội nhà văn Việt Nam) etc. These organizations usually have very strong network, a four-layered organizational structure from central, provincial, district, to commune level in order to effectively transmit decisions and instructions made at the central level.

- Socio-economic organizations: Economic institutions, The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Vocational training institutes, Vietnam Young Entrepreneurs Association (Hội doanh nghiệp trẻ Việt Nam), Non-profit organizations etc.

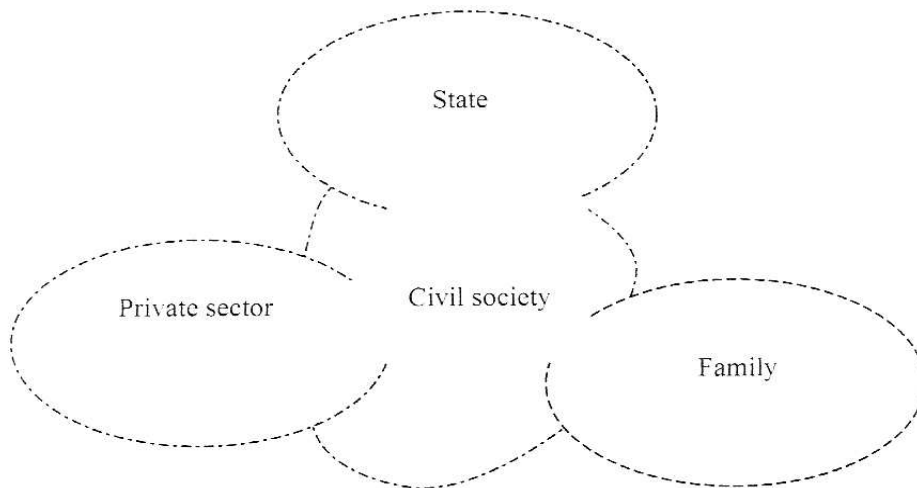
According to CIVICUS (2005)⁵⁹ Civil society has been defined as *the arena outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests*. In Vietnam, civil society is broad and open, and it emphasizes the fuzzy borders between civil society and the various sectors, which is of central importance in a country like Vietnam where the associational sector closely *interacts* with the state. Norlund (2007) is right when she describes that civil society in Vietnam is not *separate* from the state, as some definitions suggest. It also aims to take account of the *functions* of organizations rather than their forms, which is to say that it includes any efforts to support activities and values promoting the well-being of the citizens through charity, philanthropy or other means. The definition is broader and more flexible than others that only include organizations or associations as the core of civil society because informal groups and coalitions are also counted. This expands the definition of civil society beyond a purely associational sector to include broader activities “to advance common interests”⁶⁰.

The fuzzy boundary of civil society is illustrated by Irene Nørlund (2007) as follows:

⁵⁹ CIVICUS (2005), Civil Society Index – Shortened Assessment Tool (CSI-SAT). A Guide for CSI-SAT Implementing Agency;– The Civil Society Index. CIVICUS. Available at www.civicus.org/new/default.asp

⁶⁰ Norlund, Irene (2007). “Civil Society in Vietnam. Social Organisations and Approaches to New Concepts“.

see http://www.asienkunde.de/content/zeitschrift_asien/archiv/pdf/a105_ref_art_norlund.pdf



If making comparison with the outset of civil society mentioned by Thayer (2009), a question is raised that whether the civil society model can apply to Vietnam, a country strongly influenced by Confucianism and based on highly centralized political system, whether this is likely to be a force for political change in Vietnam. Dalton and Nhu Ngoc (2003), by their number of surveys and sophisticated analysis have come to conclusion that:

.... our findings suggest that the social capital syndrome--high levels of group activity and high levels of social trust occurring together--that is found in long-term democracies is not as clearly apparent in Vietnam. Perhaps, as the residue of the political mobilization of the past, levels of social capital and social trust are relatively high among the Vietnamese public, especially in comparison to nations at the same level of economic development. But it is not necessarily the same individuals who are active and who are trustful. Instead, participation in relatively more autonomous groups in a non-democratic setting may instill caution toward others because participants realize their values may be inconsistent with the dominant social and political paradigms.

(Russel J. Dalton & Nhu-Ngoc T. Ong, 2003)

Thayer (2009:22) argues that it is a misleading when Vietnamese “nongovernmental organizations” are identified with civil society because Vietnamese NGOs are largely extensions of the state. And they are often excluded when they advocate democratic political change.

This preceding argument reflects, however, partly about the situation of Vietnamese society. For my point of view, mass organizations in Vietnam play very important role in the past in national defense. In the new time, they make not only significant contribution in national poverty reduction⁶¹ and economic development, but also, in a long run, considered as contributive factors in making State adjust foreign policy and

⁶¹ See paper by Sakata (2004) http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Asedp/pdf/073_cap2.pdf

democratization process of the country.⁶² Even in some cases policies were initiated from below, with the party-state following the lead of the people (Koh, 2001b:285).

...the Vietnamese political system as a normal one in which objectives and understanding of the issues by leading personalities, competition for leadership positions, advocacy of particular goals of social and state institutions, hierarchical process and expressions of interest by various social groups, all has role to play.

(Dang Phong and Beresford, 1998:1)

3.3. Summary

Clearly, the Vietnamese system is characterized by some substantial contradictions; in some areas, there are signs of dysfunctionality. However, it would be dangerous to suggest that these issues can only be addressed by moves towards some form of Western-style multiparty democratic system. The Party-state is well aware of its own internal problems and contradictions, and many well proved capable of containing or resolving them (Communist Party of Vietnam 2001: 23-4, 125)⁶³.

Talking about political changes, Vietnam researchers like Gainsborough (2002:707), Ljunggren (1993:29-30), suggest a likely prospect that political change come from **within institutions of the state** rather than through the 'assertive rise of civil society'. It means its democratization will be carried out within the existing system. Vietnam might yet adopt a less authoritarian, less centralized and more responsive version of the Singaporean single-party system (Dixon, 2004: 26).

Many studies see the Vietnamese political system and state structures as changed almost beyond recognition since the beginning of the reform process (Fforde & Adam, 1995:100). As a result of reforms, the Vietnamese state has become more or less unified and authoritarian, and has been depicted as multifaceted, multisegmented, and multilayered, featuring significant local power structures and inconsistencies (Heng, 2001; Koh, 2001: 291). Overall, Vietnamese state is recognized as "liberalizing" but not fully "democratizing" (Thayer, 2009:63)

⁶² This will be more analyzed in the coming part of my Thesis

⁶³ Also cited in Dixon Chris (2004), „State, Party and political change in Vietnam“ in Mc Cargo, Duncan, (eds.) Rethinking Vietnam. London/New York: ReutledgeCurzon

Chapter 4: Vietnam's foreign policy in the Cold War

Since my thesis focuses much on Foreign policy after 1986. This part, based on previous analysis by other authors, will present overall foreign policy of Vietnam and some main characteristics of international relations between Vietnam and the Soviet Union, the USA and China during the cold war. I have no ambition of going through the whole history of the Vietnamese foreign relations in this period, since there have been enormous numbers of publications about Vietnam War and Vietnamese policy behaviours to the great powers⁶⁴. However, in order to give a background for coming analysis, I rather try to highlight the significant implications of Vietnam towards these mentioned States.

The cold war started after the Second World War since 1945 and continued until 1980s. For over 40 years, the confrontations between two superpowers, the USA and the USSR in all spheres spread throughout the world. It was political, strategic, economic, cultural and ideological struggles, except direct military confrontation between the two powers. Instead, numbers of "client states", or sometimes they are called "satellite states" were set up to fight for their beliefs. Proxy war, nuclear arms race, propaganda, and economic and technological competitions etc. were the follow-up exposures. The most notable result was Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam War (1956-1975) and the War in Afghanistan (1980-1989). The Cold war dominated international affairs and at the meantime, domestic and foreign policies of every state were affected by this **bipolarity world order**. And Vietnam was not an exception.

4.1. Some remarks on Vietnam's foreign policy in the cold war

Vietnamese foreign policy during 1950 to 1986 is basically characterized as follows:

- **Period 1950-1975**

In this period, foreign policy of Vietnam was determined with an ideological perception that the world is divided into "**two distinct camps**". The Democratic camp headed by

⁶⁴ See Thayer & Rames (2000), Thayer (1977), Karnow (1991), Duiker (1989), Abuza (1996 & 1997), Herring (1979), Nguyen Vu Tung (2007), Nguyen Phuc Luan (2001),

the Soviet Union and comprised the socialist countries in Europe and Asia. The other camp was headed by USA, “ringleader of imperialism”⁶⁵. This contradiction between socialism and imperialism could only be solved by a struggle “**who will win**” (*ai thắng ai*). Also like China, Vietnamese leaders looked at the world in terms of four fundamental contradictions⁶⁶:

1. The contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp;
2. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries;
3. The contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialists;
4. The contradiction among imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist group.

Following this perception, Vietnam adopted a framework which the CPV called “**three revolutionary currents**” (Ba dòng thác Cách Mạng)⁶⁷. Vietnam decided to be ally of Soviet Union and considered as one of their “cornerstones”⁶⁸. In its foreign policy, Vietnamese policy makers had to clarify, who is “friend” and who is “enemy”. ***Ideology decided the strategy.***

Vietnamese foreign policy was to serve to achieve this goal: ***National defense, national liberation and national reunification.*** The determination of the Vietnamese people was manifested in Ho Chi Minh’s declaration that “Vietnam is one, the Vietnamese nation is one. Rivers may run dry, mountains may wear out, but that truth will never change” and “even if we have to burn the whole Truong Son Range, we will do it for national independence”⁶⁹. Diplomacy was considered as important as military struggle.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ *Fifty Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam. A Selection of documents from Nine Party Congresses (1930-2005).* The Gioi Publisher. pp.149-150

⁶⁶ *Selected Works of Mao Zedong. Vol.4.p397.* Also quoted in Barnouin, B. & Yu Changgen (1998). *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution.* London/New York: Kegan Paul International

⁶⁷ The „three revolutionary currents“ indicated that the global order was determined by three revolutionary trends: **1.** the strength of the socialist system headed by the Soviet Union. **2.** Workers’ movements in the capitalist countries. **3.** The strength of national liberation movements in the Third World.

⁶⁸ See Documents of the 5th Party Congress. In „75 Years of the Communist Party of Vietnam. A Selection of documents from Nine Party Congresses (1930-2005). The Gioi Publisher. p.449

⁶⁹ <http://www.nhandan.com.vn/english/news/miennam/anti.htm>

⁷⁰ Luu Van Loi (2006). „50 years of Vietnamese Diplomacy (1945-1995)”. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p. 183

- **Period 1975-1985**

The victory of 30.4.1975 has brought unification of North and South Vietnam. Vietnam shifted to a new phase, ***national reconstruction***. The 24th Plenum of the CPV adopted a resolution which defined the direction of the country as follows:

The revolution in Vietnam has shifted to a new phase from war to peace, from half of the country being separated and dominated by neo-colonialism to all the country being independent and unified, from having two strategic tasks-national and people's democratic revolution and socialist revolution- to having only one strategic task-socialist revolution and socialist construction.⁷¹

In this period, it is noteworthy to see that *realism* dominated Vietnamese foreign relations. "Classes struggle" is still considered by the CPV as a continuous one. "Hanoi's leader also viewed Indochina as strategic entity and sought to develop an integrated alliance system with Laos and Cambodia." (Thayer, 1999:2). Split between The USSR and China brought about much of difficulties in balancing policy for the *Block* members. Vietnam continued to regard Soviet Union "cornerstones" and applied the policy of "*nhất biên đảo*" (leaning to one side). Vietnam expected to receive as much political, economic and military support from the Soviet Union. Due to "neglect" reaction of Vietnam toward China and the practiced policy toward Cambodia, Vietnam was then isolated from many other countries.

4.2. Vietnam and the great powers in the Cold War

4.2.1. Vietnam - Soviet Union relations

The Soviet Union has played a very significant role in the CPV affairs and also in Vietnam War. From 1950s to 1960s, the relationship of the two countries was regards as "*comrades and brothers*". The Soviet Union sent both military and economical assistance to Vietnam. This was due to the fact that both Vietnam and the USSR shared the same ideological standpoint: *Against imperialism*. For Vietnam, the support of the allies like Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries made an important contribution in struggles against French Colonialist and American aggression.

⁷¹ Luu Van Loi (2006). „50 years of Vietnamese Diplomacy (1945-1995)". Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.307

The Sino-Soviet split challenged the Vietnamese policy behaviours to both. Like mentioned the general goal of Vietnam in wartime was: national liberation and national reunification. Hanoi sought to retain the equilibrium of its wartime relations with both China and the Soviet Union, but mounting tensions with Beijing, culminating in the loss of Chinese aid in 1978, compelled Hanoi to look increasingly to Moscow for economic and military assistance.⁷² Beside military aid, the USSR later also became Vietnam's biggest economic and trade partner.

In 1980s, the relationship of two countries was remained **sound** but sometimes with **strain**. These strain behaviours resulted in economic relations, when the Soviet Union reducing aid to Vietnam because of doubting economic inefficiency in Vietnam. Vietnam was supported by the Soviet Union in Cambodia issue. This is also part of reason for the tension between Vietnam and China at the time. In short, Vietnam chose the Soviet Union as a friend, comrade, ally and a great donor. This came from its ideological standpoint but most importantly from the domestic strategy of **national salvation**. The Soviet Union basically supported Vietnam because of its maintenance of a set of alliances with South East Asian countries in unofficial and indirect confrontation with the USA, at the same time limiting the influence of China in the region.

4.2.2. Vietnam - China relations

History of Vietnam- China relations implies very complex characteristics. Relationship of the two sharing same nature of political regimes is regarded as critically important for both sides. Two nations have experienced the "up and down" in bilateral relations through out history and it will continue to fascinate many observers and scholars in the future. Each period of time the relation between Vietnam and China marked with its own characteristics.

- **Period 1950-1975**

This is the era which witnessed a very strong intimate cooperation between Vietnam and China. Someone has even depicted this relationship in poetry like "*Mối tình hữu*

⁷² See <http://countrystudies.us/vietnam/61.htm>

ngợi Việt Hoa, vừa là đồng chí vừa là anh em” (Friendship between Vietnam and China is like comradeship and brotherhood).

The comradeship in this period was described “*as close as lips and teeth*” (gắn bó như môi với răng). Party-to-Party relations between Vietnam Workers Party (VWP)⁷³ and the Chinese Communist Party formed the core of the relationship. The VWP leaned heavily on Chinese support and there was no alternative comparable to Chinese support. China supported necessities of life and the means of struggle. (Womack, 2006:162-163). According to Womack, Chinese “aids to Vietnam was its most important sustained foreign policy commitment from 1952-1975, and the survival and success of VWP was crucial to China”⁷⁴. This was due to the implications of China that

1. Promoting a *socialist internationalism* with China-centered inherent image.
2. The threat of spreading influence of the USA in the region and risking *national security* of China.
3. Domestic resonance to Mao’s implementation of Cultural Revolution.

For Vietnam, national liberation and national reunification was still the most important revolutionary task, therefore Vietnam attempted, in period of 1953-1965, to make use of international aid, and tried to keep solidarity with both China and USSR⁷⁵. Vietnam considered the support of China as of very significance and tried to be not alone in the struggle with the US, these included both financial and military aid from China. China did not hesitate to send 320.000 military related personal in 1965-1969 to Vietnam (Womack, 2006:176). Mutual benefits had been put in scale for both Vietnam and China.

Nevertheless, Vietnam had to face the position on the Sino-Soviet split (1960-1963), meanwhile North and South of Vietnam was still separated. Womack (2006:177) remarked about the situation as follows “...from Vietnam’s perspective the Sino-Soviet split was most regrettable, and even when it sided with China before 1965 it did not encourage international divisiveness.” Vietnam at the time had to choose a *neutrality policy* or a “*leaning on one side*”.

⁷³ Vietnam Workers Party (VWP) was the old name since 1951. Since 1976 VWP changed its name as Communist Party of Vietnam.

⁷⁴ Womack, B. (2006). *China and Vietnam: the Politics of Asymmetry*. Cambridge University Press. p.163

⁷⁵ Vu Duong Huan (2002). *Ngoại giao Việt Nam hiện đại vì Sự nghiệp đổi mới 1975-2002* (Modern Diplomacy for the cause of Đổi mới 1975-2002). Hanoi: Institute for International Relations. p.39

- **Period 1976-1985**

In 1972 Richard M. Nixon visited China. This visit marked a rift in both country relationship and meant to Vietnam as a betrayal. It was a very critical situation for Vietnam and also marked beginning **tensions**, and later on led to **direct confrontation**-military clash in 1979. Initially, China encouraged the US to restore economic relations with Vietnam⁷⁶ and called for peaceful negotiations between Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge⁷⁷. Yet Vietnam acted radically declaring its determination against Chinese hegemony in the Constitution 1980 and Document of the 5th Party Congress (Vu Duong Huan, 2002:51). Vietnam decided to incline to “**leaning on one side**” (*nhất biên đảo*) policy and considered Soviet Union as “cornerstones”⁷⁸ because China supported the Khmer Rouge. At the meantime, Soviet Union was standing firmly behind Vietnam in solving issue with Cambodia. Other than that Vietnam had high expectation about continuous aid of Soviet Union and other countries in the socialist block after the wartime.

After the great victory in 1975, the “illusions of victory” overwhelmed the atmosphere in the whole country for a long time. “The context of the “outer sleeve” of diplomatic ritual and historical common sense was changed completely by victory, and the enforced intimacy of wartime has suppressed rather than neutralized concrete problems in the relationship.”⁷⁹ This “leaning on one side” policy of Vietnam was later on assessed as a mistake by the CPV⁸⁰. China started to set sanctions against Vietnam. Followed up this reaction were the rhetoric propagandas against each other. Both Vietnamese and Chinese living on the borders were suffered from daily agitated propagandas on radio speakers. **Hostile atmospheres** dominated the two countries from 1976-1979, and until lagging on until normalization in 1991. Deng Xiaoping’s intension to “*teach Hanoi a lesson*”⁸¹ was then realized by China’s invasion of Vietnam in February 1979. This invasion of China in Vietnam was explained by China with four explicit issues:

⁷⁶ Ross, S. R. (1988). *The Indochina Tangle: China’s Vietnam policy, 1975-1979*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.15. Also quoted in Womack (2006)

⁷⁷ Qiang, Zhai (2000). *China and Vietnam wars, 1950-1075*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. p.212. Also quoted in Womack (2006)

⁷⁸ Document of 5th Congress of CPV in 1982. p.35

⁷⁹ Womack, B. (2006). *China and Vietnam: the Politics of Asymmetry*. Cambridge University Press. p.189

⁸⁰ Vu Duong Huan (2002). *Ngoại giao Việt Nam hiện đại vì Sự nghiệp đổi mới 1975-2002* (Modern Diplomacy for the cause of Đổi mới 1975-2002). Hanoi: Institute for International Relations. p.51

⁸¹ See Chen, Jian (1995). “China’s involvement in Vietnam War, 1964.69.” in: *The China Quarterly*, No. 142. pp. 356-387

Vietnam's alliance with Soviet Union; the occupation of Vietnam in Cambodia; territorial disagreement, and the mistreatment of Vietnam towards ethnic Chinese. The short bloody border war taught not only Vietnam but also China had to learn for itself a big lesson: *security in the region and solidarity with the periphery and neighboring country.*

4.2.3. Vietnam - U.S relations

The relationship between Vietnam and the USA is substantially different from that of Vietnam and other super powers. History of America in the cold world has marked a black spot when the North of Vietnam claimed Spring Victory in 30.4.1975. This end the America's longest war (1950-1975)⁸². Robert S. Mc Namara (1995) has regrettably said about Vietnam war:

We all make mistakes. We know we make mistakes. I don't know any military commander, who is honest, who would say he has not made a mistake. There's a wonderful phrase: 'the fog of war.' What "the fog of war" means is: war is so complex it's beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend all the variables. Our judgment, our understanding, are not adequate. And we kill people unnecessarily.⁸³

Vietnam War is a name known worldwide, also called as “*Cuộc kháng chiến chống Đế quốc Mỹ của nhân dân Việt Nam*” (Vietnamese struggle against American Imperialists) or the Second Indochina War. Whichever name it is called, this was the most painful and bitter era for both peoples and nations. It left Vietnam with massive destruction, cost millions of lives and burdens of victims of Agent Orange for generations of Vietnamese. The war has not only divided the American society but also has been an obsession for even today American survivors.

Vietnam War was considered as product of Cold War, the ideological contradiction between the Capitalists and Socialists. Analyzing it in this sense, Vietnam War was seen a “proxy war” between the United States, its Western allies (the war was supposed to be one of their efforts to prevent the spread of communism in the Third World) and Soviet Union and China (those who supported Vietnam with a perception of protecting Socialism and against Imperialism). But for many Vietnamese, the war was their “just war” to secure their basic rights of independence, freedom and national

⁸² This is also a title of the book by Herring, G.C (1979). *America's longest war: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. New York/Chichester/Brisbane/Toronto: John Wiley & Son

⁸³ Also quoted in <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2009/07/robert-mcnamara-an-architect-of-vietnam-war-dies-at-93.html>

integrity, not a proxy war between Communists and the Capitalists. Forced into an asymmetric war with a superpower, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and its people smartly conducted a people's war which took advantage of the Cold War situation to win from its communist allies. That is why the victory of Vietnam was not the defeat of the American's military strength, but the defeat of their "will of aggression".

In short, the time of 1950-1975 has been seen as the darkest period in the history of relations between Vietnam and the U.S. After 1975, The United States continued to apply hostile and restraint policies. Economic blockade and trade embargo was not released until the year 1994.

The **period 1975-1985** witnessed a continuity of **stalemate** relationship and characterized with a mixture of both **struggle and cooperation** between two countries. Due to its economic downturn, military failure in Vietnam and lost of public's trust, the U.S had to readjust its global strategy. Vietnam set up its priority for a national reconstruction strategy. The 24th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, September 1975 reaffirmed:

To complete national reunification, to bring all the country rapidly, steadily, and firmly to socialism, the North must continue to push forward the construction of socialism and the improvement of the socialist relations of production; the South must carry out socialist reforms at the same time with the socialist construction.⁸⁴

Following this ideology, Vietnam was clinched to Soviet Union and still considered U.S as a "basic long-term enemy". However, both sides attempted to sit on table for negotiations on issue of POW/MIA (Prisoners of War and Missing in Action)⁸⁵. This action showed the adjustment of Vietnam in its foreign policy toward America but above all it is tolerance of the Vietnamese people who never forget the past but looking forwards to a new future. The question still remained: how many lost Vietnamese citizens will be found?

⁸⁴ Quoted in Luu Van Loi (2006). *Fifty years of Vietnamese Diplomacy, 1945-1995*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.307

⁸⁵ According to database from Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personal Office (DPMO), around 1740 American solders were believed missing in Vietnam War. Since 1985, Vietnam has officially allowed the American television to enter Vietnam and negotiated with the U.S about this issue. Since then, numbers of American lost soldiers were found and brought home to the U.S.

4.3. Summary

At the beginning of Vietnam War, main essence of Vietnamese foreign policy was principally determined by both national interests: national liberation and reunification and at the same time serving the international socialism. “Like domestic policy, foreign policy required the reconciliation of ideology and nationalism.”⁸⁶ Vietnam had tried at most in the period of Cold War to National security has been always at Vietnamese primary foreign policy concerns. As proved above, **Realism** could be seen as dominant theory in Vietnamese foreign relations towards the super powers. In this context, “**external balancing**”⁸⁷ has been regarded as mostly practiced strategy.

⁸⁶ See remarks at <http://countrystudies.us/vietnam/58.htm>

⁸⁷ In his article about “Strategy and Evolution of Vietnam’s China policy”, Alexander L.Vuving (2006) clarified two forms of “Balancing”. 1. “**External balancing**” was described by Vuving (2006) as a form of a state’s response to threats posed by another state. This involves building alliances with third parties on the international stage. 2. “**Internal balancing**” is a way where a country builds up its domestic strengths to enhance its preparedness.

Chapter 5: What is **Đổi mới**⁸⁸ and how has it been done?

5.1. Determinants leading to **Đổi mới**?

“Domestic agendas now have a large impact on the foreign policy choices of all the great powers..... Foreign policy choices seem likely to be dictated by domestic concerns.” (Giffiths, O’Callaghan, Roach, 2002:135). Foreign policy reflects domestic policy, and in many cases, foreign policy is to serve domestic policy. In order to understand about Vietnamese foreign policy since 1986, it is always noteworthy to look at the domestic policy of the country.

The purpose of this part is to provide an adequate explanation for a phenomenal experience in Vietnam: **Đổi mới** since 1986. What is “**Đổi mới**”? Why Vietnam adopted economic reforms and made their transition to market-based economy? How has it been carried out?

First of all, let’s have a look at the fundamental characteristics which lead up Vietnam to the reform. I will divide them into domestic situation and international factors.

5.1.1. Internal economic situation

Đổi mới means “renovation” or “reform” in Vietnamese. It should be first understood with “reform of rethinking” and starting with reform of national economy. Domestic problems of Vietnam have been seen by Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006:3-37), due to:

Firstly, an underdevelopment of economy and huge difference between the North and the South in terms of economic institutions. After Vietnamese reunification in 1975, an economic crisis and serious food shortages became increasingly problematic for the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). The inflation is even reaching 300%. By then it had become clear, that “the root of economic success” was qualitatively different

⁸⁸ In some other documents, **Đổi mới** is translated as “Renovation” because in their point of view, in terms of meaning, Renovation is not the same as all Refoms. Although reforms also bring about certain quality of changes in social life, there are only individual and partial changes. For them Renovations brings about comprehensive changes that lead to changes in development model. But in my Thesis, **Đổi mới** is more refers to economic reform. Therefore, I would prefer to use the word Reform to imply the meaning of **Đổi mới**.

from the “root of victory in the war” (Van Arkadi and Boi, 1992). Vietnam has won the war but the country stood in front of much ruins and challenges for national reconstruction. This was mainly due to the fact that the country has been strongly destroyed by many long-lasting conflicts. The U.S.-imposed trade and aid embargo until 1994. The other difficulties are that the government had converting the agricultural sector to socialist collectivism. The following remarks by Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006:3-37) show a clear picture of Vietnamese economic situation.

- Vietnam remained a backward agricultural economy participated by 80% of the population with 70% of the labours living mainly on agricultural production in rural areas. They largely relied on traditional manual techniques, which resulted in low labour productivity. The yearly agricultural output was not enough for subsistence. Average food per capita (calculated according to the amount of unhusked rice) was around 300 kilograms per person per year. Year after year, the State had to import hundreds of thousands tons of food, but many peasant families still suffered continuous food shortage. Vietnam was one of the world’s poorest countries in the world in 1990 with GDP (General Domestic Product)
- Per capita figures of about 200 US dollars.
- The incompetence of the economy was shown primarily in the low gross product per capital.
- The economy did not produce enough food for the subsistence of the population, let alone the possibility that it could accumulate for extensive reproduction.
- The underdevelopment and incompetence of the economy inevitably led to a small and weak foreign trade, and constant trade deficit. International trade relations were largely performed with socialist countries entirely on State-to-State basis of trade agreements, protocols on exchanges of goods and payments, agreements on loans and aids. Price of goods and services was determined on principle of agreements between governments....This situation was one of the causes leading to the increase of foreign debts; at the beginning of the 1980s, total foreign debts were already equivalent to annual GNP.⁸⁹

Secondly, mechanism of central planning was considered as a big mistake and main contributor to low economic development. This mechanism has three common features:

- The economy based on the regime of public ownership of the means of production
- The State, instead of market, decided the whole production process (What, how and for whom to produce). Applied the policy

⁸⁹ See Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006). *Economic reform in Vietnam and China: A comparative study*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House. pp. 3-37

(Block the river and ban the market). It means each province produce and consume their own products, there is absolute no exchange or trading.

- Wealth was distributed according to labour contribution.

Apparently, State held monopoly over managing and performing all means of production and foreign trade activities. The relation between State and economic establishment was that of allocation and delivery. Private economy is completely eliminated. There are only two types of ownership: one is national ownership (**State businesses**) and the other is collective ownership (**cooperatives**). Market and price were removed from the process of making production decision. As a consequence, Vietnam experienced a galloping inflation which reached over 700%. Many northern provinces in Vietnam suffered from hunger. The country stepped out of a long wars, now faced another enemies, which Ho Chi Minh called: “hunger and illiteracy” (Giặc đói và Giặc dốt)⁹⁰. And Thayer and Seth Mydans called it as “*winning the war and loosing the peace*”⁹¹ The country’s backwardness set at the time a crux for the CPV.

5.1.2. Influence of international factors

Besides the internal problems, changes in external environment was also decisive factors. The hereunder mentioned notable international events are regarded as motives leading to Đổi mới:

Firstly, the Perestroika (reform) and Glasnost (transparency)⁹² in the USSR was a great encourage on the cause of reform in Vietnam. Perestroika set up bold political and economic reforms that significantly changed the fundamentals of the socialism of the past (Tsuboi, 2007). It was considered as by Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006: 32) as the “spirit” which at least helps Vietnam endeavour to look for solutions to the deadlocks arising from the realities.

Secondly, the economic crisis of the countries in Eastern Europe in the 1980s was the result of previous years of ineffectiveness and stagnancy of these economies. This

⁹⁰ See Ho Chi Minh Toàn tập . Hanoi: Nhà Xuất bản Chính trị quốc Gia (National Political Publishing House)

⁹¹ Thayer (1999) and Mydans (2000). “Vietnam today: a different War”
http://www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_capitalism.html

⁹² Perestroika was political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union which was first introduced by the Soviet leader M. Gorbachev.

consequence had made them step up with ideas of economical reforms Poland, Hungary, GDR etc. The spirit of NEP (New Economic Policy) was notably taken into account.

Thirdly, the economic reform in China⁹³ has obviously strong impact on Vietnam. Starting ten years earlier than Vietnam, China gradually found its own way of development which meets requirement of Chinese situation. Vietnam, up to now, still attempts to draw as many lessons for itself from each move of the giant neighbour. Both successes and mistakes of China are carefully studied by Vietnam. This is due to the fact that the two Asian countries share lots of common cultural identities. Both are agriculture country with over grounded population.

Seen in this light, it can be said that while casting a sidelong glance at the developments that could be seen in China and the Soviet Union, which were ahead of Vietnam in terms of socialism, Vietnam's Đổi mới Policy was commenced subsequently (Tsuboi, 2007).

History of international politics has shown us that interdependence between states of today's world is different than those in the Cold War time. The difference in the bipolarity world order is that one had to clearly choose on which side it would stand along. In other words, Ideological paradigm played important role in decision-making of a state. Interactions and reactions of the great powers made member country held the breath, when the first time in history nuclear weapon was put on the military race. But when this ideological paradigm was broke up, it left much to do for the countries, those who were once on the side of the Soviet Union. And Vietnam was, by no means, could get away from this circle of impact. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern block in 1989-1991 had forced Vietnam to decide to stand on its own feet.

5.2. Economic reform: how has it been done?

It was in December 1986, at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam that the CPV has decided to launch Đổi mới. Before Đổi mới, Vietnamese economy operated under a central planning mechanism, the country suffered strongly from

⁹³ The neighboring China has introduced a very similar "reform and openness" line under the leadership of Deng Xiao Ping in 1978.

economic crisis, the question raised for the CPV was that: ***Transition to what system?*** An important summary by Guo (2006) about transition of political and economic systems in Vietnam should be paid much attention:

Table 2.3 Transition of political and economic systems in Vietnam

Years	Political System	Power	Economic System
1945-1954	North – Democratic Republic of Vietnam	North – Vietnam Worker’s Party	North – Soviet type central planning and war economy
	South – Under the French Protectorate	South – French Rule	South – Colonial economy
1954-1963	North – Democratic Republic of Vietnam	North – Communist Party of Vietnam	North – Soviet type central planning and war economy
	South – Republic of Vietnam	South – U.S. backed government under Ngo Dinh Diem	South – Capitalist market economy
1963-1975	North – Democratic Republic of Vietnam	North – Communist Party of Vietnam	North – Soviet type central planning and war economy
	South – Republic of Vietnam	South – Military Regime under President Thieu	South – Capitalist market economy
1976-1979	Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Vietnam Communist Party	Attempt to make a transition toward socialism in the south to create a unified Soviet type central planning
1979-1986	Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Vietnam Communist Party	Liberalization and introduction of market mechanism
1986-present	Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Vietnam Communist Party	Transition to “socialist-oriented market economy”

The 6th Congress of the CPV (1986) has highlighted the followings:

Reform of the economic system: from a centralized economy to a multi-sectoral economy, through which the inherent capacity of each sector would be released.

Transition to „**socialist-oriented market economy under State management**“⁹⁴

A comprehensive agenda of Đổi mới summarized by Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006:117) shows us details of the implementation of economic reform in Vietnam.

Reform: A Comprehensive development agenda

1. Main goals and directions:

- Transforming the command economy to a market economy following socialist orientation under State management;
- Building a democratic society ruled by law; in that society, the State is owned by, decided by, and working for the people;
- Implementing the open-door policy, intensifying cooperation and developing relations with countries in the spirit that Vietnam wishes to become friends of all nations for mutual benefit of development.

The three goals and directions were the foundation for determining the specific priorities and development targets of the country in the last 15 years.

2. Central development tasks:

- Carrying out industrialisation and modernisation

3. The cornerstones of the development strategy

- Developing the economy fast and solidly
- Keeping political and social situations stable
- Speeding up liberalisation and strengthening international integration.

Basically, the priority target of the Vietnam's reform at initial stage was to *get out of economic crisis* and *narrowing the gap* between Vietnam and the countries in the region. One of the most important characteristics of the reform was the acceptance of

⁹⁴ Communist Party of Vietnam (1986): *Documents of the 8th National Congress*. Hanoi: Nhà Xuất bản Chính trị quốc gia (National political Publishing House).p. 88

Multi-sectoral economy which composes of 5 different groups: **state sectors** (Kinh tế nhà nước), **private sectors** (Kinh tế tư nhân), **collective economy** (Kinh tế tập thể), **state capitalist economy** (Kinh tế tư bản nhà nước), **joint venture sectors** (kinh tế có vốn đầu tư nước ngoài"): **a mixture formed economy.**

Vietnam in an agriculture country in which more than 80 percent of economy stems from agricultural production. A very decisive policy in Đổi mới was set forth is **Land reform**. There is not any more the time when state gave order to each province what sort of products they should produce. A farmer can now choose what crops he is going to grow, and he will decide this based on the availability, price, and demand of the seed (Nugent, 1996:67). The farmer also now knows that the more crops he grows the more profit he will be able to keep for himself (Nugent, 1996:67). **The overall effect is that the farmer is now working for himself, and not for the state** (Nugent, 1996:67). Another arguable positive factor is the increasing rates of farmers buying mechanized equipment such as mechanized ploughs, and threshing machines that produce higher yields (Nugent, 1996:70). *Land law* was issued: Agricultural policies that allowed for long term land use rights and greater freedom to buy inputs and products offered by markets.

Another new character in Economic reform was also the decentralization of state economic management, which allowed state industries some local autonomy. Elimination of the State's monopoly in foreign trade was suggested and **Administrative reform** was very rash implemented.

Let's have a look at the Reform Schedule from 1979 to 2000 by Le Huu Tang and Liu Han Yue (2006:118-119) which will depict very details of reform programs and achievements gained in each period.

Year	Main reforms	Major developments and achievements
1979	The three-part planning regime was applied to state owned enterprises (SOEs)	The autonomy of the SOEs increased on the basis of market relations
1981	The regime of Contract No100 (Khoán 100) ⁹⁵ was applied to farming households	Farmers were given some autonomy but responsible for their final products
1985	Monetary reform	Inflation galloped; the two-price mechanism and the regime of price fixing according to plan gradually lost effects.
1986	The 6 th Congress of the CPV announced Đổi mới policy	Inflation galloped at 774%
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign investment law and land law were issued; - The regime of market price started effect 	Inflation continued to galloped at more than 400%
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-tier banking system⁹⁶ was established - The decision No 10 on rights farming households to use their agriculture land was promulgated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first foreign joint venture was approved • Total export valued reached 1 billion USD
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The dual pricing system⁹⁷ was abolished - Goods limitation were discarded, except for 10 export items and 14 export items -The exchange rate system was unified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam became the world's third best rice exporter • High inflation was controlled
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The foreign investment law was emended - Ordinance on central bank and state owned commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP growth stood at 8.3% • Over 20 million tons of food was produced • Over 2 million tones of crude oil was exported • FDI capital registered reached more

⁹⁵ Farmers in Vietnam were obliged to participate in Hợp Tác Xã (Coperatives). "Khoan 100" (Contract 100) was a Directive 100 of the CPV (1981) on renovating contracting methods, expanding output contracts to groups and individual farmers in agricultural cooperatives. The principle is that if the output exceeded the contract target, the surplus went to the cooperative member. But later on, this Contract displayed limitations (The cooperatives were still tied up within umbrella of heavy bureaucracy, central - run mechanism, the income of farmer were still very low).

⁹⁶ Details about "Two-tier banking system" see Le Minh Tam (2000). "Reforming Vietnam's Banking System: Learning from Singapore's Model" available at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/vr52000.pdf>

⁹⁷ It was also called as "The two-prices system" which was applied to discriminate domestic and foreign firms, charging foreign tourists and investors with higher prices than the native people.

	<p>banks, credit organizations took effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate law came into practice, creating foundation for limited liability companies and joint ventures 	<p>than 1 billion USD</p>
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private companies were allowed to handle direct import and export activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial sector grew at 9%
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Constitution was promulgated. Multi-sectored economy was officially recognized by the Constitution - Pilot equitization of enterprises was done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total registered FDI stood at 5 billion USD • The literacy rate of the population was over 86.6% • The number of SOEs (State owned Enterprises) decreased, the number of private enterprises rose sharply
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land law was amended - Law on bankruptcy and environment was issued - The US embargo against Vietnam was removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with international donors was established
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour law was issued - Export licenses were removed for almost all types of export good, except for rice, wood and crude oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total registered FDI was 10 billion USD
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on SOEs came into effect - The number of imported goods previously managed by quotas was reduced to 7 types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam became an ASEAN member • GDP Growth rate hit the highest ever peak of 9.54% • Vietnam became AFTA member • Normalization relationship with the USA
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on industrial property protection - Large scale equitization of SOEs was carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP rose by 9.34% • Total registered FDI reached 27 billion USD
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All domestic rice trade limitations were ridded - Private economic sector was allowed to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three million tons of rice was exported • Exported crude oil stood at 10 million tons

	make direct rice export	
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Directive No 37 came into force, giving enterprises to make import or export - The exchange rate was adjusted according to market development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.5 million tons of rice was exported • The growth rate was lowest in the 1990s (4.85%)
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprises law was promulgated and enforced - The State bank controls interest rates according to “basic interest rates” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.5000 new enterprises were established, creating nearly 300.000 jobs • The growth rate was restored to 6.75%

All in all, the economy of Vietnam has gained significant achievement during *Đổi mới* process. People in Vietnam at the beginning of 1990s did not anymore suffer from Hunger. The reform has lifted the country out of economic crisis. The two important progresses have been made through *Đổi mới* are: 1, improved the ***economic structure*** and 2, changes in ***economic operation mechanism***.⁹⁸ After more than 20 years of *Đổi mới*, Vietnam has been noted with profound economic development and especially with its impressing economic growth rate at 8%. Despite of economic crisis since 2008, Vietnam’ economic growth rate still maintains 5,3%⁹⁹.

Figures by the General statistics Office below shows us some main economic development during *Đổi mới* process 1989-2000 (%)¹⁰⁰:

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
GDP Growth	4.7	5.1	5.9	8.6	8.1	8.8	9.5	9.3	8.1	5.8	4.8	6.7
Export Growth	67.4	23.5	-13.2	23.7	15.7	35.8	34.6	33.1	23.3	1.9	23.3	24.0
Import Growth	-6.9	7.3	-15.0	8.7	54.4	48.5	40.0	36.7	5.4	-0.8	1.1	31.0
Inflation	34.7	67.5	67.6	17.5	5.2	14.4	12.7	4.5	3.6	9.2	0.1	-0.6

⁹⁸ Le Huu Tang & Luu Han Yue (2006). *Economic reform in Vietnam and China: A comparative study*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.121

⁹⁹ World Bank report http://www.worldbank.org.vn/publication/pub_pdf/VDR2001v.pdf

or in <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/rof06/rof06am1.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Souce: General Statistics Office, see http://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=491 Also cited in Le Huu Tang & Lui Han Yue (2006:121)

After decades of hard working and commitments, Đổi mới launched by the Vietnamese Government since 1986 has transformed Vietnam into one of the most dynamic emerging markets in the world. Vietnam's growth domestic product (GDP) growth is expected to reach 8.5% in 2007, making it the second fastest growing economy in Asia after China.¹⁰¹.

The Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress of the CPV in 1986 was not limited to the economic reform; it also emphasized the importance of the entire party and state apparatus. As described in the political report adopted by the congress, the leadership had failed to renew itself. The organs of the state as well as the party had been growing "too big" and "overlapping". So, for many scholars, talking about political reform in Vietnam it means more about administrative reform. For others, the important political implication to be drawn out from their economic reform is that the legitimacy of the political system has shifted. Koh (2000) has viewed the shift in the legitimacy in Vietnam as follows:

Previous values of legitimacy	Present values of legitimacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marxism-Leninism - Nationalism based on some xenophobia tied to long history of foreign invasion - State role in economy predominant, followed by collective's role. Private sector actively discouraged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ho Chi Minh Thought - it is actually nationalism originating from national liberation, with sprinkle of Marxism-Leninism - Role of market economy without conceding totally the state's role - Private economy encouraged together with collective economy, state role in production still evolving.

Like the big brother China, who went ahead with open-door policy, Vietnam advocated carrying out economic reform first, followed by "gradual political reform" latter. This was very different from Russia and some Eastern European countries, which carried out administrative political and institutional reform while a new economic model was not existing. With its own historical suffering a very long time under many fierce wars, Vietnam was more demanding for "first food, then democracy"¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ See Cheah King Yoong, "Đổi mới transforms Vietnam" available at <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/11/26/business/19558548&sec=business>

¹⁰² See Tam Pham (2007). "First food , then democracy for Vietnam", in: Asia Times online, at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/IH17Ae02.html

Đổi mới is very well-known for its achievement of bringing Vietnam to get out of crisis, a stable social-economic development and political stability. And most of all the quality of the people has been significantly improved. Why did it work in Vietnam?. I would like to conclude this part by pointing out some main reasons why this reform program has been successfully carried out:

Firstly, reform of thinking, especially economic thinking, was the most important step which made Đổi mới possible. It is actually a struggle between new and old in many areas, but first and for most is in economy. It is also a very hard struggle between progressiveness and backwardness, a struggle against conservative thinking which advocated a return to the old familiar mechanism. The reality has been recognized by the CPV and Vietnamese people themselves is that: *Vietnam was falling behind and it has to try to catch up with other countries in the region.* And national independence should be absolutely separated with national building and sustainable development. The core point focuses on change from absolute ownership of State and collective mechanism to multi-sector economy with diversified ownership and forms of distribution (democratizing economy). State, at the same time, play important role of flexible management.

Secondly, the reform started from **grassroots**. The reform started first of all in agriculture with Land law. Vietnam's agriculture accounts for more than 80% of the workforce. Therefore, economic reform had to start first from households to households.

Thirdly, the basic **legal system** has been increasingly improved to build a law-governed state. And this legal system facilitates foreign investments.

Fourthly, Đổi mới also attempts to change the view of the world and the regions towards Vietnam. It means Vietnam itself had to change its perception in considering its path for integration into the region and world economy. And one of the most important tasks was to get out of isolation and embargo. **Opening policy** (Chính sách mở cửa) was a consequence of long discussions.

Fifthly, Vietnam started economic reform ten years after China, and other Eastern European countries. Experiences have been carefully scrutinized. For Vietnam, learning lessons and avoiding previous mistakes are advantages during implementation of economic reform process.

To sum up, I would like to quote an assessment by Mr. Vu Khoan, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam (2002-2006) about the success of *Đổi mới* as “Great attention has been paid to maintaining harmony between economic and social development and political and social stability, between economic development and social equity, between market mechanism transformation and state regulation at the macro level, and between internal resource maximization and international cooperation. Thanks to these principles, Vietnam has recorded great achievements, both internally and externally.”¹⁰³

5.3. Problems brought up by *Đổi mới*

Obviously, lives of Vietnamese people have been improved after *Đổi mới*. Nevertheless, Vietnam has to confront with problems followed this policy such as¹⁰⁴:

- Corruption
- Environmental pollution
- Increasing gap between the Rich and the Poor
- Greater competition regionally and internationally
- Public administration reform
- Social security issues
- Need to invest in science and technology and keep current with market needs in education and training
- Land disputes, inadequate legal and judicial reform
- Human trafficking, labor migration and strikes (more than a million new workers annually)

In practice, Vietnam ought to face with contradiction between ***rapid growth*** and ***sustainable development***, between ***money*** and ***ideology***. Guo (2006:6) is partly correct when he remarks about the choice of policy in the Asian countries, including Vietnam : “In Asian communist countries, the choice of reform policy have been largely constrained by the leadership’s perception of the necessity for economic growth and the need for maintenance of the communist party’s power and preservation of party-

¹⁰³ <http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/news/story.php?d=20041015160616>

¹⁰⁴ The problems which Vietnam has to confront based on the reckoning by Dr. Kim Ninh’s presentation, available at...

state interests, and therefore it has been the interplay between politics and economics or state and market that had led these Asian countries to adopt gradualist approaches to their reforms”.

Chapter 6: Vietnam's Foreign policy since 1986: a great shift

Domestic-international linkage is one of the most important paradigms in the field of foreign policy making (Zhao, 2005: 123). The above analysis has demonstrated the great domestic strategy-Đổi mới which focuses much on the economic reform, in other words, a gradual liberation of national economy. But the reform was not only limited in economic packages, the success of Đổi mới subordinates to radical changes in foreign policy. Taking the theory of policy analysis (mentioned in Chapter 2, part 2) as a basis, this part aims to answer the two main questions: What are determinants for changes in Vietnamese foreign policy since 1986; What are main contents in Vietnamese foreign policy adjustments? Who are the decision-makers?

6.1. Determinants leading to changes in Vietnam's foreign policy

Entering a new era of globalization, each state has to face with new challenges in finding a plausible developmental strategy. In this part, I would like to point out some external factors, importantly trigger adjustment of Vietnamese foreign policy.

6.1.1. Influence of international environment

Firstly, the **collapse of Soviet Union** by the end of 1991 was a historical event, marking a turning point for all the Communist countries. This event, like many other western scholars called as “a stunning metamorphosis” for the Communists. It was the demise of the traditional west-versus-east antagonism. “Our jaws can not drop any lower”¹⁰⁵ showed the shocks of many observers. The upheaval has ended the Cold War and affected every aspect of international politics and the international system. Numbers of lessons have been drawn for those who were ever on the side of the Soviet Union. But the first lesson above all is learning to “stand on their own feet”-relying on their domestic strength. At the same time, they must also well conceive how to deal with other great nations in globalization time. Among those who have to adjust their foreign policy, Vietnam is not an exclusive case.

¹⁰⁵ The saying by Ronald Linden of Radio Free Europe, quoted in “The collapse of Communism” edited by Bernard Gwertzman and Michael T. Kaufman (1990). Times Book-Random House

Secondly, in the post-era Cold War, **Globalization process** has a very strong impact on adjustment of most nation-state's foreign policy. Some argues that new trends in international relations such as peace, stability, cooperation and sustainable development are essential desires of most of nations. Followed up are the topics of human rights, freedom and peace, welfare and security, democracy and rule of law, solidarity and justice.

However, Kirt (2006:251) notes that the world system in the post-Cold War era is very fragile and it also operates with full susceptibility which also contains many violent conflicts. Multi-polarity replaces the bipolarity means the increase of local liberalization movements, and upsurge of local and regional crises. Breakthroughs in science and technology in the era of globalization bring individuals and nations closer. Along with that, global issues can not be tackled by one state, thus, require responsibility and multilateral approaches of many nations and international actors. Globalization means also "**economization**" and as a result, it increases the interdependence among nations. We have witnessed a strong growing of regionalism in every part of the world (the United Nations, the European Union, the ASEAN, WTO, IMF, LAS (League of Arap States), AU (African Union) etc). Apparently, for nation states and international actors, the question of adjustment of grand strategy and foreign policy is put at the center, because a state has to adapt with new changing environment. It has to evolve. Evolvement means mostly "reform". Why I say "mostly" but not "every" because if we look at North Korea then this assessment seems not to really make sense. Then, a question is raised: does it make sense for the case of Vietnam? The answer will be "yes" and "not yet". "Yes" because there have been significant changes in perception of the governing elites¹⁰⁶. And **Đổi mới** is a grand strategy, as a result of this new perception. "Not yet" because **Đổi mới** concentrates much on reform of economic, juridical and administration. Political reform is a question which is still on discussion. This is due to the fact that Vietnam, for many decades, has been once prone to opinion that "the political independence of the country is depends largely on its economic independence"¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ See Vuving (2005). Shaping of Foreign Policy: Vietnamese grand strategy after the cold war

¹⁰⁷ Dang, Duc Nam et. al. (ed.) (1991). Some aspects of the economic reform in Vietnam. Also quoted in Dahn, H. (1995). "Vietnam foreign policy and its implication for **Đổi mới**", in: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Asienkunde. No. 56. pp. 29-54

Thirdly, For foreign policy makers, changing *policy behaviors of great powers* toward each other and their interactions after the Cold War can not be underestimated. “The fight for power in the world has changed from the political-military field to a race for economic and technological power. Vietnam needs to improve its external relations and re-integrate into the world community”¹⁰⁸

After the Cold War, much have been discussed that the United States is the only superpower in international system. Nevertheless, the last decades illustrates that the involvement of the U.S in Afghanistan and Iraq plus the negative pokes of financial crisis which accretes an image of “declined” America. Meanwhile, the rising of China and its ambitious strategy withdraw much world’s attention. Though China tries to paint a “benign power”, we have seen that China’s role and influence in international arena has been increasingly affirmed. A “rising power” makes the U.S and others act with vigilance. The European Union substantially “run on its marathon” of integration but accumulate its strength with both economic and political influences. Nowadays, Europe is highly admired by its good images of welfare, a strong and stable social security system for the developing world. Looking at other continents, one can not deny significant roles of the Japan, Russia and India in international relations. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh remarks:

The end of the Cold War, increasing global inter-dependence and the trans-border nature of many threats have made strategic concepts developed in a bi-polar world somewhat irrelevant. The United States is today the dominant economic, military, technological and cultural power. However, it can be anticipated that the European Union, Russia, China, Japan and India will consolidate their individual positions to play a global role. We must evolve a new paradigm of security cooperation relevant to an emerging multi-polar world in which global threats obtain global responses.¹⁰⁹

If standing on perception of multi-polarity order, a state, regardless small, medium and great powers, has to decide how should it behave to the others, ***a strategic partnership, a strategic ally, a competitor or a cooperative one?*** As a consequence, each state has to conform itself to meet the new challenges of the new era, both domestically and externally.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted by Dahm (1995).

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Bhaskar, C.U. (2007). „ Indian Foreign Policy orientation in the twenty-first century: Continuity and Change”, available at http://www.sueztosuva.org.au/south_asia/2006/Bhaskar.pdf

“Vietnam is a tragic land”¹¹⁰ who once was caught in an “intra-power struggle” and power competition of the big powers (Nguyen Hong Thach, 2000). The historical experience has taught the country’s policy-makers political acumen and the lesson that: the interplay between nation states, especially the great powers, and international organizations shows the fact that national foreign policy has to adopt more cooperative and integrative approaches. Multilateralism or working in a multilateral frame work have become principal aims of national foreign policy and practically create favorable conditions contributing to national interest. Reconciling national interest and international responsibility is a very fundamental task of national foreign policy.

6.1.2. Influence of domestic environment

Romain Kirt convincingly states that:

Foreign policy operates on the international level, but its agenda is grounded in the realm of domestic interests.

(Kirt, 2006:247)

Some scholars¹¹¹ argue that external assistance seems to play limited roles for the success of *Đổi mới*. Vietnam’s economic renovation is only partly determined by external factors. *Đổi mới* is in fact a product of domestic development. Therefore, foreign policy changes are mostly because of the changes in grand strategy which stem from new perception of the world view. But for the case of Vietnam, it is necessary to note that changes in Vietnamese foreign policy are due to **combination** of domestic, regional and international changes and domestic status was more dominant than the others¹¹².

This argument will be clarified by the following reasons:

Firstly, critical domestic situation in Vietnam in the 1980s of was initial determination. Coming back with the 1980s, we see that Vietnam suffered largely from international isolation. This reaction was partly due to “Vietnamese invasion”¹¹³ in

¹¹⁰ Nguyen Hong Thach (2000). Vietnam between China and the United States, 1950-1995. (Doctor’s thesis)

¹¹¹ Dahm (1995), Vuving (2005)

¹¹² See Chapter 5 (5.1.1) for details

¹¹³ For many Western and Chinese perception, the Vietnamese occupation in Cambodia from 1979 to 1989 was an „invasion“ and ambition of Indochina regional hegemony but for Vietnamese understanding, sending troops to Cambodia originated from security reason for both Cambodia and

Cambodia from 1979 until 1989. Vietnam depended much on relationship with the Soviet Union and its allies. Latter on Vietnam itself witnessed the collapse of the USSR, the Soviet-Chinese rapprochement and the political and economic reforms in the Eastern Europe, the economic open door policy of China and not less important is the signs of U.S in peaceful co-existence with China. Meanwhile, Vietnamese occupation in Cambodia became more “costly” for itself. Economic crisis situation of the country occurred and brought along much of burdens and debts. The Communists faced directly the questions from its own people: “what is the meaning of Victory? We have achieved national liberation but we are not liberated from hunger and poverty.”¹¹⁴ Those are encouraging factors to the CPV in adjusting their foreign policy in adaptability to international changes and getting out of its regional and international isolation. Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach has expressed that “Nowadays, a closed door foreign policy is suicide, and opening doors is one of the necessary conditions for economic development”¹¹⁵

In order to get out of long-standing economic problems, Vietnam had no other choice rather than broadening foreign relations. Apparently, the country, more than ever, needs a peaceful environment, a broader access to sources of financial investment, technical supports and know-how of other countries and international institutions.

Secondly, the changes in foreign policy of Vietnam since 1986 are due to a **new self-perception** and new assessment about the **worldview** of the ruling elites in Vietnam. This is the main presentation by Alexander Vuving (2006). He further argues that the decision of Vietnamese grand strategy is determined by two-camps which he calls the “anti-imperialists” and the “modernizers”. Therefore, the impact on changes in Vietnamese foreign policy-making since 1986 is basically due to the compromise, struggle or conciliation of the two camps.

The “modernizer” support Vietnam’s open door policy and integration to international community and global economy. This come from a perception of the group of Vietnamese leaders (most notably, such as Phan Chau Trinh, Vo Van Kiet, Nguyen Co Thach, Vo Nguyen Giap). For them the worldview is seen in a direction of national interest, interdependence and multi-polarity. In such a world situation Vietnam was backward and legged behind many nations. Vietnam, thus, had to launch the policy of

Vietnam, more specifically, to root out the Pol Pot regime and the rescued Cambodian people from genocide.

¹¹⁴ Nhan dan Newspaper, 1990.

¹¹⁵ Also quoted in Tri (1990:209)

modernization and industrialization. National foreign policy, as a result serves for this cause.

The “anti-imperialism” (most representatives are Le Duc Tho, Nguyen Van Linh, Le Duan, Doi Muoi, Le Kha Phieu, Nong Duc Manh) still maintain suspect about the United States. They perceived that the U.S, through its “peaceful evolution, still has intention of overthrowing socialist regime of Vietnam. The U.S other Western approaches, for them, mainly concentrate on the label of promoting democracy, human rights and religious freedom.

Due to ruling elites’ different worldview and self-perception, foreign policy of Vietnam has been accordingly adjusted since the end of 1980s. There can be a period of time the “modernizers” were more dominant than the others, but there was also times where the camp of “anti-imperialists” was taken advantages, especially in the cause of national liberation and national defense. Also according to Vuving (2006), radical changes in foreign policy, in favour of industrialization and modernization, was largely due to the a strong personalities of the leaders. Nguyen Co Thach and Vo Van Kiet were the two prominent for their both theory and strategy supporting modernization in Vietnam.

Thirdly, for the last 5 years, **civil society, intellectuals, think-tanks and internet** perform positive functions in the formulation of Vietnamese foreign policy-making. For the Western societies, intellectuals and think tanks play significant role in their national foreign policy directions. In Vietnam, through Đổi mới, the country underwent an open door policy and at the same time witnessed the emerging of civil society. With the science technological evolution, internet help intellectuals and think tanks express their opinion openly than before. They also have opportunities access to different sources, their assessments about worldview are, therefore not any more obsolete. On one hand, it is a challenge for Vietnamese state’s censorship. On the other hand, it creates a more open viewpoints and criticism about socio-economic and political issues of the country. One example is the electronic newspaper “Vietnamnet”, a very popular forum where many scholars and journalists express their opinions more open than the other electronic newspapers controlled by the Party and Government. They have been gradually put great influence on foreign policy-making in Vietnam. Much attention has

been paid to the growth of civil society by different papers by of both Vietnamese and foreign scholars¹¹⁶.

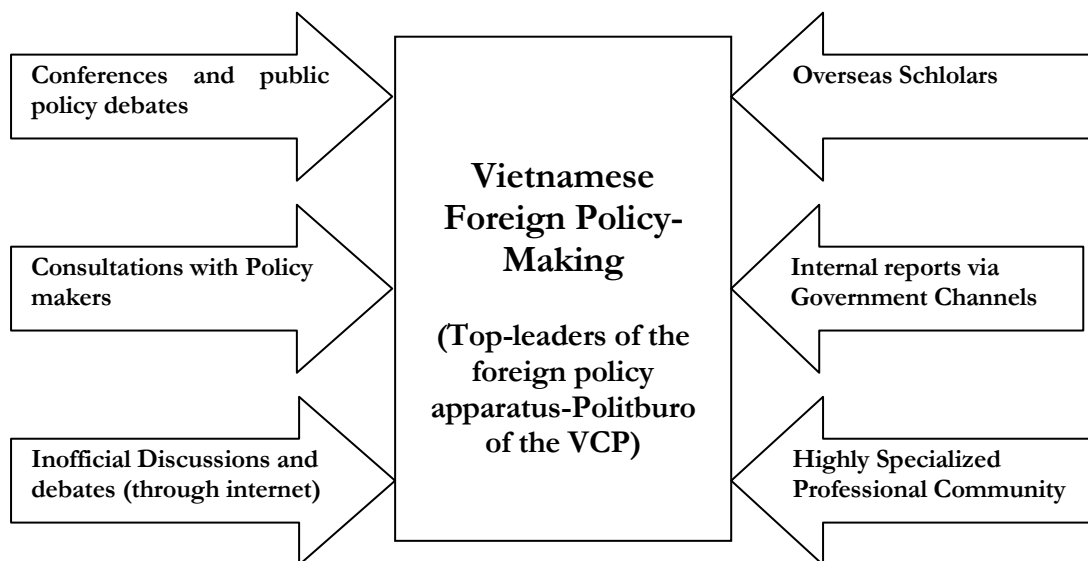
Not like the term “mass organizations” (*Các tổ chức quần chúng*)¹¹⁷, those are very close to the state, the term civil society (*xã hội dân sự*) is officially known not long ago in Vietnamese society and academic discourse. According to Salemink (2003:2-3), it has two distinct meanings in Vietnamese context. One includes economical meaning where civil society more refers to international benefactors and the other meaning refers to promotion of liberal democracy. Thayer (2008) points out some roles of civil society possibly challenge to the one-party rule, such as public criticism of Vietnam’s one-party state for not permitting political and religious freedom as well as human rights; and opening for more debates, for example, and encouraging the multi sites of contestation in National Assembly which, in reality, has been proceeding since 2005. According to Ủy ban Công tác về các tổ chức phi chính phủ nước ngoài (Committee for Foreign NGOs in Vietnam), there are more than 600 foreign NGOs operating in Vietnam. Those entities have been contributing not only to the socio-economic development but also to enhance international contacts, breaking the monopoly of the Department for Foreign Affairs of the CPV and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in dealing with foreign policy issues.

In Vietnam, intellectuals and think tanks are regarded as a part of periphery of policy making because in general, the making of foreign policy is largely in the hands of the Communist Party and State. Abuza (1997:310) notes that “Vietnamese foreign policy is decided by handful of senior Politburo officials”. Furthermore, Abuza (1997:329) points out that beside these officials, we find a proliferation of think tanks, institutes and research departments, with the Foreign Ministry and the connected Institute of International Relations providing effective input. Borrowing the analysis by Quansheng Zhao (2005). I would like to highlight the contribution of the intellectuals and think tanks in Vietnamese foreign policy-making through different channels as follows:

¹¹⁶ See Bach Tan Sinh (2001), Thayer (2008), Gita Sabharwal & Than Thi Thien Huong (2005), Russell J. Dalton, Nhu-Ngoc T. Ong (2003)

¹¹⁷ See Chapter 2, part 3.2.3.

Diagram 4: Contribution of channels from civil society, Intellectuals and Think tanks in Vietnamese Foreign policy-making



Remaining with certain limitations, these channels are not the decisive policy inputs in Vietnamese foreign policy-making, they are rather like formal and informal consultation entities. The fact is that there is still an inefficient use of resources provided by these institutes because of non-existence of comprehensive information sharing system between institutes and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that they provide decision makers advice on possible results of various causes of action; the nature of inter-linkages between issues and defining the self-interest of a state or the factions within it (Zhao, 2005:135). During its international integration, Vietnam's foreign policy is surely not only limited in political, economic, security and strategic but also concerning issues such as culture, human rights, democracy and international institutions. Those various channels have been assisting the bureaucrats with profound contribution. Học viện Chính trị Quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh (Ho Chi Minh National Institute of Administration and Politics)¹¹⁸ under direction of Communist Party of Vietnam, there are also numbers of institutes which focusing on studies on different regional and international issues ¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁸ See website at <http://www.vinagates.com/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?id=20071214125542453>

¹¹⁹ Vietnam Institute of American Study <http://www.vias.com.vn/>

Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam <http://www.dav.edu.vn/vi/nr040730094928/ns100419113438>

The centre of Economic Development <http://ias.com.vn/pages/index.aspx?Type=1&ID=64>

Institute of European Studies <http://www.ies.gov.vn/>

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Institute of Africa and Middle East www.iseas.org.vn

6.1.3. Summary

In sum, a foreign policy analyst can not ignore to the influences of both domestic and international factors. Likewise, domestic-international linkage is conventionally an important paradigm in examining adjustment and changes in foreign policy making of Vietnam. It is important to note that Vietnam is one of few countries who still maintain authoritarian state, but with orientation of “soft authoritarian” since the rising influence of the civil societies and contribution of the think tanks and intellectuals groups. Vietnamese foreign policy making is, nevertheless, still partly based on historical experience. My argument is prone to the traditional accounts which affirm that *the continuity and changes in Vietnamese foreign policy making are the result of traditional combination of different factors: economic development, regime security and consensus of Vietnam’s leaders*¹²⁰. This will be more indicated in the Chapter 7 of my thesis.

6.2. Main adjustments in Vietnam’s foreign policy from 6th Party Congress to 10th Party Congress

“The success of Đổi mới would largely depend on radical change in foreign policy” (Dorsch & Ta Minh Tuan, 2004). How has Vietnamese foreign policy changed over time to adapt to new environment? This part attempts to make an overview on main contents of Vietnamese foreign policy which have been set forth since 6th Congress of Vietnamese Communist Party to present. I try to examine the significant changes in foreign policy of Vietnam in different periods. This part hopes to shed light into the forthcoming Chapter in analysis of Vietnamese policy behaviors to the great powers.

- **Period 1986-1991: The 6th Congress of the CPV**

Like mentioned above fundamental economic reform requires a new foreign policy outlook in Vietnam. The country at the time had to confront with challenges of severe economic crisis and international isolation, most notably, was the US-embargo which prohibited not only development aid but also cut all trade relations with capitalist countries. Though the fear of “peaceful evolution” was still there, the leaders of the CPV one hand decided to launch Đổi mới, the other side, Vietnam endeavored to step out of

¹²⁰ Vuving (2006) develops another analysis paradigm which he calls the third types of explanation, whereby he calls “**strategic algorithm**” which incorporates four major mechanisms—balancing against threat, bandwagoning with power, learning, and survival by transformation.

isolation by its withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989, from Laos in 1990 and signed the Paris Peace Accords in Cambodia in 1991. The following tasks stated clearly in the Political report of the 5th Central Committee to Congress of the CPV :

In the coming years, the tasks of our Party and State in the field of external affairs are to strive to combine the strength of the nation with that of the epoch, firmly maintain peace in Indochina, contribute actively to the firm maintenance of peace in Southeast Asia and the world, strengthening the special relationship between the three Indochinese countries, strengthen the relations of friendship and all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union and other countries in the socialist community, secure favorable international conditions for the cause of building socialism and defending the Homeland, and at the same time, make an active contribution to the common struggle of the people of the world for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.¹²¹

Before *Đổi mới*, Vietnam considered relationship with the Soviet Union as a “cornerstone” and chasing a policy of “leaning on one side”. These kind of expression has not been repeated in the 6th Party Congress. Instead, Hanoi stressed the importance of the internal “strength of nation” - ***the idea of independence*** at first. “Vietnam has made clear that it will avoid being dependent on any one particular country for economic and military aid. This has been one of the painful lessons it has learnt from hitching itself to the Soviet Union from 1978.” (Yeong, 1992:263).

However, as a country with socialist ideology, the CPV has to raise their rhetoric anti-imperialism voice and the theme of proletarian internationalism plans an important role. Now with new intention of shaking hands with the capitalist countries, Hanoi has to find the way to express their inward presentation and outward attitude.

In a discussion about changing directions of Vietnamese foreign policy, Dosch and Ta Minh Tuan (2004:199) comment that “confront with mounting international pressure and a deep internal economic crisis, Vietnam decided to change its foreign policy. Now it needed peace more than ever. When *Đổi mới* was inaugurated in 1986, the Vietnamese leaders initiated a new “peace of cooperation” policy, reflecting an apparent realization that only cooperation and equality in international relations could bring about lasting peace and stability.” Accordingly, Vietnam no longer considers USA as a fundamental and long-term foe and China as an imminent and dangerous enemy.

¹²¹ “75 years of The Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. A selection of documents from nine Party Congresses”. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.718

Basically, a concrete foreign policy was defined as “**diversification**” (đa phương hóa) and “**multilateralisation**” (đa dạng hóa) which was outlined in the Resolution No.13 of May 1988 Politburo of the CPV. This determined policy has been expressing their usefulness Vietnamese foreign relations with not only the great powers but also international organizations.

- **Period 1991-1996: The 7th Congress of the CPV**

This period witnessed a wide open door foreign policy when Vietnam solemnly declared “**Vietnam wishes to befriend with all countries in the world community**”¹²². This new principle has been even adopted in the Art.14 of 1992 Constitution. Obviously, Vietnam attempts to maximize its relationship with every country regardless of ideology. It was stated clearly in the Political report in the 7th Party Congress that: “We stand for equal and mutual beneficial cooperation with all countries regardless of different socio-political systems and on the basis of the principle of peaceful co-existence”¹²³ Regarding domestic policy, Vietnam started to implement the “Strategy for Socio-economic stabilization and development 1991-2000”

The main characters of Hanoi’s open door foreign policy can be summarized as follows:

- Improve economic and political situation and social justice at the same time, to break up the state of economic embargo and diplomatic isolation and to secure a peaceful and stable international environment for “socialist construction”.
- To diversify and multi-lateralize economic relations with all countries and economic organizations on the principle of respect for independence, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit. These included attraction of foreign direct investment.
- To integrate Vietnam into regional and international organizations.¹²⁴

It is noteworthy that the priority of Vietnamese grand strategy following up with its foreign policy stressed by **the shift from political and military strength to economic development**. Hanoi has also realized that the demise of economic support from the former CMEA¹²⁵ states meant that the country has to seek for new sources of foreign

¹²² 75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005). Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.847

¹²³ 75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005). Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.884

¹²⁴ Also noted in Dosch and Ta Minh Tuan (2004).p197

¹²⁵ CMEA stands for Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

assistance. One of the most important requirements for this principle is a “stable relations with the big economic powers”. Therefore, the guidance in relations with China, the U.S and the Soviet Union was apparently adjusted¹²⁶:

- Towards China: “...to promote the process of normalization of relations with China, gradually expand Vietnamese-Chinese cooperation, and solve problems pending between two countries through negotiation”
 - Towards the U.S and other Western European countries: “ to expand equal and mutual beneficial cooperation with northern and Western European countries. To promote the process of normalization of relation with the United States”
 - To the Soviet Union: “... to consistently strengthen solidarity and cooperation with the Soviet Union, to renew the mode and improve the efficiency of Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation in order to meet the interests of each country”.
-
- **Period 1996-2001: The 8th Congress of the CPV**

After 15 years applying new direction in foreign policy of multilateralism and open friendly relationship to all countries, Vietnam gradually stepped out of international isolation and economic crisis. Besides being member of the United Nations, Vietnam became full members of more than thirty international institutions, most notably, the shift on a higher level when Vietnam was accepted to be full member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asia Nations), IMF (International Monetary Fund) and ILO (International Labour Organization).

In the Political Report of the 8th Party Congress, the statement of openness and multilateralism in foreign policy has been reaffirmed:

To continue with our foreign policy of independence, sovereignty, openness, diversification and multi-lateralization of foreign relations, in the spirit that Vietnam wishes to be friend of all nations in the world community, striving for peace, independence and development. To effect multifaceted, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with all countries and international and regional organizations on the principle of respect for one another’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other’s internal

¹²⁶ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 7th Party Congress, 1991, in *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005)*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.884

affairs, equality, mutual benefit, and settlement of remaining problems and disputes by means of negotiations.¹²⁷

A new additional feature of Vietnamese foreign policy direction in this period was that Hanoi also attempted to broaden their ties with non-government organizations and international friendship organizations, namely **people-to-people diplomacy**. This new task was also added in the Political report of the 8th Party Congress as follows:

To expand external people-to-people relations and relations with foreign non-governmental organizations, secure broad-based sympathy and, support from other peoples, and contribute to promoting the trend for peace, cooperation and development.¹²⁸

So far, one of the most active institutions working effectively in this field is the **Vietnam Union of Friendship organization**¹²⁹. This institution operates with fundamental aims to strengthen the economic, cultural and scientific cooperation between Vietnamese people and the people around the world.

- **Period 2001-2006: The 9th and 10th Congress of the CPV**

The 9th Party Congress was regarded as great significant one since the country entered the 21st century with experience of 10 years of execution of the “Strategy for Socio-economic stabilization a development”, 15 years of implementation of *Đổi mới*.

In adjustment of the domestic policy, a very popular slogan of “bringing into play the entire nation’s strength”¹³⁰ was raised. This is due to the fact that Vietnamese economic development relies much on foreign investment and markets. The Political Report to the 9th Party Congress figured out four main “dangers”¹³¹ (*Nguy cơ*): 1. “Peaceful evolution” (*Diễn biến hòa bình*); 2. Further backwardness in economic development (*Tụt hậu xa hơn về kinh tế*); 3. Corruption (*Tham nhũng*); 4. Degradation in political ideology (*Chệch hướng Chủ nghĩa xã hội*). Among those, **corruption** is

¹²⁷ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 8th Party Congress, 1996, in: *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005)*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.990

¹²⁸ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 8th Party Congress, 1996, in: *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005)*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.991

¹²⁹ See website and operation of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization (VUFO) at <http://www.vietpeace.org.vn/>

¹³⁰ Resolution of the 9th Party Congress Central Committee

¹³¹ ¹³¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 9th Party Congress, 2001, in: *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress (2005)*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.1089

considered as the biggest challenge to legitimacy of the CPV. The Congress also outlined the “Strategy for Socio-economic Development 2001-2010”¹³² and later on pointed out the other challenges such as: “other side of market economy” and challenge of increasing gap between Rich and Poor.”.

In the process of international integration, Vietnam has been aware of challenges of competition in economic integration and the negative side of market economy. Therefore, Hanoi toned up to the international community that it is not only “**befriend**” but also has to be a “**reliable partner**” in the world community: “To constantly implement the foreign policy of independence, sovereignty, openness, multi-lateralization and diversification of international relations, Vietnam is prepared to be a friend and reliable partner of all countries in the international community, striving for peace, independence, and development”¹³³

Beside the above general guidelines, Hanoi also set an important task in the new time of globalization which is “enhancing the wills of self-reliance, maintaining national identity in the process of international integration” and striving for “wealthy people, prosperous nation, democratic and civilized society”¹³⁴

What was new in the 10th Party Congress in 2006 about foreign policy orientation was that Hanoi stressed the two most fundamental objectives in foreign relations, namely “**development**”, “**security**” and “**promoting Vietnamese position in regional and international arena**”¹³⁵. In doing so, “Vietnam has to actively participate in international economic integration”, accordingly, achieving a strong and stable economic development contributes to national security. Hanoi also implies “to be ready in opening dialogues with other nations and international institutions about human right issues” but at the same time, reaffirming the leading role of the Communist Party and centralism principle of state in foreign policy-making¹³⁶.

¹³² See http://www.unaids.org.vn/sitee/images/stories/socio_economic_dev.pdf

¹³³ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 9th Party Congress, 2001, in: *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress* (2005). Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.1117

¹³⁴ Resolution of the 10th Party Congress Central Committee (2006), in: Văn kiện Đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ X. Hà Nội: National Politics Publishing House (Nhà xuất bản Chính trị Quốc Gia). p. 41

¹³⁵ Vu Khoan (2007). “Đại hội mười của Đảng và Đường lối đối ngoại” (The 10th Party Congress and Foreign Policy”, in: *Nhan dan Newspaper*, dated 24th August 2006.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Vu Khoan (2007). “Đại hội mười của Đảng và Đường lối đối ngoại” (The 10th Party Congress and Foreign Policy”, in: *Nhan dan Newspaper*, dated 24th August 2006.

Most notably, enhancing relations toward the great powers (*nước lớn*) is clearly emphasized in the Resolution of 8th Plenum of the Communist Party. A very concrete Moto of foreign relations (*phương châm đối ngoại*) are considered new and significant for the cause of industrialization and modernization¹³⁷:

- Ensure national interest;
- Maintain independence and self-reliance together with a diversification and multilateralization in foreign relations;
- Good perception of cooperation (*hợp tác*) and struggle (*đấu tranh*) approaches in international relations (application of these two approaches should be pursuant to actors, situation, issues and period, strongly focus on promotion of cooperation, struggle approach is served for cooperation, avoiding direct confrontation and falling in isolation situation);
- Promote cooperation with regional countries and especially broadening relations with **great powers**;
- Actively join and integrate into regional and international organizations.

6.3. Summary

Through investigation of Vietnamese foreign policy in different Party Congresses of the CPV since 1986, some features should be highlighted which I call “reform of thinking” in foreign policy-making:

1. Reform of thinking in perception of the outside world
2. Reform of thinking in perception of security, development, national interest
3. Reform of thinking of foreign policy approaches
4. Reform of thinking in identifying “friend and foe”
5. Reform of thinking about different contributing channels to foreign policy-making

Those components were actually affirmed previously in traditional Asian approaches - “dialectic materialism” namely “ngũ tri” (five “Knows”) which Ho Chi Minh flexibly practiced during his term: “biết mình, biết người, biết thời thế, biết dừng và biết biến” “*know yourself, know the others, know the world situation, know to stop and know the variables*”.

¹³⁷ Vu Tuyen Truyen va Hop tac Quoc te - Ban Tu tuong Van Hoa Trung uong (Department of International Cooperation - Committee of Culture and Ideology of the Communist Party of Vietnam) (2005). Vietnamese foreign relations in Đổi mới era. Hanoi: National Politics Publishing House. p.23

Significant changes in Vietnamese foreign policy since 1986 will be summarized in the following table¹³⁸:

	Before Đổi mới (1964-1986)	From Đổi mới to present
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-camps: Capitalists and Socialists • “Three revolutionary currents”¹³⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-polarity and interdependence • Globalization and Scientific-technological Revolution
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marxism-Leninism orientation • “socialism” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalization of Ideology: Pragmatism under the rhetoric slogan “orthodox of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh thought” and “socialism construction”
Grand strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National liberation and National Unification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernization and Industrialization
Interests	<p>Primacy of class interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class struggle: “who will win” 	<p>Primacy of national interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prone to peaceful cooperation; • Economic development and national security: economic security and sovereignty security, protection of national identity etc.
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communist victory on a global scale • Revolution export (to Laos, Cambodia, Thailand) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wealthy people, strong nation and democratic, and civilized society”
Foreign policy directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying: “Who is friend who is foe?” • Anti-imperialism • Vietnamese revolution was part of “World revolution” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Open door policy” • Multilateralization and Diversification: “befriend with all nations and a reliable partner”
	„begging for aid“	Self-reliance and integration to international community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USSR as “cornerstone” Socialist bloc • Alliance with China and Opposition to the United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close ties with the West • Integration to Asia-Pacific and ASEAN • Strategic partnership and cooperative partnership with the great powers

¹³⁸ This summary has been formulated with the reference of the Thesis from Vuving (2006). The shaping foreign policy: Vietnamese grand strategy after the cold war

¹³⁹ See Chapter 4, part 4.1

Diplomacy approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomacy regarded as a front serving military front • „Antagonism diplomacy“ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Economic diplomacy” • People-to-people diplomacy (track-two diplomacy) • Using intellectuals, think tanks and contribution of NGOs as a consultation sources
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Trade embargo • Economic crisis and unstable society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomatic relations with 172 countries • Trade agreements with 76 countries • Vietnam as an influent member in ASEAN • Non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2008-2009)

Chapter 7: Vietnam's strategic approaches toward the Great Powers (1986 to present)

Strategic approaches to international relations which are also called by Vuving (2006) as "Foreign policy pathways"¹⁴⁰. Nguyen Vu Tung (2002) comments that "mainstream approaches of international theory have yet convincingly to demonstrate their usefulness in explaining regionalism and foreign relation patterns in Southeast Asia". Contrasting this assessment, this Chapter attempts to investigate the configuration of the Vietnamese foreign relations with the great powers since 1986 by applying basic assumptions of Western international theories: realism and liberalism; neo-realism and neo-liberalism. The great powers mentioned in this thesis included: the U.S.A, China, Russia, The European Union, Japan and India¹⁴¹

Like mentioned in the part 2.3, the debate about realism and liberalism has dominated mainstream in western international relations. They share many assumptions about actors, values, issues and power arrangements in the international system. Neo-realists and neo-liberals study different worlds. Neo-realists study security issues and are concerned with issues of power and survival. Neo-liberals study political economy and focus in cooperation and institutions.

My argument is that *the Vietnamese relation towards the great powers since 1986 is a combination of both theoretical paradigms: **realism and liberalism***. It would be a very heavy assignment if looking in details of the whole Vietnamese foreign relations with the great powers since 1986. Therefore, in each part I will only look at Vietnamese main policy behaviour towards a great power, and then point out which kind of strategic approaches Vietnam has preferred in different phases, and I estimate different scenarios of Vietnamese relations with the great powers in the medium term.

¹⁴⁰ In his paper about Strategy and evolution of Vietnam's China policy, Vuving (2006) explains that each strategic approach operates within a paradigm of international relations, for example, "balancing" and "bandwagoning" are theoretically typical approaches corresponding to realism, and "engagement" is base on liberalism paradigm.

¹⁴¹ See Chapter 2, part 2.1. "Who are the great powers in the post-Cold War era?"

7.1. Vietnam' U.S policy

Since Vietnam launched Đổi mới policy, the country's policy towards the USA has been radically adjusted through different period of times. Hanoi started to reconsider the position of the USA in its foreign strategy and possible benefits of its relations with America in serving the grand strategy of "economic development". Vietnam's intention was to adjust its policy toward the U.S from "**confrontation**" to "**struggle for peaceful co-existence**"¹⁴². It was fully aware of harmful impact originated from U.S trade embargo (prohibiting trade in goods, services and financial transactions) which the U.S government implemented since 1964. Until 3th February 1994 (also the birthday of the Communist Party of Vietnam), the trade embargo was released. This event opened a new page for a future of bilateral cooperative and strategic relations, but what happened in history still left much **suspicion** (*nghi ngại*) and **precaution** (*de phong*) for both sides. It can be briefly said that the relationship between Vietnam and the U.S is characterized as a mixture of both "**cooperation**" and "**struggle**". Vuving (2006) calls Vietnam's attitude toward America as "ambivalent" - both admiration and hostility. Vietnam has chosen different strategic approaches in dealing with the U.S since 1986, but the two most notable approaches are: "**balancing**" (external and internal balancing) and "**appeasement**".

- **Period 1986-1994:** *From hostile behaviour to endeavours of lifting the trade embargo against Vietnam and preparing for normalization process*

In 30 April 1975, the decade-lasting image of the undefeated army of superpower- U.S was crumbled, when the two tanks of the North Army of Vietnam broke down the gate of Independence Palace in Saigon. The hostile attitudes of the U.S administration against Vietnam were expressed not only by implementation of trade embargo to entire Vietnam but also freezing over 150 million US dollars of Vietnamese assets in America. President Ford vetoed Vietnam's membership in the UN and prohibited any foreign aid to Vietnam and tightening the procedures for legal immigration.

In the year 1978, the first negotiation of the normalization between Vietnam and the U.S came to complete failure due to different national interests set by two sides: The

¹⁴² Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995). *Hội nhập quốc tế và giữ vững bản sắc* (International integration and national identity maintenance). Hanoi: Nha Xuất bản Chính trị Quốc gia (National Politics Publishing House).pp.109

U.S and the West considers Vietnamese occupation was an intention of regional hegemony in Indochina. At that time, Vietnam was still a very close ally of the Soviet Union, thus, the Soviet's influence (through Hanoi) in the Indochina region would be a threat for both U.S and China. Vietnam's position about Cambodia was "just to help the Cambodian revolutionary force to eliminate the Polpot's genocide", and this reaction was considered as necessity, not only for Cambodia security but also for Vietnamese national security.

After 1988, a remarkable change in Vietnamese policy toward the U.S should be taken into account was that Vietnam has no longer considered the U.S as a "basic and long-term enemy" and started to discuss about approaches "...to promote the process of normalization of relations with the United States"¹⁴³. This period can be seen as breaking "the ice" and coming to preparation for normalization. The rationales for both sides oriented on normalization of relationship due to calculation of national interest and changes in perceptions toward each other, mainly summed up as follows:

For Vietnam:

- Vietnam's ***new perception*** about the U.S:

The end of Cold War witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, U.S becomes the "center of world power" with much superiority and strong influences (political, economic, military and culture).

- **Political interest:**

Normalization with U.S is the primary topic in Vietnamese foreign relations. A normalized relationship with America regarded as a link and contribution to promote normalization and better relationship with other great powers. This also consolidated Vietnam's foreign policy direction of "diversification and multi-lateralization" with all other nation states. Furthermore, Vietnam also could enhance its relation with regional and international financial institutions in order to access to international aid and loans. Vietnam, therefore, could promote its position in regional and international arena.

¹⁴³ Communist Party of Vietnam, Political Report to the 7th Party Congress, 1991, in *75 years of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1930-2005. Selection documents from nine Party Congress* (2005). Hanoi: The Gioi Publisher. p.884

Vietnam set up a strategy of “external balancing” when normalizing relationship with the U.S. It was well aware of the rising of China, the importance and economic influence of Japan and Europe in the Asia-pacific region. Dahm (1995:35) notes that “The open “door” policy is trying to balance potential and actual rivals against one another so that Vietnam can benefit as a middleman”.

- **Economic interest:**

Hanoi also expected to access a huge market of consumption, advanced technology and know-how in the United States. Opportunities of exporting agricultural products to America and attracting foreign investments not only the U.S but also international institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Bank where the U.S takes much accounts and possesses a very “decisive” vote.

There are almost 2 million Vietnamese living in the United States¹⁴⁴. Though reactions and attitudes towards the Vietnamese Communists are different and contradictory but many of Vietnamese in oversea communities have been silently offered investment of support to economic development of the homeland-Vietnam.

- **Security interest:**

A normalization relation with the U.S was also important to Vietnam in improvement of a peaceful and cooperation environment in the region. This would contribute to effective execution of “economic development” strategy and at the same time, it was also an implication of **balancing** the rising China.

- ***Other interests*** included advantages in education exchanges and vocational training, especially, higher education in the U.S.

For the United States:

In the post-Cold War era, Vietnam has not been one of primary policies in the U.S global strategy, but playing an increasingly important role in American regional strategy in Southeast Asia. The changing behavior of the U.S toward Vietnam is part of the U.S adjustment in foreign policy in Asia Pacific. Bill Clinton replaced George H. W. Bush by

¹⁴⁴ Source: Vietnam National Statistics (2008)

his convincing “*engagement and enlargement*” strategy which promoted economic reform, large investment in informatics and technology, fostering talks and bilateral and multilateral agreements, searching new foreign markets etc. Behaviors toward Vietnam was later underlined by Bill Clinton that the normalization and communication exchanges between American and Vietnamese would advance the cause of freedom (liberalization process) in Vietnam like it has happened in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Economic stability in Vietnam, a free and peaceful Vietnam would serve US interest in a stable and peaceful Asia¹⁴⁵

The U.S has been aware of declining influence of Russia and constant efforts rising power of China and Japan in mobilizing allies and promoting bilateral relations with the Southeast Asian nations. America, thus attempted to improve its relationship with the core allies such as Thailand, Philippines, Australia and South Korea. Vietnamese geopolitical position, especially Cam Ranh bay, has drawn mostly U.S attention. This bay is an open connection from Pacific Ocean to Indian Ocean and from South Pacific Ocean to East Asia.

Last but not least, one of the important factors leading to change of the U.S behaviors to Vietnam is economic interest. The American business interest groups have made constant efforts to encourage U.S Administration to normalize relationship with Vietnam. They estimated the dynamics and demand of a market with almost 80 millions inhabitants¹⁴⁶. Heinz C. Prechter, Senior Consultant to White House remarked that in the near future, America will lose its competitive markets in Southeast Asia if it does not start to lift the trade embargo against Vietnam¹⁴⁷. Together with a good sign by Vietnamese open foreign policy and positive effects of implementation of *Đổi mới*, the George Bush Senior’s administration presented Vietnam in April 1991 with conditions, so called “road map” for lifting the embargo and normalizing diplomatic relations.

After gradually lifting some economic sanctions, and allowing US and foreign investment and trading in Vietnam, finally the embargo was released on 3th February 1994 after the US Senate passed the resolution of urging for lifting the embargo. The release of the trade embargo was mostly due to positive reactions of Hanoi in

¹⁴⁵ Bill Clinton (17th July 1995). “Remarks Announcing the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations with Vietnam”, available at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=51605>

¹⁴⁶ Statistics in 1990

¹⁴⁷ Brown, F.Z (1989). *Second chance: The United States and Indochina in the 1990s*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations

withdrawing its final troops from Cambodia in 1989 and ensuring the self-determination of Cambodians by launching an election for a new Cambodian government in 1991.

- **Period 1995-2005:** *Normalization of diplomatic relations, from “appeasement” to “conformation”*

Through much efforts from both sides for lifting the embargo against Vietnam, the news has actually did not draw much attention of Vietnamese government because for Hanoi, “the embargo was far less important than the restoration of full diplomatic ties and the granting of several trade privileges, including ‘Most Favored Nation Status’ and ‘Generalized System of Preferences’¹⁴⁸. Hanoi’s ambition to urge further step in normalized relationship with the superpower, once was “basic and long-term strategic enemy” of Vietnam.

One of the serious impediments in Vietnam-U.S relations was the POW/MIA¹⁴⁹ issue. The U.S, under strong pressures and obsessions of the Vietnam War, has ranked this issue as highest significance since they have to keep faith with the families of these missing servicemen. It means “Vietnam has to wait until all the questions concerning missing Americans will be answered, before full diplomatic relations will be established” (Dahm, 1995:37). For Vietnam, it is also very sensitive issue since domestic reaction of frequent questions raised by many Vietnamese: What about more than 3 millions Vietnamese citizens who were dead in a war that none of us wanted to it to happen and none of us tries to provoke. What about thousands of Vietnamese solders would have never been found again? What about the effects of Agent Orange which many victims suffer in generations?

Vietnam government, though confronting with thorny problem, expressed its concessions and considered POW/MIA as “humanitarian issue”. Hanoi’s willingness to actively cooperate with the U.S in solving this problem and numbers of different delegations were allowed to enter Vietnam and realize their missions. As a consequence, a crucial event in history of Vietnam-U.S relation took place. It was in 17th July 1995 when Bill Clinton announced about normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. After more than two decades of “hostility” and “blocking”, a new page in history of bilateral relations has been open.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Dahm (1995)

¹⁴⁹ POW (Prisoner of Wars) and MIA (Missing in Actions)

The relations of the two countries developed substantially further and marked by the Bilateral Trade Agreement signed on 10th December 2001. This agreement is regarded as good framework for cooperation in many aspects. Coincidentally, it implied a “hefty internal struggle” between the two camps of modernizers and anti-imperialist inside Vietnam¹⁵⁰ In reaching this step, Vietnam has to accept numbers of conditions set by the U.S. Though Washington has withdrawn its “stick” but would not offer “carrot” if Hanoi was not pledged to improve its human rights record, “the warmth of relationship depended partly on Vietnam’s human rights performance”¹⁵¹. Following this requirement, Vietnam was obliged with a transformation of its administrative and legal system¹⁵². An official visit of U.S President Bill Clinton in the year 2000 made a landmark in history of Vietnam-U.S relations when BBC commented that it was the first official visit ever by the U.S President to independent and unified Vietnam¹⁵³.

The period from 2001-2005 witnessed bilateral diplomatic visits of high-ranking governmental delegations, mostly concerning with following features: *Firstly*, the relations between two countries was largely affected by U.S gathering forces in anti-terrorist campaign; *Secondly*, economic cooperation and resolving trade disputes were the dominant topics in different agendas. *Thirdly*, Human rights and religious freedom are still concerned as obstacles in promoting bilateral relations¹⁵⁴.

- **From 2006 to present:** “*tacit external balancing*” and promoting economic cooperation

Vietnam decided to join “new rules of game” in its path to international economic integration when the country was accepted as 150th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. This achievement has shown enormous efforts by Hanoi in many aspects except *political pluralism*. The U.S has been often associating the

¹⁵⁰ Vuving (2006). According to former Premier Minister Vo Van Kiet, Vietnam has lost a good chance to become WTO member earlier when it signed the Bilateral Trade Agreement in 1999. The Agreement was no signed because the top representative of anti-imperialist group inside the CPV have succeeded to stop the deal.

¹⁵¹ “Dialogue With Vietnam on Human rights “, available at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1309&dat=19940211&id=he8VAAAAIBAJ&sjid=1xMEAAAAIBAJ&pg=4395,77565>

¹⁵² Admsintation reform since the year 2000 and Amendment of Law on foreign Investment (1990) in Vietnam were two examples

¹⁵³ See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4515519.stm>

¹⁵⁴ Tran Duc Hung (2007). Vietnam-U.S relations from 1995 to present (Master Thesis). Hanoi: Institute for International Relations. p. 41

issues of human rights and religious freedom with trade and investment relations. In October 2005, the United States Department of State listed Vietnam in CPC (Country of Particular Concern) which indicated Vietnam' particularly severe violation of religious freedom under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998 (H.R. 2431). Nevertheless, until 2004, the trading volume between two countries reached 6.4 billions US dollars and almost 8.0 billions dollars in 2007. The FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) of the United States accounted 2.3 billions US Dollars in 2007¹⁵⁵.

During the implementation of the Bilateral Trade Agreement, Vietnam and the U.S business group experienced some trade disputes, most notably was the Basa (Catfish) case. CFA (Catfish Farmer of America) has sued to Vietnam VASEP (Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers) for dumping prices in American markets. Vietnam later on has to cover a very high anti-dumping tariffs ranging from 36.84% to 63.88%. As a result, many of Vietnamese fishery exporters were not able to export catfish to America due to low benefit. Vietnam has also learnt a lesson that the American trade protectionism in practice is still very strong, the "new rule of game" in a competitive globalization is sometimes not really fair for developing countries. Joining WTO is not all, and the next step to do is till on the search of the almost 90 millions inhabitant country.

Nonetheless, both countries have achieved numbers of agreements for bilateral benefit in economic cooperation such as PNTR (Permanent normal Trade Relations) in 2007, TIFA (Trade and Investment Framework Agreement) and many agreements and exchanges on training and higher education.

The years in the first decade of 21st century witnessed both broad and substantial relations of the two countries when number exchanges of high-ranking delegations headed by Prime Ministers and Presidents. Behind all those events emerged a feature of further bilateral *military and security cooperation* between Vietnam and the U.S. I would prefer to have a close look into two most notable events in order to identify the strategic approach "*tacit external balancing*" expressed by Hanoi in dealing with Washington and Beijing.

The first notable event was the official visit by President Nguyễn Minh Triết in July 2007 to the White House, focusing on cooperation in the areas of economics and trade.

¹⁵⁵ Vietnam Investment Review, May 2007.p5

However, for some assessments, this was a visit with “less success in fulfilling economic objective and failed in realizing political goals” (*ít thành công về kinh tế nhưng thất bại về chính trị*)¹⁵⁶. Shortly before the planned visit to Washington, President Triet had to rush for a courtesy call to Chinese General Secretary Hu Jintao, implying that Hanoi was in search for a strategic economic partner-U.S but not allowed to forget the giant neighboring power-China. It is also a “traditional habit” which Beijing has been attempting to maintain with Vietnamese leaders, and the Vietnamese have yet dared to step out of “Chinese shade”- a traditional fear of Chinese threat¹⁵⁷. President Triet’s decision to visit China shortly before his tour to the U.S mitigated the strong pressure of conservative camp in Vietnam’s Politburo whose perception still associated with “regime security” under protection of Chinese Communist Party (CCP). However, Hanoi’s “clumsy diplomatic action” has caused Washing’s irritation and discontent¹⁵⁸. By unofficial announcement of cancelling Triet’s trip to America and at the same time it hosted a discussion with four Vietnamese human right and democracy activists. Though uneasy incidents, Hanoi still decided to send President Triet to Washington and this reaction showed its own independence in dealing with China and the U.S.

The second remarkable event was official visit of General Phùng Quang Thanh, Minister of National Defense, People’s Army of Vietnam to the United State¹⁵⁹. Before landing Washington, General Phung Quang Thanh paid tour to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii and the training facilities at the Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific. This visit has sent an message to Beijing that Hanoi will seek a “tacit external balancing” and “defense itself” after numbers of incidents happened in Eastern sea (In 2005, nine Vietnamese fishermen were shot dead by Chinese Navy and in 2007 one Vietnamese ship was again shot and then sank.¹⁶⁰) These incidents all happened due to China-Vietnam territorial disputes in East Sea. This visit by General Thanh also implied that Vietnam is interested in buying U.S. weapons and Hanoi also expressed its worries about the East sea disputes with China. It tries to make balancing to protect national independence and not be swallowed up by China. The main concern

¹⁵⁶ See interview with Nguyen Xuan Nghia by Viet Long in RFA

http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/ChinaInUsVnEconomicRelation_NXNghia-20070703.html

¹⁵⁷ Nguyen Xuan Nghia (2007) in interview with RFA

¹⁵⁸ Tran Binh Nam (2007) in interview with RFA

http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/InterviewTranBinhNamAboutNguyenMinhTrietTrip_MLam-20070620.html

¹⁵⁹ See <http://www.pacaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123182411>

¹⁶⁰ http://www.vpa.org.vn/detail_temp.jsp?page=26&id=462&cate_id=21

expressed in different dialogues with Washington “China’s increasing economic influence and military presence in Asia”¹⁶¹

Vietnam and the U.S also strengthen the relationship between two Armies, especially the American navy ship to Da Nang in 2009. Hanoi and Washington started to launch the first annual strategic dialogue on politics and defense - an indication that Hanoi is ready to promote bilateral military relations with Washington.¹⁶²

One characteristic in the Vietnam-U.S relations should be taken into account is the Vietnamese diaspora in America. Approximately, two millions Vietnamese living in the United States, most of them left Vietnam after 1975. Their attitudes toward Vietnam and Vietnam-U.S relations are quite different: Group 1. hostile behaviors and seek ways to criticize Vietnam’s regime, protesting and determent to the U.S normalization with Vietnam (most of those were once worked for the old regime of Ngo Dinh Diem and . Group 2. seeking opportunities to promote contacts with Vietnam. Group 3. no concrete political opinions or complicated attitudes, called as “silent group”, mostly involved in earning living and business development. This group is easily induced by Group 1. Others than these groups are the young second Vietnamese generation who grow up abroad and have little knowledge about Vietnam¹⁶³.

In sum, Vietnam’s U.S policy has indicated significant changes both in directions and approaches. If Hanoi’s past policy behaviors prone to ideological difference and anti-imperialist, its policy is now much flexible and diversified in different period of time, leaning on pursuit of its national interest: economic development and stable security. Though there are still existing certain impediments in the relationship, mostly due to the difference in political institutions and obsession of Vietnam War but all in all Vietnam-U.S has both adjusted their strategies and behaviors toward each other. Nevertheless, Vietnam’s leaders are well aware of China’s position and influence, particularly, in the periphery countries. Hanoi’s Politburo is dominant by two different camps: conservatives and modernizers. Continuity of external balancing has been practically Hanoi’s familiar strategic approach in dealing with the both great powers. Meanwhile, constant efforts on strengthening itself through economic development will be set as priority.

¹⁶¹ See article by Ernest Z. Bower (14th December 2009) at <http://csis.org/publication/vietnamese-minister-defense-general-phung-quang-thanh>

¹⁶² Nguyen Trung (2009) see <http://www1.voanews.com/vietnamese/news/interviews/a-19-2009-12-16-voa3-82744447.html>

¹⁶³This classification is presented in October 2003 in a Conference on “Vietnam-U.S promote understandings and look for future” by Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations.

Some scenarios can be seen in the future of Vietnam-U.S relations: **1.** continue to be a strategic partners. **2.** Vietnam becomes strategic ally. **3.** Under China's pressure, Vietnam-U.S relations mainly focus on economic cooperation **4.** Increasing differences and shoals lead to tensions, possible economic sanctions. Among those, the first scenario is more feasible, the third and fourth will happen sometimes and the second one is in the long-term impossible.

7.2. Vietnam's China policy

Numerous papers and several books about Sino-Vietnam relations¹⁶⁴ after Cold War has been published, and among those, Womack's book about "*China and Vietnam: the Politics of Asymmetry*" is one of the significant contributions to understand historical and contemporary Sino-Vietnam asymmetric China-Vietnam relationship. There should be no neglect about the importance of asymmetry in theory of international relations. One overview about history of China-Vietnam relationship in this book is valuable to take into account:

In their three thousand years of interaction, China and Vietnam have been through a full range of relationships. Twenty years ago they were one another's worst enemy; fifty years ago they were the closest of comrades. Five hundreds years ago they each saw themselves as Confucian empires...

(Womack, 2006)

Remarking about Vietnamese strategic approaches, Vuving (2006) concludes that Vietnam's China policy has been informed by a changing mixture of four concrete pathways: *balancing, deference, solidarity and enmeshment*¹⁶⁵ This part of my thesis is not an ambition of going through the diplomatic activities in history of the bilateral relationship, but rather, based on the analysis of the two scholars, mainly illuminating the dynamics of the Vietnam-China relations and highlight significant adjustment in Vietnam's policy behaviors toward the "giant neighbor"-China since 1986 to present. My assessment is that changes and tendency of Vietnam's China policy are prone to approaches of **geopolitical consideration** and **the perplexity of bandwagoning, balancing (searching for counterweight) and deference.**

- **Period 1986-1991**: *from hostile and direct confrontation to normalization*

If in the period (1950-1978), the relationship of Vietnam and China was regarded as "strategic allies" in the struggle against imperialism, sharing similar ideology-a typical "give and take" relationship of the countries in the socialist bloc in the Cold War, the period (1979-1986) witnessed a range of military clashes accompanied with hostile

¹⁶⁴ Womack (2006), Thayer (1999, 2008), Vuving (2005), Amer (2004), Dahm (1995), Guan (1998), Qiang Zhai (2000)

¹⁶⁵ Vuving, A.L. (2006). „Strategy and evolution of Vietnam's China policy“, in: Asian Survey -A Bimonthly review of Contemporary Asian Affairs. Vol. XLVI. No.6.pp.805-824

behaviors and direct confrontation¹⁶⁶. Both Vietnam and China after 1986 attempted to adjust policy behaviors of orientation for a normalized relationship.

For Vietnam: The document of the 6th Vietnamese Party Congress in 1986 identified a clear attitude that “Once again, we officially declare that: Vietnam is ready to negotiate with China at anytime, any level and anywhere in order to achieve normalization in bilateral relationship for the interest of the two peoples and for peace in the Southeast Asian region and in the world”¹⁶⁷ The Resolution 13 of the CPV (1988) again affirmed Vietnam’s striving for a normalization with China. This reaction was under the guidance of a foreign policy direction of “*more friends and less foe*” in 1986. Not to neglect that Vietnam was still suffered strongly from international isolation due to Cambodia issue and being enmeshed in severely domestic economic crisis.

For China, the end of 1980s, though its appearance with significant economic achievements and high economic growth rate, Beijing also had to face with challenges brought by radical changes in market economy and experienced with political instability, one evidence was the Tiananmen Square upheaval. After this incident, China had to confront with isolation triggered by U.S and many other Western European countries. Diplomatic relations with number of nations were, consequently, cut off. Beijing started to make adjustment in, on one hand, its policy toward the neighboring countries which China calls as “periphery countries” policy (*chính sách với các nước ngoại biên*). On the other hand, China concentrated on economic and trading development of coastal and borders areas.

Despite of turbulence in the relationship happened in 1988 (Chinese army occupied six rock yards in the Spratly Island controlled by Vietnam and later on fired shot three transport ships and killed 70 sailors of Vietnam’s navy)¹⁶⁸, apparently, both Vietnam and China, derived from internal demands, have been encouraged to strive for a peaceful environment and stable security serving for national economic development. This is also the main trends of international relations in the post-Cold War era. For Vietnam, a normalcy with China plays a very crucial role because of historical and

¹⁶⁶ Hoang Thi Phuong Loan (2006). “Vietnam-China: a model of Partner Relationship” (Bachelor paper). Hanoi: Library of Institute for International Relations

¹⁶⁷ Originally in Vietnamese “ Một lần nữa chúng ta chính thức tuyên bố rằng: Việt Nam sẵn sàng đàm phán với Trung Quốc bất cứ lúc nào, bất cứ cấp nào, bất cứ đâu nhằm bình thường hóa quan hệ giữa hai nước vì lợi ích của nhân dân hai nước, vì hòa bình Đông Nam Á và thế giới”. Communist Party of Vietnam (1997). Document of 6th Party Congress. Hanoi: Su That Publishing House. p.107

¹⁶⁸ See <http://timelines.ws/countries/VIETNAMB.HTML>

geopolitical factors. Through historical experience in dealing with the giant northern neighbor, the Vietnamese have drawn up for themselves an old proverb “*bán anh em xa mua láng giềng gần*” (selling out-of-sight brothers away to buying neighbors anigh). After more than ten years of “estrangement”, despite of numbers of on-going disputes, Vietnam and China came to normalization status declared in the Vietnam-China Joint Statement in 1991.

- **Period 1991-2006:** *partner relationship with the moto of “16-golden words” and “four good” spirit - territorial disputes as shoals forcing Hanoi to search for “balancing”*

Dealing with Hanoi is part of Chinese foreign policy toward the Southeast Asian nations which described by Sutter and Huang (2006) as “*promoting strategic partnership*” in order to expand its influence in the region; and to serve its economic and security benefits. Faced with China’s double strategy, Hanoi’s willingness to become full member of ASEAN, and it expected to fulfill a two-fold purpose: 1. to pull Vietnam out of the Chinese orbit; 2. to “balance against China”, engaged China with ASEAN structure and informal alliance. Hanoi estimated that Beijing would not risk its domestic reform program and therefore would moderate policy behavior toward the similar ideological sharing neighbor-Vietnam.

In the normalization of relationship, both Vietnamese and Chinese leaders attempted to inaugurate codification for political relations and defense cooperation. Numbers of Agreements have been signed by the two countries’ leader. Most notable was “Joint Statement Vietnam-China 2001” which defines “both sides will refrain from taking any action that might complicate and escalate disputes, resorting to force or making threats with force”¹⁶⁹. The two sides set up annual agenda for high-level political delegations exchanges, various discussions of experts on territorial disputes. As a result, Vietnam and China have achieved a further step in economic cooperation signing a Joint Statement for Comprehensive Cooperation in the New Century (2000).

In 2001, the bilateral relationship reached higher level expressed in the moto of “16-golden words”: “*Đoàn kết, hữu nghị, hợp tác toàn diện, ổn định lâu dài, hướng tới tương lai*” (Friendly neighborliness, comprehensive cooperation, long-lasting stability

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in Thayer (2008)

and looking toward the future) and the “*Bốn tốt*” “four-good” spirit” (Good neighbors, good friends, good comrades and good partners)¹⁷⁰

In terms of territorial disputes in South China seas, China has signed six different agreements with six Southeast Asian countries on security cooperation, but there was no defense clause included in the Sino-Vietnamese agreement (Thayer, 2008). Obviously, China is always aware of its position, its strength of a great power and the situation of the region in applying its strategy.

Hanoi, though fascinated by Chinese shining example in economic boom and development, looking at China as a “Model” for reform process, trying to copy its patterns, but it is still always hard for Hanoi to find a solution for a hard crux, which concerned closely to its security issue, the territorial disputes with the “giant neighbor”¹⁷¹. The long lasting *mistrusts* between the two Asian countries still exist. The evidence was that in 2005, nine Vietnamese fishermen were shot dead by Chinese navy. Hanoi startled about the news but preferred to deal with China with diplomatic negotiations rather than taking military countermeasures. Many Vietnamese all over have strongly protested and condemned this violent reaction by Chinese navy, also in front of the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi. However, Beijing insisted that this incident will not harm the bilateral relationship. Meanwhile Hanoi did not intend to make tensions but tries to search a “tacit balancing” approach in dealing with the U.S.¹⁷² and seek alliance and support from other ASEAN countries, since those nations have the same asymmetric relationship with China. This incident, however, resulted in Vietnamese leaders’ orientation of “deference” approach toward China. Inside Vietnam’s Politburo, there were certainly hefty discussions between the two camps: modernizers and conservatives. Vuving (2006:159) remarks that due to its expediency and the asymmetry of power vis-à-vis China, both camps have to conclude its “deference” toward China.

¹⁷⁰ Vietnam-China Joint Statement, available at <http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/news/story.php?d=20011202234915>

¹⁷¹ Sovereignty disputes between Vietnam and China include: shared land borders and sea borders in Tonkin Gulf and around the Spratly islands. About the Spratly islands, there is not only Vietnam and China but also involvement of other ASEAN countries such as Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, Indonesia.

¹⁷² See explanation in Part 7.1

- **Period 2006 to present:** *Mistrusts and applying mixture approach of “tacit balancing”, omni-enmeshment and “internal balancing”*

Which strategic approach should Vietnam pursue toward China? What should Vietnam do to defend itself? Those are constant questions posed not only to Hanoi's leaders, but also cost many researches by Vietnamese scholars and catch special attention of the Vietnamese people. I argue that, basically, Hanoi still endeavors to pursue a mixture between “tacit balancing” and omni-enmeshment and engagement. Each period of time Vietnam's leaders manage to make compromise in choosing a final strategy. Nguyen Hong Thach, a foreign ministry officer notes about the strategy of engagement that:

Sino-Vietnamese relations will be meshed within the much larger regional network of interlocking economic and political interests. It is an arrangement whereby anybody wanting to violate Vietnam's sovereignty would be violating the interest of other countries as well¹⁷³.

Since 2006, besides the numbers of annual exchange meetings of high-level political delegations between Hanoi and Beijing, there have been still violent reactions from Chinese navy toward Vietnamese fishery ship (incident in 2007, another Vietnamese ship sank and three were dead). Through historical background, China has three times sent its troops to attack Vietnam¹⁷⁴. From those happenings, much enquiries have been raised: Whether the historical rule repeats that China would “hit” Vietnam some time once again? In a long-term this question is hard to respond, but in short-term, this reaction will be rather remote. According to Womack (2006:252), the era of normalcy between Vietnam and China still dominates due to such factors as **geopolitics consideration** (sovereignty is the underlying fact of the relationship, Vietnam, through historical experience, is aware of its losses in keeping hostility toward China from 1979 to 1990), **context** (the expansion of ASEAN and diplomatic respect and recognition of this regional organization from other great powers, inclusive China. China other than that, still pursues its regional “good neighbors” policy) and **leadership** (the two leaderships share similar fundamental ideological resonance. Both are allied with the communist states and have to stand together to

¹⁷³ Also quoted in Vuving (2006:177) and Thayer (2003:528)

¹⁷⁴ In 1974, China besieged the Paracel Islands from the Republic of Vietnam; in 1979, claiming to “teach Hanoi a lesson”, China sent troops to attack and destroy the Vietnam's infrastructure along the borders; and the last one was the violent clash with Vietnam in 1988 in the Spratly Island).

resist against the pressures on political pluralism, but both are also meanwhile encouraged to strive for building rule of law. Above all, Vietnam and China orient its strategies on economic reform and international integration.)

In sum, Vietnam's policy behavior to China is not a "strategic ally" but rather a "strategic partner". This is because Vietnam regards China as a socialist state in a time where both Hanoi and Beijing assess that it is a decline of international communist. Vietnam, thus, views China as "comrades plus brothers" but in reality China is for Vietnam both "a Model and a Threat". Dealing with China in a traditional way of "deference" and a new way of "engagement" brings Hanoi with calculation of "regime security". At the same time Hanoi can learn from Chinese experience in economic and political reform process. Though China has been since then trying to paint its "benign power" face, **on-going mistrusts** together with major territorial disputes between the two communist countries still remain as challenges to bilateral relationship. Thus, Vietnamese strategy of omni-enmeshment is still regarded as prominent features. However, Hanoi's leaders, especially, the modernizers still search a way for political counterweight. The mid-term future scenario is that Vietnam **will not choose to be China's "strategic ally"**, rather it will seek way to enhance the cooperative relationship for mutual benefit, and reducing dissidents by negotiations.

7.3. Vietnam's Russia policy

In spite of geographical distance, the Soviet Union was once regarded as “cornerstone” in VFP in the 1970s and the 1980s, and also leader of the Socialist bloc. Besides economic and political advantages, many of Vietnamese intellectuals were once trained in the Soviet Union time. For The Soviet Union, Vietnam was a very close ally in the Cold War time. The USSR, in the Cold War time, always tried to avoid direct military confrontation with the U.S. Korean War and Vietnam War has been seen as a “proxy wars” where both these superpowers indirectly showed its strength.

With the demise of the Soviet Union and Socialist bloc in Eastern Europe in 1989, Vietnam, however, lost its core allies. Vietnamese leader at the time were very worried because for more than 20 years, Vietnam was strongly dependent on the Soviet Union not only politically, economically but also military. Hanoi was very worried about its ideological orientation. The Soviet Union's collapse meant also that it would lose almost its traditional markets and financial aids from the communist allies. According to Vietnam News,(13th March 1994) “the aid of the Soviet Union, as the main donor of ODA to Vietnam, has declined from 600 million rubles in 1989 to 200 million rubles in 1990. In 1993, Russia promised to lend Vietnam 40 million US dollars but the loans has not been granted”¹⁷⁵. Vietnam- the USSR relations started to show its stalemate at the beginning of 1990s. Not to mention that, Vietnam until the end of 1980s had hostile behavior to China.

After 1994, both sides have been managed to maintain the political and economic relations. Numbers of political delegations have been exchanged. However, until 2001, the bilateral relation has been refreshed with the official visit of President Vladimir Putin. The result of the visit was that both Russia and Vietnam signed “Joint Statement for a strategic partnership between Vietnam and Russia”¹⁷⁶.

For Vietnam, Russia today still plays an important role in Vietnamese foreign policy because “Russia is still a great power in contemporary international politics”¹⁷⁷- Russia

¹⁷⁵ Also quoted in Dahm (1995:44)

¹⁷⁶ See details of the Joint Statement at

<http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/news/story.php?d=20010305004049>

¹⁷⁷ Nhân Dân Newspapers (People's Newspaper) dated 28th February 2001

is one of the permanent members in the Security Council of the United Nations and Vietnam still needs Russian voice in supporting its accession to the international institutions. Vietnam hold high regards on traditional friendship and multifaceted cooperation with Russia. In the political report of the Central Committee of the VCP, it was again affirmed that wished to consolidate the relation with Russia¹⁷⁸

But why Vietnam underlies the relationship with Russia as a “**strategic relationship**” but not a “strategic ally” like in the past? Responding this question, I would like to point out some following assessments:

Firstly, regarding the concept of “strategic”, in the past “strategic relationship” was understood more about the cooperation in military and security, but in nowadays international politics, “strategic” not only refers to military but also **equality and mutual benefit** in economic cooperation. In “strategic relationship”, the military cooperation is either possible or not but it is not compulsory to become a strategic ally. If looking at the grand strategy of Vietnam since 1986, the Vietnamese diplomatic principle which Hanoi pursues is a “**foreign policy to serve for domestic economic development**”. The last ten years, Vietnam has adjusted its foreign policy motive to readiness for multi-lateral relationship and for an equal, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs. All those principles are subordination to modernization and industrialization process.

Secondly, It should be taken into consideration that when Putin came to power, Moscow has set forth different four objectives: **1.** foreign policy has its priority task of serving to domestic economic development, **2.** protection of national security; **3.** strengthening leadership role in the post-Soviet Union era; **4.** promoting a multi-polarity new world order.¹⁷⁹ Basically, both Vietnam and Russia emphasize the importance of economic cooperation. Russia, in a new time, is interested in promoting traditional relationship but based on the domestic demand of the both sides, military cooperation between Vietnam and Russia will not be served to be against the third adversary.

Thirdly, in the relationship with Russia, Vietnam also pays much attention to Chinese international reactions, the historical experience which made Vietnam drawn numbers

¹⁷⁸ Also reminded again in the article about Russia-Vietnam traditional ties reach new height

See <http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/news/story.php?d=20010305003822>

¹⁷⁹ Institute for Information and Social Science (2003). Document on Information about Russia and SNG, the concern issues.

of valuation lesson. Vietnam looks at Chinese behaviors to other great powers which engaged with “three No’s” principle - No ally, No confrontation and No give-up. Therefore, a “strategic ally” with Russia is for Vietnam not a priority.

Fourthly, Vietnam- Russia strategic relationship is also due to the fact that thousands of Vietnamese who are living Russia through the labor exchange contract between Vietnam and the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Vietnamese diaspora in Moscow is mostly doing small and medium business. Furthermore, Vietnam is very interested in Russian market as it exports oil and other agriculture and textile products. On the other side, Vietnam can import Russian technical machines and material for industrial production. Practically, in Vietnam’s foreign policy towards the great powers, Russia’s position does not anymore account a priority in its foreign policy strategy. Likewise, Russian priority in foreign relations is prone to promotion of relations with the SNG countries (Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, means Commonwealth of Independent States), and second is the European countries and then the U.S and the last is the East Asian countries.

To sum up, Vietnam-Russia relations, though has reached positive refreshment in comparison with the 1990s, mutual efforts have been made by two sides on consolidation relationship but not reaching the full range. In a long-term, tensions and confrontation between two countries can be excluded but also very less likely move to a higher level of strategic allies. A Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and Russia should be the next step needed to take into account.

7.4. Vietnam's EU policy

Debating about foreign policy of a state toward the European Union is assumed to be quite confusing because the European Union (27 members) today is surely different from the European Community in the past. Should other states deal with the EU as a single large bloc or with individual states separately? In the limited framework of this part, I would like to open a general discussion on Vietnam's policy behavior toward the EU as a whole.

One of the European Community (EC) countries have a very long-standing relation with Vietnam is the former colonial power France. This country had over 100 years of occupation and exploitation in Indochina. Its defeat in Dien Bien Phu in 1954 had put an end for its century of domination not only in Indochina but also in Africa.

Being part of "*breaking isolation and embargo*" policy, Vietnam's diplomatic strategy after 1986, set goals of normalization with all EC countries. After withdrawing its military troops in Cambodia in 1989, many European countries reestablished diplomatic relations with Vietnam and largely ignored any American pressure to stick to embargo¹⁸⁰. Several visits of European Foreign ministers and finally the visit of President Mitterand in 1993 had ended Vietnam's long international isolation and promoted its further integration into the world economy¹⁸¹. The highlight of Vietnam-EC relationship was the Framework Cooperation Agreement between Vietnam and EC signed in July 1995¹⁸². Nevertheless, Hanoi has been so far disappointed with limited economic assistance from European countries. Due to the "burdens" which the EC had to face with the Eastern Europe, EC's aid was exceptionally modest. According to Vietnam Investment Review (August, 1994:14), Vietnam received only 18 million US dollars for programs of developing five key sectors and accustom to market economy, 127 million US dollars for projects of creating jobs opportunity and for returning economic asylum-seekers, known as "boat people".

Enlargement of the European Union, later on, is considered as "the most ambitious project" which will help to achieve the dream to make Europe whole and free"¹⁸³. Though EU enlargement brings both challenges and advantages for its self, standing

¹⁸⁰ Südostasien Aktuell (May, 1991). p. 264. Also quoted in Dahm (1995:45)

¹⁸¹ Also quoted in Dahm (1995:45)

¹⁸² See www.delvnm.ec.europa.eu/eu.../the_framework.htm

¹⁸³ Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands (March, 2003). "Enlargement the European Union", Report to the European Commission.

in front of this project, both EU and other countries in different continents have to adjust its behaviors to meet requirements of the new condition.

Cardini (2004) comments that “Southeast Asian Countries such as Vietnam should see European Union enlargement as an opportunity rather than a threat”. He suggests five reasons why Southeast Asian countries will benefit from EU enlargement: **1.** possibility to access to a larger market than before (500 million inhabitants, GDP around 9.200 billion Euro, EU accounts for more than 19% of world trade and will be the source of 46% of world outward FDI); **2.** EU- a single set of rules for business; **3.** EU is a very open economy with a high standard of rules; **4.** An extension of the Generalized System of Preferences; **5.** and Trade disruption and trade diversion are unlikely for ASEAN countries.

In Vietnam’s perception, Hanoi considers relations with the EU as important partner, not only in economic development but also through the EU, Vietnam can enhance its international position. In fact, the EU absorbs on average about 22% of Vietnam’s exports (4.6 billion Euro in 2001). The EU is also the largest trading partner of Vietnam. Vietnam benefits not only in relations with the EU as a whole but also mutual relations with individual EU member states. For EU’s perception, “Vietnam is a key partner country within ASEAN and has acted as ASEAN facilitator in ongoing EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks”. Therefore, “the EU is seeking to broaden and diversify the agenda of its relationship with Vietnam, beyond development co-operation and trade, to increased political co-operation on issues of global concern”.¹⁸⁴

Regarding Vietnam’s strategic approach toward the European Union as a whole, there are two features should not be neglected:

Firstly, Vietnam calculated that its relation with the EU is part of “external balancing” strategy in dealing with other great powers, especially China and Japan. By signing of “the Framework Cooperation Agreement, 1995”¹⁸⁵, Vietnam achieved two-fold benefits: Vietnam, after almost more than one decade of isolation, first time was recognized as a “equal partner” of the EU in economic cooperation; Other than that,

¹⁸⁴ See EU’s assessment about the role of Vietnam at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/vietnam/index_en.htm

¹⁸⁵ For whole version of the Agreement, see http://www.delvnm.ec.europa.eu/eu_vn_relations/oveview/the_framework.htm

this Agreement provides Vietnam with broad and multilateral relations with each individual EU member states, and, thus, practically reduce political dependence on China and economic sticking with Japan.

In its relations with the great powers, Vietnam is fully aware of China's direct and sensitive influence, meanwhile Vietnam-US relations still has to confront with certain political and diplomatic obstacles. Therefore, a substantial and understanding relationship with the EU would be an *important strategic partnership*, and at the same time, "balancing" the pressures of the other powers.

Secondly, on its path to international economic integration, Vietnam certainly needs numbers of "votes" and positive "voices" of the EU whose some members have seats in the United Nation Security Council. Vietnam got a "ticket" to join in WTO was thanks to great support of the EU members.

In short, it is very clear that in terms of economic cooperation, Vietnam applies its pragmatic approaches in dealing with the EU as a whole by main motive so call "taking advantages" (*tranh thủ*) as it considers the EU as a "strategic market". But at the same time, Vietnam is also aware of its complicated legal system which is even more so since its enlargement. Furthermore, Vietnamese exported products still have to face with strong restrictions and trade protectionism from many European countries. Another issues attract EU concerns is the human right situation in Vietnam. Beside its strategic approach of "external balancing", it is more important than all, Vietnam should learn from many of the EU member states in building a strong and stable social security, while dealing with economic boom and the negative consequences left by market economy.

7.5. Vietnam's Japan policy

Memories of the Vietnamese about a brutal Japanese fascism from 1940-1945, causing massive hunger and killing almost 2 million people, are pushed back to the past. They have been gradually replaced by a image of new Japan - one of the most powerful economies, the biggest ODA provider in the world and a great power in the region.

Though Japan reestablished its normalization with Vietnam after 1975, Tokyo was still one of industrialized countries followed the American embargo until the end. Tokyo's cautious behavior to Hanoi was due to the fear that it would disappoint and endanger its relationship with the U.S.

If in the Cold War, Vietnam-Japan relations were mostly dominated by two camps-the U.S and the USSR, the post-Cold War era witnessed a warm-up relationship of the two countries. Japan changed its view and has a good impression about Vietnam's Đổi mới. After the Cambodian settlement, Japan took aims at helping establish a politically stability and prosperity of the whole Asian region, especially Southeast Asian region. Tokyo also calculates that a prosperous Vietnam would be a valuable balance to the growing Chinese political, economic and military influence in the region¹⁸⁶. Thus, Japan attempted to play more active and independent political role in the region by promoting closer cooperation with ASEAN and Indochina¹⁸⁷. This is also part of Tokyo's intention of redeeming mistakes which Japanese fascism made in the second World War to the South East Asian peoples.

Already in 1986, the 6th Communist Party Congress, Vietnam figured out the capitalist countries for financial support, these countries included France, Austria, Sweden and Japan.¹⁸⁸ Vietnam considers Japan as a priority investor in the Đổi mới era and in the modernization and industrialization process. Only in 1992, Japan has granted loans aid of 380 million USD, and around 15 million USD of grant aid for Hanoi in building infrastructure, and cultural projects¹⁸⁹. The Vietnam Investment reviews has post the

¹⁸⁶ Corin, Richard (1992). Japan, the United States and prospect of the Asia-Pacific century. Singapore: Institute of South East Asia Studies.

¹⁸⁷ Dahm (1995:46)

¹⁸⁸ See Document of 6th Party Congress (1986).p.57

¹⁸⁹ Data provided by Japanese Embassy in Hanoi, quoted in Dahm (1995)

remarkable aid by Japan to South East Asian economies, which reached 1.4 billion USD¹⁹⁰. Tourism and education become later on as the focusing important projects for both sides

Beside economical and technical supports, Hanoi also sees Japan with great admire and a possible model for its own development¹⁹¹. Notably, Vietnam and Japan are both Asian countries share many cultural values. Not like the U.S and the Western European countries who often set issues of human rights and democratization as a conditions for investment, Tokyo expresses its sympathy and recognizes the risk of political pluralism which could create political instability, and thus threatening the economic reform process in Vietnam. Nonetheless, Vietnam has also worries that a too strong dependent to economic imperative of Japan would affect Chinese view of influence in South East Asia region.

Though *strategic partnership* is perceived by both sides, Vietnam and Japan also experienced some incidents. The PCI corruption scandal is an example, in 2009 Japanese government claimed that Vietnamese officials in a state company¹⁹² have received bribery from a Japanese company (Nexus Technologies). This case has triggered a strong mistrust of Tokyo and made Japanese government suspended aid loan to Vietnam until this case is clarified. Consequently, in 2008, the main FDI of Japan flows to Vietnam accounts only about 8.0 million USD¹⁹³.

To sum up, Vietnam-Japan relations moves from a “cold phase” and disruption to a multi-faceted relationship. Both Vietnam and Japan calculate their own benefits in the mutual relations: firstly is a “balancing” against the emerging power of China and secondly is comprehensive economic cooperation. Above all, Vietnam is grateful for Japan’s full ranged assistance in its execution of Doi noi policy but not provoking factors which challenge the legitimacy of the Vietnamese Communist Party in the new process of modernization and industrialization.

¹⁹⁰ Vietnam Investment Review, November 1993. p7

¹⁹¹ Dahm (1995:47)

¹⁹² See details in both Vietnamese at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/vietnamese/vietnam/2010/03/100317_viet_us.shtml

and in English at <http://www.vietnam-partner.org/index.php?page=newsView&id=102>

¹⁹³ <http://www.vietpartners.com/statistic-fdi.htm>

7.6. Vietnam's India policy

The cordial friendship between Vietnam and India has been built up by the former leader generations, Ho Chi Minh and J. Nehru since the new establishments of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of India. India actively supported Vietnam in both persistent struggles against the French colonialist and American aggression in the Vietnam War. Later on, the bilateral relationship has been tight up with a number of official visits paid by high-ranking political leaders in 1990s.

Entering globalization time, both Vietnam and India have been managing to achieve a fair degree of success. Both have a very impressive economic growth rates and efforts in reducing poverty and striving for building social justice. While the size of the two economies is different (India's GDP in 2007 is projected at \$1,132 billion and Vietnam's at \$71 billion), the per capita income (\$946 for India and \$822 for Vietnam) are similar¹⁹⁴.

Moreover, Vietnam and India share cultural linkages and many characters both for advantages and challenges (a huge young population providing a active and dynamic labor forces, an overwhelming proportion of populations involved on agriculture with low incomes, a rapid urbanizations, and increasing gab between the Rich and the Poor). The adoption of *Đổi mới* of Vietnam and the "the 'Look East Policy'¹⁹⁵ of India imbued with the economic element, marked an important turn in India–Vietnam economic relations.¹⁹⁶

Vietnam is in the last decade largely interested in three potentials provided by India: **1.** development and support in the sphere of Informatics and Technology; **2.** trading markets, **3.** improvement of military strength by purchasing defense equipment with moderate prices.

¹⁹⁴ Remarks by Mukul Asher and Khuong Minh Vu (2007). "India and Vietnam: a case for substantive partnership", available at http://www.dnaindia.com/money/column_india-and-vietnam-a-case-for-substantive-partnership_1104528

¹⁹⁵ India's „Looking East Policy“ was implemented since 1992 which presents India's endeavors to promote extensive economic and strategic relations with the ASEAN in order to bolster its position as a regional power and a counterweight to the strategic influence of the P. R. China

¹⁹⁶ Kumar; Pranav (July, 2008). "India-Vietnam economic relations: Opportunities and Challenges", in: IPCS Special Report. New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. No.57

Vietnam is also well informed by the new strategy of India in the post-Cold War era. Remarking about India's foreign policy toward other great powers, Brawley (2004) writes that:

During the Cold War, India cast about for possible allies to balance American power. Since India currently may reckon that China is more of a threat to its interests than the U.S, it has very few potential allies to draw on. The Soviet Union was previously available as available as a balancer against China and the United States, but Russia may not be of much assistance today. India, therefore, would probably to try to pursue internal methods to balance against local threats, while seeking to appease the United States for the time being. India's only realistic option at this moment is to devote its energies to build up its internal economic capacities.

(Brawley, 2004:96)

Basically, China is not only the main concern of Vietnam or India but for most other states in the Asia - Pacific region. But like many other States in Asia, both India and Vietnam set priority on building up internal economic capacities. Practically, both India and China attempt to pursue their "tacit balancing" since they both share parallel interests in politics (influence) and economy (markets) in the Asia-pacific region.

Having an increasing role in ASEAN, "Vietnam is a country with immense economic and strategic potential"¹⁹⁷. Thus, the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2007 indicates the new contours of India-Vietnam relations. This event is seen as a success in bilateral cooperation not only in economic field but also in security reason. In 2009, India has granted market economy status to Vietnam at the same time, the substantive cooperation is further enhanced in higher education, science and technology.

One of the most notable events was when the Vietnamese Defense Minister, General Phung Quang Thanh paid a visit to India in November 2009 (prior his visit to the U.S). This event is also seen by many observers as a reaction which "withstood post Cold War strategic permutations".¹⁹⁸ The most important message in the dialogue with Indian Army was that: Vietnam needs Indian assistance in upgrading its outdated

¹⁹⁷ Pankaj Jha (2009) "The India-Vietnam Partnership", available at <http://www.ipcs.org/article/southeast-asia/the-india-vietnam-partnership-3006.html>

¹⁹⁸ Pankaj Jha (2009). Ibid.

defense equipment and other military hardware. An often practice of Vietnamese navy in the South China Sea under assistance of Indian navy would be appreciated. This also means that Vietnam is pursuing its “external balancing” if necessary when dealing with both China and India for the sake of safeguarding its territory.

To sum up, despite of recently busy bilateral trades between Vietnam and India, there still much potentials which both side should effective exploit such as tourism and technology. Both Hanoi and New Delhi so far have reached a further step in terms of security interest due to the Vietnamese requirement of military improvement. Hanoi is aware that the outdated quantity of military hardware in the past will not mean much in the today era of high informatics and technology. Nevertheless, a comprehensive mutual cooperation still needs attention of the strategic policy makers in Vietnam.

Conclusion

From a near starvation to the world's second largest rice exporter, from a country, more than two decades ago, did not even have the vocabulary of trade, legal system, the vocabulary of economics and central banking system¹⁹⁹, Vietnam turns to be one of the most dynamic and growth-rate economies in the region and achieves significant changes in economic management. From a country under years of isolation and blockage, Vietnam scored a multiple diplomatic success by having established relations with 170 countries, having trade links with 224 out of 255 nations and territories²⁰⁰, being an active member of regional and international institutions.

Discussing about Vietnam, it is a necessity to have a close look at Đổi mới, an economic reform program launched in the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (1986). By adoption of market-based economic mechanism “under socialist orientation”²⁰¹, Vietnam recognizes the free flow of goods and services, household economies and the private sectors. Along with this strategy, Vietnam continues to improve its legal framework for supporting the business sectors. Hanoi with its “open door” policy (*chính sách mở cửa*) and significant achievements in implementation of Đổi mới, has its confidence in its integrating path into world economy.

Kirt (2006:247) states that “foreign policy operates on the international level, but its agenda is grounded in the realm of domestic interests”. Likewise, essential changes of Vietnamese foreign policy solemnly derives its momentum from domestic requirement but apparently, at the same time, radical changes of foreign policy has also made a great contribution to success of Đổi mới. Main task of Vietnam's foreign policy at the beginning Đổi mới era were aim to help the country step out of isolation, normalization with the great powers, “ready to befriend with all other nations in the world” and attracting foreign investment. For Hanoi leaders' perception, “economic growth, in turn, is seen as a way to provide Vietnam with national security, since Vietnam is regarded as living ‘in a region surrounded by tigers and dragon, the continued backwardness of

¹⁹⁹ This was a remark by Seth Mydens (2000). “Vietnam today: a different war”, in Newyork Times

http://www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_capitalism.html

²⁰⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/2009/1269_vol2_en.pdf

²⁰¹ Expressed by the Communist Party of Vietnam

the country is the biggest security threat to the nation' (Goodman, 1996: 596). Like Hoang (1994) remarks "a poor country is not a strong country".

Generally, it can be noted that during the Cold War, Vietnamese Foreign Policy was determined by **ideological standpoint**. National interest was set by priority objectives such as national defence, national liberation and reunification. Since the adoption of Đổi mới, Vietnam has **shifted** from pursuing a limited number of external relationships, primarily within the socialist bloc, and over dependent on Soviet Union to a foreign policy based on "**diversification**" and "**multi-lateralization**" approaches. In other words, it has been undergone with a much **pragmatic** way to serve for the cause of industrialization and modernization process, associated with protection of national sovereignty and improving Vietnam's position in regional and international arena.

Identifying the main determinants leading to this "shift" of Vietnam's foreign policy, it can be explained by both international and domestic factors.

Regarding **International influences**, they should be included the demise of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc; the demand of economic reform (Đổi mới) strongly motivated by the Perestroika in Russia, Economic reform in China, and other Eastern European countries; the impact of globalization and "economization" process and most notably the changing behaviors of present day-great powers toward each others²⁰².

Concerning **Domestic factors**, I emphasized the importance of "reform of thinking" in foreign policy makers:

1. Reform of thinking in perception of the outside world
2. Reform of thinking in perception of security, development, national interest
3. Reform of thinking of foreign policy approaches
4. Reform of thinking in identifying "friend and foe"
5. Reform of thinking about different contributing channels to foreign policy-making

I agree partly with an assessment by Vuving (2005) that strategic culture of the state and its ruling/governing elites still play a central role in Vietnamese foreign policy-making. Grand strategy and foreign policy options are strongly influenced by

²⁰² See my analysis in Chapter 6, part 6.1 and 6.2. pp.74-89

“concessions“ or “struggling” of two camps of ruling elites which are divided into two groups: the anti-imperialists (conservatives) and the modernizers. Vietnam’s foreign policy is much depending on perception about world view of these two groups. This is very noticeable in the Vietnamese case but I just share my partly agreeing with this essessent because I still insist to underline the importance of the international influence like already mentioned above. Last but not least, one of not less important factor which might be more even essentially important in the future, which is the increasing role of civil society, intellectuals and think tanks in the Vietnamese foreign policy-making process.

From my own investigation and with a reference to the analysis by Vuving (2005), I would like to sum up again the significant changes in Vietnam’s foreign policy since 1986 to present:

	Before Đổi mới (1964-1986)	From Đổi mới to present
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-camps: Capitalists and Socialists • “Three revolutionary currents”²⁰³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-polarity and interdependence • Globalization and Scientific-technological Revolution
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marxism-Leninism orientation • “socialism” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalization of Ideology: Pragmatism under the rhetoric slogan “orthodox of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh thought” and “socialism construction”
Grand strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National liberation and National Unification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernization and Industrialization
Interests	Primacy of class interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class struggle: “who will win” 	Primacy of national interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prone to peaceful cooperation; • Economic development and national security: economic security and sovereignty security, protection of national identity etc.
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communist victory on a global scale • Revolution export (to Laos, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wealthy people, strong nation and democratic, and civilized society”

²⁰³ See Chapter 4, part 4.1

	Cambodia, Thailand)	
Foreign policy directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying: “Who is friend who is foe?” Anti-imperialism Vietnamese revolution was part of “World revolution” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Open door policy” Multilateralization and Diversification: “befriend with all nations and a reliable partner”
	„begging for aid“	Self-reliance and integration to international community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USSR as “cornerstone” Socialist bloc Alliance with China and Opposition to the United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close ties with the West Integration to Asia-Pacific and ASEAN Strategic partnership and cooperative partnership with the great powers
Diplomacy approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomacy regarded as a front serving military front „Antagonism diplomacy“ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Economic diplomacy” People-to-people diplomacy (track-two diplomacy) Using intellectuals, think tanks and contribution of NGOs as a consultation sources
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation Trade embargo Economic crisis and unstable society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomatic relations with 172 countries Trade agreements with 76 countries Vietnam as an influent member in ASEAN Non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2008-2009)

I have argued that the pattern of Vietnamese foreign relations toward the great powers since 1986 is a *combination of both theoretical paradigms: **realism and liberalism***. It has been proved in my thesis that:

- Vietnam’s U.S policy is explained by approaches of “external and internal balancing” and appeasement which correspond to realism theory;
- Vietnam’s China policy is realized by “deference” approach (asymmetry paradigm), “both external and internal balancing” which correspond to realism; the pathways involved are “engagement” and “omni-enmeshment” (liberalism)
- Vietnam’s Russia policy is more prone to “solidarity” approach which refers to socialist internationalism
- Vietnam’s the European Union is more described by “pragmatism” and liberalism stressed by “taking advantages” approach
- Vietnam deals with Japan and India as counterweight to China (realism)

It can be also clear to see that the changes in Vietnamese foreign policy after 1986 does not affect the country's behaviour of maintaining statue-quo power of the Communist Party but it also can not be denied that the CPV's significant role in contribution to national liberation, struggle for independence and national construction.

Dahm (1995) has posed a question that "The conclusion about Vietnam's future depends on whether one takes an optimistic or pessimistic view, whether Đổi mới is the beginning of substantial changes or just a matter of buying time before the final collapse of the system?" After 15 years, having seen the country's significant changes and achievements, Dahm might get now a pessimistic answer.

I might conclude my thesis by recommending the next step:

Vietnam's vision of 2020 is to become "an industrialized country"²⁰⁴ how to achieve this goals depends certainly much on its strategic approach of a flexible foreign policy. Avoiding a lame comparison by using a metaphor that "Vietnam - a tiger riding bicycle", it can be suggested by a gradual introduction of democracy with increasing role of civil society, learning how to build a strong and stable social security, for example, like what Prime Minister Bruno Kreisky has done in Austria in the 1970s. This might be an initial solution for Hanoi's task in balancing between market economy and ideology.

²⁰⁴ See Vietnam' national strategy of Vietnam on different fields at on http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page?_pageid=517,39549514&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

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Sprachen:

- Vietnamesisch (Muttersprache)
- Deutsch: Sehr gut
- Englisch: Sehr gut
- Chinesisch: Konversationsfähigkeiten

