

Abstract

The PhD. dissertation *The Lands of the Free: Thailand in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1945–1975* deals with the relationship between Thailand and the United States in the era of Cold War and of the bipolar division of the world.

In the years following World War II, Thailand (previously also known as Siam) became one of the main allies of the United States in Southeast Asia. Thailand sent military units to fight in the Korean War, joined the SEATO pact and repeatedly declared her willingness to support the struggle against the spreading of communism in Southeast Asia, which was the major objective of the policy of the United States in the region in this particular time period.

The relationship between both countries, however, had started to develop already before World War II and the subsequent emergence of the bipolar world order. When analyzing and assessing the dynamics of the relationship between the United States and Thailand after 1945, it is thus necessary to take into account not only the immediate concerns and priorities of Washington and Bangkok, but also the long-standing trends and underlying tendencies and currents in their foreign policy, as well as socio-cultural factors of this relationship. It is beyond any doubt that the Cold War has played a crucial role in forging and cementing the American-Thai alliance, but it could not be said that it was the only factor to have caused this development.

This thesis focuses on the analysis of the development of the relations between the two countries with the emphasis on the period between 1945, when World War II has ended, and 1975, when the fall of Saigon has concluded the lengthy conflict in Indochina, in which both the United States and Thailand have been involved. For the reasons already mentioned, two chapters are also included which deal with the period before 1945, allowing the reader to better grasp the essence and nature of the post-war Thai-American relationship and of the American policy in the region as such. The objective of the author is to identify and present the important moments and turning points in this relationship and also to show, by analyzing the foreign policy documents as well the public discourse (especially in the United States), how have the mutual perceptions and images of both countries gradually developed and changed and how have these changes and shifts affected the policy of the United States and Thailand on the practical level.