

Abstract

The objective of the thesis on “Thailand’s Foreign Policy in the Political and Security Dimensions toward the United States from September 11, 2001 to September 19, 2006,” is to examine and analyze Thai foreign policy formulation by means of an in depth study of the policy making process, the output or the foreign policy, the policy implementations, the results of policy implementations and their impacts on Thailand in other dimensions. With the emphasis on the study of policy formulation, the Global Policy Science is employed as the conceptual framework to identify the policy structure and process. The Linkage Politics is also used to identify the relations between the external and internal inputs that influence Thai foreign policy making.

This thesis is a documentary research that uses the descriptive and prescriptive analysis based on the primary and secondary sources and the personal interviews with the government officials concerned which help to ensure that this study works on the most reliable sources. The thesis finds that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Foreign Minister Surakiat Sathirathai played vital roles in shaping Thai foreign policy toward the United States while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the military organizations and other actors concerned have minimal influences on foreign policy making. The finding also reveals that Thai foreign policy toward the United States after September 11, 2001, is to maintain the status of treaty ally while rendering all possible assistance to the United States as consistently done in the past. The main reason that makes the Thai government choose this option is based on the characteristics of the relations between the two nations as the long standing treaty allies. However, the study exposes that in practice Thai foreign policy toward the United States is different from what is expected. It is a piecemeal policy that is characterized by inconsistency and discontinuity, and is responsive to the demands from Washington only on a case by case basis. This was because the Thaksin government gives a special attention to the internal factors especially those related to the political stability of the government.

As regard to the policy implementation, though the United States still regards Thailand as friend and treaty ally, Thailand does not receive any special treatments from the United States that outstand other strong allies in the region. Even worse, Thailand is treated in the similar ways as other non - allied nations of the United States. The positive results of the policy implementation included the acquirement of the Major - Non NATO Ally status, the commencement of the negotiations on Free Trade Agreement, the reaffirmation from President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the violence in the southernmost provinces remains Thailand's domestic problems, the financial assistance after the occurrence of Tsunami.

The negative results of the policy implementation, mainly caused by the inconsistency and discontinuity of Thai foreign policy, could be witnessed from the position of the United States that never publicly shows any signs of endorsement for the Thai candidate running for the position of the Secretary - General of the United Nations, or assisting Thailand to play an active role in international community such as to be the member of the Human Rights Council. Besides, it is difficult for the United States to trust Thai foreign policy toward Myanmar because Thai leaders enjoy a large stake of interests in Myanmar. Moreover, Thai policy that supports the United States' policy, such as the attack on Afghanistan and Iraq and the war against terrorism campaign puts Thailand at risk as the target of terrorist attacks, provokes Thai people's disagreement with the government and gradually decreases the stability of the Thai government.

The suggestions that this thesis provides is to carefully consider the relevant factors that have an influence on Thai foreign policy toward the United States before announcing any positions. This will help to guide the government officials concerned to properly formulate and implement the country's foreign policy. Also, the government should allow the non - governmental actors and the general public to take part in the foreign policy making process and voice their opinions through surveys, particularly on certain sensitive issues.