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**THE US FOREIGN POLICY SHIFT FROM
ISOLATIONISM TO INTERVENTIONISM (1920-1975)
CASE STUDY: US INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM**

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Dedication

Words are not adequate to express our gratitude, respect and love to our dear parents who have blessed and supported us throughout the ordeal of fulfilling our work. This dissertation is dedicated first to our beloved mothers who have had a profound influence on our aspiration. We have no magic word to describe their great love, sacrifice and support in the most difficulties of our life; we are deeply grateful and proud of our mothers.

Special dedication goes to our siblings and our honest friends. Special thanks go to our Grandfathers, Grandmothers, uncles, aunts, cousins and nephews.

Last not least, we dedicate this dissertation to our teachers from the primary school to the University, THANK YOU FOR INFUSING US WITH PRICELESS KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

Throughout the 20th century, the United States of America had struggled with the question of which ideology ought to be as the US foreign policy whether isolation or intervention. Precisely from the early 1920 up to 1975, U.S. foreign policy has clearly shifted from isolationism to interventionism. Hence, the dissertation deals with the transformation of US foreign policy from 1920 to 1975. It sketches the US involvement in World War II, besides it analyses the US intervention in Vietnam. The aim of the paper is to examine the evolution of US foreign policy.

The present dissertation attempts to provide a further analysis of the US foreign policy shift. It investigates the different circumstances that were behind the alteration of the US foreign policy from isolationism toward interventionism. The introductory chapter deals with the return to isolationism as the US foreign policy after World War I. Next chapter highlights the US Foreign Policy shift from Isolationism to Interventionism from 1935 to 1945. Last but not least the final chapter tackles the US foreign policy of interventionism from 1945 to 1975 with an illustration as a case study about the US intervention in Vietnam.

Keywords:

Isolationism, interventionism, the United States of America, foreign policy, ideology, US Foreign Policy shift, the 20th century, World War II, US intervention in Vietnam.

ملخص

خلال القرن العشرين، كانت الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية تكافح مسألة أي أيديولوجية يجب أن تمثل السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية سواء العزلة أو التدخل في الشؤون الخارجية. وعلى وجه التحديد منذ أوائل عام 1920 وحتى عام 1975، تحولت السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة بشكل واضح من سياسة العزلة إلى سياسة التدخل. ومن هنا، تتطرق المذكرة إلى دراسة تحول السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية من عام 1920 إلى عام 1975. حيث تحلل تدخل الولايات المتحدة في الحرب العالمية الثانية، إلى جانب دراسة التدخل الأمريكي في فيتنام. والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة تطور السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

تحاول هذه الأطروحة تقديم تحليل إضافي لتغير السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية. عن طريق التحقيق و دراسة الظروف المختلفة التي كانت وراء تغيير السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة من الانعزالية نحو التدخل. يتناول الفصل التمهيدي العودة إلى العزلة كسياسة خارجية للولايات المتحدة بعد الحرب العالمية الأولى. يسلط الفصل التالي الضوء على تحول السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية من العزلة إلى التدخل من 1935 إلى 1945. وأخيرا وليس آخرا، يتناول الفصل الأخير السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية للتدخل من 1945 إلى 1975 مع التوضيح كدراسة حالة حول التدخل الأمريكي في فيتنام.

Résumé

Tout au long du 20ème siècle, les États-Unis d'Amérique ont lutté avec la question de savoir quelle idéologie devrait être, en tant que politique étrangère des États-Unis, qu'il s'agisse d'un isolement ou d'une intervention. Précisément du début des années 1920 à 1975, la politique étrangère américaine s'est nettement déplacée de l'isolationnisme à l'interventionnisme. Par conséquent, la thèse traite de la transformation de la politique étrangère des États-Unis de 1920 à 1975. Elle croque la participation des États-Unis à la Seconde Guerre mondiale, en plus d'analyser l'intervention américaine au Vietnam. Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'évolution de la politique étrangère des États-Unis.

La présente dissertation tente de fournir une analyse plus approfondie du changement de politique étrangère des États-Unis. Il étudie les différentes circonstances qui ont entraîné l'altération de la politique étrangère des États-Unis de l'isolationnisme à l'interventionnisme. Le chapitre introductif traite du retour à l'isolationnisme en tant que politique étrangère des États-Unis après la Première Guerre mondiale. Le chapitre suivant met en évidence le passage de la politique étrangère des États-Unis à l'isolationnisme et à l'interventionnisme de 1935 à 1945. Enfin, le chapitre final aborde la politique étrangère d'interventionnisme des États-Unis De 1945 à 1975 avec une illustration comme une étude de cas sur l'intervention des États-Unis au Vietnam.

List of Acronyms

US: The United States

USA: The United States of America

WWI: World War I

WWII: World War II

FDR: Franklin Delano Roosevelt

UN: The United Nations

U.S.S.R: The Union Soviet Socialist Republic

SC: Security Council

OAS: The Organization of American States

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

SEATO: The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization

NVA: The North Vietnamese Army

NLF: National Liberation Front

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General Introduction

The United States Foreign policy regulates how America conducts dealings and relationships with other nations. It looks to assure the United States security and defense. It pursues the authority to defend US national interests around the globe. Domestic interest forms foreign policy and covers crucial political, economic, military, ideological, and humanitarian issues. On the one hand, isolationist foreign policy can be defined as the doctrine of isolating one's nation from the matters of other countries by decreasing engagement with alliances, pacts, foreign economic commitments, foreign trade, international agreements, etc. On the other hand, interventionism can be explained as the political and military practice of intervening in an autonomous state's affairs.

Historically, the Monroe Doctrine shaped US foreign policy of isolation. The U.S. decided not to interfere with existing European colonies nor meddle in the internal matters of European nations. However, the watershed regarding the history of U.S. foreign policy was the shift from isolationism to interventionism after World War II. The turning point was signaled by a series of military activities during and after WWII such as the involvement of the US in WWII and the US intervention in Vietnam.

The following research attempts to explain how the US foreign policy changed from isolation to intervention. The study does not cover the entire US foreign policy since 1776 but it covers the era between 1920 and 1975. It looks to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of American Foreign policy during the period under review. The methodology involves an efficient collection and neutral assessment of materials including books, academic journals, magazines and internet articles.

The dissertation is an effort to examine and analyse the shift of the U.S foreign policy from isolationism to interventionism from 1920 to 1975. It sheds light on both foreign policies of isolation and intervention. The importance of this research is to investigate how

the USA played an insignificant role in international affairs and keeping the nation out of international conflicts after WWI, this shaped the period of isolationism. However, international incidents began to slowly take out the USA from isolationism to interventionism after WWII.

The central question of the paper is what are the motives and the aim behind the US foreign policy shift from isolationism to interventionism during and after WWII? In addition, as a sub central question, did the United States intervene in other nations affairs solely for the sake of democracy or to secure its own interests?

To understand the US foreign policy shift from isolationism to interventionism, the study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter examines the US isolation after WWI through a number of treaties such as Washington Naval Conference, Pact of Locarno, The Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Good Neighbor policy. These pacts emphasized the US isolation during the era after WWI. The second chapter highlights the shift and the transformation of US foreign policy from isolationism to interventionism from 1935 to 1945. The chapter deals with Franklin D. Roosevelt Foreign Policy. Besides it investigates how the Neutrality Acts of 1930's and the Cash and Carry Act shifted gradually the US foreign policy toward interventionism. The chapter as well shows how far the US involvement in WWII transformed US foreign policy of isolationism towards interventionism. Eventually, chapter three describes the United States after WWII and the Cold War beginnings. Furthermore, it analyses the involvement of the US in international organizations in relation to foreign policy. The paper will conclude with the Vietnam War as a case study by presenting how the United States interventionist foreign policy was implemented in Vietnam.

Chapter One: The Return to Isolationism 1920 – 1930

1.1 Introduction

During the 1920s, the memory of tragic losses in World War I pushed Americans to rethink about their foreign policy of interventionism. All what they desired was to keep peace, to give the country time to recover from its injuries. Therefore, public opinion contributed well to alter US foreign policy toward isolationism. Isolationists advocated non-entanglements in European and Asian conflicts and non-involvement in international politics. This chapter introduces the USA after the WWI and how it would readopt isolationism policy starting from the 1920's. Also, it shows how president Warren Harding would supersede president Wilson Woodrow in term of foreign policy. Moreover, the chapter examines acts of immigration and economy that reinforced isolationism policy. Furthermore, it explores the Washington Naval Conference that invited a number of countries for disarmament and peaceful debate over their disputes. In addition, this chapter discusses the Locarno Treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact in connection with the US Isolationism foreign policy. Eventually, the interwar diplomacy of the USA after WWI and before WW2 is investigated in the present chapter; the latter as well highlights the effects of the Great Depression on the US foreign policy.

1.2 The USA after WWI

World War I has been called a war with many causes but no objectives. The casualties of the war were immense, killing up to 40 million people worldwide, including 548.452 Americans; almost 10 million troops were killed and over 20 million were injured, millions of people died as a result of the hostilities, famine, and disease (Thomas 82).

President Woodrow Wilson proposed the 14 points which later became the points which the League of Nations was based on. After WWI America turned its back to Wilson as he broke his promise to keep them out of WWI. As a result, the United States separated

itself from Europe and became once again an isolationist nation. Later, president Wilson died, the new president Warren Harding would isolate the nation from the global issues to tackle internal problems. Therefore, American officials would not attend conferences or treaties between other countries. They also became isolated from other countries by passing new acts concerning trade and immigration.

1.2.1 A Return to Normalcy

Right after World War I, the USA had witnessed a significant turning point in the building of its nation. The country turned away from the European conflicts. Gradually, the USA rejected the Treaty of Versailles, and the League of Nations. During the presidential election of 1920 President Woodrow Wilson withdrew his candidacy. Two new running candidates were the Republican Warren Harding and the Democrat James Cox. Both who vigorously were pushing their vision of America's role in the world. On the one hand, the Democrat Cox supported President Wilson's views concerning foreign policy. He confirmed that the United States had to operate actively when it would come to international matters. On the other hand, Warren Harding disagreed strongly with Cox' views of interventionism policy. He declared that the United States must solve problems within the nation, and no longer would international affairs be on its future agenda. Republican Senator Warren Harding of Ohio aimed to "Return to Normalcy"¹.

Since the outset it was clear that Republicans would win the election because the involvement of the United States in WWI had caused uncountable casualties in terms of troops and money. Americans rejected anything that might lead them to another European War, they wanted to focus exclusively on their own interests and develop their country not solve other nations' conflicts. Therefore, the United States neither ratified the Treaty of Versailles, nor joined the League of Nations or the International Court of Justice. Most of

¹ Return to Normalcy: Harding' slogan during the US presidential election of 1920s.

Americans solely wanted to enjoy the prosperity that had developed in the previous epoch and felt that foreign entanglements would threaten their harmony. On November 2nd, 1920, Harding won a decisive victory over Cox, pulling 60.3 percent of the popular vote. He stated:

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.

(Warren G 1920)

In his talk, Harding insinuated to return back to the traditional policies. He believed that the postwar era would witness a decisive period in the US history. In his view the continuation of Wilson interventionism policy would affect the US negatively. Therefore, Harding would lead the USA to the traditional ideals. His purpose was to construct normal American emphasis on a peaceful, responsible society to steer their internal affairs and made their country a better place (Eugene, Wilson). President Warren Harding died in 1923, and Vice President Coolidge assumed the presidency.

1.2.1.1 The Immigration Quota Act 1921

The Emergency Quota Act, also known as the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921, is an act that restricted the immigration into the United States. After WWI, there was an increasing fear of newcomers especially from southern and eastern Europe. This was due to the WWI, and to the fear that they would take Americans' jobs. Because new immigrants would accept lower wages and work under bad conditions. In addition, the political ideas especially communism caused a paranoiac fear. President Coolidge stated that "America must be kept American" (Thomas 82). Therefore the United States passed the immigration Quota Act 1921 to reduce immigration rates particularly from under developed countries.

Two measures would restrict immigration: numerical limits on immigration and the use of a quota system for establishing those limits. These limits came to be known as the National Origins Formula. Only 357,000 people were permitted in each year. Only 3% of the existing number of people who dwelled in the United States would be allowed in (Thomas 82). Immigrants had to take literacy test where they had to read a passage of English. Those who failed were not certified to enter USA. As a result, the immigration levels were remarkably reduced as the USA began to fear foreigners. Their policies were designed to keep out Africans, Asians and South Americans whilst continuing to allow in white western Europeans.

The new policy achieved the anticipated results. Immigration was reduced to an annual average of about 300,000 during 1920s and fell to 50,000 a year with the aid of the depression (Thomas 99). People from northwestern Europe were more welcomed than the Italians and other less desirable countries such as China.

1.2.1.2 Fordney McCumber Act of 1922

In 1922, the United States passed the Fordney McCumber Act. The latter was ratified by President Warren Harding. This tariff imposed high taxes on all non-American products to 38.5%. It made foreign products more expensive and made American products more available and attractive to the customer in terms of quality and price. Congress displayed a pro-business attitude in passing the tariff and in endorsing foreign commerce through owing Europe huge amount of loans, which in turn bought more American goods. This policy worked well and helped to create the economic 'boom' of the 1920s. The Fordney-McCumber Tariff confirmed America's intention to be an isolated country because the high tariffs on imported products would deter other nations from trading with the United States.

1.3 Washington Naval Conference

The Washington Naval Conference was held in Washington D.C. The conference took place from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922. Officially the International Conference on Naval Limitation was called by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes to head off a world naval race and stabilize power relationships. Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy would be invited, with the target being a fifty percent reduction in naval production over five years period. The world's largest naval powers would be gathered in Washington for a conference aiming to confer naval disarmament and ways to relieve growing tensions in East Asia. U.S. As a result of the conference, three main treaties would be signed: the Five-Power Treaty, the Four-Power Treaty, and the Nine-Power Treaty. These treaties would restrict battleships, aircraft carriers, and naval arms race.

1.3.1 The Five-Power Naval Treaty

The Five-Power Treaty was signed by the major countries that had won World War I. The treaty was the basis of the naval disarmament plan. It aimed to sustain a regular ratio of warship amount. Hence, the treaty would allow the United States and the United Kingdom 500,000 tons, Japan 300,000 tons, and France and Italy each 175,000 tons. Moreover, Japan preferred that sized be fixed at a 10:10:7 ratio; however the U.S. Navy preferred a 10:10:5 ratio. The conference adopted the 5:5:3 ratio limits (Benjamin 49).

1.3.2 The Four-Power Treaty

The treaty was signed by the United States in December 13th, 1921. It encompassed Britain, France, Japan and the United States. They guaranteed a plan that would limit the size of capital ships and would accept a moratorium on new naval construction. Moreover, they agreed to discuss disagreements over the Pacific in a meeting to reach peaceful solution rather than military action. The four members of the pact would debate with one another openly and honestly, to come up with a nonviolent remedy as to the most efficient measures

to be taken, jointly or separately. The concord endorsed the bargain with the reservation that there was "no commitment to armed force, no alliance, and no obligation to join in any defense." ("MILESTONES 1921-1936").

1.3.3 The Nine-Power Pact

The Nine-Power Treaty was signed on 6 February 1922 by all of the participants of the Washington Naval Conference: the United States, Belgium, the Great Britain, Republic of China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal. The treaty guaranteed the independence and territorial integrity of China and declared the principle of equal trade for all in china ("Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1922"). Furthermore, in separate agreements negotiated outside the conference, Japan agreed to return Shantung to China and to withdraw all its troops from Siberia (Benjamin 50).

Eventually, The Washington Disarmament Conference demonstrated the US foreign policy of isolationism. The naval disarmament and the rejection of Wilson's internationalism would give more space for the policy of isolationism. Thus, Harding and Hughes showed inventive practicality in promoting peace through disarmament as an alternative to Wilson's program of world government.

1.4 Pact of Locarno 1925

The Locarno Treaties were seven pacts which attempted to reach an agreement by formal discussion at Locarno. The treaty was officially ratified in London on December 1st, 1925. Belgium, United Kingdom, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy and Poland were involved. Moreover, the root of the agreement was a German plan presented by Stresemann, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to agree Germany's western frontiers with France and Belgium in exchange for the withdrawal of foreign military powers from the Rhineland. In other

words, the purpose of the conference was to discuss political borders and build permanent peace.

The treaty of mutual pledge assured that the German-Belgian and Franco-German borders as secured by the Treaty of Versailles were unbreakable; that Germany, Belgium, and France would never use military force against each other except in legitimate defense, so that the signatories would resolve their clashes by peaceful means. The treaties of agreements between France and Poland or Czechoslovakia provided mutual support against unprovoked attack (Walter 361). Finally, the main goal of the conference was to discuss political frontiers and build peace between nations; yet the indispensable issue was to reach a peaceful solution between France and Germany.

1.5 The Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928

The Kellogg-Briand Pact as well is an international agreement between the United States and other powers. It was signed on August 27, 1928. Sometimes it is called the Pact of Paris named after the city in which it was signed. The treaty aimed to settle an atmosphere for peaceful discussion to solve international issues rather than wars. It was arranged by US Secretary of State Frank B Kellogg (1856–1937) and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand (1862–1932). The Pact was signed by fifteen countries, including Canada, Germany, the United States, Australia, France, Great Britain, Belgium, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, India, Italy, Japan, Poland and Czechoslovakia (Lesaffer 02).

The Pact consisted of a number of articles, but as far as isolationism policy is concerned only two articles were significant. Article one contained a serious declaration by the countries to ‘condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and to renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another’.

However, in Article two, the states agreed that ‘the settlement or solution of all disputes or clashes of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means’ (Lesaffer 16).

The Kellogg–Briand Pact did not achieve its goal of tracing an end for direct conflicts, and so it made no immediate contribution to the international peace, and showed to be fruitless in the future. Furthermore, the pact erased the legal difference between war and peace because the nations, having rejected the use of war, began to wage wars without declaring them such as the Japanese army of entering to Manchuria in 1931 by force, and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. Nonetheless, the treaty is a crucial multilateral agreement because, in addition to binding the particular countries that signed it, it has also functioned as one of the legal bases establishing the international rules that the threat, or use of military power in infringement of international law, as well as the territorial attainments resulting from it, are unauthorized according to the Kellogg–Briand Pact (“Kellogg-Briand Pact”).

1.6 Great Depression 1929

The Great Depression was an economic recession that took place during the 1930’s. Generally the timing of the Great Depression differed across countries; in most nations it started in 1929 and lasted until the late 1930’s. It was the longest, deepest, and most disastrous economic crush. In other words, The Great Depression was a global event that derived in part from incidents in the United States and US financial policies. As it lasted throughout the period of 1930’s, it influenced US foreign policies in such a way that the United States Government became even more isolationist.

In the United States, the Great Depression started soon after the stock market crash of October 1929, which sent Wall Street into a panic and wiped out millions of investors. Over the following several years, consumer spending and investment dropped, causing steep

deteriorations in industrial productivity and rising levels of redundancy as failing companies laid off employees. By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its nadir, some 13 to 15 million Americans were idle and approximately half of the nation's banks had failed (Bryn 97).

Though the reassurance and reform measures introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt contributed in minimizing the worst effects of the Great Depression in the 1930's, the economy would not fully turn around until after 1939, when World War II kicked American industry into high gear ("The Great Depression").

The Depression coerced the United States to adopt isolationism as a foreign policy. Remarkably number of international incidents occurred during the 1930's such as the Japanese seizure of northeast China in 1931, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, and German expansionism in Central and Eastern Europe. The United States did not react or take an active action in response or opposition toward the aforementioned incidents. When these and other events happened, the United States Government issued statements of condemnation but took limited action beyond that. Furthermore, Isolationism was established in Latin America in the form of the Good Neighbor Policy of Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, under which the United States reduced its military troops in the region and improved relations with its neighbors. Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt were to an extent embarrassed by public opinion, which necessitated that primary attention be given to national affairs. The Hoover and Roosevelt Administrations concentrated upon rebuilding the U.S. economy and dealing with widespread unemployment and social dislocation at home and as a result international affairs took a back seat ("MILESTONES 1921-1936").

1.7 Good Neighbor policy

The Good Neighbor policy was a foreign policy of the United States government which President Franklin Roosevelt established toward Latin America. In the late 19th and

early 20th centuries, the United States occasionally intervened militarily in Latin American nations to defend its interests, particularly the commercial interests of the American business community. As a result, turmoil and tension characterized the relationship between the US and Latin American. Number of Latin Americans condemned U.S. presence in their states; consequently conflicts grew towards the United States.

In President Franklin Roosevelt's inaugural address, he assured to improve relations with Latin America. Through the Good Neighbor policy, the US would isolate itself from intervening on Latin Americans affaires. Franklin Roosevelt was aware that development and progress in real terms can only be achieved in a lasting peace and stability environment. He argued:

In the field of world policy, I dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor, the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others, the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors (“MILESTONES 1921-1936”).

President Roosevelt did much to improve relations by assigning Secretary of State Cordell Hull to carry out his view of this policy, which was to recover the ties between Latin America countries and the United States to ensure nonviolent neighbors south of its boundaries. Secretary of State Cordell Hull participated in the Montevideo Conference of December 1933, where he backed a declaration preferred by many countries of the Western Hemisphere: “No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another” (Walter 376). Moreover, in the same month Roosevelt stated “The definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention.” (Nixon 559). He placed the objective of non-intervention at the very center of the US foreign policy vision.

Furthermore, the policy sought to secure Latin American collaboration in the world war effort by sustaining the flow of petroleum and other raw materials (William, Jackson 679).

The aim of the new policy was to restore relations with Latin American nations after the aforementioned countries criticized the Coolidge Administration during the Sixth Pan-American Conference in Havana in 1928 for American military interventions in Haiti and Nicaragua. The Good Neighbor Policy would terminate the U.S. Marines occupation of Nicaragua in 1933 and occupation of Haiti in 1934, led to the cancellation of the Platt Amendment by the Treaty of Relations with Cuba in 1934, also it annulled the compromise of compensation for Mexico's nationalization of foreign-owned oil assets in 1938.

Eventually, the policy's central principle was that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of Latin America. Besides it reinforced the idea that the United States would be a “good neighbor” and engage in shared exchanges with Latin American countries.

1.8 Conclusion

Throughout the 1920's the USA adopted isolationism policy. The US preferred to step out from international disputes that were an extra burden over the Americans shoulders. The nation succeeded to isolate itself. First, the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 made America for Americans only. Second, the Fordney McCumber Act of 1922 made US products available and imposed taxes on foreign products; hence the US economy became isolated as well. Furthermore, the Washington Naval Conference deterred naval race and stabilize power between belligerent signatories. It contributed well in establishing circle table for discussion over their disagreements rather than wars. Moreover, the Locarno Treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact reinforced more the principle of debate between countries. Eventually, the great depression also pushed the USA to be an isolated nation because it was enduring economically. In simple words, through the pre-examined conference and pacts the USA remarkably implemented isolationism policy during 1920s.

Chapter Two

The US Foreign Policy Shift from Isolationism to Interventionism 1935 - 1945

2.1 Introduction

Historically, between the two World Wars, the United States foreign policy was characterized by isolationism, the country favored to stay isolated from the matters of other nations. The ideological aims of the fascist powers in Europe during World War II and the growing belligerence of Germany would push many Americans to pay close attention for their country security, and therefore they would ask for a shift on the US policy of isolationism. In the early 1940s, US policies such as the Cash and Carry Program and the Lend-Lease Act provided remarkable support to the Allied Powers against the Nazis. This growing contribution by the US marked a significant transformation from isolationist trends towards interventionism. This chapter highlights the shift of the US foreign policy from isolationism to interventionism. The foreign policy transformation had passed through many events of both foreign and domestic incidents. The chapter explores Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy through a number of bills that had been passed during his term such as the Neutrality Acts that allowed the United States to trade weapons with belligerents, also the policy of "Cash and Carry" that would permit the US to buy military equipment to belligerents but only with cash and only if they transported their purchases themselves. In addition, the Lend Lease Act of 1941 allowed the US to offer significant armaments to the Allies. Eventually, the chapter investigates the shift in US foreign policy its involvement in WWII.

2.2 Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policy

Franklin Delano Roosevelt commonly known as FDR was an American president and political leader. He had served as the 32nd President of the United States from 1933 until his death in 1945. FDR was only chief executive to be elected to more than two terms in US office. He had administered the United States through the Great Depression and World War II. FDR traced a central goal when he entered office which was about the American economy and resolve the Great Depression problems. Besides, Roosevelt had shed light on the international arena. He believed that many of the problems within the United States could be solved through a solid global agenda. For example, he believed that the Great Depression could be overcome by consolidating relations with foreign marketplaces.

Roosevelt looked to restore public confidence, proclaiming a bank break and talking openly to the community in episodes of radio broadcasts or “fireside chats.” His ambitious schedule of New Deal programs and reforms changed the role of the federal government in the Americans’ lives. FDR was reappointed by comfortable margins in 1936, 1940 and 1944; and led the United States from isolationism to triumph over Nazi Germany and its allies in World War II. He headed the successful wartime alliance between Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States and assisted the basis for the post-war peace organization that would become the United Nations. FDR was the only US president to be elected four terms. (Waldo 22).

During 1937, Roosevelt sought an international isolation on countries that were generating disputes in the world. Simultaneously, he commenced requesting Congress for a reevaluation of the neutrality legislation. Eventually, he accomplished success in 1939 when Congress removed the ban on selling armaments to those at combat. The new legislation

established a 'cash-and-carry' provision to those who could buy arms with cash and carry them away on non-American warships. This was useful to Britain and France, considering they were a short distance from the United States.

In short, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policy focused on shifting the United States from isolationism to interventionism. He believed that the United States had a significant role to play in the world. Therefore, FDR Foreign policy shifted during his term through two stages; in one coin' side in 1939, the passage of the Fourth Neutrality Act, which permitted the USA to exchange weapons with belligerents, commonly known the policy of "Cash and Carry". In the second coin' side, the "Lend-Lease" policy allowed the USA to trade arms with Britain in form of defense against the Nazis.

2.3 The Neutrality Acts of 1930's

In the 1930s, the United States ratified a series of laws planned to deter itself from being entangled in a foreign conflict by openly stating the terms of U.S. neutrality. Even though a number of Americans had rallied to join President Woodrow Wilson's struggle in 1917 to erect a safe and democratic world, during the 1930's critics debated over the U.S participation in WWI that had been drawn into the war through loans and trade with business interests with the Allies. Congressional supporters, Republicans, of neutrality legislation pursued to avert similar mistakes. These findings fueled a growing "isolationist" movement that argued the United States should navigate clear of future hostilities and continue neutral by avoiding commercial contracts with all belligerent signatories.

2.3.1 First Neutrality Act

By the mid of the 1930s, as a result of numerous incidents that occurred in Europe and Asia that could probably escalate into another world war, the United States Congress imposed neutrality. The first Neutrality Act was imposed to end military material with all parties in a war and banned all loans or credits to belligerents. Besides, demanding arms

makers in the United States to make distribute authorization. Furthermore, the American citizens were restricted to travel on belligerent ships such as Germans ships, and US advised them to take care of themselves in the nations in war; if they went to belligerent nations they should be responsible for their security.

After Congress approved the Neutrality Act of 1935, the State Department established an office to administer the necessities of the Act. Practically, Roosevelt invoked the act after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935, stopping all armaments shipments to both Italy and Ethiopia (Jerald). Initially, President Franklin D. Roosevelt opposed the legislation, but relented in the face of strong Congressional and public opinion. On February 29, 1936, Congress reintroduced the Act till May of 1937 and banned Americans from offering any loans to countries in war (“MILESTONES 1921-1936”).

2.3.2 Neutrality Act of 1937

The Neutrality Act of 1936 was ratified by the US Congress in February 1937; it ratified the extending of the 1935 Act for other 14 months. The 1937 act extended these provisions to civil wars and gave the president unrestricted authority to control weapons trade to a “cash-and-carry” basis; belligerents had to pay in advance then export goods in their own ships, American merchant ships were forbidden from transporting any arms to hostile countries. These bills were signed and publicly applauded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, although he complained privately that they limited presidential authority (“The Neutrality Acts”). Moreover, the act would prevent U.S citizens to travel on belligerent ships.

The Neutrality Act of 1937 gave the President the authority to prevent all ships from U.S sea borders. The Act fixed one concern which was that belligerent nations were allowed to obtain anything from the United States except military equipment. Roosevelt had planned to aid Great Britain and France in war rather than the Axis Powers, because the

aforementioned countries were the only countries that contribute to the use of “cash-and-carry”. The whole Act was enduring; so that the provision would expire after twenty-four months (“MILESTONES 1921-1936”).

2.3.3 Neutrality Act of 1939

In September 1939, after Germany had occupied Poland, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. Roosevelt invoked the provisions of the Neutrality Act but came before Congress and lamented that the Neutrality Acts might give passive aid to a belligerent country. The 1939 act was passed under the shadow of the European war after intense discussion in the Congress. It banned U.S. ships from transporting neither merchandises nor passengers to belligerent ports, yet it allowed the United States to sell armaments, although on a “cash-and-carry” basis. Roosevelt further skipped neutrality over the next two years, trading surplus U.S. destroyers to Britain for access to naval and air bases. Congress repealed the Neutrality Acts on 13 November 1941 (“The Neutrality Acts”).

President Roosevelt succeeded over the isolationists; on November 4 the Neutrality Act of 1939 was passed, allowing for arms trade with belligerent countries such as Great Britain and France on a cash-and-carry basis, hence in effect ending the arms prevention. Likewise, the Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937 were canceled, American populations and vessels were prohibited from entering war regions traced by the President, and the National Munitions Control Board that had been formed by the Neutrality Act of 1935, it was charged with issuing certificates for all armaments importations and exportations. Munitions sale without a license became a national crime, with a penalty of up to two years in jail (Brinkley *et all* 99-106).

Albeit regarded as the great tide of interwar isolationism, the neutrality legislation of 1935 and 1937 had insignificant influence on U.S. defense organization. The 1939 Act encouraged war testing of U.S. armaments materials by Allied forces, but created shortage as

U.S. production primarily was unable to cover the necessities of both Allies and increasing U.S. military forces (Cole 3).

The neutrality act marked a significant shift on the US foreign policy. The approval of arms sale by Franklin Roosevelt would coerce the US to entangle in international matters. In other words, the Neutrality Acts were characterized by negotiation by which the US Government accommodated the isolationist sentiment of the American public, but still retained some ability to interact with the world. In the end, the terms of the Neutrality Acts became irrelevant once the United States joined the Allies in the fight against Nazi Germany and Japan in December 1941 (“MILESTONES 1921-1936”).

2.4 The "Cash & Carry" Act of 1939

Under the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a number of neutrality acts were passed by the United States Congress. It was an attempt to sustain neutral status in the European clashes. The first Neutrality Acts banned the sale of military weapons or the making of loans to belligerent nations. Besides, the U.S. Congress passed a noteworthy Neutrality Act in 1937 that allowed commerce with other countries under the condition that American vessels was not used the so-called “cash-and-carry” principle. This policy was reintroduced in November 1939 with the Neutrality Act of 1939 (“1939 US Congress The Neutrality Act”).

Cash and carry was an American policy introduced by US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on September 21, 1939, following the sudden outbreak of war in Europe. It superseded the Neutrality Acts of 1936. The amendment allowed the sale of military equipment to belligerents, but only with cash and only if they transported their acquisitions themselves, assuming all threat in transportation (“Franklin D. Roosevelt: Foreign Affairs”).

However "Cash and Carry" concepts, which had been presented in the Neutrality Act of 1936, it only related to materials that could not be used in war, which allowed them to support belligerent signatories. Firstly, introduced to Congress by Senator Key Pittman in

1939, the bill was designed to replace the Neutrality Act of 1937, which had lapsed in May 1939 (Dougals 99). The bill had been beaten repeatedly by the Senate on more than one event as Isolationists feared that passing the bill would draw the US into the conflict in Europe, which would shift the US foreign policy toward interventionism. However, President Roosevelt felt that additional assistance was needed in Europe after Germany occupied Poland in September 1939. The bill was approved in late October, gaining approval from the House on November 5, 1939. The President gave his signature the same day (Robert 48).

The aim of the policy was to preserve and continue neutrality between the United States and European nations when providing assistance to Britain by allowing them to buy non war materials. Several policies, such as the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937, banned selling war gears or loaning money to belligerent countries under any conditions. The U.S. economy was recovering during this time, following the Great Depression, but there was still a need for industrial jobs. The cash and carry program facilitated to solve this problem and in turn Great Britain benefited from the buying of merchandises.

The "cash and carry" legislation enacted in 1939 effectively traced an end for the arms embargo that had been in place since the Neutrality Act of 1936. The legislation would pave the way for Lend-Lease. Remarkably, since the "cash and carry" program had allowed the US to buy military equipment to belligerents, the US foreign policy started its shift from isolation to intervention.

2.5 The Lend Lease Act 1940

In September 1940 the United States began to offer noteworthy arm materials to the Allies, yet the United States did not involve in the war. Much of this assistance flowed to the United Kingdom and other countries already at combat with Japan and Germany through a new act known as Lend-Lease. In September 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt confirmed that while the United States would continue to be neutral in terms of

law, he could “not ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well.” Roosevelt himself made important efforts to aid countries involved in the fight against Germany and sought to extend assistance to those nations that required the essential materials to battle against the Nazis. The United Kingdom greatly desired support since it was weak in terms of hard currency to pay for the military equipment, and raw materials it looked for from the United States (“Lend-Lease and Military Aid to the Allies in the Early Years of World War II”)

The Lend-Lease policy, officially entitled as "An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States", was ratified by President Roosevelt on March 11, 1941. The bill provided the US president the right “to sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of ... any defense article ... for the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States” (Ebbert 28). It was an act under which the United States provided, between 1941 and 1945, France, Britain, China, and later the Soviet Union and other Allied nations with food, oil, and “*any defense article*”². This included battleships and warplanes, beside other armaments. In other words, the equipment and services delivered and provided by the United States to its allies during the era of WWII as assistance was to be repaid after the end of the war. It was passed on March 11, 1941 and finished in September 1945. In general the service was free, though certain hardware was returned after the war such as vessels. In return, during the war the U.S. was given rents on naval bases and army in Allied region. The Lend-Lease act provided a way for the U.S. to support its allies in World War II without officially breaking neutrality and involving in the war.

² Any defense article: means weapons, food, military equipment, ammunition, munitions, strategic raw materials, and civilian goods required by the army and homeland-defense forces, as well as any information of military significance.

With the assistance of the Lend-Lease Act, President Roosevelt's administration arranged to shed light on a number of serious problems, both internal and external. First, its agenda would make it probable to produce new job opportunities in the nation, which had not yet entirely developed from the extreme financial crisis of 1929-1933. Second, the Lend-Lease Act made it possible for the American government to use a certain degree of effect over the nations on the receiving end of the lend-lease aid. Third, by transport goods to the Allies, weapons and raw materials, but not boots on the ground, President Roosevelt was able to stay true to his campaign pledge, in which he promised, "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." ("WWII lend-lease: was the US aid that helpful?").

Lend-Lease act brought the United States one step further to involve in World War II. Isolationists, such as Republican senator Robert Taft, opposed it. Correctly, he noted that the program would "give the President power to carry on a kind of undeclared war all over the world, in which America would do everything except actually put soldiers in the front-line trenches where the fighting is" ("Lend-Lease Act"). The act was one of the reasons behind the US involvement in WWII. Thus, the bill would contribute in the US' foreign policy shift from isolation to intervention.

2.6 The US Involvement in WWII

World War II (1939-1945) was one of the major armed wars in human history. Reaching six continents, the war caused an estimated 50 million military and civilian deaths. World War II shaped a new world. Its major outcomes were the beginning of the nuclear era, the escalating desire to occupy the so called "Third World", and the rise of the Cold War. The war also ended America's relative isolation from the rest of the world and resulted in the foundation of the United Nations (UN). In the United States, the war ended the Great Depression and significantly had shifted the US foreign policy from isolationism to interventionism (Brinkley *et al* 772-733).

In the late 1930s, as Europe moved faster toward war, the United States Congress was doing everything it could to prevent the predictable second world war. Between 1936 and 1937, much to the disappointment of the pro-British President Roosevelt, Congress approved the Neutrality Acts. In the final Neutrality Act, Americans could not sail on boats having a belligerent flag or trade arms with combatant nations. Furthermore, during the 1940 Presidential election campaign, Roosevelt assured to keep US out of any external conflicts. He stated, "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again; your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." ("Lend-Lease Act 1941").

Although isolationists kept the U.S. out of WWII for years, the interventionists eventually had their way and the U.S. declared war in 1941. The same scenario that led to the rise of the First World War continued with the second World War, belligerent European powers, yet this time President Roosevelt tried to keep his nation isolated and not to commit all of Wilson's mistakes. The ideological goals of the fascist powers in Europe during World War II and the growing aggression of Germany led many Americans to fear for the security of their nation, and thus called for an end to the US policy of isolationism ("Interventionism"). Remarkably, American policy preferred Britain and its allies, and the U.S. becoming involved in the war. Unlike the loans in World War I, the United States made large-scale allowances of military and economic encouragement to the Allies through Lend-Lease act. Industries notably prolonged to produce military equipment. The United States officially involved in World War II against Germany, Italy and Japan in December 1941, following the Japanese sudden attack on Pearl Harbor. In this period the U.S. was a full-grown member of the Allies of World War II, not just a supporter like what happened in the First World War commencement. Throughout the war, the U.S. steered military operations on both the Atlantic and Pacific fronts. After the war and destruction of its European and Asian enemies, the United States found itself in an exceptionally influential position because of the lack of

damage to its national and domestic industries. Besides, it found itself in direct rivalry with a rising power, the Soviet Union (“Interventionism”).

In the early 1940s, US policies such as the Cash and Carry Program and the Lend-Lease Act provided assistance to the Allied Powers in their fight against Germany. This growing involvement by the US marked a move away from isolationist tendencies towards interventionism. Furthermore, when the World War began, a number of countries were involved, and President Franklin Roosevelt saw that the nation would be entangled on the war in a way or another. As a result the US isolationist policies were superseded by more interventionism. On September 1, 1939, Germany occupied Poland; Britain and France consequently declared war on Germany, marking the outset of World War II. After two days, in a speech to the American society, President Roosevelt guaranteed the nation that he would do as possible as he could to keep America out of external conflicts. However, even though he was determined on neutrality as the official foreign policy of the United States, the president still echoed the threats of remaining out of WWII. Besides, he warned the Americans not to let their desire to avoid combat at all expenses replace the security of United States of America.

The war in Europe divided the American people into two different groups: non-interventionists and interventionists. The two groups debated over America's participation in this Second World War. The basic principle of the interventionist argument was anxiety of German occupation and annexation of many countries. During 1940, France had been occupied by Germany, and Britain was the only supporter of democracy between the United States and Germany. Interventionists were anxious that if Britain would be invaded, immediately their security as a country would be threatened. An American investigation represented that in 1940, 67% of Americans saw that a German-Italian triumph would threaten the United States, that if such an incident happened 88% supported "arming to the

teeth at any expense to be prepared for any trouble", and that 71% preferred "the immediate adoption of compulsory military training for all young men" ("Interventionism"). Ultimately, the ideological gap between the principles of the United States and the objectives of the fascist powers is what had gave birth to the central argument of the interventionists.

However, there were still many who sided with the policy of non-intervention. Although a minority, they were well organized, and they had an influential manifestation in Congress. Historically, non-interventionists had a noteworthy impact, mentioning incidents such as Washington's farewell address and World War I disappointment. In 1941, the actions of the Roosevelt's government made it obvious that the United States was going straight toward war, thus a remarkable shift would occur on the previous policy of isolationism that had been adopted by the United States since the 1920's. This policy shift, driven by the President, came in two stages. The first came in 1939 with the passage of the Fourth Neutrality Act, which permitted the United States to sell armaments to belligerent countries, as long as these states came to the United States to recover the military equipment, and pay for them in cash. Rapidly, this policy was named 'Cash and Carry.' The second stage was in 1941, the Lend-Lease Act. The act permitted the President "to lend, lease, trade, or barter arms, ammunition, food, or any 'defense article' or any 'defense information' to 'the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States.' He used these two acts to side economically with the Britain and the France in their combat against Germany ("Interventionism").

December 7, 1941, a date will last on the history of both Americans and Japanese. The American fleet at Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan. The attack was planned as a defensive program to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from intervening with military actions of Japan was scheduled in Southeast Asia against foreign zones of the Britain and the United States. After one day, the United States of America declared war on Japan. National support

for isolationism as foreign policy vanished. Secret support of Britain was substituted by dynamic alliance. Many operations by the U.S. provoked both Germany and Italy to declare war on the U.S. on December 11, on the same date the U.S. reciprocated (“World War II”).

During the final period of World War II in 1945, the United States conducted atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. These two actions characterized the only usage of atomic arms in combat to date. Consequently, the United States would embrace the idea of international collaboration. The country would support interventionism as a foreign policy. The traditional prevailing views were no longer suitable for its needs (Legro 262).

2.7 Conclusion

Woodrow Wilson stated that “no policy of Isolation will satisfy the growing needs and opportunities of America”. Remarkably, a gradual profound shift happened on the US foreign policy through a number of incidents between 1933 and 1945. Franklin Roosevelt believed that America had to play a great role in global affairs. Prior to World War II, American foreign policy was isolationist. Americans avoided getting involved unless they felt directly threatened. Yet Americans realized that amid the growing Fascist threat presented by Hitler and Mussolini, the U.S. could no longer hide behind the false illusion of safety offered by isolationism. Furthermore, the bills that had been ratified in the period between 1933 and 1941 by President Roosevelt shaped a new philosophy in terms of foreign policy. The United States adopted a non-interventionist foreign policy from 1932 to 1938, but then President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved toward strong support of the Allies in their wars against Germany and Japan. Hence, US foreign policy transformed toward interventionism after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Chapter Three: US Foreign Policy of Interventionism 1945 – 1975

Case study: US Intervention in Vietnam

3.1 Introduction

After WWII, the U.S. had become the leading power with massive influence in much of the globe. Immediately the world witnessed division into different two blocks during the Cold War era; one side was steered by the United States, and the other by the Soviet Union, this division would give birth to a shift in U.S. policy. Isolationism had become outdated. The US changed its foreign policy dramatically due to the belief that the Soviet Union might be interested in pushing not only the West, but threatening the stability of all the world. The chapter explores the US after WWII giving close attention to foreign policy. In addition, it introduces the emergence of the Cold War and examines the containment policy which had been adopted by the United States seeking to limit Soviet influence. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the US foreign policy of intervention through International organizations such as United Nations and The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Eventually, it analyses the US intervention in Vietnam as a case study.

3.2 The US after WWII

During the summer of 1945, World War Two had come to end. Life in the United States started to return to normal. Soldiers began to return home and look for peaceful occupations. Industry finished manufacturing armaments and started to produce goods that would make life easy and pleasurable. The US economy became stronger than ever before. Furthermore, the involvement of the United States into World War II produced massive changes in almost every aspect of American life. Millions of men and women participated in military service so that they explored parts of the world they would probably never have seen. The employment demands of war trades caused millions more Americans to move generally to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts where most defense plants placed. When World War II ended, the United States became in better financial situation than any other country in the

world. Even the 300,000 combat deaths suffered by Americans paled in comparison to any other major belligerent (“Postwar United States”).

Moreover World War II had an insightful influence on the United States. It was a watershed that altered the country’s course especially in terms of foreign policy. Although no combats happened on the US territories, the conflict affected mainly all aspects of the American life particularly foreign policy. It required unprecedented efforts to manage plan and strategies with other members of the Grand Alliance and then to involve on the battle against the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). Meantime, it required a massive production effort to offer the equipment needed to fight. As the United States produced the armaments and became, in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous expression, the “arsenal of democracy,” the nation experienced a central reorientation of financial and social patterns on the country that delivered the template for the after war years (“The World War II Home Front.”). As a result, US became a strong nation that would play a paramount role in the international affairs. The country would not play anymore the role of isolationism, intervention would characterize the period after WWII (*ibid*).

After the war, number of critics believed that the United States would pass again through a period of depression, yet the conditions in 1946 as commerce gradually stripped itself from government conventions and tried to cover the demand for products and services. But it was soon obvious that the economy was solid and that industry could make the necessary regulations. In the five years after the combat, the gross national product scaled from \$213 billion to \$284 billion, and national income reached \$241 billion (Thomas 147). World War II undoubtedly brought a return of prosperity after the dismal economic crush of the 1930s. It promoted the growth of big business and solidified military industrial links. The United States would witness unprecedented growth mainly on all

life aspects, hence the country would find itself in a sphere which would not allow for it to adopt isolationism as a foreign policy anymore; isolationism has become outdated (*ibid* 147).

After World War II, the US became fully interventionist. The triumph of the war located US in a crucial and powerful position that would push to display the policy of intervention so that it would keep its international leadership. US interventionism were encouraged by the aim of communism impact, and fundamentally meant the US was a leader in international security, commercial, and social disputes ("Interventionism").

3.3 Cold War Emergence

As World War II came to an end, the United States and the Soviet Union started to look for position in postwar, in the first exploratory moves of what would soon become an international rivalry for control and power. After World War II, the U.S. prospered to become the leading non-colonial economic power with extensive impact in the globe, with number of key programs such as the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. Ideologically during the Cold War the world would witness rivalry that would divide it into different two parts; one side would be led by the U.S., and the other by the Soviet Union. The Cold War would dramatically affect American foreign policy as well as American domestic policy. This era almost continued till the end of the 20th century, and is considered to be both an ideological, political and power fight between the aforementioned superpowers. A policy of containment would be adapted to besiege Soviet extension. In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved into unconnected states, and the Cold War officially ended as the United States gave separate political appreciation to the Russian Federation and other former Soviet states.

The first years of the Cold War between 1945 and 1948 would witness a political and ideological conflict more than military. To secure its interests, accordingly the US would adopt interventionism in its foreign and international affairs. The United States and Soviet Union quarreled with each other at the UN; their aim was to call nations that were not tied by

the United States or the Soviet Union. In 1950, proved facts made the Cold War military struggle. The factors that happened at that time, the Soviet Union's seized in China; the declaration of Truman Doctrine; the coming of Soviet nuclear weapon to occupy Germany; the fire setting of Korean War; and the formalization of the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thus, formalization helped both nations the United States and Soviet Union to boost the Cold War's military distance. At that time, the U.S foreign policy adopted status that sought to "contain" the Soviet Union from other extensions. By that time, the "contain"³ policy stayed the main strategy of U.S foreign policy from 1952 till the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991 ("The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project: Cold War").

United States would almost completely abandon its isolationist foreign policy due to the change in worldview among American presidents during and immediately after World War II. Furthermost significant was President Franklin Roosevelt's long-held conclusion that America's response to international matters after World War I had been ill-advised and that such a response should not steer post-World War II foreign policy. Instead, Roosevelt had determined that continued American involvement in global affairs would be necessary and, early on in the war, had revealed his vision of a future world order (James 38).

3.3.1 Truman's Containment Policy

The term "containment" was first used in US policies directly following WW2. It is U.S foreign policy adopted in 1947 by the Harry S. Truman administration, operating on the belief that communist governments will eventually fall apart as long as they are banned and restricted from expanding their effect on the world (Leffler 236). There are several examples of incidents during the Cold War when the United States used the containment policy such as the Vietnam War, the Korean War and the Cuban missile crisis.

³ Contain: from Containment policy, it is best known as the Cold War plan of the United States and its allies to stop the spread of communism in the world.

Containment contributed to a massive arms race between the United States of America and the Soviet Union that created greater tension and competition between them. As a result of the containment policy application US involved in several non-domestic conflicts for the aim of preserving its interests abroad.

Containment represents the American effort, by political, military, and economic means, to restrict communist expansion throughout the globe. The doctrine's author, George F. Kennan, a significant foreign service officer in 1947, often disagreed crucial diplomacies that many American policymakers defined as the application of containment: the global rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949–1950, the heavy military emphasis of U.S. policy in the 1950s, the expansion of alliances to the Middle East and Asia , and the continued military involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s ("Containment").

There were different alternative strategies to containment under debate in the late 1940s. The first was a return to isolationism, reducing American intervention in international affairs. This policy was maintained by conservative Republicans, typically from the Midwest, including Senator Robert A. Taft and former President Herbert Hoover. However, many other Republicans, led by Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, said that policy had caused World War II and was thus too dangerous to revive (David 631).

3.4 The US Involvement in World Organization during the Cold War

In the aftermath of World War Two, the United States rejected to stay out of international treaties and acknowledged openly that the policy of isolationism would not suit the US position in the world affairs. The U.S felt that the country had to play an active role with the external world to make broad relationships through developing International Organizations, which support economic and political cooperation among nations. Hence, during the Cold War the role of the US management of the world affairs reflected the official

abandonment of pre-occupation with legal system-building in the political and military aspects of international affairs. US established numerous international organizations to win its ideological war with the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* and rhetoric to justify their involvement in other nations' affairs under the containment policy during the Cold War. Among these organizations were the United Nations, the Organization of American State, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asian Organization.

3.4.1 The Foundation of the United Nations in 1945

On October 24th, 1945, the winners of World War II: the United States, France, China, the U.S.S.R. and the United Kingdom approved the UN Charter, founding the Security Council and establishing themselves as its five permanent participants with the exceptional capability to veto determinations. The UN which is an intergovernmental organization to promote international co-operation was established by the aforementioned nations with liberal idealist intentions mainly to avoid a third destructive world war and preserve international peace and security. Initially there were six provisional participants, circling every two years and scattered on an impartial geographic principal. That rule was more obviously defined in 1965, when the number of temporary members was enlarged to ten (five from Africa and Asia, one from Eastern Europe, two from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Western Europe).

Due to the inflexible structure of the UN that was projected to keep the international peace and encourage noninvolvement policies, the Security Council (SC) often found itself in an unclear position, unable to act objectively. Indeed, regarding the number of international incidents, it can be said that the SC was used as a means by the USA to intervene in international matters to preserve and protect its interest. Thus, isolationists feared that the new organizations would compromise American sovereignty by intervening in other nations affaires. Furthermore, after the Second World War and as the world split into two camps,

either under US or Soviet influence, Roosevelt's vision of the Security Council as "a board of directors of the world" with the obligation to implement "the peace against any potential miscreant" collapsed (Kissinger 395). Each of the two superpowers emphasized on preserving order and peace in its own sphere of inspiration, while respecting the other's bloc (Cassese 323). In this rivalry the UN played a decisive role in decision making. This race was reflected in the SC and the P-5's veto power often served as a tool to create a stalemate, such as in the 1956 Suez Crisis and the situation in Vietnam from 1946-75 (Kingsbury, Roberts 6).

3.4.2 The Organization of American States in 1948

The Organization of American States (OAS) is a continental institution established on 30 April 1948. The new organization was designed to facilitate better political relations between the member states, and at least for the United States, to serve as a protector against communist expansion on the Western Hemisphere. The OAS was intended to endorse cultural, military and economic cooperation between its members including separated nations of the Western Hemisphere. The Organization of American States had undertaken multiple initiatives to monitor human rights, provide electoral oversight, promote development, and enhance security in the region of Latin America.

In time of WWII Latin American nations declared war against the western axis powers such as Brazil and Mexico. After this conflict most of the independent nations agreed on mutual defense, besides the beginning of the cold war, there was a great demand on security in the western hemisphere to control communist expansion. During the Cold War, the USA interested to use the OAS to advance critical, economic, political and security goals in the western hemisphere to prevent the spread of communism.

3.4.3 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949

The rising communist threat and the growth of the USSR desired to spread communism in all the globe did not break the European nation's panic that the support they

received from the Marshall Plan would not protect them from the expansion of communism; hence they wanted to construct a shield as a collective security defense system under the instruction of the US. In 1948, they succeeded to found a military alliance under the leadership of the USA (Djeddi 33). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an international military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was approved in 1949. The institution introduces a system of collective security by which its member states approve to common defence in response to any assault by any exterior party. Three NATO members (the United States, France and the United Kingdom) are stable members of the United Nations Security Council with the power to use the veto.

The Treaty was intended if the USSR and its allies launched an attack against any of the NATO members; it would be considered as an attack on all member states. This highlighted a remarkable shift on the US foreign policy, which was traditionally characterized by strong isolationist parties in Congress. Moreover, The United Nation (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) both developed within the background of World War II to build an international order. The UN recognized to emphasis on the collective security system; however, NATO viewed as a Collective security defense alliance for the common goals of containing the increasing menace of the USSR and its ideology of communism. Therefore, the NATO and the UN cooperation continued as the institutionalized assistance association after the Second World War in pursuing the USA effective policy of interventionism (Oertel 2-3).

The growth of NATO shaped the entire abandonment of isolationism. Anyone who supported isolationism directly supported communism. Between 1946 and 1949 the U.S. became obsessed with the supposed interventionism of the Soviet Threat. In 1948, 74% expected war within the following 10 years, up from 28% just 2 years earlier (Foster 60).

3.4.4 The Southeast Asian Organization

On 8 September 1954, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, France, Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines signed the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty in Manila. The SEATO organization led to the formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in February 1955. SEATO was an alliance organized pursuant to the Southeast Asia Defense Treaty to prevent the increasing growth of communist impact in Southeast Asia.

At the beginning, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization ratified in Washington after the French military defeat at Dien Bien Phu of Vietnam in April 1954. SEATO formed the U.S commitment to Southeast Asia. President Dwight D. Eisenhower started his aid to the south of Vietnam noncommunist nation by Ngo Dinh Dien. The organization was steered by the US as an effort to halt the spread of Communism in Asia (David L 73).

3.5 US Intervention in Vietnam

3.5.1 The Vietnam War

Vietnam War (1954–1973) generally means the era when the United States and other SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) members joined the forces of the Republic of South Vietnam in opposing communist powers containing South Vietnamese guerrillas as well as regular-force units, generally known as Viet Cong (VC), and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). America's war in Vietnam lasted nearly eight years from 1965 to 1973. The US had the highest foreign military presence on the territory and it directed the war from 1965 to 1968. The war was part of a larger regional conflict and a remarkable indicator of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies.

The conflict started in 1954; though disputes in the area had taken place back to the 1940s, after the political success of Ho Chi Minh and his communist Viet Minh party in North Vietnam. On the one hand, the war resulted in over 47,000 Americans killed in battle plus

other 11,000 noncombat deaths; and over 150,000 were wounded and 10,000 missing. On the other hand the Republic of South Vietnam calculated 110,000 deaths and a half-million wounded. Civilian Casualties were also heavy, with the lowest estimates around 415,000. Increasing disagreement over the war in the United States gave birth to bitter separations among Americans, both before and after President Richard Nixon ordered the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973. In 1975, communist forces took control of Saigon, finishing the Vietnam War, the following year the state integrated as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (“Vietnam War”).

3.5.1 The Vietnam War: Origins

Generally, the roots of the Vietnam War can be traced to France’s occupation of Indochina in the late 1880s. By the end of World War II, the Viet Minh, led by Ho Chi Minh, arose as a strong anti-colonial movement, though Viet Minh leaders faced number of problems as they tried to merge their power on the eve of the First Indochina War against France. Vietnam independence war became a significant battlefield of the Cold War in 1950s. The lines of future clash were drawn in 1950s when the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union accepted offering assistance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi, followed directly by Washington’s acknowledgment of the State of Vietnam in Saigon. From that date, American entanglement in Vietnam was frequently justified in terms of the Domino Theory which meant that if one nation in the area came under the effect of communism, then the surrounding nations would follow in a domino influence, verbalized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on the eve of the Geneva Conference of 1954. The Franco-Viet Minh ratified an armistice reached at Geneva divided Vietnam to two at the 17th parallel, with nationwide reunion elections scheduled in the summer of 1956 (“Origins of the Vietnam War”).

However, the United States and its ally, Ngo Dinh Diem, refused to participate in introductory discussions to those elections, favoring instead to form South Vietnam as a non-

communist bastion. Though the Vietnamese communist party, known as the Vietnam Worker's Party in Hanoi, initially aimed to resolve the state by nonviolent means, it reached the conclusion by 1959 that violent revolt would be indispensable to bring down the American imperialists. During 1960s, the party has established the National Liberation Front for Vietnam and, following Diem's assassination in 1963, passed a solution to wage all-out conflict in the south in an effort to assert victory before the United States committed combat troops. After President John F. Kennedy took office in 1961, he reacted by deteriorating circumstances in South Vietnam by militarizing the American pledge, though he averted short of presenting devoted field troops. Diem and Kennedy was assassinated, in quick succession in November 1963, Lyndon Baines Johnson took US office, so that he would make a firm decision to prevent defeat in Vietnam, but wanting to avoid the issue of foreign policy from interfering with his national political agenda. As the situation in South Vietnam deteriorated, president Lyndon B. Johnson found himself unable to sustain the middle of the road approach that Kennedy had chased ("Origins of the Vietnam War").

3.5.2 Vietnam War: US Intervention

Primarily, the United States had insignificant interest in Southeast Asia and Vietnam in particular; it became clear that the post-World War II world would be directed either by the US and its allies or the Soviet Union and theirs. In terms of foreign policy, separating communist activities took a remarkable attention by the United States through the programs which formed by US. These issues would be eventually molded into the policy of containment and domino theory. First spelled out during 1947, containment identified that the aim of Communism was to spread to capitalist states and that the only way to stop it was to "contain" it within its present borders.

Moreover, the concept of domino theory believed that if one country in an area was to adopt Communism, then inevitably the neighboring countries as well would adopt the same

ideology. The aforementioned concepts were to lead and guide US foreign policy during the Cold War ("What Caused the Vietnam War?"). On May 11, 1947, in National Security Action Memorandum 52 well-known as The Presidential Program for Vietnam, the US president John Kennedy confirmed the pledge to defend South Vietnam, he argued:

U.S. objectives and concept of operations are to prevent communist domination of South Vietnam; to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society, and to initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions of a military, political, economic, psychological, and covert character designed to achieve this objective. (Gibbons 40)

Furthermore, the American failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba; the construction of the Berlin Wall by the Soviets; and a negotiated settlement between the pro-Western government of Laos and the Pathet Lao communist movement had played a crucial role in provoking the US policy of intervention. Americans feared that another defeat to break communist escalation would fatally damage U.S trustworthiness with its allies. As a result, US began displaying interventionism in Vietnam to secure its interest and its reputation in terms of international affairs. The US president, Lyndon B. Johnson, argued: "I am not going to be the president who saw South-East Asia go the way China went." (Gibbons 48). John Kennedy confirmed "Now we have a problem in making our power credible... and Vietnam looks like the place." US clearly become obliged to practice its foreign policy of interventionism (*ibid* 48).

The war began when the North Vietnamese had attacked the USS Maddox ship in August 1964, and then killed US soldiers in February 1965. The battle and US intervention can be divided into three stages. The first stage of the attack started on January 30 and 31 1965 when National Liberation Front forces instantaneously assaulted a number of goals, generally inhabited zones and areas with full U.S. military presence. The attacks on the main

towns of Hué and Saigon had gained a remarkable psychological influence, as they displayed that the NLF soldiers were not as fragile as the Johnson Administration had previously claimed. Although the first attack phase of became the most celebrated by the Americans. A second stage as well started through simultaneous offensives on smaller towns and cities on May 4th, 1965 and extended into June. However, a third stage began in August and lasted six weeks. After months, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces retook the cities that the NLF had protected over the sequence of the offensive, but they experienced massive military and civilian casualties in the course (“U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Tet Offensive, 1968”).

United States became involved and interfered in Vietnam during the 1960s because of America’s desire to guarantee that evolving nations modernize as capitalist countries. Accordingly, U.S involvement started with economic and social assistance in South Vietnam. Dramatically, during the terms of Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy, the objective of the US interest of containing communism gradually became applied by military means.

3.6 Conclusion

Prior to World War II, American foreign policy was isolationist. However, the movement of the United States from an isolationist foreign policy to one of intervention was a remarkable profound ideological shift. During the Cold War the US adopted interventionism to maintain diplomatic relations with other nations and international establishments such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States. To secure its interest and contain the spread of communism US practiced intervention in a number of incidents such as the case of Vietnam War. As a superpower, the United States had also taken a leadership role. In short, US foreign policy between 1945 and 1975 was characterized by intervention to halt communist activities.

General Conclusion

The American foreign policy had undergone a drastic change from the policy of isolationism to the policy of interventionism. Between the 1920s and 1975s the US was often characterized as having been isolationist and interventionist nation depending on certain circumstances. After WWI, the United States found itself in a neutral position that did not allow it to intervene or expand its authority in the world arena. Hence, the US focused exclusively on domestic affairs. The United States did not get involved in any disputes with foreign nations especially with the European countries. The isolation policy was highly implemented through a number of acts and treaties for instance Washington Naval Conference, the Locarno Treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

The USA was slowly drawn into war as a result of the German threat to their national interests. The consequences were disastrous for the Americans; it encouraged Americans to support the sentiment to return to isolationism. The Great Depression was devastating; Americans again turned their focus inward. During the period between the two World Wars a major shift is seen in the foreign policy of the United States. It struggled with the dilemma of their role in the world arena. Before and at the very beginning of WWII, the US government under Franklin D. Roosevelt decided not to intervene and focused on the improvement of the US economy. Nevertheless the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 obliged the US to involve in the War which marked the shift of the US foreign policy toward interventionism.

What was remarkable after WWII is that the United States was no longer a country that isolated itself from the world affairs. The emergence of the Cold War pushed the US to plan for its foreign policy. The USA became a world superpower and involved internationally in world organizations. The main ideological tactic during the Cold War was the doctrine of containment. During the Cold War it was undeniable that the policy of Isolationism was simply no longer possible in a world where noninvolvement was intolerable. Eventually, the

US intervention in Vietnam can be seen an epitome of US foreign policy of interventionism for the sake of protecting its interest.

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