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**SINGAPORE – UNITED STATES RELATIONS
FROM 1990 TO 2012**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rational

The success of Singapore in transforming itself from a small island nation with limited area, population, and natural resources into “a dragon” in terms of economics and raising its status in the international arena is a topic that has been discussed a lot. Knowing how to promote geostrategic advantages logically, Singapore has established diplomatic relations with many countries. In particular, an important factor to the success of Singapore is that this nation has taken advantage of the geopolitical and economic pursuits of the United States in Southeast Asia, thereby effectively implementing the strategy of borrowing political and military power from this great nation. However, this issue has not been systematically studied in Vietnam, especially in terms of Singapore's behavior in relation to the United States.

At the same time, after the Cold War, the United States became the world's sole superpower. To implement a new global strategy and specifically to maintain its presence in Southeast Asia, the United States needed strategic partners like Singapore. The Singapore-US relations is a typical strategic partnership between a world superpower and a small island nation in Southeast Asia. Singapore had been a strategic security partner of the United States but not an ally, making this a very interesting and specific relationship that needs more research and analysis. Besides, Singapore's countermeasures in relations with the United States are also suggestive experiences for policy makers in many other countries in protecting and expanding their countries' security space and development, as well as in relations with the great powers. The Singapore-US relationship, therefore, has scientific, practical and topical significance. However, due to various reasons, up to now, there have not been many in-depth studies on Singapore-US bilateral relations within Vietnam.

In the aforementioned new context, what factors influenced the formation of the relationship between the two countries? What were the

strategic goals of Singapore and the United States in this bilateral relationship? What were the developments of Singapore-US relations from 1990-2012 in various fields and achievements and limitations? What were the nature and characteristics of the relationship? What was the impact of the Singapore-US relationship on either country and on Southeast Asia?... are some of the big questions posed to politicians, economists and scientists. The study of Singapore - US relations from 1990 to 2012, within the framework of a doctoral thesis, will contribute to providing a relatively systematic and comprehensive view of the relationship between the two subjects that play an important role in the Asia-Pacific region after the Cold War and may contribute to answering the above questions. This research is not only to understand the motivation, choice, and implementation of this pair of relations, but more importantly, to understand more the foreign policy of Singapore and the US - the two partners of Vietnam.

Coming from this perspective, the author has chosen the topic “Singapore – US relations from 1990 to 2012” for her dissertation in the field of World History, coded as 62.22.03.11.

2. Aims and content of research

2.1. Research aims

The thesis clarifies the process of advocacy and development as well as the nature of the Singapore - US relationship from 1990 to 2012 via comparative analysis, thereby drawing independent comments and assessments about this special relationship.

2.2. Research content

The thesis clarifies the factors that strongly influence the relations between Singapore and the US from 1990 to 2012, including the constant changes of international and regional situations, domestic situations of each countries, the bilateral relations in the period before 1990, and the adjustment of the foreign policy of Singapore and the US at particular times, and the position of either country within their partner’s foreign policy. On this basis, the process of Singapore - US relations in major areas, including political

and diplomatic affairs, defense and security, and economics, is reconstructed in detail in order to draw out the achievements, limitation, characteristics, and impacts of this relationship for Singapore, the US and the Southeast Asia area.

3. Research objective and research scope

3.1. Research objective

The research objective of this thesis is the political and diplomatic relations, defense and security relations, economic relations between Singapore and the US from 1990 to 2012, including the impact factors, the process of the relations, achievements, limitations, characteristics, nature and the influences of this relation on each country and on the region.

3.2. Research scope

On the time perspective, the dissertation concentrates on the relations between Singapore and the US from 1990 to 2012.

On the space perspective, the dissertation focuses on the political - diplomatic relations, defense - security relations, and economic relations between Singapore and the US as unitary socio-political entities, from these to point out the characteristics, nature, and influence of this relationship on Singapore, the US and Southeast Asian region.

4. Literature sources

- Original document:
 - + Official documents of the Government of Singapore and the Government of the US related to foreign policy. Speeches and Joint Statements by the leaders of Singapore and the United States.
 - + Agreements: United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (USSFTA), Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA).
 - + Statistics archive of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Press release of the Government of Singapore and the United States.
- Documents of reference:
 - + The monographs on modern world history, international relations

history, Singapore history, and American history.

- + Research articles published in specialized journals, domestic and international conference proceedings.

- + National and international doctoral theses and master theses.

- + Archives at some major universities in the world, the National Library, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, the Institute of American Studies, and the Diplomatic Academy, etc.

5. Research methodology and methods

5.1. Research methodology

To carry out this thesis, we adhere strictly to the Marxist Historiographical methodology in analyzing and evaluating historical events and their content, while following the point of view of Marxism - Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thoughts and policies of Communist Party of Vietnam on international relations and foreign policy.

5.2. Research methods

The thesis utilizes some specialized research methods such as the historical and the logic methods. Moreover, this research also employs interdisciplinary research methods such as event analysis, comparative analysis, statistical analysis and systematization when concerned with specific issues.

6. Contribution of the project

6.1. From the scientific points of views

Through historical data, the thesis contributes to providing an objective scientific view to comment on and evaluate the relationship between Singapore and the United States during a period of 22 years (1990 -2012) and from that basis to draw out this relations' characteristics and impacts on peace, security and development of the region.

6.2. From the practical points of views

- On the basis of the research, it is possible to suggest some ideas for Vietnam's foreign policy in relations to the major powers as well as other

countries in the region in the current globalization trend. The results of the thesis to a certain extent contribute to providing scientific data for Vietnam's foreign policy practice, especially in relations with the United States and Singapore (both important partners of Vietnam).

- The thesis is a valuable reference in research, teaching and learning for universities, institutes, research centers related to such fields as contemporary world history, international relations in the Asia-Pacific in general, and the foreign policy and diplomacy of Singapore and the United States in particular.

7. Structure of the dissertation

In addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, References, and the Appendix, the main content of this thesis includes 4 chapters:

Chapter 1. Literature review

Chapter 2. Factors affecting Singapore-US relations from 1990 to 2012

Chapter 3. Highlights on Singapore-US relations from 1990 to 2012

Chapter 4. Remarks on Singapore-US relations from 1990 to 2012

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Literature review in Vietnam

Firstly, the group of research with direct mention of the Singapore-US relations, typically by author Tran Khanh with the book “Thành công của Singapore trong phát triển kinh tế” (1993), Trần Khánh and Trịnh Hải Tuyên with the article Bàn về hành động địa chiến lược của Cộng hoà Singapore, Trịnh Hải Tuyên with “Chiến lược cân bằng của Singapore trong quan hệ với Mỹ và Trung Quốc những năm 90 của thế kỷ XX” and “Quan hệ Singapore – Mỹ giai đoạn 2004 – 2017” and Dương Văn Quảng with the book “Singapore đặc thù và giải pháp” (2007).

Secondly, the group of research which study the bilateral relationships between either Singapore/USA with a third country, typically: Doctoral Thesis in History “Quan hệ Singapore – Trung Quốc từ năm 1990 đến 2010” (2016) by Tôn Nữ Hải Yên; “Quan hệ Việt Nam – Hoa Kỳ” (2007) by Nguyen Mai and the project team of the Government Office.

Thirdly, the group of research which explore some topics related to the thesis, such as research on Singapore in general, on its foreign policy, and US-ASEAN relations in particular, typically: Ngô Thị Bích Lan (2018) with the article “*Vai trò địa chính trị của khu vực Đông Nam Á đối với Hoa Kỳ những năm đầu thế kỷ XXI*”; Hồ Sỹ Quý (2015), “*Singapore: Nghịch lý phát triển*”; Trần Khánh (2008), “*Kinh nghiệm phát triển sức mạnh quốc gia của Cộng hoà Singapore*”; “*Hồ Sơ Thị Trường Singapore*” by the International Relations Department of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry VCCI (2015); Trần Thị Hợt (2014), “*Những kinh nghiệm của Singapore trong việc thực hiện chính sách và các biện pháp phòng chống tham nhũng*”.

1.2. Literature review from international sources

Firstly, the group of research about the situation of Singapore, the United States, and foreign policy of each country. Typically: Ho Khai Leong (2003), *Shared Responsibilities, Unshared Power: The Politics of Policy-Making in Singapore*; John Wong with the article *Twelve Points on Singapore's Foreign Policy* in *The Rise of Singapore* (2016); Amitav Acharya (2008), *Singapore's Foreign Policy: The Search for Regional Order*; Alan Chong (2016), *Lee Kuan Yew and Singapore's Foreign Policy: A Productive Iconoclasm, Reflections – The Legacy of Lee Kuan Yew*; Brandon J. Weichert (2017), *The High Ground: The Case for US Space Dominance*; Gillian Koh (2017), *The Little Nation that can – Singapore's Foreign Relations and Diplomacy*.

Secondly, the overall study of Singapore-US relations. Typically: Asad-ul Iqbal Latif (2009) with the book *Three Sides in Search of a Triangle: Singapore – America - India Relations*; David Adelman with “*The US-Singapore Strategic Partnership: Bilateral Relations Move Up a Weight Class*” (2012); Graham Allison, Robert D. Blackwill, Ali Wyne (2012), *Lee Kwan Yew: The grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (Lý Quang Diệu bàn về Trung Quốc, Hoa Kỳ và Thế giới). Also the autobiography of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, book is named *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (Bí quyết hóa rồng); Wei Sheng

Damien Lim (2017), *Sources of Stability in U.S. – Singapore Relations 2001-2016*, Master Thesis; Ben Dolven và Emma Chanlett-Avery (2019), *U.S. – Singapore Relations*, Report of the CRS to the Congress.

Thirdly, in-depth studies on Singapore - US relations in each of these specific fields:

- Research on political-diplomatic relations between Singapore and the United States. Typically: Robyn Klingler Vidra (2012) with *The Pragmatic ‘Little Red Dot’: Singapore’s US Hedge Against China*; Wei Boon Chua (2014) with Doctoral thesis *Intimacy at a Distance: A History of United States – Singapore Foreign Relations from 1965 to 1975*, and the article *Becoming a “Good Nixon Doctrine Country”: Political Relations between the United States and Singapore during the Nixon Presidency*; Tommy Koh, Chang Li Lin (2005) with the book *The Little Red Dot: Reflections by Singapore’s Diplomats*; Joel Hodson (2003), *A Case for American Studies: The Michael Fay Affair, Singapore-US Relations, and American Studies in Singapore*; Ong Keng Yong (2015), *Pursuing Mutual Strategic Interests: Lee Kuan Yew’s Role in Singapore–US Relations*; Anthony L. Smith (2005), *Singapore and the United States 2004-2005: Steadfast Friends*; Lynn Kuok (2016), *The U.S. – Singapore Partnership: A Critical Element of U.S. Engagement and Stability in the Asia – Pacific*.

- Research related to relations in the field of security and defense: Maj Cai Dexian in *Hedging for Maximum Flexibility: Singapore’s Pragmatic Approach to security Relations with the US and China*; See Seng Tan (2011) with *Singapore’s View of the United States’ Engagement in the Asia-Pacific*; Barry Desker và Cheng Guan Ang (2015), *Perspectives on the Security of Singapore: The First 50 Years*; Damien D. Cheong and Kumar Ramakrishna (2013), *Singapore – US Cooperation on Counterterrorism and National Security*, NTU; Tim Huxley (2006), *Singapore’s strategic outlook and defence policy*; Evelyn Goh (2005), *Singapore and the United States: Cooperation on Transnational Security Threats*.

- **Research related to the economic relations between Singapore and the US:** Andrew D. Lugg (2012) with his Master thesis “*Interests and Anxieties: U.S. Foreign Policy and Economic Integration Agreements*”; Seongho Sheen (2001) with Doctoral thesis *Trade, Technology and Security: U.S. Bilateral Export-Control Negotiations with South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia*; Pang, Eul-Soo with the book “*The U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement: an American Perspective on Power, Trade, and Security in the Asia Pacific*” (2011); Tommy Koh (2005) with the article “*USSFTA: The Year in Review*”; Ramkishen S. Rajan, Rahul Sen and Reza Siregar with “*Singapore and the New Regionalism: Bilateral Economic Relations with Japan and the US*” (2001); Ingrid J. Schenk (1995), *The State and Economic Growth in a Changing Global Political Economy: A Case Study of Singapore*, Master Thesis; Tommy Koh and Chang Li Lin (2004) with *The United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement: Highlights and Insights*; Ramkishen S. Rajan and Shandre M. Thangavelu (2009), *Singapore: Trade, Investment and Economic Performance*; Chan Chin Bock (2002), “*Heart Work*”, Singapore EDB and EDB Society; Liew Li Lin (2005), *(Re)Organizing Production Geographies: Shifting Production Networks in the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement*, Master Thesis, NUS; Laurence A. Green và James K. Sebenius (2014), *Tommy Koh and the U.S. – Singapore Free Trade Agreement: A Multi-Front Negotiation Campaign*, Working Paper, Havard Business School.

1.3. Some remarks and issues posed for the dissertation

First of all, there are researches which have been written on Singapore-US relations in a certain period or in a specific field.

Second, most of the studies on Singapore-US relations are from the perspective of international relations, politics, and economics.

Third, there are many issues that need to be further explained due to the existence of different and even contradictory views.

The main issues posed for this dissertation: *Firstly*, the thesis will reconstruct the relationship between Singapore and the US throughout the

period from 1990 to 2012 (there has been no research that goes through the whole 22 year period); *Secondly*, this thesis systematizes bilateral relations in all three fields: politics - diplomacy, economics, security - defense and mentions some other fields such as education, science – technology in the appendix (combining and stringing studies on each separate economic/military/political... into a multi-faceted work); *Thirdly*, the thesis is based on the historical method to exploit specialized documents in other fields (such as international relations, economics, politics ...) to build a historical work on the relationship between Singapore and the United States in the period 1990 - 2012; *Fourthly*, on the basis of selective inheritance of different research views of other scholars, the thesis will deeply analyze and explain events, motives, policies and draw its own arguments.

CHAPTER 2. FACTORS AFFECTING SINGAPORE – US RELATIONS FROM 1990 TO 2012

2.1. International and regional context

2.1.1. International context: Firstly, the gradual formation of a multi-center, "one super-multi-power" world order; Secondly, the tendency to emphasize economic policy and globalization; Thirdly, the world post-Cold War entered a quiet phase of arms race, even though in-state instability and dormant racial conflict challenged universal security. The attack on 9/11 raised concerns about international terrorism and Islamic extremism.

2.1.2. Regional context:

The regional stage of Asia Pacific and Southeast Asia after the Cold War entails both opportunities and challenges towards the development of Singapore-US relations. The regional political landscape is impacted by up-rising powers which threatened the US's position, most prominent among them was China, which created a different setting for the Singapore-US relations. Globalization, trade liberalization and the prioritization of economic development, especially a knowledge-based economy with modern science - technology are positive conditions for promoting bilateral relations.

2.1.3. Influence of a factor called China

With 75% of its population being Chinese Singaporean, along with its multifaceted ties with China and huge profits from the economic relations with this country, it would be hard for Singapore to fully support the U.S. and turn away from China. Singapore's objective was to keep a balance between the major countries in the region, in accordance with its founding principle of "impeding the regional domination of any major power". In this tripartite relationship between the U.S. - Singapore - China, it is needless to say the U.S. still overtook China in Singapore's foreign policy.

2.2. The state of Singapore and the US

2.2.1. Singapore's context: The miracle economic development; Stable socio-political situation; Borrowing military power from a superpower.

2.2.2. *The US's context:* The US becomes the superpower in the world with superior military power and expands its influence with a system of allies and strategic partners in all key regions.

The situations of Singapore and the US show that the two countries' economies possess complementary factors rather than competitive factors. Singapore develops a modern economy, many knowledge-based products, focuses on refining intermediaries for export, and providing excellent financial services. The US has a demand for products with high scientific content based on technology and services that Singapore can provide. Singapore maintains socio-political stability, providing favorable environment for investment that attracts US MNCs to locate headquarters there, thereby expanding to all over Asia. In addition, if Singapore was a small state, vulnerable against regional instability, and needed a "nuclear umbrella," then the US presented a combination of economic strength and an overwhelming militia which carried impactful political authority on a global scale. Some issues related to democracy, human rights and Singapore's management method still cause disagreements, but the overall conditions of the 2 countries create a need for

cooperation for mutual benefits from both sides.

2.3. Singapore – US relations prior to 1990

Most notably was Singapore's consistent stance in favor of US involvement in the Vietnam War, and its support for US presence in Southeast Asia as a peacekeeper. This approach stemmed from Singapore's national interests, which also coincided with America's policy. Singapore proactively demonstrated its importance at the right moment, and was able to increasingly foster the reliability of the two nations' partnership. This was the important premise from which the Singapore – USA MoU was signed in 1990, and which would later open up an era of comprehensive and far-reaching bilateral relationship between the two states in the 1990-2012 period.

2.4. Foreign relations of Singapore, US and the role of each country in each other's foreign policy

2.4.1. Singapore's foreign policy: the need for a peaceful and stable region around it; Singapore must take advantage of external resources to develop the country; It is necessary to build a balance of power among the great powers. The strategy of the Singaporean government to borrow political and military power from the major countries outside of the region, namely the United States

2.4.2. The US's foreign policy: adjusted through the different presidencies, but whether the representative be of the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, the constant goal is the strategy of hegemony, world leadership.

2.4.3. The role of each country in each other's foreign policy: The U.S. saw Singapore as a strategic partner in Southeast Asia—a critical region—for the sake of hegemony and military deployments, while Singapore needed a powerhouse capable of supporting it—a small island nation—to protect the country, accelerate the industrialization process, develop the economy thereby enhancing Singapore's position in the region.

CHAPTER 3. SOME HIGHLIGHTS ON SINGAPORE-US RELATIONS FROM 1990 TO 2012

3.1. In the field of politics - diplomacy

3.1.1. The period of 1990 - 2001

On May 5, 1994, the Michael Fay incident erupted into disagreements what had existed between Singapore and the US on democracy, human rights, Asian values, and the role of government in social governance. This controversy persisted throughout the 1990s.

After the financial-currency crisis in July 1997, Singapore was the only country in the region with solid legal principles and banking regulations, so it was able to stand firm. The United States also commended Singapore for promoting regional trade liberalization.

3.1.2. The period of 2001 - 2012

3.1.2.1. Singapore's "multi-faceted diplomacy" in the process of negotiating the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement USSFTA

From 2000 to 2003, the USSFTA negotiation process demonstrated Singapore's flexibility and clever diplomatic strategy in its relations with the US through "dining" diplomacy, "golf course" diplomacy, state and people-to-people diplomacy.

3.1.2.2. The period of 2001 – 2012

In 2003, Singapore refused the US's request for it to become Major Non-NATO Ally status but the 2 countries signed onto the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Closer Cooperation Partnership in Defence and Security in 2005, the two sides had perceived each other as "a major security partner, further than a friend yet not an ally."

In 2012, Singapore and the United States built the SPD - this is a great success in terms of political and diplomatic cooperation between a small country like Singapore and a world superpower like the United States, at the same time TCTP embodies the common vision of the two countries for expanding the influence of bilateral relations to the region.

3.2. In the field of security and defense

3.2.1. Developments in some key areas of cooperation

On the *use of military bases*: Singapore actively opened Paya Lebar Airbase and Sembawang Naval Base for American ships and planes on the basis of the MoU signed in November 1990. In 1991, America relocated its Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific from Subic to Singapore.

The frequency of Singaporean Army's bilateral or multilateral *military exercise* with America and other nations increased such as Tiger Balm, Commando Sling, Cope Tiger, Cobra Gold.

On *military training, research and sales of weapons*, the long term preparation that the United States facilitated for Singapore was important for the development of Singapore's armed forces. In 2001, Singapore was one of the two Asian nations, and the only Southeast Asian state, to participate in the development of coordinated bombers (JSF).

3.2.2. Security initiatives in the war on terror

Singapore was the first one in Asia to support and partner with the US in the practice of RMSI, AIS applied on business vessels, CSI, or Proliferation Security Initiative. Those were initiated by the US in an attempt to combat terrorists all over the world.

3.2.3. The Strategic Framework Agreement - SFA

In July 12, 2005, the two countries signed The Strategic Framework Agreement for a Closer Cooperation Partnership in Defense and Security. The SFA included statements of having strategic dialogues over security and defense; and promoting military cooperation and technology, research and development exchanges. The SFA helped create an official legal framework for the bilateral security and defense cooperation at the present time and into the future, including the principles and detailed sectors for cooperation. The SFA marked a new chapter in the relation between the two countries. The two nations considered each other as less than an ally and more than a friend.

3.3. Singapore - US economic relations

3.3.1. Commerce

3.3.1.1. Trade turnover: Singapore is the largest trading partner of the US in Southeast Asia

Firstly, the export and import turnover for Singapore - the United States trades grew at a very fast rate. At the same time, the total import-export turnover between Singapore and the US has always been high.

Secondly, continuously from 1990 to 2000, the United States had slipped into a trade deficit with Singapore. The main reason why a large market like the US went into trade deficit was because Singapore was a re-exporting economy and the US MNCs in Singapore re-imported goods into the US.

Thirdly, the ratio of Singapore's domestic exports to the US on the total Singapore export value to the world is always high, around 25%. This is also the weak point of the Singapore economy. Researchers demonstrated that the decline in US export growth had had a major effect on Singapore due to the large share of the US in the Singapore economy. It is estimated that a 2% decline in the US economy will reduce Singapore's GDP by about 2%

3.3.1.2. Structure of Commerce

By analyzing the list of key import and export products of Singapore and the United States, it can be seen that the main groups of products in both lists are in the fields of electricity - electronics, petrochemicals, and chemical compounds.

One noteworthy point is that in the top 10 main export products from the US to Singapore and the top 10 main export products from Singapore to the US, there are 6 out of 10 duplicate products (2 duplicate in top 3 products), which are: data processing machines, electronic valves, stationary machinery, electrical circuit equipment, special transactions, measuring instruments. This demonstrates the high technical content of Singaporean products and the degree of compatibility between the two markets, and it is explained that

Singapore imports raw materials and processes refined goods and re-exports the final products to the United States.

3.3.1.3. US - Singapore Free Trade Agreement USSFTA

The basis for the Singapore-US relationship in the field of trade is the Free Trade Agreement USSFTA, which was signed on May 6, 2003 and started to go into effect on January 1, 2004. USSFTA brings about many great benefits to the economic relations of the two countries: First, the FTA helps save tax money, Second, the USSFTA helps increase two-way trade, Third, USSFTA helps to increase FDI, Fourth, it brings favorable conditions to US companies in Singapore and Singapore companies in the United States.

3.3.2. Investment:

3.3.2.1. US investment in Singapore:

First, US MNCs account for more than 25% of all FDI shares in Singapore. There are about 6000 MNCs operating in Singapore; and the United States accounted for 1500 MNC.

Second, the number of FDI that went from the United States into Singapore increased continuously. The number of US firms investing in Singapore was more than the number of those investing in China, almost doubled that for Hong Kong. Singapore has always been one of the most attractive investment destinations in the world for US investors.

Third, the profits from US MNCs' investment in Singapore was the highest in the world, more than that in Canada and Europe, the region that attracts the most investment from US MNCs.

3.3.2.2. Singapore's investment in the United States:

Most of the investment activities of Singaporean companies in the US are in finance, commerce, real estate and manufacturing. After Japan, Singapore is the second largest Asian investor in the US.

In terms of the overall components of FDI into Singapore, the majority of investments in the manufacturing sector in 1999 were directed to the electronics sector, accounting for 42% of total investment commitments, followed by chemicals (33%) and engineering. The service and office

services sectors account for 36% of the total investment, followed by the information technology and communications sectors (32%) and the logistics / supply chain management services (21%).

CHAPTER 4. SOME REMARKS ON SINGAPORE-US RELATIONS FROM 1990 TO 2012

4.1. Achievements and limitations

4.1.1. Achievements: The relationship developed with an upward trend over time; Relations were widely deployed in all fields; Close cooperation mechanism: MoU, FTA, SFA; Highly cordial relations in mutual trust; The bilateral relationship is potential for further development based on the compatibility of high quality human resources, investment in R&D and the knowledge economy.

4.1.2. Limitations: The two countries have some public disagreements: democracy, human rights, radical Islam; Despite comprehensive cooperation in various fields, the two states had not yet reached an official alliance status

4.2. Characteristics

4.2.1. Singapore - US relations development is based on the mutual strategic interests, complementary over competition

First, security issues. In particular, terrorism and Islamic extremism (short and medium term), uncertainties arising from China's rise (long term), the goal forward is regional stability and safety of the sea route through the Strait of Malacca.

Second, the goals and strategic economic interests are common and the two countries considered each other as important partners to help develop their economies.

Third, the shared worldview of pragmatism, and its emphasis on a rules-based international order, with the shared belief that the presence of the United States is crucial for regional peace and prosperity.

4.2.2. Singapore's flexible policy in relations with the US

Singapore implemented a highly independent and autonomous policy, asserting its own perspectives upon the American-style democracy, extremist Islam in the war against terrorism, and particularly refusing to become a “Major Non-NATO Ally” of the US - favouring instead to being a “Major Security Partner”, further than a friend yet not an ally, in the Singapore-U.S. relations.

4.2.3. The Singapore-US relations illustrated versatility and proactivity of Singapore foreign relations: Singapore took it to open Singaporean military bases for American use, in spite of oppositions from neighboring countries and the fact that Singapore was a modest country in terms of territory; Singapore used its own finance and resources to build Changi Naval Base, of which it offered the US Army usage; Policies to attract MNCs, welcome FDI investment from the US; Prepared for FTA; Actively created competitive advantages, and constantly innovated.

4.2.4. Singapore, by its flexible policy, has gradually shifted from one-sided dependence to a more balanced position in relations with the US: Singapore has skillfully turned the objective factors (its fortunate location in an important strategic position, the trend of global economic development) - gradually into subjective factors (actively opening military bases for the US, take advantage of the opportunity to create economic take-off to create a relationship of cooperation)... Singapore has become an increasingly important partner to the United States in the region.

4.3. Impacts of the Singapore – US relations on the two countries and the Southeast Asia region

4.3.1. On Singapore

On security, the US military presence demonstrated the US's commitment to the common security interests and regional stability. At the same time, America's military capabilities are a shield for allies.

Economics: cooperation with the US brought capital, markets, job creation, investment attraction opportunities, institutional improvement, and increased competitiveness for Singapore.

Singapore's influence was increased thanks to the US-Singapore relations as it had ambitions to influence the region, and could even set a model for global partnerships.

- Negative impacts: Singapore's economy is quite dependent on the US. And its close relationship with the US makes Singapore a target of extremism.

4.3.2. On the US

With the military in Singapore, the United States could form a defensive barrier and quick response from Southeast Asia to Northeast Asia, serving its global strategy. At the same time, with the presence in Southeast Asia, the United States has conditions to implement the strategy of balance and restraint with China.

Business performance in Singapore was very good, bringing great benefits to the US's MNCs.

Singapore helped connect the US to the region.

4.3.3. On Southeast Asia region

- More US companies were expanding to penetrate deeper into the Southeast Asian market thanks to the "gateway" Singapore.

- Maintain regional peace and security

- Promote regional international integration

- The United States and Singapore work together to create greater influence in the region and globally through SPD and TCTP.

4.4. Some suggestions for Vietnam

First, the geographical location. Singapore has well exploited its prime location to develop into a wharf - a "hub" of the whole region, thereby enhancing its role in relations with major countries. Vietnam also has a number of location advantages, which Vietnam can take advantage of based on Singapore's previous experience.

Second, to anticipate the development trends of the world. Singapore is at the forefront of developing a knowledge-based economy and invests heavily in R&D. At the same time, it inherited from the quintessence of

previous breakthroughs of other countries to shorten the time to catch up with the world's pace. This is also a suggestion for Vietnam.

Third, the flexibility to take the initiative and maintain friendship with all other countries. The policy of promoting mutually beneficial relations in many fields is also a good model for Vietnam. From Singapore's perspective, once it maintains good diplomatic relations with many countries and interests are intertwined, to a certain extent, the role, position and interests of this small island nation will be guaranteed.

CONCLUSIONS

1. With the end of the Cold War, the United States became the world's only superpower and had outstanding strength in many fields. The easing of the arms race and the global trend of prioritizing economic development changed the strategic goals of the United States, leading to an adjustment in the redeployment of forces in the regions. If in the 1990s, the United States reduced its involvement in Asia, in the 2000s, the United States had a "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific. Singapore is an active player calling for a US military presence in Southeast Asia. Although Singapore is a small island nation, it has a strategic role, and a highly developed economy with good social indicators which made Singapore a good potential partner. While the United States needed a strategic partner in the key Southeast Asian region to serve the needs of gathering forces and ambition for hegemony, Singapore needed a power capable of supporting this island nation to uphold its security. Cooperation in economic development, security, science - technology comprehensively and thereby enhancing the influence of both states. Objective and subjective factors had multi-dimensional impacts on the Singapore-US relationship in the years 1990-2012.

2. In the field of politics - diplomacy, as President Bush once said Singapore is a small country in terms of area but large in influence. The United States and Singapore are not official allies, however, the relationship with Singapore is the most substantive and multi-faceted relationship that the US has in Southeast Asia, in terms of diplomacy, economics, military.

Singapore has always considered the US presence in Southeast Asia paramount to regional security and stability and has sought to support that presence. At the same time, Singapore has been very steadfast in supporting the US in the fight against international terrorism. The two countries' political and diplomatic relations have witnessed many friendly visits, the establishment of many cooperation memorandums, and bilateral agreements - serving as the basis and creating a legal framework for relations in other fields. In particular, not only stopping at internal relations, the Singapore-US Strategic Partnership Dialogue SPD and Training Program for Third Countries TCTP create an annual dialogue mechanism, expressing common interests and vision of the two countries on expanding regional influence.

At the same time, the Singapore-US diplomatic relationship is very special, in the core political issues of principle, Singapore stands firm and is determined not to give in, as shown in its refusal to become a non-NATO ally of the United States, through disagreements over the Michael Fay case and the issue of democracy and human rights, and the management of Asia-West society.

3. In the field of security - defense, the long-term and good relationship between the two countries has been consolidated by historic bilateral agreements. If the 1990 MOU established close defense ties between Singapore and the United States when Singapore openly opened its military bases to the US military (in the face of objections from other ASEAN countries), which led the way for a series of cooperation in many fields such as joint exercises, army training, arms sales, etc., the 2005 SFA Strategic Framework Agreement elevated the two countries' relationship to a "main security partnership". Singapore agreed to allow the US Navy to station its regional logistics command unit in Singapore, facilitating hundreds of visits by US Navy ships each year. Singapore supported the US War in Iraq and Afghanistan and was a strong ally in the war on terror and was a pioneer in the US CSI and PSI Security Initiatives. Close defense cooperation with Singapore, a strategically located island nation, has enhanced the United

States' ability to conduct foreign policy in Southeast Asia and confirmed the United States' security commitment to the region.

4. Economically, although Singapore's domestic market is very small, Singapore is a large intermediate port in the Asia-Pacific and a leading dynamic financial-investment center, and thanks to its developing refined industries for re-export, the economic cooperation indexes of Singapore with the US are always in the top of the top partners. Bilateral economic cooperation gained many achievements: the United States and Singapore are among the top countries with large FDI sources of each other; US MNCs invest and set up a branch or regional headquarters in Singapore and expand into the Asian market; Bilateral trade turnover is always high; The US - Singapore Free Trade Agreement, which took effect in 2004, was the first FTA signed by the US with an Asian country. Economic relations between Singapore and the United States are comprehensive, effective and mutually beneficial.

5. The Singapore-US bilateral relationship develops in an upward direction, spreading from the military to the economic and political fields... in which the most special is military cooperation – the most comprehensive military relationship between Singapore with another country. The relationship between the two countries has accomplished many achievements with close cooperation mechanism (from MoU, FTA, SFA, SPD...) and high level of mutual trust. Singapore has consistently supported the United States in operations, allowing the deployment of troops and the relocation of the US regional logistics headquarters to Singapore, pioneering the implementation of security initiatives by the United States in maritime security and counterterrorism.

Political relations between the two countries are decidedly case-based rather than principled commitments, with the goal of maximizing benefits and minimizing risks. Driven by national interests, this relationship also has its ups and downs along historical timelines, in which public disagreements over democracy and human rights issues and radical Islam are prominent. Singapore and the United States are also not moving towards a formal alliance.

The main factor determining the bilateral relationship between the two countries is the degree of similarity in interests. Protecting maritime security, protecting Singapore's sovereignty and its people, but also protecting the lifeline economic traffic and ensuring a stable security environment for more than 6000 MNCs investing in Singapore, in which there are 1500 US companies. If instability occurs or is attacked by terrorism, these companies divest from the island nation, which would also be a crisis for the economy that is closely dependent on this FDI source. Conversely, the United States can also accomplish strategic goals through its relationship with Singapore: fighting terrorism in Southeast Asia - the second key front, maintaining a presence to counterbalance China's rising power and control over the security of the shipping lanes through which more than two-thirds of the world's oil passes annually.

Well aware that the country is a "small red dot" on the world map, with scarce resources, human resources and "vulnerability", Singapore's leaders are always sensitive and flexible in decision-making. Singapore's foreign policy choice is based on the protection by a dominant power. In the relationship between the US and China, Singapore considers the US as the foundational pillar, the top priority partner in international relations, in order to have an umbrella to protect security, and at the same time to attract capital and market for schools, education, science and technology from this superpower to develop the country. However, Singapore has been very clever, from a disproportionate and rather dependent relationship, gradually raising its position and moving towards a more commensurate balance of interests in its relationship with the United States.

Singapore is very proactive in its relations with the United States, on the one hand maintaining economic incentives and political and security support, while not linking itself to the US as official allies to avoid obligations or getting caught up in into conflicts between great powers. Singapore puts itself in a neutral position. Singapore also makes good use of regional factors such as ASEAN, ARF, or the competition for influence of regional powers... to

promote its role. Protecting national sovereignty and security is Singapore's ultimate goal.

6. The US military presence in Singapore is, to a certain extent, valuable for deterrence and protection of Singapore's security, and comprehensive military cooperation activities also help improve Singapore's military capabilities. At the same time, the United States brings capital, markets, job creation, investment attraction opportunities, science and technology, modern education, perfecting institutions, and increasing competitiveness for Singapore. On the US's side, the military presence in Singapore forms a defensive barrier and quick response from Southeast Asia to Northeast Asia, serving its global strategy. Besides, business performance in Singapore is of great value, bringing great benefits to US MNCs. Singapore also helps connect the United States to the region regarding economics, security, and politics.

For Southeast Asia, through Singapore, US MNCs penetrate the Asian market. The Singapore-US relationship is a model for Southeast Asian countries, a driving force for promoting economic integration and maintaining peace and security for the region.

In general, the relationship between Singapore and the United States from 1990 to 2012 developed deeply, stably and multi-facely. This relationship is remarkable because Singapore is not an official ally of the United States and because of the size and position of the two countries: a "small red dot" in Southeast Asia with the world superpower. Singapore and the United States have many correlations in pioneering the development of a knowledge-based economy towards common prosperity and ensuring maritime traffic and stability in Southeast Asia. Allies and hundreds of military bases spread across five continents will remain a springboard for the United States to project its military might and contain potential hegemonic powers. Therefore, as long as the United States can still maintain this massive security project and as long as Singapore maintains a flexible, responsive and pragmatic foreign policy, then the bilateral strategic partnership of Singapore and the United States still has many prospects for development.

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