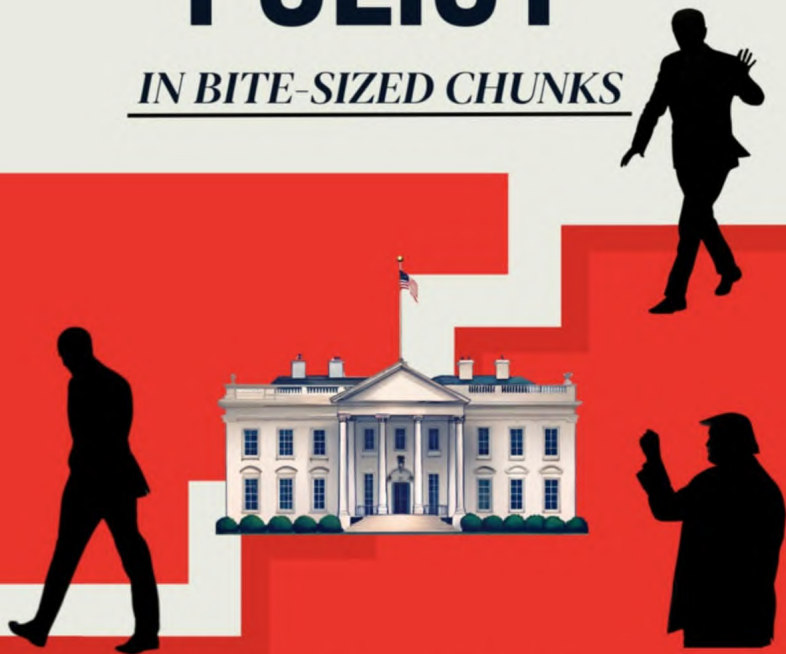


AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

IN BITE-SIZED CHUNKS



THAPIORN SUPORN

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SERIES VOL. 2

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN BITE-SIZED CHUNKS

THAPIPORN SUPORN

National Library of Thailand Cataloging in Publication Data

Thapiporn Suporn.

American Foreign Policy in Bite-Sized Chunks.--

Phitsanulok : Crackers Books Publishing House, 2025.

215 p.-- (International Affairs Series).

1. Foreign policy -- America. I. Title.

327.73

ISBN 978-616-94677-1-7

RRP: 300 Baht

Author: Thapiporn Suporn

Cover Design: Thapiporn Suporn

First Publication: January 2025

Editor/Managing Editor

Watcharabon Buddhaksa

Editorial Board

Chutidech Metheechutikul

Kan Boonyakanchana

Monchuda Supornjak

Olarn Ongla

Pakchira Nugbanleng

Sirisopa Suntitissadeekorn

Sunsai Wongsuwan

Todsapon Chinjorhor

Weerachon Gedsagul

Worapon Chotjiradechakul

Proofreading

Khamonwan Thabthimthong

Kanyanat Maliwan

Published by

Crackers Books Publishing House

555 Moo 10, Soi Phuangpetch Nuea,

Buang Phra Subdistrict,

Mueang District,

Phitsanulok, 65000

Printed by

Paperista Co., Ltd.

89/17 Moo 7, Bang Talat Subdistrict,

Pak Kret District, Nonthaburi, 11120

Contacts

Website: crackersbooks.com

Facebook: facebook.com/crackersbooks

Email: crackersbooks2023@gmail.com

Line: @crackersbooks

Shopee <http://shopee.co.th/crackersbooks>



Nanos gigantium humeris insidentes

*To all my teachers who allow me to see further
by standing on their shoulders.*

Publisher's Preface

As a proud publisher, we are delighted to present the second volume in our *International Affairs Series*, *American Foreign Policy in Bite-Sized Chunks* by Thapiporn Suporn. Following the resounding success of *Sretthaplomacy: Thai Foreign Policy in the Age of Srettha and Beyond*, this latest work continues to exemplify Suporn's ability to distill complex geopolitical dynamics into engaging and accessible narratives.

This book comes at a pivotal moment in history, where the shifting tides of U.S. foreign policy influence not only global security but also the everyday lives of individuals worldwide. By examining key theoretical debates, historical milestones, and the evolving role of American hegemony, Suporn provides readers with a nuanced understanding of the forces shaping our interconnected world.

Designed for both academic and general readers, this volume is meticulously structured to support critical inquiry and inspire fresh perspectives on international relations. It stands as a testament to Crackers

Books' commitment to fostering intellectual engagement and informed dialogue.

We invite you to delve into this compelling exploration of American foreign policy, confident that it will illuminate the challenges and opportunities of our complex global landscape.

Crackers Books
Read. Crack. Inspire.

Preface

We are indeed living through interesting times. Take the Russo-Ukrainian war, which began with Putin's "special operation mission." It was initially expected to result in a swift and decisive Russian victory. Instead, it has become the largest conflict in Europe since World War II and appears to be heading toward a stalemate. In another significant development, the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, has jeopardized Benjamin Netanyahu's ambitions for peace with neighboring Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia.

This unexpected assault by the Palestinian militant group resulted in the deaths of 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, with 253 people taken hostage. In response, Israel launched a military retaliation. These conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East not only exacerbate global divisions but also compel major powers to reevaluate their foreign policy priorities and reallocate their resources. With the contentious race between Kamala Harris and

Donald Trump in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election—culminating in Trump's unexpected triumph against the predictions of liberal pundits—the trajectory of U.S. foreign policy toward Europe and the Middle East is set to have significant implications for global security, beyond what we could have imagined. Undoubtedly, there has never been a more critical time to study U.S. foreign policy.

The idea for writing this book emerged during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, a period when even the most powerful countries faced challenges in providing assistance to their citizens, let alone the global community. As a result, this book serves as a reminder of the pandemic's disastrous effects on our lives. We must all adjust to the “new normal” lifestyles of working from home, attending virtual classes, and participating in online meetings. The outbreak underscores social inequalities and the fragility of each state's healthcare system, as individuals in developing countries are suffering more than people in developed countries. On a global scale, the COVID-19 disease poses a significant threat to the great powers. While China

has been criticized for concealing the severity of the outbreak that began in Wuhan city, the Chinese Communist Party has effectively implemented damage control campaigns to improve China's image nationally and internationally. The CCP developed a new narrative touting its accomplishments in combating the virus at home and providing COVID-related assistance, especially of the mask and vaccine diplomacy kind, to a number of countries. The international community even has praised Beijing at times as a country that can "flatten the curve" and serve as an example for post-pandemic economic recovery.

In contrast, the United States has not always received a positive response for managing the crisis. Both individuals and allies have sharply criticized the performance of the United States. By any standard, the Trump administration's initial response to the COVID-19 situation was a disaster. Trump admitted that the virus was highly contagious in an interview with U.S. journalist Bob Woodward, but he preferred to "play down" the threat of an outbreak in order to avoid causing

panic. In addition to his Twitter wars with foreign leaders, Trump dubbed the coronavirus the "Chinese Virus" and announced Washington's withdrawal from the World Health Organization. The COVID-19 death toll in the United States had reached 400,000 by the end of his presidency in 2021. In light of these circumstances, it's fair to conclude that America's global leadership has been scrutinized like never before.

If anything, the scrutiny sends a message to America's allies that the world's most powerful country can no longer play a critical role in addressing the global pandemic. For example, the current state of the "special relationship" between Thailand and the United States was demonstrated by this paltry incident when the Biden administration provided Thailand with a small portion of 1.5 million doses of Pfizer vaccinations. Before then, Thailand-U.S. relations had already hit rock bottom following the two military coups in 2006 and 2014. The U.S. placed mounting political pressure on the military junta to hand over power to a civilian government, while in 2015 former U.S.

Ambassador to Thailand Glyn T. Davies delivered a controversial speech condemning the use of "*lèse-majesté*" against political activists and protesters. The speech provoked anti-American sentiment among those who revered the late King Bhumibol. It seems that Thailand's strategic importance in the eyes of American foreign policymakers may not be as high as it was during the Cold War, but the United States' credibility and global commitment is questioned more than previously.

In other words, Thailand is clearly shifting away from the United States and toward a closer relationship with China. Will this pattern continue to dominate Thailand's interactions with major powers in the long run? Will Thailand, as a middle power, completely disregard the United States? For the past decade, these are major problems that have preoccupied Thailand's foreign policy establishment. The greater concerns, though, appear to be the diminishing role of American hegemony, as well as Washington's strategy for reinventing itself while its credibility and global standing are in jeopardy. This book, however, does not seek to answer these

burning questions. Furthermore, this book is neither a manifesto for my affection for the United States nor propaganda to justify Washington's past misdeeds. Rather, my analysis conveys that we should not further deteriorate diplomatic relations with the U.S.

While writing this book, I could not help but note that the Thai foreign policy establishment believes Thailand has the choice of picking China over the United States. Without a doubt, the American century is nearing its end, but for a small country like Thailand, it is not a wise decision in the long run to pick sides. As international affairs students, we should learn about the foreign policy traditions, philosophy, and principles that influence policy formulation of a major power like the U.S. This way will allow us to comprehend what a major power truly desires, as well as the strategy Thailand should employ to protect and enhance its national interests.

Originally, this book was designed to complement the course "U.S. Foreign Policy" for third-year International Affairs students at Khon Kaen University International College. The book is structured into 13 chapters, primarily focusing on the continuity and changes in American foreign policy. It draws on fundamental concepts and foundational ideas that have shaped U.S. foreign policy since World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the Post-Cold War era. Additionally, the book introduces readers to major theoretical debates that illuminate the diminishing role of American hegemony, the future of the liberal international order, and the rivalries between the United States and China. It also delves into current policy issues and examines the new trajectory of American foreign policy in both the post-Trump era and the return of Trump in 2024. For this edition, I have also included a new sub-section in Chapter 12 that discusses the return of Donald Trump to the White House and its implications for U.S. foreign policy.

In January 2024, Dr. Watcharabon Buddharaksa breathed new life into this book, incorporating it into Crackers' International Affairs Series. However, I must be candid: I completed writing this book before the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War and the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as before Donald Trump's stunning victory in November 2024. Certainly, these recent developments serve as a litmus test for the U.S.'s commitment and relevance in the post-pandemic world as a defender of the liberal international order. Nevertheless, I believe that the foundation for understanding U.S. foreign policy, laid out in this book, will be sufficient for readers to comprehend how an understanding of U.S. foreign policy contributes to a broader understanding of world.

I would also like to thank Dr. Poowin Bunyavejchewin, a true comrade-in-arms, for his guidance and support. Without a doubt, he is, to me, the epitome of a scholar who wholeheartedly dedicates his life to academia, regardless of how others perceive him.

In *Sretthaplomacy*, I dedicated it to my grandmother. I wish to continue that tradition by wholeheartedly dedicating this book to Supot Theerapattham, who has been the pillar of my family for the past 60 years. He is a devoted husband, a loving father, and an adoring grandfather. As a boy who grew up under his care, I know him as a grandfather whose love transcends words—expressing a fatherly devotion that speaks volumes from his heart. Like many East Asian families, we do not often say “I love you” to one another. However, I have found the perfect way to say those three words—through this dedication to him.

Thapiporn Suporn

Khon Kaen, Thailand
December 16, 2024

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Introducing U.S. Foreign Policy	
Chapter 2	10
American Power in the World: The Demise of Pax Americana?	
Chapter 3	22
Theories of U.S. Foreign Policy	
Chapter 4	37
Who Makes American Foreign Policy?	
Chapter 5	50
American Exceptionalism	
Chapter 6	61
America's Path to Global Power	
Chapter 7	74
The Cold War and Containment Policy	
Chapter 8	83
American Power in the Post-Cold War: The Unipolar Moment	

Table of Contents

Chapter 9	
Bush and War on Terrorism	95
<hr/>	
Chapter 10	
U.S. Foreign Policy during Obama	110
<hr/>	
Chapter 11	
Trump's America: Continuity and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy	122
<hr/>	
Chapter 12	
America and the Liberal World Order	137
<hr/>	
Chapter 13	
U.S. and the Great Powers Competition	153
<hr/>	
Bibliography	165
<hr/>	
Index	180
<hr/>	

List of Illustrations

1.1	The United States delivers COVID-19 vaccine doses to Cambodia	6
3.1	A soldier hugs the President as he greeted U.S. troops at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan	25
3.2	Five determinant factors contributing to foreign policy formulation	26
3.3	The Resignation of General Washington, December 23, 1783	29
3.4	Separation of Powers	31
4.1	Foreign policy actors	39
4.2	President Trump delivers a statement on the Syrian attack on April 13, 2018	44

List of Illustrations

5.1	Otto von Bismarck	53
6.1	President Woodrow Wilson	66
6.2	Photograph of hangar and planes damaged and set afire by Japanese bombs at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941	69
7.1	George F. Kennan	76
8.1	NATO expansion	90
9.1	President George W. Bush	96
9.2	Explosion following the plane impact into the South Tower (WTC 2) on September 11, 2001	100

List of Illustrations

10.1	Secretary Clinton visits with Aung San Suu Kyi	113
10.2	Asia Pacific Region	116
11.1	Donald Trump during his swearing-in ceremony as the 45th President of the United States, January 20, 2017	123
11.2	White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and Chief Strategist Steve Bannon at the 2017 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC)	129
11.3	The Blob (1958) theatrical poster	130
12.1	Serious Trump supporter	143
12.2	Donald Trump with Elon Musk, Tulsi Gabbard, RFK Jr, Mike Johnson, Vivek Ramaswamy, Donald Trump Jr, Dana White, and Kid Rock at UFC 2024	147

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

