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| **25 years of Vietnam-US diplomatic relations.**  **Bui Kien Thanh’s refined mannerisms check out with his backstory**: a former representative at the United States office of the defunct Republic of Vietnam’s National Bank and an **ex-realtor** in France.  He used to be the special assistant to former President Ngo Dinh Diem during his presidency of the Republic of Vietnam, and he was later known to be one of the agents who bridged the gap between Vietnam and the U.S. during the **inception** of Vietnam’s open-door **era**.  Thanh was born in 1931 into an established household.  His dad was a successful entrepreneur and Thanh enjoyed a pleasant childhood. But he was faced with an array of challenges later in life.  Early in his career, Thanh was sent by the Diem administration to New York, with financial support from International Cooperation Administration, to study central banking operations in an attempt to rebuild infrastructure.  After a year of study, Thanh was invited to stay in America and was appointed to be the representative of the National Bank in New York all at the young age of 25.  Before moving back to Vietnam in the early 1990s, Thanh found himself requently traveling between France and the United States.  In 1984, he was recruited by an insurance company now known as American International Group, an entity that Thanh used to represent back in his days in Saigon, the old name of Ho Chi Minh City.  Experience in international economics and connections with **American executives and politicians** acted as the **premise** for Thanh’s deeply influential work in **the normalization of Vietnam-U.S. relations**.  He was one of the advisors who contributed to the momentous *Doi Moi*  Policy of Vietnam in 1986, with the focus on extending economic ties and its subtask of normalizing **bilateral relations** with the U.S.  Thanh still takes pride in his work opening up the conversation with Vietnamese economic reformists in the early 1980s.  After months of discussions, the Vietnamese government came to the **unanimous conclusion** that “only when the people become properous can the nation become stronger,” according to Thanh.  **Staying to help as long as he could**  The normalization of Vietnam-U.S. relations was attribute to the pre-existing desire for it from both parties, Thanh said.  As proposals on normalizing the relationship with Vietnam had been voiced within the realm of American politics from as early as 1975, the go-getting economy of a 1986 Vietnam could not skip out on such a **lucrative** market as the U.S. – the biggest economy of the world.  Between 1986 and 1987, some Vietnamese leaders showed a **willingness** to enter negotiations with the U.S., but they could not reach out due to the limited communication channels.  The option to start the conversation via Sweden, one of the earliest diplomatic linkages of Vietnam post-1975, was not viable because of conflicting **stances** of both sides on Vietnam’s part in the **unrest** in Cambodia then.  Utilizing his connection with American figures, Thanh once again acted in the progress as the bridge of diplomatic conversation.  “Since I am one of the few [people in Vietnam] with a history of working with government higher-ups as well as the social and economic **echelons** of America, whenever the Vietnamese government needs to **liaise** with the American government, I can provide support by linking up [Vietnamese officials] with their American counterparts,” Thanh said.  “This work have done for years is more like a personal mission to me. Not because I am excellent or anything, I just happened to be in the right position to do it.”  For dozens of years now, Thanh has never ceased his commitment to solving the imperative requirements, **inching towards the reconciliation of Vietnam-U.S.** bilateral relations, using resources obtained from the former administration to fill the gap between the two countries.  As he mentioned earlier, there might be others who are as talented as him, yet not everyone would have stepped up and **dedicated** themselves to the common good as he did.  For the octogenarian, half a decade of back-and-forth travel and tenacious advocay for Vietnam-U.S. relations can be all traced back to a vision bigger than himself.  One of the women living with Thanh talked about his health and **the frustration of his progency** for his refusal to move to America.  **Model relations**  The Vietnam-U.S. dynamics have progressed so far, from being former enemies to the official normalization of relations in 1995.  Over the past 25 years, their bilateral ties have been enhanced on **every facet**.  U.S. leader have praised the proceedings of normalization and development of the relationship on multiple occations.  The 25-year journey came to **fuition** from a deep understanding of historical context as well as the international and domestic landscape.  Even after the normalization, there remains **hurdles** and complications in the linkage between the two countries, one of which is **cynicism**, or lack of trust.  **This is not an issue that can be flipped overnight** since the two countries uphold different political and social systems, were one arch-enemies, and had a history of sanctions and isolation imposed by the U.S. that extended well beyond 1975.  The resolution for this issue in none other than mutual trust-building via cooperating on a leveled basis as well as respecting each other’s system, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. | Sự tinh tế của Bui Kien Thanh thông qua câu chuyện của ông ấy.  **ex-realtor:** cựu nhân viên.  **Inception/** in'sepʃn: sự bắt đầu.  **Era/** 'iərə: thời đại, kỷ nguyên.  **American executives and politicians:** giám đốc điều hành và các chính trị gia Mỹ.  **Premise/**prem-is: a basis/ tiền đề.  **the normalization of Vietnam-U.S. relations:** Bình thường hóa quan hệ Vietnam-US.  **bilateral relations/** bahy-lat-er-uhl**:** quan hệ song phương.  **unanimous conclusion/** yoo-nan-uh-muhs**:** thống nhất kết luận.  **Lucrative/** loo-kruh-tiv: profitable.  **Willingness:** thiện chí.  **Stances/**stans: thái độ, lập trường.  **Unrest:** bất ổn.  **Echelons/**esh-uh-lon: level, rank.  **Liaise/**lee-eyz: to communicate and maintain contact.  **inching towards the reconciliation of Vietnam-U.S.:** hướng tới sự hòa giải của VN-US  **dedicated/** ded-i-key-tid: cống hiến.  **the frustration of his progency:** thất vọng của con cháu.  **every facet:** mọi khía cạnh.  **Fuition/**froo-ish-uhn: something attained./ kết quả.  **Hurdles/**hur-dl**:** barrier/ rào cản.  **Cynicism/** sin-uh-siz-uhm: hoài nghi.  **This is not an issue that can be flipped overnight:** đây là vấn đề không thể thay đổi trong một đêm. |