

Hillary Clinton made her first international visit as Secretary of State of the United States of America to Japan recently. Why was Japan the first? As much as her visit was to engage more closely to the Asian partners on [global](#) issues, one couldn't disregard that the fact constituting US command over the Pacific. Japan was chosen as her initial visit due to its alliance, its largest US naval base outside of the US (Yokosuka and Okinawa) as well as its command and strategic location in the Pacific. The US Pacific Command is one of the largest US Naval operations in the region and commands strength that no other nation can dispute off.

The US-Japan relations are considered a major milestone for US foreign policy ever since the end of [World](#) War 2. Japan's surrender in 1945 marked the end of Japan's regional hegemony in the Pacific and hence creating another hegemony by the US in the Pacific, with a promise of peace and security within the region. Nevertheless should we not consider the "hegemony" of the US as a "hegemony" of control in the Pacific, but a sense of security and peace in its policing of the region. Arguably there is no other country that commands such initiatives as the US and its protection for nations who upholds democracies, peace and security.

One cannot deny the fact, that US foreign policy endowers for peace and freedom and it is justified in its constitution to uphold that duty, be it domestic or international. The US is the only country that has incorporated its military policy with its foreign policy based on many experiences over the past decades. As such, the Secretary of State plays a major key role in establishing the US stand on its policies internationally with all of its allies and partners.

Clinton's visit proved to be of a new era in American politics, with a new "African American" President and its famous slogan "Change has come"! The Obama's administration promises new diplomatic means of solving the economic crisis and promising security contributions in the region. Hillary, in Japan conveyed America's "relationship across the Pacific as indispensable to addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century". She reassured the Japanese leaders that Washington would continue to consider the importance of the alliance while seeking to support its key ally. The US-Japan alliance is vital for both countries as it is a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region and to the [world](#).

Key issues in Japan included the Korean Peninsular and the "six party talks" in addressing the nuclear threat as well as the reconstruction of Afghanistan, where Japan has its forces on a United Nations Peacekeeping effort. On another matter of great concern from the Japanese side was the US troops in Okinawa and matters relating to its stationing of troops. In respect to this a new accord; an agreement was signed in Nakasone on the relocation of some 8,000 US

Marines from Okinawa to Guam in 2014 by stages. The fight against terrorism would have been an undisputed discussion as the US strongly recommends that Japan play a role in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Other important issues, from my opinion would have included the Japanese abductees by North Korea. The North Korean's abductions are part of the "six party talks" which is relatively high on the Japanese governments agenda in addressing the issues pertaining to them. As much as the "six party talks" are concerned, we must address the fact that the priority is the denuclearization of North Korea and the Korean Peninsular. If these are hindered by other issues, the "six party talks" may be going off its course.

As Hillary continued to proceed on her international visit as State Secretary of the US to Indonesia and South Korea, we not only see a new era of American politics, but a new wave of commitment of the new US Administration in addressing international issues pertaining to economic, peace and security in the region as well as globally. This also means changing the perspectives of international [world](#) leaders on its former administration policies. As much as the Obama's Administration is concerned, I will feel his top most priority is now to concentrate within the United States to address issues related to the economic crisis as well as to clean up its "backyard" before it moves drastically ahead in international affairs

Just days ago, the Japanese Prime Minister, Taro Aso made his official visit to the US, being the first high ranking foreign diplomat to be invited to the United States under the Obama Administration. The visit further strengthens its bilateral alliance after the visit of Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton to Japan. The meetings included the economic crisis, climate change as well as challenges, such as Afghanistan and North Korea. Prime Minister Aso also announced fresh aid to Pakistan in support to the United States in addressing the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

In light of the two high ranking visits from the US and Japan, I am skeptical of the interest that the US will show in Northeast Asia and the Asean region. The US main concerns are currently directed to its troops stationed in conflict affected regions and will continue to adhere to those problems till such time!

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