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# **U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY ALLIANCE TREATY AT ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY: CHALLENGES FACING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION**

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The U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance Treaty, concluded in Washington on January 19, 1960, has been one of the longest alliance treaties in the world since the 1648 Peace Treaty of Westphalia. The alliance between the two countries was constructed on a foundation of “trust and reconciliation” in the wake of the World War II. In 1960, there was a public movement against the revision of the previous treaty signed in 1951. The 1960 treaty was, indeed, concluded amid violent protests in Japan. It is fair to say that Japan’s most severe postwar political crisis was directly connected with its alliance treaty with the United States.

## **BACKGROUND**

Alliances are usually viewed as a response to threats, mostly coming externally. In general, states, when entering an alliance, may either balance or bandwagon (ally with the state that poses the major threat).<sup>1</sup>

But neither balance nor bandwagoning is applicable to describe the original motive of Japan in this case. Its security alliance was imposed upon by the United States after Japan surrendered in August, 1945. An earlier treaty, immediately following the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in September 1951, provided the basis for the 1960 treaty.<sup>2</sup> Throughout its more than two thousand years of history, Japan in 1951, for the first time, accepted the deployment of foreign troops on its territory. Following the surrender by the Japanese Imperial Showa Government to the United States and the Allies, Japan accepted the presence of about 260,000 U.S. military personnel at more than 2,800 bases across its territory.

The cohesion of the U.S.-Japan alliance has fluctuated since the security defense treaty was concluded. In other words, frictions between the United States and Japan emerged from time to time in the past five decades. Yet, the United States has always been aware of the fact that the benefits of the treaty persistently exceeded its costs. The U.S. military bases in Japan have been the pillar of its forward strategy in East Asia. One instance, among others, was that the U.S. bases in Japan helped bottle up the Soviet naval fleet in the sea of Okhotsk. Viewing the remarkable upsurge of Japan’s economy, the United States has asked Japan to take

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Spring 1985, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The 1960 treaty downgraded the appearance of “inequality” in the 1951 treaty by deleting from it a clause under which the United States was allowed to intervene in times of insurrection in Japan.

measures to alleviate U.S. financial burdens in stationing U.S. forces in Japan. Japan increasingly became not thoroughly a “free-rider” in its security needs. In 1983, the then Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone took steps to lift its ban on quite some defense technology exports to the United States. Particularly in 1992, Japan passed legislation allowing its troops to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. For almost a decade from 2001 until mid-January 2010, Japan kept naval vessels in the Indian Ocean in supplying fuel to coalition forces fighting in Afghanistan under U.S. leadership. Japan is now one of the three largest supporters of U.S. ongoing efforts in Afghanistan. It has committed US\$5 billion to a host of humanitarian and reconstruction efforts there. Additionally, it sent out 600 troops in a relatively peaceful zone in Iraq. In view of the above, the utility of the alliance treaty to the United States is quite obvious. But on January 16, only three days before the treaty’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Japan ended its naval mission providing fuel to U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> Kurt Campbell, U.S. Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, expressed his regrets on January 19, 2010. Such a suspension by the government of the Democratic Party of Japan was doubtlessly a setback for the Obama Administration of the United States.

#### JAPAN NOT A THOROUGHGOING FREE-RIDER

In 1981, two specialists John K. Emmerson and Daniel I. Okimoto summarized the functions of U.S.-Japan alliance in the Cold War largely as: It introduced an element of predictability in the region. It also served as the linchpin of a powerful deterrent against Communist states. It provided sufficient leeway for both the United States and Japan to accomplish normalization of relations eventually with Beijing. In appraising Japan’s value to the United States, Emmerson and Okimoto noted that Japan as a nonthreatening nation was capable of playing a constructive role in mediating and modulating conflicts in Asia. They said in particular that Japan was essential for the operation of U.S. Seventh Fleet as it served as a home for military facilities.<sup>4</sup>

On January 13, 2010, right on the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S.-Japan security treaty, Vice Admiral John Bird, Commander of U.S. Seventh Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan, called the alliance the “cornerstone of peace and stability throughout the Asia-Pacific region.”<sup>5</sup>

Including Condoleezza Rice, the then Secretary of State of the George W. Bush Administration, Japan’s strategic importance to the United States is widely recognized. Rice wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in summer 2008 that “America believed that a democratic Japan

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<sup>3</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun (satellite edition), January 16, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> John K. Emmerson and Daniel I. Okimoto, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Overview and Outlook,” U. Alexis Johnson, ed., *The Common Security Interests of Japan, the United States, and NATO* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 91-93.

<sup>5</sup> Bird said, “For the past half century this treaty has successfully deterred aggression, while promoting common values of freedom and democracy...” He went on to say, “This alliance has served as the basis for our strong relationship with the JMSDF, arguably the most critical navy-to-navy partnership in the world.” See “U.S.-Japan Alliance is Cornerstone of Security in Asia, Says 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Commander,” <http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story-id=50500> 2010/4/18.

might one day be a source of peace in an increasingly free and prosperous Asia.”<sup>6</sup>

While the public opinion in the United States recognizes Japan’s strategic value, the majority of Japanese citizens likewise admit that Japan has benefited for many years more from the treaty with the United States than it paid. For several decades, Japan maintained defense budget to less than one percent of its GDP. Even though Japan is the second largest economy in the world, Japan only has the seventh-largest military budget in the world, such low defense budget undeniably contributed in some ways to its economic prosperity. Japan accounts for about 14.3 percent of world output. In an interview-based book with Brent Scowcroft in 2008, Zbigniew Brzezinski notes that “Japan needs us at least as much as we need them, and probably much more.”<sup>7</sup> A U.S. journalist Walter Russell Mead praised George W. Bush Administration for having improved American relations with Beijing without alienating Japan.<sup>8</sup> It is not an overstatement that Alliance-mindedness exists in the citizens of both the United States and Japan.

Over the years, the treaty has evolved itself into a largely credible operating system. The treaty is fully qualified to be called an institutionalized alliance. The treaty even has validated a hypothesis that an alliance can have a function of the accretion of power for the signatories. Actually, the alliance treaty has brought forth a convergence of interests that goes beyond a common interest in security. Specifically speaking, the alliance is now based on shared interests, values and cooperation on major global challenges.

## NATURE OF THE ALLIANCE

Undeniably, the security alliance treaty was not one between equal sovereign states at its origin. Even today, the alliance is still asymmetric. No ally of the United States, including NATO, has a thoroughly reciprocal relationship with it mainly as the United States possesses the massive military strength.

Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye in February 2007 continued to push Japan to should more responsibilities for its security. In their second Armitage Nye Report on U.S.-Japan alliance relationship, Armitage and Nye urged that “Japan must make the alliance a more balanced relationship by contributing fully in more of the sectors needed for its own national defense.”<sup>9</sup>

Ending a half-century of largely uninterrupted conservative rule in Japan in August 2009, Japan’s current Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama immediately called for a “more equal” alliance with the United States. Thereafter, major policymakers in both the Obama

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<sup>6</sup> Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4, July/August 2008, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, *America and the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America’s Grand Strategy in a World at Risk* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” *CSIS Report*, February 2007, p. 20. Nye previously served as an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Bill Clinton Administration from 1994 to 1995.

Administration and the Hatoyama government have sought for a “more equal” alliance. But paradoxically, both governments have still been divided on what that would mean.

The U.S.-Japan alliance contains military base agreements and contingency plans. The alliance has been a “defensive” alliance in nature since its formation. It has never been an “offensive” alliance.

Alliances generally presuppose national or ideological affinities that go beyond expediencies. In the past five decades, the United States and Japan have shared the democratic values. The alliance relationship has been more than a military alliance. It has evolved itself into a political alliance as well.

The U.S.-Japan alliance is also an economic partnership. Certainly, the two countries do not have an identical vision. Yet, they still have quite some overlapping values. Nye, when serving as an Assistant Secretary of Defense, said in 1995 that “China must realize that the U.S.-Japan security dialogue is not an effort to constrain or ostracize China. Our bilateral relationship derives from our common interest in promoting economic growth and political stability in East Asia.”<sup>10</sup>

The U.S.-Japan alliance is, after all, an asymmetric relationship of things and people. So far, considerable doubts and dissatisfaction about the alliance have surfaced between them. The problems include the division of roles and various base issues.<sup>11</sup>

In his book *Alliance and Small Powers* published in 1968, Robert L. Rothstein discussed the fundamental imbalances problems existing between a large ally and a small one in an alliance. Rothstein states, “In an alliance relationship between a large nation and a small nation, from the outset intrinsic imbalances exist in various issues in terms of maintaining and preserving the alliance. While the small nation demands debate as an absolute right, the large nation seeks to decide the degree of debate according to the small nation’s capacity to contribute when it comes to actual problem solving.”<sup>12</sup> Rothstein’s words are useful in explaining the recurrent and hitherto continued frictions between the United States and Japan in their alliance relationship.

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONTROVERSY IN JAPAN

General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Japan, imposed upon Japan a new constitution in 1947. Specified in its Article 9, Japan gave up “war as a sovereign right of the national and the threat or use of force in settling international

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, testimony, House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 1995, *Federal New Service*, October 25, 1995. See also Paul J. Smith, “China-Japan Relations and the Future Geopolitics of East Asia,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Winter 2009, p. 242.

<sup>11</sup> Daisaku Sakaguchi, “The Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan and Its Impact on the Interdependent Relationship between Japan and the U.S.,” *NIDS Security Reports*, No. 10, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, December 2009, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliance and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 57-58.

disputes” and committed itself to never “land, sea, and air forces as well as other war potential.” Article 9 of the Japanese constitution not only renounces the use of force for settling its international disputes but also prevents its possession of military force. Japan for decades always claimed that its constitution prohibited it from exercising the right of collective self-defense. But in practice, Japan established its right to individual self-defense. Implicitly, Japan already demonstrated its right to “partial” collective self-defense.

Alliances in most cases are reciprocal. An American scholar Robert E. Osgood defines alliance “as a formal agreement that pledges states to cooperate in using their military resources against a specific or states.”<sup>13</sup> But as far as the U.S.-Japanese alliance treaty is concerned, Japan at any time can still invoke Article 9 as a pretext to stay out of future wars involving the United States.

In retrospect, a flexible reinterpretation of Article 9 has facilitated the deployment of the Japanese forces abroad in recent years. Additionally, since the North Korean missile tests in 1998, the issues of constitutional revision and nuclearization has been frequently raised and debated extensively in Japan.

The public opinion in Japan is not totally against the idea of constitutional revision but remains profoundly ambivalent about changing Article 9 of the Japanese constitution.<sup>14</sup> Yet, Japan’s public opinion is apparently not receptive to the usefulness of military power for the pursuit of any political objective such as democracy promotion overseas. Japan’s public continues to support nonmilitary instruments of foreign policy.

Among the media in Japan, The Yomiuri Shimbun has shown great concern over the U.S.-Japan security alliance. On March 17 this year, it hosted a forum under the theme “The U.S.-Japan Alliance and East Asia.”<sup>15</sup>

In an earlier editorial on February 19, The Yomiuri Shimbun took note of the increase of defense expenditures for 22 straight years. It additionally gave concern to the military balance surrounding Japan in 10 to 20 years.<sup>16</sup> In another editorial on the same day, The Yomiuri Shimbun praised the increasing coordination between the United States, Japan and Australia by commenting on Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada’s visit to Australia.<sup>17</sup>

## YOSHIDA DOCTRINE AND KOIZUMI’S STRATEGY

The late Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, indeed, resisted U.S. urgings to build up Japan’s armed forces. But Yoshida left a legacy known as Yoshida Doctrine. At the core of

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<sup>13</sup> Robert E. Osgood, Alliances and American Foreign Policy (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Most members of Japan’s military elite and the general public firmly oppose to an active exploration of its nuclear options. See Peter J. Katzenstein, “Japanese Security in Perspective,” in *Rethinking Japanese Security: Internal and External Dimensions*, Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun (satellite edition), February 19, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

the Yoshida Doctrine were the military, economic and political advantages of American security umbrella. Today, Japan's grand strategy is still deeply rooted in depending upon the extended nuclear deterrence provided by the United States.

Junichiro Koizumi, who served as Japanese Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006, moved quite closely with the United States. His strategy was to enhance security cooperation with the United States. In 2003 under Koizumi's leadership, Japan agreed to acquire a ballistic missile system. It was planned to be fully operational by 2011. Japan bought the main components of the ballistic missile system such as the Patriot Advance Capability (PAC)-3 and the Aegis destroyers from the United States. Missile defense cooperation further enhanced the U.S.-Japan alliance.<sup>18</sup> Most distinctly, Koizumi took leadership in a reinterpretation of the geographical scope of the U.S.-Japan security alliance treaty.<sup>19</sup>

## CHINA FACTOR IN JAPAN'S SECURITY CALCULATIONS

China again became one of the major concerns of the U.S. military deployment in Japan following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In reporting the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S.-Japan alliance treaty, Agence France-Presse on January 18 this year commented that the treaty more recently has served "as a visible U.S.-backed bulwark against a rapidly growing China."<sup>20</sup> Nye believes that China is a long-term challenge to the security of East Asia.

Tobias Harris, an observer of Japan's foreign and security policy, notes that China is a hegemony-in-waiting in East Asia. Harris argues that with the rise of China, the U.S.-Japan security alliance is by no means valueless, "but the terms certainly have changed." He issues a warning to Japan by saying that "Japan can no longer afford to be wholly dependent on the alliance as its hedge against a violent turn in China's rise, because the U.S. commitment may be less than ironclad."<sup>21</sup>

U.S. forces in Japan are mobile and expeditionary. U.S. forces in Japan allow the United States to respond to diverse threats across East Asia. The withdrawal or significant downsizing of U.S. marines in Japan's mainland and Okinawa is a controversial thing in the eyes of some Japanese security specialists. It is worried that if U.S. marines are decentralized, their ability to respond to threats will be reduced.<sup>22</sup>

It is questionable that the rise of China will definitely lead to a strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance. The rise of China, indeed, does not insure the strengthening of their alliance.

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<sup>18</sup> Katzenstein, "Japanese Security in Perspective," p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Koizumi's "fighting diplomacy" caused tension with both the South Korea and China over his visits to the Yasukuni shrine.

<sup>20</sup> Shaun Tandon, "At Age 50, U.S.-Japan Bond Hits Growing Pains," Agence France-Presse, January 18, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Tobias Harris, "A New US-Japan Alliance in the Making," January 13, 2010,

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/01/13/a-new-us-japan-alliance-in-the-making> 2010/4/18. But Harris dismisses the hope that the United States and Japan, "along with other democracies, could present a united front tasked with integrating China peacefully." He says that such a hope has proven unrealistic. Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Sakaguchi, "The Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan and Its Impact on the Interdependent Relationship between Japan and the U.S.," p. 32.



The official line of the Obama Administration is to avoid making references to China's potential threat. While praising the enormous adaptability of the U.S.-Japan alliance treaty on January 19, Campbell said that "now it is basically aimed at no specific or particular nation."<sup>23</sup>

Yoichi Funabashi, Editor-in-Chief of The Asahi Shimbun published in Japan, concedes that China remains a potential threat in the region. He said in mid-January that "Although Beijing is not a threat right now, there is no guarantee that will remain so in the future." He argued that "a functioning Japan-US alliance will be vital." Funabashi advocates that "Japan and the United States should consider constructing a multilateral structure for maritime stability in the South China Sea and the East China Sea."<sup>24</sup>

On April 10, ten Chinese naval warships, including two submarine, passed between Okinawa's main island and Miyakojima island. It caused an alarm to Japan. The Chinese naval vessels headed from the East China Sea to the Pacific Ocean. The ten vessels continued training exercises in the region on April 13. While naval training in open seas or passing through international waters presents no problem under international law, the Japanese Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa commented it as "an unprecedented case."<sup>25</sup> The latest case appeared to be the first one involving two Chinese surfaced submarines.

#### TAIWAN FACTOR IN U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

In June 1997, Japan's Cabinet Secretary Kajiyama Seiroku commented on the involvement of Taiwan issue in the U.S.-Japan security relations in a televised statement. Most importantly, Seiroku said that if an "emergency in Taiwan led to U.S. military involvement and Japan did not supply even water and food to the U.S. forces, it would be difficult to maintain the alliance with the United States."

In early 2005, Japan went so far as to join the United States in declaring Taiwan a "common strategic objective."<sup>26</sup> In February 2005, Japan issued a joint security declaration with the United States, specifically identifying the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue as a shared strategic objective.

Speaking before the Japanese Diet in April 2007, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that Beijing would never tolerate independence in Taiwan.<sup>27</sup> Wen warned Japan that "We

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<sup>23</sup> "State's Campbell on 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of U.S.-Japan Relations," [America.gov](http://www.america.gov), January 19, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision for the Alliance," [PacNet Newsletter](http://www.pacnet.com/newsletter), February 18, 2010, p. 1. <http://by116w.bay116.mail.live.com/mail/InboxLight.aspx?FolderID=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&n=793233792> 2010/2/19

<sup>25</sup> [The Asahi Shimbun](http://www.asahi.com/english), "10 Chinese Warships Pass Near Okinawa," April 14, 2010, <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201004130430.html> 2010/4/18

<sup>26</sup> Smith, "China-Japan Relations and the Future Geopolitics of East Asia," p. 238. The move by the United States and Japan was interpreted by some circles as a countermove to China's promulgation of the Anti-secession Act.

<sup>27</sup> [China Economic Net](http://www.chinaeconomic.net), "Wen Jiabao: China, Japan Must Improve Relations," [http://en.ce.cn/National/Politics/20070412/t20070412\\_11020705.shtml](http://en.ce.cn/National/Politics/20070412/t20070412_11020705.shtml) 2010/4/18

hope that Japan recognizes the high sensitivity of the Taiwan issue, honors its commitment and handles this issue discreetly.”

Campbell, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said in an interview with a Japanese newspaper Yomiuri on January 7, 2010 in Washington that the motivations for deepening the security alliance with Japan include the importance of maintaining peace and security in both the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits.<sup>28</sup> On January 19, at a press conference at the Department of States, Campbell reaffirmed that American forward basing in Japan provides “capabilities to be able to respond urgently and directly to challenges not only to Japan’s security, but regional security challenges in the immediate region.”<sup>29</sup>

## HATOYAMA AND OZAWA ADVOCATE CHANGE

Yukio Hatoyama became the incumbent Japanese Prime Minister in September 2009 after the Democratic Party of Japan defeated the Liberal Democratic Party in the election of the House of Representatives. At an APEC summit, his off-conference remarks confirmed the misgivings about a Japanese policy shift by the Obama Administration. Other Asian leaders at APEC summit disclosed that Hatoyama had been promoting an East Asia Community concept designed to reduce Japan’s “dependence” on the United States.<sup>30</sup> Barack Obama’s campaign mantra “Yes, we can!” echoed in Japan. Championing policy change, Hatoyama additionally has argued that the presence of the U.S. military in Japan is only necessary in times of emergency.<sup>31</sup> U.S. apprehensions were heightened.

George R. Packard, President of the United States-Japan Foundation, expressed in an article his worries that Japan made a mistake in saying that that the establishment of a community of East Asian nations can be without U.S. participation.<sup>32</sup>

Ichiro Ozawa, the Secretary General of the Japanese Democratic Party, was the ideological mastermind of the party. His immense influence on the policies of the Hatoyama government is well-known. The foreign policy program of the Democratic Party of Japan reflects to some degrees Japan’s anticipation for a new diplomatic identity in a new decade. Taking a parallel line with Hatoyama, Ozawa said that U.S. military bases in Japan are

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<sup>28</sup> Central News Agency, January 7, 2010. Local government chiefs on Yunakuni, an island which is about 100 kilometers away from Taiwan, in recent years have repeatedly requested the Japanese government to station forces on it. Japan’s Ministry of Defense is now evaluating the request. See Liberty Times (Taiwan), January 18, 2010, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> “State’s Campbell on 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of U.S.-Japan Relations: U.S. Marks Anniversary of U.S.-Japan Security Alliance and Partnership,” America.gov, January 19, 2010, p. 8, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/January/20100120120603xjsnmmis0.3517...2010/1/21>

<sup>30</sup> Michael J. Green and Nicholas Szechenyi, “U.S.-Japan Relations: Adjusting to Untested Political Terrain,” p. 3. Comparative Connections, A Quarterly E-Journal, published by Pacific Forum CSIS, January 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, “Tokyo’s Trials: Can the DPJ Change Japan?” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 6, November/December 2009, p. 114.

<sup>32</sup> George R. Packard, “The United States-Japan Security Treaty at 50: Still a Grand Bargain?” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 89, No. 2, March/April 2010, p. 103. Packard previously served as a special assistant to U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer.

unnecessary. He added that the presence of the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet is sufficient to protect the interests of both the United States and Japan.<sup>33</sup> Ozawa held that the U.S.-Japan-China relations should be like an "equilateral triangle."<sup>34</sup> Management of good relations with the United States and China simultaneously requires dexterous diplomacy on the part of the Democratic Party of Japan. Ozawa is scheduled to visit the United States in late April, in a couple of days. It is expected that he will meet with Obama. Their dialogue will cover the Futenma base issue.

## UNABATED NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY

In 1967, Japan's then Prime Minister Eisaku Sato unilaterally announced such three principles against nuclear weapons as: Japan would not manufacture, possess, or introduce nuclear weapons into Japan. Sato put forth the three nonnuclear principles in December 1967 during a session in the Budget Committee of the Japanese House of Representatives.<sup>35</sup> A controversial question thereafter arose. Could U.S. warships and warplanes carry nuclear weapons while in transit through Japanese ports and airports? Actually, a secret agreement, which had been signed between the United States and Japan in 1960, provided that they could. Until now, Japan has allowed U.S. nuclear-powered vessels to dock at its ports. Throughout history, hidden or secret clauses commonly exist in publicized alliances. The U.S.-Japanese security alliance is not an exception. But the position taken by the Japanese government has been that no such an agreement exists. Instead, Japanese government argues that an exchange of notes accompanying the 1960 treaty required consultation to be made by the United States with Japan prior to bringing any nuclear weapons into Japan's territory.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following Hatoyama's inauguration as the Japanese Premier, began to conduct an investigation into a classified bilateral agreement on the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan. For quite some long time, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had denied that there was any secret agreement between the United States and Japan over nuclear weapons' stopovers and passage. In the campaign promises it made in last August, the Democratic Party of Japan, pledged, if it became the ruling party, that it will conduct an investigation into the secret agreements. The Hatoyama government appointed a high-level panel of scholars and experts to investigate whether secret nuclear agreements exist. In early March, an expert panel at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs tendered a report to its minister Okada, reversing the long-time position of the ministry. The panel confirmed instead that three secret agreements "in a large sense" were reached between the United States and Japan in 1960.<sup>36</sup> The three agreements related to

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<sup>33</sup> Funabashi, "Tokyo's Trials," p. 114.

<sup>34</sup> The Asahi Shimbun, March 6, 2010, p. 4. Interestingly, Ozawa made a controversial argument about Japan's Self-Defense Forces. Ozawa said that Japan's Self-Defense Forces should engage in combat operations authorized by resolutions adopted by the United Nations. His statement seemed to have contradicted Article 9 of Japan's constitution. See Funabashi, "Tokyo's Trials," p. 113.

<sup>35</sup> "Memo: Sato Said Ban on Nukes was 'Mistake,'" The Daily Yomiuri, March 11, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun (satellite edition), March 10, 2010, p. 1. On March 19, the Foreign Affairs Committee

stopovers and passage of nuclear-armed U.S. warships, use of U.S. military bases in Japan in the event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula and allowing the United States to bring nuclear weapons into Japan. On January 6, 1960, the Japanese then Prime Minister Aichihiro Fujiyama and U.S. Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II initialed and exchanged two English originals of the “Record of Discussion.”<sup>37</sup> In the Record of Discussion jointly signed by Fujiyama and MacArthur II, it was stated that “Major changes in their equipment are understood to mean the introduction into Japan of nuclear weapons, including intermediate and long-range missiles as well as the construction of bases for such weapons...”<sup>38</sup>

On March 9, the former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe commented that he learned nothing from his predecessors about the existence of secret agreements.<sup>39</sup> The reaction from the Obama Administration was that it was a question of the past. It claimed that there was no such secret document in the files of the U.S. government.<sup>40</sup> After the reversal of the long-term denial position of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hatoyama and Okada announced that Japan will adhere to the three no-nuclear policies henceforth.<sup>41</sup> The Hatoyama government deplored the long concealment of the three secret agreements. Yet, they reaffirmed that probe into the secret agreements will not affect U.S.-Japan security alliance arrangements.

U.S. nuclear deterrence is an essential link that binds the United States and Japan. On March 9, Hatoyama continued to affirm that U.S. nuclear umbrella is still indispensable to Japan’s security posture.<sup>42</sup>

Japan began to formulate its fourth Defense Guidelines on February 18. Hatoyama appointed 11 professors, specialists and retired high-ranking diplomats and defense officials to be on the policy review committee. Its third Defense Guidelines were released in 2004. This year, the new Defense Guidelines will also set Japan’s positions on China’s military

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of the House of Representatives of Japan’s Diet summoned four people to testify about secret agreements between the United States and Japan. The four people were former Vice Foreign Minister Kunihiko Saito, former Treaties Bureau Chief of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kazuhiko Togo, former Lower House Representative Hajime Morita, and former Mainichi Shimbun reporter Takichi Nishiyama. See Kyodo News Agency, “Four May Have To Testify on Pacts,” The Japan Times, March 12, 2010, p. 2. On March 19, Togo, at a hearing held by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, openly aired his suspicion that some documents about the nuclear secret agreements in Japan’s Foreign Ministry had been destroyed in 2001 when the Information Declassification Act was put into implementation. See The Asahi Shimbun (international edition), March 20, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> In October 1969, when Sato was negotiating with the United States over the reversion of Okinawa, he expressed remorse over the adoption of the nonnuclear principle of not allowing nuclear arms into Japan. He admitted the “mistake” in a document on October 7, 1969. The previously classified document was publicized by Japan’s Foreign Ministry on March 9, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun (satellite edition), March 10, p. 10. See also The Daily Yomiuri, “Memo” Sato Said Ban on Nukes Was “Mistake,” March 11, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, editorial, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun (satellite edition), March 10, 2010, p. 2. In 1991, the United States decided not to take away tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. naval warships docked in Japan.

growth and the missile threat from the North Korea.<sup>43</sup>

## CHALLENGES TO OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Alliance transformation is never an easy task. Successful reform of the U.S.-Japan alliance depends mainly on four factors: personnel, politics, presidential leadership, and perceptions. It was argued that each of the above-mentioned four factors has been problematic since the start of the George W. Bush Administration's second term.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the Obama Administration inherited the challenges left by its predecessor.

To deal with the problems confronting their bilateral security alliance, both the Obama Administration and the Hatoyama government appointed key persons in charge of the working-level discussions. From Japan, the two key figures are Nobushige Takamizawa, director-general of its Defense Ministry's Defense Policy Bureau, and Koji Tomita, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau. From the United States, they are Wallace Gregson, assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs, and Joseph Donovan, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. These four people met at the U.S. Department of Defense on January 14, 2010.<sup>45</sup> Their meeting was followed by a meeting later between Hillary Clinton and Japanese Foreign Minister Okada in Hawaii.

## LOW PRIORITY GIVEN TO THE ALLIANCE

The current political climate prevents the Obama Administration from being intensely engaged in the issues involving the alliance. It is noted that if senior officials have little time to care for the alliance relationship, there is little hope for presidential leadership from Obama on alliance transformation.<sup>46</sup>

According to observers Tobias Harris, Adma P. Liff, and Wakana Mukai, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has signaled that security cooperation—and alliance transformation—will carry less weight in future. They predicted that the Obama Administration will place less emphasis on the typical alliance transformation agenda.

The United States for several decades has pressured Japan to revise Article 9 of its constitution and play a more assertive role both regionally and globally.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *The Yomiuri Shimbun* (satellite edition), February 19, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Tobias Harris, Adam P. Liff, and Wakana Mukai, "Obstacles to Efforts to Strengthen and Reform the U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Issues & Insights*, published by Pacific Forum CSIS, Vol. 9, No. 21, December 2009, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> "Prep Talks for Deeper U.S.-Japan Ties Set for Thursday," *Jiji Press English News Service*, January 14, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Harris, Liff, and Mukai, "Obstacles to Efforts to Strengthen and Reform the U.S.-Japan Alliance," p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. In a speech on January 12 at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Secretary of State Clinton outlined five principles that will guide the U.S. continued multilateral engagement and leadership in Asia Pacific. The first principle, she elaborated, is that the U.S. alliance relationships are the cornerstone of American regional involvement. In Hawaii, Clinton had a one-on-one meeting with Japanese counterpart Okada. See "United States Seeks Deeper Ties with Asia-Pacific," January 12, 2010,

In February 2010, U.S. Department of Defense released its 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report. It reveals that about 400,000 U.S. military personnel are now forward-stationed or rotationally deployed around the world. It stresses continued provision of extended deterrence to Japan. Furthermore, it pledges that “With Japan, we will continue to implement the bilateral Realignment Roadmap agreement that will ensure a long-term presence of U.S. forces in Japan and transform Guam” into a hub for security activities in the region.<sup>48</sup> Although this statement reasserts U.S. determination to station forces in Japan, it indicates U.S. adaptation to the new political situation in Japan.

Does the United States have the needs to revitalize the U.S.-Japan security alliance? Some American strategists, such as Brzezinski, do not perceive that there are challenges facing the Obama Administration in American security alliance with Japan. In appraising the foreign policy of the Obama Administration in the January issue of *Foreign Affairs* this year, Brzezinski made no mention at all of the security alliance between the United States and Japan. Instead, Brzezinski urges that China should be treated not only as an economic partner but also as a geopolitical one. In the case of U.S. combat in Afghanistan, Brzezinski believes that the support of China could be helpful in view of its geopolitical stake and its traditional close ties with Pakistan. Brzezinski holds that Beijing, as it has proclaimed, is “rising peacefully.”<sup>49</sup> Brzezinski seems to urge that the United States must increasingly view Beijing as a partner in solving some regional and global problems.

The instruments of “bribery” and penetration are by themselves weak determinants of alliance. Both of them can be effective in vitalizing existing alliances. How will the Obama Administration strengthen its persuasion task to the Japanese public in general for the maintenance of the alliance treaty? Funabashi advocates that the redefinition of the management of the alliance treaty must be mindful of three principles: the principle of reciprocity, the principle of complementarity, and the principle of collaboration.<sup>50</sup>

Assistant Secretary of State Campbell also talked about the principles on which the Obama Administration will strengthen U.S.-Japan security alliance. Before Hatoyama and Okada visited the United States in 2009, Campbell said that the United States had “patience, a commitment to listen, and to work closely” with the Hatoyama government.

## FUTENMA BASE ISSUE

The Futenma base controversy might have led the Obama Administration to have even less interest now in pushing Japan to play a more assertive role in regional and global affairs.

The realignment of U.S. forces in Japan is part of the Global Posture Review (GPR)

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<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2010/January/20100112212627dmslahrellek0.47...2010/1/14>  
<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 2010, p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “From Hope to Audacity: Appraising Obama’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 1, January/February, 2010. p. 17, 25 & 27.

<sup>50</sup> Funabashi, “A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision for the Alliance,” p. 1.

pursued by the United States. The GPR aims to make the U.S. forces' bases and troop deployments abroad become more suited to the present strategic environment. In September 2001, the United States in its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) illustrated a shift in basic strategy from a threat-based approach to a capabilities-based one.<sup>51</sup> At this juncture, incorporating the Futenma base issue within the process of a new vision for the U.S.-Japan alliance is a challenge.

Before the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the alliance treaty, the Futenma Marine Air Station issue in Ginowan City of Okinawa already grew into a major source of discord of the alliance relationship. At the core of the problems now is an insistence by the Hatoyama government on a review of the 2006 deal stipulating the relocation of the base to a less populated place close to Nago City in northern Okinawa.

U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, a Hawaii Democrat, called upon Hatoyama in Tokyo on January 15 over the Futenma base relocation issue. In their meeting, Hatoyama sought U.S. understanding of his determination to resolve a standoff by this May. During his stay, Inouye also talked to Sadakazu Tanigaki, president of Japan's main opposition Liberal Democratic Party.<sup>52</sup>

It was reported on March 12 by Kyodo News Agency that the Hatoyama government intends to prevent the pace of the negotiations over the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma from being dictated by the Obama Administration.<sup>53</sup>

Packard, who heads the United States-Japan Foundation, urges that the Obama Administration should have given the Hatoyama government more time to

formulate its position on the issue of the Futenma base. To him, the matter of the Futenma base is not a vital matter. He said that "The matter of the Futenma base is only a small part of the equation."<sup>54</sup> To him, the security treaty with Japan, however important it is, is only part of a larger partnership between the United States and Japan.

Instead, Packard advocates that particularly over the military matters, it is time for the White House and the State Department to reassert civilian control over U.S. policy toward Japan.<sup>55</sup>

Nye commented on the Futenma base issue on the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

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<sup>51</sup> Sakaguchi, "The Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan and Its Impact on the Interdependent Relationship between Japan and the U.S.," p. 30.

<sup>52</sup> "Hatoyama Seeks U.S. Understanding over Base Issue," *Jiji Press English News Service*, January 15, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> *Kyodo News*, "Bureaucrats out of Futenma Talks Loop," *The Japan Times*, March 12, 2010, p. 2. It also notes that when the proposal from the Hatoyama government is finalized, Foreign Minister Okada and Defense Minister Kitazawa will engage in negotiations with their U.S. counterparts. The 2+2 talks will pave the way for Hatoyama's visit to the United States to sign the agreement with President Obama. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Packard, "The United States-Japan Security Treaty at 50: Still a Grand Bargain?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 2, March/April 2010, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

U.S.-Japan security alliance treaty. In his article printed by the New York Times on January 6, 2010, Nye argued that the alliance relationship is more important than the Futenma base. He observes that “The Pentagon is properly annoyed that Mr. Hatoyama is trying to go back on an agreement that took more than a decade to work out. While taking note of the displeasure expressed by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in his trip to Tokyo in October 2009, he believed that the United States needs “a more patient and strategic approach to Japan.” He worried that a victory on the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma “could prove pyrrhic.” Nye cautioned that “The two countries will miss a major opportunity if they let the base controversy lead to bitter feelings or the further reduction of American forces in Japan.”<sup>56</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Over the past five decades, the U.S.-Japan security alliance has demonstrated its utilities and potential. It is time that both the United States and Japan had interests in exploring alliance transformation or restructuring. There has been a “two-plus-two” bilateral security committee between the United States and Japan. Its current members from Japan are Foreign Minister Okada, Defense Minister Kitazawa. From the United States are Hilary Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates. The bilateral security committee is aiming to produce a report during a meeting between Obama and Hatoyama in November this year when both of them attend the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Yokohama.

Packard believes that the United States should adopt a wiser course which the Japanese call “teishisei” (low Posture.)<sup>57</sup> Packard hopes that Japan will explicitly state that it has the right to engage in operations of collective self-defense.

In light of China’s military rise, Japan may increasingly emphasize its internal development of military capacity. While depending upon U.S. extended deterrence, Japan earlier focused its resources on complementary force development.

Shouldering the responsibility of governing the country, the leaders of the Democratic Party of Japan may become less insistent on their campaign rhetoric in matters involving security alliance with the United States. It is also likely that they will be less confrontational with the foreign policy and defense bureaucrats in Japan.

There is little likelihood about a substantive and radical drift by the Hatoyama government from the security alliance treaty. Few in both the United States and Japan envision a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Japan. Hatoyama wrote on Twitter, “The Japan-U.S. alliance is the cornerstone of Japan’s diplomacy” ahead of the meeting between Secretary of State Clinton and Japanese Foreign Minister Okada on January 12 in Kapolei, Hawaii. In his statement on January 19 on the occasion of the treaty’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Hatoyama called the

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<sup>56</sup> Joseph Nye, “An Alliance Larger Than One Issue,” January 6, 2010, New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/07/opinion/07nye.html> 2010/4/18.

<sup>57</sup> Packard, “The United States-Japan Security Treaty at 50,” p. 102.



alliance “indispensable” not only for Japan but also for the Asia-Pacific region. Hatoyama made assurances that his government will work jointly with the United States to deepen the security alliance to adapt to the evolving environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> Funabashi urges that it is important for Japan to have a bipartisan consensus on national security issues, particularly the U.S.-Japan alliance. To him, if the Democratic Party of Japan and Liberal Democratic Party can achieve a bipartisan agreement on Japan-US security policy, it will be “historically significant.”<sup>59</sup> In the eyes of Funabashi, the challenges facing the Obama Administration can still turn into an opportunity with regard to the U.S.-Japan security alliance.

In the immediate future, Japan’s security alliance with the United States will still be primarily a deterrent alliance vis-à-vis their potential foes. So far, it has not become an alliance in anticipation of a war. In the absence of war, the alliance will continue to be a peacetime one.

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<sup>58</sup> Xinhua News Agency, “Japan-U.S. Alliance ‘Indispensable’ for Asia-Pacific Region: Hatoyama,” January 1, 2010, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-01/19/c\\_13142803.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-01/19/c_13142803.htm) 2010/4/18. In an address to Self-Defense Force cadets on March 22, 2010, Hatoyama reaffirmed that his government has “unshakably” inherited Japan’s traditional security policy centered on its alliance with the United States. See Kyodo News, “Hatoyama Vows Emphasis on U.S. Alliance in Address to Cadets,” March 22, 2010, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/hatoyama-vows-continued-emphasis-on-us-alliance-in-address-to-cadets> 2010/4/18

<sup>59</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, “A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision for the Alliance,” PacNet Newsletter, February 18, 2010, p. 3.



# THE US-CHINA-TAIWAN INTERACTIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF OBAMA-HU SUMMIT OF NOVEMBER 2009

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**Abstract:** U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao met and held an international press conference, and announcing U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 11, 2009. Given China's financial pressures on the United States, it is understandable that President Obama could not but make some concessions, including U.S. respect for China's core interests and U.S. encouragement of cross-Strait negotiations on issues other than economic ones. Washington not only told Taipei the main content of Obama-Hu summit, joint press conference, and US-China Joint Statement in advance, but also reassured Taiwan of its honoring of the TRA, one China policy, no push and urge to cross-Strait political dialogues, and security commitment afterwards. While U.S. assurances have significantly mitigated Taiwan's concern and suspicion, they have aroused new controversies. As a result, this author will explore the controversies over the U.S.-China Joint Statement among Washington, Beijing and Taipei to see to what extent they will hurt Taiwan's national interests. In the opinion of this author, the U.S.-China Joint Statement between President Obama and President Hu of China would not hurt Taiwan's national interests for the time being, but it could do harm in the future. It would not endanger Taipei immediately, but it carries potential jeopardy. If Taiwan can integrate its national interests with those of the United States, deepen bilateral relationship, strengthen mutual trust, seek for U.S. strategic reassurance on the TRA, and secure U.S. security commitment and arms sales, Taiwan will be able to transform the crisis resulted from the 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement into a new opportunity and create a win-win-win situation for the United States, China, and Taiwan.

**Key Terms:** US-China Joint Statement, one China policy, three communiqués, Taiwan Relations Act, core interest, central document

## I. Introduction

U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao held an international press conference and announced a U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 11, 2009. Since there exist some differences between the content of the joint statement and U.S. officials' assurances, therefore, the main purpose of this article is explore U.S. strategic reassurances to both sides of the Taiwan Strait and U.S-China-Taiwan controversies, seeing to what extent they hurt Taiwan's national interests.

For Taiwan, three major points in the U.S.-China joint statement come to attention.<sup>1</sup> First of all, both the United States and China underscored the importance of Taiwan issue in U.S.-China relationship. On the one hand, China emphasized that “the Taiwan issue concerns China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed hope that the United States will honor its relevant commitments and appreciate and support the Chinese side’s position on this issue.” On the other, the United States stated that “it follows its one China policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués.” Second, the United States stated that “it welcomes the peaceful development of relations across the Taiwan Strait and looks forward to efforts by both sides to increase dialogues and interactions in economic, political, and other fields, and develop more positive and stable cross-Strait relations.” Third, the two countries reiterated that “the fundamental principle of respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity is at the core of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués which guide U.S.-China relations. Neither side supports any attempts by any force to undermine this principle. The two sides agreed that respecting each other’s core interests is extremely important to ensure steady progress in U.S.-China relations.”

Given China’s financial pressures on the United States, it is understandable that President Obama could not but make some concessions, including U.S. respect for China’s core interests and U.S. willingness to see the cross-Strait negotiations on issues other than economic ones. Fortunately, the U.S. not only told Taiwan in advance about Obama-Hu summit, US-China joint press conference, and US-China Joint Statement, but also dispatched Raymond Burghardt, AIT Board Chairman, to Taiwan to present a briefing to President Ma Yin-jeou. Other U.S. officials also provided Taiwan with their assurances, thereby helping mitigating Taiwan people’s suspicion. Thus, the main theme of this article is that, if Taiwan can successfully integrate its national interests with those of the United States, deepen bilateral relationship, strengthen mutual trust, seek for U.S. strategic reassurance on the TRA, and secure U.S. security commitment and arms sales, Taiwan will be able to transform the crisis caused by the 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement into a new opportunity creating a win-win-win situation for Washington, Beijing and Taipei.

## II. U.S. Briefing and Assurances before 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement

Prior to Obama’s visit to China, Washington informed Taipei the main content of Obama-Hu summit and related statements in advance, promising that the United States would not disappoint Taiwan and that it would compensate for Taiwan’s loss afterwards. First, one month before President Obama’s visit to China, State Department officials told Taiwan’s officials that the United States needed China’s financial support badly because U.S. economy had not recovered; therefore, Washington had to say something to please Beijing or it could not say something on some special occasions. They also sought for Taipei’s understanding

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<sup>1</sup> U.S.-China Joint Statement, Beijing, China, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, November 17, 2009 (hereinafter 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement), <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/us-china-joint-statement>>.

when referring to Obama's omission of the TRA in Shanghai and U.S. respect for China's core interests in sovereignty and territorial integrity in Beijing.

In fact, in a speech for the Project 2049 Institute established on October 19, 2009, Kurt M. Campbell, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, pointed out:<sup>2</sup>

One of the things that I am finding, particularly in Southeast Asia, on my visit is a very welcome statement about American involvement going forth, and this extends not just to the countries that you would probably expect—you know, Philippines and Thailand—but to Vietnam, to Indonesia—Indonesia probably the most assertive country asking for a strong American commitment to the region....We, in all of our interactions with Chinese interlocutors, underscore our fundamental commitment to the preservation of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. I think they expect it and we do not fail to miss the opportunity to reaffirm it. We also have made very clear to both sides of the Taiwan Strait that we support a peaceful dialogue and that we encourage that dialogue to take place in an environment of confidence in both side.

Three points of his speech deserve Taipei's attention. Washington has demonstrated that it will be deeply and increasingly involved in the Asian Pacific affairs. The United States will let Asian Pacific countries feel its presence and its commitment to Asia. Moreover, it will put emphasis on fundamental commitment to the preservation of peace and stability across the Strait in all of its dialogues with Chinese friends. Furthermore, it has made very clear that it supports and encourages peaceful cross-Strait negotiations as long as they are conducted in an environment of confidence in both sides.

Second, Washington provided Taiwan with a guarantee that no matter what President Obama said in China, the United States would never do anything at the expense of Taiwan's national interests. In order to clarify the bottom line of U.S. policy, a senior White House official even made it clear that the U.S. policy across the Taiwan Strait is based on the three U.S. joint communiqués and the TRA. In a Q & A session after his speech for The Brookings Institution on November 16, 2009, Jeffrey Bader, senior director for Asia and Pacific, National Security Council (NSC), presented his ideas on China's core interests. He pointed out:<sup>3</sup>

About core interests: Well, the issue of Taiwan's status—which I guess is what the PRC sees as the core issue—has been addressed thoroughly in the three communiqués that we negotiated and U.S.

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<sup>2</sup> Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "China 2025: Keynote III: The U.S. and China in 2025," a speech delivered for the Project 2049 Institute t Council for Foreign Relations in Washington, DC on October 19, 2009, <[http://project2049.net/documents/china\\_2025\\_kurt\\_campbell.pdf](http://project2049.net/documents/china_2025_kurt_campbell.pdf)>. The Project 2049 Institute is a Washington-based think tank, established by former deputy Asian Pacific assistant secretary of state Randy Schriver, now president & CEO of the Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Bader made his remarks when answering the question on President Obama's possible response to President Hu's calls for the U.S. to respect China's core interests. See Jeffrey Bader, Special Assistant to the President, National Security Council, "Obama Goes to Asia: Understanding the President's Trip," a speech delivered at The Brookings Institution in Washington, DC on November 6, 2009, <[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/1106\\_obama\\_asia/20091106\\_obama\\_asia\\_trip.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/1106_obama_asia/20091106_obama_asia_trip.pdf)>.

policy is also driven by those three, plus the Taiwan Relations Act. That framework is unalterable. We're not going to touch it. There will be nothing we say or do on the trip that will go in different directions. You know, sometimes there are some areas where it's a good not to innovate. This is an area where we have a tried-and-true basis for a stable relationship, and we're not going to tamper with that.

Bader's messages are clear enough. Although China will associate its core interests with Taiwan's status, the United States will insist that the U.S. policy across the Taiwan Strait is based on the three U.S. joint communiqués and the TRA, arguing that such an issue has been addressed thoroughly. Moreover, President Obama would not touch the framework of U.S. policy across the Strait during his trip in China in November 2009. Furthermore, the president would not say or do in different directions because the U.S. policy across the Strait is established on a tried-and-true basis.

Third, Washington guaranteed Taipei that it would continue its arms sales afterwards. Certainly, the major barrier is China factor. Xu Caihou, the vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, told U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates during his visit in Washington in October 2009 that Beijing would once again cut off military-to-military exchanges as it did in October 2008 if the United States sold F-16C/D jet fighters to Taiwan.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, U.S. officials told Taiwan's counterparts privately that sales of jets might take some more time because President Obama simply did not want the just recovered U.S.-China military exchanges to be ceased shortly.

In order to let Beijing understand more about U.S. position, at least three high-level officials made it clear in early November 2009. In a Q & A session following his speech for the Center for American Progress (CAP) in Washington, D.C. on November 6, 2009, deputy secretary James Steinberg pointed out,<sup>5</sup>

Our commitment to Taiwan is very clear under the Taiwan Relations Act and we will continue to respect it. That means that we are committed to appropriate arms sales to meet Taiwan's security needs. And there is no question that Beijing doesn't like that but it is no question that that is our responsibility. And it's not just because of the TRA—although we obviously have a legal obligation under the TRA—but we actually think it's the right thing to do that we think that this is a set of policies that appropriate defensive security support for Taiwan and contribute to security across the strait. So we will continue. Each sale has to be evaluated in terms of the specific needs of Taiwan and we take that responsibility very seriously, and we'll continue to proceed on that basis.

Likewise, in a Q & A session after his speech for the Brookings Institution in Washington,

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<sup>4</sup> Background Briefing on Asian Security, Two Senior Officials accompanied by Mr. Philip .J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Via Teleconference, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/136286.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, U.S. Department, "Leading the Charge or Charging the Leader," a speech delivered for the Center for American Progress in Washington, DC on November 6, 2009, <<http://www.americanprogress.org/events/2009/11/inf/steinbergtranscript.pdf>>.

D.C. on the same day, Jeffrey Bader stated, “Our policy on arms sales to Taiwan has not changed, and that will be advanced over the course of our administration.”<sup>6</sup>

A couple of days later, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made similar remarks on the issue of U.S. Arms sales to Taiwan. When asked whether the United States would taper down arms sales to Taiwan, Clinton answered positively, “Well, we only sell defensive measures to Taiwan, and we told the Chinese we will continue to do that on an as-needed basis.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the U.S. assurances prior to 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement can be summarized as follows. First of all, the United States would not touch the framework of its one China policy—the three communiqués and the TRA—on a tried-and-true basis. Second, it will sell defensive weapon systems to Taiwan on an as-needed basis. Third, it supports a peaceful dialogue and encourages that dialogue to take place in an environment of confidence in both sides on a reciprocal basis.

### III. TRA Omission Incident and Respective Interpretation of Taiwan Issue

In his speech at Town Hall to meet the students and citizens of Shanghai on November 16, 2009, President Obama did not bother to mention the TRA at all when he emphasized that his administration’s cross-Strait policy is to completely support the “one China” policy reflected in the three communiqués, and will not change such a policy. This made many people suspect whether the United States tilted in favor of China at the expense of Taiwan and whether the TRA was in decline.

There were reasons for them to worry about the shift of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. First, the United States and China have signed one joint communiqués and two joint statements since 1982.<sup>8</sup> Since then, the TRA has never appeared in the U.S.-China official documents because the Chinese are reluctant to see the words of the TRA in their official documents. Whenever U.S. presidents and officials mention their “one China” policy, they point out that the pillars of U.S. “one China” policy are the three communiqués and the TRA.

Second, China procured more than eight hundred billions of U.S. public debts prior to President Obama’s visit to Beijing. Therefore, how President Obama would maintain a low-profile stance in China attracted global attention.

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<sup>6</sup> Bader made his remarks when answering the question on whether the United States would stop arms sales to Taiwan. See Jeffrey Bader, Special Assistant to the President, National Security Council, “Obama Goes to Asia: Understanding the President’s Trip,” a speech delivered at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC on November 6, 2009, <[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/1106\\_obama\\_asia/20091106\\_obama\\_asia\\_trip.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/1106_obama_asia/20091106_obama_asia_trip.pdf)>.

<sup>7</sup> Secretary Hillary Clinton’s Interview with David Gollust of Voice of America at University of St. Tomas in Manila, Philippines on November 13, 2009, <<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/November/20091113164517easifas0.8055318.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0YHFdJWTa>>.

<sup>8</sup> One communiqué and two joint statements during 1982~2009 are (1) August 17, 1982 Joint Communiqué ; (2) U.S.-China Joint Statement of October 29, 1997 between President Bill Clinton and President Jiang Zheming of China; and (3) U.S.-China Joint Statement of November 17, 2009 between President Barack Obama and President Hu.

Third, when President Obama affirmed the rise of China in his speech at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan on November 14, 2009, he did not mention Taiwan at all.<sup>9</sup> His neglect of Taiwan had made many Taiwanese feel uneasy. Therefore, the fact that he failed to mention the TRA in Shanghai surprised many observers, including Bonnie Glaser, senior research fellow of Center for Strategic & International Studies, CSIS, much less the media and scholar in Taiwan.

Fortunately, in the joint press statement in Beijing on November 17, 2009, President Obama juxtaposed three communiqués and the TRA, thus remedying his neglect in Shanghai. In front of President Hu and international media, the president emphasized, “our one China policy is based on the three U.S.-China communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act.”<sup>10</sup> His mentioning of the TRA in time has thus significantly mitigated Taiwan’s concerns and suspicion.

The Taiwan issue seems to have been marginalized as so many other issues are surrounding Washington and Beijing. Nevertheless, both the United States and China underscored in their joint statement of 2009 the importance of Taiwan issue in U.S.-China relationship. China emphasized that the Taiwan issue concerns China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, whereas the United States stated that it follows its one China policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, what China concerns over the Taiwan issue and what the United States responds are typically respective interpretation. According to the text of the statement, Beijing hopes that the United States will honor its relevant commitments and support the Chinese side’s position on this issue. In other words, China’s hope is only a wishful thinking. On the other hand, while Washington states that it abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués, it does not indicate that it will abide by the principles of the three communiqués in the Chinese version. Moreover, Washington states that it follows its one China policy, explicitly suggesting that its one China policy differs from Beijing’s “one China” principle. While Beijing’s “one China” principle may incorporate peaceful unification as one of its options, it does not exclude the use of force and other means to achieve the goal of unification as China’s anti-secessionist law suggests. However, according to U.S. one China policy, peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue is the only possible method approved by the United States.

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<sup>9</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, November 14, 2009, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall>>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S.-China Joint Press Statement by President Obama and President Hu of China, Great Hall, Beijing, China, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, November 17, 2009 (hereinafter 2009 U.S.-China Joint Press Statement), <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/joint-press-statement-president-obama-and-president-hu-china>>.

<sup>11</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement.



While the omission of TRA in Shanghai proves that it is only an incident in the U.S.-China-Taiwan interactions, U.S.-China respective interpretation of the Taiwan issue will be the beginning of controversy between them, thus having a negative impact on Taiwan in the long run.

#### IV. U.S. One-China Policy Unchanged: Core Interests vs. Central Document

It was widely discussed whether President Barack Obama would alter U.S. long-standing “one China” policy prior to his visit to China in November 2010 when he met Chinese president Hu Jintao and showed respect for China’s core interests in its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As shown in his remarks in both the U.S.-China joint press statement and joint statement; however, U.S.’s “one China” policy has remained intact. While the U.S. long-standing “one China” policy remains unchanged, some new issues have been brought to our attention

In the joint press statement, President Obama pointed out: “As President Hu indicated, the United States respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. And once again, we have reaffirmed our strong commitment to a one-China policy....We also applauded the steps that the People's Republic of China and Taiwan have already taken to relax tensions and build ties across the Taiwan Strait. Our own policy, based on the three U.S.-China communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, supports the further development of these ties -- ties that are in the interest of both sides, as well as the broader region and the United States.”<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, in the joint statement, he pointed out, “The United States stated that it follows its one China policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués... The two countries reiterated that the fundamental principle of respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity is at the core of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués which guide U.S.-China relations. Neither side supports any attempts by any force to undermine this principle. The two sides agreed that respecting each other’s core interests is extremely important to ensure steady progress in U.S.-China relations.”<sup>13</sup>

Why did China want to reiterate the wording of “the fundamental principle of respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” the United States had agreed in the Communiqué of August 17, 1982?<sup>14</sup>

First, Beijing has long suspected Washington’s willingness to fulfill its commitment to the three U.S.-China joint communiqués, and the Communiqué of August 17, 1982 in particular. Moreover, China thinks that the United States has its own opinion and position on the Taiwan issue. Therefore, China has expected to further reaffirm the fundamental principle regarding respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity as stipulated in the

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<sup>12</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Press Statement.

<sup>13</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement.

<sup>14</sup> Communiqué of August 17, 1982.

Communiqué of August 17, 1982, thereby keeping the fundamental principle of U.S.-China relations remain intact.

Second, in the eyes of Beijing, the United States has repeatedly violated the Communiqué of August 17, 1982 by constantly providing Taiwan with defensive weapon systems. Therefore, the Communiqué of August 17, 1982 has thus become a painful experience for Beijing. Although the United States and China have expressed respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the August 17, 1982 Communiqué, Hu Jintao preferred to arrange a brand new joint statement on his own.

Third, in U.S.-China joint statement, Beijing could easily connect "mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity" with "respecting each other's core interests."<sup>15</sup> Given China's fast rise, Washington's increasing dependence on Beijing's procurement of U.S. public debts, and China's growing ability to influence U.S. foreign policy through its financial instrument, China believes that the United States will sooner or later be unable to maintain a balanced policy across the Taiwan Strait.

Raymond F. Burghardt, AIT Board Chairman, came to Taiwan on November 24, 2009 to present President Ma Yin-jeou with a briefing on Obama-Hu Summit. He reassured President Ma that U.S. policy on Taiwan remained unchanged, including its position on Taiwan's sovereignty and its policy commitment to Taiwan. He told Ma that Obama has made remarks both in public and private reaffirming Washington's longstanding policies toward Taiwan, including its position on Taiwanese sovereignty. "U.S. public and private statements on Taiwan, including the joint US-China statement, in no way represented any change whatsoever in the U.S. position concerning sovereignty over Taiwan," he said. "Simply put, the United States has never taken a position on the political status of Taiwan." Burghardt emphasized that the TRA remains the "central document" governing relations between Taipei and Washington, as Obama pointed out in his public statement in Beijing about the U.S. commitment to the TRA.<sup>16</sup> He came to Taiwan to provide the Ma administration with U.S. policy commitment and seek for resolution on some bilateral economic controversies, including bilateral economic agenda on Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and/or Free Trade Agreement (FTA), U.S. arm sales to Taiwan, Taiwan's eventual participation in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, extradition agreement, and the controversy surrounding Taiwan's relaxation of its regulations on U.S. beef imports. He said that TIFA negotiation will be resumed, but FTA negotiation is still far away.<sup>17</sup>

Apparently, it is quite even that China gains U.S. respect for China core interests in

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<sup>15</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement.

<sup>16</sup> Ko Shu-ling, "US Policy on Taiwan Unchanged: AIT," *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2009/11/25/2003459370>>.

<sup>17</sup> CNA, "Obama Visit Briefing Comprehensive: Ma," *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/foreign-affairs/2009/11/25/234079/Obama-visit.htm>>; CNA, "No Surprises in Obama's Visit to China, Top U.S. Envoy Says," *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/foreign-affairs/2009/11/25/234080/No-surprises.ht>>.

sovereignty and territorial integrity, whereas Taiwan is assured that the TRA is the “central document” between Washington and Taipei. Nonetheless, U.S. respect for China’s core interests in sovereignty and territorial integrity and the status of the TRA will become a new controversy among Washington, Beijing, and Taipei.

In a teleconference on January 29, 2010, two senior officials, who were accompanied by Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, discussed Taiwan’s place in China’s “core interest.” In the military-to-military exchanges between the United States and China, the issue of Taiwan does come up frequently. Taiwan is always in the discussions in some form. China considers Taiwan one of its “core interests.” And it has been a component of the way China thinks about its interests and its relationship with the United States.<sup>18</sup> When the two countries discuss their bilateral military-to-military relations in the future, it goes without saying that China will put an even stronger emphasis on Taiwan’s place in its “core interests” since the announcement of U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 17, 2009.

In a testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on March 18, 2010, David B. Shear, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, asserted that the United States' "one China" policy based on the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act has guided our relations with Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, not supporting Taiwan independence, opposing unilateral attempts by either side to change the *status quo*, and insisting that cross-Strait differences be resolved peacefully and according to the wishes of the people on both sides of the Strait.<sup>19</sup> According to him, the U.S. "one China" policy is based on the three U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqués and the TRA. The United States is also guided by the understanding that it will neither seek to mediate between China and Taiwan, nor will it exert pressure on Taiwan to come to the bargaining table. While it is not a direct participant in the dispute between the PRC and Taiwan, it has a strong security interest in doing all that it can to create an environment conducive to a peaceful and non-coercive resolution of issues between them.

The Chinese have long worried that the United States will change its one-China policy someday. As a result, whether the United States maintains its commitment has become Beijing’s Achilles heel. For instance, although Beijing is not satisfied with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, Washington’s reaffirmation of its strong commitment to a one-China policy can help relieve China of some of its pain.

In a briefing on his trip with Senior Director Jeffrey Bader to Asia in early March 2010,

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<sup>18</sup> Background Briefing on Asian Security, Mr. Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Two Senior Officials Via Teleconference, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/136286.htm>>.

<sup>19</sup> China-Taiwan: Recent Economic, Political and Military Developments Across the Strait and Implications for the United States, David B. Shear, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Testimony Before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington, DC, March 18, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/03/138547.htm>>.

James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, emphasized on March 29, 2010: <sup>20</sup>

During the trip Jeff and I had an opportunity to reiterate the core approach that President Obama laid out in his address to the first meeting of the S&ED as well as during his visit to China. That message, of course, is that the United States seeks a relationship with China marked by a positive and pragmatic cooperation in which we expand our areas of mutual interest while candidly addressing our differences. Our bilateral relationship with China rests on a longstanding and firm foundation pursued by Democratic and Republican administrations alike since Nixon, Carter and Reagan. The centerpiece, of course, is our one China policy, which has not changed. Indeed, this past year we just marked the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the normalization of our relationship with the People's Republic of China under that one China policy. We've made clear that we do not support independence for Taiwan and we oppose unilateral attempts by either side to change the *status quo*.

When asked whether the United States still follows the one China Policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués, Deputy Secretary Steinberg further pointed out: <sup>21</sup>

The U.S. position, our one China policy is unchanged, and as I said, it has long and deep roots. As President Obama said when the S&ED have met here last year, he looks forward during his term to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of President Nixon's historic opening to China. And as I said, we also marked last year the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of full normalization with the PRC which meant, it was a very clear indication of our one China policy. We moved to formal recognition of PRC and established only unofficial relations with Taiwan. Those have been embodied in a number of agreements that we've reached with China. They are part of the fabric of our one China policy. We have not changed our view on that and it's served us very well. We have consistently, through Democratic and Republican administrations understood those agreements and those principles to be the foundation of building an ever-stronger relationship. So there's no change. It's a commitment that we understand to be at the bedrock and the foundation of the relationship between the two countries.

In receiving the credentials of China's new Ambassador to the United States, Zhang Yesui on March 29, 2010, President Obama reaffirmed U.S. one China policy and its support for the efforts made by Beijing and Taipei to reduce friction across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>22</sup>

In his meeting with U.S. President Obama at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington D.C. on April 12, 2010, Chinese leader Hu Jintao presented five proposals on the future Sino-U.S. relations.<sup>23</sup> First, both China and the United States should reach a consensus on

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<sup>20</sup> The Deputy Secretary's Trip to the Balkans and Asia, James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, Foreign Press Center, Washington, DC, March 29, 2010, <<http://fpc.state.gov/139203.htm>>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Statement by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs on China, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington DC, March 29, 2010, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-china>>.

<sup>23</sup> Statement by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs on China, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington DC, March 29, 2010, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-china>>.Xinhua, "Hu

promoting a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and set a new direction for the development of their relations.

Second, the two countries should adhere to the principles of the three Sino-U.S. joint communiqués and the 2009 Sino-U.S. joint statement, and respect each other's "core interests" and "major concerns." It is argued that properly handling the Taiwan and Tibet issues, which concern China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and represent China's "core interests," is key to ensuring a sound and stable development of the China-US relations.

Third, both countries should maintain high-and various-levels communication channels, up to the president-to-president direct contact, and promote the second round of Strategic & Economic Dialogues.

Fourth, they should cooperate each other to properly address differences and sensitive issues between them, strengthen dialogue and cooperation in all areas.

Fifth, they should strengthen communication and coordination on important international and regional hot spots and global issues

In response to Hu's proposals, President Obama said that the positive, cooperative and comprehensive relations between the United States and China are very important for both countries and the world, adding healthy and stable relations between the two countries serve their strategic and long-term interests. He reaffirmed U.S.'s adherence to the one-China policy, which it recognizes as one of China's "core interests."

Doubtless, U.S. "one China" policy has remained intact since the announcement of U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 17, 2009. What are new to both Beijing and Taipei is while China gains U.S. respect for China "core interests" in sovereignty and territorial integrity, Taiwan is assured that the TRA is the "central document" between Washington and Taipei. Whether U.S. respect for China's "core interests" gains the upper hand over the TRA as a "central document" between Washington and Taipei or vice versa will become a new controversy among the United States, China and Taiwan in the future. China has put an emphasis on the Taiwan issue for a long time. In the wake of 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement, China will put an even stronger emphasis on Taiwan's place in its "core interests."

## V. Cross-Strait Dialogues on Political Issues

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Meets with Obama in Washington on China-US Ties," *China Daily*, April 13, 2010, <[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-04/13/content\\_9719025.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-04/13/content_9719025.htm)>; Briefing by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs and Assistant to the President for Counterterrorism and Homeland Security John Brennan, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., April 12, 2010, <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/briefing-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-and-assistant-president-co-unterrorism-and->](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/briefing-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-and-assistant-president-co-unterrorism-and-), and Press Briefing by Jeff Bader, NSC Senior Director for Asian Affairs, Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, Via Conference Call, April 12, 2010, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/press-briefing-jeff-bader-nsc-senior-director-asian-affairs>>.

President Obama stated in the U.S.-China joint statement that Washington welcomes the peaceful development of relations across the Taiwan Strait and looks forward to cross-Strait dialogues in economic, political and other fields and develop more positive and stable cross-Strait relations.<sup>24</sup> His remarks have aroused concerns as to whether the United States is taking side with China which is increasingly anxious to conduct negotiation on political and military issues in recent months by exerting political pressure on Taiwan. If the United States is really doing so, it will violate the sixth assurance in former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's "Six Assurances."<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, whether the Obama administration violates the sixth assurance remains questionable. First, what the president said on November 17, 2009 can at most be quoted as saying that the United States is encouraging the cross-Strait dialogues on politically sensitive issues rather than exerting pressures on Taiwan.

Second, President Obama pointed out in the joint press statement: "We also applauded the steps that the People's Republic of China and Taiwan have already taken to relax tensions and build ties across the Taiwan Strait." When referring to the relaxed cross-Strait relations, he emphasized, "Our own policy, based on the three U.S.-China communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, supports the further development of these ties -- ties that are in the interest of both China and Taiwan, as well as the broader region and the United States."<sup>26</sup> His remarks suggest that the U.S. support of relaxed cross-Strait ties is based on the three communiqués and the TRA. After all, one can hardly find faults with U.S. one China policy across the Taiwan Strait.

Third, President Obama's mentioning of cross-Strait dialogues on issues other than economic ones is by no means the first time his administration did so. In a speech at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) on September 24, 2009, deputy secretary James Steinberg pointed out, "We're encouraged by the positive dialogue between China and Taiwan, and we encourage both China and Taiwan to explore confidence-building steps that will lead to closer ties and greater stability across the Taiwan Strait."<sup>27</sup> One of his goals to encourage cross-Strait CBMs talks may be that the United States could understand more about the details of cross-Strait CBMs talks and related developments through Taiwan. Moreover, U.S. scholars could be invited to participate in the second track talks, thereby observing the cross-Strait CBMs talks and related developments. Furthermore, because his remarks on cross-strait CBM talks were closely associated with military transparency,

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<sup>24</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement.

<sup>25</sup> The sixth assurance of "Six Assurances" indicates that the United States will not exert pressure on ROC-PRC negotiation." See also Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China Since 1972* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1992), 389-390.

<sup>26</sup> 2009 U.S.-China Joint Press Statement.

<sup>27</sup> James B. Steinberg, "Administration's Vision of the U.S.-China Relationship," Deputy Secretary of State, Keynote Address at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), Washington, DC, September 24, 2009, <<http://www.state.gov/s/d/2009/129686.htm>>.

Washington might be interested in knowing more about Beijing's strategic intention and how to promote China's military transparency.

During his four-day trip to Taiwan in late November 2009, Raymond F. Burghardt, Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) said President Obama applauded the eased tensions between Taiwan and China, which have mainly occurred during the Ma administration. He maintained that the official U.S. cross-Strait position hoped for the issues to be "resolved peacefully with the assent of the people on both sides."

When Burghardt met Lai Shin-yuan, chairperwoman of Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) of the Executive Yuan, he emphasized that the United States does not intend to "push or urge" the cross-Strait dialogues on political issues, and there is no timetable for such talks.<sup>28</sup> However, Burghardt did suggest that cross-Strait dialogues be divided into three stages when he met President-elect Ma in Taipei in late March 2008, just a few days after Ma's victory. According to him, in the first stage, the United States expressed its hope that Taiwan could start negotiation with China on such issues as charter flights, Chinese tourists to Taiwan, three links, and the like. In the second stage, it expected that Taipei could negotiate with Beijing on some difficult economic, financial and trade issues such as cross-Strait financial MOU and economic cooperation agreement. In the third stage, it expected that both sides of the Taiwan Strait could negotiate on Taiwan's international space, military mutual trust building measures, conclusion of cross-Strait hostility, and peace accord.<sup>29</sup>

On January 29, 2010, two senior officials explained why the United States supports the cross-Strait dialogues and sells arms to Taiwan simultaneously.<sup>30</sup> According to their rationale, the United States supports the dialogue that has taken place in recent years across the Taiwan Strait. Thus, it can be argued that the provision of necessary defense items to Taiwan not only meets an urgent requirement in terms of dealing with the military challenges across the Taiwan Strait, but also provides the Taiwan leadership with the confidence and the understanding that the United States provides a critical support to Taiwan, and that gives Taiwan leaders greater confidence and ability to interact across the Straits in peaceful dialogue with their counterparts in China.

In his testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on March 18, 2010, David B. Shear, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, asserted that the United States has a constructive role to play in the following three

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<sup>28</sup> Ko Shu-ling, "US Policy on Taiwan Unchanged: AIT," *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2009/11/25/2003459370>>.

<sup>29</sup> Dimitri Bruyas, "U.S. Won't Play Mediator in Cross-strait Issue: AIT Head," *The China Post* (Taipei), March 29, 2008, <<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/foreign%20affairs/2008/03/29/149336/U.S.-won%27t.htm>>.

<sup>30</sup> Background Briefing on Asian Security, Mr. Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Two Senior Officials Via Teleconference, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/136286.htm>>.

key areas.<sup>31</sup> First, the "one China" policy of the United States is based on the three U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqués and the TRA. The United States is also guided by the understanding that it will neither seek to mediate between China and Taiwan, nor will it exert pressure on Taiwan to come to the bargaining table. While the United States is not a direct participant in the dispute between China and Taiwan, it has a strong security interest in doing all that it can to create an environment conducive to a peaceful and non-coercive resolution of issues between them.

Second, the Obama Administration welcomes the increased stability in the Strait and the upsurge in Taiwan-China economic, cultural, and people-to-people contacts. Washington believes that enhanced cultural, economic and people to people contacts help further peace, stability and prosperity in the East Asian region. The United States applauds the courage shown by President Ma in restoring U.S. trust and reversing the deterioration in cross-Strait relations that took place during the years prior to his inauguration. It is thus argued that the United States should not be alarmed by China-Taiwan rapprochement as somehow detrimental to U.S. interests, as long as decisions are made free from coercion.

Third, future stability in the Strait will depend on open dialogue between Taiwan and China, free of force and intimidation and consistent with Taiwan's flourishing democracy. In order to engage productively with China at a pace and scope that is politically supportable by its people, Taiwan needs to be confident in its role in the international community, its ability to defend itself and protect its people, and its place in the global economy.

Shear's testimony indicates that while the United States will not directly get involved in the dialogues between China and Taiwan, it shows its interest in helping create an environment conducive to a peaceful and non-coercive resolution of issues between them.

In a news briefing on his trip with Senior Director Jeffrey Bader to Asia in early March 2010, James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, stated, "And we in particular welcome recent improvements in cross-Strait relations and hope that they will continue to expand, and we urged our counterparts in Beijing to continue to work to that end. That PRC-Taiwan dialogue contributes to the objective of a peaceful resolution that has been long central to our approach."<sup>32</sup> Obviously, as long as the cross-Strait dialogue contributing to the goal of a peaceful resolution, Steinberg will welcome such a development.

In receiving the credentials of China's new Ambassador to the United States, Zhang Yesui on March 29, 2010, President Obama also reaffirmed U.S. one China policy and its

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<sup>31</sup> China-Taiwan: Recent Economic, Political and Military Developments Across the Strait and Implications for the United States, David B. Shear, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Testimony Before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington, DC, March 18, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/03/138547.htm>>.

<sup>32</sup> The Deputy Secretary's Trip to the Balkans and Asia, James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, Foreign Press Center, Washington, DC, March 29, 2010, <<http://fpc.state.gov/139203.htm>>.



support for the efforts made by Beijing and Taipei to reduce friction across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, Washington has not yet exerted political pressures on Taipei to encourage the cross-Strait dialogues on politically sensitive issues. Nor is there a timetable for the cross-Strait dialogues on such issues. Nonetheless, the United States may have had an unspoken plan on that in mind, and it is well prepared for such dialogues. As long as the cross-Strait dialogues are conducted free of force and intimidation and decisions made free from coercion, and consistent with Taiwan's flourishing democracy, the United States will welcome such a development. That is why the United States makes very clear that its arms sales to Taiwan is to give Taiwan leaders greater confidence and ability to interact across the Straits in peaceful dialogue with their counterparts in China.

## VI. U.S. Arms Sales and Security Commitment to Taiwan

In the wake of Obama-Hu summit in Beijing on November 17, 2009, when asked on the issue of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, Jeffrey Bader confirmed that the president has not changed his policy by saying the United States will try its best to do in this regard, adding “there will be arms sales to this administration.”<sup>34</sup>

Raymond F. Burghardt, Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) said on November 24, 2009 that the U.S. will continue to provide defense weapons because of the 1979 TRA. Although he did not specify a timeline for future arm sales, he said sales of the F-16C/Ds are currently being evaluated. In a blunt personal statement, he addressed the recent talks between U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao, dispelling what he viewed as "cliches" proclaiming China's leverage over the U.S. on the Taiwan issue or that U.S. arms sales slow the progress of cross-strait relations. He stated that the United States will uphold its commitment to Taiwan by resuming arms sales, adding: “If arms sales to Taiwan came to a complete stop, you will also see progress in cross-strait relations grind to a halt.” He argued that, Taiwan, in the absence of U.S. arms sales as a kind of back-up, will lose its bargain chips on the negotiating table.<sup>35</sup>

On January 29, 2010, Mr. Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, announced that the Department of Defense, under the Foreign Military Sales program, notified Congress of the Obama administration’s intent to sell various defensive systems to Taiwan.<sup>36</sup> He said that the notification includes UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters,

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<sup>33</sup> Statement by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs on China, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington DC, March 29, 2010,

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-china>>.

<sup>34</sup> Ko Shu-ling, “US Policy on Taiwan Unchanged: AIT,” *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2009/11/25/2003459370>>.

<sup>35</sup> Lydia Lin, “U.S. Arms Sales Will Resume: AIT Chair,” *The China Post*, November 25, 2009, <<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2009/11/25/234053/US-arms.htm>>.

<sup>36</sup> Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2010/01/136282.htm>>.

Patriot Advance Capability Missiles, technical support for Taiwan's command and control communications computers intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance system – the C4ISR – two Osprey-Class mine-hunting ships, and Harpoon telemetry missiles.

According to Crowley, the sales are a clear demonstration of the commitment that the Obama administration has to provide Taiwan the defensive weapons it needs and as provided for in the TRA, adding that this action is consistent with the U.S. “one-China” policy based on the three joint communiqués in the TRA and contributes to maintaining security and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Asked whether there were consultations with the Chinese Government before U.S. decision, he answered that the United States did not consult with China before taking this action, adding that the Department of State did notify the Chinese in the morning of January 29, 2010 through its contacts here at the Embassy in Washington, just as it notified Taiwan before the notification was sent forward. In an answer as to whether the decision of not selling the F-16C/Ds was based on concerns about the Chinese reaction, he said that it was based on U.S. evaluation of the defensive needs of Taiwan.<sup>37</sup>

In a follow-up teleconference on January 29, 2010, two senior officials, who were accompanied by Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, provided the media with background information on the announcement regarding the sale of arms to Taiwan. According to them, there are a set of reasons for U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.<sup>38</sup> First, the sales are consistent with U.S. “one-China” policy, in line with the Taiwan Relations Act, and contribute to stability in the Asian-Pacific region.

Second, for more than 30 years, through both Democratic and Republican administrations, the United States has provided Taiwan with arms it needs to defend itself. And by doing so, the United States is helping to ensure stability in the Taiwan Strait and throughout the region.

Third, in the military-to-military relations between the United States and China, the issue of Taiwan does come up frequently. Taiwan is always in the discussions in some form. China considers Taiwan one of its “core interests.” And it has been a component of the way China thinks about its interests and its relationship with the United States.<sup>39</sup>

Fourth, the United States is well aware of Taiwan's interest in acquiring F-16C/D aircrafts, and it has discussed that with Taiwan on a variety of occasions. And Washington is in the process of assessing Taiwan's needs and requirements for that capability. As for diesel electric submarines, the senior officials stated that nothing has been ruled in or ruled out. The

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* See also Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, February 1, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2010/02/136356.htm>>.

<sup>38</sup> Background Briefing on Asian Security, Mr. Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Two Anonymous Senior Officials Via Teleconference, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/136286.htm>>.

<sup>39</sup> Background Briefing on Asian Security, Mr. Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Two Anonymous Senior Officials Via Teleconference, Washington, DC, January 29, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/136286.htm>>.

United States will continue to evaluate Taiwan's defense needs, including the maritime front. In this regard, submarines are just a component of Taiwan's maritime defense.

Fifth, an even broader policy rationale behind U.S. arms sales to Taiwan is associated with U.S. relationship with Taiwan. At the strategic level, national law and the strategic interests of the United States require Washington to provide the defensive capabilities and also the wherewithal in the United States to deal with any challenges to the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The United States takes that responsibility very seriously, as underscored by the decision to move ahead with the package of U.S. arms sales.

More specifically, the fundamental goal of U.S. strategy in the Taiwan Strait is to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait through everything it could do—diplomatically, strategically with forward deployments, with military-to-military engagement with China, with partners in the region, and unofficial relationship with Taiwan.

China's reaction to the arms sale deal was by no means seemingly ferocious only. The Chinese government announced that they would halt bilateral military exchange programs and other security-related programs. It even suggested that they would impose sanctions on U.S. companies involved in the sale of these defensive articles.<sup>40</sup> However, just as what assistant secretary of state Philip J. Crowley pointed out, "The Chinese have made clear their views regarding meetings with the Dalai Lama, regarding arms sales to Taiwan, and I think what we're clearly indicating is that we will continue to follow our national interest just as we would expect China to follow its national interest."<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are consistent with its "one-China" policy, in line with the Taiwan Relations Act, and contribute to stability in the Asian Pacific region. When Taiwan and China are improving their relations through numerous negotiations, the United States sells its weapon systems to Taiwan because it wants to give Taiwan leadership greater confidence and ability to interact across the Taiwan Straits in peaceful dialogues with their counterparts in China.

## VII. Conclusion

U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao met and held an international press conference, and announcing U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 11, 2009. Given the financial pressures, the United States could not but make some concessions, including U.S. respect for China's core interest and U.S. encouragement of cross-Strait negotiations on issues other than economic ones.

Prior to U.S.-China Joint Statement of November 17, 2009, the U.S. assurances can be

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<sup>40</sup> Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, February 1, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2010/02/136356.htm>>.

<sup>41</sup> Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, February 2, 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2010/02/136397.htm>>.

summarized as follows. First of all, the United States will not touch the framework of its one China policy—the three communiqués and the TRA—which is on a tried-and-true basis. Second, it will sell defensive weapon systems to Taiwan on an as-needed basis. Third, it supports a peaceful dialogue and encourages that dialogue to take place in an environment of confidence in both sides on a reciprocal basis.

In the wake of U.S.-China Joint Statement, U.S. officials have reassured Taiwan of its honoring of the TRA, unchanged one China policy, no push or urge to cross-Strait political dialogues, and security commitment and arms sales, but many of them remain controversial or even more complicated than ever before.

First, while the omission of TRA in Shanghai proves that it is only an incident in the US-Chin-Taiwan interactions, U.S.-China respective interpretation of the Taiwan issue will be the beginning of controversy between them, thus having a negative impact on Taiwan in the long run.

Second, Doubtless, U.S. “one China” policy has remained intact since the announcement of U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 17, 2009. What are new to both Beijing and Taipei is while China gains U.S. respect for China “core interests” in sovereignty and territorial integrity, Taiwan is assured that the TRA is the “central document” between Washington and Taipei. In the future, whether U.S. respect for China’s “core interests” gains the upper hand over the TRA as a “central document” between Washington and Taipei or vice versa will become a new controversy among three of them. China has long put an emphasis on the so-called Taiwan issue. In the aftermath of the U.S.-China Joint Statement on November 17, 2009, it goes without saying that China will put an even stronger emphasis on Taiwan’s place in its “core interests”.

Third, Washington has not yet exerted political pressures on Taipei to encourage the cross-Strait dialogues on politically sensitive issues. Nor is there a timetable for the cross-Strait dialogues on such issues. Nonetheless, the United States might have had an unspoken plan on that in mind, and it is well prepared for such dialogues. As long as the cross-Strait dialogues are conducted free of force and intimidation and decisions made free of coercion, and consistent with Taiwan's flourishing democracy, the United States will welcome such a development.

Fourth, U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are consistent with its “one-China” policy, in line with the Taiwan Relations Act, and contribute to stability in the Asian Pacific region. When Taiwan and China are improving their relations through numerous negotiations, the United States sells its weapon systems to Taiwan because it wants to give Taiwan leadership greater confidence and ability to interact across the Taiwan Straits in peaceful dialogue with their counterparts in China.

While U.S. assurances have significantly mitigated Taiwan's concern and suspicion, they have aroused new questions. Indeed, given U.S.-China respective interpretation of the Taiwan issue, controversy on "core interests" and "central document," U.S. unspoken plan on cross-Strait political dialogues in mind, and its arms sales linking with Taiwan's greater confidence and ability in peaceful dialogue with China, U.S. assurances are sometimes clear enough to provide Taiwan with more confidence and sometimes vague enough to cause controversy and complexity.

Therefore, the U.S.-China Joint Statement of November 17, 2009 would not hurt Taiwan's national interests for the time being, but it could do harm to Taiwan in the future. It would not put Taipei in jeopardy immediately; it carries potential dangers. If Taiwan could integrate its national interests with those of the United States, deepen bilateral relationship, strengthen mutual trust, seek for U.S. strategic reassurance on the TRA, and secure U.S. security commitment and arms sales; however, Taiwan may be able to transform the crisis resulted from the 2009 U.S.-China Joint Statement into a new opportunity and create a win-win-win situation for Washington, Beijing and Taipei.



# THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S CHINA POLICY

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China is becoming a great power in East Asia. The United States as a global superpower cannot ignore China's increasing power and influence both in the global and regional dimensions. After President Obama took office, his administration also has to deal with the China issue. This paper intends to explore the Obama administration's China policy and what the impacts will be on East Asian security of that policy.

## I. President Obama's ideas on Foreign Policy

President Obama fiercely criticized the Bush administration's foreign policy during the presidential campaigning period. He criticized that the Bush administration overly relied on the U.S. military forces in pursuing foreign policy. The United States was also criticized for its unilateral approach in implementing foreign policy. Obama asserted that the United States should resort to diplomacy most likely in pursuing foreign interests.<sup>1</sup> He also thought that the United States should take a multilateral approach in implementing foreign policy. He even said that he will be willing to negotiate with leaders of North Korea and Iran in order to solve the nuclear disputes. Obama also proposed that he will revive the U.S. leadership in the international community by increasing American national power. He did not ignore the threat of terrorism to the United States. Different from the Bush administration, Obama argued that the United States should focus on cracking down the terrorists of Taliban and Al Qaeda in the Afghanistan who are the sources of international terrorism in Iraq and other areas. He asserted that the United States should withdraw its military forces from Iraq and increase military presence in Afghanistan.

Based on the fundamental assertions on foreign policies of Obama, we can conclude that he is neither a pure idealist nor a realist. Obama is a pragmatist in making foreign policy. Like an idealist, he has emphasized the tool of diplomacy in advancing national interests. He has also endorsed the multilateralism in implementing foreign policy. President Obama has stucked to the goal of regaining the U.S. leadership in the world.<sup>2</sup> For achieving that goal, the United States has to increase its power. It has also to prevent the other states from surpassing or challenging U.S. power. Obama has also not overlooked the threat of international terrorism especially the Al Qaeda on the United States and international

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<sup>1</sup> Barack Obama and Joe Biden's Plan to Secure America and Restore our Standing, <http://asrudiancenter.wordpress.com/2009/02/19/barack-obama-and-joe-bidens-plan-to-secure-america-and-restore-our-standing/>

<sup>2</sup> Barack Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', Foreign Affairs, July/ August 2007.

community. He has agreed with the necessity of military forces in defeating terrorism. Since he became the president, Obama has increased the level of military presence in Afghanistan in order to cracking down the Al Qaeda and the emergent Taliban insurgents. Judged on the above ideas and actions, Obama is like a realist. The Obama administration has also advocated the idea of smart power in pursuing foreign interests. The hard power is a coercive power and relies on military forces as its source. The soft power is a cooperative and attractive power and relies on culture and institutions as its sources. The smart power emphasizes on properly combining and utilizing both hard and soft powers to best serve the national interests. Therefore, president Obama is not an ideologically oriented politician. His philosophy and style of leading the United States is very pragmatic. He cherishes the U.S. national interests and uses both idealistic and realistic approaches to execute foreign policies. The currently primary goals in terms of foreign policy for the Obama administration include reviving U.S. economy, ensuring national security, and strengthening U.S. international leadership. In order to fulfill these goals, the Obama administration has to lead to revive the international economy, to fight against international terrorism, to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to promote democracy in the world.

## II. The Obama Administration's East Asian Policies

In contrast with the Bush administration, the Obama administration has shown a more interest in having a close relationship with East Asia. Immediately after taking office, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid her first foreign visit to East Asia. Usually the U.S. Secretaries of State make their first state visits to Western Europe to express the U.S. emphasis on this area. The new Secretary's change in traditional state visits has expressed the Obama administration's intention to strengthen the U.S.-East Asia relationship. The Obama administration's emphasis on East Asia was further disclosed by president Obama's own visit to this area. Usually the U.S. president made a visit to this area after taking office at least one year later. Obama visited East Asia in last November after taking office less than a year. In his staying in Japan, Obama deliberately made an important speech on his East Asian policy.

He first made it clear that the United States has been a nation of pacific for generations. Asia and the United States are not separated by the ocean but are bound by it. The two parts are bound by past history of interaction and by shared prosperity in terms of commerce and jobs created. He emphasized that 'we have a stake in the future of this region, because what happens here has a direct effect on our lives at home.'<sup>3</sup> Therefore, he firmly stated the U.S. determination to actively engage with this region again. He said that 'So let me be clear: Those days have passed. As a Asia Pacific nation, the United States expects to be involved in the discussions that shape the future of this region, and to participate fully in appropriate organizations as they are established and evolve.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan, November 14, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



On the relationship with East Asian countries, Obama reaffirmed U.S. intention to maintain a stronger alliance relationship with Japan. He said that 'our efforts in the Asia Pacific will be rooted, in no small measure, through an enduring and revitalized alliance between the United States and Japan.'<sup>5</sup> After meeting with the new Japanese premier Yukio Hatoyama, the two sides agreed to deepen the alliance. In order to gain the cooperation of new Japanese government, the Democratic Party of Japanese, Obama stated that both sides will uphold 'a partnership of equality and mutual respect.'<sup>6</sup> Besides Japan, the Obama administration also wants to maintain a close relationship with other allies in this region. Obama stated that 'we look to America's treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines -- alliances that are not historical documents from a bygone era, but abiding commitments to each other that are fundamental to our shared security.'<sup>7</sup> The Obama administration also want to expand the U.S. cooperation with other important countries in East Asia. Obama said that 'to meet these common challenges, the United States looks to strengthen old alliances and build new partnerships with the nations of this region.'<sup>8</sup> The ASEAN has become an active and important group in political and economic affairs in East Asia. The Obama administration intends to strengthen the U.S. relationship with it. Obama said that 'I look forward to becoming the first American President to meet with all 10 ASEAN leaders.' He had done that during participating in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in his Asian trip last November. Since the ASEAN has been an important player in East Asia, the Obama administration's decision to strengthen relationship with its members has a very strongly strategic meaning for the United States and security in this region. As a further step to deepen U.S. participation in East Asia affairs, the Obama administration wants to engage more formally with the East Asia Summit (EAS) which incorporates sixteen Asian countries and is an important forum for these countries to deal with affairs in this region.<sup>9</sup> By enhancing U.S.-ASEAN relationship, the United States wants to become a formal member of the EAS. In his Asian speech, Obama also elaborated his thoughts on the Sino-U.S. relationship. He stated that 'the United States does not seek to contain China' and will increase cooperation with it for the benefit of East Asia.<sup>10</sup>

### III. The Obama Administration's China Policy

Many people have wondered how will the United States deals with China which has become stronger in the world. The Obama adminidtration has seen China as a partner to solve many critical issues since it took office. Soon after being the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton paid a visit to East asia including China. In her meeting with the Chinese leaders, both sides agreed to build up a positive and coperative relationship. The two countries also intended

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

to set up a strategic and economic forum to discuss and develop bilateral relations. In the G 20 summit, president Obama and Chinese president Hu Jintao had a first meeting. The two leaders approved the strategic and economic dialogues mechanism proposed during Hillary's visit in Beijing.

President Obama's first Asian visit also included China. In his speech in Japan, he said that 'it is important to pursue pragmatic cooperation with China on issues of mutual concern, because no one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century alone, and the United States and China will both be better off when we are able to meet them together.'<sup>11</sup>

The Obama administration came to power during a serious international economic setback. It was the primary goal for the Obama administration to revive the international and domestic economy. Besides this thorny problem, there are also other issues needed be overcome by the United States including the threat of terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), climate change etc. All these issues cannot be solved by the United States alone. It needs the cooperation from other states in the world, especially strong states such as China. Therefore, Obama said that 'the rise of a strong, prosperous China can be a source of strength for the community of nations. That's why we welcome China's effort to play a greater role on the world stage -- a role in which their growing economy is joined by growing responsibility.'<sup>12</sup>

In his staying in China, Obama met with Hu and other top Chinese leaders. After a talk with Hu, both sides reached a joint statement. In the joint statement, the United States reiterated that 'it welcomes a strong, prosperous and successful China that plays a greater role in world affairs'.<sup>13</sup> The two sides reiterated that they are committed to building a 'positive, cooperative and comprehensive U.S.-China relationship for the 21st century', and will take concrete actions to steadily build a partnership to deal with common challenges.<sup>14</sup> The United States and China agreed that they have an increasingly broad base of cooperation and share increasingly important common responsibilities on many major issues concerning global stability and prosperity. The two countries also think that they should further strengthen coordination and cooperation, work together to tackle challenges, and promote world peace, security and prosperity. On the economic issue, the two countries agreed to sustain measures to ensure a strong and durable global economic recovery and financial system. The two sides reiterated that they will continue to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on macro-economic policies. The two sides believed that the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should have sufficient resources and to reform their governance structures in order to improve IFIs' credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness.<sup>15</sup> On fighting terrorism, the United States and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> U.S.-China Joint Statement, Beijing, China, November 17, 2009, Office of the Press Secretary of the United States.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

China agreed to enhance counter-terrorism consultation and cooperation on an equal and mutually beneficial basis and to strengthen law-enforcement cooperation. They agreed to exchange evidence and intelligence on law enforcement issues, to undertake joint investigations and provide investigative assistance, to combat transnational crime and criminal organizations as well as money laundering and the financing of terrorism, to combat smuggling and human trafficking.<sup>16</sup> On nonproliferation issue, the two sides reaffirmed the importance of continuing the Six-Party Talks and implementing the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005, including denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, normalization of relations and establishment of a permanent peace regime in Northeast Asia. The two sides hoped that the Six Party Talks would convene at an early date. The two sides also agreed that Iran has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT and it should fulfill its due international obligations under that treaty. They reaffirmed their support for a comprehensive and long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear issue through negotiations, and called on Iran to engage constructively with the P5+1 and to cooperate fully with the IAEA to facilitate a satisfactory outcome.<sup>17</sup> On the climate change issue, the two countries maintained that a vigorous response is necessary and that international cooperation is indispensable in responding to this challenge. They consistent with their national circumstances, resolved to take significant mitigation actions in the upcoming Copenhagen Conference.<sup>18</sup> On protecting the global health, the two sides agreed to deepen cooperation on global public health issues, including Influenza A (H1N1) prevention, surveillance, reporting and control, and on avian influenza, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.<sup>19</sup> On increasing the security of East Asia, the two sides agreed to encourage APEC to play a more effective role in promoting regional trade and investment liberalization and economic and technical cooperation and for the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to play a more effective role in strengthening regional security cooperation.

Obama and Hu also agreed to strengthen the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. The two countries will further increase communication and the exchange of information regarding macro-economic policy. The two sides recognized the importance of open trade and investment to their domestic economies and to the global economy, and agreed to jointly fight protectionism in all its manifestations. The two sides agreed to work proactively to resolve bilateral trade and investment disputes in a constructive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial manner.<sup>20</sup> They reaffirmed their commitment not to target at each other the strategic nuclear weapons under their respective control. The two sides agreed that they have common interests in promoting the peaceful use of outer space and agree to take steps to enhance security in outer space. The two sides thought it is necessary to discuss issues of strategic importance through such channels as the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue and

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

military-to-military exchanges. The two sides agreed to actively implement various exchange and cooperation programs agreed between the two militaries, including by increasing the level and frequency of exchanges. They will prepare for the visit to the United States by Chen Bingde, Chief of the General Staff of China's People's Liberation Army, and the visits to China by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen.<sup>21</sup> Both sides agreed to further upgrade the level of exchanges and cooperation in scientific and technological innovation through the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Science and Technology Cooperation. The United States and China planned to expand discussions on space science cooperation and starting a dialogue on human space flight and space exploration, and to strengthen their cooperation on civil aviation. The two sides also believed that the transition to a green and low-carbon economy is essential and welcomed significant steps forward to advance policy dialogue and practical cooperation on climate change, energy and the environment, building on the U.S.-China Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Cooperation on Climate Change, Energy and Environment announced at the first round of U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue last July and formally signed during the Obama visit.<sup>22</sup> The United States agreed to encourage more Americans to study in China by launching a new initiative to send 100,000 students to China over the coming four years. The United States and China agreed to jointly hold the Second U.S.-China Cultural Forum in the United States at an appropriate time.<sup>23</sup>

Since China has considered preserving the sovereignty as its core interests, it will not omit this issue in an officially bilateral meeting with the United States. In the Joint Statement, China emphasized that the Taiwan issue concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and hoped that the United States will honor its relevant commitments and appreciate and support the Chinese side's position on this issue. The United States on its part stated that it follows its one China policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués.<sup>24</sup> The Obama administration also expressed its appreciation on the development of cross-Strait relations since Ma Yingjio took office in 2008. It also looks forward to efforts by both sides to increase dialogues and interactions in economic, political, and other fields, and develop more positive and stable cross-Strait relations.<sup>25</sup> On the American side, promotion of democracy is both the guiding principle and one of the major goals of its foreign policy. Obama could not skip this issue in his talk with Hu. In the Joint Statement, both sides recognized that the United States and China have differences on the issue of human rights. They also agreed to hold the next round of the official human rights dialogue in Washington D.C. by the end of February 2010 to address these differences in the spirit of equality and mutual respect, as well as promoting and protecting human rights

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

consistent with international human rights instruments.<sup>26</sup>

The Obama's China visit was quite fruitful and helped to strengthen the Sino-U.S. relations. Obama reaffirmed the U.S. intention to support a strong and prosperous China and expect it to play an important and responsible role in addressing international affairs. The United States wants to cooperate with China rather than to contain it. On the critical issue of sovereignty, the United States clearly expressed that both sides should respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and each other's choice of development model. These words and ideas represented the conformity of the United States to China's demands. The two countries also agreed to cooperate on a broad spectrum of issues that has concerned the United States.

## VI. The U.S.-China Relations after the Summit

Although the two countries agreed to enhance their relations and cooperation during the Obama-Hu summit last November, the bilateral relations has not been smoothed as expected. The two sides failed to cooperate in the Copenhagen Conference held in last December as promised in the U.S.- China Joint Statement. The two countries cannot agree with the targets of emission reduction that they should implement respectively. The two countries' officials openly criticized each other's assertions in the conference. Chinese premier Wen Jia-bao even sent a lower-level official to meet with Obama in the meeting on climate change. The Obama administration decided to sell weapons of \$6.4 billions to Taiwan in January this year. Beijing has long opposed arm sale to Taiwan by the United States. Although the quality of weapons in this deal is not sensitive, Beijing still strongly protested against the Obama administration by suspending presumed bilateral military exchange.<sup>27</sup> The U.S.- China relations was also impeded by Obama's meeting with the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama in the White House. Beijing was very angry with this meeting and criticized the Obama administration for its breaking up the commitment to China.<sup>28</sup> The Obama administration also concerned the worsened U.S. trade deficit with China. Obama in State of the Union Address demanded China to open its domestic market.<sup>29</sup> In his meeting with Hu Jiatao in April this year, Obama told the Chinese leader that China should appreciate the value of currency against the U.S. dollar. Yet Hu replied that China would not accept foreign pressure and would decide its currency policy by considering Chinese own economic conditions.<sup>30</sup> Although the U.S.-China relations still remains somewhat strained, the atmosphere is better than in the early period of this year.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/china/2010/01/100130\\_chinaus\\_military.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/china/2010/01/100130_chinaus_military.shtml)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN1116932520100218>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.udn.com/2010/4/13/NEWS/MAINLAND/BREAKINGNEWS4/5533955.shtml>

<sup>31</sup> Zhu Feng, 'A return of Chinese Pragmatism,' PacNet #16 - April 5, 2010.

The Obama administration's China policy has been based on the thoughts of creating a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship between the two countries. This policy is consistent with Obama's philosophy of foreign policy on promoting international cooperation and peace. It also facilitates the fulfillment of Obama administration's goals on reviving American economy and enhancing international security. Yet, the two countries still have objective difference in national interests, ideologies, political and social systems. Therefore, frictions and conflicts are unavoidable between these two countries. It does not mean that the two countries will be hostile to each other. The two countries still endeavor to expand their cooperation on both international and bilateral issues.<sup>32</sup> They have realized that their interest will best be served by maintaining such a relationship.

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<sup>32</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., 'China's Bad Bet Against America', PacNet #14 - March 25, 2010.

# THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S NEW EAST ASIAN POLICY

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## I. Preface

On 20 January 2009 Barack Obama became the 44th US president, ushering in a new era amidst great volatilities and opportunities. In his inaugural address, he has laid priority on domestic politics as he identified combating a deepening economic crisis as his most urgent task. Externally, he would spare no effort in strengthening US global leadership.<sup>1</sup> The war against terror will be a key component in this effort. If he can pull US troops out of Iraq in time, he will have wider strategic options in coping with the fast changing world order, itself a challenge to unipolarity.

As secretary of the state Hillary Clinton's testimony speech on her confirmation on 14 January 2009 may shed good light on an understanding of Obama's overall foreign policy in the next four years. Central to her speech is the concept of the US as a "smart power" which combines the country's great economic and military hard power and its world appealing soft power of democracy and freedom. She has laid down a number of important guiding principles: 1) diplomacy takes priority over employment. of force; 2) diplomacy is based on principles and pragmatism; and 3) diplomacy is about communication and consultation.<sup>2</sup>

These mark a visible departure from Bush's foreign policy behavior and policy orientation. "Smart power" is a rebuke to Bush's convenient use of force to deal with complex situations. Emphasis on diplomacy means that Obama would have a distinctive leadership style over world affairs: relying more on cooperation, multilateralism and persuasion to secure vital US interests. Leadership would be more effective if conducted through persuasion from a position of strength than unilateral military pressure. This is the embodiment of Obama's campaign platform of change.

Under Obama a two-ponged strategy may emerge to guide US Asian policy: enhancing alliance against any potential challenger and engaging China to stabilize the security situation in the Far East. On these two fronts the overall situation is positive to Obama. Japan and South Korea would reciprocate Obama's efforts to repair the alliance. China is willing to cooperate where it can, as it serves its interests in doing so.

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<sup>1</sup> Obama's inaugural address, Washington D.C., 20 January 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Hillary Clinton's testimony to the Congress on her confirmation as secretary of the state. 14 January 2009.

In Southeast Asia Obama has promised to revitalize US-ASEAN relations. He would first redress the neglect ASEAN has felt during the Bush administration.

This is important both as a necessity and a choice: America needs military access to the region and there are no fundamental and outstanding problems between the two sides. As pointed out by Obama's key Asian affairs advisors, he will allocate more attention and resources to Southeast Asia.

On November 15, 2009, President Obama met the 10 leaders of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the first ever U.S.-ASEAN Summit. Together, these countries include two U.S. treaty allies (the Philippines and Thailand) and the world's busiest trading route—the Strait of Malacca. ASEAN is the world's most trade-dependent formal grouping of nations, with trade accounting for nearly 100 percent of its \$1.3-trillion gross domestic product. It is also the fifth-largest trading partner of the United States and home to 650 million people. This Critical Questions touches on key issues related to the inaugural U.S.-ASEAN Summit.<sup>3</sup>

## II. The U. S. intends to broaden and deepen its partnerships

“The United States is back,” On Hillary Clinton's second trip to Asia as secretary of state, she is carrying a no-nonsense message about American intentions.<sup>4</sup> By that she means the administration of President Obama thinks it's time to show Asian nations that the U.S. is not distracted by its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and intends to broaden and deepen its partnerships in this region. She speaks during a press conference with Thai Deputy Prime Minister Korbsak Sabhavasut at the Government house in Bangkok.

Clinton trumpeted that line Wednesday in an appearance with a prominent TV personality before flying to a seaside resort at Phuket for two days of international meetings to discuss North Korea, Myanmar and a range of other regional issues. Clinton said she would, as previously announced, sign the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's seminal Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, a commitment to peacefully resolve regional disputes that has already been signed by more than a dozen countries outside the 10-nation bloc.

### **2009 Obama's first visit to Asia**

The U.S. signing will be by the executive authority of Obama, and does not require congressional ratification, said a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the move publicly.

The administration of President George W. Bush had declined to sign the document; Obama sees it as a symbolic underscoring of the U.S. commitment to Asia.

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<sup>3</sup> Ernest Bower, 2009, U.S.-ASEAN Summit: President Obama Engages Southeast Asia, *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, Nov 9, 2009

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/07/21/2009-07-21\\_clinton\\_us\\_is\\_back\\_is\\_asia.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/07/21/2009-07-21_clinton_us_is_back_is_asia.html)



When Clinton arrived in Bangkok Tuesday, she reiterated Obama administration concerns that North Korea - already a threat to the U.S. and its neighbors with its history of illicit sales of missiles and nuclear technology - is now developing ties to Myanmar's military dictatorship.

Clinton held out the possibility of offering North Korea a new set of incentives to return to negotiating a dismantling of its nuclear program if it shows a "willingness to take a different path." But she admitted there is little immediate chance of that. A Clinton aide said the U.S. and its allies are looking for a commitment by North Korea that would irreversibly end its nuclear weapons program. The aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal U.S. government deliberations, said there is no sign that North Korea intends to make such a move, keeping the U.S. focus on enforcing expanded U.N. sanctions.

Barack Obama's first visit to Asia since his inauguration was one of the most disappointing trips by any U.S. president to the region in decades, especially given media-generated expectations that "Obamamania" would make it yet another triumphal progression. It was a journey of startlingly few concrete accomplishments, demonstrable proof that neither personal popularity nor media deference really means much in the hard world of international affairs.<sup>5</sup> In Asia, he labeled himself "America's first Pacific president," ignoring over a century of contrary evidence. But it was on matters of substance where Mr. Obama's trip truly was a disappointment. On economics, the president displayed the Democratic Party's ambivalence toward free trade, even in an economic downturn, motivated by fear of labor-union opposition. On environmental and climate change issues, China, entirely predictably, reaffirmed its refusal to agree to carbon-emission limitations, and Mr. Obama had to concede in Singapore that the entire effort to craft a binding, post-Kyoto international agreement in Copenhagen had come to a complete halt.

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ASEAN Summit**

The U.S.-ASEAN Summit represents a historic new level of engagement for the United States with ASEAN. The significance of the summit is the fact that the U.S. president is in ASEAN, is following through on his administration's early commitments to engage the region in a serious and sustained way, and for the first time is sitting down with all 10 of the ASEAN leaders, including Burma's prime minister. This is an important diplomatic step forward. In the event, the United States will break free of its self-imposed trap of letting the Burma tail wag the ASEAN dog. In other words, President Obama recognizes that ASEAN is vitally important to the United States in terms of national security, trade, as well as socially and culturally. And while the situation in Burma remains untenable, the United States is saying "we cannot let one issue, Burma, keep us from deepening ties with our ASEAN counterparts

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<sup>5</sup> John R. Bolton, "President Obama Didn't Impress Asia" Wall Street Journal Monday, <http://www.aei.org/print?pub=article&pubId=101339&authors=<a href=scholar/121>John R. Bolton</a>>, November 23, 2009.

and working with them to strengthen relationships and trying to make progress in Burma as well as other areas.”

After banner initiatives in US policy toward Southeast Asia were unveiled in 2009 – the US-ASEAN Leaders Meeting, signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and a 45-degree change in Burma policy that added engagement to sanctions – a loss of momentum in early 2010 was hardly surprising. President Obama’s decision to delay his long-awaited trip to Indonesia twice in March added to the impression of a slump in relations with the region. The administration proved to be prescient in its warning last fall that greater engagement with the Burmese regime would not likely reap short-term gains when the junta announced restrictive election laws.<sup>6</sup> However, in the first quarter of 2010 the US moved forward on two regional initiatives – strengthening its interest in the TransPacific Trade Partnership, which could be a route to trade liberalization with several Southeast Asian countries, and preparing to establish a Permanent Mission to ASEAN. Despite Bangkok’s ongoing political crisis and a new wave of “red shirt” protests, the US and Thailand implemented new rounds of two multilateral military exercises in this quarter, including the flagship *Cobra Gold*. At the end of the quarter the US and Vietnam signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding on the development of civilian nuclear power facilities, a bilateral segue to the multilateral nuclear summit that Obama will host with 43 heads of state in mid-April, 2010.

### III. Consolidating Bilateral Alliance

The biggest policy challenge that Obama faces in Asia is how to respond to the dynamic restructuring of the regional order due to China’s rise, Japan’s power normalization and relative decline of US influence, partially due to mounting anti-Americanism as the result of Bush’s unilateralism.<sup>7</sup> Although Obama’s East Asian policy has not been announced officially, there are logical traces to follow in assessing his future strategies vis-à-vis the region.<sup>8</sup>

#### **A two-pronged strategy**

Obama would adopt a two-pronged strategy: 1) strengthen bilateral alliance with Japan and Korea, as the basic hedging approach vis-à-vis China’s rise and the resultant restructuring of the regional order;<sup>9</sup> 2) in parallel with this Obama will see increased necessity to cooperate with China in dealing with economic and security challenges globally and in Asia, i.e., the international economic meltdown and the North Korea nuclear problem.<sup>10</sup> It is generally recognized in Washington that without a solid alliance mechanism in Asia it is difficult for

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<sup>6</sup> Catharin Dalpino, 2010, “US-Southeast Asia Relations: Denouement and Delay”, Comparative Connections :A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations, CSIS ◦ Georgetown University

<sup>7</sup> David Shambaugh (ed.), *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics*, University of California Press, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Hillary Clinton’s speech on 14 January 2009 provided good clues for a understanding of Obama’s foreign policy and his Asian policy as well. (Hillary Clinton’s testimony to the Congress.)

<sup>9</sup> Obama’s testimony, *Floor Statement, Congressional Record*, April 25, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew MacIntyre, “Obama and Asia”, *East Asia Forum*, 12 January 2009.

US' hedging strategy vis-à-vis China to work.<sup>11</sup> At the same time US' global leadership cannot be effective if it is challenged by China. That Beijing has promised not to challenge US leadership opens space for this cooperation, the crux for a successful US Asian policy.<sup>12</sup>

This means that US' Asian is poised to shift from its previous sole anchorage on bilateral alliance to a dual one adding US-China engagement as the center of the policy. While the logic for this change is plain enough, the policy adjustment is easily said than done; it requires ideational emancipation and difference accommodation on the part of Obama. Resistance from US allies to this change can well be anticipated, another major challenge to Obama's Asian policy.<sup>13</sup> Although US' relations with its traditional allies in Asia remain strong, they are not without thorns that have to be dealt with.

### **Redirecting free trade**

On Jan. 1, 2010 the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) was finalized, after an eight-year negotiation and implementation process, making it the largest free trade arrangement in the world. This salutary event was juxtaposed against a halting US record of trade liberalization with Southeast Asia and an administration agenda that does not include a US-ASEAN FTA in its plans. Efforts to negotiate bilateral FTAs with Thailand and Malaysia have lapsed. In their place, Washington is urging these two countries – and any other APEC members – to consider accession to the TransPacific Trade Partnership (TPP).<sup>14</sup> In November 2009, President Obama signaled clear interest in US membership in the TPP, and the administration has since publicly touted the group as a potential springboard for a regional free trade regime. In March, officials from the US Trade Representative joined trade officials from seven other Asia-Pacific countries in a negotiating round in Melbourne. Vietnam has also indicated a firm interest and participated in the Melbourne rounds; Singapore and Brunei are already members.

Since then, Kuala Lumpur has expressed interest in the TPP and seems to be persuaded that US-Malaysian trade can benefit from that arrangement at least as much as it would from a US-Malaysia FTA. Thailand has not weighed in publicly and is not likely to do so until the government has been able to stabilize the domestic political situation. It is not clear what other Southeast Asian countries might be inclined or able to join the TPP. Jakarta has not as yet expressed concrete interest and the Philippine constitution prohibits participation in free trade agreements of this nature.

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, Dan Blumenthal (朴大年) suggested that Obama should make US-Japan alliance more tuned to contain China. Huanqishibao, 9 January 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Jisi, "China's Changing Role in Asia", The Atlantic Council Paper, January 2004. For Obama's China policy, please refer to EAI Background Brief No. 426 on "Obama's China Policy: Continuity Rather Than Change".

<sup>13</sup> Masashi Nishihara, "What to expect from the New US Administration", *AJISS-Commentary*, no. 53, 9 January 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Catharin Dalpino, 2010, "US-Southeast Asia Relations: Denouement and Delay", *Comparative Connections : A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations*.

Entry into the TPP will not necessarily be smooth sailing for the US. Several sectors may present obstacles, including textiles, agriculture, dairy, and intellectual property. Congress has indicated some concern about including Vietnam in an agreement if US allies are not included. The administration has not yet conducted extensive consultations with Congress on the TPP. It intends to do so this spring, before the next TPP round in June. In the present political climate, however, it is unlikely that the administration will be able to change the minds of 50 percent of Congressional Democrats who have opposed new trade agreements in the next few months. Nevertheless, administration officials remain convinced that over the long run the TPP offers the best possibility for a regional FTA that includes the US.

### **Addressing thorns in US-Japan Relations**

Traditionally Japanese elites are suspicious of US democrats who are considered as less sympathetic to Japan, leaning more toward China in the tripartite interaction, and belittling Japan's role in world affairs. This exaggerated perception is somewhat understandable. Jimmy Carter set diplomatic relations with China as a way to build a strategic triangular relationship against the USSR but his "overhead" diplomacy was kept from the Japanese.<sup>15</sup> Bill Clinton started his administration with a Japan bashing.

These perceptions have conveniently influenced Japanese leaders when they assess Obama's Japan policy. They have repeatedly expressed their worry over Obama's potential and relative neglect of Japan in recent months, both as a reminder to the White House and as a pressure tactic to call attention.<sup>16</sup>

There is a reason for Japan's elites to be concerned.

In the history of US-Japan relations the Clinton era registered many cases of unpleasant encounters between the two powers. Obama's team is basically composed of Clinton's old hands, especially the secretary of state. Clearly Clinton's Asian policy serves as the starting point for Obama's.<sup>17</sup>

On specific issues, Tokyo would hope that Obama takes a positive-sum foreign trade policy to combat the on-going international economic storm. The successive Democrats administrations were inclined to yield to protectionism pressure at home, as they were politically allied with the trade unions. Japan's export to the US would bear the first brunt each time America suffers a recession.<sup>18</sup>

#### IV. The "creeping multilateralization" of security

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<sup>15</sup> 《中美建交秘聞：1972-1978》，鳳凰衛視，2009年1月11日

<sup>16</sup> Funabashi, "Keeping Up with Asia".

<sup>17</sup> According to Stuart Holliday, a member of Bush's power transition team in 2000, presidential personnel is policy. *E. journal of the US State Department*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Armacost, *Friends or Rivals: The Insider's Account of US-Japan Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

American power will inevitably decline in relative terms as Asian giants such as China and India rise. But, at least as far as Asia is concerned, arguments about the end of American hegemony ring hollow.

For one thing, the United States was never a hegemon in Asia. Only some American post-Cold War triumphalists thought it was. The nature of US power and the exercise of its influence was always much more clever and subtle than most assume. In fact, as India and China rise, the US could actually find itself in a stronger position.

After all, power and influence are built on the back of economic success. The Chinese economy has been doubling in size every 10 years since 1978. The Indian economy has been doing the same since 1991. In contrast, it takes about two decades for the US economy to double in size. Doesn't this surely mean that Asia is rushing toward a state of multi-polarity -- a configuration of roughly equal great powers balancing against each other -- while American influence is on the wane?

The seemingly obvious conclusion would be true but for the fact that Asia has a unique kind of hierarchical security system that came about partly by accident and partly by design.

No power can be pre-eminent if it cannot maintain its military advantage over rivals. Yet, despite the fact that America spends more on defense than the next 10 powers combined, it has never been a regional hegemon because it actually relies on the cooperation of other states to remain predominant. Without cooperation from allies such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore and the Philippines, the US could not retain its forward military positions in the West Pacific. Likewise, the US needs the cooperation of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to host its critical radar infrastructure.

Moreover, in remaining pre-eminent, America requires other key states and regional groupings, such as ASEAN, to acquiesce in its security relationships. Thus, there is broad-based regional approval of US alliances with Japan, South Korea and Australia, as well as with partners such as the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and India. The key to the effectiveness of these bilateral relationships is that they enjoy widespread support in the region as stabilizing arrangements. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Combined with the raw military capacity that the US brings to the table, this means that America is powerful enough to enforce the peace and provide stability for commerce to thrive. America's presence and bilateral partnerships are complementary to Asian states' obsession with counter-dominance and non-interference in the region.

This dynamic "liberal order" -- largely fair, flexible and open enough to welcome new entrants as they rise -- will continue to serve Asia well. For example, even China has been a major beneficiary of the public goods provided by the US-led hierarchical system.

This interdependent relationship means that the US is not so powerful that it can readily ignore the wishes of key states, and it is here that its apparent weakness is actually strength. America is not a Hobbesian Leviathan with absolute authority and power.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, China's strategists are frequently puzzled by the lack of "balancing" that takes place against the US in the region. But it is puzzling only if we characterize Asia as being multi-polar rather than hierarchical.

In fact, any balancing tends to take place in order to preserve the hierarchy, not to replace or supersede it. Other states tend to resist bids by any Asian power -- be it Japan, China or India -- to rise to the top of the pyramid. As a foreign-based power, the US needs the cooperation of Asian partners. This keeps the top dog in check. Were an Asian country like China to rise to the top, it would not need the same level of regional cooperation and acquiescence to maintain its position and military footholds.

## V. Conclusions

In terms of political issues, over the last decade, China took advantage of the U.S. preoccupation with security issues at home and fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to expand its power in Southeast Asia. It has been very effective in this effort, expanding trade, investment, and tourism and turning the page on a new chapter of nuanced diplomacy that is much more effective than the ideological and rigid posture it assumed earlier. However, the ASEAN countries are interested in ensuring a careful balance between major powers, particularly China given its proximity. For the most part, one would be hard pressed to imagine a more benign process for China's emergence on the world and regional stage than what we have witnessed over the last 10 years. Chinese domestic policies aside, its regional role has been largely positive, providing investment, a new and growing market for exports, tourists, and expanding Asia's heft in global organizations. An important exception is the South China Sea where Chinese rhetoric has been old school and ideological. Its approach has alarmed Vietnam and to a lesser extent the Philippines. Chinese foreign policy has hoped to divide ASEAN on this critical issue, using aid, investment, and other forms of engagement to try to ensure that more needy ASEAN countries such as Laos, Cambodia, and Burma do not support a unified stance on issues related to the Spratleys and the South China Sea. The United States and ASEAN will likely discuss these issues during the summit, not in the context of confronting China, but through areas such as strengthening education on international maritime law and expanded training opportunities.

In 2010, we will likely see an increase in US momentum in Southeast Asia as President Obama makes his visit to Indonesia and ASEAN and its dialogue partners prepare for the summer ASEAN meetings. Before then, several Southeast Asian leaders attended the nuclear

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<sup>19</sup> John Lee, 2009, Why America Will Lead the 'Asian Century' ? August 16, 2009.  
[http://www.realclearworld.com/printpage/?url=http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/08/16/why\\_america\\_will\\_lead\\_the\\_asian\\_century\\_97061.html](http://www.realclearworld.com/printpage/?url=http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/08/16/why_america_will_lead_the_asian_century_97061.html)

summit in Washington. With 43 heads of state expected, their collective presence will be noted. Secretary Clinton's participation in the ASEAN meetings in Hanoi will follow through on the Obama administration's pledge to "show up" in Southeast Asia. However, the ASEAN countries will also judge the administration's commitment to strengthening its relations with the region by its handling of the second US-ASEAN Leaders Meeting. A time and venue for the summit meeting should become apparent in 2010.





# **RENEWABLE ENERGY AS A VIABLE SOLUTION TO GLOBAL TERRORISM & PIRACY DIRECTED AT AMERICA AND ITS ALLIES**

Dr. Kennedy G. Ondieki

## Introduction

The attacks of September 11, 2001 presented the American foreign policy with extraordinary complex challenges. The immediate need to devise approaches and policies to protect America and respond to terrorist attacks directed at American infrastructure and interests became the first priority and consumed time and energy of administrators and policy-makers (Habeck 2010; Laqueur 2010). Over the last eight years, Americas' response to the so-called "global war on terror" involved an aggressive offensive military operations aimed at dismantling and eliminating al-Qaeda's network, to deny it safe-havens and prevent further attacks. The removal of Saddam Hussein and Taliban regimes and the displacement of al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan were critical early victories (Boucek and Donadio 2010; Cohen 2010; Ondieki 2005). However, the US-coalition forces, military invasions did not completely defeat al-Qaeda global network nor have al-Qaeda and Taliban's core leaders (bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and Omar) been captured or killed. The Taliban and al-Qaeda disciples have now merged into *Taliquaeda* network that has morphed into shadowy fighters and insurgents who are determined more than ever to attack America and its allies at home and abroad (Ondieki 2005).

Under president Obama's watch, the recent case of a Nigerian free-lance terrorist, Farouk Abdulmutallab's failed attempts to attack America on Christmas Eve over the skies of Detroit, was yet another rude awakening that al-Qaeda's network of terrorists threatens America's national security (Serwer 2010). To counter the threat of terrorism, the Obama administration imposed travel restrictions on Nigerians and authorized new and strict screening apparatus on all US airports and on all flights bound for the United States (Cohen 2010).

Beyond the short-term priorities and policies aimed at protecting America, is the long-term problem of discerning the deeper motivational factors of the attacks. By framing the attacks of September 11 and others that followed thereafter, within some sort of plausible paradigms of who attacked America and why would policy-makers be in a position to find long-lasting solutions to the problem of global terrorism (Habeck 2010). To disrupt and dismantle global terrorism and piracy attacks, the Obama administration must not only discern why the US establishment and interests are targeted but also must take into consideration that the American foreign policy towards the Middle East and the Arab and Muslim world sometimes provoke hatred and violence. Only then, would president Obama be

in a position to devise viable strategies to deal with the problem of terrorism and piracy to minimize and/or prevent further attacks, and maybe dismantle al-Qaeda's global network of terror.

But before discussing what the Obama administration's new approach to international terrorism and what he must do to successfully disrupt and dismantle al-Qaeda's global network of terror and piracy attacks, it is important that we briefly summarize some of the principal paradigms and recruiting narratives that contribute to global jihadist terrorism and their implications. These paradigms run the gamut from the anthropological to economic factors, religious to political motivations. They include: the clash of civilization theory, the root-cause factor, the Israel-Palestine imbroglio, the US foreign policy, and the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq.

### Paradigms that Explains Terrorism

Over the decades, scholars, policy analysts, and terrorist experts have spent a great deal of time and energy debating and researching the phenomenon of terrorism. There is still no general consensus on what terrorism means beyond the "we know it when we see it" (Hoffman 2004) rule of thumb that lets one man's terrorist off the hook as another man's liberator. Besides, there is no consensus on the theory of terrorism. Many scholars and theorists no longer strive to explain terrorism by means of "unitary theories". This is because the study of terrorism is a complex enterprise that calls for diverse analyses and perspectives (Henderson 2001; Bender and Leone 1986; Booth and Dunne 2002; Hershberg and Moore 2002; Ondieki 2005).

### The "Clash of Civilizations" Theory

In his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington (1996:19-39) argued that in the post-Cold War world, the most significant distinctions among peoples and societies, both those in developed and developing countries, will not necessarily be economic, political, or ideological forces, but rather cultural factors. Specifically, he argued that future global conflicts and wars would occur between the "tectonic plates" of civilizations or along the fault-lines of ancient cultural programming.

For example, he maintained that whenever peoples or nations seek to find out who they really are the bulk of their answers lies in generational practices or cherished values and beliefs, ancestry, customs, tradition, history, institutions, language, and religion, among others. People identify with their own tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nation-states, and, at the broader level, civilizations (p.21).

Furthermore, Huntington asserted that people use politics not only to promote and advance their interests but also to define who they are. Oftentimes, he observed that, "people and nations know who they are only when they know who they are not and often only when they know whom they are against" (p.21). Among the future clashes predicted by Huntington

is a conflict between a revitalized Islam and the West. For Huntington, “The dangerous clashes of the future are likely to rise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness” (pp.28-29).

Huntington identified civilizations in terms of world religions and philosophies, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judeo-Christianity, and Slavic-Orthodox philosophies. He argued that since there are deep distinctions and differences in terms of the cultural values, practices, and teachings among these religions, most likely they are bound to clash (pp.28-29).

Dinesh D’Souza (2002:14-15) argued that the Western industrial nations in general and the United States in particular must take Huntington’s warnings seriously and cease assuming that “the rest of the world will uncritically embrace the principles of Judeo-Christian civilization.” He asserted that in this new world order, local politics are the politics of ethnicity and global politics are the politics of civilizations. D’Souza, like Huntington, noted that future rivalries between the core (developed countries) and the periphery (developing countries) could be based upon the clash of civilizations (p.15).

One implication of Huntington’s theory is that in the new world, the most pervasive and dangerous confrontations will not be between social classes, the “haves” and the “have-nots” (i.e., first- and third-world countries), or other economically defined groups, but rather, between peoples and societies belonging to different cultural backgrounds and entities (pp.19-39). The September 11 attacks on America’s symbolic landmarks, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (sites of U.S. economic and military power), appear to bear this out.

Huntington’s theory has come under severe criticism. For example, Edward Said (2001) critiqued the cultural essentialism underlying his concept of a “civilization” as something discretely marked off from its neighbors (Herbst 2003; Mamdani 2004). Said noted that Huntington is an ideologue who is looking for another cold war between the “West” and “the Rest”, who makes his “civilizations” and “identities” into “sealed-off entities” purged of the “myriad of currents and counter-currents that animate human history” (quoted in Ruthven 2002:241). He concluded that such interactions have over the centuries made it possible for “history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest, but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing”(quoted in Ruthven 2002:241).

Other critics, specifically Peter Bergen (2001:227), argued that Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis was essentially a seductive theory that generally explained the events and the political discourse of the post-Cold War era. Bergen maintained that “The test of such a theory is its applicability to a wide number of situations, and certainly Huntington can point to a wealth of examples: a bloody war in the Sudan between the Islamist regime and Christian rebels; continued wars between the Russians and Chechens; the Muslim insurgency in the Philippines; the Arabs versus the Jews in Israel; and now, perhaps, the events of September 11” (p.230).

Furthermore, Bergen contended that the myriad of conflicts around the globe have run inconveniently the opposite of the world according to Huntington. For example, the bloodiest political violence, genocide during the 1990s, was not between civilizations, but between tribal and ethnic groups. The point is exemplified by the Hutu-Tutsi massacres in Rwanda and the Congo and on-going tribal and religious wars in other hotspots around the world (pp. 227-231).

Additionally, critics contend that Huntington's theory fails to explain, for instance, the frequency of conflicts that are emerging from within the developing countries themselves. Therefore, contrary to Huntington's prediction that future conflicts would be between the world's major civilizations, it appears that future conflicts will be, to borrow Bergen's phrase, between the "clash of acquaintances" (p. 231), i.e., wars fought between peoples and societies with similar historical, territorial, cultural, ideological, linguistic, or religious backgrounds.

Moreover, examples that seem at first glance to conform to the idea of the clash of civilizations become more complicated when one takes a hard and deeper look at contemporary world conflicts—the tribal wars in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast (Africa); ethnic rivalries in Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Chechnya (Eastern Europe), politico-religious confrontations in Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Southwest and Southeast Asia); political conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain (Western Europe); political rivalries in Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, (the Middle East), or the on-going religious strife and conflicts in many parts of the Middle East, especially those between Islamic fundamentalism, the Shiites against Sunnis, the Wahhabis against the rest of the Islamic dogma, and the al-Qaeda brand of Islam against the rest of the Arab and Muslim world. In other words, the underlying cause for confrontation among and within the Muslim clerics and followers is Islamist reformation—whose dogma and interpretation of the Koran dominates (Habeck 2010). One detects a pattern of confrontations and animosities waged and directed at peoples and societies that share similar socio-cultural backgrounds, geopolitical landscapes, or religious faiths.

Walter Laqueur (2001 and 2004) also argued that it is impossible to explain the current and frequent violent atrocities using the "clash of civilizations" theory because the bloodiest confrontations have occurred not only between Muslim groups or states against the West, but also within the Muslim world itself. He added that this trend holds true for both interstate conflicts (e.g., the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in the 1990s) as well as intrastate conflicts (such as the terrorism of Algerian Islamists against their fellow citizens (Laqueur 2001:77-79). The same thing also applies to the persecution of the Kurds in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's dictatorial era and the civil war in Afghanistan during the Taliban's brutal era. Additionally, one must consider the many assassination attempts, successful and unsuccessful, against Arab and Muslim leaders (Laqueur 2001:71-82)

It may be a more accurate predictor of post-Cold War rivalries, and particularly, the many modern animosities and conflicts that we are currently witnessing. Nationalism is another motive that cuts across the “clash of civilizations.” It applies to the Muslims in Kosovo, the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, the Basques in Spain, the Irish Republican Army in Ireland, and the Palestinians in the Middle East. On a smaller scale, we see the rivalries that Michael Ignatieff, borrowing from Sigmund Freud, called the “narcissism of minor differences” (i.e., wars fought between culturally and ethnically similar tribes) as epitomized by the many conflicts witnessed in contemporary African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and European countries and regions (Ignatieff 2003; Bergen 2002; Rushdie 2002). It is important, however, to note that where there are clashes of confrontation within each major civilization, it is only a few groups who are engaged in conflict, as were the cases with the ethnic cleansings in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

#### The “Root-Causes” Factor

For many decades, policy analysts, decision-makers, media pundits, and academic scholars viewed terrorism as a response to socio-economic injustices (Flint 2003; Chomsky 2003; Hershberg and Moore 2002). Historian and terrorism expert, Walter Laqueur (2001:71-72), observed that the proponents of the “root-causes” theory tended to argue that if the economic, political, and social injustices were to be solved, there would be fewer human conflicts and confrontations. He noted that proponents of the “root causes” theory, therefore, suggested that the way to deal with terrorism is to address factors such as anger, frustrations, grievances, stresses, and resentments that lead to hatred and terrorism. Viewed from this perspective, Laqueur wrote that “terrorists were fanatical believers driven to despair by intolerable conditions. They were poor or oppressed, or at least on the side of the poor and oppressed, and their inspiration were deeply ideological” (p.72).

Although Laqueur acknowledged some truth in the assertions proposed by the root-causes theorists, he however thought that this was a left-wing ideology that was mostly applicable during the decolonization periods, during which those in developing areas employed violence to justify liberating themselves from imperial and colonial rule (p.72). He further noted that this left-wing ideology found and still finds fertile ground among organizations such as the Basque separatist movement (ETA), sections of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which subscribe to Marxist-Leninist doctrines. Laqueur, however, noted that this “ideological patina was merely a reflection of the zeitgeist, did not go very deep or last long, and hardly affected staunch nationalism at these movements’ cores” (p.72).

Furthermore, although there are new waves of terrorism emerging from the extreme right of the political spectrum, the left-wing terrorists did not totally disappear, but rather occupied a peripheral position. Laqueur, therefore, concluded that those “people who had sympathized with what they thought were the justified grievances behind terrorism found themselves in a

quandary” (p.72). This is because the most heinous terrorist attack in American history prior to the catastrophic attacks of September 11 was in Oklahoma City in 1995. The bombing of the Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City was not the work of left-wing ideologues, but that of homegrown right-wing terrorists (Talbot and Chanda 2001; Kushner 1998; Hamm 1999; Heymann 1998). Laqueur pointed out that Timothy McVeigh, the perpetrator of the Oklahoma City bombing, harbored deep grievances and a hatred of the U.S. federal government and law enforcement authorities, but McVeigh’s grievances were not what Americans in the left-wing of the political spectrum would have supported, endorsed, or sympathized with.

Other scholars also propose that the “root causes” for hatred and terrorism are hunger, poverty, illiteracy, alienation, oppression, unemployment, and other miseries. For example, because it is generally believed that poverty provides a fertile breeding ground for terrorism, fighting poverty would seem an ideal strategy in helping make the world free of terrorism. The argument then goes that solving these underlying socio-political and economic problems would end hatred, violence, and terrorism (Laqueur 2001; Chomsky 2003; Chua 2003; Atran 2004),

The problem with these assertions, however, is that as logical as poverty-breeds-hatred and hatred-breeds-terrorism might be, poverty and socio-economic disparities do not necessarily drive people to sacrifice their own lives to kill others. Anthropologist Scott Atran (2004:67) stated that, “poverty and lack of education per se are not the root-causes of suicide terrorism.” For example, he noted that the September 11 planners, financiers, hijackers, and suicide bombers were not impoverished or ignorant. Legal scholar Amy Chua (2003) observed that when poverty is combined with other factors such as honor, pride, dignity, and hopelessness, they can become lethal, the driving wedge against all types of evils.

Other critics of the “root causes” theory, including Fergal Keane (2002) and Victor Hanson (2004) argued that if terrorism is the response of socio-economic and political injustices, why is it that the most oppressed and repressed people, particularly those in developing societies are reluctant to employ terrorism as an instrument of struggle to express their frustrations and grievances? Put another way: Why is it that the world’s poorest nations, Haiti and Burkina Faso, among others, do not resort to the use of terrorism to express their anger, suffering, and injustices? Why is it that millions of oppressed people throughout the developing world do not embark on suicide missions or campaigns to vent their frustrations? Why is it that two of the most politically oppressed nations on the globe, Afghanistan and Iraq during the regimes of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, did not resort to terrorism to express their miseries? Hanson (2004) noted that individuals/groups rarely resort to violence solely based on their economic or political status. In other words, poverty and oppression are not the only reasons why individuals join and participate in terrorist operations nor are some members of terrorist groups impoverished.

In reference to the terrorist attacks against America on September 11, Peter Bergen (2001:226-232) argued the attacks were not primarily the by-products of poverty or socio-economic inequalities between the West and the developing countries. Because if that were the case, the September 11 hijackers should have been poor and destitute Africans or Afghans and not Egyptians, Saudis, or United Arab Emirate citizens who came from well-off families. Rohan Gunaratna (2002:26) also pointed out that Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the world's most wanted renegades, "are the archetypes of a new generation of terrorists, many of whom come from educated and well-to-do families, as did the 9/11 hijackers—a clear demonstration that the Islamist terrorists ideologies appeal equally to all classes and strata of society."

Peter Bergen (2002) argued that bin Laden and his terrorist network did not want to destroy U.S. symbols of American culture such as the entertainment industry in Hollywood, the media establishment, or the "entertainment capital of the world", Las Vegas. But *The 9/11 Commission Report* (2004: xvi) contained the following conclusions about Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist infrastructure: "We learned about an enemy who is sophisticated, patient, disciplined, and lethal. The enemy rallies a broad support in the Arab and Muslim world by demanding redress of political grievances, but its hostility toward us and our values is limitless. Its purpose is to rid the world of religious and political pluralism, the plebiscite, and equal rights for women. It makes no distinction between military and civilian targets. *Collateral damage* is not in its Lexicon." In other words, bin Laden and his followers are interested in universalizing their brand of Islam, overthrowing Middle Eastern regimes, opposing secularism, and installing establishing true Islamic states in the Arab world even if it requires destroying the US its allies.

### The Nationalist Reactions to Foreign Invasion

The nationalist reaction to foreign invasion was a theory proposed by Robert Pape, a Chicago professor who argued that the underlying motivation for current on-going terrorist activities planned and executed by al-Qaeda's network has little to do with Islamic fundamentalism and more to do with the US and its allies' invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan that inflames the Muslim and Arab world. The problem with this assertion—the American occupation in Middle East is the primary cause for its attack is unsupported because as much as there have been terrorism in opposition to foreign invasion but currently 95% of suicide terrorist activities have very little to do with foreign invasion (or in reality point to an entirely different conclusion). For example, terrorist activities perpetrated by al-Qaeda and its affiliates mostly kill Muslims be they in Afghanistan, Iraq, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Turkey, or Yemen (Laqueur 2010).

Similarly, the recent metro twin attacks in Moscow by two young female suicide-bombers were not motivated by foreign invasion per se or driven to retaliate due to foreign invasion. According to the Russian authorities, the two female bombers were from the

north Caucasus and mostly the Muslim region including Dagestan. Furthermore, some observers think that the Moscow bombers were allegedly avenging their husbands who had been killed by the Russian counter-terrorist operations. These incidents show that foreign invasion does not necessarily always result to terrorism (*The Economist* 4/3/2010, p.47).

Nonetheless, Pape's theory was not only embraced by isolationist and also by some policy-makers in Washington. The solution to minimizing terrorism directed at the America and its allies was, then to leave or withdraw from the Middle East and let the Iraqis and Afghans run their own countries (Laqueur 2010). The Obama administration and many of his policy elites embraced this thinking and thus decided to start scaling back the US military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to President Obama's plans, the US military personnel should be out of Iraq and Afghanistan by latest the year 2012. The question now becomes, will the US withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan end terrorism without also finding a viable solution to the age-old dispute in the Muslim and Arab world—the Israel and Palestine conflict?

#### The Israel-Palestinian Imbroglio

There are some scholars and policy-makers who have gone as far as saying that a solution to terrorist problem is very easy: impose a peace settlement on Israel and Palestine and the price of oil will dramatically fall, failed states will prosper, the popularity of the west in general and America in particular will skyrocket and al-Qaeda's leader Osama bin Laden will retire to his agricultural and construction businesses and projects and terrorism will disappear from the face of the earth (Laqueur 2010). The problem with this assertion is that many US presidents before Barack Obama tried to find a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict but for some reason, failed to close the deal and thus squandered opportunities (Hitchens 2010).

Will the Obama administration finally find a long lasting solution to the Arabs and Jews confrontations i.e., to make sure that an existence of two states of Israel and Palestine finally becomes a reality? With possibly another showdown between the Israelis and Palestinians in horizon as Israelis Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's deviant plans to build in the occupied territories in East Jerusalem regardless of what officials in Washington say. President Obama is faced yet with another set of problems as previous concessions and peace agreements signed by both the Israelis and Palestinians would be disregarded in preparation for another war.

The question now becomes: Would a solution to Palestinian-Israeli dispute minimize hatred and violence against America and its allies? The current conflict between the Arabs and Israelis could be traced to the historical hatred and practices that incite the Palestinians and Israelis to resort to violence. Finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem that will allow two peoples to exist side-by-side as neighbors and sovereign states will be critical in mitigating Arab and Muslim rage and end the cycle of hatred and violence against the Israelis



and Americans and vice versa. For example, Richard A. Clarke (2004:224) stated that, “If we could achieve a Middle East peace much of the popular support for al-Qaeda and much of the hatred for America would evaporate.”

Charles Hill (2001:92) however, observed that, “Those who think that the U.S. can defuse Islamic fundamentalist rage and end the terrorism by imposing a peaceful agreement are out of touch with the cruel reality of the Middle East. To press now for such a peace is to invite further terror.” He argued that pressing for peace process without solving the underlying causes of animosity and conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis is to contribute for more hatred and confrontation. Hill concluded that only after Islamic terrorism is eradicated can an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement be achieved and only after the American war on terrorism is won can peace in the Middle East become possible. Berger and Sutphen (2001:124) also stated that:

*Unquestionably, the cycle of violence in the Middle East over the past year, which from the Arab perspective is driven by Israel’s occupation and its American-supplied power (without regard to Palestinian provocation), has provided resonance for bin Laden in the region. Moreover, American is a magnet for a range of frustrations—some driven from our power and some from our policies. But it is important to lay flatly to rest the notion that September 11 somehow is payback for America support for Israel or failure for American Middle East policy.”*

The argument has been made in many other intractable conflicts around the globe, including those motivated by religious fundamentalists. Bergen (2002), Ruthven (2002), Scheuer (2004) asserted that political actors and public officials who think that capturing bin Laden “dead or alive” (to borrow President Bush’s phrase) will end terrorism fail to take into consideration that if bin Laden is killed, he will be regarded a martyr by many in Arab and Muslim countries and if he is captured alive, he will be viewed as a religious fighter for the service of Islam and Allah. They claimed that if bin Laden is captured or killed, there are many bin Ladens in the Arab and Muslim world who would be willing to take his position.

According to Michael Ignatieff (2003), solving the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation is critical to eradicating decades of animosities between the Jews and Arabs. He noted that the U.S. must ensure that peace prevails between the two competing entities. He also argued that to enforce peace, the U.S. must ensure that the Palestinians have a state of their own and are assisted in rebuilding their shattered infrastructure and economy to ensure growth and development. He concluded that to leave “the Palestinians to face Israeli tanks and helicopter gunships, is a virtual guarantee of unending Islamic wrath against the United States” (quoted in Chomsky 2003:212).

Chomsky (2003:212) also observed that by supplying Israelis with U.S.-made gunships, tanks, military equipment, and the financial largesse to maintain them infuriates the Palestinians and Arabs who harbor hatred against Americans and Israelis. Chomsky maintained that public officials interested in controlling terrorism must heed the advice offered by some top Israeli military intelligence and security personnel, including the assertions made by Israeli counter-terrorist experts, Ami Ayalon, who claimed that “those

who want victory' against terror without addressing underlying grievances 'want an unending war'—much as President Bush proclaimed" (quoted Chomsky 2003:213). Similar remarks were made by former head of Israeli military intelligence, Uri Sagie who pointed out that the Israelis will not be safe with their neighbors nor get anywhere as long as they adopt the slogan: "We will teach you what is good for you [by our superior force]. We must see things from the perspective of the other side....Those who hope for mutual survival with the Arabs must accept a minimum of respect for Arab society" (quoted in Chomsky 2003:213).

To conclude, without a viable Palestinian state that will ensure its peoples' right to self-rule, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will continue. This is because as long as the Palestinians believe that they are politically oppressed and their aspirations for a free state are unrealized, the historical conflicts and violence directed toward the United States and its ally Israel is unlikely to recede. Furthermore, as long as there is a lack of a solution to the Palestinian–Israeli imbroglio or confrontation, Arab and Muslim militants and terrorists, especially bin Laden and al-Qaeda, will continue to capitalize on the Palestinian plight as leverage to justify their hatred and violence against the United States and Israel.

But as Berger and Stuphen (2001:124) cautioned, "...one must separate bin Laden's agenda from the distinct but relevant identification of the sources of sympathy for him and resentment in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Indeed, bin Laden had been no champion of the Palestinian cause, although conflict in the Middle East has allowed him to more easily coalesce a wide range of terrorist groups under the Al Qaeda umbrella." In other words, although the Palestinian-Israeli problem provokes the sensibilities of the Arab and Muslim worlds including bin Laden and al-Qaeda, their claims that they wage jihad against America and Israel primarily because of the Palestinian plight is camouflaged in political propaganda and rhetoric. The true objectives of terrorist groups including those within al-Qaeda "...are often stated in veiled terms or implication, and sometimes they are not stated at all" (Laqueur 2004:2).

#### U.S. Foreign Policy Contributes to the Attacks

Several scholars, political analysts, and religionists argue that one of the reasons why the United States is unpopular, hated, targeted, and attacked by terrorists is generally because of its foreign policies. Critics of U.S. foreign policy cite its profitable projects of globalization; its blind support of Israel over the Palestinian cause; its support of tyrants and unpopular regimes in the Middle East, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia; the continued presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia; and its current preemptive invasion and war in the Muslim states of Afghanistan and Iraq (Chomsky 20003; Mamdani 2004; Rubio 2002; Booth and Dunne 2003; Scheuer 2004; Mahajan 2002; Hershberg and Moore 2003; Smith 2002). In other words, U.S. foreign policies provoke widespread hatred and hostilities in the Arab and Muslim countries.

Herbst (2003) and Smith (2002) pointed out that immediately after the attacks of September 11, there were fundamental differences of opinion as to why bin Laden and

al-Qaeda attacked the United States. Some people within the United States and many from around the world blamed American foreign policy as the contributing factor for the attacks. Scholars, who “blamed America first” for the attacks included, Chomsky (2003), Scheuer (2004), and Mamdani (2004) and Mahajan (2002). They pointed to the U.S. intentions for hegemony in the Middle East; its disregard of Muslim grievances; its economic sanctions against Iraq; its blind support for Israel’s repressive policies against Palestinians; and its support of some of the most unpopular, oppressive, repressive, and corrupt regimes in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to ensure profits for American companies. In their view, the combination of these factors provokes Arab and Muslim rage and al-Qaeda’s attacks against U.S. interests at home and abroad.

Another critic of American foreign policy, novelist Susan Sontag, stated that the September 11 attack was a “dose of reality” for the United States. In her view, the attack was provoked by the U.S. direct and indirect engagement in “acts of terrorism” such as the military bombings i.e., no fly zone incidents of Iraq prior to September 11 (cited in Herbst 2003:27). Sontag’s criticisms were directed at the U.S. government. Religious leaders who supported the “war on terrorism” and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq directed their criticisms towards secular Americans and their lifestyles. For example, Reverend Jerry Falwell, speaking as a guest on Pat Robertson’s television show, “The 700 Club”, stated:

*I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way—all of them who’ve tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face and say ‘You helped this happen’ ....God will not be mocked (quoted in Herbst 2003:27).*

For months after the attacks of September 11, those people who blamed the United States and questioned the President’s policies and counterterrorism strategies were considered disloyal, unpatriotic, and apologists for terrorism.

Rushdie (2002) pointed out that blaming America foreign policies and its citizens’ lifestyles for the attack of September 11 was fundamentally flawed because as much as U.S. policies and practices inflames anti-American sentiments in the Arab and Muslim countries and around the world, the killing of three thousands civilians could not be justified. Friedman (2002) claimed that as the nation was mourning the loss of lives and the destruction of the World Trade Center, those who blamed the U.S. foreign policies and suggested that “America had it coming” and deserved to be attacked were wrong and unpatriotic.

Herbst (2003), however, argued that most critics who were labeled unpatriotic for “blaming America first” were just as shocked and outraged by the attacks as the others. Furthermore, those who criticized government policies and actions may not necessarily be hateful towards America and Americans or support the macabre actions of al-Qaeda terrorists, but rather were practicing the traditions and values that make America great, exercising the freedom of expression and dissent (Koh 2001; Hershberg and Moore 2002; Booth and Dunne 2002). To conclude, because American foreign policy continues to inflame Arab and Muslim

sensibilities, those who blame the U.S. policies and practices for the attacks are not only accused for being disloyal, unpatriotic but also hostile to the United States interests. The September 11 attacks and many other that have followed since then have the effect of strengthening the hand and resolve of those who make policies including those designed to confront terrorism.

#### Recruiting Narratives for Terrorists

Karen Greenberg (2010:25) postulates that there are at least three major terrorist narratives that are employed to lure recruits to terrorist movements and violence. The first is the regional narrative—this involves local conflicts such as the ones in Somalia, Kashmir, Chechnya, etc. The second is the narrative that the West and the United States and their corrupting cultural influences and secular lifestyles undermine Islamic doctrines and teachings. The third is the narrative that the United States and its allies' involvement in the Arab and Muslim countries abroad—the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military presences in the Saudi Arabia (Islam's holiest places), and the courting of Muslim leaders and dictators who oppress people and exploit resources (oil). And the fourth is the Palestine narrative—the miseries and suffering of the Palestinian is often used to recruit new followers into terrorist movements. Greenberg claims that these kinds of appeal have been weaved together by Osama bin Laden to lure the young and Muslim in American and other western cities to join al-Qaeda and other terrorist movement to attacks America and its allies at home or abroad.

Before discussing how the Obama administration can counter terrorist recruiting narratives in order to dismantle global terrorist networks, it is important that China be included in the overall calculus on war on terrorism and piracy. To bring China on board to assist in the war on terror and piracy, officials in Washington and Beijing must normalize their current and on-going tensions and disputes and cooperate to confront their common adversaries—Iran, North-Korea, al-Qaeda, and pirates in the Persian Gulf/Horn of Africa.

#### US-China Confrontations

In recent months, America and China relations having been experiencing tremendous pressure and tension. Officials in Washington and Beijing are busy trying to normalize their differences by toning down their rhetoric and differences to work as partners who share common mutual respect and interests. Under the Obama administration, the US-China disputes seem to revolve around two key issues –the US arms sale to Taiwan and Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama and trade regulations—the Chinese indigenous innovation, patent law, standards, approvals, currency, and Google disputes.

The China Economic Review (2010:3) recently said that “An aggressive China on trade relations with US and western powers might not win many friends and favors....” Threatening to punish and/or sanction American businesses and firms involved in the sale of

arms to Taiwan might not normalize Washington, instead this might lead to ripple effects—the tit-for-tat policies. For instance, immediately after Beijing announced that it will punish American companies that were involved in arm sale to Taiwan, president Obama responded by meeting Dalai Lama and imposed tighter import tariffs on Chinese cheap tires and said that stimulus money can only buy American made products. Lately officials in Washington and Beijing are toning down their rhetoric and tit-for-tat policies to work together on normalizing their relations. To make good of their promises, the Chinese government allowed American carrier group to dock in Hong Kong, a privilege that had been revoked in the past in response to the US supporting the China's "renegades provinces" i.e., Taiwan and Tibet (Roberts 2010; Ramo 2010).

Additionally, Beijing moved passed her confrontation to smooth the way for President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington. The question now becomes: Why is China willing to normalize its relations with the US? Firstly, the Chinese economy is more vulnerable to foreign sanctions than those of America. Secondly, the Chinese have realized that excluding foreign companies from Chinese markets may have ripple effects. Thirdly, China still remains weaker than America in many respects—militarily, information, science, technology, innovations, among others. So, it is fair to say that as a rising power with tremendous growth-rate is, China needs America and western markets and thus strict economic sanctions, favoritism, and protectionist agendas will hurt the Chinese economy in the long-run.

In regards to business and trade, American and foreign companies claim that China's new protectionism policies are shutting them out of business as China is favoring domestic companies and thus making it harder for western companies to compete for business licenses, government contracts and markets. Roberts (2010:1) writes that "Western companies are getting a frosty reception on the mainland and facing new trade, patent, and procurement policies that shut them out as Beijing promotes homegrown rivals." In fact, the Chinese government has devised policies and regulations that keep foreign companies and business enterprises in check.

The first one is the "indigenous innovations" policy—which is supposed to favor domestic and local technologies in computer software and new energy equipment for government purchases worth billions of dollars. Under these regulations, western and Americans companies such as Microsoft and SAP and computer makers such as Dell and HP stand to lose contracts.

The second is patent law—a new guideline could force foreign companies to hand over patent if they are seen using them "unfairly". The law measure require that foreign drug-makers and software writers or designers to first register in China any innovations developed in their mainland labs, spurring fears of loss over control of their technology.

The third is the complex and ubiquitous trade regulations. It is argued that every year, China issues over ten thousand product standards some of which are written and imposed to

keep foreign businesses out the market. For example, Italian appliance manufacturers were shut out by rules requiring hotter-burning gas stoves. Similarly, Germany tire-makers must contend with the rules mandating that costly and thus Germans find it less profitable to sell in China.

The fourth is the approval of licenses—it is claimed that there are many bureaucratic huddles foreign companies have to jump to apply for licenses and when they do get them approved, the process takes up to two years. This is Chinese officials drag their feet in order to discourage foreign firms. Besides, foreign businesses are allowed to register one business at a time (Roberts 2010:32-37).

The fifth is in regards to censorship—the dispute that led to Google exiting China had to do with hacking problem and censorship rules. Although China has disputed the hacking claim, the fact of the matter is that Beijing officials are interested in developing homegrown technologies and internets that are run by Chinese businesses instead of being shop-stores for foreign and western brands. China wants to not only to control the social networking of its people but also wants to assert her power and play a bigger role in the world market. Claims of “pornography” may be used to censor foreign companies, as they did with Google to promote China’s agenda.

In essence, Chinese regulations make it hard for foreign companies to open more branches to tap into Chinese markets. This is because Chinese protectionist policies favor domestic companies and homegrown rivals over foreigners. These disputes and regulations create tensions between US officials with those in Beijing. Besides, Chinese rules and barriers make it extremely difficult for foreign firms to do business in China (Roberts 2010, Ramo 2010.) As rising power, China must be open and fair in her dialogues with other world powers and play much larger role in global conflicts and management—including global terrorism and piracy.

#### China’s Role on Terrorism and Piracy

The question now becomes, why should China be brought on board on the war on terrorism and piracy? As one of the emerging economies in the world, China a leading member of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) has a lot at stake—for example, (i) China is going to build dozens of nuclear reactors in the next fifteen years, thus will need more materials; (ii) China is the leader in Solar-and Wind technologies (designs and manufactures solar panels and wind turbines); (iii) China makes more cars than the US and is now the largest exporter in the world recently displacing Germany; (iv) China is now the second largest economy in the world and stands to lose if its business infrastructures and interests are targeted by terrorist and pirates; (v) China is expanding its influence throughout the world—she is now the largest donor in developmental aids and loans to developing countries in Asia and Africa and to some extent is South America; (vi) China is making significant impasses in developing countries not only in search of markets but also in raw

materials and energy sources—oil, timber, cements etc. For example, in Uganda, Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, China has made concession to drill oil and in Congo basin they are going for the vast reserves of minerals and timber; (vii) China is leading in infrastructure building in developing nations, in Africa, they are building schools, hospitals, roads, railways and have forgiven some African nations' debts; (viii) China is now the financier and banker of some of the richest nations on earth, including the United States; (ix) China is also the top manufacturer, top car marketer, top cement producers and top polluter (Garfinkle 2010; Ramo 2010, *The Economist* April 3, 2010)

According to Larson (2010), China is seeking oil, timber, and mineral resources in far flung corners of the world as she strives to maintain her high growth in ways that will at times unsettle Americas and Europeans. In addition, China's military and naval capacity are growing—its construction-driven hunger for natural resources especially timber and energy is reshaping the landscapes of Africa, South-east Asia, and South America. Rana and Lin (2010) also argue that China, the world biggest polluter has become the single biggest state supporter of green technology. This is because of massive government subsidies, it is now the world's leader in Solar-and Wind-energy hardware and is moving fast to set the standards in the next generation of clean energy automobiles.

With all these advances and scramble for energy resources, oil, green technology, and markets, China's going to run into problem and face competitions from other countries and companies with similar interests, thus leading to confrontations and animosity and violence. For example, as it concerns the oil in Africa and the now the new find of oil bonanza in Uganda, oil companies from fast-growing Asian countries India and Malaysia and western countries are competing for government contracts and rights to drill as are those from western powers. Although China seem to be the likely biggest winner in drilling oil in Uganda, some western governments, officials, and companies are uncomfortable or jealousy and want to do whatever it takes to stall China's advance into the Congo basin—an area known for vast reserves of minerals, iron-ore, diamonds, and timber (*The Economist* April 3, 2010 p.45).

What should China do? Learn to steer-clear and be fair open in her global energy undertakings. Considering the above factors, China should be wary and concern of future terrorist and piracy threats against her national security and interests. China must contend with the realities that as she continues to rise into economic stardom and make impasses around the globe in search of resources and markets. Chinese business infrastructures and interests are going to be terrorist targets as has been those in America and other western powers.

The Chinese authorities must be cautious when dealing with their allies in developing countries—Middle East, Asia, and Africa or else they provoke rage and hatred that will lead to terrorist and piracy attacks. China cannot only be interested in her own interests and lining her pockets but also be concern with the plight of the citizens where they acquire their raw

materials and energy resources and the world “common”. China must learn from other powers e.g., the United States and European countries that overstepping on other people toes on the way to economic and military stardom has its repercussions. Finally, China must learn not to court dictators and oppressive regimes in her quest for energy resources—oil, timber, cement etc.

To counter future threats and attacks, China must cooperate with Americans and other nations to confront global threats of terrorism and piracy. In other words, China must cooperate with other world powers on issues and problems ranging from international and bilateral trade to Iran’s nuclear programs ambitions, human rights issues, terrorism and piracy, to open and fair trade relations instead of taking isolationist, protectionist, and confrontational approaches.

### US National Security and Renewable Energy

America’s way out of economic crisis and attacks emerging from the oil producing countries in the Middle East and the Arab Muslim regions is to be self-reliance on oil, gas, and renewable energy. According to *The Economist* April 3, 2010 (p.10) “Barely a week goes by without Obama promoting new measures to spur investment in renewable energy such as wind, solar, and bio-fuel to wean America off imported oil and reduce green-house gas” and ensure that America is no longer the primary target of terrorism organizations. Just as the oil shocks of 1970s and 1990s galvanized American presidents, policy-makers, and politicians into trying to reduce the country’s dependence on imported oil, the shocks of terror attacks from al-Qaeda and Middle Eastern terrorist movements since 2001 have also galvanized US officials and Congressmen into pushing for legislations that allows drilling oil within America territories and earmark billions of dollars in renewable energy and new technologies to support American economy and thus becoming less depended on foreign oil and especially from hostile regions around the world.

Other benefits of renewable energy and green economy include: safeguarding America from terrorist and piracy tacks, creating new jobs to reduce unemployment and revamp the struggling economic; making sure that America exploits her many available resources —solar, wind, ocean waves, bio-fuel among others to provide alternative energy to its people, and contribute in reducing gas emissions, pollution, and global warming. Besides, the Obama administration has made alternative energy and national security his top priority undertakings to ensure that America is not targeted and/or attacked by its worst adversary al-Qaeda’s network of terror.

### Obama’s New Policy on Terrorism/al-Qaeda’s Threats

In his presidential campaigns, Obama made numerous statements about the growing threat of international terrorism. He however, disassociated himself from the Bush administration’s so-called “holistic approach” and the rhetoric about “global war on terror”,



“axis of evil” and “evil-doers” among others. Obama promised the American people that if elected he will provide a more sophisticated “security architecture” or apparatus to disrupt and dismantle terrorism (Lauquer 2010). But his first year as president, the Obama administration was rudely awaked by the near failed attempt by an al-Qaeda affiliate, Nigerian citizen Amaur Farouk Abdulmutallab, to attack America on Christmas day—a testament that terrorist threats against America has not abated nor has al-Qaeda been imploded or broken. Obama also promised to work closely with American allies, to pay greater attention to civil rights of detainees and to ensure that due process was extended to enemy combatants. He also promised to close Guantanamo prison within a year of his presidency and end torture of detainees. Obama also charged the Bush administration with failing to adequately confront nuclear terrorism (Laqueur 2010; Kaplan 2010).

The Obama’s strategy of “outreach” “engagement” “negotiations” and compromise even with America’s worst enemies and adversaries might backfire. Some scholars think that the problem with global terrorism has largely been on counter-terrorism and not terrorism itself. Therefore, those who think that terrorists commit acts of terror out of boredom and will soon or later fade away might be mistaken because the chances of terrorists acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction against America are high and thus it the current administration must urgently address and confront the threat of nuclear terrorism before it is too late and the clock-ticking (Laqueur 2010; Habeck 2010). Laqueur writes that with “equal intensity a more conciliatory tone as suggested by Obama, may be important, but gaining respect is just as good if not decisive” (p.45). It is of consolation to know that even president Obama himself has acknowledged that some of his foreign policies including nuclear reduction plan may not be realized in his lifetime nor will his campaign promises be realized in his first term in office. But the truth of the matter is that he has set the ball-rolling and has already delivered in the home-front in regards to health care reforms. Obama has earmarked billions of dollars for renewable energy innovations and is working with Congress on environmental and climate issues. On the international front, he recently signed an agreement with Russia to cut down on their arsenals by 30% percentage. He has promised not to use nuclear weapons against countries that do not posses them. He has continued to engage other countries around the globe on nuclear security to ensure that nuclear weapons do not get into the hands of terrorists. Furthermore, Obama has relentlessly continued to pressure North Korean and Iran against their nuclear weapons program agendas. Besides, Obama continue to conduct dialogues with China officials to normalize the two nations’ relations.

## Conclusions

Until president Obama clearly separates the motivational causes of terrorism and counter the recruitment narratives of al-Qaeda, he might not succeed in amounting appropriate counter-terrorism strategies or approaches to fight and dismantle global terrorist networks. Furthermore, Obama must not only try to discern the fact that different terrorist groups have different motives but also disregard some of the age-old and shopworn theories and strategies

to design appropriate approaches to fight terrorism. Otherwise his administration will be a continuation of previous administrations especially that of George W. Bush (Serwer 2010). Apparently, many of the individuals involved in the recent incidents of terrorism (domestic and international) are not radicalized in Mosques and madrassas per se but are also radicalized through the Internet. Serwer (2010:25) points out that despite “the on-going concern over safe-havens where terrorist groups can train, recruit, and plan attacks without interference, al-Qaeda has proved adept at radicalizing its targets from a far, through the Internet”.

Therefore, to successfully dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates and to diffuse international conflicts, America and the Obama administration must seek a concerted effort of military, diplomatic, political, and civilian solutions. Not only will the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq and Afghanistan help reduce Arab/Muslim hatred against America and the west, but also America’s investment in renewable energy will help in reducing its overreliance on foreign oil from the Middle East (a motivational root-cause of al-Qaeda’s attacks against America and its allies). The Obama administration must also support innovation in new technologies in Afghanistan, Iraq and other regions in the Middle East and Africa to benefit from the renewable energy program to create jobs in Africa and the Arab world. In essence the Obama administration foreign policy endeavors must seek the political, economic and civilian solutions to international conflicts and especially the Palestinian-Israeli imbroglio.

In addition, the Obama administration must seek the cooperation and support of other countries especially China to assist in diffusing and finding viable solutions to international conflicts such as terrorism and piracy. This is because China is now a major importer of foreign oil and a provider of economic aid to developing countries. China’s growing links with Africa and Middle East on energy trade is an added advantage. In addition, China has not only made significant impasses in Africa and the Middle East but also has a large investment in oil industry and plays a major role in fighting piracy in the Horn of Africa.

Although innovation in renewable energy will not completely eliminate international conflicts such as terrorism and piracy, an investment in alternative energy is nonetheless a necessary step to dismantling global terrorist movements to discourage would be terrorists from joining terrorist groups. Besides, investments in renewable energy will not only create new jobs and help revive the global economies in the current economic crisis but also will wean the West in general and America in particular from dependence on imported oil.

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**DOCTRINAL SHIFT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE OBAMA  
ADMINISTRATION AND  
THE IMPLICATION FOR U.S.-TAIWAN SECURITY COOPERATION<sup>1</sup>**

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*As president I refuse to set goals that go beyond our  
responsibility, our means, or our interests.* Barack Obama,  
Dec. 1. 2009, U.S. Military Academy

Barack Obama won the presidential election in 2008 with a powerful and widely quoted word – change. The victory reflected a generally emerged attitude of American views on domestic issues, and more importantly on the U.S. position and purpose in world affairs. The Obama Administration came into office at a time when the American economy experienced significant downturn, when the American image and popularity in the world suffered, and when the American influence in international politics declined.

Students of U.S. foreign policy might be caught by surprise when listened to President Obama's speech at the United Nations in September 2009, when he stated: "No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. . . For just as no nation should be forced to accept the tyranny of another nation."<sup>2</sup> The December 14, 2009 issue of *Newsweek* called Obama the "Post-Imperial President."<sup>3</sup> For many people, it would be hard to imagine that the Bush Doctrine of "unilateralism" and "preemption" was just 8 years ago and now gone.

Short of an official release of national security strategy document, President Barack Obama's foreign policy guidelines can only be extracted from various statements, remarks, speeches by the president himself. Outlines of those documents could be somewhat summarized as "multilateralism" and "cooperation" based on his various public statements around the world. But one would ask: When multilateralism gives away leadership, when cooperation invites rivalries, what defines the Obama Doctrine? This paper intends to make initial inquiry to this important question.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a paper presented at the conference on *The Obama Administration's Foreign Policy*, April 23, 2010, Tamkang University. It should be noted that this paper is a preliminary draft for conference discussion only, and should not be quoted without the author's consent.

<sup>2</sup> President Obama's speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Sep. 24, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-united-nations-general-assembly>, accessed September 29, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Newsweek*, December 14, 2009, pp. 42-46.

## Seven Competing Paradigms in Global Security

The search for foreign policy of the Obama Administration is as hard as the time during the protracted war in Vietnam. As Richard M. Nixon, before becoming president, stated that Washington needed to contemplate “a U.S. policy which must begin to look beyond Viet Nam.”<sup>4</sup> Now President Obama needs to find exit strategy for Iraq and Afghanistan.

In reality, professors and students of international relations in the past two decades have encountered greater challenges than their previous generation. In the past 20 years, the field has gone through at least two major paradigm shifts by the end of the Cold War, and the surge of transnational crimes and terrorism highlighted in the tragic 9/11 incident. Researchers and analysts struggled to redefine the essences of international politics, redesign teaching syllabi, and exploit new methods in describing and analyzing phenomena so new to the understanding of global affairs.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the transnational nature of global security threat have dominated the post-Cold War international politics. In search of ways to deal with these challenges, there are at least seven categories of competing paradigms surfaced in the past two decades, and all of them would have substantial implications for the U.S. national security strategy and foreign policy.

### 1. Preventive Diplomacy vs. Preemptive Defense

In the 1990s, many people believe that international and regional conflicts can be prevented through effective diplomacy. Others thought conflicts would be best deterred by preemptive actions that usually associate with the use of force.

### 2. Strategic Ambiguity vs. Strategic Clarity

Ambiguity in the eyes of many policy makers can provide necessary room for maneuver in the course of preventing crisis. Other people consider only strategic clarity can avoid misperception and misunderstanding.

### 3. Incentives vs. Coercion

The school of idealism seems to believe persuasion and reward could gradually change national behavior and bring about long-lasting peace. Realists believe rogue states would only behave through dissuasion and punishment.

### 4. Multilateralism vs. Unilateralism

The end of the Cold War raised the hope of a new international order by international organizations and multilateral forums. But for great powers, national self-interests would be

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<sup>4</sup> Richard M. Nixon, “Asia After Viet Nam,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967.  
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/23927/richard-m-nixon/asia-after-viet-nam>, accessed March 22, 2010.

compromised if they cannot act unilaterally.

#### 5. Peace-making vs. Regime Change

Peace-keeping and peace-making have been major approaches when the United Nations and international organizations are favored vehicles for resolving conflicts. A counter argument considers regime change is a better approach for long-term peace.

#### 6. Traditional Allies vs. Coalition of the Willing

Some defense specialists believe that only traditional allies can provide sufficient and meaningful security assistance. Others argue that treaty alliances are too much bureaucratic and inflexible to respond to crisis.

#### 7. Overwhelming Force vs. Military Transformation

In conducting warfare, the absolute superiority of force deployment is viewed by many the only way to avoid the mistakes in Vietnam. Rapid-responding and lighter forces are considered by other war-planners better way to respond to future crisis.

### **The post-Cold War doctrines**

Since the end of the Cold War, there are three U.S. presidents – Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barak Obama, and each administration has provided different interpretations of opportunities and challenges the U.S. has faced in that particular international environment; and has taken different, if not in sharp contrast, approaches in foreign policy to protect American interests and to maintain influence in international politics.

Bill Clinton was the first post-Cold War president, inherited 3-term, 12-year of Republican administrations. His 1996 *National Security Strategy* identified “engagement and enlargement” as the guidelines for U.S. foreign policy under which the U.S. would selectively engage with international actors and in events based on American national interests; and enlarge and promoting democratic institutions, human rights, and other important values. Humanitarian intervention was another key element in the Clinton doctrine as we saw U.S. involvement in Kosovo and Somalia.

President George W. Bush came into office in early 2001 with an emphasis on American interests and leadership, on fighting rogue states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and on strengthening relations with allied and friends. The tragic event of terrorists attack in New York and in Washington, DC on September 11, 2001 has been widely regarded as the defining factor in the Bush Administration’s vision on dealing with national security threats and on American foreign policy priorities. With unilateralism and preemption as guidelines for foreign policy, the U.S. has unprecedentedly exercised its power in promoting American self-interests; and as a result, alienated many traditional allies and friends, and damaged American image abroad.

One commonality in the three post-Cold War U.S. presidents has been “opposing predecessors,” especially in the areas of foreign policy. People have been familiar with the slogan of ABC, i.e. Anything-But-Clinton, in the beginning of the Bush Administration. Sidelined international organizations and traditional allied, disregarded the Agreed Framework in Korean Peninsula, ignored the Kyoto Protocol, and suspended many programs initiated by President Clinton. When Obama took office, President Obama has done similar things and can be seen as Anything-But-Bush, under which, the U.S. rejuvenated multilateralism, emphasized cooperation with other countries, paid the U.N. dues, and re-engaged with international organization.

### **The Reality Check: What Obama Have Said**

The United Nations<sup>5</sup>

- In an era when our destiny is shared, power is no longer a zero-sum game.
- No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation.
- All nations have rights, but all nations have responsibilities as well
- Stop the spread of nuclear weapons
- Pursuit of peace
- There will be no peace unless we take responsibility for the preservation of our planet
- For just as no nation should be forced to accept the tyranny of another nation

On War in Afghanistan<sup>6</sup>

- I opposed the war in Iraq precisely because I believe that we must exercise restraint in the use of military force, and always consider the long-term consequences of our actions.
- America will have to show our strength in the way that we end wars and prevent conflict -- not just how we wage wars.
- For unlike the great powers of old, we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations.

At Nobel Prize<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> President Obama's speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Sep. 24, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-united-nations-general-assembly>, accessed September 29, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Eisenhower Hall Theatre, United States Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York, December 01, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>, accessed December 7, 2009.



- There will be times when nations -- acting individually or in concert -- will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified.
- To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism -- it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.
- America -- in fact, no nation -- can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we refuse to follow them ourselves.
- America cannot act alone. America alone cannot secure the peace.

#### On relations with Muslim World<sup>8</sup>

- Seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect
- Principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings
- Confront is violent extremism in all of its forms
- The rights and responsibilities of nations on nuclear weapons
- Promotion of democracy
- Economic development and opportunity

#### On Asia Policy<sup>9</sup>

- Our efforts in the Asia Pacific will be rooted. . . through an enduring and revitalized alliance between the U.S. and Japan.
- The United States looks to strengthen old alliances and build new partnerships
- alliances continue to provide the bedrock of security and stability
- look to emerging nations that are poised as well to play a larger role
- the growth of multilateral organizations can advance the security and prosperity
- Cultivating spheres of cooperation -- not competing spheres of influence

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<sup>7</sup> Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, December 10, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize>, accessed December 15, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Remarks by the President on a New Beginning at Cairo University, Egypt, June 4, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-by-the-president-at-cairo-university-6-04-09/>, accessed July 5, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan, November 14, 2009.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall>, accessed November 24, 2009.

■As America's first Pacific President, I promise you that this Pacific nation will strengthen and sustain our leadership in this vitally important part of the world.

#### On Relations with China<sup>10</sup>

■United States does not seek to contain China, nor does a deeper relationship with China mean a weakening of our bilateral alliances.

■The United States and China have an increasingly broad base of cooperation and share increasingly important common responsibilities

■to nurture and deepen bilateral strategic trust is essential to U.S.-China relations in the new era

#### Whither Obama Doctrine?

It is speculated that a National Security Strategy of the Obama White House is to be released soon.<sup>11</sup> However, before we see the official rolling out of that document, many in the foreign policy community have tried sharp different angles in observing and interpreting the yet fully defined doctrine for the Obama Administration.

Spencer Ackerman considers the Obama doctrine with two pillars: global “dignity promotion” and overcoming the alleged “politics of fear” from the Bush years.<sup>12</sup> But “dignity promotion” itself has included most of the ideals already presented in the Clinton Doctrine. To use the term “dignity” may be further interpreted as damage-control or influence-renewal in the wake of much declined American images and reputation under the Bush Administration.

Ben Smith describes President Obama’s military surge in Afghanistan decision is a rejection of choice between idealism and realism, and calls the approach “realism with a heart.”<sup>13</sup>

*The Atlantic* carries a commentary calling the Obama Doctrine “multilateralism with teeth,” arguing “our president is not a nonviolent pacifist.”<sup>14</sup> That is to say, President Obama, like all his predecessors, will not give away the unilateral rights to defense the American interests and security, even with softer approach and skilled cooperation with other countries.

Students in international relations can craft their own definition of a upcoming Obama

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall>  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/us-china-joint-statement>.

<sup>11</sup> Will Inboden, “In Search of the Obama Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy*, April 9, 2010.  
[http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/04/09/in\\_search\\_of\\_the\\_obama\\_doctrine](http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/04/09/in_search_of_the_obama_doctrine), accessed April 18, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Spencer Ackerman, “The Obama Doctrine,” *American Prospect*, March 24, 2008,  
[http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the\\_obama\\_doctrine](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_obama_doctrine), accessed April 10, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Ben Smith, “Realism with a Heart?” *Politico*, December 10, 2009,  
[http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/1209/Realism\\_with\\_a\\_heart.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/1209/Realism_with_a_heart.html), accessed April 10, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Chris Good, “The Obama Doctrine: Multilateralism with Teeth,” *The Atlantic*, December 10, 2009.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2009/12/the-obama-doctrine-multilateralism-with-teeth/31655/>, accessed April 10, 2010.

Doctrine. No matter what the official national security strategy document will present to us in the future, the mixture of soft and hard powers, the mixed application of democratic values and military might, and the incorporation of image-elevation and interests-protection are well expected in Obama's foreign policy in the coming years.

### **Innovation of U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation**

Taiwan's national security has always been highly connected with American foreign policy, and the U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation is the key for Taiwan's sustainable development and defense modernization. Taiwan's current defense reform and transformation was in fact initiated in the wake of the 1996 missile crisis. In the same period, the U.S.-Taiwan security assistance and cooperation has also been upgraded to an unprecedented level. In 1997, Taiwan kicked in the "Jing-Shi" force streamlining and defense reorganization program; and in the same year, the first "Monterey Talks" – the first institutionalized senior level security dialogue was held in California.

### **Transformation after Crisis**

Taiwan's defense transformation, of course, has been based on its own assessment of strategic environment and defense modernization planning. But it has been also closely associated with U.S. security strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. There have been 8 specific areas of security cooperation that have been distinct since the 1996 missile crisis. These new developments reflect a combination of Washington's extended strategic interests in Asia-Pacific, Taipei's quest for defense modernization and balance in the Taiwan Strait, and probably more importantly, the shared concerns over China's growing military power. The 8 areas are:

1. **High-level Visits:** Taiwan's defense ministers and deputy ministers were able to pay visits to the U.S. through the venue of annual Defense Industry Conference and other senior-level meetings
2. **Defense Reorganization:** With the encouragement by the U.S., the making of the two national defense laws in 2000 reflected Taiwan's efforts to reorganize its defense institutions to better communicate and cooperate with the U.S. counterparts.
3. **Strategic-Level: Monterey Talks:** Beginning in late 1997, the annual strategic-level dialogues have enabled senior national security staff to share their threat perceptions and defense planning concepts in a full-spectrum dialogue.
4. **Policy-Level: Defense Review Talks:** Dialogues between Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense and the Pentagon have been no longer constrained by debates on military procurement items, but more on the policy and planning issues.
5. **Professional-Level Exchanges:** Assessment teams have been sent to Taiwan to review

defense requirements and key operational capabilities. Professional military education and exchanges has been expanded from National Defense University in Washington to the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii.

6. **Exercise Observations:** The U.S. has sent retired and active duty observers to the annual Han Kuang Exercise, in which senior defense leaders verified doctrinal changes, examined operational concepts, and evaluated warfighting performance.
7. **Military Liaison:** Taiwan created the defense attaché position to head the military mission to the U.S. and the U.S. decision to send active duty officers to American Institute in Taiwan can be regarded as new trends of normalization of security relationship between Taiwan and the U.S.
8. **Arms Sales Package:** The Bush Administration in 2001 has approved a robust arms sales package for Taiwan, including the Kidd-class destroyers, patriot missile defense systems, maritime reconnaissance airplanes and diesel submarines. Although some of the items are yet to be delivered, arms sales continue to be the symbol of U.S. security commitment to Taiwan.

### **Paradigm Change in Security Relations**

The upgrade of the U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation in the past decade has been a response to the rapid modernization of the People's Liberation Army. Today, this relationship experiences great challenges due to the same rationale. The rise of China's economic and military power has fundamentally changed the global power balance and brought about the re-assessment of strategic posture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Due to the rapid rise of China's global influence, or may be because that China is now the largest creditor of the United States, Beijing's attitude towards Washington has also changed. President Hu Jintao's repetitive reminder that the U.S. must observe China's "core interests" i.e. sovereignty and territorial integrity; Premier Wen Jiabao's manipulation tactics in the summit meetings in Copenhagen; and the unprecedented public threats made by Chinese generals against U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, all have shown a more belligerent Chinese behavior toward the United States.

The shift of U.S.-China strategic equation comes at a time when relations across the Taiwan Strait turns into positive ground after nearly a decade of tension and distrust. How both Washington and Taipei innovatively advance their security relationship would have significant impact upon the U.S. strategic posture and security commitment in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Innovative Security Cooperation**

The current defense reform undertaking in Taiwan is crucial to transform the ROC armed forces to acquire necessary capability for new missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its success will not only defend Taiwan's democracy but also common security interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

President Ma Ying-jeou in his address to the senior officer corps in November 2009, urged the Ministry of National Defense to "apply the concepts of innovation and asymmetry in defense modernization." Ma's remarks paralleled to the concepts raised by Assistant Secretary Chip Gregson in his speech in the 2009 Defense Industry Conference. More interestingly, the Center for a New American Security issued a policy brief in December 2009, recommending that Taiwan and the U.S. to "establish a joint analysis group" to discuss asymmetric capabilities and new doctrines. Based on more than half century of security relationship and the closer cooperation in the past decade, we strongly endorse the ideas that Taiwan and Washington should work together to find new and innovative approaches to Taiwan's defense transformation in dealing with a mixture of cross-strait rapprochement and Chinese military expansion.

Debates over when and what arms sales items would be approved have been always sensational headlines in news reports. However, the real core of U.S.-Taiwan relationship is based on common democratic values and shared security interests. The rise of Chinese influence may empower Beijing leaders to be more assertive in foreign policy conducts, but only continued U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation will ensure the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. ###



# OBAMA'S TRADE POLICY TOWARD ASIA: PREPARING FOR THE U.S. HOST OF APEC IN 2011

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## Transformation of the U.S. Economy

The U.S. economy is undergoing one of its biggest transformations in decades. The crisis and then the recession for the last two years put an abrupt end to the old economic model. The house prices have fallen by 29% and share prices by a similar amount since their peak. Households' wealth has shrunk by US\$ 12 trillion, or 18%, since 2007. As a share of disposable income it is back to its level in 1995. Consumers are less inclined to spend and banks are also less willing to lend. Consumer debt rose from an average of less than 80% of disposable income 20 years ago to 129% in 2007 (Economist, 2010a). Consumer spending and housing rose from 70% of GDP in 1991 to 76% in 2005. And by the year of 2009, it had fallen back to 73% (see Chart 1).



Chart 1

Virtually every industry has shed jobs in the past two years, with those that cater mostly to consumers suffering the most. Employment in residential construction and car-making is down by almost a third, in retailing and banking by 8%. In 2008, the median size of a new home shrank for the first time in 13 years. The number of credit cards in circulation has declined by almost a fifth (Economist, 2010a).

In order to avoid the stagnation that afflicted Japan in the 1990s, the federal government

has stepped up its borrowing to counteract the drop in private consumption and investment. Over the next few years, this stimulus will be withdrawn. Barak Obama wants the deficits to come down to 3% of GDP by the middle of this decade. Furthermore, the situation of cheap oil which pushed up America's imports began to change a few years before the crisis as the dollar fell and emerging markets' growing appetite put pressure on global production capacity. A fourfold increase in oil prices since the 1990s has rearranged both consumption and production. Policies to boost conservation and renewable energy have become popular, and imports of oil have dropped by 10% since 2006 and likely to come down further (Economist, 2010a).

Another trend worth noticing is the higher energy prices. A fourfold increase in oil prices since the 1990s has changed both the consumer and producer behavior. Sport-utility vehicles are no longer popular and policies were adopted to boost conservation and renewable energy. The housing bust recently has tied many Americans to homes they cannot sell. On the other hand, as the knowledge-intensive industries are rising, areas well-endowed with infrastructure and specialized skills are more in favor. People have to make smart choice and go to places where the probability of rising productivity is high so that it would enable them to repay some of their debt yet continue to spend. Overall, business investment accounts for only 10-20% of GDO, so it will never be a full substitute for consumer spending.

In the past, other countries were looking up the United States as a huge market absorbing their exports. But now, it is other countries' market that American firms must increasingly rely for sale. Though competition from low-wage countries, especially China, has increasingly taken over the markets of domestic industries such as furniture, clothing or consumer electronics, shift in the pattern of global growth and the dollar are laying the path for the U.S. exports. The United States used to be the consumer of the world and emerging markets are the producer. That has changed. Now the United States accounts for just 27% of global consumption this year against emerging markets' 34%, roughly the reverse of their shares eight years ago (Economist, 2010a). America's current-account deficit with the rest of the world shrank from 6% of GDP in 2006 to 3% in 2009 (see Chart 2).

### **Exports Are the Key?**

As America's economic transformation will require businesses to rely less on selling to Americans and more on selling abroad, the emphasis will be on high-value products and services rather than on labor-intensive items such as furniture and clothing. When Barack Obama in his state-of-the-union speech called for exports to "double in five years", many thought he is asking for a mission impossible. Yet exports do not have to double for trade to lead economic growth: all they have to do is to grow more rapidly or fall more slowly (in dollar terms) than imports. That has already happened. Between 2008 and 2009 exports dropped by US\$ 272 billion whereas imports fell by US\$ 589 billion (Economist, 2010b). So the trade deficit narrowed sharply.



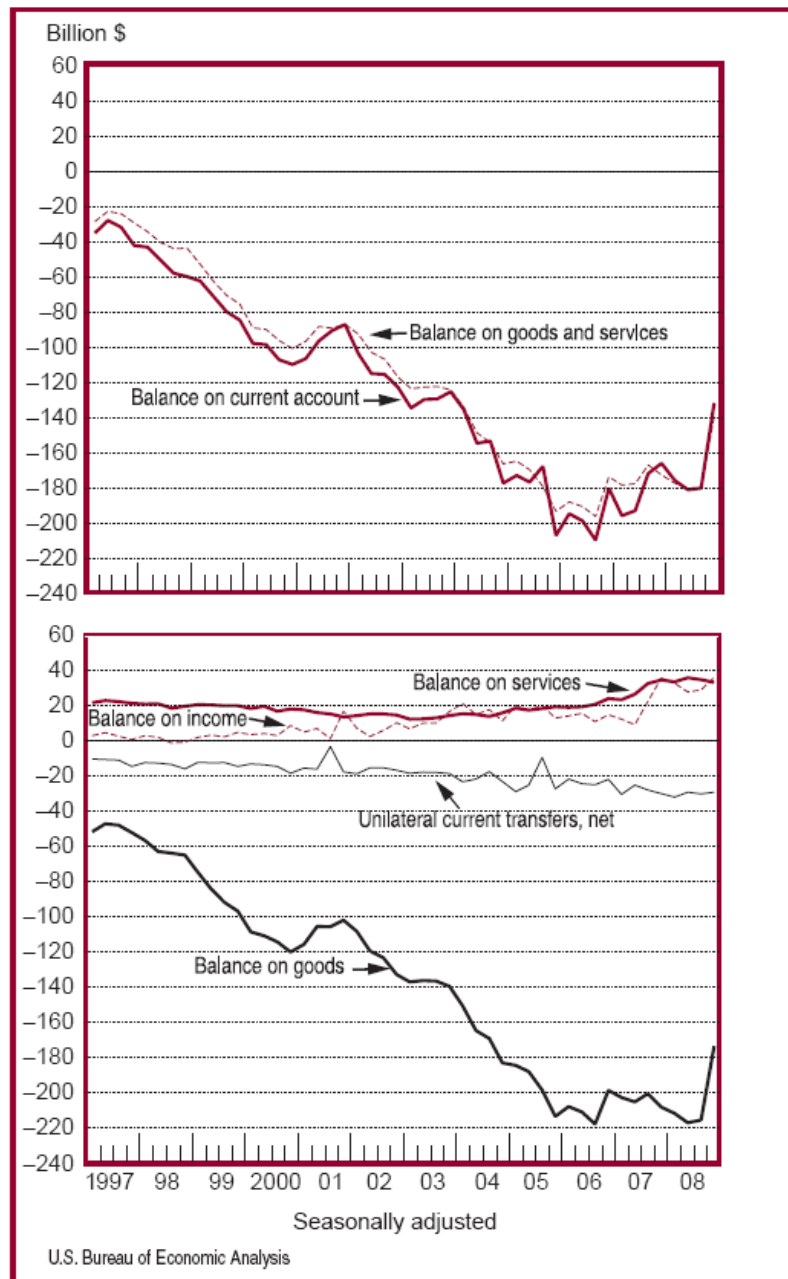


Chart 2 U.S. Current-Account Balance and Its Components

Source: Weinberg *et al.* (2009).

This happened before. The U.S. exports grew at a rate of 8.2% per year from 1987-1994, far faster than the economy as a whole or even the manufacturing sector. Bernard and Jensen (1998) examined the source of this export boom and argued that the boom itself has been less remarkable for the rate of exports than for the striking increase in export *intensity*. This increase in export intensity has occurred both in the aggregate and for individual plants across a wide range of industries. Their test showed that changes in exchange rates and rises in foreign income are the dominant source for the export growth, while productivity increases in

U.S. plants play a relatively small role. The result suggested that slower growth rates of U.S. trading partners and an appreciation of the dollar will have strong negative effects on the growth rate of U.S. manufacturing exports.

Free trade is essential for a market-based economy to produce the greatest total wealth with various natural, human and financial resources. The United States has been eager to encourage other countries to adopt freer trade policies. As a consequence, developed countries have become more interconnected through trade as well as investment with each other and other developing countries. Most developing countries have also become more open, seeking to promote their exports as well as to reduce barriers to imports and foreign investment.

On the other hand, trade policy is also an expression of a country's own domestic society. It is destined to safeguard a society's security. The United States practices freer trade because its society gives a high priority to consumers' welfare, as more freedom of choice could provide consumers more goods and services of lower prices and better quality. According to the thesis on "embedded liberalism" around the 1980's, external free trade was "embedded" in internal social commitment: free, commercial competition abroad was to be offset by social protection at home (see, *e.g.*, Ruggies, 1982). Capitalists gained from access to foreign markets while labor was assured of employment and rising income at home.

It could be observed that, in recent years, one of the major goals of the U.S. trade policy was the expansion of market, which was more prominent since the Clinton years (see, *e.g.*, Schott, 2001). How the goals were achieved? It is undeniable that the so-called "aggressive unilateralism", in which such as the Super 301 or Special 301 were used to pry open other countries' markets, was quite important, but we have witnessed an increasing and more prominent role of preferential trading arrangements (PTAs). The United States is pushing hard on the negotiations of Free Trade Agreement of Americas (FTAA), in addition to North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), allowing American firms to penetrate anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. In Europe, the U.S. is actively conveying the concept of Transatlantic Free Trade Area (TAFTA), originally raised by Klaus Kinkel of Germany. As for Asia, the U.S. is trying to resist trade liberalization measures based on the principle of most-favored nations (MFN) and instead insisting on the opening of Asian market to the U.S. reciprocally.

In fact, this was not what the U.S. used to be. It is well known that there is no other places of the world which could be comparable to Europe in the degree, and duration, of regional integration. On the contrary, the United States was sternly against the practice of regional arrangement and insistent on using multilateral negotiations to reduce trade barriers. After the Second World War, she was adamantly opposing bilateral agreements, which, she thought, could have resulted in substantial restrictions on the post-war world trade. Under the supervision of GATT, the United States consistently stuck to the principle of multilateralism until the Tokyo Round of 1979, continued to resist the notion of regional agreements and even

rejected the proposal of establishing the North Atlantic Free Trade Area by the United Kingdom. European Economic Community was the only regional organization supported by the U.S. in the hope to fight against the Soviet group (Lin, 2002: 77-78).

The historical turning point was 1982, when the U.S. was somewhat blocked from initiating the 8<sup>th</sup> round of multilateral negotiations while the GATT ministers was gathering in Geneva, and also was frustrated by stagnation of the European economy. She began to realize that regional trade arrangements could be a more feasible path to promote trade liberalization. U.S. Trade Representative William Brock was then so upset that he admitted the feasibility of going the way other than multilateral negotiations (Bhagwati, 1993). The U.S. thus began to negotiate bilateral agreements with several countries and subsequently signed agreements with Israel and Canada in 1985 and 1988 respectively. As the EEC was endeavoring to establish the single European market around the beginning of 1990s, this rendered the U.S. another reason for negotiating free trade area with Mexico beginning from 1989 and, with the subsequent joining in of Canada, the NAFTA was established at the end of 1992.

After changing her mind, the U.S. had recognized that regional arrangements could also be relied upon to rectify the stickiness of the world trade system. She began to adopt twin approaches: to promote multilateral negotiations along with promulgation of regional concessions. Furthermore, as she found that it was not so advantageous by sticking to the principle of unconditional MFN since other countries would not willing to give in so much in responding U.S. concessions. This has resulted in huge trade deficits on the side of the U.S. and pushed her to change policies into conditional liberalization. The U.S. would render concessions only when other countries reciprocally give her comparable concessions. Therefore, the U.S. would accept no matter it was multilateral, trilateral or plurilateral, as long as trade barriers could be eliminated.

However, not everyone was convinced by this argument, because since the 1950s people such as Jacob Viner have continuously raised doubts on motivations of regional agreements (Viner, 1950). Viner believed that one has to clarify relationships between eliminating trade barriers and trade movement in order to understand why there are regional trade agreements. A smart politician always knows how to achieve protectionist goals with the elimination of trade barriers. This had induced later development of the theory of “effective trade protection” (Balassa, 1971; Bruno, 1972). For instance, many vulnerable industries were usually the most active promoters of trade agreements and therefore, when agreements finally established, it was likely to result in trade diversion<sup>1</sup> where the third country (the country excluded from the agreements) was negatively affected, because of the protection implicit in the agreements

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<sup>1</sup> If imports from a partner country replace those originally imported by a third country which is excluded from the trade agreement, then there is trade diversion. It is the reduction of tariffs on imports from the partner country, as the agreement is signed, that renders imports from the third country not be able to come in. This is a protectionist policy against the third country. On the other hand, products from partner country may also not be able to come in because sometimes the buffer period of tariff reductions in trade agreement has been elongated due to the lobby by domestic industries.

(Grossman and Helpman, 1995).

## **U.S. Trade Strategy toward APEC**

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) had been very cautious during the first four years since its establishment, tackling every issue with unanimity, without any formal negotiation and formal secretariat. It was the U.S., on the other hand, who was more active in promoting APEC towards a formal free trade organization, which became evident in the 1993 leaders' meeting and culminated in the Bogor goal of free trade in the next year.

After Bogor, the U.S. kept encouraging developing member countries to engage in liberalization policies while she insisted that she would not give in any further on tariff reductions based on the principle of MFN. The U.S. intention was revealed evidently in report drafted by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which was dominated by her. In its 1994 report, the EPG explicitly warned APEC members, especially the larger ones, not to liberalize unilaterally substantially or it might risk losing valuable bargaining chips, especially against the European Union (APEC, 1994). The point of the EPG was very clear: The U.S. would not engage in any unilateral reduction in trade barriers unless members of APEC adopt discriminatory measures toward non-members. Nevertheless, the effect on small members would be negligible. Anyway, we would not be able to tell whether the opinion of EPG really reflected the true intention of the U.S., but we could tell that the U.S. was becoming more impatient and unwilling to liberalize by her own, as she oftentimes complained toward such countries as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines for their reluctance to reduce trade barriers. We could also recognize her intention by the fact that she never mentioned about accelerating the speed of lifting import quota from Asian countries.<sup>2</sup>

Now as Obama has come on the stage and as he called for U.S. exports to double in five years, expectations are running high for Barack Obama's policies, especially, toward Asia. And nowhere is the expectation greater than among the 10 members of ASEAN which held their first-ever summit with a U.S. President following the APEC leaders' summit in November 2009. Obama was making true of his campaign promise that he wants to listen to the regional states, and work with the regional organizations. As China's influence in the region keeps growing, closer U.S.-ASEAN coordination matters more now than ever. China has replaced the U.S. as the largest trading partner for several Asian countries. In this year (2010) as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area comes into force, both parties will drop most tariffs on farm and manufactured goods. They have held annual summits for many years, and China has beefed up its role in other regional groupings that exclude the U.S., such as the ASEAN Plus Three and the East Asian Summit. China also extended its diplomacy to the

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<sup>2</sup> We could also observe from the Individual Action Plans (ISPs) provided every year since 1996 by each APEC member countries that the U.S. never raised any new proposition except reiterating what she had committed in the Uruguay Round negotiations. This again could prove that the U.S. would not commit any more concession before she receives a more definite reciprocal concession from other member countries. See Lin (2002).

region. For the past ten years, when the U.S. attention was diverted by wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan, China took advantage of that period to advance its interests in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia and within APEC (Balfour, 2009).

The United States has remained engaged, but focus has ebbed and flowed. President Clinton hosted the first APEC Leaders Meeting in 1993, but missed two summits. President Bush missed one too but with a good excuse: the U.S. was at war. The challenge for Obama is to deepen and sustain U.S. engagement and investment in Asia. The U.S. announced in March 2008 that it would join the negotiations of the parties to the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (P4)—Brunei, Singapore, New Zealand and Chile on financial services and investment. These issues were deferred when the P4 was signed in 2005. Three rounds of negotiations had been held by March 2008 when the Bush administration announced that these negotiations would be extended to a full FTA. In the wake of the U.S. announcement, Australia, Peru and Vietnam also decided to join the talks.

The P4 agreement has been viewed as broadly comprehensive and high quality. It includes liberalization on all tariff lines for Chile, Singapore and New Zealand, and 99 percent for Brunei (phased in over time). The services chapter contains a negative list. Some of the 20 chapters include sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT), competition policy, intellectual property rights, government procurement, and dispute settlement. It contains some labor and environmental provisions in separate MOU. Two additional chapters on financial services and investment were to be completed within two years of the agreement. Critically the document also included an accession clause to allow other economies to join the agreement in the future.

The first round of negotiations including the U.S. was scheduled for March 2009, “on the assumption that the incoming administration could put their own stamp” on the talks (Elms, 2009). Instead, the talks were postponed, pending a thorough review of U.S. trade policy.

The outcome of that review was in considerable doubt all the way up to Obama’s departure for Asia in November 2009. In his speech in Tokyo, President Obama said, “The United States will also be engaging with the Trans-Pacific Partnership<sup>3</sup> countries with the goal of shaping a regional agreement that will have broad-based membership and the high standards worthy of a 21<sup>st</sup> century trade agreement (cited in Elms, 2009).” Listeners in the audience just could not help to be confused at what the President mean by “engage”. It was left to U.S Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk to clarify the position the next morning at the APEC meetings in Singapore. He unambiguously announced that the United States was going to participate in formal negotiations. Although officials at USTR argued vigorously for a strong commitment to Asia, it was not clear whether the TPP was the appropriate vehicle for engagement, nor was it clear whether the U.S. ought to be committing to any further trade

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<sup>3</sup> The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will expand on P4 and presumably will lead, in the future, to a pan-APEC free trade agreement.

liberalization talks at all. After all, three existing free trade agreements (including one with South Korea) were still waiting for the right time for ratification by Congress.

Nevertheless, the momentum had shifted in favor of action on the TPP. First of all, as the free trade agreement between the European Union and South Korea has been signed, this galvanized businesses to argue more forcefully in favor of an active U.S. approach to trade in Asia. And Secondly, alternative economic integration in Asia such as the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea) or ASEAN Plus Six (adding Australia, New Zealand and India) all poised to exclude the U.S. out of Asian markets. Japan's proposal for an East Asian Community further marginalized the United States. And finally, the TPP gave the United States a seat in the economic group in Asia wherein the above-mentioned alternatives did not.

TPP is the first positive initiative on trade the Obama administration has taken in any area. It is driven by Obama's emphasis and priority on Asia, recognizing the need to engage actively and constructively with Asia on trade and economic issues, partly because he recognizes Asia is moving toward its own arrangements that would otherwise discriminate against the United States and hurt U.S. trade interests (Bergsten, 2009).

But will the TPP really provide sufficient incentives to exporting interests to mobilize against domestic protectionist forces and pressure governments to proceed with a high quality, multilateralized agreement? One problem is that existing PTAs already link many of the TPP partners. Only three of them—Brunei, New Zealand and Vietnam have not already signed a PTA with the United States. And the big prize in an expanded TPP would also be preferential access to the U.S. market for these three countries. Although the two countries most likely to benefit from improved access under the TPP to the U.S. market—New Zealand and Vietnam together account for less than one half of one percent of total U.S. exports, the two come with a host of challenges. For example, opening the American market to further imports of New Zealand dairy products will be quite difficult, as will negotiations over textiles and footwear with Vietnam (see, *e.g.*, Ravenhill, 2009).

Other problem is that, besides failure to secure congressional consent to the U.S.-Korea FTA, the President would need new congressionally sanctioned trade negotiation authority. Moreover, the U.S. also needs to upgrade the desultory negotiations with ASEAN—the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to full-fledged FTA negotiations and express its willingness to dilute, or stretch out, the so-called “Gold-Standard” liberalization provisions usually demanded by the United States (see, *e.g.*, Barfield, 2010). The U.S. also needs to revisit the stalled bilateral FTA negotiations with Thailand and Malaysia. And the last but not the least, the U.S. still needs to discuss with Japanese leaders to establish common goals and concrete steps to achieve meaningful trade and investment liberalization in APEC at the 2010 and 2011 summits, including at least preliminary discussion of how to integrate existing sub-regional arrangements (such as the TPP) into APEC. Both parties also need to involve key allies such as Singapore, Korea, Australia and, possibly, Indonesia in the discussion and

planning.

As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made clear, APEC would be the central focus of U.S. regional interests. But she also suggested that the Obama was open to participate in, and even join, the East Asian Summit and other intra-regional institutions such as the ASEAN Plus Three. She warned, “It is important that we do a better job in trying to define just which organizations will best protect and promote our collective future (cited in Barfield, 2010).” She reinforced the U.S. APEC commitment by promising to work with Japan to take advantage of the fact that Japan would host the APEC Summit in 2010, followed by the United States in 2011, with the assumption that both nations would push to “deliver” advances in regional integration at these meetings.

### **Concluding Remarks**

We have described in this paper how the United States economy is undergoing a transformation after the global economic crisis started by her. The profligate consumption of the American people made available by low-price and high-quality imports from, especially, emerging market economies in the past has to be changed. Now the situation seems reversed with the United States accounting for less global consumption against emerging markets which even resulted in a shrinking of her current-account deficit.

President Barack Obama’s timely calling to double the U.S. exports in five years needs to be fulfilled by practical actions. And as he committed to deepen and sustain U.S. engagement and investment in Asia, countries in the region, especially those ASEAN members, are all expecting to see how he makes those campaign promises come true. Despite the barriers he faces at home as well as abroad, President Obama seems to be determined to look for all possibilities in joining regional agreements in Asia. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) arrangement emanated from the APEC forum looks like a promising avenue for the U.S. to enter this area more deeply.

The TPP provides most flexibility in coverage and membership and involves individual ASEAN members, which could facilitate melding of integration plans. But the U.S. needs to modify U.S.-style “gold standard” to manage agriculture problems and developmental concerns. Also, the APEC integration pact needs to address interrelated challenges facing APEC members in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as energy security, food safety and security, border security, and climate change. Furthermore, the rights and obligations related to PTAs will have to be regionalized starting, for example, by harmonizing and cumulating rules of origin. Many blocking issues such as agriculture, labor and environment need to be resolved by, for example, focusing on food security and safety, on implementation of ILO principles and specific labor services barriers, and on energy security/environment linkages. On the other hand, the broadening of participation in such regional pact as the TPP needs to be considered, such as engaging bilaterally, besides Canada and Mexico who already expressed their interests,

with TPP core economies like Japan and South Korea, once U.S.-Korea FTA is ratified. But what about China? Linking ASEAN-Plus-One pacts with cross-Pacific FTAs is the key to whether TPP will become a vehicle for Asia-Pacific integration. China will be interested in such Asia-Pacific initiatives if President Obama can convince her leaders that (see, *e.g.*, Schott, 2009)

- involving the U.S. could provide a buffer in China-Japan competition in East Asian arrangements;
- the pact could facilitate her dealings with Taiwan;
- it renders a better channel to resolve bilateral disputes with the U.S.; and
- it may complements collaboration with the U.S. on North Korea.

In sum, the challenge for Barack Obama in engaging APEC members is huge. He has to convince a skeptical public and Congress to embrace further market access and harmonization of existing rules of trade. He will need to cajole the TPP partners into accepting bargains on some items, like stronger labor and environmental rules, than most would prefer. And finally, he will have to make the final package attractive enough to encourage other economies to join in future tranches of negotiations. If these missions were not accomplished somewhat satisfactorily, then it will not lead to major changes in the economic structure in the Asia Pacific that his backers hope to achieve.

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## ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIMENT:

### U.S. POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA UNDER PRESIDENT OBAMA

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

What will U.S. relations with Latin America look like under President Obama? For decades Washington's policy toward the region has been driven by three major goals within a broad hegemonic strategy: *First*, the promotion of a peaceful and secure hemisphere as part of the defense of the American homeland and American economic and strategic interests; *second*, the promotion of a hemispheric free trade area open to commerce and investment among the countries of the region; *and third*, the promotion and consolidation of representative democracy in the region.

During the Bush Years, America's hegemonic project suffered and many are predicting it will never recover. Some herald multi-polarity as the inevitable wave of the future while others focus more modestly on the rise of competitors in the region. Either way, U.S. strategy must begin to identify with the common interests of the important actors in the region, learn to empower the norms and institutions that reinforce this commonality, and isolate and defeat any hostile agenda.

Five challenges face the Obama Administration in crafting a new policy toward Latin America: Three are general and two are specific:

- 1) How to strengthen the **economic integration** of the hemisphere by expanding **free trade**. This requires increasing the legitimacy of such purpose throughout the region and making progress on the distribution of trade gains and costs, environmental concerns, labor rights and energy integration.
- 2) How to normalize **immigration** from Latin America to the U.S. in ways that strengthen Homeland Security against terrorism and transnational crime while using the vital contingent of American citizens with Latin origin to strengthen the U.S. agenda in the hemisphere.
- 3) How to deal with **the rise of different versions of the Latin American left** in ways that strengthen **representative democracy** in the region.

The two specific cases are the challenges of the transition in **Cuba** and the rise of **Brazil** as a major regional power. These cases actually present both challenges and

opportunities for advancing hemispheric integration and creating a safer and friendlier environment for U.S. interests. Like it or not, the Obama Administration will inherit a negative legacy from George W. Bush, and this legacy must be corrected.

But deeper forces are also at play: The powerful forces of global economics, politics, and law. Add the decisions of technocrats who use cost-benefit analysis to answer every question. And the relations between the Executive Branch and Congress, with important decisions from time to time by the Judiciary. Then there are political action committees, businesses interests, ethnic lobbies, and NGOs of all kinds.

The new administration will have to juggle all of them.

## **II. TRADE AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

The promotion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas has been the single most important goal of U.S. strategy toward the Western Hemisphere since the end of the Cold War. Every Administration has pursued this goal since the creation of NAFTA and the Initiative for the Americas under George H.W. Bush. Bill Clinton endorsed this agenda after attaching labor and environmental conditions to NAFTA. Indeed, when he proposed the creation of a Free Trade Zone from Alaska to Argentina, he was going a step further. Finally, at the Second Summit of the Americas in 1998, the nations of the hemisphere opened negotiations for the creation of a hemispheric Free Trade Zone.

In February 2001, George W. Bush declared free trade the most important aspect of his Latin American policy. During his first month in office, he met the leaders of Mexico, Canada and Colombia and asked Congress to grant him Fast Track authority to negotiate free trade agreements with Latin American countries.<sup>1</sup> Bush saw free trade as key to his market-based philosophy and essential to the consolidation of democracy in the region. Speaking to the Permanent Council of the OAS, a few days before leaving for the Third Summit of Americas in Quebec City, he described the “vital link” between freedom of people and freedom of commerce. Bush said: “Democratic freedoms cannot flourish unless our hemisphere also builds a prosperity whose benefits are shared ... Open trade is the essential foundation for that prosperity and that possibility.”<sup>2</sup>

But Bush found a less warming atmosphere for his free trade ideas than his two predecessors. During his presidency, important forces converged to slow the march of the free trade agenda. In 2001, during the Third Summit of the Americas, Bush faced the opposition of Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez to the neo-liberal Washington Consensus, and he faced objections from the MERCOSUR nations, under Brazil’s leadership, to the times

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<sup>1</sup> See George W. Bush, Remarks Following Discussion with Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada, February 5, 2001, and Remarks Following Discussion with President Andres Pastrana of Colombia, February 27, 2001, in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> George W. Bush, Remarks to the Organization of American States, April 17, 2001, in *The Public Papers of the Presidents*, p. 409.

and terms of the negotiation; the lack of consideration for the asymmetries of economic development in the hemisphere; and the exclusion of U.S. farm subsidies from the agenda.<sup>3</sup> Although the election of Chavez and several leftist leaders in other countries played an important role in mobilizing Latin American protests against the U.S. free trade agenda, the leading role of the MERCOSUR countries—especially Brazil and Argentina—should not be underestimated.

The mood in the U.S. in favor of new free trade agreements also slowed down during the Bush presidency. Increases in unemployment and the lowering of wages in key industries and states created a backlash against globalization in important segments of the population. After 9/11, Trade Representative Robert Zoellick tried to link Bush's free trade agenda to national security, but the link didn't hold for long.

The next attempt at progress in the negotiations for FTAA occurred around the Fourth Summit of the Americas at Mar del Plata. Political conditions in 2005 were very different from those that surrounded the Quebec Summit in 2001. Neo-liberalism was on the retreat. Leftist presidents were in office in Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay while leftist parties formed the major opposition forces in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Mexico and other countries. Thanks to high oil prices, Hugo Chavez could support important political mobilizations against U.S. hegemony in the hemisphere, calling for "anti-imperialist" Latin American or Caribbean integration. His diplomacy combined ideological partnership with nongovernmental leftist actors and an active political engagement with national governments based on oil subsidies.

The Mar del Plata Summit showed how the project for a multilateral free trade agreement was seriously stalled. At one extreme, Chavez of Venezuela had launched several initiatives aiming to use his great oil wealth to finance a counter-hegemonic project to reduce U.S. presence in the region. After Mar del Plata, the rise to power of presidents Daniel Ortega, Rafael Correa and Evo Morales seemed to place Nicaragua, Ecuador and Bolivia in a similar position. But the discretionary authority of these three leaders is limited by the fact that Nicaragua is already part of a free trade agreement with the U.S. and Bolivia and Ecuador are dependent on the preferential access of their nations to the U.S. market under the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Enforcement Act (ATPDEA).

Brazil and Argentina, and in less measure Uruguay and Paraguay, opposed the version of FTAA proposed by the U.S. but did not discount their future participation in a continental Free Trade Zone if it serves their interests. The position of MERCOSUR was stated by President Kirchner of Argentina: "Integration will be possible only if it takes into consideration existing asymmetries and if negotiations fulfill fundamental

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<sup>3</sup> Eduardo Gudymas, *El ALCA y la Cumbre de Quebec*, in *Nueva Sociedad*, Mayo/Junio, 2001, no. 173.

interests of each country, especially in the area of market access.”<sup>4</sup> Since the Summit, Venezuela abandoned the Andean Community of Nations and applied to MERCOSUR.

The small countries of the Caribbean and Central America expressed interest in continuing the FTAA negotiations while demanding special consideration for economic asymmetries. Despite the significant oil support they received from Venezuela, this position was shaped by their need to obtain preferential access to the U.S. markets.

A fourth position favored pushing ahead with the negotiations for a hemispheric Free Trade Zone. Supporting the U.S. were Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and most of Central America.

In parallel to the process of FTAA, the Clinton and Bush Administrations pursued separate free trade agreements with Chile, Central America, Panama, the Dominican Republic, the CARICOM states and the Andean Community of Nations. After the failure of the Mar del Plata Summit, Bush pushed hard for these alternative sub-regional or bilateral free trade agreements. He was able to pass by Congress bilateral agreements with Chile and Peru as well as a multilateral free trade agreement with the nations of Central America and the Dominican Republic. He also signed and sent to Congress free trade agreements with Panama and Colombia. And there are reports of potential free trade agreements with CARICOM and Uruguay.<sup>5</sup>

The impact of these bilateral agreements on the promotion of the FTAA will depend on whether they are steps toward the larger goal. Some argue they divert rather than create more regional trade. Joseph Stiglitz has argued that bilateral agreements are counterproductive because they favor some countries over others, making it more difficult to negotiate future broader agreements because the countries that enjoy special privileges would resist any comprehensive treaty that takes them away.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Bush Administration, the bilateral free trade agreements and CAFTA-DR served to advance American economic interests as well as consolidate market fundamentals for the economic growth and democratic stability of its partners. Addressing the issue of trade diversion versus trade creation, Bush’s trade negotiator, Robert Zoellick, proposed the creation of an Association of American Free Trade Agreements to synchronize the different agreements and promote a culture of free trade.

The current FTAA agenda is also closely connected to the collapse of the WTO’s Doha Round. The U.S. had argued its agricultural subsidies were based on the fact that Europe and Japan do the same in higher measure, making their farmers and not the

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<sup>4</sup> Buscar discurso de Kirchner [clarify this footnote]

<sup>5</sup> In Uruguay, there is a significant chance that Danilo Astori, the minister of economy of the Vazquez government and promoter of a free trade agreement with the United States, could be the next presidential candidate of the leftist coalition Frente Amplio-Encuentro Progresista.

<sup>6</sup> See Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (W.W. Norton & Company, New York 2006), pp. 96-97.

farmers of the Third World the main beneficiaries of a unilateral dismantlement of American protectionism. In response, Brazil linked progress in FTAA to progress in the Doha Round. American negotiators in the WTO have not been Brazil's allies in those negotiations but managed to avoid blame for the collapse of the round by proposing a more flexible position than the European Union.

**The Electoral Campaign and Obama Administration.** The 2008 campaign brought forth hostility toward free trade by major segments of the electorate, especially among Democrats. It looked as if Clinton and Obama would compete over who hated NAFTA more. But Obama's election allows us to place his rhetoric into proper context.

In the Senate Obama supported the Peru Agreement but not CAFTA-DR and Colombia because the former had "binding labor and environmental provisions" but the latter did not. He rejects the "protectionist" label: "There is nothing protectionist about demanding that trade spreads the benefits of globalization, instead of steering them to special interests while we short-changed workers at home and abroad ... [We need] to look for ways to grow our economies and deepen integration beyond trade deals."<sup>7</sup>

Now that he is taking the Oval Office, Obama faces disenchantment with free trade at home and abroad. Joseph Stiglitz describes the sources of this disenchantment: "[F]ree trade has not worked because we have not tried it: Trade agreements of the past have been neither free nor fair. They have been asymmetric, opening up markets in the developing countries to goods from the advanced industrial countries without full reciprocation ... The theory of trade liberalization (under the assumption of perfect markets, and under the hypothesis that the liberalization is fair) only promises that the country as a whole would benefit. Theory predicts that there will be losers. In principle the winners could compensate losers; in practice, this almost never happens ... If [market] liberalization is not managed well, the majority of citizens may be worse off—and see no reason to support it."<sup>8</sup>

In the short term, the U.S. should perhaps try to integrate its multiple existing free trade agreements in ways that insure trade creation prevails over trade diversion. But over the long haul, the unequal distributive effects of free trade and the need for labor and environmental standards will form the core of the debates over free trade under President Obama.

### **III. IMMIGRATION**

In February of 2001, President Bush made his first foreign trip to Mexico to meet with the also recently-elected Vicente Fox. The visit was welcomed as the fulfillment of

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<sup>7</sup> Remarks of Barack Obama: Renewing U.S Leadership in the Americas, Miami Fl, May 23, 2008, accessed in [www.barackobama.com/2008/05/23/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_Barack\\_Obam\\_68.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/23/remarks_of_senator_Barack_Obam_68.php)

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work (WW Norton & Company, New York 2006), pp. 62-63.

Bush's campaign promise to make Latin America a priority. He was received with hope. The central issue was Mexican immigration to the U.S.

Fox had launched a new approach to the issue after defeating the PRI, which had ruled Mexico for several decades. To the PRI, the millions of Mexicans living in the U.S. were an embarrassment. Critics of the PRI said that Mexicans had to leave their country because of the lack of jobs, the corruption, and the government's lack of attention to the poor. Fox didn't carry this baggage. He called Mexican immigrants to the U.S. "heroes" who help Mexican progress with their hard work and remittances. And he insisted the U.S. should recognize the economic dependence of important sectors of its economy on the work of people who are forced to live in illegality, uncertainty and vulnerability. The two new presidents created a commission made of the Secretaries of Foreign Affairs and Justice of both countries to propose solutions.

Jeffrey Davidow, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico at the time, has written: "Bush's decision to go along with Fox was based on a desire to be responsive and helpful to Mexico's new president. But the new administration in Washington did little serious analysis of the issues." Everyone figured the U.S. would shoulder the big burdens and write the big checks. Mexico would crack down on illegal smuggling and promote economic development in locations with high emigration rates. Over time the U.S. would "legalize" undocumented workers and facilitate the legal movements of family and temporary workers. Looking back, Davidow concluded: "A joint effort seemed to make so much sense. But in reality, there wasn't much room for negotiation. One side, the United States, controlled almost all of the chips. The other, Mexico, had little to bring to the table for trading."<sup>9</sup>

Fox was the leading voice of Latin America on immigration but his pledge for legalization of undocumented workers was shared across the continent. During the 1980s and 1990s, the wars in Central America, the political violence in the Andean countries, and the great attraction of the U.S. as a land of opportunities brought to American territory large numbers of Central Americans and people from the Andean region and Caribbean. The Pew Hispanic Center Report of December 2007 predicted that Hispanics would soon make up 15 % of the U.S. population. This demographic is critical to the debate, because large percentages of the populations of some countries (20% of Salvadorians and 12 % of Mexicans) now live in the U.S.

Immigration is therefore both: A domestic issue and a central problem between the U.S. and several of its Latin neighbors. For some, it is the most important issue. Remittances from the U.S. make the first, second or third source of their hard currency. Expatriates from Mexico and the Dominican Republic are key constituencies that vote and can even be elected in their native countries. Moreover, while other Latin nations may

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Davidow, The Bear and the Porcupine (Markus Wiener, Princeton, New Jersey, 2004) p. 216.



not have the same number of immigrants to the States, they relate to the issue because large numbers of their citizens live in Europe or other foreign countries.

Some say 9/11 stopped an immigration agreement that was close. But it is hard to argue this position. True, the bi-national commission created in Mexico discussed a few ideas, like guest worker programs and ways to expedite the immigration of people already approved. But, at the end of the summit in Washington in September 2001, before 9/11, the positions of the two sides were still far apart.<sup>10</sup>

In the long run, the “whole enchilada” approach of Mexican foreign minister Jorge Castañeda proved to be impossible to digest by even a favorable administration like Bush’s. Its efforts to reform immigration failed. In no other area of hemispheric relations has Bush left a worse legacy. The change of focus after 9/11 to border security and the anti-immigration climate that developed in America blocked the bipartisan McCain-Kennedy proposal and the “Grand Bargain” of 2007, despite the President’s positive view about both initiatives.

The effect has been devastating for U.S. interests in Latin America. The biggest senders of undocumented emigrants to the U.S. are Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Central America—precisely the countries with free trade agreements with the U.S. In these countries, the populations compare the integration proposed by the U.S.—which allows the movement of goods but not people—with the European Union—where movement of labor is allowed. The fence on the border, the raids on businesses where most workers are Latin, the separation of families, and the incarceration and deportations of fellow nationals arouse anger among people from the region.

The failure of immigration reform is tragic because Latin Americans see it as a clear example of short-term bickering that sabotages long-term foreign policy interests. As Jorge Castañeda has written: “The substantive elements necessary are well known: tightening security at the border but ... including gates in the wall currently being built; legalizing, with expeditious and sensible fines and conditions, the 15 million or so foreigners now present in the United States illegally; establishing what Obama has called a ‘migrant worker program’ ... that allows a sufficient number of foreigners ... to satisfy the growing needs of the U.S. economy and American society, with paths both to regular visits home and to U.S. permanent residence.”<sup>11</sup>

The tragedy is worse because the anti-immigrant crusade has been based on scaring the citizenry with a loss of their American identity. But the U.S. is not on the verge of a massive invasion of immigrants who would not assimilate into society. Studies of the total fertility rate (TFR) and average number of births per woman per lifetime in Latin America show the TFR plummeted from 6 in 1960 to 2.5 in 2005. By 2010, most Latin

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<sup>10</sup> For the story of the Bush-Fox summit see *id.* at p. 230.

<sup>11</sup> Jorge Castañeda, “Morning in Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs*, Sept/October 2008, p. 131.

American countries will fall to nearly 2.1. The issue is particularly relevant in Mexico, where the projected TFR is 2.07, below the replacement level, for 2006.<sup>12</sup> There are strong reasons to believe that immigration from Mexico will slow simply because its population will decrease. And when it comes to assimilation, studies show the assimilation of new arrivals from Mexico is faster than many other migrant groups: 90% of first generation Hispanics born in California have native fluency in English, and by the second generation, half have already lost Spanish as a second language.<sup>13</sup>

The anti-Mexican propaganda is especially damaging because Mexico is seen in Latin America as the country on the road to creating a strategic alliance with the U.S. and Canada. It was the first Latin American country to enter into a free trade agreement with the U.S. and it is clear the two economies and societies are deeply intertwined.

**The Electoral Campaign and Obama Administration.** Immigration did not trigger significant debate between Obama and McCain. The economic crisis simply trumped the issue. During the primaries, however, immigration was a major issue. McCain, who had received high approvals from pro-immigration groups, leaned right. The Republicans favored more fencing and tough immigration laws, alienating many Hispanics. After clinching the nomination, McCain went to Colombia and Mexico, where he said he would promote immigration reform after securing the border.

Obama's record is more cautious. He didn't play a leading role in the effort to pass immigration reform in 2007. During the debates, he backed a measure cutting the number of guest workers from 400,000 to 200,000 and introduced a measure banning employers from hiring guest workers in areas of high unemployment. In the primaries, Hispanics became one of the main constituencies where Hillary Clinton defeated him.

But Hispanics turned out for Obama in record numbers on Election Day. As the new president, he will have to reinforce his support among this sector. They will be even more important in 2012. The new Democratic Congress will likely pass some form of regularization for undocumented workers. Democrats now believe they have harvested the benefits of Hispanic naturalization waves in 1992 and 1996, even though it was Ronald Reagan who passed the last reforms in 1986.

President Obama will face challenges in securing the border and a growing undocumented population. The issue is also connected to homeland security, trade, and the war on drugs. If he can deliver some types of regularization for the undocumented and some type of guest worker program, he could demand more cooperation from the countries sending the most immigrants, especially Mexico, to curtail illegal immigration

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<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Changing Demographics of the U.S. Southern Security Perimeter: A First Look at the Numbers, Vol. 25 Comparative Strategy (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006) pp. 83-88.

<sup>13</sup> Data from the census quoted by K. Anthony Appiah, "The Multiculturalist Misunderstanding," New York Review of Books, October 9, 1997.

in the future.

#### **IV. DEMOCRACY AND THE RISE OF NEW LEFT ALTERNATIVES**

Left-leaning alternatives, often called the New Left, are rising in Latin America. These are not the radical, ideological, totalitarian lefts of the past, but a different breed: market-friendly, less ideological, more democratic and more experimental. The U.S. must learn to engage with these movements and their governments in positive ways.

The promotion of an inter-American order based on respect for democracy and human rights is in the best interest of the U.S. Homeland security and free trade profit from a stable hemisphere in which dissent is expressed through free speech, free press, and free elections. After the Linowitz Report in 1976, it became clear: A firm stance by the U.S. on behalf of human rights would enhance American soft power and appeal to its Latin neighbors. The two administrations after Ronald Reagan adopted an agenda that made human rights a major concern to U.S. policy toward the hemisphere.<sup>14</sup>

George W. Bush inherited a promising situation. The only time Pres. Clinton intervened militarily in Latin America was to reinstate Pres. Aristide in Haiti after he was overthrown by a military coup, an action approved by the Caribbean Community and U.N. In the OAS, Clinton supported the new democracies of the region, endorsed the Declaration of Santiago against any interruption of the constitutional order in any member state, and coordinated mediation in cases of coup attempts, conflicts within regional governments, and rebellions. Clinton made friends in the region.

But from the first, Bush's views on democracy and human rights clashed with his views on economic rights. And economics won. He focused on the development of market economies that satisfied his version of capitalism. He would not support any other type of economic, cultural and social rights. He nearly endorsed an interruption of the democratic order in Venezuela during the coup in 2002,<sup>15</sup> rather than opposing it as required by the Inter-American Democratic Charter. And while American ambivalence has been especially evident in Venezuela, it has not been limited to that nation.<sup>16</sup>

Negativity toward Bush and the Washington Consensus means that Obama will face the most vigorous electoral ascent of the left in Latin history. Besides Chavez, other leftists have won elections in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. Leftist thrive in Mexico and Peru. But this rise of New Left alternatives in Latin America reflects factors that

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<sup>14</sup> See Clair Apodaca, *Understanding U.S. Human Rights Policy* (Routledge, New York 2006) and Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Cornell University Press 2004).

<sup>15</sup> See Eva Golinger, *The Chavez Code: Cracking U.S. Intervention in Venezuela* (Pluto Press, London 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Another major case was U.S. acquiescence to the International Republican Institute's complicity in coordinating anti-Aristide efforts in Haiti with the participation of armed bands and paramilitary groups. These actions, coordinated in Santo Domingo, led to the overthrow of the Aristide government by a revolt. [cite article from *New York Times* Week in Review]

preceded Bush and will exist when he leaves office. The collapse of the neo-liberal model in the global market crisis of 2008 and the illiberal flaws of many Latin American democracies are also to blame.

Here two processes intersect but are not the same. The rise of the left is not the same as the erosion of Latin American republican and liberal institutions of democracy. Some Latin democracies lack the most basic rule of law. In others, checks and balances are weakened by constitutions that centralize power in the executive. In still others, republican ideals—like representative government and federalism—are attacked by those who call for direct forms of democracy. To associate these trends only with the rise of the left is wrong because similar processes have taken or are taking place in other countries without being driven by populist leftist ideology. Columbia is an example.

But even in places like Venezuela and Bolivia, where Chavez and Morales have engaged in provocation, there are opportunities for progress if the U.S. learns to respect the differing brands of the New Left. Already the Bush Administration has nailed a democratic mask to Chavez's face and supported an opposition strategy based on the continuation of the democratic process. This was a smart move. As a result, the U.S. let the Bolivian Revolution run off some of its steam. And in 2007, for the first time, the Venezuelan opposition defeated Chavez in a major referendum designed to further enhance his power.

Unfortunately the Bush Administration failed to follow these gains with a more integral strategy. U.S. neglect of problems in Latin America, in favor of obsession with other areas of the world, and its unilateralist attitude toward the OAS, prevented it from investing in efforts to revive and stabilize the democratic order in the region. The U.S. must lead the democratic community of the hemisphere in the promotion and defense of democracy, but this requires a commitment to the multilateralism of the OAS.

Bush's legacy in developing hemispheric democratic governance is also mixed. American diplomacy endorsed the efforts by Peru, Canada, Chile and others that led to the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. This Charter codified the principles of representative democracy and made its defense and promotion a common responsibility of all the states of the hemisphere. It softened the non-intervention norm by giving the Permanent Council and Secretary General of the OAS powers to suspend countries from inter-American cooperation if a constitutional interruption should occur. The Quebec Summit and the Mar del Plata III and IV Summits reiterated that republican democracy is a precondition for participation in the Summit of the Americas process.<sup>17</sup>

In its other efforts to develop democracy in the OAS, the U.S. pushed permanent democracy-monitoring mechanisms before the General Assembly in 2005. Venezuela,

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<sup>17</sup> Declaration of Quebec City Summit of the Americas, Quebec City, April 21, 2001 and Declaration of Mar del Plata, December, 2005.

Brazil and Mexico resisted. Endorsed by NGOs like the Carter Center, the U.S. then proposed a committee to alert the Secretary General about adverse developments to the democratic order in member states. In light of the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. proposal was perceived as just another example of the U.S. meddling in the affairs of sovereign nations. The proposal later mellowed into the Declaration of Florida, calling for the Secretary General to draft a plan of action.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the U.S. underestimated the role of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, well-respected throughout the region. Highly qualified human rights lawyers like Tom Farer, Susana Villaran, Jose Zalaquet and Robert Goldman have been members of the Commission. In 2003 the U.S. nominated a Cuban-American lawyer and brother of Mel Martinez, the Republican Senator from Florida. Most rejected the nomination as an attempt to politicize the Commission with an unqualified candidate, introducing an unwelcome polarization on Cuba, excluded from the OAS for decades. In 2004, for the first time since the creation of the Commission, no American sat on it.

Today sub-regional organizations proliferate across the region, complementing and competing for multilateral coordination with the OAS. Some, like MERCOSUR, SICA and the Andean Community of Nations, have approved democratic clauses, but others—the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA) and PetroCaribe—do not exclude non-democracies. Cuba, for instance, is a founder of ALBA, with full rights.

**The Challenge for President Obama.** The rise of alternative lefts and erosion of republican institutions in Latin America are major challenges. President Obama will also face a crisis in Pan-American multilateralism. The OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank need revitalization and redesign. The hemisphere needs forums for greater integration and dialogue among the different regional groups.

But no greater challenge faces the new administration than the restoration of the American “brand” in the region and throughout the world. No doubt the image of the U.S. will benefit from Obama’s expected withdrawal of forces from Iraq, return to an active multilateralism, and closure of Guantánamo. These changes will resonate deeply in Latin America because the region has strong anti-interventionist and anti-torture feelings. The U.S. simply cannot improve its image among Latin Americans as long as it debates whether torture can be justified or what types of torture should be legalized.

The U.S. should support democratic institutions throughout Latin America, abandon its culture of secrecy, and rethink its war on terror. President Obama must work to channel the New Left onto democratic tracks. Ironically, in most countries, the left has won the democratic popularity contest but lacks a commitment to the checks and balances that modern democracy inherits from its republican traditions. The U.S. should strengthen the

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<sup>18</sup> Joel Brinkley, “Latin States Shun U.S. Plan to Watch Over Democracy,” New York Times, June 9, 2005.

multilateral human rights mechanisms in Latin America because they are the natural loci for discussing democracy as a system of accountability.

The U.S. must also understand that the rise of the New Left has been motivated in large measure by rejection of the Washington Consensus. The Latin public is as divided on free trade as the U.S. But there are openings for a consensual, pro-market coalition across the North-South divide. This consensus must be sensitive to both environmental concerns and income inequality. Rather than opposing initiatives like ALBA, the U.S. should use its resources and talent to promote competitive alternatives.

Nothing is more strategically important than designing the proper policy toward Venezuela because the Caracas-Havana axis is the center of a regional authoritarian left. Chavez's hold on power is weaker today than when George W. Bush came into office. His coalition has begun to divide. His attempts at constitutional reform via referendum—which would have ended presidential term limits—were defeated in December 2007. What is the lesson? Do not fall for his provocations. Whenever Chavez tries to polarize the region with his ideological rhetoric, the U.S. must respond with pragmatic solutions to real-world problems. Whenever he closes doors to trade, academic, cultural or other exchanges, the U.S. must open them. Today, the single biggest weapon aimed at Hugo Chavez is the constitutional term limit he faces. In due course he will leave office and his revolutionary posturing will run its course. The U.S. must be ready for that opportunity.

As Obama takes office, the growing consensus in American politics is all about integrating national security with economic, energy and environmental policy. Pursuit of this integrated approach could produce major political benefits by reducing the power of energy-based economies in which authoritarianism blossoms.<sup>19</sup> It is hard to imagine the current leverage enjoyed by Chavez, or even extra-regional powers in the region like Iran or Russia, if oil prices were lower.

## V. THE SPECIAL CHALLENGE OF CUBA

Shortly before Obama swore an oath to uphold the American Constitution as the 44<sup>th</sup> President, the Cuban Revolution marked its Fiftieth Anniversary. A key challenge for his policy toward Latin America will be to design and implement an effective approach toward Cuba. The small island nation is powerfully—if less numerically—connected to the broader debates over immigration policy, trade policy, and the rise of the New Left. When the leaders of Latin America called to congratulate Obama on his electoral victory, voice after voice joined in the refrain: **Lift the Cuban Embargo!**

These are times of transition on both sides of the Straits of Florida. In Cuba, Fidel Castro's younger brother Raúl is now firmly in power after a peaceful succession. And

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<sup>19</sup> See Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*, and Joseph Stiglitz [must complete citations]

for the first time in many decades, there were truly competitive elections in the congressional districts of South Florida where most Cuban-Americans live.

George W. Bush's policy toward Cuba was defined by his support for the Helms-Burton law. He tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the "succession" from Fidel to Raúl and he tried, unsuccessfully, to promote a "transition" to a representative democracy with a free market economy.

At first, Bush made no changes in the policy he inherited from his predecessor. Clinton had achieved a migration agreement by which legal immigration from Cuba to the U.S. was regularized. Even so, Bush was hailed by pro-Embargo Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart as "the strongest and indispensable factor standing between the Clinton-created anti-embargo coalition and the elimination of the embargo."<sup>20</sup>

Over time Bush worked to prevent any relaxation of the Embargo and generally he succeeded, except for agricultural trade. Today U.S. farmers sell over \$600 million of their products to Cuba under an exemption from the Embargo. Despite all the red tape and regulatory restrictions, Cuba has become a major trading partner of the U.S.

When the 2004 election cycle began, things changed. Republicans detected a lack of enthusiasm among the Cuban-American right. The perception was that Bush had not delivered on his 2000 electoral promises of tightening sanctions against Castro. Unable to reduce farm trade and reluctant to create a rift in the WTO by enforcing the extra-territorial provisions of Helms-Burton, he targeted vulnerable Cuban-Americans with family ties to the island. In 2004, he restricted their ability to visit relatives in Cuba to once every three years and reduced the remittances allowed to be sent to there.

Bush's policies were focused on regime change. They failed. This failure was clear when Raúl Castro peacefully assumed power in Cuba and the U.S. did nothing but repeat the same old mantra about not tolerating succession. As a result, the Cuban government is more influential than ever in Latin America and the Third World. It has excellent economic and political relations with China and India. And it is repairing its relations with the EU, Russia and Mexico, three actors with which it had conflicts during the early 2000's. Even in the area of human rights, Cuba has avoided any major inquiry even though it still keeps many dissidents behind bars.

Until August, 2009, Cuba was the president of the Non-Aligned Movement. Its economy is improving due to the rise in the price of nickel and increased non-American tourism. The island is part of ALBA and PetroCaribe, two integration groups led by Venezuela. Cuban doctors, teachers and trainers are spread throughout Latin America, Africa and even Pakistan. The fact that Cuban leadership is not as visible as Chavez in fighting against U.S. hegemony should not confuse anyone about the shared nature of the

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<sup>20</sup> Karen DeYoung, "Bush Continues a Clinton Policy on Cuba," Washington Post, July 17, 2001.

task. Fidel is an ailing pope, but Havana is still the Rome of Latin America's radical left.

If ever there were a place that symbolized the need for change, it is Cuba.

**The 2008 Elections and the Challenge for Obama.** The relevant question is not **whether** to engage with Cuba but **how** to do so. The limits on Cuban-American travel and family remittances have created a rift in the Cuban exile community that the Democrats have exploited. Obama's victory in Florida was only part of it. In the 2008 congressional elections, the powerful Diaz-Balart brothers faced formidable Democratic contenders.<sup>21</sup> For the first time, candidates ran on a platform that proposed to remove parts of the Embargo. This was important because the strategy of the Democratic Party in Florida had been historically to try to "out-Cuban" the Republican right.

The causes of these shifts were simple. Demographics are changing. U.S.-born Cuban-Americans and Cubans who emigrated from the island after 1980 are much less ideological and much more focused on issues like the economy and engagement.

Obama's victory—especially in Florida—augurs major change. When running for the Senate in 2004, and asked about Cuba, he stated: "I believe that normalization of relations with Cuba would help the oppressed and poverty-stricken Cuban people while setting the stage for a more democratic government once Castro inevitably leaves the scene." Today he stands ready to negotiate the dismantlement of the Embargo, reciprocating Cuban steps toward democracy and economic liberalization, beginning with the release of political prisoners.

Obama's immediate responses are twofold. First, he would quickly dismantle the 2004 regulatory restrictions on Cuban-American travel to the island and monetary remittances to relatives on the island. In his view, there "are no better ambassadors for freedom than Cuban Americans." Second, he would open direct negotiations without preconditions with Raúl Castro because "after eight years of disastrous policies of George Bush, it is time to pursue direct diplomacy with friends and foes alike."<sup>22</sup>

The balance of power in Congress is also changing. Farmers, the oil industry, new Cuban-American groups, hotel companies, travel agents and other players all favor a new approach to Cuba.<sup>23</sup> Beyond his immediate proposals, Obama will change the policymaking process in several ways. He will open it up to a wider spectrum of actors with significantly different agendas. This spectrum will include mainstream Democratic

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<sup>21</sup> Ultimately Mario Diaz-Balart beat the former director of the Cuban American National Foundation and president of the Democratic Party in Dade County, Joe Garcia. And Lincoln Diaz-Balart beat the former mayor of Hialeah, Raul Martinez.

<sup>22</sup> Barack Obama, Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: Renewing U.S Leadership in the Americas, Miami, May 23, 2008. See also the policy paper on Cuba on his Web site.

<sup>23</sup> See Pete Kasperowicz, "The Bush Administration, Cuba and the Cuban-American Lobby," Center for National Policy, 2002; and Soraya Castro, "A New Dynamic in U.S-Cuba Relations: Is the Balance of Power in U.S Politics Towards Cuba Changing?" Centro de Estudios sobre Estados Unidos, Universidad de la Habana, 2001.



groups in favor of lifting the Embargo and new groups of Cuban-Americans that support using the Embargo as a bargaining chip. Obama will also end the threat of an automatic veto over legislation that dismantles the Embargo in whole or in part.

Obama has said he will rely on Joe Biden on foreign relations. As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden refused to schedule hearings to confirm Otto Reich, the darling of the Cuban right, as Undersecretary for Hemispheric Affairs. In 2003, Biden voted to end funding for enforcement of the ban against travel to Cuba. When Fidel Castro resigned, Biden called for lifting the 2004 restrictions on Cuban-American travel and remittances. And during the primaries, he supported Chris Dodd's position of normalizing relations with Cuba, though later he said full normalization should happen only after Cuba changed "its human rights policies."

What are the odds Obama and Biden will succeed with their new policy? If the goal is a democratic transition in Cuba, they don't have much leverage in the short term. But elimination of the restrictions on Cuban-American travel and remittances would create pressure for market reforms and further liberalization on the island. They also would create pressure for greater contacts across the Straits.

Obama should move quickly and send signals to the Cuban leadership that he is ready to change the atmosphere. The Cubans realize that engagement with the U.S. would increase pressure for cultural, economic and political reform. Nationalism—the major pillar of the Communist Party on the island—would have to be adjusted.

Obama should also use engagement to solve current problems and create more dissent among the Cuban elite. Greater engagement would open lines of information and communication with the different sectors of Cuban society while placing the Cuban government on the defensive if it rejects popular reforms and accepted human rights. Negotiations should be expected to begin in the early months after Obama takes office on areas of common interest, like drug interdiction.

## **VI. THE SPECIAL ROLE OF BRAZIL**

Brazil presents both a problem and an opportunity for U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America. The Southern analog of the U.S. in the North, Brazil has become increasingly hegemonic in its own right. It ranks as the fifth largest and most populous country in the world and the fourth largest democracy. It is structured as a Federal Republic composed of States governed by a written Constitution.

Brazil also has an active market-based economy—the tenth largest in the world—and is weathering the turmoil in global markets better than most emerging nations. But that's only the tip of the iceberg. The real dilemma is this: Brazil's growing hegemony, especially among the southern nations of Latin America, makes it America's biggest competitor for influence in the region. But, because its system is so closely aligned with

the U.S. model and with U.S. interests—in terms of its democratic politics, its market-based economics, and its vast environmental responsibilities—Brazil is also likely to be the biggest ally the U.S. has in Latin America.

It depends on whether the U.S. can accept and exploit its new role in the world. Everyone from the Council on Foreign Relations to the CIA agrees: The U.S. is losing its status as the sole superpower. The rise of BRIC—Brazil, Russia, India and China—and the persistence of the EU will reduce America’s hegemony, globally and regionally. The new report Global Trends 2025, released by the National Intelligence Council in November 2008, was especially blunt in predicting the loss of American power and the inevitability of a multi-polar power structure evolving over the next fifteen years.

So Brazil has become a player. In 2002 the IMF loaned it \$30.4 billion, a record amount at the time. Brazil paid off that loan a year early in 2005, prefacing a trend away from the market fundamentalism of the IMF and World Bank, toward a new phase of globalization that no longer plays by the rules of the Washington Consensus.

Brazil’s tendency to experiment started decades ago. It responded to the Arab oil embargo in the mid-1970s with great foresight. It “launched a national program to produce ethanol from sugarcane”—which is far more efficient than corn-based ethanol —“to make itself less dependent on imported oil. Today, between Brazil’s domestic oil production and its ethanol industry, it doesn’t need to import crude oil.”<sup>24</sup>

Visionary long-term experimentation is alive and well in Brazil. This notable willingness to experiment on a grand scale puts Brazil at the heart of the debates over free trade and the rise of the New Left in the New Millennium. Is it a perfect nation? That’s the wrong question. Can lessons be learned from its emergence? That’s the opportunity—for America and for its new president.

No one wants to replicate the slums of Rio in Atlanta. But that doesn’t mean we cannot learn from the experiments of other nations, especially in our own Hemisphere. At a time when our health care and education systems are no longer the best on earth, and our banking system ranks 40<sup>th</sup>—that’s right, 40<sup>th</sup>!—in terms of stability, we must start looking for solutions to global problems in new places.

And here’s the good news: Globalization, in the broad sense of market-based economics, is alive and well in Brazil. So, too, respect for the political forces of sovereignty is alive and well in Brazil. That’s one of the major reasons why it and its neighbors have little use for Bush-era bluster and unilateralism.

And then there are the instrumental reasons for paying attention to Brazil. Deforestation and explosive economic growth in that country have contributed greatly to

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green revolution—And How It Can renew America (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 2008), p. 14.

the world's environmental crisis. Rapid deforestation releases greenhouse gases on a huge scale, causing global warming and climate change, exacerbating the energy crisis, fueling the global economic crisis—it's all interconnected. Multilateral action, like that taken by the European nations acting in concert in response to the banking crisis, becomes more inevitable the more global the problem becomes.

Enter Roberto Mangabeira Unger, a professor at Harvard Law School, where a young Barack Obama once was his student. Currently Unger is on leave from HLS while serving as the head of the Long-Term Planning Secretariat in his native Brazil. That means he's a cabinet-level minister.

Wouldn't it be astonishing if the new President of the United States created a cabinet-level department tasked with planning for the long-term!

An eccentric, exuberant, prolific figure, Unger went to Harvard for his LLM in the 1970s. Recognizing his precocious genius, the faculty plucked him from his peers and gave him a teaching position. As a young professor, he would prowl the stages of the biggest classrooms at HLS, delivering lectures in precise sentences and structured paragraphs, drawing crowds of teachers and students from across the campus.

Today Unger is associated with the New Left in Latin America. But that misses the essence of the man. He disavows the dualistic thinking that polarizes the world into liberals and conservatives, left and right, communists and capitalists. He has developed a theory of Progressive Pragmatism which he distinguishes from Social Democracy. His writings seek to apply this theory to concrete real-world problems. His ministry position in Brazil gives him the opportunity to put his experiments into practice.

Two of his ideas illustrate the sorts of experiments he advocates. He recognizes the advantages of a three-branch constitutional system with separated powers and checks and balances, but he also sees the need to “quicken democratic experimentalism” by [1] accepting “the conventional body of contract and corporate law as the basic framework for the self-organization of civil society,” while [2] creating “a [new] branch of government responsible for localized intervention in organizations or practices corrupted by entrenched forms of social exclusion or subjugation.”<sup>25</sup>

Would this simply legitimate the “Headless Fourth Branch,” those independent agencies already found in American government? Or is he advocating a multi-branch system like the one in the failed European Constitutional experiment? Either way, it *is* intended to be political, economic, and legal experimentation on a national scale.

Unger also advocates changes in property rights, beyond social democracy's focus on stake-holding: What stake do the employees, unionists and environmentalists have in the

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<sup>25</sup> Roberto Mangabeira Unger, Democracy Realized: The Progressive Alternative (Verso Press, New York 1998), p. 269.

operation of a business? Instead, Unger elevates these stakes to a different legal order by calling them rights and infusing them with value. Think of it this way: Intellectual property law in the U.S. is divided into copyright, patent and trademark. Europeans recognize a fourth category called “moral rights.” Cases are litigated in their courts over these moral rights. Giving them juridical status makes a real difference. What Unger is advocating when it comes to property rights is not so different. He says: “The conflict between statism and privatism is dying and being replaced by a contest among alternative institutional forms of political, social, and economic pluralism. Representative democracy, free civil society, and the market economy can all take forms different from those they now assume in the North Atlantic world.”<sup>26</sup>

This is not scary Latin American voodoo. This is sound social theory. And it will become even sounder as the U.S. responds to its housing, economic, environmental, and foreign policy crises by entering a new era of re-regulation. This new era will push the U.S. away from the market fundamentalism of the past and toward a more heavily regulated political and economic environment. And this will happen not for ideological reasons, but for practical, pragmatic reasons. In the hyper-connected world of global business and politics, regulations are needed to harmonize all the players clamoring for something faster, quicker, more responsive to the cascading problems of the moment.

The quality of President Obama’s engagement with Latin America will likely be influenced by the teachings of his former law professor. Already, when Obama speaks of doing away with the outmoded distinctions between the left and the right—between the labels of conservative and liberal—the echoes of Roberto Unger can be heard.

## **VII.CONCLUSION**

The themes for Obama’s Presidency are clear:

The U.S. must engage more meaningfully with its neighbors to the south. Engagement and diplomacy are the only things that will move the ball forward on the critical issues of trade, immigration, and the rise of the New Left. Engagement is the only way the U.S. will end its stalemate with Cuba. And engagement is likely the only way it will effectively learn the lessons of Brazil, which is likely to be its biggest competitor and ally in the region.

So, too, at a time when radical ideology is on the wane, and pragmatic solutions to hemispheric problems are called for, the U.S. must open itself to greater political and economic experimentation both on its part and on the part of the Latin American states. Experimentation points the way to redesigning not only the global financial system, but also to dealing in creative ways with the problems that have haunted Latin America.

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<sup>26</sup> Id. at p. 277; see also the various writings cited at [www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/unger](http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/unger).

Looking at Bush's legacy in the region, we must distinguish between his terms. In the opening months of his first term, he tried to achieve some progress on trade and immigration. After 9/11, however, his hemispheric agenda took a back seat to the challenges he faced in other parts of the world. In terms of democracy promotion his record was also inconsistent. As a result, many problems in the region festered.

During his second term, Bush tried to correct some of the neglect. He traveled often to the region. And as ideologues like Otto Reich, John Bolton and Roger Noriega retired from their government positions, a more pragmatic team took control. But the new appointments came too late. The damage done by America's ambiguity if not support for the coup in Venezuela, and the time lost in punishing Chile and Mexico for their opposition to the War in Iraq, delayed progress on free trade and immigration.

Bush's record shows how the U.S. has operated in the past. But in the future, foreign policy issues will be interconnected in ways that demand integrated responses. Lack of economic development encourages illegal migration. Illegal migration affects security along the border and is used by criminals for their activities. Insecure borders interfere with the people's disposition toward legitimate movement of people and trade.

If there is a key word to define the experiment of engagement, it is **integration**. Integration is a challenge and an opportunity. The U.S. must integrate its policies on specific issues into a **grand strategy**. The Cuba issue needs to be seen as part of a general response to the rise of the Latin American left. U.S. policies toward Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico must be integrated into U.S. energy, national security and environmental policies.

But rational foreign policies often collide with domestic political constraints. The promotion of free trade, immigration reform, sugar-based ethanol trade as part of a commercial and political alliance with Brazil, and change toward Cuba are limited by internal politics. Trade unions, anti-immigration groups, the Cuban-American right, farmers and electoral politics all play a role. The U.S. and Latin populations will not support free trade if they see its benefits reaped only by a few, leading to even greater economic inequality. The development of an integrated grand strategy for the region will also likely be hampered by the ongoing economic recession.

Barack Obama has proposed a more comprehensive engagement with the region. He seems willing to negotiate with Chavez and Castro and experiment with newer, fresher policies. How successful he will be remains to be seen.

But this is certain: The ghosts of the old ideologies of Left and Right must be exorcized. A new era must dawn on the region. To preserve what remains of its hemispheric hegemony, the new U.S. president must be willing to engage and experiment.



THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHÁVEZ AND OBAMA'S LATIN  
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

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**ABSTRACT**

Relations with President Chávez are an important test for Obama's Latin American Foreign Policy. The symbolic status of Chávez, as the foremost leader of Latin American Leftist Neo-populism and Anti-imperialism, turns the relations between US and Venezuela into a symbolic level. The influence of Chávez on other Latin American leaders adds importance to Obama's handling of Venezuela.

Chávez evaluation of Obama's Latin American Policy has been influence not only by Obama's statements and actions, but also by internal and external factors of political and economic nature. Chávez' statements about Obama show an evolution from a conditional acceptance to a increasingly critical view. The texts and contexts also show that the Venezuelan President position versus Obama is expressed both in rhetorical and political ways, with the aims of changing and influencing Obama's attitude, criticizing Obama's policies and actions, helping him in its quest to exert a greater political control of Venezuela (by winning elections and debilitating the Foreign support and justification for his political opponents), letting him have a freer hand in handling Foreign companies and investments in Venezuela, allowing him to keep the US market for Venezuelan oil while preparing new alternatives markets in other parts of the World, etc.

**KEY WORDS:** US Foreign Relations, Hugo Chávez, Venezuela, Latin America

## Introduction

The examination of Chávez's discourse about Obama and his Latin American Foreign Policy will offer interesting data not only about Chávez evaluation, but also about the motives and factors behind it. Discourse as a social construction is not only a tool for knowledge and communication, but also a political and ideological weapon. Statements are not only raw information or evaluation, most of the times are relational acts directed to change others' attitude, thought or behaviour. Our words are at times statements about our opinions, rejections of somebody else position, or tools to elicit a reaction. Ideology, power, and interest are the context of political discourse like the one of Chávez regarding Obama's policies.

Obama seems to have softened U.S. policy toward Latin America, in comparison to his predecessor, by adopting a more conciliatory approach in the line of Frank Delano Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" Latin American policy. With its tone of respect and softer policies on Cuba, drug control, and immigration, the Obama administration will definitely get greater Latin American cooperation on those and other important issues, including US multinationals deployment in Latin America, economic integration and poverty reduction and also energy and climate change. Further, it should become easier to engage President Chávez and other Leftist and Populist Latin American leaders and work together with the U.S. in its domestic and international goals, especially toward a peaceful, and democratic American continent.

Hugo Chavez is the Latin American leader most inspired by the Cuban economic and political model. This makes Chavez only a "symbolic enemy" of Washington but also a real threat against U.S. corporations in Venezuela, beset by the Venezuelan Government push for nationalizations.<sup>1</sup> Chavez is also a symbolic figure the World public opinion. The

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<sup>1</sup> Nationalizations during Chavez tenures: 2007 On May 1, 2007, Venezuela stripped the world's biggest oil companies --U.S. companies ConocoPhillips, Chevron, Exxon Mobil, Britain's BP, Norway's Statoil and France's-- of operational control over massive Orinoco Belt crude projects valued at more than \$30 billion and can convert about 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) of heavy, tarry crude into valuable synthetic oil..2008 On April 3, 2008, President Hugo Chavez ordered the nationalization of the cement industry. ([Al Jazeera English - Americas - Chavez nationalises cement industry](#) ). Chavez also nationalized CANTV (<http://sweetness-light.com/archive/chavez-wont-pay-market-value-for-seized-us-telcom>), buying out U.S.-based Verizon Communications Inc's (VZ.N) 28.5 percent stake for \$572 million. Analysts said Verizon received fair compensation for its assets.. 2008 On April 9, 2008, Hugo Chavez ordered the nationalization of Venezuelan steel mill Sidor, in which Luxembourg-based Ternium currently holds a 60% stake. Sidor employees and the Government hold a 20% stake respectively. ([Venezuela to nationalize steelmaker Sidor: union | Reuters](#)). In the same year, 2007, Venezuela expropriated the assets of U.S.-based AES Corp (AES.N) in Electricidad de Caracas, the country's largest private power producer. The government paid AES \$740 million for its 82 percent stake. Analysts said the deal was fair for AES. 2008 On August 19, 2008, Hugo Chavez ordered the take-over of a cement plant owned and operated by Cemex, an international cement producer. While shares of Cemex fell on the New York Stock Exchange, the cement plant comprises only about 5% of the company's business, and is not expected to adversely affect the company's ability to produce in other markets. Chavez has been looking to nationalize the concrete and steel industries of his country to meet home building and infrastructure goals. ([Venezuela Seizes Cemex - Forbes.com](#)). 2009 On February 28, 2009, Hugo Chavez ordered the army to take over all rice processing and packaging plants. ([BBC NEWS | Americas | Chavez sends army to rice plants](#), <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0426337720090305>). By



deteriorated relationship between Washington and the President of its fourth largest supplier of imported oil<sup>2</sup> is too strategically important to ignore, especially if we also take into consideration the strong leadership of Chávez among Latin American Leftist and World Anti-imperialist leaders, and the huge amount invested in Venezuela by US enterprises. For Obama, the opening of a détente with Chávez will mean a political victory. This would allow him to concentrate on digging the U.S. economy out of recession and tackling up the pressing military conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, because it would remove political conflict and opposition abroad, ensure a steady supply of oil, and facilitate the international deployment of US companies in Latin America.

U.S. influence in Latin America has been eroding in the last decades, and U.S. corporations are losing space by nationalizations and both Chinese and European investments. Washington counts basically with two right allies in the region: Colombia and Mexico. Bush strengthened U.S. relations with both governments by implementing Plan Colombia first, and the Meridia Initiative (Plan Mexico) to cooperate in the fight against drug traffic.

Obama's Latin American Foreign Policy faces several limitations: domestic pressure, military engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Antiterrorist War against Al Qaeda, the financial and economic crisis, the emergence of China as a new important economic and political power, the strong lobbying power of transnational US enterprises, and its weak political majority beset by the pervading political and social power of the Republican Party. Even though, Obama might wish to drastically change the preceding Foreign Policy of the Bush

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July 2009, according to "Thus far the (Venezuelan) government has invested approximately \$22 billion in nationalization programs," said Asdrúbal Oliveros, an economic expert for Ecoanalítica in Venezuela. "This does not include the dispute that Venezuela is engaged in (nationalizing Venezuelan operations of) ExxonMobil and Sunoco, which accounts to about \$8 billion, bringing the total to \$30 billion," he added (Cfr. Edwin Mora, "Obama, Chavez Are Both Nationalizing Private Companies, Venezuelan Political Analyst Says", CNS News, July 28, 2009. In <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/51638>. Regarding the nationalization of banks, on December 2, 2009, President Hugo Chavez threatened to seize more banks following the government's takeover of four lenders. Banco Canarias de Venezuela CA and Banpro Banco Universal were closed by Chavez while Banco Confederado SA and Bolivar Banco CA are being administered by the government to "rehabilitate" the institutions, Finance Minister Ali Rodriguez said Nov. 30. The four banks represented about 6 percent of total deposits in Venezuela. At least four international banks have a presence in Venezuela, including Spain's Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA, Amsterdam-based ABN Amro Holding NV and U.S.-based Citigroup Inc. Venezuela's banking sector had 248 billion bolivars (\$115.5 billion) in deposits among 50 institutions at the end of October, according to Softline Consultores, a consulting firm in Caracas. The government this year took control of Stanford Bank SA Banco Comercial and closed the local offices of Antigua-based Stanford International Bank Ltd. after the owner, R. Allen Stanford, was accused of defrauding investors of \$8 billion. Venezuelan investors had as much as \$3 billion in Stanford's Antigua bank, the banking superintendent said in February. Chavez ordered the government to buy Banco de Venezuela, a unit of Spain's Banco Santander SA, for \$1.05 billion to expand the state's presence in the banking sector this year. (Cfr. Daniel Cancel, "Venezuela Dollar Bonds Plunge on Chavez Bank Takeovers, Threats", Caracas, *Bloomberg*, Dec 2, 2009. In <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=awz3v.yjx29g&pos=7>). At the end of December 2009, Chávez gave the Toyota Motor Corporation an ultimatum: give us your technological secrets and increase your local production of Land Cruiser 4x4 vehicles, or prepare to have your plants nationalized (Cfr. Claude Cartaginense, "Obama's Buddy Chavez Threatens to Nationalize Car Industry: Chávez vs. Toyota", *Free Republic*. In <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2416145/posts>).

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. <http://www.state.gov/r/pe/ei/bgn/35766.htm>

Administration, the present domestic and international political, economic and military situation imposes too many restrictions to real change, and even to symbolic change in the case of Cuba, due to the radicalism of the Anti-Castro Lobby and its power in domestic politics. It seems that Obama can only change the discourse, the attitude, and the atmosphere of US-Latin American relationship, and some lesser measures, while enunciating its new vision and desires-- minor modifications accompanied by rhetorical change promising greater future changes.

### **The statements of Chávez about Obama (2008-2010)**

When on March 1st 2008, the Colombian military bombed a FARC base in Ecuador without warning, the Latin American countries organized in the “Rio Group” denounced the raid, while both Bush and Obama<sup>3</sup> supported the bombing. Chavez, and other Latin American leaders, concluded that the U.S. was using Colombia and Mexico as a counterbalance to the loss of influence in the region, and that it was trying to build powerful armies in both countries, to regain its potential to influence the affairs of other countries in the region. Obama, after becoming president, supported Colombia and Mexico, defending the Plan Colombia, and making a special trip to Mexico before the Summit of the Americas. These actions seem to show continuity in the policies of Obama and Bush, imposing clear limits to the new “good neighbor” policy in the name of “U.S. strategic interests,” including those of U.S. corporations. On this context, Chávez launched strong attacks on Obama, accusing him of continuity with the policies of Bush, and defending Venezuela from U.S. accusations of cooperating with drug trafficking and violations of human rights<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Obama Statement on Recent Events near Colombia's Borders - March 03, 2008: "The Colombian people have suffered for more than four decades at the hands of a brutal terrorist insurgency, and the Colombian government has every right to defend itself against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The recent targeted killing of a senior FARC leader must not be used as a pretense to ratchet up tensions or to threaten the stability of the region. The presidents of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have a responsibility to ensure that events not spiral out of control, and to peacefully address any disputes through active diplomacy with the help of international actors." Obama says, "The presidents of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have a responsibility to ensure that events not spiral out of control, and to peacefully address any disputes through active diplomacy with the help of international actors." That's absolutely correct. He might also note that the U.S. - which is a protagonist through its role in Colombia - shares this obligation. Statement from Hillary Clinton - 3/3/2008: "Hugo Chavez's order yesterday to send ten battalions to the Colombian border is unwarranted and dangerous. The Colombian state has every right to defend itself against drug trafficking terrorist organizations that have kidnapped innocent civilians, including American citizens. By praising and supporting the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Chavez is openly siding with terrorists that threaten Colombian democracy and the peace and security of the region. Rather than criticizing Colombia's actions in combating terrorist groups in the border regions, Venezuela and Ecuador should work with their neighbor to ensure that their territories no longer serve as safe havens for terrorist groups. After reviewing this situation, I am hopeful that the government of Ecuador will determine that its interests lie in closer cooperation with Colombia on this issue. Hugo Chavez must call a halt to this provocative action. As president, I will work with our partners in the region and the OAS to support democracy, promote an end to conflict, and to press Chavez to change course." (Robert Naiman, “Obama Glosses Colombian Attack in Ecuador; Clinton Calls for Escalation Against Venezuela”, *Znet*, March 7, 2008. In <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/16802>).

<sup>4</sup> “El Presidente Hugo Chávez ha criticado esta tarde con dureza al Presidente de EE.UU. Barack Obama por los últimos pronunciamientos de ese país contra Venezuela. El Presidente se ha mostrado indignado de que EE.UU. acusara a Venezuela de “violaciones de Derechos Humanos” y de “favorecer el narcotráfico” (Ernesto

Many Latin America leaders reacted positively to the election of Barack Obama as the President of the United States, and to its initial statements and plans regarding Latin America. A minority of leaders, mainly those linked to the New Latin American Left, expressed mixed opinions and criticism. Among these leaders, Hugo Chavez is one of the most influential, due to his control over Venezuela's oil and resources, and to his being the anointed successor of the mythic Fidel Castro. Chávez is already the main symbol of the radical and populist Latin American Left.

Before taking over the presidency, the comments of elected president Barack Obama in relation with the government of president Hugo Chávez of Venezuela were not positive. Obama accused Chávez of going against the progress of the region, exporting terrorist activities and supporting the Farc guerrilla of Colombia. Chavez reacted and asked him to rectify his opinions about the South American country if he wanted to improve the broken diplomatic relations. Obama's statements like Chávez or any other politician during an electoral campaign do not necessarily reflect the real position, and more often than not they do not translate into policies when power is achieved. Chávez might have taken these statements as rhetorical and merely electoral, directed to middle of the road or dissatisfied conservative voters.

At the height of US and Venezuela diplomatic conflict in 2008, Chávez called Bush "devil", "drunk" and "stupid", and expelled US ambassador Patrick Duddy from Caracas in solidarity with Bolivia in 11th September. Next day, Washington reacted by doing the same with the Venezuelan ambassador, Bernardo Herrera. The Treasury Department said also that Venezuela was aiding Farc guerrillas. In November 2008, Chávez said that if Obama wins the elections, he would meet him. Obama sent mixed signals, saying that the Venezuelan President was exploiting anti-US feelings in Latin America and that Washington should not react "excessively" to his attacks, accusing Chávez of ruling the country in a non democratic way, and adding that the relations between both countries will not improve unless Venezuela respects democracy and the rule of law.

After Barack Obama's election, on November 5, 2008, Chávez reacted with a wait-and-see attitude, and criticism aimed at deflecting Obama's attacks, and at influencing the elected President future policies. In December 2008, and in reaction of Obama's comments linking him with the Farc, Chavez accused Colombia and the United States of falsely accusing him of setting up a rebel camp on Venezuelan soil, and of being in cahoots with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

"The verbal war against Venezuela began weeks ago, saying that we have I don't know how many guerrilla chiefs hidden here ... that in Venezuela there are rebel camps protected by

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Justiniano, "Chávez on March 1st Chávez manda a Obama a "lavarse ese paltó"", Bogotá, March 1, 2009. In <http://www.ernestojustiniano.org/2009/03/chavez-manda-a-obama-a-lavarse-ese-palto>)

the Venezuelan government, which is absolutely false," Chavez told troops during a televised speech in the western border state of Zulia.

"We have evidence that the Colombian government, instructed and supported, or rather directed by the United States, is preparing a 'false positive,'" Chavez said<sup>5</sup>.

He said he believes Colombia could bring bodies "to a mountain in Venezuelan territory, build some huts, an improvised camp, put some rifles there ... and say "There it is, the guerrilla camp in Venezuela."

In January, Obama told Univision: "I think Chavez has been a disruptive force in the region," and Chavez responded to the attacks by the new U.S. administration by accusing Obama of being "an ignorant" and invited him to study the realities of Latin America.

In February 2008, Chávez in the context of his campaign for his indefinite re-election amendment, pointed out the limitations Obama would face upon entering the White House, and tried to gather electoral support by hitting the old and familiar US Imperialism. Obama, as the president-elect of The United States, was the embodiment of the Empire, the center of imperialism. In this light, Chávez equated Obama to George W. Bush, and attributed him the "stench" of his predecessor<sup>6</sup>. The motivations for these rhetorical attacks should be traced to both the electoral context, and to his objectives of increasing domestic political control, and of becoming the main beacon of the Latin American Left, and one of the main World Anti-imperialist leaders. Chavez, besiege at home by a strong social opposition to its Socialism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and by a drastic drop in revenues due to the decline of oil prices, used the old and successful tactic of demonizing the US political power to rally Nationalistic support, in the road to the referendum of February 15, 2009, about his indefinite re-election. Chavez, on January 17, 2009, called Obama the new "leader of the Empire" and accused him of "meddling" against him in Venezuela's referendum campaign<sup>7</sup>. The Venezuelan president also called him a "fiasco" and "harmful influence." And stated: "We're confronted by a very powerful enemy"<sup>8</sup>, because the campaign against him in the referendum

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<sup>5</sup> Venezuela has already bought more than \$4 billion worth of Russian arms since 2005, including 24 Sukhoi fighter jets, dozens of helicopters and 100,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles. In September, Russia agreed to lend Venezuela \$2.2 billion to buy more weapons.

<sup>6</sup> "Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Saturday Barack Obama had the "stench" of his predecessor as U.S. president and was at risk of being killed if he tries to change the American "empire." ... "I hope I am wrong, but I believe Obama brings the same stench, to not say another word," Chavez said at a political rally on a historic Venezuelan battlefield." If Obama as president of the United States does not obey the orders of the empire, they will kill him, like they killed Kennedy, like they killed Martin Luther King, or Lincoln, who freed the blacks and paid with his life." ("Venezuela's Chavez says Obama has "stench" of Bush". Campo Carabobo, Venezuela. *Reuters*. Jan. 17, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> "President Hugo Chavez... accused Barack Obama of meddling in a referendum that could allow him to run for re-election indefinitely and ordered a crackdown on disorderly student protests against the upcoming vote... "He's said I'm an obstacle for progress in Latin America," Chavez said. "Therefore it must be removed, this obstacle, right?" It was unclear what comments Chavez could be referring to." (Rachel Jones, "Chavez: Obama Meddling in Venezuelan referendum", Caracas. *Associated Press*. Jan, 17, 2009. In <http://www.vgchartz.com/forum/thread.php?id=57253>)

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Jeremy Morgan, "Chavez Says Obama Will Be a "Fiasco" and "Harmful Influence", *Latin American Herald Tribune*. In <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=325765&CategoryId=10718>

was dictated by Washington: "They are dictating a campaign from the Pentagon," said Chavez., " which is the real imperial power." And added: "For quite a time we've not been a colony, Señor Obama." After Chavez won the referendum to eliminate term limits on February 15, 2009 and vowed to remain in power for at least another decade to complete his socialist revolution, there was lesser need for an external enemy to gather internal political support. Opponents accepted defeat but said Chavez is becoming a dictator. Chavez won 54 percent of the votes, with a 67 per cent turnout, and felt less need of attacking the US as possible source of help and legitimisation for the opposition, and in US, President Barack Obama got off to a good start by moving to close the Guantánamo detention facilities. In this context, and before the Summit of the Americas, Chavez launched a petition to Obama: to put an end to the "absurd and stupid" U.S. embargo against Cuba. The Venezuelan President also condemned the exclusion of Cuba from the Americas summit, asking for the issue "to be discussed." "Cuba is in Latin America. It's no longer the Cuba that was kicked out of the OAS by those governments subordinated to the Pentagon," Chavez said. "With what right, for example, am I going to go to a summit where all of Latin America is there ... and Cuba isn't there? Why?"<sup>9</sup>

During the Summit of the Americas 2009, in Trinidad and Tobago, on April 17, Chávez tried his best to mend fences with Obama, shook hands with the US President, and told him: "With this same hand I greeted Bush eight years ago. I want to be your friend."<sup>10</sup>. "It was a good moment," Chavez told reporters afterwards. "He is a very intelligent man, young, and he is black. He is an experienced politician in spite of his young age," he added. Obama later met with the presidents of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and Chavez gave him a copy of 'The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent,' a book by Uruguayan Leftist writer Eduardo Galeano. In the book Chávez wrote: "For Obama, with affection." Obama later told reporters "I think it was a nice gesture to give me a book. I'm a reader." During the final day of the Summit, Obama approached Chavez again and they spoke in private for several minutes. When asked about the content of his conversation with Obama, Chavez told reporters that they both ratified their willingness to work on ushering a new era in US-Venezuela relations. "I told Obama that we have decided to appoint a new ambassador," he said. Chavez added that Obama promised not to interfere in the internal affairs of any country. "We have differences in our points of view, but we have the firm willingness to work together," Chavez added.

Chavez also spoke to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss a possible normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Chavez told Venezuelan state television that he discussed with Clinton the appointment of new ambassadors in both countries, and in the following days both counties exchange new ambassadors. Chávez

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<sup>9</sup> "Chavez fires first "shot" at Obama before Summit of the Americas next month", *AP*, March 17, 2009. In <http://havanajournal.com/politics/entry/chavez-fires-first-shot-at-obama-before-summit-of-the-americas-next-month/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30271562/>

appointed his former Venezuelan Foreign Minister Roy Chaderton, as new ambassador to Washington. "Of all the summits which I've attended in this decade, this is, without doubt, the most successful, the one that opened the doors to a new era of rationality among all the countries," Chávez told reporters at the end of the Summit.

Before heading back to the U.S., Obama said that the Summit was "very productive", and proved it is possible to "disagree respectfully", and after returning to the U.S. defended his meeting with Chávez: "Venezuela is a country whose defense budget is probably one six-hundredths of the United States'. They own [oil refiner and retailer] Citgo. It's unlikely that as a consequence of me shaking hands or having a polite conversation with Mr. Chavez, we are endangering the strategic interest of the United States," Obama told reporters. "You would be hard pressed to paint a scenario in which U.S. interests would be damaged as a consequence of us having a more constructive relationship with Venezuela," he added. Nevertheless, Obama criticized Chávez's economic and foreign policies and "inflammatory" anti-U.S. rhetoric.

The American President acknowledged the need for change toward the region: "One of the things that I mentioned in both public remarks as well as private remarks is that the United States obviously has a history in this region that's not always appreciated from the perspective of some, but that what we need to do is try to move forward, and that I am responsible for how this administration acts and we will be respectful to those democratically elected governments, even when we disagree with them," he said during his final press conference. And Obama went so far as to indirectly praise Cuba saying that the U.S. could learn a lesson on soft-diplomacy from Cuba. "One thing that I thought was interesting -- and I knew this in a more abstract way but it was interesting in very specific terms -- hearing from these leaders who when they spoke about Cuba talked very specifically about the thousands of doctors from Cuba that are dispersed all throughout the region, and upon which many of these countries heavily depend. And it's a reminder for us in the United States that if our only interaction with many of these countries is drug interdiction, if our only interaction is military, then we may not be developing the connections that can, over time, increase our influence and have -- have a beneficial effect when we need to try to move policies that are of concern to us forward in the region." Regarding relations with Cuba, which many leaders here urged Obama to improve by lifting the economic embargo, the president said, "The policy that we've had in place for 50 years hasn't worked the way we want it to. The Cuban people are not free." Obama noted progress, citing Raúl Castro's recent statement that his country was willing to discuss human rights issues with the United States. Cuba, Obama said, should free political prisoners, reduce its tax on remittances to the island and grant new freedoms to its citizens as a next step in thawing relations with the United States.

The actions and words of Obama during the Summit of the Americas showed a sincere desire to change the relationship between U.S. and Latin America, and a new and welcome "listen and learn" approach. He presented a broader U.S. agenda for Latin America than

under the Bush and Clinton administrations, which focused primarily on trade and counter-narcotics programs. And his meeting with Chávez represented the first steps towards improved relations between Venezuela and the U.S., which deteriorated after US initial support for a failed coup attempt against Chávez in 2002.

After the Summit, the first serious test of Obama policy in Latin America was the Honduras crisis. After the coup, Washington suspended its military aid, and joined the U.N., the E.U., and the O.A.S. in condemning the coup and demanding Zelaya's restoration. The Obama Administration played a secondary role during the first months after the coup, letting the O.A.S. take the lead in negotiations, held in Costa Rica, between the ousted Zelaya and representatives of the coup regime. When those talks produced no agreement, and Zelaya, returned to Honduras and took refuge in the Brazilian Embassy, the U.S. State Department started being more active. Hillary Clinton called the coup leader, Roberto Micheletti, and according to Micheletti, told him that Zelaya must be reinstated. The Administration sent a high-level delegation to Honduras at the end of October to broker an agreement. Two days later, Clinton triumphantly announced a "historic agreement", opening the way for elections after the reinstatement of Zelaya. But Thomas Shannon, the American diplomat who led the delegation that procured the agreement, said, a few days later, that the U.S. would recognize, whether Zelaya was actually reinstated to office or not, the government produced by elections scheduled for November 29th.<sup>11</sup>

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez lamented in Montevideo the step-down of deposed Honduras President Manuel Zelaya and expressed concern about the acknowledgment by some countries of the "rigged election" on November 29th.

"Zelaya is Honduras President," he said. "A wide array of diplomatic actions, pressures, intend to find a honorable exit for Zelaya, but we cannot acknowledge that government," Chávez added during his speech at the Mercosur summit.

"We cannot accept anything, except for Zelaya's return to office and new elections<sup>12</sup>," the Venezuelan president told his counterparts Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva of Brazil; Cristina Kirchner of Argentina; Fernando Lugo of Paraguay, and Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay. Meanwhile, Chavez accused the United States and its President Barack Obama of resorting to double-dealing in recognizing the election<sup>13</sup>. Chavez placed blame for the removal of the

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<sup>11</sup> For Obama, recognising the election had an extra advantage. Republican senator Jim De Mint was a loud supporter of the coup and opposed several Obama nominations for jobs in the White House. He declared: "I am happy to report the Obama Administration has finally reversed its misguided Honduran policy and will fully recognize the November 29th elections... Secretary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Shannon have assured me that the U.S. will recognize the outcome of the Honduran elections regardless of whether Manuel Zelaya is reinstated." The senator then backed Obama's nominations" (Keith Spencer, "Honduras: Election farce exposes sham Zelaya deal", *League for the Fifth international*, Dec. 15, 2009. In <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/honduras-election-farce-exposes-sham-zelaya-deal>

<sup>12</sup> "Chavez describes Honduras voting as a farce", Xinhua, Caracas, Nov. 30, 2009. in

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/30/content\\_12564085.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/30/content_12564085.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Honduras President on “the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the US Department of State and the Pentagon,” and warned Obama to stay away from Latin America, “The process of change in Latin America is not going to stop, President Obama. You can send the Fourth and the Sixth Fleet, or the world’s largest bombers, but changes will not end.”

The failure of getting stable support from Washington in the Honduras crisis brought Chávez to step up his criticism of Obama. The Venezuelan president had made a personal appeal to Washington, through a phone call to a State Department official asking for help to restore deposed Honduran president Manuel Zelaya to power through multilateral pressure. Chávez called Tom Shannon, the State Department’s assistant secretary for the Western Hemisphere at home at 11:15 p.m on July 9, 2009. Mr. Shannon said that Chávez “again made the case for the unconditional return of Mr. Zelaya, though he did so in a less bombastic manner than he has in the past.”, and suggested to him “that Venezuela and its [allies] address the fear factor by calling for free and fair elections and a peaceful transition to a new government.”

In the following months, Chávez comments about Obama became darker and more critical, especially since the Colombian government of President Álvaro Uribe announced in July that it had reached an agreement with Washington to allow the U.S. military to use seven air, naval and land bases in Colombia. The Venezuelan President complained about plans for an attack on his country with the aim of toppling him and his socialist policies. With the escalation of the conflict between Venezuela and Colombia, on November 2009, the criticisms of Chávez against U.S. intensified. He complained that a small spy drone using U.S. technology from Colombia violated Venezuelan airspace in the northwest of the country and was sighted by soldiers in Fort Mara, near the border. Colombia denied the charges For Fernando Gerbasi, a former Venezuelan ambassador to Colombia, ‘the crisis with Bogotá allows Chávez to confront (U.S. President Barack) Obama, via Colombia.’<sup>14</sup>

In the same line of criticizing U.S. military bases and interventionism in Latin America, Chávez, said on August 16, 2009, that Obama was "lost in the Andromeda" galaxy on Latin American policy, while demanding the closure of U.S. military bases.

"We are not asking you to intervene in Honduras, Obama. On the contrary, we are asking that "the empire" get its hands off Honduras and get its claws out of Latin America," Chavez said in a rambling weekly television and radio show.

"President Obama is lost in the Andromeda Nebula, he has lost his bearings, he doesn't get it," he said. Chavez repeated an accusation that the United States had prior knowledge of the coup that deposed Honduran President Manuel Zelaya on June 28 and the military plane that flew Zelaya out of the country had used a U.S. base in Honduras. The comments coincided with growing tensions with Colombia.

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<sup>14</sup> Humberto Márquez, “Colombia-Venezuela: Conflict Escalates in Military Terrain”, Interpress Service, Caracas. Nov. 29, 2009. In <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2009/12/21/3998>



"This is just the start of an imperial military expansion," Chavez said of the U.S.-Colombian security arrangement.

Chavez asked Obama to withdraw U.S. forces from the Palmerola air base in Honduras (also known as Soto Cano) and from Guantanamo Bay, which the U.S. Navy has used as a base in Cuba for over a century.

"Until when? Get with it, Obama -- get with it, brother," Chavez said.

The critical mood of Chávez in relation with American military interventions, brought him to say, on October 11, 2009, that Barack Obama did not deserve the Nobel Peace Prize he was awarded: "What has Obama done to deserve this prize? The jury explained its decision by his urge for peace without nuclear weapons, but forgot about the presence of his troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and his intention to occupy military bases in Colombia," he said<sup>15</sup>. And, later on, on December 18, 2009, during the climate change conference in Copenhagen, the Venezuelan President said Barack Obama should give his Nobel Peace Prize back as he is sending more soldiers to war-weary Afghanistan: "He [Obama] got the Nobel Peace Prize almost the same day as he sent 30,000 soldiers to kill innocent people in Afghanistan," he said during a speech "Obama should give back the prize," Chavez commented. And later on said: "Obama, Nobel Prize of War. ..I still smell sulphur, I still smell sulphur in this world, the Nobel Prize for War has said that, he has said that, he shouldn't leave by that little door .... he should support Kyoto". Meanwhile, Chavez accused the Netherlands and the US of plotting to attack Venezuela as Washington sent military equipment to three Dutch islands off Venezuela's Caribbean coast, Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire. "They are three islands in Venezuela's territorial waters, but they are still under an imperial regime: the Netherlands," the president noted. "Europe should know that the North American empire is filling these islands with weapons, assassins, American intelligence units, and spy planes and war ships." In response, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly denied that US military personnel in the Caribbean are planning to attack Venezuela. "These allegations are baseless. These are routine exercises. We seek cooperation with the region," Kelly said. Chavez, however, described the cooperation as part of a broader plan for weakening leftist governments throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Cuba. "It's a threat to all the people of Latin America and the Caribbean," he said<sup>16</sup>.

The disillusion, real or rhetorical of Chávez with Obama, become clear in the beginning of 2010. Chavez said in his New Year's message that the "illusion" around President Barack Obama was over and rich nations had left the world on the verge of ecological disaster. Quoting from both Karl Marx and the Virgin Mary, Latin America's leading critic of U.S. power said only socialist and Christian principles could right the wrongs of capitalism.

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<sup>15</sup> "Chávez Says Obama Does Not Deserve Nobel Prize", Ria Novosti, Moscow, Oct. 11, 2009. In <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091012/156432294.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=114023&sectionid=351020704>

"It's not an easy task, I acknowledge," Chavez said in a written message carried by state media on Monday.

Chavez initially sought to foster good ties with Obama, shaking his hand and giving him a book at a regional summit. But he has been increasingly critical of late, saying Obama failed to curb "imperialist" policies in Afghanistan and Iraq, and was tolerant toward a coup leader in Honduras.

"Let's not kid ourselves: the Obama illusion has finished, and the shameless interventionism of the American administration shows that," wrote Chavez.

Having opposed the Copenhagen climate change summit's final agreement as a behind-doors deal between major powers that ignored nations on the margins, Chavez said rich nations were making a mockery of U.N. principles of equality.

"Those leaving us on the verge of an unimaginable 'ecocide,' those who caused climate change, should be forced to accept their responsibilities," he said.

The new tone and intensity of criticism against Obama are linked to Chávez's perception that the President of U.S. has not substantially changed Bush's policies, and perhaps to the preparation of the electoral campaign for the 2010 National Assembly election. Analysts expect Chavez to win the 2010 National Assembly vote, albeit it with a reduced majority<sup>17</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Chávez comments have always been critical of Obama, most of the time in response to U.S. negative comments, but the criticism was accompanied by hope of change until the latest Honduran presidential election and the escalation of the tensions between Venezuela and Colombia at the end of 2009. In electoral periods, Chávez has stepped up his criticism of U.S. and Obama, but the dissatisfaction of Chávez with Obama's policies cannot be fully attributed to electoral considerations. His attacks on U.S. policies are consistent with his ideological and political position, as a Leftist and nationalistic Latin American leader, and concentrated on the topic of military, political and economic intervention of U.S. in Latin America and other parts of the World.

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<sup>17</sup> "Chavez says Obama "illusion" over", Reuters, Caracas, Dec. 28, 2009. In <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5BR2CD20091228r>

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# OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA: A NEW ERA?

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## I. Barack Obama took the stage

Since Mr. Barack Obama, the first African-American president, assumed office as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of the America in January 2009, not only the Americans are anxious to see a substantial change in their national and international policies, most of the world is expecting some changes too in their relations with USA. Among them Latin America could be the area where people has their eyes wide open to see if there will be a new Latin American policy for the Obama's Administration.

As Obama said in his victory speech in Chicago, "It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America."<sup>1</sup> Although this kind of speeches used to be full of emotional and rhetoric phrases, due to his African-American background, a lot of Americans and people around the world did expect some real changes in his administration. Later in the inaugural speech he emphasized that the United States is a country with multiple races and religious beliefs and he will seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect to the Muslim world. He also said, "To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict, or blame their society's ills on the west- know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not on what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on he wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."<sup>2</sup> This sounds familiar for the situation of Latin America.

And in the inaugural speech he said: "To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow, to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we con no longer afford indifference to suffering outside our borders; nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it."<sup>3</sup> According to theses words, Obama might be the most sensible president in the history of United States, who intends to break the US-centric minding of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Obama's Victory Speech", retreated on April 1, 2010,  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us\\_elections\\_2008/7710038.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us_elections_2008/7710038.stm), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>3</sup> "Obama's Inaugural Speech", retreated on April 3, 2010,  
[http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp/srv/politics/documents/obama\\_inaugural/address.html?hpid=topnews](http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp/srv/politics/documents/obama_inaugural/address.html?hpid=topnews), p. 2.

United States in front of the rest of the world.

In fact, about Latin America, nothing concrete has been mentioned. Nevertheless, some phrases of his speeches did arouse new hope for some changes in the relations between United States and Latin America, especially in the quest for peace and the revision of some false decisions. As he said: “As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. And so to all other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born: know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and that we are ready to lead once more.”<sup>4</sup> In the next chapters some of Obama’s Latin-American policies will be reviewed.

## **II. A necessary change in Latin American policy**

Being an African-American to win the presidency of the United States, Obama moved the heart of the Americans with the slogan of “change”. The Americans was tired of the economic disorder inside and the fear of another Vietnam War outside after eight years of Bush Administration. And he made the rest of the world anxious too to wait for some substantial change in American foreign policy. As the “brothers” in the same Western Hemisphere, Latin America also hopes for certain necessary adaptation in its relations with USA. There are, among others, the problem of the drug war, the left-wing orientation of many Latin American governments, the long-standing Cuban-American dilemma and the commercial relations in the trends of regional free trade agreements. All need the reconsideration of Obama in order that the United States could maintain its hemispheric privilege.

At the end of the Bush Administration, a highly regarded would-be superpower, Brazil, an impressive collection of left-leaning governments, lead by Hugo Chavez, a concerted attempt at regional integration, and the formation of an entire array of new institutions have emerged in Latin America since Washington’s near abandonment of the region in favor of the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. Obama must live up to his oft-repeated campaign rhetoric calling for “change”. What is needed is a sense of respect for all of the hemisphere’s players rather than ideological storm and stress, Sturm und Drang, or the assumption that augmented trade will provide a universal elixir.<sup>5</sup>

## **III. Drug war**

In front of the drug war that has been a continuous nuisance to U.S. for decades,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Tomas Ayuso and Guy Hursthouse, “¿Cambio?: Latin America in the Era of Obama-An Early Reading on the Administration”, retreated on Sep. 20, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/2009/02/%c2%bfcambio-latin-america-in-the-era-of-obama%e2%80%95-an-early-reading-on-the-administration/>, p. 1.

Colombia and Mexico represent important part of U.S. Latin American Policy. In Colombia, under Plan Colombia, in the framework of the War on Terror of the Bush administration, Washington's approach to Colombia was: prioritize affording Bogota the military assistance deemed necessary to fight the guerrilla insurgency and the problem related to narcotics production, and couple this with the pursuit of a free trade agreement. Despite bringing a more tolerant and euphoric rhetoric and attitude to the White House, Obama has appropriated the Bush approach in his own policy towards Colombia. In spite of his opposition toward the free trade agreement with Colombia for the human rights violation of Uribe government, once he assumed office, Obama reversed his position. Last October, Obama boosted a military approach towards drug interdiction which has failed to quash overall violence or lower drug production, and has displaced several million Colombians, by signing a new deal on the U.S. use of Colombian air bases, and, in doing so, angered most South American governments.<sup>6</sup>

In the negotiation, which strengthened military cooperation by granting U.S. military personnel and civil contractors access to seven Colombian military bases, has generated contentious internal and regional debates. Throughout the hemisphere, many questions remain regarding the real motivations, benefits, and above all, the significance of the U.S.-Colombian deal. These questions have been fueled by the secrecy surrounding the negotiations and their details. In fact, it seems that growing political isolation from the rest of Latin America is the high price that Bogota is willing to pay. And U.S. stands to institutionalize strategic geopolitical and economic ties with Colombia even as the rest of the region grows increasingly autonomous from U.S. influence.<sup>7</sup>

For Colombia, according to Colombian Foreign Minister, the objective of this base agreement is to fight and to end of drug trafficking and terrorism. Since the main tool for Uribe to reach this objective is Plan Colombia, an exam of the Plan will help to verify this statement. Washington verified the Plan Colombia in 2000. The initial objective was to curtail narcotics production by 60% over a 6-year period and to win back the 40% of national territory held by the insurgents. Nine years and US\$6 billion have yielded mixed results. In the 2009 report of UN Office on Drug and Crime, the area of coca cultivation only dropped from 136,200 hectares in 2000 to 81,000 hectares (about 40%); and the production of alkaloid cut from 580 metric tons in 2000 to 430 metric tons (about 26%), far from the 60% objective. While the fight against the insurgency, has already been successful, along with the economic aid provided under Plan Colombia, paying a high human and ethical cost. Now the FARC insurgents have been forced to resort to orthodox guerrilla

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<sup>6</sup> Guy Hursthouse and Tomas Ayuso, "¿Cambio?: The Obama Administration in Latin America: A Disappointing Year in Retrospective", retreated on April 6, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cambio-the-obama-administration/>, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Sebastian Castañeda, "The Consolidation of U.S. Military Presence in Colombia and Those Who Are Apprehensive Over It", retreated on March 25, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/the-consolidation-of-u-s-military-presence-in-comombia/>, p. 1.

warfare. However, the successes have been achieved at the expense of continuing human rights violations by the Colombian military and regional diplomatic disputes.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, in a region increasingly governed by progressive presidents with tenuous ties to Washington, it is imperative that the U.S. be heavily involved in the collection of intelligence on the region. In 2005, the U.S. Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facilities Structure was conducting a complete review and proposing recommendations regarding U.S. overseas military facilities. One recommendation for Latin America was to avoid setting up new U.S. military bases, instead proposing more flexible agreements that would allow for the use of other countries' existing facilities. Colombia as the Western Hemisphere's largest recipient of U.S. economic and military aid under Plan Colombia was the obvious choice. Besides, the protection of vital natural resources, especially oil reserves, is central to the U.S. economic strategy in the region. According to the latest statistics of Energy Information Administration, Colombia is the third Latin American and tenth worldwide source of oil for the U.S., at 320,000 barrels per day. Colombia has the fifth largest proven crude oil reserves in South America with 1.39 billion barrels and shares with Venezuela the Orinoco belt, which is thought to house one of the largest oil reserves in the world.<sup>9</sup>

Moving to the southern border of U.S., an increasingly high-intensity war is being fought in Mexico between all-powerful drug trade organizations (DTO) and the country's security forces. Since early 2007, President Felipe Calderón attempted to dismantle the DTOs' heavily armed network and to moderate the unprecedented violence that had been growing in the country throughout 2006. Since the anti-drug trafficking offensive began, over 8,000 casualties have been violently claimed in cartel hot spots across Mexico. The two bloodiest battlefields have been right along the U.S. border in and around Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana. Early in 2009 the violent trend set in motion during two previous years has shown no sign of slackening. And the U.S. government officials have begun to point out the destabilizing effects that a lawless Mexico could have on the southern U.S. and the rest of Latin America. Guatemala suffered at least four massacres that occurred due to Mexico's growing DTO influence in the country. And incidents in Honduras and El Salvador tell similar tales.<sup>10</sup>

So when Calderón went to meet with President Obama and told him "the more secure Mexico finds itself, the more secure U.S. will be", the later understood the importance of this threat represents for U.S.-Mexican security concerns. Nevertheless, assisting the Mexican government with only military and intelligence will have little effect if the DTOs

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Tomas Ayuso and Guy Hursthouse, "¿Cambio?: Latin America in the Era of Obama-An Early Reading on the Administration", retreated on Sep. 20, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/2009/02/%c2%bfcambio-latin-america-in-the-era-of-obama%e2%80%95-an-early-reading-on-the-administration/>, pp. 1-2.



continue to arm themselves with U.S.-secured weaponry from cross-border sources. So they have to collaborate on this issue. The Merida Initiative started will have limited impact on the drug trade. Obama administration must recognize the price that the war on drugs has cost the region, which has been fueled by high levels U.S. consumption and eager DTOs doing the supply.<sup>11</sup> Dealing the drug war only from the production side is misleading and won't solve the problem fundamentally.

But drug-related violence in Mexico reached new peaks during 2009, with a staggering 7,800 homicides reported there, bringing to more than 16,000 the number of deaths that have been caused since President Felipe Calderón's anti-trafficking offensive began in 2007. However, one of the unforeseen consequences of Mexico's attempts to purge the major cartels and criminal gangs from its territory has been an increase in common crime across Central America. Over the last year, most notably in Honduras and Guatemala, domestically organized crime syndicates serving as proxies for Mexican cartels have openly targeted their home governments and its security forces.<sup>12</sup>

The Mexican government unleashed its security forces against the drug cartels several years ago in what ended up being a failed effort at interdiction. The strategy was then to change. On August 2009, Mexico City announced that it would be eliminating jail time for possession of small amounts of heroin, cocaine, and marijuana. President Calderón said that the new law would free up law enforcement resources, so that Mexican officials can focus on the larger and more lethal drug cartels, rather than cluttering Mexico's criminal justice system with cases dealing with petty drug dealers and small-time addicts. Later both Brazil and Uruguay announced the elimination of measures harshly penalizing citizens carrying small amounts of drugs. Nevertheless, on September 8, 2009, President Calderón asked his Attorney General, Eduardo Medina Mora, a key figure and hard liner in the government's war on drug, to step down. This occurred after criticism of the government further escalated when drug lords executed 18 people outside a rehab center in Juarez.<sup>13</sup> Evidently, there is no internal consensus about the solution.

Since Obama's inauguration, aid assigned to Mexico City under the terms of the Mérida Initiative, the controversial U.S.-crafted security pact intended to contain the influence of drug trafficking organizations in Mexico and Central America, has yet to materialize, to date, only 3% of the allotted \$ 1.4 billion has been allocated and the initiative is far from being entirely operational. Early in 2009, former Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and César Gaviria of Colombia

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Guy Hursthouse and Tomas Ayuso, "¿Cambio?: The Obama Administration in Latin America: A Disappointing Year in Retrospective", retreated on April 6, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cambio-the-obama-administration/>, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Schaffer, "What the Drug War Needs is a Debate, Not a Disingenuous Battle Plan", Sep. 18, 2009, retreated on March 25, 2010, <Http://www.coha.org/what-the-drug-war-needs-is-a-debate-not-a-disingenuous-battle-plan/>, p. 1.

issued a plea to President Obama urging him to reconsider the present direction of the failing U.S.-led “drug war”. As long as the Obama administration ignores such pleas and continues to target the vast majority of its resources at curbing the supply coming from abroad, the northbound traffic of narcotics will persist.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, Obama ensure in the opening remark of the fifth Summit of the Americas: “I recognize that the problem will not simply be solved by law enforcement if we’re not also dealing with our responsibilities in the United States. And that’s why we will take aggressive action to reduce our demand for drug, and to stop the flow of guns and bulks cash south across.<sup>15</sup>” And everybody hope his promise will be achieve.

The drug war, due to the ever-existed vicious tendency of human beings, for sure will be a hard war for anybody. And it will be nothing easy for Obama, since “change” is something he reclaimed; but no change has come true until now, especially in the problem of drug war.

#### **IV. Cuban-American relationship**

Since the severance of official diplomatic ties and the institution of the U.S. trade embargo, in almost fifty years, Cuban-American relationship has remained virtually frozen. The advent of the Obama administration has, at first glance, changed this situation and this new approach to Cuba has thus far been well-received by nearly all groups, even though it increasingly is being seen as excessively cautious. In the course of his presidential campaign, Obama promised that he would introduce innovations to Washington’s current Cuba policy.<sup>16</sup>

Most regional specialists now dealing with the embargo issue agree that it has not been particularly effective in persuading the island leaders to take steps toward the democratization of the country. Instead, it only has served to damage Washington’s economic, diplomatic and national-security interests affecting Cuba as well as the remainder of the region. Due to Obama’s optimism for political change toward Cuba during his presidential campaign, there was considerable hope that the sterility and selective indignation that had characterized U.S. policy toward Havana would be altered in a more constructive direction. But he direction of the new administration was more in reverse than in fast-forward. Once hopeful attitudes and expectations are now disintegrating, and as a

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<sup>14</sup> Guy Hursthouse and Tomas Ayuso, “¿Cambio?: The Obama Administration in Latin America: A Disappointing Year in Retrospective”, retreated on April 6, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cambio-the-obama-administration/>, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> “Official Remarks of United States President Barack Obama at the Opening Ceremony of the Fifth Summit of the Americas”, retreated on April 9, 2010, [http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09CD/v\\_summit\\_obama\\_en.pdf](http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09CD/v_summit_obama_en.pdf), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Felipe Matsunaga, “Barack Obama and Where he and Hillary Clinton are going with the Cuba Issue”, retreated on July 27, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/2009/07/barack-obama-and-cuba-dancing-rumba-but-to-a-very-slow...> p. 1. retreated on July 27, 2009.

result, there is a growing continuum of hostility between the United States and Cuba. Meanwhile, Washington, if anything, is becoming more isolated from much of Latin America than meaningfully connected to it.<sup>17</sup>

In the inaugural speech Obama said: “As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideal... Those ideals still light up the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake.” He has reinforced this message repeatedly since he took office, beginning with an executive order in January 2009 to close the detention center at Guantánamo Bay, which he says has become a recruiting tool for terrorists.<sup>18</sup> Among the most prominent of these reversals has been the April 13 decision to relax restrictions on Cuban American travel and remittances to the Caribbean country.<sup>19</sup> Obama also announced on April the easing of U.S.-Cuba telecommunications restrictions. Later on May 31 Obama administration announced the resumption of migration talk with Havana after its suspension in 2003. On July 13 in New York the talk was held aiming to reduce the flood of Cuban migrants attempting to enter the United States. All these measures are indicative the administration’s states desire for a more diplomatic and constructive approach toward Cuba.<sup>20</sup>

In the Summit of the Americas, April 18, 2009, in Trinidad and Tobago, Obama called for a new beginning between the U.S. and Cuba as well as seeking “an equal partnership” with Latin American leaders. In the Summit, all the regional leaders publicly demanding the United States end its trade embargo against Cuba unilaterally. Later the UN resolution condemned again the embargo with any positive respond from U.S. After the Summit Raúl Castro stated on April 30, in which he offered to “talk about everything with the United States,” but he said that he would not “negotiate our sovereignty, nor our political and social system, the right of self-determination, nor our internal affairs.” He called upon the Obama administration to overturn the blockade unilaterally, since “Cuba has not imposed sanctions against the United States.” Until the U.S. government moderates its position against one-party rule in Cuba, the Castro government will continue to view an opening of relations with trepidation.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, on June 4, 2009, the Organization of

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<sup>17</sup> Katya Rodriguez, “Cuba-U.S. Rhetoric Timeline: Hope for a Basic Shift in Policy Disintegrates into Continued Polarization”, retreated on March 18, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cuba-u-s-rhetoric-timeline-hope-for-a-basic-shift-in-policy-disintegrates-into-continued-polarization/>, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Mimi Hall, “Obama’s Inaugural Speech, One Year Later: Assessing His Words”, *USA Today*, retreated on April 3, 2010, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-01-18-obama-one-year-later\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-01-18-obama-one-year-later_N.htm), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> “The strict restrictions under the Bush administration capped remittances to a \$1,200 annual amount and permitted Cuban-American with family ties on the island o have on two-week visit every three years. A 2004report issued by the Commission for Assisance to a Free Cuba estimated that between \$400-800 million flowed annually to the island from such sources.

<sup>20</sup> Felipe Matsunaga, “Barack Obama And Where He And Hillary Clinton Are Going With the Cuba Issue”, retreated on July 27, <http://www.coha.org/2009/07/barack-obama-and-cuba-dancing-rumba-but-to-a-very-slow-and-familiar-tune/>, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Roque Planas, “The Embargo on Change”, retreated on February 8, 210, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/28/the-embargo-on-change>, pp. 1-2.

American States voted to lift Cuba's suspension from the Washington based organization; however, Cuba will need to make steps toward democracy in order to rejoin. As a result, Cuba rejected OAS membership due to U.S. intransigent gesture.<sup>22</sup>

However, in retrospect, the reversals have merely brought Cuban-American relations back to their former status during the waning days of the Clinton administration, after the signing of Helms-Burton Act. For the first year, Obama has failed to take bold steps beyond the realm of modest and incremental steps, which could have furthered the White House's ultimate professed goal of normalizing relations with Cuba. Even Secretary of State Clinton has described the Cuba policy, which she inherited "as having failed," and that perhaps "more productive ways forward" were required.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, Obama is the first American leader who has an unparalleled opportunity to build upon his initial successes and bring about historic change. 71% of Americans support restoration of diplomatic ties with Cuba. (CNN/Opinion Research Corp., April 35, 2009) Obama has a 70% approval rating in Latin America. (CIMA, April 16, 2009) The political power of the historically hard-line Cuban-American community has crumbled in recent years due to the emergence of a younger and more conciliatory generation. There is a prevalent sentiment in Cuba that Obama is the first American leader willing and capable of bringing change to the troubled relations between the two ancient foes.<sup>24</sup> In fact, even if Obama were to aggressively pursue normalized relations with Cuba, however, there are limits to his power as president, since only Congress can overturn the embargo. Although the traditional pillar of anti-Castro lobbying, the Cuban American National foundation, has splintered and moderated in recent years, no progressive lobbying group has emerged to change Washington's entrenched, anti-Cuba policy. Nevertheless, Washington Office on Latin America, an NGO that promotes human rights in the region, says the legislation to watch is the travel bill to end travel restrictions to Cuba for all Americans.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, on September 14, U.S. government extended the trade embargo for one more year, which was condemned by the UN at the end of October. Yet again at the beginning of 2010, Cuba was designated by the U.S. as one of the four State Sponsors of Terrorism, to which Raúl Castro criticized as a justification for the American economic embargo that the international community is united in rejecting. So as a whole, for over a year, Obama has done little to fulfill his campaign promise to meet with Cuban leaders and

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<sup>22</sup> Katya Rodriguez, "Cuba-U.S. Rhetoric Timeline: Hope for a Basic Shift in Policy Disintegrates into Continued Polarization", retreated on March 18, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cuba-u-s-rhetoric-timeline-hope-for-a-basic-shift-in-policy-disintegrates-into-continued-polarization/>, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Felipe Matsunaga, "Barack Obama and where he and Hillary Clinton are going with the Cuba Issue", retreated on July 27, <http://www.coha.org/2009/07/barack-obama-and-cuba-dancing-rumba-but-to-a-very-slow-familiar-tune/>, p.2.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Roque Planas, "The Embargo on Change", retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/28/the-embargo-on-change>, p. 2.

take necessary steps toward normalizing ties with Cuba. On January 21, 2009 he signed orders instructing the CIA to close Guantánamo Bay in one year, a year later, it remains open and Reuters reported that the deadline has been extended to an additional three years. Obama has ordered that the release of all political prisoners held in Cuba as a reoccurring condition to regain ties. It has indicated that Raul Castro is willing to release anyone of importance to the U.S. if the White House sees to it that the Cuban Five are freed. Meanwhile, the UN and other international support against the imprisonment of the Cuban Five remain strong.<sup>26</sup>

Many Americans worry about the influence of the intransigent policy on the embargo to Cuba. They think that the U.S. unilateral embargo will continue to retard regional security and stability, and further serve to erode U.S. influence in the Americas at a time when U.S. credibility is globally scrutinized. Furthermore, the embargo will continue to encourage Cuba to partner with Russia, China and Brazil for the offshore oil and natural gas exploration within the shared U.S. and Cuban economic exclusion zone. And it will endear many of the poor Caribbean and Central American nations to the Chavez Venezuelan Petrocaribe initiative. In fact, the U.S. efforts to isolate and force a regime change in Cuba have failed. It only has driven Cuba to seek support elsewhere. After all, Cuba has the backing of Hugo Chavez' endorsed ALBA and doctor for oil initiative, Evo Morales' MAS, China's 600 million dollars economic and trade stimulus grant, and Brazil's 300 million dollars infrastructure and modernization credit to list a few.<sup>27</sup>

## V. FTAA perspective

The first Summit of the Americas, in 1994, was a moment of great promise. Thirty-four countries of the Western Hemisphere, including the United States, plus many newly democratic states busily opening their economies, signed a declaration affirming their mutual commitment to representative democracy and social justice and to negotiating a single Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). But by the second summit, four years later, the promise had already begun to dim. Brazil showed less interest in hemispheric free trade than in consolidating a sub-regional trading bloc, and the ambitious goal of free trade for all was sidelined and eventually abandoned. The fourth summit, in Argentina in 2005, was dominated by noisy counterdemonstrations (headlined by Venezuela's Hugo Chávez) that overshadowed any official business.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Katya Rodriguez, "Cuba-U.S. Rhetoric Timeline: Hope for a Basic Shift in Policy Disintegrates into Continued Polarization", retreated on March 18, 2010, <http://www.coha.org/cuba-u-s-rhetoric-timeline-hope-for-a-basic-shift-in-policy-disintegrates-into-continued-polarization/>, pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Ricks, "Marine Colonel: Drop the Cuba Embargo", October 23, 2009, retreated on February 8, 2010, [http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/10/23/marine\\_colonel\\_drop\\_the\\_cuba\\_embargo](http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/10/23/marine_colonel_drop_the_cuba_embargo), pp. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Feinberg, "The Eclipse of the Americas: How the Trinidad Summit Marked the Fragmentation of the Inter-American System", retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65081/richard-feinberg/the-eclipse-of-the-americas>, p. 1.

Trade between the United States and Latin America has grown inexorably over the past decade, with Washington remaining the largest trading partner for many of the countries there. Even Venezuela, despite Hugo Chávez's 'anti-imperial' rhetoric, relies heavily on U.S. commercial ties, with almost half of the country's exports in 2007 heading for U.S. shores. However, Latin American countries have been moving increasingly towards a system of trade rationalization with steadily limits Washington's presence. A host of bodies like Mercosur and such collective entities as UNASUR, ALBA, and Petrocaribe have emerged promoting strong regional trade links, and largely have focused on South and Central American Basin locations. The prominence of these organizations has represented an implicit rejection of the Bush administration's attempt to press Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in the region. This continental free trade zone became a major project designed to realize Washington's vision for hemispheric trade, but Bush's position was so inflexible that it forced the rest of Latin America into forging ahead with a system of its own choosing, relegating the U.S. a peripheral presence.<sup>29</sup> Even in the NAFTA, due to some protectionist policy, caused by the financial crisis in 2008, from part of the U.S. in March 2010 to suspend the permission for some Mexican trucks to enter U.S. since 2007; on the other hand, Mexico took some reprisal measures. If Obama insists in the free trade policy, he will have to confront the interests of American people, and if he seek a "fair trade", than it will hamper the U.S.-Mexican relationship again.<sup>30</sup>

In the inaugural speech of Obama in the fifth Summit of the Americas, he said:" I know that promises of partnership have gone unfulfilled in the past, and that trust has to be earned over time... But I pledge to you that we seek an equal partnership. There's no senior partner and junior partner in our relations; there is simply engagement based on mutual respect and common interests and shared values..." In the speech, he also announced a new Micro-finance Growth Fund for the hemisphere and proposing the creation of a new Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas while mentioning specially the contribution made by Mexico and Brazil.<sup>31</sup> It's a good-will expression pledging the understanding of Latin America.

Nevertheless, the well-received speech didn't guarantee the success of his strategy. The weak international institutions in the western hemisphere and the profound differences and the lack of interest among the leaders of the region frustrated U.S. intention. According to the observers, there are four reasons for the failing of American policy: 1) the multilateralism requires more commitments and concessions than what the United States is

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<sup>29</sup> Tomas Ayuso and Guy Hursthouse, "¿Cambio?: Latin America in the Era of Obama-An Early Reading on the Administration", retreated on Sep. 20, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/2009/02/%c2%bfcambio-latin-america-in-the-era-of-obama%e2%80%95-an-early-reading-on-the-administration/>, p.3.

<sup>30</sup> Hsiang Chun, "Challenge for Obama in Latin America", *History Monthly*, June 19, 2009, retreated on March 22, 2010, [http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jw!\\_4qwYw6ZGQQOSgBMthp8sw-/article?mid=6353](http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jw!_4qwYw6ZGQQOSgBMthp8sw-/article?mid=6353), p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> "Official Remarks of United States President Barack Obama at the Opening Ceremony of the Fifth Summit of the Americas", April 17, 2009, retreated on April 9, 2010, [http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09\\_CD/v\\_summit/obama\\_en.pdf](http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09_CD/v_summit/obama_en.pdf), pp.1-2.

ready to give; 2) due to its tendency to avoid conflict and its interests contradictory to the ones of the United States, Brazil is not a country easy to work with; 3) the Latin American countries are still suspicious about the U.S. intentions; 4) the past relations full of difficulties between U.S. and Latin America.<sup>32</sup>

The Trinidad Summit was a personal triumph for Obama. But ALBA's clever tactics, along with some U.S. missteps and Brazil's continued preference for subregionalism, diminished the prospects for any rebirth of a full-fledged inter-American system. So Obama will have to create forums where he can pursue U.S. interests with willing partners according different issues. For example, on energy, the spokes will likely include Canada, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and maybe Bolivia and Ecuador; for immigration, the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and possible some Andean nations; for economic relief for the poor, Brazil, Mexico, and perhaps Nicaragua, among others; one counter-narcotics, Guatemala, Mexico, and Andean countries. For such U.S.-led "flexible functionalism" to appeal to Latin Americans, the U.S. political system will have to do a better job at considering Latin American interests, whether the issue is bilateral free-trade agreements, comprehensive immigration reform, border politics and arms trafficking, or more rational narcotics policies.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, neither does Latin America enjoy a true solidarity. Relations between Peru and Chile had worsen for the espionage in 2009, commerce between Colombia and Venezuela fell a 70% and almost in war, while Brazil seemed more interested in playing in the global stage than in the region. In short term, it seems that the Latin American integration dream will keep postponing in 2010. No matter in the Community of Andean Nations (CAN), the Mercosur, or the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), there will be more divergence than before. One of the reasons is, instead of the leading role played by the U.S. in the past, the rising attraction from China and Russia. A great dissension ideological about the regional development model exists with o without the United States. Countries like Colombia, Peru and Chile have a vision of free market economy, while the others, who form part of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), like Bolivia, Venezuela and the others, are looking for a justice economy instead of the free trade agreement. Therefore, the difference is substantial. Meanwhile, Brazil is looking for a regional leadership, and in order to reach this objective, it has to get involved in the regional troubles. Before that, its claim for regional leadership will be only a good intention.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "No Se Puede", *América Economía*, Sep. 1, 2009 debates, retreated on Dec. 8, 2009, <http://www.americaeconomia.com/NotePrint.aspx?Note=330062>, pp. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Feinberg, "The Eclipse of the Americas: How the Trinidad Summit Marked the Fragmentation of the Inter-American System", retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65081/richard-feinberg/the-eclipse-of-the-americas>, pp. 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> "Fricciones entre Países Frenan Integración Sudamericana en 2009", Dec. 20, 2009, retreated on Dec. 21, 2009, [http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/091220/latinoamerica/ams\\_gen2009\\_integracion](http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/091220/latinoamerica/ams_gen2009_integracion), pp. 1-2.

## VI. Hegemony difficult to maintain

Since he took office, President Obama has articulated a policy toward Latin America that is centered on the idea of partnership. Yet recent crisis, from the coup in Honduras to simmering tensions in the Andes, have revealed a fundamental weakness in the Obama administration's nascent Latin American policy. Without strong U.S. leadership, partnership in the Americas risks inertia or, even worse, an escalation of tensions on many of the hemisphere's critical issues, such as transnational crime, democracy, and security. Although some countries, like Brazil and Chile, have been willing to take on diplomatic responsibilities commensurate with their economic status, they remain averse to conflict with neighbors, even to the point of willfully downplaying existing disagreements. When any one of them fails to assume a larger regional profile, especially with regard to protecting norms and security, problems fester. So the U.S. again has been forced into a position of default leadership.<sup>35</sup>

During the coup that removed José Manuel Zelaya from power as president of Honduras, OAS was against the coup but couldn't bring the two sides to the table. It took U.S. leadership to break the deadlock. For its part, Brazil, supposedly a regional leader, did little but allowing Zelaya hide in its embassy when he got back to Honduras. When Costa Rican President, Óscar Arias failed to reach an agreement, the U.S. sent its officials to negotiate and finally made Zelaya and the de facto regime agree to an accord that would restore democratic constitutional order with elections in November. Latin American countries seemed unengaged in the responsibilities of true partnership.<sup>36</sup>

As one of the BRICs, Brazil is assuming a leading role in Latin America, particularly in the new wave of regional institutionalization. The Brazilian economy has exhibited a degree of resilience in the face of the ongoing global economic downturn and has become the most economically and geo-politically significant presence in the area. In fact, President Lula, since Obama's inauguration, illustrates his enthusiasm for the new U.S. president, but it is also tempered by the realistic expectations he has for him. Brazil's strong voice as South America's regional hegemony has echoed the expectations that the area has of Obama: asking for mutual respect as the most important guidepost. "Obama should transform that gesture of the U.S. people into a gesture for Latin America... respecting our sovereignty and an equitable coexistence," explained Lula, particularly regarding countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia. Given the current positive standing of Brazil in Latin America, good relations between Washington and Brasilia are vital for the existence of solid U.S. links with the region as a whole. What was once exclusively the U.S.' Backyard is now one which

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<sup>35</sup> Christopher Sabatini and Jason Marczak, "Obama's Tango: Restoring U.S. Leadership in Latin America", *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 13, 2010, retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65923/christopher-sabatini-and-jason-marczak/obamas-tango>, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.



Obama must learn to share with Lula, and later, others.<sup>37</sup>

Besides the rising role of Brazil, there are other challenges to the restoration of U.S. leadership in Latin America. Nearly a decade of strong economic growth, real GDP growth in Peru, for example, rose from 5% in 2004 to nearly 10% in 2008, has stoked ambitions and ideological assertiveness in the region. This, in turn, has made the interests of individual states increasingly diverse and complex. The boom in commodity prices that began in 2000 benefited two groups of Latin American countries: the economically and politically moderate (Brazil and Chile) and the erratic and profligate (Venezuela under Chávez). Lula of Brazil has become a symbol of Latin America's new pragmatic left, and Bachelet of Chile has overseen an extended period of economic expansion and was able to save much of the windfall from the high price of copper—more than 20 billion dollars by the end of 2008. While left-wing countries led by Chavez has challenged constantly the prestige of U.S. in the Summit of the Americas in April 2009 with the Cuba issue and denouncing the new U.S.-Colombian military base agreement as Yanqui imperialism in the summer of 2009.<sup>38</sup>

Besides, what the U.S. worries was the arms race tendency in the region. Among them, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela are the major spenders. The Brazilian defense officials have announced the future purchase of 250 Leopard 1 battle tanks, 36 Rafale warplanes among others. And Brazil's air fleet mounts to over 720 planes. Chile has purchased 12 Super Tucano planes from Brazil, dozens of F-16 planes from U.S. and Holland, two Scorpene-type submarines from France and 200 American Humvee from General Motors. But perhaps the most worrisome for U.S. is the recent purchase made by Hugo Chávez government from Russia and China. They bought radar equipment from China and Sukhoi fighter jets, helicopters and 100,000 rifles from Russia. But if they obtain the Russian S-300 air-missile system, they would effectively strengthen its defense capability, and it would not be easy for its possible adversaries to punish the country by striking at its oil fields.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems that Latin American begin to get tired of the left-wing governors. The multi-millionaire businessman of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, won the presidential campaign in January 2010 and would assume office on March 11. Chile had elected a conservative president, unseating the central-left "Concertación" coalition that has ruled the country for the last two decades. And it's been the first right-wing victory in more than 50 years. He has already announced that he won't reject a government with personnel who

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<sup>37</sup> Tomas Ayuso and Guy Hursthouse, "¿Cambio?: Latin America in the Era of Obama- An Early Reading on the Administration", retreated on Sep. 20, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/2009/02/%c2%bfcambio-latin-america-in-the-era-of-obama%e2%80%95-an-early-reading-on-the-administration/>, pp. 4-5.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Sabatini and Jason Marczak, "Obama's Tango: Restoring U.S. Leadership in Latin America", *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 13, 2010, retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65923/christopher-sabatini-and-jason-marczak/obamas-tango>, p. 1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Alex Sanchez, "South America and its Likelihood of a Season of Splendid Little Wars: An Analysis of Arms Races and Regional Geopolitics", Oct. 8, 2009, retreated on Oct. 14, 2009, <http://www.coha.org/south-america-and-its-likelihood-of-a-season-of-splendid-little-wars-an-analysis-of-arms-races-and-regional-geopolitics/>, pp. 1-2.

worked before in the dictatorship. He said: “The fact that one had worked for a government, including a military government, is not a sin nor is a crime.”<sup>40</sup> Piñera’s campaign theme was a familiar “change”. Since 1990, Concertación governments, including the one led by Socialist Michelle Bachelet, have helped transform Chile into one of the region’s most stable democracies, but haven’t made fundamental change to Pinochet’s economic policies.<sup>41</sup> This could be a sign for some real change in Latin America after a decade of left-leaning tendency. Furthermore, the discordances between the regional integration institutions could give the Obama administration some freedom to extend its influence again. It may not be easy, all depends on how true does the “partnership” mean for Obama.

It is time for the United States to refocus efforts on defining its national interests in the region and to forge and lead the ad-hoc alliance necessary to further them. For starters, the Obama administration and Congress must strengthen ties with Brazil (cooperating on biofuels and anti-discrimination laws), Uruguay (strengthening commercial relations) and Colombia and Panama (forging free trade agreements). However, it is the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions that have the most impact in shaping the region’s attitudes toward the United States. For example, in 2006, U.S. bilateral development assistance to Latin America was \$1.6 billion, while total private investment to the region was \$26.8 billion. On such issues as labor rights, transparency, and the rule of law, the U.S. government has a shared set of interests with business coalitions. Even more, U.S. should lead alliances with the strong local NGOs that are committed to addressing many of the long-standing social inequities that governments have failed to resolve.<sup>42</sup>

According to a review to three compilations of recommendations from U.S. and Latin America, nearly all voices urge a more humble, multilateral-minded Washington that listens respectfully to its neighbor, even as many convey a deep yearning for renewed U.S. leadership. Common recommendations for U.S. policy include intensifying energy cooperation, especially in biofuels and other alternative technologies; passing comprehensive immigration legislation and linking visa quotas and temporary-worker programs to U.S. labor-market needs; approving the pending free-trade agreements with Colombia and Panama and exploring other instruments for hemispheric economic integration; and seriously reviewing failed counter-narcotics policies. Significantly, virtually all agree that Washington should gradually lift the embargo against Cuba, beginning with allowing more travel and remittances, while working multilaterally to promote civil society and democratic reforms on the beleaguered island. Paradoxically, many of these foreign voices plead for greatly enhanced U.S. leadership. Others, less surprisingly, calls for much

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<sup>40</sup> “Millonario derechist Sebastián Piñera es el nuevo presidente de Chile”, retreated on Jan.18, 2010, [http://espanol.new.yahoo.com/s/afp/100118/latinoamerica/chile\\_elecciones&printer=1](http://espanol.new.yahoo.com/s/afp/100118/latinoamerica/chile_elecciones&printer=1), pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Dickinson, Is the Pinochet Era Finally Over?, *Foreign Policy*, Jan.17, 2010, retreated on Feb. 8, 2010, [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/01/17/is\\_the\\_pinochet\\_era\\_final\\_over](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/01/17/is_the_pinochet_era_final_over), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Sabatini and Jason Marczak, “Obama’s Tango: Restoring U.S. Leadership in Latin America”, *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 13, 2010, retreated on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65923/christopher-sabatini-and-jason-marczak/obamas-tango>, p. 3.

more U.S. technical and financial support.<sup>43</sup>

In another word, before Latin American countries remove their differences, Obama administration should take its promise of “partnership” seriously and be ready to commit more responsibility. Latin America still needs a good partner, and U.S. could be the one.

## VII. Conclusion

Since Obama assumed office in January 2009, not only the Americans in the United States but also lots of Latin Americans hope to see what kind of change could Obama, the first African-American President in the States, bring them. Domestically, he has stabilized the worst economic crisis in the last 80 years, although the crisis has not past yet, he made the Congress prove the Health Care Act. Nevertheless, internationally, he has disappointed a lot of countries.

The present Latin America is like the one at the end of 1950s. Latin Americans are impatient of the Yanqui hegemony and trying to find out their way to move forward, politically and economically. The rise of an African-American president in U.S. and the vision he had given, gave them the imagination that he might lead a different United States of America. This is the perfect time for U.S. to reconsider its national interests in the Western Hemisphere, and redesign a new Latin American Policy for the mutual interests and with mutual respect in order to build a true partnership, as Obama said. In fact Latin Americans still need external help. Although Hugo Chávez presented a Bolivarian socialist ALBA for Latin America, trying to solve the economic mess and poverty by their own, he is not afford to cover all the problem of Latin America. Brazil is rising as one of the BRICs, but it has to face its own difficulties first. None of them are ready to assume the hegemony responsibility of Latin America in the near future.

Nevertheless, Obama administration has been too cautious until now, going in contrary to the expectation of Latin Americans. Among all the aspects that we mentioned before, the most urgent issues to solve are the lifting of trade embargo to Cuba and rethinking of the anti-drug war that U.S. has assumed for decades. The first one has been maintained for the insistence of the conservative sector and is against the interests of most Americans and Cubans. The second one is waging too much U.S. budget and brings little result. According to some data, the strategic need to keep some Latin American standpoint in hand perhaps is the inside motivation of this insistence in the drug war, nevertheless, the price is the violation of human rights in those countries, which is against the American value and the isolation of Latin America to U.S. The drug problem should be reconsidered from the

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Feinberg, “U.S.-Latin America Relations: A New Direction for a New Reality; Re-thinking U.S.-Latin American Relations: A Hemispheric Partnership for a Turbulent World”; “Memos to the President-Elect”, Capsule Review, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2009, retrieved on February 8, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64759/richard-feinberg/us-latin-america-relations-a-new-direction-for-a-new-reality-re->, pp. 1-2.

consumer side and blaming only the farmers who plant it because drug plant can bring them better profit or the drug cartel won't make things different.

Nevertheless, the economic and political relations between U.S. and Latin America will be more troublesome. After long-term hostility and the nomination of Yanqui imperialism for U.S., it's no easy task to relief this tension. But Obama is still the right man in the right time. He knows, as he said: "I think it's important to recognize, given historic suspicions, that the United States' policy should not be interference in other countries, but that also means that we can't blame the United States for every problem that arises in the hemisphere.<sup>44</sup>" He also knows that trust has to be earned over time. If Obama's policy can be more aggressive and regain the confidence of Latin Americans, there is still chance to repair the damaged economic and political relation between them, and then U.S. could rebuild its leading role in the Western Hemisphere.

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<sup>44</sup> "Official Remarks of United States President Barack Obama at the Opening Ceremony of the Fifth Summit of the Americas", retreated on April 9, 2010, [http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09CD/v\\_summit\\_obama\\_en.pdf](http://www.summit-americas.org/GA09CD/v_summit_obama_en.pdf), p. 5.

# 美國歐巴馬政府對拉丁美洲外交政策之研析

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## 摘要

歐巴馬於 2008 年元月接任美國第四十四任總統以來，在其外交政策上，已經展現與其前任布希總統相當程度的差異。作為美國第一位非白人總統，歐巴馬背負了許多發展中國家的期待，在美國與拉美的外交關係上，拉美國家也有類似的預期，希望歐巴馬總統能以更對等的方式緩和美國與拉美國家日益緊張的關係。

在區域整合的議題上，柯林頓總統「美洲自由貿易區」的構想在委內瑞拉總統查維斯(Hugo Chavez)領軍的「玻利瓦美洲替代方案」(AJBA)、「南方共同市場」(MERCOSUR)、「南美國家聯盟」(UNASUR)的挑戰下，似乎只能推進到中美洲加勒比海地區；古巴與美國的長期矛盾在卡斯楚退而不休的情況下，也似乎進展緩慢；拉丁美洲毒品在美國市場氾濫的情形，哥倫比亞雖然願意與美國合作加以抑制，然而墨西哥的毒品貿易組織卻益形猖獗；再加上中美洲青少年幫派迅速蔓延，又與毒品產業相互結合，使毒品問題更加複雜化。

根據世界貿易組織的最新統計，美國仍是拉美國家最大的貿易夥伴，即便是正面與美國作對的查維斯總統也必須將 50% 以上的石油銷往美國，未來美國對拉美外交政策仍將對拉美地區產生重大影響。歐巴馬雖然在拉丁美洲面臨嚴峻的挑戰，但正應善用其非白人總統的特色，爭取拉美國家的認同，採取更以拉美國家需求為考量的政策，方能利用契機，擺脫拉美國家將美國邊緣化的意圖，繼續保有在拉美地區的影響力，並保有對拉美各項重要資源的掌控權。



## OBAMA'S CHALLENGES TO "RESET" RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA

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### **Abstract:**

It is no simple task for Obama to "reset" relations with Latin America because "Bush has become more unpopular in Latin America than any other U.S. president in recent memory." The eight-year presidency of George W. Bush marked a period during which Latin American countries increasingly turned to non-traditional players in forming their trade and political relations.

In addition to domestic pressures, Obama faced at least four challenges in Latin America. First, Venezuela's Hugo Chávez won the referendum on Feb. 15, 2009, allowing him to run for a third six-year term in 2012. Even if losing in next presidential campaign, Chávez's current presidential tenure will be longer than Obama's current one. Given the Venezuelan's role in Latin America's leftward tilt, Obama should prevent Chávez from being regional leader.

Second, even Obama can successfully satisfy domestic constituency with protectionist policy, he will hardly to keep Mexico at bay, if the benefit of the NAFTA cannot be fairly distributed. In fact, Mexico is thinking about to keep it as a country of North American or Latin America.

Third, while President Álvaro Uribe retains extraordinary popularity for against mounting guerrilla and paramilitary violence, Uribe also created three dilemmas for the Obama administration: strong man vs. strong institution, military bases vs. arms races, and free trade vs. fair trade.

Fourth, due to the fact that "Brazil is emerging as the hemisphere's leading power broker," the United States should convince Brazilians that Washington can help to bring Brasilia's "representation and the voting power into line with their relative weight in the world economy."

### **Introduction**

At the Opening of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, in Trinidad and Tobago on April 17, 2009, President Barack Obama's speech *A New Partnership for the Americas* laid out a vision that looked much more like President Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy than the Monroe Doctrine of U.S. dominance. Obama recognized then that "it's time for a new alliance of the Americas," and that given the "eight years of failed policies of the past, we

need a new leadership for the future.”Ironically, the Obama administration has continued to espouse President George W. Bush’s Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas.<sup>1</sup>

Worse. the United States “is asking for trouble when, nine months into a new administration, Western Hemisphere Affairs is the only regional bureau in the State Department that does not have an Obama appointee serving as assistant secretary of state and the most influential nation in the region, Brazil, has no U.S. ambassador, because James DeMint of South Carolina disagrees with the administration’s policy toward Honduras.”<sup>2</sup>

In fact, countries in Latin America “have not only grown stronger but have expanded relations with others, including China and India. U.S. attention has also focused elsewhere in recent years, particularly on challenges in the Middle East. The result is a region shaping its future far more than it shaped its past,” according to Richard N. Haass, President of Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>3</sup> Because “Bush has become more unpopular in Latin America than any other U.S. president in recent memory,” it is no simple task for Obama to “reset” relations with Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

Just name some incidents within 2 months after his inauguration to exemplify Obama’s formidable challenges in Latin America. On Feb. 15 2009, Venezuela passed referendum and gave Hugo Chávez the rights for reelection. Bolivia’s President Evo Morales expelled another American diplomat, Francisco Martinez, on March 9, accusing him of “coordinating contacts” with a Bolivian police officer accused of infiltrating the state oil company on behalf of the CIA. On March 10, twelve South American countries officially inaugurated the South American Defense Council, a new group that had been proposed by Luis Inacío Lula da Silva to cooperate on military issues and avert potential conflicts. On March 15, Hugo Chávez welcomed Russian bombers to use Venezuela facility. And Costa Rica reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba after 48-year of interruption on March 18.

If left regime is an indicator of anti-Americanism in Latin America, Obama may face more challenges in the region. On March 15, 2009, Mauricio Funes, former member of Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), the revolutionary group-turned-mainstream political party, was elected as El Salvador’s president. Evo Morales, first elected President of Bolivia on December 18, 2005, with 53.7% of the popular vote, was reelected in December 2009 by 63% and continued to his second term of presidency.

On March 1, 2010, José Mujica inaugurated as the President of Uruguay. Mujica was a former member of a radical guerrilla group, the Tupamaros, and spent 14 years in prison. He was released in 1985 when Uruguay returned to democracy after a 17-year military dictatorship.

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<sup>1</sup> Manuel Pérez-Rocha, “Latin America: C-,” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Feb. 12, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Aronson, “U.S. must confront neighbors’ crises soon,” *The Miami Herald*, Oct. 11, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Richard N. Haass, “Foreword,” for *U.S.-Latin America Relations: A New Direction for A New Reality*. Independent Task Force Report No. 60, Council on Foreign Relations, 2008, p.xi.

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Castañeda, “Morning in Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 5, Sept./Oct. 2008, p.126.



If foreign aid budget request is a reflection of Obama's priorities in world affairs, it looks like the president is saying "adios" to Latin America. The Obama administration's foreign aid request to Congress for next year calls for only a nearly 10 percent cut in aid for Latin America. Has Latin America become irrelevant to the Obama administration?<sup>5</sup>

With such a "pink tide" in Latin America and a Congress disregarding the region, Obama really faces formidable challenges to "reset" US relations with Latin America. Let's begin with Bush's legacy in the region.

### **Bush's Legacy**

When George W. Bush pledged on his first presidential visit to Mexico in 2001 to make the twenty-first century the "century of the Americas," he didn't count on 9/11 to get in the way. Instead, the "century of the Americas" lasted less than seven months. Bush abandoned any plans for greater involvement south of the border in favor of fighting the War on Terror.

Bush's policy had not served America's interests. Many Latin American nations see the United States as a marginal actor in the region and set policies accordingly. According to Andrés Oppenheimer, Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist, Latin America "is the world's region that most affects Americans' daily lives, whether we're talking about immigration, trade, the environment or oil."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, like Bush, America's attention seems elsewhere. In an early 2008 Zogby International poll, 7.3 percent of Americans pointed to Latin America as the region of the world they consider the most important to the United States. America's southern neighbors beat only South Asia (India), Africa and the South Pacific (Australia).

So while Bush was both the first Spanish-speaking president and first to hold a *Cinco de Mayo* fiesta in the White House, his failure to intelligently involve the United States in Latin America's political and economic transformations constitutes both a tremendous missed opportunity and an abandonment of traditional allies.

Bush's policies in Latin America often came down to a stark choice: our way or the highway. When Hugo Chávez was forced to resign on April 12, 2002, Washington refused to condemn the coup despite prevailing Latin American views criticizing the overthrow of an elected government. Washington essentially forced Latin American leaders to back the U.S. or be in league with someone it considers a rogue leader. This kind of oppressive diplomacy resulted in "many Latin America[n] nations... redefin[ing] their national interests and establish[ing] ties with Europe, Asia and other parts of the world," says Thomas A. Shannon Jr., the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, "we are no longer the only option for these countries."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Andrés Oppenheimer, "U.S. aid-cutback plan sends wrong message," *The Miami Herald*, Feb. 7, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Andrés Oppenheimer, "Do Americans Care About Latin America? Not Really," *The Miami Herald*, Feb. 4, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Bussey, *The Miami Herald*, Jun. 11, 2008.

Refusing to believe that Latin American nations would look elsewhere, the Bush Administration continued to pursue a unilateralist agenda, with three issues provoking particular ire. First, it became clear that Bush considered Latin America a “backyard.” Julia E. Sweig, Director for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, explains that “U.S. policies — whether on trade, aid, democracy, drugs or immigration — presumed that Latin Americans would automatically see U.S. interests as their own.”<sup>8</sup> Second, Washington attempted to strong-arm Latin American nations into supporting the second Iraqi war. Most Latin American leaders saw no useful purpose to getting their countries involved in a suspect war. The final insult came as the White House sanctioned eleven Latin American countries for accepting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court without granting immunity to the United States.<sup>9</sup> The message from Washington was crystal clear: support us or face retribution.

The eight-year presidency of George W. Bush marked a period during which Latin American countries increasingly turned to non-traditional players in forming their trade and political relations. The region has enjoyed an economic boom over the past decade, and the U.S. continues to represent its largest trading partner. However, Washington, with its major distractions in the Middle East, failed to make the most of the area’s recent prosperity, and consequently its dominance has slipped. World Trade Organization (WTO) statistics show that in 2000, the U.S. was the destination for 59.8 percent of Latin America’s exports, but by 2007 this figure had fallen to 46.2 percent.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, “George Bush’s policy in the Americas has been negligent toward our friends, ineffective with our adversaries, disinterested in the challenges that matter in people’s lives, and incapable of advancing our interests in the region. As the Americas have changed, we have sat on the sideline, offering no compelling vision and creating a vacuum for demagogues to advance an anti-American agenda,” as read candidate Obama’s Web site. This was a useful theme for a political campaign. Unfortunately, it is also what President Obama inherited from Bush administration. In fact, “many Latin American countries no longer look to Washington for leadership.”<sup>11</sup>

Obama’s challenges to “reset” relations with Latin America will be discussed below.

### **Chávez as Petro-Czar**

On Feb. 15, 2009, Venezuela’s second constitutional referendum in 14 months was approved by a resounding 54% to 45% margin, allowing Chávez to run for a third six-year

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<sup>8</sup> Julia E. Sweig, “Why They Hate Us,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Alexandra Starr, “How the US Went Wrong in Latin America,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 15, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Guy Hursthouse, “[China’s Latest Geopolitical Assault on Latin American Commodities and Bilateral Trade](#),” COHA Report, Feb. 17, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Abraham F. Lowenthal, “The Obama Administration and the Americas: A Promising Start,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vo. 32, No. 3 (July, 2009), p.123.

term in 2012 and perhaps others after that. Even if losing in next presidential campaign, Chávez's current presidential tenure will be longer than Obama's current one. For the following reasons, President Obama should re-establish relations with Chávez as soon as possible.

First, despite the diplomatic freeze of the Bush years, Venezuela still exports a majority of its petroleum to the United States. At more than a million barrels a day (roughly 10 percent of America's crude-oil imports), this isn't business the United States can easily do without. In fact, most experts believe that Chávez's hold on power is the most tenuous of all the petro-rulers because "Venezuela in particular isn't doing any proper field maintenance, which ultimately could result in a supply interruption."<sup>12</sup> That is why even Chávez has recognized the need for improving relations with the United States. The day before the referendum, Chávez declared that "any day is propitious for talking with President Barack Obama" so long as it is on "equal terms."

Second, Venezuela is deepening its connection with Iran. The diplomatic ties between Iran and Venezuela go back almost 50 years. Until recently, it amounted to little more than the routine exchange of diplomats. However, with the election of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, the relationship dramatically changed. In 2009, Ahmadinejad and Chávez have created a cosy financial, political and military partnership rooted in a shared anti-American animus. It "is the time to develop policies in this country to ensure this partnership produces no poisonous fruit."<sup>13</sup>

Third, "given the Venezuelan's role in Latin America's leftward tilt, talking to Chávez could also help Obama break ground with Venezuela's radical allies in Bolivia, Ecuador and eventually even Cuba."<sup>14</sup> After Tehran has gained a foothold in South America, Nicaragua is also at risk of being added to the list of authoritarian governments aligned with Venezuela and by association, its Islamic ally. Unlike Honduras, Nicaragua's military leaders have Sandinista roots and are well-known to have many business interests they might not want to jeopardize by challenging the status quo. Nicaragua's private sector showed no backbone against Mr. Ortega.<sup>15</sup>

In April 2009, days after Hugo Chávez gave President Barack Obama a copy of *Open Veins of Latin America* in Trinidad and Tabago, the English-language version of the book shot to the No. 2 slot on Amazon. *Open Veins* posits that the economic and political domination of Latin America -- first by Europeans and, much later, by the U.S. -- created a region that "continues to exist at the service of others' needs." The extraction of gold, silver, oil and iron, and the cultivation of sugar, bananas, coffee and rubber served developed countries that "profit more from consuming them than Latin America does from producing

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<sup>12</sup> Rana Foroohar, "The Decline of the Petro-Czar," *Newsweek*, Feb 23, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Robert M. Morgenthau, "The Emerging Axis of Iran and Venezuela," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 8, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Miller, "An Opening For Obama?" *Newsweek*, Feb. 19, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "The Ortega-Chavez Axis," *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 22, 2010.

them.” No wonder, on March 6, 2010, Chávez said, “To me, she’s like Condoleezza Rice ... a blond Condoleezza,” referring to former U.S. president George W. Bush’s secretary of state.

### **Keeping Mexico under NAFTA**

Among Latin American presidents, Mexico’s president was the only one received phone call from Obama in few days after Obama was elected. However, if Obama is serious to repair the fence with Mexico, he should not support protection at the expense of the NAFTA. Ernesto Zedillo, the former Mexican president who helped steer his country through a financial crisis in 1994, complains, “The U.S. needs to show some proof they have a plan to get out of the fiscal problem...We, as developing countries, need to know we won’t be crowded out of the capital markets, which is already happening.”<sup>16</sup>

During the presidential campaign, then candidate Obama seemed ambivalent about the US legacy of the 1950s, leading the charge for dismantling global trade barriers. He called to renegotiate NAFTA and supported for the policies of the protectionist labor unions. However, “open trade is crucial part of a global stimulus package.”<sup>17</sup>As the House run wild with language demanding procurement rules that clearly violate U.S. commitments as part of the World Trade Organization, Obama also drew protests from NAFTA’s members, Canada and Mexico. Thus, even Obama can successfully satisfy domestic constituency with protectionist policy, he will hardly to keep Mexico at bay, not mention to maintain the US global leadership.

In fact, Mexico is the nation most hard hit by NAFTA and the financial crisis. Despite Mexico’s exports and foreign investment close to tripled under NAFTA, Mexico's economy only grew at an annual per capita rate of approximately 1.5%. Foreign investment wiped out local firms, so domestic investment slid to 19% of GDP, compared to a pre-NAFTA level of 24% of GDP. This is why growth has been so poor in Mexico, according to Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid and Jaime Ros’ book *Development and Growth in the Mexican Economy*.<sup>18</sup>

No wonder, Mexico has been choosing the place it should occupy: North America or Latin America? “Since the late '80s, the country has been ruled by bold, enlightened albeit authoritarian governments that imposed a deep process of economic integration with North America (through NAFTA) on a largely nationalist and anti-American society. It did so without consultation or debate. Consequently, neither society nor elites have convinced themselves of the value of this arrangement. Fifteen years on, the problem has resurfaced, as

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<sup>16</sup> Nelson D. Schwartz, “Global Worries Over U.S. Stimulus Spending,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 30, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey E. Garten, “The Coming Trade War,” *Newsweek*, Feb. 9, 2009, pp.28-30.

<sup>18</sup> Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid and Jaime Ros, *Development and Growth in the Mexican Economy: A Historical Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Kevin Gallagher, “Fix America’s trade regime,” *Guardian*, September 15, 2009.

though we were witnessing an Aztec version of the Freudian return of the repressed. Mexico has to choose once again, but this time democratically: North America or Latin America?”<sup>19</sup>

Despite the slowdown in both the U.S. and Mexican economies, trade between the two nations has increased. In the first half of 2008, U.S.-Mexico trade grew by 9.6 percent to \$183.7 billion. That follows a record \$347 billion in trade in 2007. In 1993, total two-way trade was only \$81.5 billion. Mexico now ranks third behind Canada and China among the top exporters to the U.S. market.

Mexico even beats China when it comes to buy U.S. goods. During the first ten months 2008, Mexico imported U.S. products worth \$129.4 billion - or more than twice the \$61 billion China bought from U.S.<sup>20</sup> U.S. and Mexican interests are so intertwined that rare is the U.S. government agency that doesn't deal with Mexico. A strategic partnership would require sustained attention in Washington and Mexico City as well as a coordinated engagement of all government actors in their specific policy areas.<sup>21</sup>

Under the NAFTA, Mexican carriers were authorized to deliver their cargo to any border state starting in 1995 and anywhere in the U.S. as of 2000. Until April 2007 the Bush Administration started a pilot program allowing a select group of Mexican cargo trucks to cross the border. The idea was to gradually expand the number rather than stop the program. However, the U.S. Congress decided in March 2009 to stop the temporary truck program. In the words of Mary Anastasia O'Grady, *The Wall Street Journal's* columnist on Americas, “Washington Starts Another Trade War.”<sup>22</sup>

She was right because since March 19, 2009, U.S. exports ranging from fruits and vegetables to toilet paper and deodorant were subject to Mexican tariffs of 10 to 20 percent in retaliation for the Obama administration's cancellation of a cross-border trucking program. Restricting Mexican trucks free access to the United States costs consumers more than \$400 million a year, the U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated.<sup>23</sup>

Consequently, it is no surprise that in February 2010, at least 25 Latin American and Caribbean presidents started to discuss the creation of a new organization, excluding both the US and Canada. The Mexican-led initiative is a clear sign of Latin America's growing confidence as a region.<sup>24</sup> It is even a clearer sign of Mexico's intention of returning to Latin America. For mending the fence with Mexico, respecting NAFTA's truck provision would be a good start.

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<sup>19</sup> [Jorge Castañeda](#), “A Paralyzed Democracy,” *Newsweek*, Feb. 22, 2010, p.16.

<sup>20</sup> “NAFTA Turns 15: Bravo!” *Latin Business Chronicle*, Jan. 2, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Marifeli Pérez-Stable, “Mexico's progress in U.S. interest,” *The Miami Herald*, Feb. 26, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Anastasia O'Grady, “Washington Starts Another Trade War,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> “Mexico Tariffs Test Obama,” *Latin Business Chronicle*, March 17, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Adam Thomson, “Mexico to propose pan-Latin American alliance,” *The Financial Times*, Feb. 21, 2010.

## Colombia's three Dilemmas

President Álvaro Uribe maintains extraordinary popularity among Colombians because he has effectively controlled mounting guerrilla and paramilitary violence for decades. In September 2009, Colombia's Congress approved the final text of a law to call a referendum on changing the constitution to allow Uribe to run for a third consecutive term. However, Colombia has also created at least three dilemmas for Obama administration.

First Dilemma: Strong Man vs. Strong Institution. The wave of rewriting Constitution for Presidential consecutive term has been high in Latin America since the beginning of the 21 century. The main reason is that Venezuela's democratically elected President Hugo Chávez won the referendum to extend presidential tenure from 5 to 6 years in 1999. Since then, Chávez has successfully destroyed Venezuela's institutional checks and balances and finally to make himself an "elected dictator." It also set the example for Latin American presidents to follow. Honduras' former President Manuel Zelaya is the most recent one.

On June 28 2009, the Honduran military executed a Supreme Court arrest warrant against Zelaya for trying to hold a referendum on whether he should be able to run for a second term. According to Article 239 of the Honduran constitution, any president who tries for a second term automatically loses the privilege of his office. However, because Zelaya joined ALBA in 2008, Chávez condemned "coup" against Zelaya and even threatened military intervention to restore democracy to Honduras. In fact, "by insisting that Mr. Zelaya be returned to power, the U.S. is trying to force Honduras to violate its own constitution."<sup>25</sup> Consequently, Uribe's reelection may help Chávez to create an anti-American client state in Honduras that might serve as a political and economic beachhead for Chavez's Iranian, Chinese and Russian allies.<sup>26</sup>

The good news came in February 2010 when the ruling by the Constitutional Court was a rejection sufficiently emphatic as to seem inevitable in retrospect. Obama applauded Uribe for accepting the court decision as an "invaluable example."<sup>27</sup> For Washington, the better news was that Juan Manuel Santos, a former defense minister who marshaled U.S. aid to thrash Marxist guerrillas, has consolidated his position as the front-runner to succeed Álvaro Uribe as president of Colombia. His party won 27 of 102 seats in the senate, seven more than it had after the 2006 elections. That put Santos, 58, in the best position to win May's presidential elections.

Second Dilemma: Military Bases vs. Arms Races. In addition to seek for the third terms of president, Uribe also provided another dilemma for Obama in the short term and for the U.S. in the long term. According to an agreement, Uribe administration gave the U.S. military

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<sup>25</sup> Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "Obama vs. Honduran Democracy," *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 30, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Robert White and Glenn Hurowitz, "Honduras' coup must not stand," *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 31, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> "Obama lauds Colombian president for heeding court," AP, March 11, 2010.

a 10-year lease on space at seven Colombian bases to help fight drug traffickers and leftist rebels. The U.S. military has already operated in Colombia for years as part of Plan Colombia, \$6 billion in U.S. aid that helped Uribe bring security to the violent nation. The dilemma is it also could fuel arms purchases in South America.

The 12 members of the UNASUR spent about \$51 billion in 2008 on their militaries — up 30 percent from 2007, according to the Center for a New Majority, a Buenos Aires research group. It may not be important for Obama to convince presidents like Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, or Rafael Correa of Ecuador, or Evo Morales of Bolivia. However, it is important to give a satisfactory explanation to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose “beloved South America is feeling very nervous.” In fact, Brazil has bought French submarines and helicopters and is poised to spend \$2 billion for fighter jets to protect its offshore oil and Amazon resources, which many Brazilians fear could be targeted by unnamed foreign powers.

Third Dilemma: Free Trade vs. Fair Trade. During the Bush administration, Colombia had been the staunchest supporters of America. However, Uribe had said that “Colombia has had difficulties with other countries because [they] did not understand the reasons for our loyalty to the United States.” Even he may be questioning his own faith. The U.S. House of Representatives’ continual unwillingness to pass the U.S.-Colombia free-trade agreement caused Uribe to lament how, “anyone [can] understand that United States does not approve this agreement.”<sup>28</sup>

The House refused to pass the agreement because “Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a union organizer.”<sup>29</sup> In the last 17 years, more than 2,700 teachers, farm workers, coal miners and other laborers have paid with their lives for seeking rights that Americans have long taken for granted, such as safe working conditions. During the same period, there were more than 4,000 reported death threats against labor leaders, 350 disappearances and kidnappings, and 75 cases of torture.

Worse, Obama has also been trying to meet the Democratic Party’s demands, i.e. satisfy labor union interests, but at the expense of international allies. FTA with Colombia is the typical case. For most of Obama’s political supporters, “the ideal defense against competition from the poor countries is to raise their cost of production by forcing their standards up, claiming that competition with countries with lower standards is “unfair.” It becomes a dilemma for Obama to strike balance between FTA with Colombia and rising protectionism in the U.S..

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<sup>28</sup> “The Price of Friendship,” *Newsweek*, May 5, 2008, p.29.

<sup>29</sup> “Murder in Colombia and a U.S. multinational,” *Los Angeles Times* (editorial), Oct. 1, 2009.

## Brazil as Regional Power Broker

Obama was right to invite Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, as the first Latin American leader, to visit White House in March 2009, a sign that he'd prefer to deal with a more moderate Latin leftist. In fact, "Brazil is emerging as the hemisphere's leading power broker."<sup>30</sup>

With the world's 11th-largest economy and third-highest level of inequality, Brazil puts to the test the claims of those who champion democracy: that democracy can improve people's lives, that citizenship within democratic political institutions fosters inclusion and well-being, and that democratic nations can be significant forces for self-government and social justice in the globalized world.<sup>31</sup>

Responding to the US "buy American" provision, Brazil and Argentina are exerting pressure on members of Mercosur, the South American trade block, to raise the group's external tariff. Brazil's Ministry of Development announced that 3,000 new items would be added to the list requiring import licensing. However, President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva reversed the decision because he did "not want Brazil being identified with protectionism." *The Wall Street Journal* praises it as "a sign of Brazil's growing economic and political maturity."<sup>32</sup>

For Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, D.C, "Lula is very right to point the finger of blame at the U.S. If the Venezuela...rejected market policies out of hand, come out better at the end of all this than the Brazils do, the credibility of the Washington Consensus will be sadly diminished." If capitalist-oriented economies such as Brazil's survive global economic crisis, "the market approach could actually be bolstered in an ironic way," says Hakim, "meaning that countries like Brazil will look like the examples who managed capitalism better than the U.S. did." In that case, Washington and Wall Street could find themselves berated by a new "Brasilia Consensus."<sup>33</sup>

For Lula, "the time had come for a show of political will and for undertaking fundamental structural adjustments...The G-20 must bring the representation and the voting power of developing countries into line with their relative weight in the world economy...Of course, the G-20 cannot solve these problems alone... They can only be successful if they help us get back to the reform of the multilateral system."<sup>34</sup>

Just name some cases to exemplify how Lula already began his "independent diplomacy." First, Brazil joined UNASUR in criticizing Colombia for having agreed to allow

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<sup>30</sup> Andrés Oppenheimer, "By design or default, Brazil emerges as leader," *The Miami Herald*, March 12, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey W. Rubin and Emma Sokoloff-Rubin, "A big opportunity for Obama and Lula," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 13, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> "Obama's Trade Deflection," *The Wall Street Journal* (editorial), Feb. 6, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Tim Padgett, "In Latin America, Pointing a Finger at the US," *Time*, Oct. 7, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, "The G-20's new world," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 2009.



the U.S. to use seven of its military bases for counterterrorist and counter narcotics activities inside Colombia.

Second, Brazil has never tried to mobilize support against Hugo Chávez. On the contrary, Lula da Silva is supporting Venezuela's efforts to join Mercosur, despite rules that limit membership to democratic countries.

Third, both Brazil and the U.S. initially opposed the Honduran military's removal from office of the democratically elected president, Manuel Zelaya, despite the fact that Mr. Zelaya had violated Honduras's constitution. But Lula refused to recognize the result of Honduran election in last November. Lula's government even criticized the United States over its handling of the crisis in Honduras and increasing its military presence in Colombia.<sup>35</sup> It "is likely to accelerate a process through which Brazil abandons the OAS in favor of other regional outfits, such as the Union of South American Nations, where it can wield power more freely."<sup>36</sup>

Fourth, instead of expressing concern over Iran's activities in Latin America, Brazil has drawn closer to Tehran and hoped to expand its \$2 billion bilateral trade to \$10 billion in the near future. In November 2009, President Lula hosted President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Brazil. He reiterated his support for Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful uses, while insisting that there is no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons.<sup>37</sup>

Success at home has given oxygen to the vaulting ambition of Lula's foreign policy. He wants Brazil to be seen as a great power by setting itself up as the leader of a united Latin America while also seeking new alliances with other rising powers of the global "south". Brazil's leaders have often preferred to see their country as a "southern" power, a leader of the developing world.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, it becomes formidable challenge for Washington to maintain the relations with Brasilia as good as possible.

## Conclusion

Obama is facing formidable challenges to "reset" relations with Latin America. First, given Venezuela's role in Latin America's leftward tilt, Obama should prevent Chávez from being regional leader. Second, Obama can hardly to keep Mexico at bay, if the benefit of the NAFTA cannot be fairly distributed. Third, even Uribe will not run for the third term of presidency, military bases and free trade agreement will be the dilemmas for Obama. Fourth, while Brazil is emerging as the hemisphere's leading power broker, the United States will be more difficult to prevent Brazilians from being "reluctant partners."

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<sup>35</sup>Alexei Barrionuevo, "Brazil's President Elbows U.S. on the Diplomatic Stage," *The New York Times*, Nov. 23, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Kevin Casas-Zamora, "Democracy Loses the Honduran Election," *Foreign Policy*, Dec. 1, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Brazil Steers an Independent Course," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 4, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> "Whose side is Brazil on?" *The Economist*, Aug. 15, 2009, p.8

It is true, “it won’t be easy to undo what Mr. Bush has done.” However, the first thing Obama did as President was to undo what Bush has done, announcement of the closure of Guantanamo and the end of any official sanction for torture. Repairing America’s tarnished reputation and restoring faith in allies will be a monumental challenge for Obama. Holding the course will only further drive Latin American nations into the open arms of Europe and Asia. If Washington can find the courage to act in a multilateral, sensible way, the 21<sup>st</sup> century can still be the “century of the Americas.”

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