

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENT OF
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CHAIRMAN**

**before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**

U.S.-Japan Relations: Enduring Ties, Recent Developments

March 17, 2010

This year marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States. That treaty forms the bedrock of our bilateral relationship, which in turn plays an indispensable role in ensuring security and prosperity for the United States and Japan as well as for the broader Asia Pacific and the world. As Article VI of the Treaty notes, one of its major purposes is to contribute to “the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.”

The advent of new governments in both countries offers us a unique opportunity to expand and invigorate both the security alliance and our close economic, diplomatic and political ties in the face of new regional and global challenges.

Our two government witnesses today are involved in senior-level discussions with their Japanese counterparts on deepening and expanding the alliance to encompass greater cooperation in disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, climate change, cyber security, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions and other issues.

In this important dialogue, both sides are guided by a shared respect for democracy and freedom, by a mutual interest in successfully adapting to the realignment of the region’s great powers, and by the enduring ties we have forged over the last 65 years.

Clearly, we have encountered some difficulties in relations since the electoral victory of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) last August. But we should be mindful that the DPJ never governed previously as with one brief interruption, the Liberal Democratic Party ruled Japan for more than half a century. As those of us in Washington should be acutely aware, getting a new Administration up to speed can take time.

More to the point, most of the issues on which the press has reported so breathlessly are relatively minor when viewed in the context of the breadth and depth of the bilateral relationship. The fact that certain Toyota models sometimes accelerate unexpectedly is a mechanical problem, not a diplomatic issue. And last week's acknowledgement by Japan's Foreign Minister of the existence of secret Cold War agreements was a welcome fulfillment of the DPJ's campaign pledge to promote greater governmental transparency.

In my view, the secret agreements to allow military operations by U.S. forces based in the country in case of an emergency on the Korean peninsula, and to have Tokyo spend \$20 million to help restore former U.S. military areas in Okinawa to farmland, should have been made public decades ago.

The more problematic secret agreement that gave tacit permission for U.S. nuclear-armed warships to make calls at Japanese ports and transit through Japanese territorial waters – which would appear to have contravened Japan's three non-nuclear principles not to make, own or allow entry of nuclear weapons – was made public decades ago. Edwin Reischauer, our Ambassador to Japan in the mid-1960s, discussed those port calls in an open press conference in 1981. And ten years later, when George H. W. Bush announced the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. naval ships, he rendered the secret pact moot.

I believe both the United States and Japan should welcome Tokyo's new willingness to acknowledge historical truths, and indeed encourage the Hatoyama government to do so in other areas.

In any case, the most significant issue between our two countries is Japan's decision to re-examine the agreement to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station from Futenma to a less populated part of Okinawa. Two months ago, I signed a letter with the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees, expressing our continued support for the Guam International Agreement of February 2009, and our view that any concerns regarding the Futenma Replacement Facility be addressed through that accord.

As the Agreement notes, it is the intent of both parties to “reduce the burden on local communities, including those in Okinawa, thereby providing the basis for enhanced public support for the security alliance.” It further states that, “The relocation [of 8,000 Marines and their 9,000 dependents from Okinawa to Guam] shall be dependent on tangible progress made by the Government of Japan toward completion of the Futenma Replacement Facility as stipulated” in the United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation of 2006.

Yet, I believe all of us who signed the letter recognize that during the campaign, the Democratic Party pledged to review the base issue. And since the Social Democratic Party, one of the DPJ's coalition partners, adamantly opposes the existing relocation plan and insists that the base be moved outside Japan, the decision by the Prime Minister to

put the realignment process on hold after taking office should not have come as a surprise.

After the January Nago mayoral election resulting in the victory of a first-time candidate opposed to the planned relocation, the Okinawa prefectural assembly's unanimous approval of a written statement demanding that the base be moved outside the prefecture, and the Governor of Okinawa's recent hints that he may take a similar position when he campaigns for reelection later this year, the issue has clearly become more volatile locally.

The burdens the Okinawan people have shouldered on behalf of the alliance should not be underestimated. With less than one percent of Japan's land area, Okinawa is host to two-thirds of the American forces based in the country. We should also remember that Okinawa, once the sovereign Ryuku Kingdom, was forcibly annexed by Japan in 1872, and that during the Battle of Okinawa, one-third of its inhabitants died. To this day, Okinawa remains a vestige of imperialism as it languishes behind the rest of the country economically and educationally, and its people face discrimination throughout the Japan.

In dealing with the Futenma relocation issue, we must not neglect this history. Politically, we must also recognize that Prime Minister Hatoyama's approval ratings have deteriorated steeply from almost 80 percent when he took office to 30-40 percent now, largely as a result of financial scandals and uneven leadership. Even worse for the DPJ, only one-quarter of voters say they plan to cast their ballots for the party in July's Upper House elections.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the strategic importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance or allow the Futenma issue to define the bilateral relationship. Japan remains America's most important ally in the Asia Pacific, is the world's second largest economy (or third if one uses an alternative metric), and just a few weeks ago regained its position as the largest holder of American treasuries at \$769 billion – outpacing China's holdings of \$755 billion, according to Treasury Department numbers.

The country shares our democratic values and our interest in a prosperous, peaceful, stable and sustainable world. The U.S.-Japan alliance should and will remain a pillar of strength for both countries so long as we address the issues of the day with patience, persistence, flexibility and an understanding of our enduring bilateral ties.