

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Slaughter, Anne-Marie <SlaughterA@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2010 9:27 PM
To: H
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: FW: Nye on Japan Alliance

Madame S,

I promise I won't abuse the privilege of emailing you directly, but here is the piece by Joe Nye that I mentioned this morning. You may note that my S/P staffer who does Asia, and who is very good, agrees with my assessment that it was a valuable piece to write.

AM

From: Green, James B
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Slaughter, Anne-Marie
Cc: Sokolsky, Richard D
Subject: Nye on Japan Alliance

From today's New York Times. Not sure if someone in this building (or the NSC) put Nye up to this, but agree with this assessment

Not surprisingly, some in Washington want to play hardball with the new Japanese government. But that would be unwise

January 7, 2010
OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

An Alliance Larger Than One Issue

By JOSEPH S. NYE Jr.

Cambridge, Mass.

SEEN from Tokyo, America's relationship with Japan faces a crisis. The immediate problem is deadlock over a plan to move an American military base on the island of Okinawa. It sounds simple, but this is an issue with a long back story that could create a serious rift with one of our most crucial allies.

When I was in the Pentagon more than a decade ago, we began planning to reduce the burden that our presence places on Okinawa, which houses more than half of the 47,000 American troops in Japan. The Marine Corps Air Station Futenma was a particular problem because of its proximity to a crowded city, Ginowan. After years of negotiation, the Japanese and American governments agreed in 2006 to move the base to a less populated part of Okinawa and to move 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2014. The plan was thrown into jeopardy last summer when the Japanese voted out the Liberal Democratic Party that had governed the country for nearly half a century in favor of the

Democratic Party of Japan. The new prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, leads a government that is inexperienced, divided and still in the thrall of campaign promises to move the base off the island or out of Japan completely.

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 and that has major implications for the Marine Corps' budget and force realignment. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed displeasure during a trip to Japan in October, calling any reassessment of the plan "counterproductive." When he visited Tokyo in November, President Obama agreed to a high-level working group to consider the Futenma question. But since then, Mr. Hatoyama has said he will delay a final decision on relocation until at least May.

Not surprisingly, some in Washington want to play hardball with the new Japanese government. But that would be unwise, for Mr. Hatoyama is caught in a vise, with the Americans squeezing from one side and a small left-wing party (upon which his majority in the upper house of the legislature depends) threatening to quit the coalition if he makes any significant concessions to the Americans. Further complicating matters, the future of Futenma is deeply contentious for Okinawans.

Even if Mr. Hatoyama eventually gives in on the base plan, we need a more patient and strategic approach to Japan. We are allowing a second-order issue to threaten our long-term strategy for East Asia. Futenma, it is worth noting, is not the only matter that the new government has raised. It also speaks of wanting a more equal alliance and better relations with China, and of creating an East Asian community — though it is far from clear what any of this means.

When I helped to develop the Pentagon's East Asian Strategy Report in 1995, we started with the reality that there were three major powers in the region — the United States, Japan and China — and that maintaining our alliance with Japan would shape the environment into which China was emerging. We wanted to integrate China into the international system by, say, inviting it to join the World Trade Organization, but we needed to hedge against the danger that a future and stronger China might turn aggressive.

After a year and a half of extensive negotiations, the United States and Japan agreed that our alliance, rather than representing a cold war relic, was the basis for stability and prosperity in the region. President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto affirmed that in their 1996 Tokyo declaration. This strategy of "integrate, but hedge" continued to guide American foreign policy through the years of the Bush administration. This year is the 50th anniversary of the United States-Japan security treaty. 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. The best guarantee of security in a region where China remains a long-term challenge and a nuclear North Korea poses a clear threat remains the presence of American troops, which Japan helps to maintain with generous host nation support.

Sometimes Japanese officials quietly welcome “gaiatsu,” or foreign pressure, to help resolve their own bureaucratic deadlocks. But that is not the case here: if the United States undercuts the new Japanese government and creates resentment among the Japanese public, then a victory on Futenma could prove Pyrrhic.

Joseph S. Nye Jr., a professor of government at Harvard and the author of “The Powers to Lead,” was an assistant secretary of defense from 1994 to 1995.

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