# Guam Updates

## Japan Relations

### High

**Japan alliance strong now – security and economic relations high despite Futenma**

**Sang-ho** 7 – 8 – **12** (Song, reporter for the Korean Herald, “U.S.-Japan alliance grows for Asia-Pacific security balance”, <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120708000302> ck)

As the U.S. has been shifting its military and diplomatic priorities toward the economically vibrant region, its alliance with Japan, along with its one with South Korea, will continue to be the core of its strategy to maintain primacy in the region. “Washington hopes to work with China’s neighbors to put together a balancing coalition that will contain China and prevent it from dominating Asia the way the U.S. dominates the Western Hemisphere,” said Mearsheimer. On the surface, the alliance between the U.S. and Japan appears to have worsened in recent years due to a long-standing controversy over the relocation of the Futenma airbase in Okinawa. But **this would not undermine the core of the alliance** between the two countries that share security interests and values of democracy, and take initiatives against global terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, experts pointed out. “**People should not misconstrue a long-running local dispute over** how to close **one Marine air base with the durability and capability of that vital alliance**,” said Patrick M. Cronin, senior director of the Asia Program at the Center for a New American Security

### Low

**Alliance on the brink - political promises to relocate marines causing tension**

**Xinhua News** 7 – 16 – **12** (“Okinawa base issue tests U.S. lockstep alliance with Japan”, <http://english.china.com/news/international/11020308/20120716/17318482.html> ck)

However media reports and political commentary, on the back of Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada's somewhat fruitless meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Honolulu, Hawaii on Tuesday, continue to swirl with speculation that Tokyo's stalling on a key military issue in Okinawa threatens to subvert Hatoyama's "indispensable" alliance, as Washington's agitation increases as the debate trundles on. The Japanese Prime Minister, following his election campaign pledges, has created something of a Catch-22 situation for his ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) over the initial proposed relocating of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station to Ginowan, a less densely populated region of Japan's southernmost prefecture, and the Japanese premier has extended his self-imposed deadline to find his way out of the diplomatic labyrinth fashioned by his administration, until May of this year, further rattling Washington's cage who has persistently called for the issue to be resolved expeditiously. POLITICAL PARADOX "Like the Japanese public, the Obama administration has not concealed its exasperation. The president and other senior officials visiting the country have repeatedly called for an "expedited" resolution to the base dispute," a recent editorial in The Washington Post said. "After the prime minister broke his own deadline just before Christmas and announced that he would postpone the matter for another few months, the Japanese ambassador to Washington was summoned for an unusual dmarche by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton."

**Relations strained – political implications and dialogue constraints over movement of marines**

**Xinhua News** 7 – 16 – **12** (“Okinawa base issue tests U.S. lockstep alliance with Japan”, <http://english.china.com/news/international/11020308/20120716/17318482.html> ck)

"The DPJ's campaign platform included language that questioned the LDP's traditional lockstep alignment with U.S. foreign and defense policy and fanned the hopes of constituents grown dissatisfied with the noise and danger associated with the likes of outmoded Air Station Futemma in crowded Ginowan City," added political analyst Jeff Marchesseault, in an article for the Guam News Factor. Further contributing to U.S. President Barack Obama's administration's umbrage on the matter is the increased and incessant wrangling from Hatoyama's junior coalition parties, most notably the Social Democratic Party, who want to see the Marine Corps' base moved outside Japan entirely, and thus **what started as bilateral dialogue between the U.S. and Japan** and was at first a minor headache for the former, **is quickly morphing into a diplomatic migraine** for Washington. The quandaries the Hatoyama-led DPJ face if they opt to move the facility. Not only will they have to deal with the fallout from their own coalition parties, the local government and people of Okinawa, there's also the general electorate to consider, whose favor of the ruling administration is already waning since their meteoric rise to power in August 2009, which put pay to decades of Liberal Democratic rule **that held the Japan-U.S. alliance at the very core of its political ideology**.