

Obama's Foreign Policy Versus McCain's

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Americans who care about the US relationship with Asia know that the Bush administration has had a destructive impact on that relationship. We can expect an Obama administration to adopt new policies that strengthen existing US alliances in Asia, while also supporting multilateral approaches that help bring stability and prosperity to the region.

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I believe that John McCain would bring significantly greater experience, judgment and credibility to the presidency and to the execution of US strategy in Asia. Throughout more than two decades of service in the US Congress, John McCain has been a consistent and principled voice on US policy towards Asia.

Senator Obama and Asia

By Donald G. Gross

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA offers the hope of visionary leadership for the 21st century to millions of Americans. As president, his foreign policy will strengthen US relations with Asia and help bring lasting peace, security and prosperity to the region.

Senator Obama believes the next American president must provide a new vision of leadership that draws from the foreign policy approach of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Kennedy.

In his view, “the security and well-being of every American depend on the security and well-being of those who live beyond our borders.”

The senator’s adherence to this critical principle underlies his commitment to revitalizing America’s alliances and forging an effective multilateral framework in East Asia that promotes stability and prosperity while confronting common threats such as energy insecurity, pandemic disease, global warming, poverty, and inadequate health care.

Americans who care deeply about the US alliances and broader US relations in Asia fully realize the destructive impact of the Bush administration’s foreign policy during the last eight years:

- By almost exclusively focusing US attention and resources on the war in Iraq, President Bush largely ignored Asia. Lack of US leadership in Asia has compromised the national security interests of our allies and the American people alike.
- The Bush administration’s disdain for diplomacy — until recent months — magnified the threat from North Korea and allowed Pyongyang to significantly increase the amount of material it possesses for building nuclear bombs. This misguided policy also led, directly or indirectly, to North Korea’s decision to test a nuclear device in October 2006.
- By approving torture and infringing human rights at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib as

well as by authorizing the CIA’s notorious program of forced “renditions” of prisoners, the Bush administration undercut US standing to challenge human rights violations and harmed the reputation of the US around the world.

- By failing to provide strong leadership for building a multilateral framework for peace and security in Northeast Asia, the Bush administration bears partial responsibility for allowing numerous transnational threats to fester and grow.

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Now and Then
Some Obama Criticisms of Bush

Bush

Lack of US leadership in Asia

Weak standing to challenge human rights violations

Failure to provide strong leadership for building a multilateral framework for security in Northeast Asia

Obama

Broadening cooperation with China

Ending torture and secret detentions

Deepening the US partnership with ASEAN to expand regional cooperation on transnational challenges

- During President Bush’s term in office, energy security in East Asia has declined, important public health concerns have not been adequately addressed, trafficking in women and children has continued unabated, and dangerous emissions of greenhouse gases have gone unrestricted.

Senator Obama’s message of hope to the American people holds deep significance for Asian countries as well. His vision of renewed US leadership for the 21st century promises major improvements in security and prosperity in the region.

We can expect an Obama administration to adopt new policies that strengthen existing US alliances in Asia, while also supporting multilateral approaches that help bring stability and prosperity to the region as a whole. These policies include:

- Broadening areas of cooperation with China, in areas where the US and China share mutual

interests, while seeking greater transparency of China’s military activities. In Senator Obama’s view, the US should improve its ability to manage differences in US-China relations more effectively while never failing to be clear and consistent on areas where the US disagrees with China, such as strengthening human rights and protecting intellectual property rights.

- Maintaining the “one China” policy, US adherence to the three US-PRC Joint Communiqués concerning Taiwan, and observance of the Taiwan Relations Act — which together set out the framework for US-China relations.
- Encouraging both China and Taiwan to build commercial, cultural and other ties, laying the groundwork for a closer relationship and ultimately for resolving their differences.
- Pursuing serious diplomacy with North Korea, in close consultation with South Korea, that leads

Pyongyang to completely and verifiably eliminate its nuclear weapons program while accepting new permanent peace arrangements for the Korean Peninsula that replace the 1953 Armistice.

- Ensuring that the US-Japan alliance remains at the core of efforts to revitalize Japan's role in strengthening stability and security in the region. Japan's effort to develop more capable Self-Defense Forces should be welcomed as a sign of a "normal" Japan which is able and willing to play a leading regional role. To be perceived as "normal," Japan should deal forthrightly with the important issue of its history, facing this issue fully, openly and honestly.
- Revitalizing America's commitment to the US-South Korea security alliance, including a full resolution of all outstanding issues concerning basing for US troops in South Korea.
- Closely cooperating with South Korea and Japan to promote both shared interests and shared values — expanding economic opportunity, increasing energy security, furthering human rights and democracy, reducing the threat from global warming, combating pandemic disease, and fighting the spread of weapons of mass destruction.
- Ending torture and secret detentions so the US government can once again "reflect the decency and aspirations of the American people," in Obama's words.
- Working with key regional players, particularly China, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India, and Japan to coordinate international efforts for engaging and pressuring the Burmese regime toward reform. As Senator Obama sees it, the military junta in Burma is one of the most repressive regimes in the world and lies at the epicenter of a range of transnational threats (including narcotics, HIV/AIDS, avian flu and human trafficking).
- Deepening the US partnership with ASEAN and involvement in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum as well as helping shape emerging multilateral forums, such as the East Asia Summit. In so doing, the US should expand regional cooperation on transnational challenges such as terrorism, traffick-

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ing of arms, narcotics and people, health issues, and the environment.

- Forging a new and more effective multilateral framework for security and cooperation in East Asia — an inclusive architecture — which can promote stability and prosperity, while helping to resolve regional problems and meet transnational threats.

The election of Senator Barack Obama as president of the United States on November 4 will not only be good news for America. Obama's vision of renewed American leadership and his commitment to revitalizing America's alliances also promises a new era in US-Asia relations that will greatly benefit both the United States and Asian countries in the 21st century.

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