

# Analysis of obama's foreign policy



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Since the beginning of 2009, when Barack Obama officially became the President of the United States of America, there were many changes in the foreign policy of the US. Some of them are great, but there still be some weaknesses need to be fixed. As Dionne said, Obama's foreign policy is " a form of realism unafraid to deploy American power but mindful that its use must be tempered by practical limits and a dose of self-awareness" (Wikipedia 2011). In the essay we will discuss to find out the strengths and weaknesses of Obama's foreign policy.

Before Obama become the president of the US, he gave several speech on the foreign policy field. The speech in 2007 to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs is considered as the most important one that focus on five key points: first is " bringing a responsible end to this war in Iraq and refocusing on the critical challenges in the broader region"; second is " by building the first truly 21st century military and showing wisdom in how we deploy it"; third is " by marshalling a global effort to meet a threat that rises above all others in urgency - securing, destroying, and stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction"; fourth is " rebuild and construct the alliances and partnerships necessary to meet common challenges and confront common threat"; and finally, " while America can help others build more secure societies, we must forget that only the citizens of these nations can sustain them" (Wikipedia, 2011). One year after that speech, he gave another speech in Washington, DC restated his main goals in foreign policy: first is to end the war in Iraq responsibly, second is to finish the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban; third is to secure all nuclear weapons and materials from terrorists and rogue

states; fourth is to achieve true energy, security; and finally, to rebuild US's alliances to meet the challenges of the 21st century (Wikipedia, 2011).

In Obama's speech when he became the President of the US, talked about his foreign policy, he stated that the US army will soon leave Iraq, and focus on Afghanistan conflict. He wanted to decrease the nuclear threat by working hard with old friends and enemies. The spirit of America in opposing terrorism is much stronger and cannot be broken. Obama has a positive attitude toward the Muslim, open a new way based on mutual interest and respect each other to show them that America is not their enemy. This never happened before in the history of the US President. He always follows the ideals of the Founding Fathers of the US by practising directly the charter to ensure the rights of man, and the rule of law. Many of the past policy will be repudiated, but some still remain, such as the six-party talks over the North Korean nuclear weapons program continue.

It is hard to evaluate the foreign policy of Obama now. It does not make sense if we only list the successes and failures under his administration, because many of them still in the process of implement. However, Obama's policy did not bring a certain leadership role for the US in the international arena. Almost all international negotiations do not follow directly to the agenda of the administration, or still out of progress. About Israel, they refused to support, even the smallest, an unconditional concession in an effort to find a sustainable peace agreement with Palestine. It ruined Obama's approach to the Arab world. The persistent resistance of Taliban to military surge of the US in Afghanistan also show clearly to the world about the limitations of US military power.

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In the pass two years since Obama was in office, the feeling about American's political decline is still increase. The competition for world leadership began to rise, such as China, Turkey, or Brazil.

But the Obama's administration has been succeeded in reconnecting the US with the world outside Middle East and Pakistan by the US approach to Iran. This includes a series of senior-level visits to Europe, Russia, Latin America, Africa & especially South East Asian in the first year of him in office. The number of these visits is also much more than any other president has done. Generally, Barack Obama has raised the level of US engagement all around the global.

To be more specific, we will concentrate now at Obama's foreign policy toward some region of countries all over the world. First of all, we will talk about Africa. According to the US, some Africa countries in the North such as Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and so on, are counted as part of the Middle East. So when talking about Africa, these countries may not be included. As a black man, Obama somehow prioritize Africa. His policy toward Africa is to prevent genocide in Darfur, fighting property, expand prosperity. The US will "combating al-Qaida's efforts to seek safe havens in failed states in the Horn of Africa; help African nations to conserve their natural resources and reap fair benefits from them; stopping war in Congo; ending autocracy in Zimbabwe and human devastation in Darfur." All these countries play the important roles in the US policy toward Africa.

About Asia, it is divided into two parts: East Asia and South Asia. East Asia include China, Myanmar, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Thailand, Taiwan,

Hong Kong, Mongolia. Obama denied the idea that the US and China will become enemy if China become a super-nation. On the contrary, he said both states could have common benefit, and help each other to be succeeded. The relationship with Chinese economic is very important to the US, that is why they have to find out the way to get benefit for both sides. Then, two states established the high-level US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in 2009. They believe their relationship is the most important political-economic relation in the world. Not only to China, but America under Obama's administration also try to strengthen the relationship in the Pacific Asia region. Toward North Korea, the relation is still extremely tense. While South Korea is a very close allied power; North Korea, as they broke up the peace agreement and started the war between N. Korea and S. Korea, and put in prison two American journalists, also become the enemy of the US. Then the alliance between US and Korea is considered as the cornerstone of US security in the Pacific region. Another big ally of American in East Asia is Japan. America tried their best to support Japan during the earthquake and tsunami, Japanese really appreciate that and so proud to be an ally of the US.

About South Asia - which include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives; American " goals was and remains to support the development of sovereign, stable, democratic nations, integrated into the world economy and cooperating with one another, the US, and its partners to advance regional security and stability." About the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama believe that both countries " can be a bridge that links South and Central Asia, rather

than a barrier that divides them.” About India, Obama is criticized that did not support them enough as Bush did before.

Let’s move to other important region is Europe. First of all, Estonia is an important ally of the US in Afghanistan. Estonia stated that even though they have suffered some losses, but they will never give up the mission in Afghanistan. About Kosovo, US tried to help them to have the independence and their own diplomatic recognition in the world. Toward Russia, America disagrees on everything related to nuclear weapon. The relation between US and Switzerland is increasing hostile. About Turkey, America under Obama administration tried to change it from fully strained into a better relation. Obama confirm that creating a close, stable relation with Turkey is very important to the interest of the US. And finally, relationship between the US and the UK is very special. They are so close as a family. That is why Obama is very disappointed when UK refused to join in the sovereign dispute in Falklands.

The other region are counted in American foreign policy is Middle East that consists many complicated situations. It includes Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria, and Libya. Obama has to deal with many problem such as the conflict in Iraq, Pakistan, and so on; the terrorists; efforts in developing democracy in those countries. Relationship between the US and Israel is extremely tense.

Final region is counted in Obama administration is Americas. About Canada, this is the closest ally of the US. Obama’s first visit after officially became the President of the US was to Canada. They have a shared vision for perimeter security and economic competitiveness. Toward Cuba, the Obama’s policy is

almost does not change in compare to the policy of Bush before. Obama want to push Cuba to follow the democratic reforms and free political prisoners.

In future, President Obama will continue to increase pressure on Iran without creating the outright escalation of hostilities. He will continue to strengthen the relationships of the US with its neighbour in Latin America and all around Southeast Asia. Recover the economy of the US is very important because without the power inside the state, its power on abroad will continue to be eroded (Niblett 2011).