# ASEAN-US Relations under the Obama Administration

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### 1- Overview of ASEAN-US Relations

- ASEAN-US dialogue started in 1977: political & security matters only.
- In 1990s: Both sides have agreed to expend their relationship by launching many programs that focused on trade & investment
  - technology transfer
  - human resource development
- This relationship seemed to be forgotten during the Bush Administration
- Obama Administration has turned a new area by announcing his foreign policy towards Asia-Pacific, especially to Southeast Asian Nations, that called ASEAN( Association of South-East Asian Nations). 3

### 1- Overview of ASEAN-US Relations

- This relationship between ASEAN and the U.S. was reaffirmed in July 2009 when the Obama Administration acceded to TAC (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia).
- In November 2011 (Bali-Indonesia): U.S. President Barack Obama suddenly sent U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Myanmar.
- In November 2012, the President made an historic trip to the region, becoming the first U.S. President to visit Myanmar and Cambodia.
- It is the first visit to Myanmar and Cambodia by a U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. President in more than 50 years.

### 1- Overview of ASEAN-US Relations

- There has been four ASEAN-US Leaders' Meetings under the Obama Administration with the purpose of re-strengthening and promoting their relations.
- At the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-US Leaders' Meeting in Phnom Penh on November 2012: Both leaders agreed to convene the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-US Summit tentatively scheduled to be held in October 2013 in Brunei Darussalam.
- The dialogue was rapidly grown and expanded to cover a wide range of areas, including political and security, economic and trade, social and cultural, and development cooperation.
- Today, both sides are working to upgrade their relationship to a strategic one.

# 2- Strategic Rebalancing

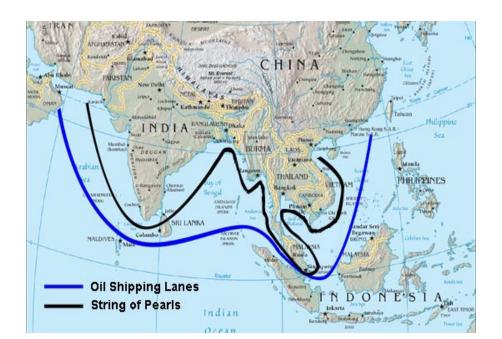
- President Obama's visit to Southeast Asia underscored his commitment to the U.S. strategic "rebalancing" to the Asia-Pacific. (Source: TAF, by John J. Brandon, January 30, 2013).
- China's Foreign Policy towards Southeast Asian Nations can be a roadblock to the U.S. Foreign Policy (Obama Administration) towards the region.
- China and ASEAN has upgraded their relationship up to a strategic relation since October 2003. The first dialogue partner to accede to the TAC.
- Below are the points that the two giant countries are trying to rebalance in the region:

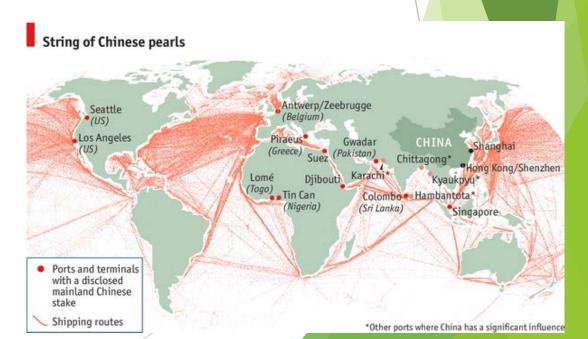
# 2- Strategic Rebalancing

- Political matters: Asean Regional Forum(ARF), East Asia Summit(EAS), Asean Plus Three(APT), Asean Defense Ministers Meeting Plus(ADMM Plus).
- Economic matters: ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partners (RCEP) vs. Trans-Pacific Partners(TPP).
- Technology matters: China has increased its investment in technology to compete with the U.S. technology from all kinds of electronic equipment to space technology.
- Manufacturing matters: A new study by the consulting firm AlixPartners estimates by 2015 the cost of outsourcing manufacturing to China will be equal to the cost of manufacturing in the U.S.

# 2- Strategic Rebalancing

- Military matters: The fact that the US announced to withdraw his troop of about 50% to 60% from Atlantic Ocean to stand clear in Asia-Pacific is clear that will encounter with the China's military String of Pearls.
- *Democratic matters:* re-strengthening the former alliances (BIMPST) and improving relationship with CLMV.
- Cultural matters: Chinese language vs. English language.





# 3- The Way Ahead of the Relations

- The 21st Century will be the "American's Pacific Century": Obama was called by FP magazine as the "First Pacific President".
- Concept of Asia-Pacific Community vs. East Asia Community.
- The U.S. will continue to increase its "Soft Power" through trade & investment(TPP, E3, US-ASEAN Business Council), scholar exchange, USAID(democracy and human rights, and human development), etc.
- ASEAN is proud to have the U.S. (and China or India) to present in the region as long as the U.S. or other powerful countries in the region don't force them to take sides.

### 4- Conclusion

- Re-energizing American's Alliance (Old ASEAN Nations-BIMPST) and promoting relationship with new (ASEAN Nations-CLMV).
- > The relationship between both sides is still skeptical.
- > The two sides need to work closely and frankly to clear and clean all their curiosity, in particularly the relations with CLMV and especially Cambodia.
  - \*\*\* President Obama shakes hands
    with Cambodian Prime Minister

    \*\*\* O
  - \*\*\* Cambodia wants to be your truly friend.



### Messages from scholars:

- ❖ The 21<sup>st</sup> Century would be "Asian Century"
- ❖ The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the "American Century"
- ❖ The 19<sup>th</sup> Century was the "British Century"
- ❖ The 18<sup>th</sup> Century was the "France and Spain Century"
- ❖ The 17<sup>th</sup> Century was the "Portugal and Dutch Century"

## THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION !!!!!