

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515**

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
CHAIRMAN**

**before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**

U.S.-Japan Relations: An Overview

June 12, 2008

According to the Congressional Research Service, the once strong relationship between the U.S. and Japan may be in decline due to the U.S. shift on North Korean nuclear negotiations, the decision not to export the F-22 to Japan, Japan's restrictions on U.S. beef imports, the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, and the July 2007 passage of House Resolution 121 by the U.S. House of Representatives which called upon Japan to formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery during its occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands during WWII.

Realignment of U.S. forces is also placing pressure on the U.S.-Japan relationship. The realignment calls for moving a Marine air station in Okinawa to a less-congested area and transferring 8,000 Marines to Guam. Japan is assuming 59%, or about \$6 billion, of the estimated cost to relocate forces from Okinawa to Guam and may have to spend an estimated \$20 billion for the overall realignment of U.S. troops in the region. Political divisions between the Upper House and Lower House are delaying the process.

Political turmoil in Tokyo is also detracting from our relationship, as the Japanese population is demanding that more attention be paid to domestic issues. Prime Minister Fukuda's mishandling of a controversial gasoline tax and the government's mismanagement of pension records have dragged his approval ratings to less than 20%.

Given these considerations, I am concerned about the state of our relationship. Japan has been one of our strongest allies in the region and has contributed significantly to the war in Iraq. Unfortunately, the war in Iraq has taken our attention away from all things Asia but I believe the time has come for us to put our relationship with Japan back on track.

In fairness to Japan, I believe the U.S. should have stuck to its commitment during the Six-Party talks and insisted that North Korea disclose the fate and/or whereabouts of several Japanese citizens abducted by North Korean Agents in the 1970s and '80s.

Having said this, I find it ironic that Japan is ignoring the pleas of parents from the U.S., Canada and elsewhere whose children are wrongfully taken and kept in Japan in the case of broken international marriages. Japan has yet to sign a parental-abduction treaty with an eye on meeting the requirements of the 1980 Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. To avoid further criticism and growing international pressure, I am hopeful that Japan will resolve this issue soon and, for the record, I am including extraneous material regarding this sensitive and timely subject.

It is now my pleasure to welcome Deputy Assistant Secretary Alexander Arvizu. I have great confidence in Secretary Arvizu. He is a man of integrity and I trust his insight. I also thank him for being with us again today.

At this time, I also recognize our Ranking Member for opening remarks.