

Yukio Hatoyama is the new leader of Japan. He has been busy making sure the US understands that the connection between the two countries is still very strong. The relationship is very important and he told that to Obama and the US ambassador. He called the White House and told Obama the relationship would not change. This was the first time the two men talked. Mr. Hatoyama won the election by beating the political party that had been in power for a long time. Mr. Hatoyama wanted to make sure people knew that he wasn't going to break or change the relationship. Some people were worried that he would pull Japan away from the US.

His political party is different from the party he defeated in the election. During the campaign he said he wanted an equal relationship with the US and he wanted to build stronger relationships with China and other Asian countries. The biggest problem was caused when Mr. Hatoyama wrote an essay that said Japan's economy was weak because it was connected to the US. The US has connections to countries all over the world and Hatoyama felt that this hurts other Countries especially if the US economy does poorly. This caused problems in Washington and Japanese newspapers published the Americans' negative views of Hatoyama's essay.

Many people in Japan believe Japan should stay closely connected to the US, especially since China and N. Korea are so close. China is growing really quickly and N. Korea has been testing nuclear weapons. Hatoyama said his essay was misunderstood and he didn't write it to be negative toward the US and he doesn't want to really change the basic relationship with the US, but, his party does want to discuss the agreements over the 50,000 US troops that are in Japan. Political experts don't think it was a good idea for Hatoyama to be so negative so early. One expert thinks this shows that Mr. Hatoyama might not have made the smartest

choice to criticize the US. He thinks it shows that Hatoyama might be weak in the area of making good diplomatic decisions. The political experts also think that there was confusion in Washington because Hatoyama's party is so new and the US was so used to dealing with the other party. The US has never needed to pay attention to Hatoyama's party. Mr. Murata, a political expert, said the US also overreacted to Hatoyama's campaign promises. He thinks if the US isn't willing to negotiate over where the 50,000 Marines are located then the Japanese government will just become more stubborn. In the meeting between Hatoyama and US Ambassador

Roos they talked about many different issues, including the military relationship. Mr. Hatoyama told Roos the US-Japan relationship will get even better when they start thinking about the future.

Hatoyama also said his 12-minute conversation with Obama was friendly and positive.