

# *U.S. President Leaves for Asia Tour to Reassure Allies*

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Washington, April 23 (RHC)-- U.S. President Barack Obama is on a tour of the Asia-Pacific region in an effort to revive the “pivot” of U.S. military towards the region.

Obama’s eight-day trip to four nations includes programs of dining with the Japanese emperor, returning ancient seals to the South Korean government, touring a grand mosque in Malaysia and an address to U.S. troops based in the Philippines, according to a report by USA TODAY.

Observers say that Obama will focus on reassuring U.S. allies in the region of Washington’s commitment to the “Asia pivot” at a time of escalating tensions between China and U.S. allies. They note that Washington is meddling in territorial disputes between China and Japan over several islands in the East China Sea, on the one hand, and between China and some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations over islands in the South China Sea, on the other.

The U.S. president will begin his four-nation tour in Japan, which has been locked in a dispute with China for more than a decade

over the sovereignty of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea -- that are called Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan. The islands are believed to have vast natural resources.

Although Washington has repeatedly said it would take no side on sovereignty of the disputed islands in the East China Sea, it officially recognizes Japan’s administration of the islands and feels responsible to protect Japan’s territory under a defense deal signed between the two countries.

Obama will then travel to South Korea where thousands of U.S. troops have been deployed since 1950s. The Korean press reports that the U.S. president will return some ancient seals seized by U.S. troops during the Korean War.

After visiting South Korea and flying over the vast South China Sea, Obama travel to Malaysia and then on to the Philippines.



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