SINGAPORE: A new American president can only strengthen Singapore-US relations which are currently at an all-time high, said experts.

This is in light of Super Tuesday in the US where 24 states, including California and New York, are holding primaries or caucuses, on the road to electing a new president by year's end.

Results will be known in Singapore on Wednesday morning.

War veteran John McCain looks likely to win the Republican nomination in the run to the White House.

But it is a close call for now on whether former First Lady, New York Senator Hillary Clinton, or Illinois Senator Barack Obama will be the Democratic representative for the November elections.

But whoever becomes the new US president, analysts said it is unlikely to create shockwaves in foreign policy.

Professor Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said: “All will be relatively centrist and middle of the road in their foreign policy.”

Some believe Clinton would do a better job in enhancing economic and political links with foreign nations.

Assistant Professor Ilya Farber, School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, said: "McCain is engaged in foreign policy, he’s probably more interested in that than in domestic policy, but as I said, he’s somewhat more militaristic, and I think with him, there’s the greatest risk that tensions could be raised in the area.

"Obama is much more concerned about domestic policy and he knows he’s a bit weak on foreign policy. Clinton, if you look at her proposals, she has much more concrete policy proposals on what she wants to do in the region, what sorts of partnerships she wants to build. So I think we’d be most likely to see some difference with her."

The hope is that the new leader will pay more attention to Asia.

Prof Mahbubani said: "It has built up huge reservoirs of goodwill towards America in Asia, and it’s been wasting them through neglect and unfortunately ill-conceived policies, but I think the opportunity is still alive for United States to engage in a new partnership with Asia and I hope the new administration will try to do that."

K Kesavapany, director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, said: "Because of problems that the Bush administration faced in the Middle East and Afghanistan, their concentration on Southeast Asia has been a little less than desired.

"I hope, either of the three, whoever comes up, will give some new emphasis. If they do that, I think Singapore will naturally be supportive and will do its part to further strengthen US-Singapore relations."

In Singapore, not many are tracking the US presidential race. Some said it is too early to determine the winner, so interest will only gather momentum when the November elections draw nearer.

For now, Singaporeans are more concerned about domestic issues like how to cope with rising costs.

- CNA/so